

INFORMATION

40

Pres file

~~SECRET~~--MARIA THREE

Thursday, February 8, 1968
6:10 p. m.

Mr. President:

Herewith a Soviet official in Hanoi and an official of the Hanoi government put out their line to the French. They both say:

-- The offensive was designed to weaken the U. S. negotiating position; and

-- The fighting will go on for some time.

You will be interested in the Soviet observation on our possible use of tactical nuclear weapons (page 2).

In general, I take this line to be their fall back position if the attack on the cities failed to achieve decisive results.

W. W. Rostow

Paris 10089
Paris 10084

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-206
By Ct, NARA Date 11-3-97



Department of State

40a
TELEGRAM

PP RUEHC
DE RUFNCR 1209Z 239155Z
ZNY SSSSS
P 281517Z FEB 68
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9285
STATE GRNC
BT
~~SECRET~~ PARIS 10089

~~SECRET~~

2 5 3 9 Q
1968 feb 8 PM 2:05P

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-196
By us, NARA Date 7-3-97

1. *Redlow*
2. *Jordan*

NODIS MARIA THREE

SUBJ: DEQUIRIELLE CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET DIPLOMAT

DEQUIRIELLE SENT FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM HANOI DATED FEB. 6:

"MY SOVIET COLLEAGUE, IN THE COURSE OF AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATIONS ON THE NEW CHARACTER OF THE WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM IMPOSED BY THE FRONT.

"ACCORDING TO HIM, THE FLN HAD BEEN LED TO ATTACK THE URBAN CENTERS IN ORDER TO CONTRADICT THE CLAIMS OF THE AMERICAN COMMAND AND THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION, AS WELL AS THE STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON THAT THE PACIFICATION WAS SPREADING AND THAT THE SAIGON REGIME WAS CONSOLIDATING AND ENLARGING ITS BASE. THE FRONT WISHED TO PROVE TO ITS ADVERSARIES THAT THE SITUATION WAS FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT AND THAT THEIR CALCULATIONS WERE ERRONEOUS. FOR MR TCHERBAKOV THERE WAS THEREFORE NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL FOR NEGOTIATIONS FORMULATED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE UNLEASHING OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH. HE VIEWS THE TWO ACTIONS AS COMPLIMENTARY, THE COMBINED EFFECT OF WHICH SHOULD END IN A NEGOTIATED PEACE SETTLEMENT.

"HE DISPLAYED, HOWEVER, A 'MODERATE OPTIMISM' WHICH ARE HIS OWN WORDS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HE ADMITS THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH STRENGTHENS THE ARGUMENTS OF THE "HAWKS" IN WASHINGTON. HE CONSIDERS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON TO RUN THE RISK OF A NEGOTIATION WHICH WOULD NOT END WITHIN THE ELECTORAL PERIOD. HE DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF REPRISALS ON NORTH VIETNAM AND MORE PARTICULARLY ON THE CAPITAL, BUT HE TOLD ME THAT THAT WOULD BE A GRAVE ERROR ON THE PART OF THE AMERICANS WHICH WOULD DO NO MORE THAN PROLONG AND MAKE STILL MORE BLOODY THE CONFLICT WITHOUT A POSITIVE RESULT FOR THEM.

~~SECRET~~

-2- PARIS 10089 8 February 1968,

"I ASKED HIM IF HE THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT THE ADVERSARY WOULD USE THE TACTICAL ATOMIC WEAPON, IN CASE THE AMERICANS FIND THEMSELVES IN A CRITICAL SITUATION. MR TCHERBAKOV, HAVING TOLD ME THAT THIS EVENTUALITY COULD NOT BE RULED OUT, I ASKED HIM WHETHER THE USSR WOULD IN SUCH A CASE GIVE VIETNAM THE MEANS TO RETORT EFFICACIOUSLY. HE ANSWERED ME, "PERHAPS", BUT HE IMMEDIATELY ADDED THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN PUT ON GUARD AGAINST THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH AN ACTION.

"MR TCHERBAKOV THINKS THAT SEVERAL MORE MONTHS OF BITTER FIGHTING WILL STILL BE NECESSARY TO CONVINCE THE UNITED STATES OF THE USELESSNESS OF THIS STRUGGLE. HE DOES NOT THINK THAT A SOLUTION CAN REASONABLY BE ENVISAGED BEFORE THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER.

"ADDITIONALLY, HE SPOKE OF SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE STATUS OF VIETNAM. HE THINKS THAT IF THE HANOI AUTHORITIES SHOW THEMSELVES TO BE INTRACTABLE REGARDING THE CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS THEY WILL SHOW PROOF OF MUCH MORE FLEXIBILITY WHEN THE RIGHTS OF THEIR COUNTRY WILL HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED; THEY WOULD BE DISPOSED TO ACCEPT A STATUS OF NEUTRALITY APPLICABLE BOTH TO THE NORTH AS WELL AS TO THE SOUTH, AND ALTHOUGH WHOLLY A MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST CAMP, THEY WOULD NOT TIE THEMSELVES TO IT BY A MILITARY ALLIANCE. HE DREW MY ATTENTION IN PASSING TO THE FACT THAT THE RDVN AS OPPOSED TO NORTH KOREA HAD NOT CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT FOR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE WITH WITH THE USSR OR WITH CHINA.

"ALL DURING OUR CONVERSATION MR TCHERBAKOV EXPRESSED HIMSELF IN A SUBTLE FASHION. HE JUSTIFIED THE VIETNAMESE ACTION BY ARGUMENTS SIMILAR TO THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN FURNISHED TO ME AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BUT HE DID NOT FORMALLY APPROVE IT."

GP-1 BOWLEN
BT



Department of State

TELEGRAM

#6

40-8

~~SECRET~~

CONTROL: 2478Q
RECD: FEBRUARY 8, 1968
10:23 A.M.

PP RUEHC
DE RUFNCR 10084 0391430
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 081400Z FEB 68
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9282
STATE GRNC
BT

~~SECRET~~ PARIS 10084

NODIS MARIA THREE

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-196

By us, NARA Date 9-3-97

1. Rastow
2. Jordan
3. Lab. Blo

SUBJECT: DEQUIRIELLE REPORT ON CONVERSATION WITH HANOI OFFICIAL

DEQUIRIELLE SENT FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM HANOI DATED FEB. 6:

"MR. HA, WHOM I MET FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE START OF THE GENERAL INTENSIVE FLIGHT IN THE SOUTH, GAVE ME AN EXPOSE OF THE SITUATION.

"HE TOLD ME FIRST OF ALL THAT THE EVENTS IN THE SOUTH, CONTRARY TO CERTAIN WESTERN INTERPRETATIONS, CHANGED NOTHING WITH RESPECT TO

PAGE 2 RUFNCR 10084 ~~SECRET~~

"THE JUST POSITION OF VIETNAM AS IT HAD BEEN DEFINED BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN HIS DECLARATIONS OF JAN. 28 AND DEC. 29, QOYU". THESE STATEMENTS CONFIRM AND CLARIFY AN ARTICLE IN 'CHAN-DAN' DATED FEB. 5 REPROACHING THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT FOR STICKING TO THE SO-CALLED 'SAN ANTONIO' FORMULA AND 'REFUSING TO DIRECT ITSELF TOWARDS THE LIGHT WHICH SHINES AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.'

"MY INTERLOCUTOR THEREUPON ASSERTED THAT THE DECISION OF THE FRONT TO ATTACK HAD BEEN PROVOKED BY THE CANCELLATION OF THE TRUCE BY THE OTHER SIDE AND THE NECESSITY TO CHASTISE THE AGRESSORS WHO TRAMPLED UPON THE CUSTOMS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THE LACK OF CONVICTION WITH WHICH HE PRESENTED THESE ARGUMENTS TO ME SHOWED THAT HE HARDLY HOPED TO CONVINCE ME.

"HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN THIS PHASE OF THE FIGHTING THE FRONT DID NOT SEEK AS A FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE TO CONQUER AND TO OCCUPY THE URBAN AREAS BUT RATHER TO GET THEM AWAY FROM THE CONTROL OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION BY DEPRIVING THE LATTER OF ALL MEANS OF ACTION. HE EMPHASIZED IN EFFECT THE DECOMPOSITION OF THE 'PUPPET' ARMY, THE PARTICIPATION OF NUMEROUS

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-2- PARIS 10084, FEBRUARY 8 (NODIS/MARIA)

PAGE 3 RUFNCR 10084 ~~SECRET~~

UNITS OF THESE TROOPS ALONG SIDE OF THE FRONT IN THE FIGHTING, THE INVITATION MADE TO THE TROOPS WHO WISHED TO REMAIN NEUTRAL TO PUT THEMSELVES IN CONTACT WITH THE NFL COMMAND TO WORK OUT THEIR STATUS. THE FIGHT WAS LED BY THE 'REVOLUTIONARY FORCES' COMPOSED OF UNITS OF THE FRONT AND OF OTHER GROUPS WHO ARE TAKING PART SPONTANEOUSLY IN THE FIGHT.

"HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD NO SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL AND PACIFIC FORCES AT SAIGON AND THE FRONT FOR NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE AND PEACE AT HUE THE APPEALS OF WHICH HAD BEEN REPRODUCED IN THE VIETNAMESE PRESS. WHEN I ASKED HIM IF THESE TWO ORGANIZATIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY BE ASSOCIATED IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT, HE TOOK A RESERVED POSITION. FOR THE MOMENT, HE TOLD ME, IT IS A QUESTION FIRST OF ALL OF MOBILIZING IN THE STRUGGLE ALL PATRIOTIC AND ANTI-AMERICAN ELEMENTS. THE FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT IS SOMETHING FOR THE LONGER RUN. THE FORMATION WILL LEAN UPON THE POPULAR MOVEMENTS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY SPRINGING UP. WITHOUT RULING OUT THE RISK OF AMERICAN REPRISALS AGAINST THE NORTH, MY INTERLOCUTOR CONSIDERED THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED. THE AMERICAN CAPABILITIES WERE NOT INFINITE, SINCE THE PROXIMITY OF THE

PAGE 4 RUFNCR 10084 ~~SECRET~~

ELECTIONS PARALYZED THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION. FURTHERMORE, THIS WAS ONLY A SECONDARY ASPECT OF THE QUESTION BECAUSE INTENSIFICATION OF BOMBARDMENTS WOULD NOT AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFLICT. IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE THE AMERICANS UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR 'INSOLENT' PRETENSIONS WERE UNACCEPTABLE AND WOULD ONLY LEAD THEM INTO AN IMPASSE.

"THAT WAS THE BASIC REASON BY THE FRONT HAD TO TAKE ACTION.

"IN CONCLUSION, MR. HA RECALLED WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD TOLD ME SOME DAYS AGO THAT THE FIGHTING WOULD BE EVEN MORE VIOLENT IN 1968 THAN DURING THE PRECEDING YEARS. THE FACTS CONFIRMED THIS PREDICTION. ON ACCOUNT OF THE AMERICAN OBSTINANCY, ONE SHOULD EXPECT THAT THE FIGHTING WILL GO ON STILL FOR MANY MONTHS."

GP-1. BOHLEN

BT

~~SECRET~~

Pres file

41

Thursday, Feb. 8, 1968
6:10 p. m.

Mr. President:

This is the first piece of evidence directly associating the North Koreans with a diversionary movement on behalf of North Viet Nam.

W. W. Rostow

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ attachment



1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-199
By is, NARA Date 8-19-98

41a

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Intelligence Information Cable

ROUTINE

IN 46473

PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

STATE/INR	DIA	NMCC/MC	(SECDEF	JCS	ARMY	NAVY	AIR)	CIA/NMCC	INIC	NSA	SDO	ONE	CRS
EXO		DDI						OER	FBI	DCS	IRS	AID	USIA

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~~GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification~~

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

080934Z

CITE: [REDACTED]

DIST 8 FEBRUARY 1968

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

COUNTRY NORTH KOREA

DCI LATE OCTOBER 1967

SUCD [REDACTED] IN OCTOBER 1967

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

[REDACTED] THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERTAKE A DIVERSIONARY ACTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE

ACQ [REDACTED]

SOURCE [REDACTED]

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED]

SANTIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-200
By isa, NARA Date 7-10-98

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(Classification) (Dissem controls)

1. DURING [REDACTED] OCTOBER 1967 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NORTH KOREA WAS EXTREMELY CRITICAL OF
THE SOVIET POLICY OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH THE UNITED STATES
AND [REDACTED] THIS POLICY WAS HURTING THE MILITARY EFFORTS OF THE
NORTH VIETNAMESE. [REDACTED] IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR
THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT TO UNDERTAKE SOME SORT OF A
DIVERSIONARY ACTION TO SUPPORT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE.

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

2. THE NORTH KOREAN [REDACTED] OPPOSITION TO THE
SOVIET-PROPOSED WORLD CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST PARTIES [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ON THIS ISSUE THE NORTH KOREANS WERE IN AGREEMENT WITH
THE CHINESE.

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

3. [REDACTED] DISSEM: CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC STATE ARMATT
NAVATT AIRATT USFJ NSAPAC/J COMNAVJ NISOJ 5AF 6499SG 500MIG USARJ
DC46/OSI DET4/FTD [REDACTED]
REPORT CLASS ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ [REDACTED]

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

INFORMATION

42

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
6:05 p. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith an extraordinarily interesting summary from Ellsworth Bunker. Thus far plusses greater than minuses, although we are not out of the woods.

W. W. Rostow

Saigon 18582

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By Ng, NARA, Date 12/92

Thursday, February 8, 1968

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM BUNKER (Saigon 18582)

Herewith my Thirty-Eighth Weekly Telegram:

A. General

Because of the emergency situation caused by the Viet Cong Tet attacks, my last report was sent to you on February 4, just four days ago. Nevertheless, I think enough has happened in the meantime to justify a short report at this time. As more facts concerning the massive Tet offensive of the enemy comes to light and the story unfolds, a number of things become evident. Information is being steadily accumulated as reports come in from the country and Saigon. Consequently, what were somewhat tentative assumptions a few days ago begin to take more definite shape.

It seems fairly clear now that:

A. Plans for the offensive were worked out long in advance and with meticulous care. Instances have come to light in which enemy units were infiltrators disguised as civilians to reconnoiter targets, withdrawn, and re-infiltrated again as civilians immediately before the attack.

B. Commitment of enemy troops was considerably larger than the estimate I reported in my last message. Estimates now are that 52,000 enemy troops, plus another possible 10,000 guerrillas, for a total of approximately 62,000 enemy forces, were committed to these widespread attacks.

C. The enemy believed that there would be uprisings in their support and that they would be able to take over many of the cities. This is supported by captured documents and prisoner interrogations which indicated that enemy troops were told they would find popular support, that there would be defections from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam troops, and that reinforcements would follow. Unlike previous heavy attacks, they had no orders covering possible withdrawal. The tenacity with which the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army have held on to some of the areas they have captured (as in Hue and parts of Saigon) also suggests that the leaders envisaged a seize-and-hold and not a hit-and-run operation. Given the forces available to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, this would not be possible without massive popular and Army of the Republic of Vietnam support. The enemy radio constantly pounded on the theme that the masses were rising to help the Viet Cong, and the government forces were defecting to join with the Communist troops.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 96-196

By us, NARA Date 9-3-97~~SECRET/NODIS~~

A particularly interesting captured document is the order of the day from the headquarters of the South Vietnam Liberation Army to all military forces in South Vietnam. The document has a tone of urgency and calls all enemy troops "to liberate the 14 million people of South Vietnam" and "fulfill our revolutionary task." It refers to the attacks as the greatest battle in Vietnamese history and states that the assaults "will decide the fate and survival of the fatherland". It exhorts the enemy forces "to achieve the final victory at all costs."

D. No popular uprisings took place in any city, nor did the security forces defect to the enemy. Initially, many Vietnamese were frightened and impressed by the enemy's ability to attack on such a wide scale, and their confidence in the ability of their government and the United States to provide security was shaken. Now they have observed that the enemy was not able to stand in the face of our forces but has instead fallen back and has been able to remain in none of the cities he has tried to seize. The reaction consequently has changed from one of apprehension and doubt to anger, indignation, and resentment at the treachery of the enemy's attack during the Tet holidays, at the widespread destruction he has caused, and the terrorist tactics he has employed.

E. The enemy has suffered a major military defeat. He has suffered losses on an unprecedented scale. From the early morning hours of January 31 until midnight of February 7, the enemy lost nearly 25,000 killed in action, nearly 5,000 detainees, more than 5,500 individual and nearly 900 crew-served weapons. These losses are two and one-half times that of any previous month. Although these losses seem extraordinarily high, they are substantiated to a considerable degree by the number of detainees and weapons captured. Friendly losses have been 2,043 killed (703 U. S., 1,303 Army of the Republic of Vietnam, and 37 Free World), less than one-twelfth of the enemy's. General Westmoreland tells me that this estimate of enemy killed in action is computed on a very conservative basis, since neither enemy killed by air strikes nor artillery have been included. This has been a heavy blow for the enemy, particularly as many of the men killed were among the best they had, carefully trained regulars and commandos, many of them from North Vietnam. From a military point of view, he had gained little in return for his heavy expenditure of men and equipment.

