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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2012-044, document no. 1
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: December 5, 2014

16 April 1975

CHRONOLOGY

- 27 Feb-3 Mar NVA ABF's and ground probes (later determined to be diversionary) in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces
- 4 Mar NVA cut QL-19 between Pleiku City and Qui Nhon at two spots (one each in Pleiku and Binh Dinh Provinces)
- 5 Mar NVA cut QL-21 between Darlac and Khanh Hoa Provinces on Khanh Hoa side. NVA cut QL-14 between Pleiku City and Ban Me Thuot
- 9 Mar POIC Pleiku began to reduce classified files to one week's holding as precautionary measure
- 10 Mar NVA attacked Ban Me Thuot (POIC BMT was closed December 1974 at suggestion COS)
- 12 Mar NVA captured Ban Me Thuot and was chasing ARVN forces along QL-21 towards Khanh Hoa. ConGen Rep and several other Americans were captured in Ban Me Thuot (also believed captured was). Lesson: get our sensitive locals out of threatened areas early. VNAF dependents began leaving Pleiku by air. NOTE: Since early March the civilian population was nervous due to daily rocket attacks, cut roads, higher prices for essential commodities, extended curfew of 2100 to 0600, availability of electric power only every other day. Attempt by those with money to flee along with influx of frightened population from Kontum added to sense of doom.

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13 Mar POIC Pleiku discussed emergency evacuation planning with ConGen ProvRep and DAO Rep

14 Mar POIC Pleiku arrived in Nha Trang to explain situation in Pleiku and the status of the evacuation planning. COB and POIC Pleiku briefed ConGen on the situation in Pleiku. COB directed Acting POIC Pleiku to reduce classified holdings to one day's holdings immediately.

President THIEU met with MR-2 commander, General PHU, in Phan Rang and ordered PHU to abandon Pleiku and Kontum.

15 Mar

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[redacted] reported Kontum and Pleiku to be abandoned and that all military forces will be leaving not later than 17 March. [redacted] said he tried to contact Case Officer evening 14 March but the phones were out. Lesson: Make sure CO/Agent emergency commo operative and tested, particularly with curfew situation. APOIC notified ProvRep and suggested latter get reading from General PHU. ProvRep unable get to PHU and saw Chief of Staff who said MR-2 can no longer guarantee safety of Americans and urged all Americans to leave Kontum and Pleiku immediately. This message passed to ConGen Nha Trang on our classified circuit. ConGen and COB discussed situation in terms of two issues: validity of intelligence and safety of Americans. Although we were unable to confirm the intel, we decided to recommend to Saigon the immediate evacuation of Americans on the premise we could always go back. The Ban Me Thuot experience was very much with us. Saigon agreed. By 1800 hours all Americans in Kontum and Pleiku, plus a substantial portion of the local staff, were evacuated by air to Nha Trang. APOIC, [redacted] [redacted] came out on the first

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plane; commo officer [redacted] [redacted] came out on the second plane with classified commo gear. All classified files and materials were destroyed and all small valuables were moved out earlier to Nha Trang. The remaining local staff were told to use our vehicles to evacuate should it be necessary. Later, some of our Pleiku locals showed up in Nha Trang after travelling down LTL-7B and turned in our vehicles. Lessons: Advance intel from proven sources vital; reduce local staff early and make provision for their evacuation, which includes their dependents; prepare ProvRep and ConGen in advance re probability of evacuation.

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16 Mar

Attempts to evacuate DGTS personnel from Pleiku had only limited success due chaotic conditions in Pleiku. Station-designated aircraft brought out only few DGTS personnel among two plane loads of ARVN dependents and others. Soldiers and civilians began to flee the city.

17 Mar

Pleiku airfield closed to fix wing aircraft - all further attempts to evacuate DGTS personnel closed. [redacted] returned to Saigon.

Thousands of civilians and military were retreating in a disorderly fashion down Route 14 to LTL-7B through Phu Bon towards Phu Yen.

18 Mar

COB decided to thin out personnel. On 15 March Base was responsible for [redacted]

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20 Mar

Very little effective GVN military forces were available for defense of MR-2.

[redacted] left on FVT, was told to hold in Saigon, reducing Base to [redacted]

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- 22 Mar Khanh Duong in western Khanh Hoa fell to the NVA. MR-2 decided to abandon northern and western districts of Binh Dinh.
- 23 Mar ConGen decided to thin out dependents.
- 24 Mar NVA overran Cung Son town, Phu Yen, and eliminated the Ranger blocking force at the rear of the retreating column. [redacted] left for Saigon.
- ConGen approved FSL dependents to leave by air, plus FSLs who wished to resign.
- 25 Mar [redacted] left for Saigon, reducing Base to [redacted]
- 26 Mar Refugees and unruly troops from Pleiku and Kontum reached Nha Trang, which was already hosting large number of refugees from Darlac. NVA attacked Binh Khe in attempt to open road to Qui Nhon.
- All POICdoms instructed to reduce files to one day's useage and thin out personnel to one chopper load and be prepared to leave on one hour's notice. POIC, Qui Nhon arrived in Nha Trang to discuss evacuation.
- 27 Mar [redacted] departed to Saigon. [redacted] left on FVT, reducing Base to [redacted]
- COB ordered POICs Qui Nhon and Tuy Hoa to return to Nha Trang and begin shuttle coverage. Following action taken at Tuy Hoa: all files destroyed, all valuables taken to Nha Trang, all but five local staff moved to Nha Trang by jeep and 3/4

