

O 150305Z ZYH ZFF-4 ZFF-1
 FM GEN AERAMS COMUSMACV SAIGON
 TO VADM ZUMWALT COMNAVFORV
 LTG WICKERSON CG III MAF
 LTG CORCORAN CG I FFORCEV
 LTG EWELL CG II FFORCEVO
 LTG ZAIS CG XXIV CORPS
 MG JONES VICE COM 7AF
 MG WETHERILL CG DMAC
 ZEM

TOP SECRET NOFORN MAC 9093 EYE ONLY
 REQUEST MLT 1500 HOURS, 16 JULY 69, VIA THIS CHANNEL, YOUR
 PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A. UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF "VIETNAMIZATION"
 OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM BY RVNAF AT SENIOR OFFICER,
 JUNIOR OFFICER, NCO AND LOWER LEVELS.
- B. REACTION ON THE PART OF RVNAF AT FOREGOING LEVELS TO THE
 CURRENT REPLACEMENT OF 25,000 US TROOPS BY GVN FORCES.
- C. EFFECT ON RVNAF MORALE OF THE CURRENT REPLACEMENT OF
 25,000 US TROOPS BY GVN FORCES.
- D. UNDERSTANDING OF "VIETNAMIZATION" ON THE PART OF US
 FORCES AND ATTITUDE OF US FORCES TOWARD THE REPLACEMENT CITED
 ABOVE. GP-4.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
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TOP SECRET

NOFORN 44(1)

44(1)

HEADQUARTERS
III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

TOP SECRET

III MAF FORM 5216 (REV 3-68)

OPERATION CODE			FROM		DATE	
X- ORIGINATOR A- ACTION / COGNIZANCE C- COMMENT / RECOMMENDATION I- INFORMATION S- SIGNATURE			ADMIN FMFPAC		10 JUL 1969	
			SERIAL# / CONTROL DATE		COPY# / OF 3 COPIES RECO	
			102005Z JUL 1969		1 / 3	
ROUTE	SECTION	CODE	DATE		INITIAL	SUBJECT
			IN	OUT		
	CG					SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCE
	DCG					
	DCG AIR					REMARKS THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE RETAINED OVER NIGHT EXCEPT AS NOTED IN FORCE ORDER P5511.4...
2	C/S	I				
	DC/S					THE RECORD OF DISCLOSURE MUST BE SIGNED BY ALL PERSONS SIGHTING THIS DOCUMENT.
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**EXCLUSIVE
FOR**

MARINE CORPS EYES ONLY

48

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

PP RHMAFA
 DE RUHFMA 1492 1912005
 ZNY TTTT
 P 102005Z JUL 69
 FM ADMIN FMFPAC
 TO RHMAFA/CG III MAF

BT SECTION 1 OF 2 SECTIONS
 T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE. SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR BGEN
 DOOLEY FROM BGEN WILSON, MARINE CORPS EYES
 ONLY

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A JCS MEMO, FORWARDED
 TO YOU FOR INFO. SENSITIVE, LIMIT ACCESS TO THOSE
 WHO HAVE NEED TO KNOW.

QUOTE:

SUBJ: MILITARY STRATEGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (U)

1. (TS) MEMORANDUM BY SECDEF, DATED 2 JULY
 (1969), SUBJECT AS ABOVE, IS QUOTED BELOW FOR
 INFORMATION:

QUOTE

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS
 OF STAFF

SUBJECT: MILITARY STRATEGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
 I HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY IMPRESSED OVER THE

PAGE 2 RUHFMA 1492 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCEO
 PAST FEW DAYS AND WEEKS BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS
 WHICH INDICATE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT
 CHANGE IN THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH
 VIETNAM. I BELIEVE UNITED STATES STRATEGY
 IS PROPERLY A DERIVATIVE OF OUR OBJECTIVES;
 THE RESOURCES, BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY,
 AVAILABLE WITH WHICH TO WORK; AND THE GENERAL
 ENEMY STATUS IN THE AREA, TO INCLUDE THE OTHER
 SIDE'S DISPOSITION AND STRATEGY. THEREFORE,
 IF THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE MILITARY SITUATION,
 EITHER CURRENTLY OR PROSPECTIVELY, ARE CHANGING,
 IT MAY BE DESIRABLE AT THIS TIME FOR US TO RE-
 ASSESS THOROUGHLY OUR MILITARY STRATEGY.
 THE FACTORS WHICH INDICATE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFI-
 CANT CHANGES INVOLVE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, THE
 SOUTH VIETNAMESE, AND THE UNITED STATES. AMONG
 THE FACTORS WHICH HAVE IMPRESSED ME ARE THE
 FOLLOWING:
 NORTH VIETNAM.
 GENERAL GIAP'S JUNE 22 SPEECH TO THE AIR FORCE