F. In inflicting this severe military defeat on the enemy, our forces everywhere turned in a superior performance. A highly encouraging development also was the very commendable performance of Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces. General Westmoreland reports that all the Army of the Republic of Vietnam Division Commanders were on their toes and performed well, as did the Corps Commanders. General Abrams has been visiting the Army of the Republic of Vietnam Divisions. He returned yesterday from the Second Corps with glowing reports of the performance of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam 22nd and 23rd Divisions. The commander of the 23rd Division, with headquarters at Ban Me Thuot, allowed no Tet leave and, anticipating an attack, had deployed his troops outside the city; had he not done this, destruction would have been much greater.

G. Although the enemy has suffered a heavy setback, he still retains the capability of launching a second wave attack in Saigon and in the Third Corps area. Elements of three enemy divisions, the 5th, 7th, and 9th, are in the Third Corps area. In Northern First Corps, in the DMZ, and the Khe Sanh area, he still has four divisions and farther south is threatening to exert pressure on Danang. As I have previously reported, it is Thieu's opinion that the enemy will endeavor to keep up pressure throughout the summer in the First Corps and the central highlands. In my talk with him yesterday, he added the view that in addition to this pressure, he believed the enemy would continue efforts at harassment and infiltration against the cities in order to pin down friendly troops in defense of the populated areas and would also endeavor to recover territory in the countryside, in what he called a "counter-pacification effort".

H. Enemy attacks have resulted in heavy damage in many cities and towns. We do not yet have an accurate count of the number of houses destroyed or refugees created, but we do have enough information to know that there has been very considerable property damage. As of this morning, the refugee count in the Saigon metropolitan area was 93,000 and for the country as a whole about 190,000. Thus far, with 31 provinces out of 50 reporting, even though sketchily, we estimate the number of evacuees (many of whom will return home as soon as fighting subsides) may reach between 250,000 and 300,000. About 15,000 homes are reported destroyed though this figure will undoubtedly increase. Civilian casualties compiled from preliminary figures total almost 800 dead and 7,500 injured, though this also is probably much under the actual total. Some important installations, such as hospitals, radio stations, and power plants, have also been damaged. The Government of Vietnam, however, has taken prompt measures to deal with all these problems through the joint task force, which I mentioned in my last message, and to which I shall refer in some detail later in this report.

It may be argued that the enemy objective was not primarily military, that his military defeat is more than compensated by his political and psychological gains. But I believe clear evidence is emerging that Hanoi expected to take and hold a number of cities. Enemy documents and interrogations clearly suggest that at least middle and lower level cadre and officers thought this was to be the final push to victory. The order of the day of the South Vietnam Liberation Army would lend credence to this view. Some Vietnamese leaders who know the Communists well tell us that they think the Communists expected to take the cities and so end the war. This, in fact, seems to be a fairly general interpretation among our contacts.

As I mentioned in my last message, however, Thieu leans to the theory that the Tet attacks represent an effort to get into a more favorable position for negotiations. He believes that the enemy realizes his strength is ebbing and so took a desperate gamble so they could at least give the impression abroad of great and growing Communist power in South Vietnam.

I think the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. It seems possible that Hanoi would actually expect that the Vietnamese people would in many cases side with the invading forces, either out of fear or because of grievances against their own government. The experience of the Buddhist "struggle" movement in the First

Corps in 1966, when military and police units sometimes sided with the anti-government forces, may have encouraged Hanoi to believe that it was possible to trigger defections from the Government of Vietnam security forces. Thus their maximum objective may have been the occupation of some major urban centers and the collapse of the Government of Vietnam.

But the primary objective of winning the war in one great series of attacks on the cities does not preclude a lesser objective. Hanoi may well have reasoned that in the event that the Tet attacks did not bring the outright victory they hoped for, they could still hope for political and psychological gains of such dimensions that they could come to the negotiating table with a greatly strengthened hand. They may well have estimated that the impact of the Tet attacks would at the very least greatly discourage the United States and cause other countries to put more pressure on us to negotiate on Hanoi's terms.

But I am convinced that there is now a great opportunity not only to frustrate Hanoi's expectations, but to compound the enemy's military defeat by also turning it to political and psychological advantage for the Government of Vietnam. Much depends on the promptness and effectiveness with which the Government of Vietnam acts to return the situation to normal, to set about the task of reconstruction and to care for the victims of the fighting. I have urged on Thieu that this is the psychological moment to assert aggressive, dynamic leadership, to mobilize and energize elements of the government, and to let the people know that he proposes to push ahead with the programs he outlined in his State of the Nation message. I have stressed the importance of capitalizing speedily on the mood of anger and resentment at the Viet Cong treachery at Tet which is sweeping the nation. And I have urged on him the importance of keeping the people informed about the Government of Vietnam's programs to help them; that through frequent brief appearances on radio and TV he should tell the people what is going on and seek their support.

I have also suggested to Thieu that other Cabinet members supervising emergency activities should speak to the people about their programs and that notables in Vietnamese life should be involved in all these activities and should be encouraged to stimulate efforts by the population. I offered our assistance and participation on these information activities in any way that he thought useful, and left him with a memorandum of specific suggestions.

I also suggested to Thieu yesterday he might want to consider broadening the base of his Government by associating with it in some way prominent and influential civilians such as Nguyen Luu Vien, Tran Van Huong, Mai Tho Truyen, Vo Long Trieu, Ha Thuc Ky, Tran Van Tuyen, Phan Quang Dan, Tran Van An, and others. Thieu said that perhaps such individuals could be asked to serve as an advisory council to the government and that he was considering convening a congress of notables, something along the lines of the congress which had been convened in 1966 to promote the movement for elections for a constituent assembly to draft the constitution. He also noted that Ky had gone on television on February 5 to inform the people of the Government of Vietnam's relief and recovery effort and that he himself will address a joint session of both Houses of the Assembly on the morning of February 9.

Our pacification organization has turned itself into a relief operation for the time being. Bob Komer is managing U. S. support of the Government of Vietnam's relief and recovery effort under Vice President Ky and has established a command post in the palace with Ky. A small group of bottleneck-breakers and problem solvers are working there to pull together civil-military operations on both Government of Vietnam and American sides. One basic issue in getting recovery operations into full swing is still unresolved, those in charge of clearing operations, General Vien, Military Governor Khang, Loan, Saigon Mayor Cua and others, are still insisting that tight security measures such as curfews and checkpoints take precedence over relief. Ky and the Government of Vietnam fear a "second wave" assault on Saigon. Continued Viet Cong activity in the Cholon-Phu Tho area lend some credence to their fears. Operating under these restrictions, the emergency committee at the palace is making headway nevertheless. Curfew has been relaxed in Districts 1 and 2 and runs from 1700 to 0700. Government offices and universities will be open; public utilities are operating 24 hours; buses will operate. In effect, except for primary and secondary schools, about everything will be normal during daylight. It is expected that the curfew will be relaxed tomorrow in District 4 and part of District 3. Twenty-seven rice distribution points were opened yesterday. Rice was sold at 20 piasters per kilo with two kilos, a five-day supply, allotted to each member of a family. Revolutionary Development cadre provided security, checked family rosters, talked to people, and helped with distribution. In some areas, students chipped in to help the Revolutionary Development cadre.

One sideline is of interest. The contractor who furnished 50 laborers for the Thu Duc rice run showed up with a written contract asking for payment of laborers' wages only with no portion to himself. Instead, he said he was donating his share to the people of Saigon.

The road situation is improving. The main routes into the city are in good condition. Route 4 to the Delta is now open to military convoys to as far as My Tho. The main problem is to restore security sufficiently so that Army and police checkpoints can be opened to trucks and barges carrying food and produce to the city. When this is done, private enterprise will soon take care of food distribution.

Dr. Que and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Refugees, now pretty well accustomed to emergencies, are doing an excellent job under still difficult conditions. Mobile teams are working with major concentrations of refugees in Saigon and surrounding urban areas. Two thousand five hundred Revolutionary Development cadre arrived in Saigon Monday by LST and two smaller boats from Vung Tau to assist in recovery operations and are reinforcing the Ministry. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Works and their respective ministries have also done excellent work.

In the Fourth Corps, an emergency-recovery committee paralleling the National Committee, began functioning yesterday with U. S. representation. Today the committee intends to survey the three worst hit cities, Ben Tre, Vinh Long, and

My Tho. Throughout the Corps, except in Go Cong and Vinh Binh, where they still hug the cities, the Viet Cong seem to be withdrawing to intermediate areas. Provincial reconnaissance units, broken down into ten-man teams, are attempting to follow Viet Cong units in order to direct air and artillery on them as they withdraw. Ky visited Can Tho yesterday afternoon and explained recovery plans to Corps and provincial officials.

The Third Corps Emergency Recovery Committee is in full operation and emergency needs are being met.

It is a little early to judge the reaction of the people to the efforts of the government. There have been a large number of expressions of willingness to chip in and help and I think various labor and religious groups are heading in the right direction. At the same time, there is also some tendency to blame the government for failing to anticipate and prevent the attacks, and this may grow if vigorous action is not now taken.