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ton trucks and hired transportation. ProvRep took over compound for his own use and our shuttle coverage. Following action taken in Qui Nhon: all files destroyed. Except for five, all local staff, plus dependents, (77) departed Qui Nhon by six vehicles for Nha Trang. One sedan was given to Province Chief. SSB and two portamobiles were given to ProvRep. Weapons given to SB. All ops gear and valuables sent out week earlier to Nha Trang.

28 Mar

ARVN 22nd Division reportedly could no longer hold. ConGen ordered ProvRep Qui Nhon to begin evacuation so COB decided against shuttle to Qui Nhon and instructed our five local staff to come out with ProvRep.

[redacted] made shuttle run to Tuy Hoa.

Many of the FSLs spent time out of the office to evacuate their dependents. Guards wanted to leave. Base terminated many FSLs from closed POICdoms.

[redacted] arrived in Nha Trang as evacuees from Danang. All of them, plus Base personnel [redacted]

[redacted] departed for Saigon, reducing Base to 18.

Danang evacuees [redacted] arrived and were moved to Saigon.

29 Mar

[redacted] departed for Saigon, reducing Base to 16 and zero dependents. COB moved into ConGen compound to sleep because of 2000 hour curfew. Other Base personnel shifted to fewer locations. Early morning Tuy

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Hoa came under rocket attack. ConGen ordered ProvRep to evacuate. [] went in with chopper to evacuate ProvRep and our remaining local personnel (some of whom came out with our Pinto).

Saigon officers [] arrived for attempted water drop op to evacuees in Danang harbor. Moved HHE and official cargo by C-47 to Saigon.

30 Mar

NVA broke through airborne brigade at M'Drak Pass in Khanh Hoa.

COB ordered thin out of Phan Thiet. [] took [], plus compromising local personnel files to Saigon. C-47 sponsored by ConGen took out most of the FSLs and dependents to Saigon, leaving [] one TCN and five locals.

Saigon officers [] plus Base officers [] left for Saigon. Base reduced to 13.

[] spent day in Cam Ranh helping the move of Danang personnel to Saigon.

31 Mar

NVA by-passed airborne, which was retreating toward Duc My.

[] spent day in Cam Ranh helping the move of Danang personnel, including COB [] to Saigon.

ConGen ordered evacuation of Phan Thiet by chopper to Saigon and requested COB to handle, as all his personnel were busy attempting to evacuate ProvReps from remaining provinces in MR-2. [] one TCN and locals were moved to Saigon. [] departed for Saigon, reducing Base to []

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ConGen decided to move out all Americans from Nha Trang save for a small hard core on 1 April. COB ordered traffic to be handled on a read and burn basis. All classified files were destroyed. Weapons and C-rations were placed in the ConGen. Survival kits were placed in the boats.

1 Apr

0800 hours - [redacted] left by car for airport. They departed by air for Saigon at 1030, reducing Base to five.

0930 hours - Crowd began to swell around Consulate.

1000 hours - several carloads of Americans moved to airport; were stopped three times before they made it. ConGen ordered chopper lift from ConGen to airport.

1015 hours - S-2 advised COB that NVA had broken through and was near Duc My; all ARVN troops at Duc My were fleeing towards Dien Khanh.

1045 hours - Khanh Hoa Province Chief called ConGen to say Nha Trang was out of control.

1100 hours - ConGen ordered complete evacuation.

1117 hours - COB ordered commo to close down and destroy (used nitrate drums) classified gear and files. COB decided not try take out three KW-7's (around 90 lbs each), as it would deprive at least two persons of chopper ride out.

1145 hours - [redacted] Marine and [redacted] were ready to leave. ConGen requested all four to leave by chopper to airport. [redacted] took out all

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remaining piasters and dollars. []
had spent most of the morning paying off
terminating FSLs.

1215 hours - [] Marine
and [] departed by air for Saigon.
[] who was detailed to ConGen
to act as liaison with airport security,
was ordered off airfield by airport
authorities at gate and returned to
ConGen. He later choppered to airport
and arrived Saigon with Marines around
1900 hours.

NOTE: Later reporting showed city was
out of control as a result of desertion
by MR-2 staff around 1100 hours and
desertion of MR-2 commander around 1200
hours. Looting and panic began around
1030 hours.

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