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TOP SECRET

PAGE 3 RUHHFMA 1492 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCFE
 CONGRESS OUTLINED A CHANGE IN DEGREE, IF NOT A
 CHANGE IN KIND OF NORTH VIETNAMESE STRATEGY.
 THE EMPHASIS ON CONSERVATION OF FORCE AND
 PROTRACTED WAR SEEMS NOTEWORTHY. IN THAT
 SPEECH, GENERAL GIAP SAID:

"(THE NVN/VC WOULD USE) ... MINIMAL FORCE TO
 OPPOSE AN OVERPOWERFUL ENEMY ... AND ORDINARY
 WEAPONS AGAINST HIS (U.S.) MUCH BETTER MODERN
 WEAPONS."

"(THIS IS) ... THE METHOD OF OPPOSING A MAXI-
 MAL FORCE WITH A MINIMAL FORCE...."

ANOTHER ELEMENT, WHICH GENERAL ABRAMS CHARAC-
 TERIZED IN JUNE 29 MESSAGE (MAC 3351) TO
 GENERAL MCCONNELL, IS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE
 INFILTRATION ACTIVITY. GENERAL ABRAMS NOTED:
 "EXCEPT FOR TWO (ENEMY) GROUPS ENTERING THE
 PIPELINE IN MAY, THERE HAVE BEEN NO GROUPS
 DETECTED SINCE 20 MARCH 1969."

"WE FIND THE ENEMY'S NET LOSS FOR THE FIRST
 SEVEN MONTHS OF THE YEAR WILL PROBABLY TOTAL

PAGE 4 RUHHFMA 1492 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCFE
 ALMOST 75,000. HIS NET LOSSES ARE PARTICULARLY
 HEAVY IN TV AND I CTZS, ABOUT 33,000 AND
 23,000 RESPECTIVELY."

SOUTH VIETNAM

THE MODERNIZATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
 ARMED FORCES (RVNAF) HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SOME
 TIME. THE RESULT OF THAT PROCESS IS AN ACCELE-
 RATION OF THE VIETNAMIZATION OF THE WAR. SIGNIFI-
 CANTLY INCREASED COMBAT LOADS ARE BEING ASSIGNED,
 OR ARE IMMINENT FOR, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE. THE
 TREND IS CLEARLY AND MARKEDLY TOWARDS THE SOUTH
 VIETNAMESE ASSUMING MAJOR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES
 FOR THEIR OWN SECURITY.

UNITED STATES.

THE COROLLARY TO THE VIETNAMIZATION PROCESS IS
 THAT REDEPLOYMENTS OF UNITED STATES FORCES ARE
 UNDERWAY. THE MACHINERY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED
 FOR MAKING PERIODIC ASSESSMENTS WHICH ARE LIKELY
 TO LEAD TO FURTHER U.S. REDEPLOYMENTS.
 IN ADDITION, A NUMBER OF OTHER NOTEWORTHY FACTORS

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PAGE 5 RUHKFMA 1492 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCOE
 HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE UNITED STATES SIDE
 OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA EQUATION. FOR EXAMPLE:

- CLEAR BUDGETARY GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED WHICH MAKE IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT SUPPLEMENTAL APPROVATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO OPERATE WITHIN THE RESOURCES PROVIDED, AND EVEN LOOK FOR WAYS TO ECONOMIZE WITHIN THOSE PROVISIONS.