Criticism of the government's failure to provide adequate security was voiced in the Senate at its session on February 6, particularly by Dai Viet Senators Nguyen Van Ngai and Senator Pham Nam Sach. Yesterday the Senators were in a calmer and more constructive mood and there was no irresponsible criticism of the Government of Vietnam. The draft resolution approved unanimously by the 43 Senators in attendance denounced the savage actions of the Viet Cong and its treachery in carrying out their preconceived attack during Tet; expresses its concern for the refugees and advocates that assistance and protection be a matter of priority; expresses its gratitude to the armed forces and all those participating in the defense of the nation; applauds the effective contributions of allied forces, especially the armed forces of the United States; and warmly welcomes the movement of unity and cooperation between the people and the authorities for self defense. It urges public agencies to bring unity to fruition in order to continue to defeat the Communists and construct the nation; heighten the vigilance of the people, contribute financial and material resources to help the victims of recent events; severely punish and prevent corrupt elements to take advantage of this situation; develop a movement of groups and people for armed self defense.

Fortunately, both in the Senate and the Lower House, critics of the government are greatly outnumbered by members who are anxious to do whatever is necessary to help the government in the present situation. These include such "oppositionists" as MRS. Leader Ly Quy Chung who is busy spreading the word that the attacks were a great political defeat for the Communists because the populace refused to help them. Also encouraging are strong statements of support from deputies such as Khieu Thien Ke whose latest speech at Danang on February 3 (rebroadcast several times since) is just the sort of thing that is needed.

One of the most encouraging factors of the present situation is the degree of cooperation and better feeling which it has created between President Thieu and Vice President Ky. These two have consistently risen above their personal rivalry

to do what is necessary for the nation. This was true during the Buddhist "struggle" in 1966, in the Cabinet crisis of the same year, in their joint effort to persuade the military to accept the constitution just after the Guam Conference, and in the final decision to run together on one ticket for the sake of military unity. They are doing it again. I have mentioned previously that I believe they have been working together better than at any time since my arrival here last April. I think there is good reason to hope that this present experience will show them the way to work effectively together in the new constitutional framework in the future. At the moment, it is an important factor in the good beginning which has been made in turning the Tet attacks into a political as well as a military defeat for the Communists.

B. Economic

The economic situation in Saigon one week after the beginning of fighting presents us with some serious worries, but as yet these chiefly concern the future, and events have not yet gotten out of hand. Most Saigon families had large food stocks laid in for Tet, and markets would have been closed most of the week in any case. Therefore, there probably have been few really hungry people, at least among those whose homes have not been disrupted.

The civilian economy of Saigon began to revive as early as Thursday and Friday of last week. Beginning with a few items sold at very high prices, food markets started to operate without official sanction, and by Tuesday quite a large variety of fruit, vegetables, fish and meat, and miscellaneous foodstuffs became available in markets in secure parts of town. Prices range from around pre-Tet levels for a few staples evidently still in large supply, such as sugar, to roughly double pre-Tet prices for fresh meat and fish. In Cholon, where security is worse, prices are reported much higher and the population of Cholon may be on the threshold of severe hardship.

No figures are available this week on the Saigon Retail Price Index or the Imported Commodity Index.

C. Chieu Hoi

Because of the emergency, latest figures are not available.

INFORMATION

43

Pres file

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
6:10 p. m.

Mr. President:

A note from Amb. Lodge.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, sec. 1.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1993
NARS, Date 1-5-92
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43a

~~SECRET~~

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE
WASHINGTON

February 8, 1968

TO: The President

FROM: H. C. Lodge

H.C. Lodge

1. I have heard that my views on the desirability of holding Khe Sanh were recently discussed in your presence.

2. So that there may be no misunderstanding, I wish to state that I support the decision to hold Khe Sanh. For many reasons I consider it vital that it be held.

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State ltr 3-6-79
By iphg, NARA, Date 2-3-92

INFORMATION

45

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
5:25 p. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith Ho's order of the day
for the Tet offensive.

I believe he meant every word.

W. W. Rostow

Salgon 18562

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 1-31-92

45a

CONFIDENTIAL

Thursday, February 8, 1968

TEXT OF CABLE FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER (Saigon, 18562)

SUBJECT: COSVN Order for Tet Offensive

The following is the combined documents exploitation center translation of a document captured on February 3 in Tay Ninh Province. The document is a carbon copy of what appears to be the general order from COSVN to its military forces for the Tet offensive.

Begin text:

Headquarters, South Vietnam
Liberation Army

Enclosure
B

Order of the Day
of the Headquarters,
All South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces

To all cadre and combatants,

"Move Forward to Achieve Final Victory"

The Tet greeting of Chairman Ho is actually a combat order for our entire army and population.

And in compliance with the attack order of the Presidium, Central Committee South Vietnam Liberation Front, all cadre and combatants of all South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces should move forward to:

Carry out direct attacks on all the Headquarters of the enemy, to disrupt the US Imperialists' will for aggression and to smash the Puppet Government and Puppet Army, the lackeys of the US. Restore power to the people, completely liberate 14,000,000 people of South Vietnam. fulfill our revolutionary task of establishing democracy throughout the country.

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988
By *AS* NARA, Date 1-31-92

This will be the greatest battle ever fought throughout the history of our country. It will bring forth world-wide change but will also require many sacrifices. It will decide the fate and the survival of our fatherland and will shake the world and cause the most bitter failure to the imperialist ringleaders.

Our country has a history of four thousand years of fighting and defeating foreign aggression, particularly glorious battles such as Bach Dang, Chi Lang, Dong-Da and Dien Bien Phu. We defeated the special war and are defeating the limited war of the Americans. We resolutely move forward to completely defeat the American aggressors in order to restore independence and liberty in our country.

Dear Comrades,

Our liberation armed units have had many achievements in the past. This will be a good opportunity for you to score more brilliant and heroic victories. Through this opportunity, you will be able to make maximum use of your abilities, demonstrate your devotion to the revolution and your unsubdued will to get even for what has been done to our country and brighten our beloved country.

In the name of our fatherland's independence and liberty, Headquarters of all South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces orders every cadre and combatant to:

1. Move forward aggressively to carry out decisive and repeated attacks in order to annihilate as many American, Satellite and Puppet troops as possible in conjunction with political struggles and military proselyting activities. Each cadre and combatant must be doggedly determined to accomplish their combat mission. Each local area must also accomplish its assigned mission.
2. Display to the utmost your revolutionary heroism by surmounting all hardships and difficulties and making sacrifices so as to be able to fight continually and aggressively. Be prepared to smash all enemy counter attacks and maintain your revolutionary standpoint under all circumstances. Be resolute in achieving continuous victories and secure the final victory at all costs.

3. Correctly comply with all combat discipline and the Front policies. Strive to assist and protect the people and motivate them to comply with the Front policies.

It is evident that the American aggressors are losing.

The call for assault to achieve independence and liberty has sounded.

The Truong Son and the Mekong river are moving.

You, comrades should act as heroes of Vietnam and with the spirit and pride of combatants of the Liberation Army.

The final victory will be with us.

- Day - Month 1968

Instruction: This enclosure B will be read to every cadre and combatant prior to departure for attack.

Comment: JUSPAO is processing this document for release February 8 or 9.

ACTION

46

Pres. file

Thursday, February 8, 1968 -- 5:15 p.m.

Mr. President: (via George Christian)

I have been asked to appear on ISSUES AND ANSWERS on Feb. 18.

If you think it would be useful, I will accept.

W. W. Rostow

Accept _____

Regret _____

Call me _____

WWRostow:rla

INFORMATION

Thursday - February 8, 1968 - 2:30pm

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Pres file

SUBJECT: Reported Invitation to President Costa e Silva

Brasillian Deputy Raimondo Padilha, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who was in the United States recently with the Parliamentarian Commission, told the press on his return to Rio that you had invited President Costa e Silva to the United States to discuss mutual problems.

In reporting this, Ambassador Tuthill asks whether you extended such an invitation. What answer should I give?

- I extended invitation _____
- I did not extend invitation _____
- Call me _____

W. W. Rostow

INFORMATION

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

Pres. file

Thursday, February 8, 1968
2:20 p. m.

Mr. President:

This Romanian report from CIA is interesting in three respects.

- 1. It states both the Soviet Union and Communist China are preventing Hanoi from negotiating peace.
- 2. It implies that the Romanian has "counter-proposals from Hanoi."
- 3. It implies that Hanoi in fact wishes to negotiate an end to the war.

