

~~TOP SECRET~~

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

CM-1955-72
19 June 1972

~~TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subj: Termination of THUNDERHEAD [C]

1. In view of lack of evidence to the contrary, it must be assumed that the escape attempt which prompted the development of THUNDERHEAD [C] was either not attempted or was unsuccessful. It is possible that renewed air attacks in the Hanoi Area or the warnings provided to the POWs influenced their decision to attempt the escape. In any event, unless there are indications that the escape has taken place in the final hours of THUNDERHEAD [C], it is recommended that CINCPAC be authorized to terminate his recovery operations and that the Director, National Security Agency, be permitted to terminate all THUNDERHEAD [C] support. Termination of recovery operations are planned to be phased over a four-day period to avoid abrupt changes in patterns of activities.

2. It is also necessary to cancel formally the special authorities granted solely for THUNDERHEAD [C] operations

3. Recommend approval of the attached message. the Commander in Chief, Pacific and Director, National Security Agency.

DECLASSIFIED

BY JS

DATE SEPT 11, 1997

T. H. MOORER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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TOP SECRET CONTROL	
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IMMEDIATE

JCS

CINCPAC

DIRNSA

DISTR SPECIAL FOUR COPIES IN SEALED ENVELOP TO DOC&A

~~TOP SECRET~~ SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~

FOR ADMIRAL MCCAIN AND VICE ADMIRAL GAYLER FROM ADMIRAL MOORER

CJCS SENDS

DELIVER DURING WAKING HOURS

SUBJ: TERMINATION OF THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~

REFS: A. CINCPAC 242053Z APR 72 (NOTAL); B. MY MEMO TO VICE
ADMIRAL GAYLER, SUBJ: THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~, DATED 28 APRIL 1972.

J 1. ~~(TS)~~ IT MUST NOW BE CONCLUDED THAT FOR REASONS UNKNOWN
THE ESCAPE ATTEMPT WHICH GENERATED THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~ EITHER DID
NOT OCCUR OR WAS UNSUCCESSFUL.

J 2. ~~(TS)~~ BARRING INDICATIONS THAT THE ESCAPE TAKES PLACE IN
THE FINAL HOURS OF THIS OPERATION, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO
TERMINATE ALL THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~ ACTIVITIES AS INDICATED IN REF A
COMMENCING ON 20 JUNE. IN THE EVENT OF INDICATION THAT THE
ESCAPE HAS TAKEN PLACE, REQUEST ALL THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~ ACTIVITIES
BE CONTINUED UNTIL RECOVERY IS COMPLETE OR IT APPEARS THAT
FURTHER EFFORTS ARE POINTLESS. SPECIAL AUTHORITIES FOR
THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~ ARE CANCELLED EFFECTIVE WITH THE WITHDRAWAL
OF LAST ELEMENTS OF THE RECOVERY FORCE O/A 24 JUNE 1972.

J 3. ~~(S)~~ UNFORTUNATELY, THE REAL PURPOSE OF THUNDERHEAD ~~(S)~~
CANNOT BE DIVULGED TO MOST OF THE PERSONNEL WHO PARTICIPATED

OK for
SECDEF *SM*

COL C.E. SKOEN, USA SOD J3 72602

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IN THE OPERATION. HOWEVER, PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR A JOB WELL DONE IN THIS VITAL HUMANITARIAN TASK. TO CAPTAIN SPENCER, THE OTC, A SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS FOR HIS EXCELLENT SUPERVISION AT THE LOCAL SCENE.

4. (U) WARM REGARDS.

~~YGDS-3~~

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OK for
SECURITY
SPM