- THE PRESIDENT HAS CLARIFIED AND MADE EXPLICIT OUR OBJECTIVE -- BOTH WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY ARE NOT. HE SAID IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON MAY 14, 1969:

WHAT WE WANT IS VERY LITTLE, BUT VERY FUNDAMENTAL. WE SEEK THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURE WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

WE HAVE RULED OUT ATTEMPTING TO IMPOSE A PURELY MILITARY SOLUTION ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

WE HAVE ALSO RULED OUT EITHER ONE-SIDED WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM OR THE ACCEPTANCE

PAGE 6 RUHKFMA 1492 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCOE
 IN PARTS OF TERMS THAT WOULD AMOUNT TO A DISGUISED AMERICAN DEFEAT."

- IN ADDITION TO ADDRESSING OBJECTIVES, THE PRESIDENT HAS RECENTLY DELINEATED IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF POLICY. HE SAID IN HIS JUNE 19, 1969, PRESS CONFERENCE:

WE HAVE STARTED TO WITHDRAW FORCES. WE WILL WITHDRAW MORE. (NOTE: HE CLEARLY STATED HIS HOPE THAT TROOP REDEPLOYMENTS WOULD EXCEED 100,000 THIS YEAR. THIS IS OUR GOAL.)

"I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT ... I ADVOCATED A SUPERVISED CEASEFIRE. THAT IS THE POSITION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION.

"AS FAR AS THE ORDERS TO GENERAL ABRAMS ARE CONCERNED, THEY ARE VERY SIMPLY THIS: HE IS TO CONDUCT THIS WAR WITH A MINIMUM OF AMERICAN CASUALTIES."

IN THESE PRONOUNCEMENTS, EACH OF WHICH I HEARTILY ENDORSE, I FIND ELEMENTS WHICH MAY BE NOT ONLY NEW TO THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BUT WHICH

BT
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TOP SECRET

BT SECT 20F 2 SECTIONS
 T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE. SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR BGEN
 DOOLEY FROM BGEN WILSON. MARINE CORPS EYES
 ONLY

MAY ALSO BE DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN SIMULTANEOUSLY.
A STRATEGY WHICH ASSISTS THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE
TO ACHIEVE AND PRESERVE SELF-DETERMINATION MAY
NOT BE OPTIMUM FOR PROVIDING SECURITY TO OUR
OWN TROOPS, ESPECIALLY DURING WITHDRAWAL PHASES.
YET IT IS CLEAR WE MUST DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO
REDUCE AMERICAN CASUALTIES.

IN SUMMARY, WE ARE CONFRONTED NOW WITH A SERIES
 OF UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT TRENDS IN THE SOUTHEAST
 ASIA CONFLICT. I BELIEVE THE TOTALITY OF THESE
 TRENDS MAKES DESIRABLE, AND PERHAPS EVEN MANDA-
 TORY, A BROAD AND DEEP REASSESSMENT OF OUR MILI-
 TARY STRATEGY AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF OUR LAND,

PAGE 2 RUHMFMA 1493 T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCRG
 SEA, AND AIR FORCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. I WOULD
 LIKE FOR YOU TO PERFORM SUCH A STRATEGY REASSESS-
 MENT. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THIS
 REASSESSMENT TO BE AVAILABLE, AT LEAST IN OUTLINE
 FORM, PRIOR TO THE PLANNED AUGUST ASSESSMENT ON
 FURTHER UNITED STATES TROOP WITHDRAWALS.

5)
 MELVIN R. LAIRD
 UNQUOTE.

2. (U) THE JCS ARE UNDERTAKING REASSESSMENT
 REQUIRED BY THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THE MEMO-
 RANDUM. IN ORDER FOR YOUR VIEWS TO BE CON-
 SIDERED IN PREPARATION OF THE REPORT, REQUEST
 THAT INPUT BE PROVIDED NLT 13 JULY.