DECLASSIFIED
 E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
 NLJ 96-199
 W. W. Rostow By is, NARA Date 8-19-98

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

WWRostow:rla

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

550

48a

Rostow

SANITIZED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLI 96-200

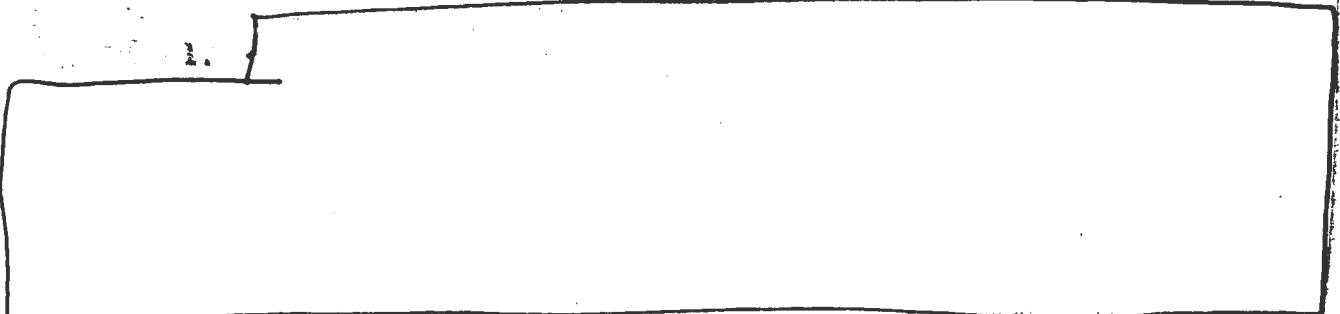
7 February 1968

By us, NARA Date 7-10-98

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
Mr. Walt Rostow
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: Rumanian Efforts to Mediate the
Vietnamese War

1.5 (L)
3.4 (b) (U)



1. [Redacted]

2. Several unofficial Rumanian delegations dispatched to Hanoi in the last half of 1967 for the purpose of mediating the Vietnam conflict established that the North Vietnamese wanted an end to the war but that the pressures exerted on them by the Soviet Union and China prevented them from acting independently. Although the pressures and interests of the Soviets are different from those of the Chinese, both countries nevertheless are pushing North Vietnam into continuing the conflict.

3. The Rumanian Communist Party leadership continues to maintain its position of supporting North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front and of extending material help to them in the current conflict. The Rumanian delegations have tried, however, to convince the Hanoi government that the continuation of the conflict is only in the interests of others and in no way in the interests of the Vietnamese people. Rumanian officials pointed out to the Vietnamese leadership that Hanoi's main objective should be the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam rather than an effort to obtain everything at once.

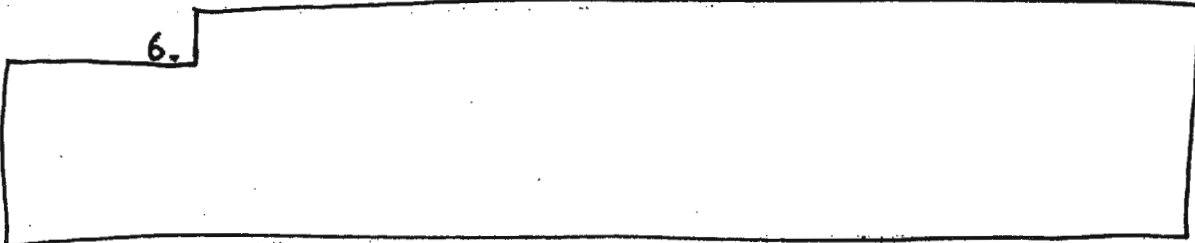
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4. The Rumanian Party leadership, aware of the North Vietnamese desire for an end to the conflict, decided to undertake some action which would be instrumental in stopping the bombing of North Vietnam and of starting negotiations. If negotiations took place, Hanoi would express its desire for American compensation for the damage done to North Vietnam in order to rebuild the country. Nicolae Ceausescu is personally leading these attempts at mediation, and everything possible will be done by the Rumanian side to persuade the United States to stop the bombing and to convince the North Vietnamese that they should accept negotiations.

5. For this purpose, Gheorghe Macoveescu, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, travelled to Washington in January 1968 and returned with proposals regarded by the Rumanian Party leadership as encouraging. Macoveescu was then sent to Hanoi, and he may soon travel again to Washington with proposals and counter-proposals from Hanoi.

6.



1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

/s/ Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

SECRET/SENSITIVE

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
2:15 p.m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith Gen. Westmoreland explains why he believes the enemy casualty figures are accurate.

W. W. Rostow

mac 01754

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rlm

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(h)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By MS, NARA, Date 1-31-92

RECEIVED
WHCA

~~EYES ONLY SECRET~~

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OO YEKADS
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FM GENERAL WHEELER, CJCS, WASH DC
INFO MR HELMS, CIA
MR RUSK, STATE DEPT, WASH DC
MR ROSTOW, WHITE HOUSE. WASH DC
GEN JOHNSON, CSA, WASH DC
GEN MCCONNELL, CSAF, WASH DC
ADM MOORER, CNO, WASH DC
ZEM/GEN CHAPMAN, CMC, WASH DC
O 072350Z ZYH ZFF3
FM GEN WESTMORELAND

~~TOP SECRET~~
JORDEN

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS/CBS 7

By is, NARS, Date 7-25-83

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS
ADM SHARP CINCPAC
ZEM

Rostow

~~SECRET~~ MAC 01754 EYES ONLY

1. THE HIGH ENEMY CASUALTY FIGURES HAVE CAUSED A GOOD DEAL OF CONSTERNATION OUT HERE TOO. I TOO HAD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THEM AT FIRST, BUT AS THE FACTS OF THE GENERAL SITUATION AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS COME IN, THE KIA FIGURES LOOK REASONABLE. THE ENEMY COMMITTED VIRTUALLY EVERY VC UNIT IN THE COUNTRY REGARDLESS OF COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS AND REGARDLESS OF NORMAL AREA OF OPERATIONS. THEY WERE COMMITTED WITH DC-OR-DIE ORDERS, FORBIDDEN TO RETREAT, AND WITH NO WITHDRAWAL OR RALLYING PLANS. THE ENEMY ATTACKS MIGHT BE DESCRIBED AS A COUNTRY-WIDE SERIES OF "LOC NINHS". THE VERY

HIGH CASUALTIES ARE NOT STRANGE IN THIS LIGHT.

2. WE CANNOT, OF COURSE, PROVIDE A VERY PRECISE BREAKDOWN OF CASUALTIES BY TYPE OF ENEMY FORCE. IT APPEARS NOW THAT BY FAR THE BULK OF THE ENEMY DEAD ARE FROM VC MAIN AND LOCAL FORCES OR NVA TROOPS COMMITTED IN I AND II CTZ'S. EVIDENCE TO DATE DOES NOT INDICATE THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF GUERRILLAS WERE USED. WE HAVE INFORMATION OF MANY NEW AND VERY YOUNG RECRUITS IN THE COMMITTED FORCES, BUT NO REPORT THIS FAR OF A POW WHO IS A GUERRILLA. I DO NOT DOUBT THAT SOME OF THE ENEMY CASUALTIES WERE GUERRILLAS, PORTERS, AND SUCH, BUT THE PERCENTAGE WILL PROBABLY BE SMALL.

3. THE ENEMY OBVIOUSLY BANKED HEAVILY ON SURPRISE IN HIS TET OFFENSIVE. THIS MAY ACCOUNT FOR MINIMAL PARTICIPATION BY GUERRILLAS. HE MAY NOT HAVE WISHED TO DISSEMINATE PLANS AS BROADLY AS LARGE SCALE PREPARATION OF GUERRILLA FORCES AND PORTERS WOULD REQUIRE.

4. YOUR JCS 01463 FEB 63 ON POSSIBLE USE OF NVN AIR IN DMZ HAS BEEN RECEIVED.

UP-3

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS

~~EYES ONLY SECRET~~

INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
2:05 p. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

I believe you will wish to read the full text of this careful and somewhat ominous account of Communist preparations for the attack on Khe Sanh.

I recommend that you ask Gen. Wheeler for a JCS assessment of its accuracy and implications.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-199
By isa, NARA Date 8-19-98

Cy 3, SC No. 01244/68
Intelligence Memorandum "Construction and Logistic Activities in the Khe Sanh Area."

WWRostow:rla

INFORMATION

51

~~TOP SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
2:00 p. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith a supplementary from
Gen. Wheeler on Khe Sanh.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~

WWRostow:rlm

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By My, NARA, Date 1-31-92



~~TOP SECRET~~

5/a

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

CM-2972-68
8 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Situation in the Khe Sanh Area

You have received General Westmoreland's fourth report on the Khe Sanh area, covering the period through 11:00 PM EST, 7 February 1968. I have received additional information from General Westmoreland and Admiral Sharp which is reported in the succeeding paragraphs.

