

Cable Authorizing Air Strikes On Laos Infiltration Routes

Cablegram from the State Department and the Defense Department to the United States Embassy in Vientiane, Oct. 6, 1964. Copies of the cablegram were sent to the United States Embassies in Saigon and Bangkok and to the commander in chief of Pacific forces. The embassy in Saigon was asked to relay the message to the United States commander in Vietnam.

You are authorized to urge the RLG to begin air attacks against Viet Cong infiltration routes and facilities in the Laos Panhandle by RLAFF T-28 aircraft as soon as possible. Such strikes should be spread out over a period of several weeks, and targets should be limited to those deemed suitable for attack by T-28s and listed Para. 8 Vientiane's 581, excluding Mu Gia pass and any target which Lao will not hit without U.S. air cover or fire support since decision this matter not yet made.

You are further authorized to inform Lao that YANKEE TEAM suppressive fire strikes against certain difficult targets in Panhandle, interspersing with further T-28 strikes, are part of the over-all concept and are to be anticipated later but that such US strikes are not repeat not authorized at this time.

Report soonest proposed schedule of strikes and, upon implementation, all actual commitments of RLG T-28s, including targets attacked, results

achieved, and enemy opposition. Also give us any views in addition to those in Vientiane's 581 as to any targets which are deemed too difficult for RLG air strikes and on which US suppressive strikes desired.

FYI: Highest levels have not authorized YANKEE TEAM strikes at this time against Route 7 targets. Since we wish to avoid the impression that we are taking first step in escalation, we inclined defer decision on Route 7 strikes until we have strong evidence Hanoi's preparation for new attack in PDJ, some of which might come from RLAFF operations over the Route. END FYI.

You may inform RLG, however, that US will fly additional RECCE over Route 7 to keep current on use being made of the Route by the PL and to identify Route 7 targets and air defenses. The subject of possible decision to conduct strikes on Route 7 being given study in Washington.

FYI: Cross border ground operations not repeat not authorized at this time.