3. (S) IN CONNECTION WITH DEVELOPING INPUT,
 THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE PROVIDED AS GUIDANCE:
 A. WHILE THE MEMORANDUM CALLS FOR A BROAD AND
 DEEP REASSESSMENT, AN IMMEDIATE ISSUE CONCERNS
 REASSESSMENT OF OUR MILITARY STRATEGY AND
 EMPLOYMENT OF OUR FORCES IN SEA IF A TOTAL OF

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PAGE 3 RUHFMA 1493 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCEO
 100,000 US PERSONNEL WERE TO BE REDEPLOYED FROM SVN IN CY 69. IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT NSSM 36 STUDY ON VIETNAMIZING THE WAR WILL INCLUDE EFFECTS OF SUCH A REDEPLOYMENT IN CY 69 AND OF SUBSEQUENT REDEPLOYMENTS LATER HOWEVER, THE NSSM 36 STUDY DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS THE POSSIBLE RESULTING CHANGES IN MILITARY STRATEGY, TACTICS OR MISSION FOR COMUSMACV.
 B. AMONG MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE REASSESSMENT WILL BE RECENT REPORTS AND ASSESSMENTS ON TRENDS IN THREAT AND TACTICS PROVIDED BY CINCPAC AND COMUSMACV, ANALYSES OF THE PATTERN OF RECENT HOSTILE ACTIVITY AND INFILTRATION DATA, ASSESSMENTS OF RVNAF PERFORMANCE, AND EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF GIAP'S SPEECHES IN RELATION TO OBSERVED ENEMY ACTIONS. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WILL BE COMMENTS ON ANY CORRELATION BETWEEN GIAP'S STATEMENTS AND EVENTS OF THE PAST SIX WEEKS; THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS WHICH GIAP DESCRIBED MAY

PAGE 4 RUHFMA 1493 T O P SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MCEO
 BE REGARDED AS NEW; AND WHAT CHANGES IN OUR STRATEGY, MISSION, TACTICS, AND FORCE POSTURE MAY BE APPROPRIATE, PARTICULARLY FOR THE REMAINDER OF CY 1969.

1. (U) DUE TO THE SENSITIVITY OF THIS PROJECT, ACCESS MUST BE ON A CLOSE HOLD BASIS, RESTRICTED TO THOSE WHO HAVE A CLEAR NEED TO KNOW.

UNQUOTE.

2. WARM REGARDS.

GP-3

BT

1493

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0 1671087 ZYH ZFF-1 ZFF-4
 FM LTG ZAIS CG XXIV CORPS
 TO GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV
 INFO LTG WICKERSON CG III MAF
 ZEM

T O P S E C R E T WOFORN PHB 1336 EYES ONLY

REF: MAC 9093, DTG 150305Z JUL 69, FROM GEN ABRAMS TO ZAIS.

1. MY ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL "VIETNAMIZATION" OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM AND OF THE INITIAL STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION--AS REFLECTED IN THE WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES FROM RVN--IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THERE IS, I AM QUITE SURE, A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGHOUT ALL RANKS OF RVN UNITS, OF THE NEED FOR THE GRADUAL "VIETNAMIZATION" OF THE WAR. IN XXIV CORPS AREA, WE HAVE NOT USED THE SPECIFIC TERM IN OUR DISCUSSION WITH COUNTERPARTS, BUT IT IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT RVNAF WILL ULTIMATELY BE REQUIRED TO ASSUME THE ENTIRE ROLE OF SECURITY NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS. GENERAL TRUONG AND HIS SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS ARE PREPARED TO ASSUME THIS ROLE, AND THEY HAVE NEVER MENTIONED ANY PARTICULAR CONCERN TO ME, EVEN THOUGH THE 9TH RLT IS CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF DEPARTURE. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBJECT, GENERAL TRUONG HAS RECOGNIZED THIS ULTIMATE NEED IN HIS SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE DEPLOYMENT OF HIS FOUR REGIMENTS IN THE EVENT ADDITIONAL MARINE FORCES SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN, AND I AM SURE HE IS AWARE OF THE IMMINENT POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A WITHDRAWAL, PROBABLY THROUGH HIS OWN MILITARY SOURCES.