General Westmoreland informed me that he has issued instructions to General Weyand (Commanding General, II Field Force.) to arrange for a US unit to be brought into the race track area of Saigon. This will release Vietnamese troops to put more pressure on enemy elements in the city. Although General Westmoreland is reluctant to take this step, he feels that it is essential to push ARVN to greater action to clean up Saigon. Additionally, as I told you yesterday, he plans to move a battalion of the 101st Airborne Division to Hue/Phu Bai. Also, a Vietnamese Marine Battalion will be moved to Hue/Phu Bai to replace one of the depleted Vietnamese airborne battalions in that area. He indicates that he may follow these deployments with two more Vietnamese Marine Battalions into that area.

You may be interested to know that, yesterday, as a result of an ambush of an enemy party by US forces west of Saigon, a North Vietnamese passport containing a Cambodian visa, stamped Phnom Penh, and a baggage claim check from Phnom Penh, were taken from one of the bodies. The party had a sophisticated radio, believed to be single sideband. It was reported that this appeared to be a most important group.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority J. S. Motta 10-3-78

By ep/ry, NARA, Date 2-3-92

1 of 1 copies

~~TOP SECRET~~

Regarding the North Vietnamese air threat, Admiral Sharp has assured me that all concerned have been watching this activity closely and that all forces have been alerted to this potential threat. In this regard, air strikes are being conducted daily at Vinh and Bai Thuong airfields to preclude their being used as forward staging bases for MIG operations. These airfields are being seeded with 500 pound bombs with influence fuzes (Mark 36s) as necessary to harass and disrupt repair operations. Additionally, fighter cover is being provided for B-52s operating in the DMZ and Mu Gia Pass areas. A full report on the air threat will be provided separately as requested by you.

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

~~TOP SECRET~~

52

ACTION

SECRET

Pres file

**Thursday, February 8, 1968
1:55 p.m.**

Mr. President:

Here are the 8 questions that Gen. Taylor has set out as the basis for the discussion you want organized today.

**You may wish to set a time _____;
indicate those you wish to attend the discussion:**

W. W. Rostow

~~**SECRET**~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By kg, NARA, Date 13192-

SECRET

February 8, 1968

Questions Related to the Military Situation in Viet-Nam

1. What are the problems confronting General Westmoreland if the enemy continues the attacks on the cities and, at the same time, opens up one or more border fronts (e.g., Khe Sanh, DMZ, Darlac-Kontum)?

a. What mobile reserve forces does Westmoreland have to meet these frontier attacks? Can he sustain them concurrently in action? In particular, will he have enough airlift to support and supply all of the actions?

b. With respect to Khe Sanh, what will be the supply problem if the airstrip is kept under artillery and rocket fire?

2. How have the Marines organized Khe Sanh for defense? How many days of supply, particularly ammunition, are in the perimeter? Are these supplies protected from enemy fire?

3. How is weather likely to effect the action along the border? When does it favor us, when the enemy?

4. What is the enemy air capability if he elects to use his IL-28's, MIG's and AN-2's in South Viet-Nam or against U.S. naval targets? Are there any other surprise weapons with which we should be concerned?

5. If we decided to send additional forces to Viet-Nam, what ones are available? How soon could they be deployed and become operational in South Viet-Nam? What would be the effect on our strategic readiness world-wide?

6. In case of an affirmative decision to reinforce, what actions should be taken with regard to extension of tours and terms of service, call-up of reservists, and requests of Congress? Should we reconsider the question of a declaration of war?

7. What would be the domestic and international impact of the foregoing actions?

8. In the light of the foregoing considerations and our estimate of the probable course of events during the next few months, are we satisfied with the military resources presently available in Southeast Asia or should we make a drastic effort to rush additional forces to the area?

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED
Authority OSD ltr 10-25-78 NSC 12 8-1480
By ip/rs, NARA, Date 2092

Thursday, Feb. 8, 1968
11:15 a. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Bob Ginsburgh made available to me this staff memorandum of General DePuy's bearing on the question you raised with me this morning, and which I am discussing with Gen. Wheeler. You may wish to read it.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachment

53a



THE JOINT STAFF

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

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR
COUNTERINSURGENCY AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

7 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Through: Director, Joint Staff

Subject: "The Meaning of the Communist Offensive
in Vietnam"

1. There is much speculation concerning the purpose and the strategy behind the current enemy offensive in Vietnam. Captured documents, prisoner statements and Hanoi announcements seem to speak rather clearly on this point.

2. The enemy says that he wants a coalition government and an end to the war. He wants the coalition government to be under the leadership of the NLF.

3. The enemy has said that the Thieu/Ky clique have never been, and can never be, a government. Therefore, the coalition he has in mind is obviously not between the NLF and the GVN. He seems to visualize a coalition between the NLF and other "patriotic" elements in South Vietnam. He no doubt has in mind the militant Buddhists, the students, the intellectuals and so much of the population as he may be able to scrape together under the so-called Alliance of National and Peace Forces Committees.

4. His main problem is that the GVN and its Army stand in his way and are not only unacceptable to him but are also implacable and irreconcilable enemies.

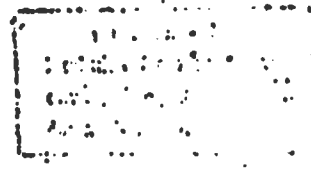
5. Thus, if he is to end the war by establishing a coalition which then sues for peace and for American withdrawal he must destroy the GVN. In order to destroy the GVN he must either achieve a popular uprising against it or wear it down quickly, particularly its army, until it has lost confidence in itself, and the people in it.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MLG/CBS 6

By ics/ry, NARA, Date 2-5-92

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

6. He has sent his VC main, local and guerrilla forces against the structure of the government at every level simultaneously. He has told his combat units to persevere in their attacks and they may or may not be able to do so. In the meanwhile, he has held off his North Vietnamese forces with minor exceptions (20 percent) to keep U.S. forces dispersed or engaged. He must believe that his VC forces with some NVA gap fillers have the capability of grinding down the RVNAF and destroying the governmental mechanism.

7. By the most optimistic estimate the VC have lost about 20,000 out of 140,000 armed men. Another 75,000 irregulars which recently were written out of the order of battle may be available to him as reserves and replacements.

8. If he is able to do exactly what he says he will do we can expect that this first phase of attacks will continue (perhaps with ups and downs in intensity) for as long as it takes to enervate the government and the RVNAF. Signs of enervation are now emerging in the I Corps area near Hue. If U.S. forces seem to be upsetting these plans in a decisive way he can intensify his squeeze at Khe Sanh and commit 9 North Vietnamese Divisions which are not now heavily committed and in some cases not committed at all.

9. Within the next few days and in order to draw off U.S. forces so that his attrition battle can go on against the government, we should expect to see increased NVA action at Gio Linh, Conthien, Khe Sanh, Dak To, Kontum, Danang, Tam Ky/Chu Lai/Quang Ngai (or all three), Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang and somewhere north of Saigon by the 7th NVA Division.

10. The critical areas to be watched continue to be:

a. Effectiveness of the RVNAF.

b. The state of provinces and districts and the autonomous cities - i.e. the GVN.

c. Reaction of the people.

11. The enemy says February is the key month and a coalition would come about during TET. He talks of negotiations and the war being over in the first half of 1968 and about his soldiers being home by August.

~~TOP SECRET~~


~~TOP SECRET~~

12. He cannot make a climactic effort of this kind on a repeated basis. He cannot send units in to stay and die unless he has a timetable. It seems that he is pushing all his chips into the middle of the table. Ours are there also. It is not credible to think in terms of a peak of effort followed by subsidence and a return to the status quo ante. Vietnam will never be the same again.

13. General Westmoreland must:

- a. Hold off the NVA.
- b. Protect the GVN at most or all levels.
- c. Keep "ARVN intact.

14. By March or April the issue will be decided. General Westmoreland could use some more troops.


W. E. DePUY
Major General, USA

~~TOP SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
10:30 a. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

You asked yesterday when did you decide to accept Bunker's and Westy's recommendation that the Tet truce be cancelled in I Corps and that there be no bombing halt south of Vinh.

The message was received here at 9:05 a. m. , Wednesday, January 24. It was considered by State and Defense during the day. I informed you that Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, as well as the JCS, supported the recommendation sometime early in the evening of January 24. Washington's concurrence in the recommendation was dispatched at 8:09 p. m. , January 24, after I informed State of your concurrence.

