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FROM: SAIGON

ACTION: SECSTATE 1249 PRIORITY

INFO: CINCPAC 649

DATE: JANUARY 3, 4 PM

DEPARTMENT PASS DOD AND JCS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: DEPTEL 1055, DEPTEL 147, AND EMBTEL 668.

EMR EMBTEL 668 RECOMMENDED AUTHORITY BE DELEGATED TO AMBASSADOR AND COMUSMACV TO APPROVE CHEMICAL CROP DESTRUCTION OPERATIONS IN VIET-NAM ON BASIS OF MILITARY NEED SUBJECT TO GUIDELINES SET FORTH IN DEPTEL 1055. PENDING DECISION THIS REQUEST INVOLVING ALL OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT AUTHORITY BE SO DELEGATED AT THIS TIME FOR SPECIFIC AREA WITHIN WAR ZONE D.

GROUND OPERATIONS THIS AREA FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTER VC CROPS MEETING ALL GUIDELINES FOR CROP TARGETS CONTAINED IN DEPTEL 1055. GROUND SECURITY REQUIRED AREA TO PERMIT CHEMICAL ATTACK OF THESE CROPS, BUT TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS PREVENT RETENTION OF GROUND FORCES IN ANY ONE AREA FOR EXTENDED PERIOD. CURRENT APPROVAL PROCEDURES PRECLUDE OBTAINING PERMISSION WHILE TROOPS STILL ON SCENE. THIS NECESSITATES REMOUNTING OPERATION AFTER PERMISSION OBTAINED, WHICH IS COSTLY AND FREQUENTLY IMPRACTICAL APPROACH DUE TO NATURE OF TERRAIN WHICH REQUIRES HELICOPTER MOVEMENT. RESULT IS ATTEMPTED MANUAL DESTRUCTION OF CROPS, A TIME-CONSUMING AND INEFFECTIVE METHOD, OR NO DESTRUCTION AT ALL. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO AMBASSADOR AND COMUSMACV WOULD PERMIT ATTACK OF TARGETS WHILE TROOPS ALREADY IN AREA.

/AREA INVOLVED

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-2- 1249, JANUARY 3, 4 PM, FROM SAIGON

AREA INVOLVED AS FOLLOWS: FROM VINT ON BINH LONG PHUOC THANH PROVINCIAL BOUNDARY, XT888550, NORTH ALONG BOUNDARY TO NATIONAL HIGHWAY NR. 14, XT933724 THEN EAST ALONG HIGHWAY NR. 14 TO YT 244878. FROM THIS POINT DUE EAST TO DA DUNG RIVER, YT 482878, THEN SOUTHEAST ALONG DA DUNG RIVER TO CONVERGENCE WITH DONG NAI RIVER, YT 659639. SOUTHWEST ALONG DONG NAI RIVER TO YT 200270. FROM THAT POINT ON STRAIGHT LINE NORTHWEST TO YT 054550 THEN DUE WEST TO ORIGINAL POINT, XT 888550.

THIS AREA EXCLUDES SOUTHWEST CORNER OF ZONE D WHICH INCLUDES SOME FRIENDLY HAMLETS. REQUESTED ZONE ESSENTIALLY 100 PERCENT UNDER VC INFLUENCE OR DOMINANCE. FEW GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED HAMLETS ALONG SOUTHEASTERN AND NORTHERN BOUNDARIES OF ZONE. CROP DESTRUCTION WILL NOT RPT NOT BE PERFORMED IN VICINITY OF HAMLETS.

ZONE D CONSIDERED VC SAFE HAVEN AREA HOUSING NUMEROUS LOGISTIC AND TRAINING INSTALLATIONS AND PROVIDING WAY STATIONS ON INFILTRATION ROUTES SOUTH. VC CROPS GROWN IN ZONE UTILIZED TO FEED PERSONNEL AT THESE INSTALLATIONS AND TRANSIENTS PASSING THROUGH ZONE. LOSS OF CROPS WOULD SERIOUSLY DISRUPT VC OPERATIONS IN AREA AND MIGHT FORCE VC OUT OF AREA TO SEEK FOOD. FRIENDLY FOOD CONTROL PROGRAM IN AREA DESIGNED TO FORCE VC UNITS INTO OPEN WHERE THEY CAN BE ENGAGED BY GOVERNMENT FORCES. EACH REQUEST FOR CROP DESTRUCTION WOULD BE HANDLED ON INDIVIDUAL BASIS, EXERCISING GREATEST CARE TO ENSURE SUITABILITY OF TARGET. IN ADDITION, FULL ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO REQUIREMENT THAT APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AND CIVIL AFFAIRS ARRANGEMENTS ARE IMPLEMENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY CROP DESTRUCTION MISSIONS. THESE WILL INCLUDE RESETTLEMENT AND RELIEF OF ANY PERSONS WHO ELECT TO COME OVER TO GOVERNMENT AS RESULT OF OPERATIONS. COMMANDER OF PHUOC BINH THANH SPECIAL ZONE, OF WHICH ZONE D IS A PART, HAS SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO ACCOMPLISH THIS RELIEF AND HAS DEMONSTRATED IN THE PAST GOOD EFFORTS IN THIS AREA. ALL CROP DESTRUCTION MISSIONS WOULD BE MONITORED CLOSELY BY US PERSONNEL.

/CROPS SUCH AS

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CROPS SUCH AS MANIOC ARE GROWN YEAR ROUND IN THIS AREA AND
MANY ARE NOW SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHEMICAL ATTACK. AN EARLY DECISION
ON THIS REQUEST WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

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