B. REACTION OF 11TH DTA FORCES TO THE CURRENT WITHDRAWAL OF 25,000 US FORCES HAS BEEN MOST REFRESHING. ALTHOUGH OUR OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO BE COMBINED WHENEVER POSSIBLE, I HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO NOTE GENERAL TRUONG'S AGGRESSIVENESS IN THE INITIATION OF TWO UNILATERAL ARVN UNDERTAKINGS--THE FIRST AGAINST ELEMENTS OF THE 7TH FRONT IN THE JUNGLES TO THE SOUTH OF BASE AREA 101, AND THE SECOND (JUST RECENTLY INITIATED) IN THE HIGH GROUND JUST SOUTH OF THE BA LONG VALLEY AND WEST OF BASE AREA 101. AS YOU KNOW, THE BATTALIONS OF THE 1ST ARVN DIVISION ARE CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS ANYPLACE WITHIN THE AO IF HELICOPTER ASSETS CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM. GENERAL TRUONG IS CURRENTLY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS SUPPORT, AND NOW HAS UNITS WORKING WITH THE 101ST AGAINST THE 4TH NVA REGIMENT, OTHERS WORKING IN THE A SHAU VALLEY AND THE POSSIBLE CACHE SITES IN THE VICINITY OF THE VALLEY, THE BATTALIONS CONDUCTING THE OPERATIONS MENTIONED ABOVE, AND ELEMENTS OF THE 2D REGIMENT WORKING WITH THE 3D MAR DIV ALONG THE DMZ. CONSEQUENTLY, MY ASSESSMENT OF THE REACTION OF RVNAF TO THE CURRENT WITHDRAWAL IS FAVORABLE, AND I BELIEVE THAT ALL 11TH DTA ELEMENTS WILL CONTINUE TO MARCH, PERHAPS EVEN MORE AGGRESSIVELY THAN IN THE PAST. 49(1)

C. THERE HAS BEEN NO NOTICEABLE DIMINUTION OF MORALE WITHIN 11TH DTA AS A RESULT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE 9TH RLT. I AM SURE THAT GENERAL TRUONG AND HIS COLLEAGUES SHARE SOME CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE WITHDRAWAL BEING EXECUTED TOO RAPIDLY--BEFORE THE RELATIVELY SIGNIFICANT THREATS ALONG THE DMZ AND THE LAOTIAN BORDER ARE ELIMINATED. THE THREAT FROM BASE AREA 611 CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR ONE AND WOULD BE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IF GENERAL TRUONG WERE REQUIRED TO GO IT ALONE WITHOUT REINFORCEMENT EITHER FROM US OR RVNAF SOURCES. ADDITIONALLY, THE 304TH NVA DIVISION POSES A THREAT IN THE WESTERN QUANG TRI AREA WITH ITS 24B (57) REGIMENT ALREADY PRESENT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ADDITIONAL REGIMENT JOINING THE 24B. I WOULD THEREFORE EXPECT TO SEE A REDUCTION IN THE EXISTING HIGH MORALE OF 11TH DTA FORCES IF FURTHER WITHDRAWALS WITHOUT REINFORCEMENT WERE NOT KEYED TO THIS THREAT.

D. US FORCES HAVE GENERALLY ACCEPTED THE WITHDRAWAL AS AN EXPECTED COURSE OF ACTION WHICH ULTIMATELY HAD TO COME. NATURALLY, THE LOWER RANKS ACCEPT IT AS A NORMAL PROCESS AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN IT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEM. THE SENIOR OFFICERS, WHO HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENEMY SITUATION, HAVE ALL ACCEPTED THE DECISION AND ARE CURRENTLY MAKING PLANS TO FILL THE GAPS CAUSED BY WITHDRAWAL OF MARINE ELEMENTS. HOWEVER, THE CONCERN OF ARVN COMMANDERS REGARDING A WITHDRAWAL PRIOR TO THE ELIMINATION OF THE NVA THREATS AT THE BORDER IS SHARED BY ME AND BY OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF RVNAF UNITS IN XXIV CORPS AREA TO CONTROL THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN THE EVENT THERE IS NO FURTHER INTRODUCTION INTO THE AO OF NVA UNITS, WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WILL BE INCLINED TO LEAVE THE AREA OF THE BORDER IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. NEVERTHELESS, IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTION, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE "VIETNAMIZATION" UNDERTAKING IS WELL UNDERSTOOD THROUGHOUT ALL US RANKE.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER NLT 161500H JULY
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