Incidentally, I recall that when I made the proposal to you, your response was not only instantaneous, but you said something like: "I'm ready to cancel the whole thing. "

The relevant cables are attached, including Bunker's and Westy's approach to Thieu, and the announced cancellation which was held purposely until January 29 so that the enemy would not be alerted to our change in posture.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachments



Department of State

TELEGRAM

54a-1

48

~~TOP SECRET~~ 827

PAGE 01 STATE 104215

85
ORIGIN SS 25

INFO MM 81,SSU 20,NSCE 00,7026 R

DRAFTED BY: EA W P BUNDY
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY
S/AM GOV HARRIMAN
DOD SECRETARY MCNAMARA
WHITE HOUSE MR SMITH
SXS MR READ

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-207
By is, NARA Date 6-12-97

0 250109Z JAN 68 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 5720
INFO CINCPAC
DOD

~~TOP SECRET~~ STATE 104215

EXHIS

STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

REF: SAIGON [685]

SUBJECT: TET CEASEFIRE

1. WE CONCUR WITH GENERAL THRUST OF YOUR MESSAGE AND BELIEVE
YOU SHOULD TAKE UP MATTER WITH THIEU ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

PAGE 2 RUEHC 104215 ~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~ NOT TO BE REPRODUCED
WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION
OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



Department of State

TELEGRAM

~~TOP SECRET~~

PAGE 02 STATE 104215

A. OUR MILITARY VIEW (AMPLIFIED AS YOU SEE IT) IS THAT
THE CEASEFIRE SHOULD NOT APPLY IN 1ST CORPS AREA.

B. SIMILARLY, WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONTINUE
BOMBING AGAINST SUPPLY ROUTES IN NVN SOUTH OF VINH TO
MEET THEIR OBVIOUS RELEVANCE TO EXISTING MILITARY SITUATION
IN NORTHERN AREAS OF SVN.

C. TACTICALLY, WE BELIEVE SITUATION CAN BEST BE HANDLED
BY PLANNING NOW FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESE EXCEPTIONS TO THE
CEASEFIRE APPROXIMATELY TWELVE HOURS BEFORE THE TRUCE GOES
INTO EFFECT. SUCH DELAY WOULD PERMIT US TO EXPLAIN OUR ACTION
IN LIGHT OF THE THEN EXISTING TACTICAL SITUATION AND ALSO WOULD
INCREASE HANOI'S DIFFICULTIES IN ATTEMPTING TO MAKE RAPID
ADJUSTMENTS IN THEIR PREVIOUS PLANS.

2. IF YOU CONCUR, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO PROCEED ALONG THESE
LINES AT ONCE WITH THIEU AND REPORT. MORE EXACT MILITARY
INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE WORKED OUT THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS.
WE LEAVE IT TO THIEU WHETHER HE FEELS HE SHOULD COORDINATE WITH

PAGE 3 RUEHC 104215 ~~TOP SECRET~~

OTHER TROOP-CONTRIBUTING NATIONS, BUT OUR SUGGESTION WOULD BE
THAT THIS BE DONE JUST PRIOR TO THE PLANNED ANNOUNCEMENT.

3. IN VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST, WE BELIEVE THAT TEXT
OF ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE AGREED UPON IN ADVANCE BETWEEN SAIGON
AND WASHINGTON.

GP-3 RUSK.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

54a-2 27

~~TOP SECRET~~ 644

PAGE 01 SAIGON 16917 251257Z

41
ACTION SS 25

INFO SSO 00, NSCE 02, CCO 00, MM 01, /026 W

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-207
By us, NARA Date 6-12-97

0 251233Z JAN 68 [FF-]
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5100

~~TOP SECRET~~ SAIGON 16917

EXDIS

REF: STATE 104213, SAIGON 16851

SUBJECT: TET CEASE FIRE

1. GENERAL WESTMORELAND AND I SAW THIEU THIS EVENING, EXPLAINED IN DETAIL THE SERIOUS SITUATION DEVELOPING IN I CORPS AND PROPOSED THAT WE PROCEED ALONG LINES MENTIONED YOUR 104215. THIEU AGREED THAT CEASE FIRE SHOULD NOT APPLY IN I CORPS AREA AND WITH OUR PROPOSAL TO CONTINUE BOMBING AGAINST SUPPLY ROUTES IN NVN SOUTH OF VINH.

2. HE SUGGESTED, AND WE AGREED, THAT APPROPRIATE PROCEEDURE WOULD BE TO REQUEST AMEASSADORS OF TROOP CONTRIBUTING

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 16917 ~~TOP SECRET~~
COUNTRIES THE NIGHT OF 28TH TO MEET TOGETHER MORNING OF 29TH AND EXPLAIN TO THEM REASONS FOR PROPOSED ACTION AND THAT ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE MADE AT NOON 29TH. WE WILL SEND DRAFT OF SUGGESTED ANNOUNCEMENT TOMORROW MORNING.
BUNKER

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

54a 94

~~TOP SECRET~~

920

PAGE 01 SAIGON 16851 (241307Z

41
ACTION SS 25

INFO SSO 00, NSCE 00, CCO 00, MM 01, /026 W

.....
C R 241230Z JAN 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5005
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO CINCPAC
CJCS

~~TOP SECRET~~ SAIGON 16851

EXDIS

JOINT EMBASSY/MACV MESSAGE

SUBJ: TET CEASFIRE

1. THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE AND THE ADJOINING DMZ AND LAOS AREAS RAISES THE QUESTION IN GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S AND MY MINDS OF THE FEASIBILITY OF OBSERVING A TET CEASFIRE IN THAT GENERAL AREA. IN OUR VIEW THE OVERT AND MASSIVE INVASION OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN STRENGTH BY FRESH, WELL-ARMED AND WELL-EQUIPPED NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS MAKES IT CLEARLY UNDESIRABLE FOR

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 16851 ~~TOP SECRET~~
US TO BE A PARTY TO A TRUCE IN QUANG TRI, THE DMZ, AND IN AT LEAST PART OF NVN AT THIS TIME. THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF THEIR AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS IS THE OVERRUNNING TODAY OF THE FAR POST AT BAN HOU EI SANE ON HIGHWAY 9 IN LAOS WEST OF KHE SANH.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State ltr 7/3/79
By g/lisp, NARA. Date 5/1/96

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Department of State

TE E -RAM

~~TOP SECRET~~

PAGE 02 SAIGON 16851 241301Z

2. BY HIS ACCELERATED AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST LAOS AND NORTHWEST RVN THE ENEMY HAS NULLIFIED COMPLETELY ANY PEACEFUL POTENTIAL THAT MAY HAVE ATTENDED A TRUCE IN THAT AREA AT TET, ONCE AGAIN CLARIFYING HANOI'S REPEATEDLY STATED AND DEMONSTRATED OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO SOUTH VIETNAM. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH PAST HOLIDAY CEASE-FIRES GIVES US LITTLE REASON TO PRESUME THAT NVN FORCES INTEND TO OBSERVE THE CEASE-FIRE THEMSELVES ON THIS OCCASION WHERE IT IS NOT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. THE PRESENT COMMUNIST POSTURE ALONG THE DMZ AND IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE REMOVES ANY DOUBT AS TO THIS. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO IMPROVE HIS RELATIVE MILITARY POSITION IN THIS AREA DURING THE CEASE-FIRE AT THE COST OF US AND VN LIVES.

3. OUR CONCERN ALSO RELATES TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING OF NVN SINCE THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO MOVE MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF MEN AND MUNITIONS SOUTH TO SUPPORT HIS OPEN INVASION OF SOUTH VIETNAM. IT IS NOT CONSIDERED POLITICALLY FEASIBLE TO

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 18851 ~~TOP SECRET~~
MAINTAIN BOMBING THROUGHOUT NVN DURING THE TET TRUCE, WE CONSIDER THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONCINQE THE BOMBING IN THE AREAS THROUGH WHICH THE MAIN MOVEMENT IS FUNNELING. THIS WOULD BE SOUTH OF THE GENERAL AREA OF VINH, ABOUT HALF-WAY BETWEEN THE 18TH AND 19TH PARRELS, AND WOULD INCLJUE THE TALLY HO AND ROUTE PACKAGE ONE AREAS. TO DO LESS WOULD, IN WESTMORELAND'S VIEW, COMMIT OUR FORCES IN QUANG TRI TO GREATLY INCREASED CASUALITIES AND DECIDEDLY DIS-ADVANTAGEOUS TACTICAL POSITIONING.

4. WE BOTH STRONGLY URGE EARLY ACCEPTACE OF THIS POSITION. WE WOULD THEN PLAN TO DISCUSS IT WITH PRESIDENT THIEU INFORM OUR SEVEN NATIONS ALLIES HERE, AND ANNOUNCE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN TERMS WHICH WOULD GAIN THE MAXIMUM PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE FOR THE FREE WORLD FORCES.
BUNKER

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

6F

546

~~TOP SECRET~~

296

PAGE: 01 SAIGON 17006 260942Z

ACTION SS 30

INFO SSO 00, NSCE 00, CCO 00, MM 01, /031 W

0 260920Z JAN 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE: 5140

2

~~TOP SECRET~~ SAIGON 17006

EXDIS

REF: SAIGON 16917

SUBJ: TET CEASE FIRE

FOLLOWING IS OUR DRAFT OF GVN ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH WE WOULD PROPOSE TO DISCUSS WITH THIEU AFTER RECEIVING DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS.

BEGIN TEXT: IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST FEW DAYS THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING EVIDENCE AND VISIBLE MILITARY ACTIONS WHICH ESTABLISH CONCLUSIVELY THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES ARE ENGAGED IN A MAJOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE NORTHERN AREAS OF SOUTH VIETNAM. THERE HAS BEEN AN EXTENSIVE BUILD-UP OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES AROUND KHE SANH, INCLUDING LARGE NUMBERS OF TROOPS IN NEIGHBORING AREAS OF LAOS. IN ADDITION, THERE IS VISIBLE SUPPLY ACTIVITY ON A LARGE SCALE IN THE SOUTH-

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 17006 ~~TOP SECRET~~
ERN AREAS OF NORTH VIETNAM: OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THIS OFFENSIVE.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE DRAMATIC FURTHER EVIDENCE OF

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Authority State memo 9/11/95
By [Signature], NARA, Date 4/29/96

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Department of State

TELETYPE

~~TOP SECRET~~

PAGE 02 SAIGON 17006 260942Z

OPEN NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM. COMBINED WITH THE WHOLESALE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG VIOLATIONS OF THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS TRUCES, THESE THREATENING PREPARATIONS AND ACTIONS UNDERLINE HOW LITTLE RESPECT THE AGGRESSORS HAVE FOR THE PEACEFUL PURPOSES BEHIND OUR PROPOSALS FOR TRUCES DURING THESE TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS.

IN THIS SITUATION THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAS DECIDED, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THAT THE EARLIER ANNOUNCED PROVISIONS OF THE TET TRUCE CAN NOT BE APPLIED IN CERTAIN AREAS WITHOUT SERIOUS RISK TO THE LIVES OF THE DEFENDING SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND AMERICAN FORCES. IN ORDER TO PROTECT THESE DEFENDING FORCES, THEREFORE, THE TET TRUCE WILL NOT BE APPLIED BY VIETNAMESE AND ALLIED FORCES IN THE I CORPS AREA OF SOUTH VIETNAM. MOREOVER, IN THE FACE OF THE MASSIVE LOGISTICAL BUILDUP IN SUPPORT OF THIS OFFENSIVE, IT HAS ALSO BEEN DECIDED THAT THE PREVIOUSLY PLANNED CESSATION

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 17006 ~~TOP SECRET~~

OF THE BOMBING OF SUPPLY ROUTES IN NORTH VIETNAM WILL NOT BE APPLIED IN THE AREA SOUTH OF VINH THROUGH WHICH THESE SUPPLIES ARE FLOWING. IT IS A SOURCE OF GENUINE REGRET TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM THAT THE ENEMY'S ACTIONS HAVE NECESSITATED THESE DEFENSIVE MEASURES AND HAVE MADE IMPOSSIBLE THE PEACEFUL OBSERVANCE OF THE TRADITIONAL TET HOLIDAYS IN THESE AREAS.

THE FOREGOING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE OTHER MANILA CONFERENCE POWERS. END TEXT.

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

542

~~TOP SECRET~~ 175

PAGE 01 STATE 105226

05
ORIGIN SS 30

INFO MM 01, SSU 00, NSC 00, CCO 00, 031 R

DRAFTED BY: EA/VN:JRBURKE
APPROVED BY: EA: WILLIAM P BUNDY
ODD/ISA: MR STEADMAN (SUBS)
EA-PHAG: B
S/S: MR KESHAN
JT-STAFF: BRIG GEN BANNING, USMC (SUBS) J13

O R 252 19Z JAN 68 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 5877
INFO CINCPAC

~~TOP SECRET~~ STATE 105226

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SAIGON 17006

WE FIND DRAFT GVN ANNOUNCEMENT SUBMITTED REFTEL GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE IN ITS PRESENT FORM. WE WOULD HOWEVER LIKE TO SEE THIRD PARAGRAPH OF SUGGESTED TEXT MODIFIED AS FOLLOWS: PHRASE "IN CONSULTATION WITH US GOVT" SHOULD BE CHANGED TO READ "IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS ALLIES." LAST TWO WORDS IN SAME SENTENCE SHOULD BE "ALLIED FORCES" INSTEAD OF "AMERICAN FORCES." THESE

PAGE 2 RUHC 105226 ~~TOP SECRET~~

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Authority State memo 9/11/95
By [Signature] NARA, Date 4/29/96



Department of State

THIRTY

~~TOP SECRET~~

PAGE 02 STATE 405226

CHANGES WOULD NECESSITATE THE DELETION OF LAST SENTENCE OF PROPOSED TEXT.

2. IT SEEMS TO US FROM YOUR 16917 THAT MEETING OF ICC AMBASSADORS ON THE MORNING OF THE 29TH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS CONSULTATION FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT. 6249 ASK

~~TOP SECRET~~
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ACTION

**Thursday, February 8, 1968
10:20 a. m.**

Pres file

Mr. President:

**Herewith a possible response to
Bill Fulbright, which you requested.**

**Page 3 is a reflective note on the
question of a dinner -- an idea in
Mike Manatos' memo to you of Feb. 7.**

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rla

55a

DRAFT -- February 8, 1968

Dear Bill:

I have considered carefully your letter of February 7.

Pres file

Let me say first that there is no question that we in the Executive Branch have the constitutional duty of presenting to you in the greatest detail our view of the situation of the world and our policies; and we have an equal duty to listen attentively to your views and those of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

I cannot, however, take the further step of agreeing that those presentations and discussions should take place at all times and occasions in public.

Think for a moment of where we are right now. A half million American troops are engaged in an unresolved battle which could determine the outcome of the war in Vietnam. The South Vietnamese government, with 700,000 men under arms, is, with more unity and energy than we have hitherto seen, putting the cities and towns back in order, feeding the people, caring for the wounded and the refugees. But they may face a second wave of attack this week end.

The men in Hanoi, conscious that the uprising they hoped for did not take place, are, nevertheless, carrying forward other elements in their military-political plan of operations, and taking comfort, as their newspapers and radio indicate every day, from every sign of confusion and debate in the U. S.

On the other hand, the government in Saigon, as it meets this stern test, is shaken by symptoms of confusion and debate in the U. S.

At the same time, we are engaged in negotiations of extreme delicacy with the North Koreans. We are trying to get our men and our ship back through diplomacy. It is a task not unlike that of dealing with a kidnapper.

These efforts, which are my first duty in the matter of the Pueblo, have raised complex issues with South Korea, a friend and an ally.

I cannot help believing that a public discussion of the Pueblo matter -- and how we are proceeding -- could not do anything but reduce the possibilities of our getting our men back through diplomacy and make more difficult our relationship with the South Koreans.

These are particular reasons why I do not believe a public hearing on Asian policy before the Committee on Foreign Relations would now be in the national interest.

To underline the seriousness of our commitment to exchange views fully with that Committee, however, I would be pleased to have you all as my guests for dinner after the Lincoln Day recess, on February 15, if that time is convenient.

Sincerely,

Honorable J. W. Fulbright
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Note: I'm not sure of all its implications, but my instinct is that a quiet evening with you would be good for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The question of whether Secretaries Rusk and McNamara are present would be for you to decide:

-- On the one hand, it would be bad practice for Senators to believe that they could gain by separating you from your advisers in this way;

-- But it is also possible that you could get more from them if the two Secretaries were not present. They may not feel comfortable modifying their positions or showing flexibility in the presence of their two old sparring partners.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rlm

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 7, 1968

Wednesday - 6:00 p.m.

55b

consider 2/8/68

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Mike Manatos *M.M.*

Senator Mansfield filled me in on what happened in the Foreign Relations Committee today, and resulted in the sending of the attached letter from Senator Fulbright.

Mansfield, Aiken, Hickenlooper and Sparkman not only voted against the sending of a letter to the President asking that he direct Secretary Rusk to appear in public session, but they strongly urged the Committee not to take that action.

According to Mansfield, it was not Gore who led these forces as was the case last year, but Senator Mundt, who has changed his mind. All of this, of course, was sparked by the Sunday television program of Rusk and McNamara. The feeling in Committee was that the Administration was engaged in a ploy - leading off with Katzenbach, followed by Rusk and McNamara, and then by Walt Rostow on the Today show.

Mansfield reports that Carlson was not unreasonable in his attitude, though he voted to send the letter - and that for the first time he detected a wavering by both Clark and Pell. McCarthy and Church were not present.

There was more than a little discussion of a meeting President Wilson once held in the White House in 1919 to which the full Committee was invited, and from which came a formal report.

There were expressed certain views that the Committee could not invite itself to the White House, but that such a meeting with the President alone - without Rusk, McNamara, or Rostow - would be worthwhile. It was even suggested that a dinner with the full Committee would be ideal if the President would be willing to subject himself to such an undertaking, but only under agreed hard and fast ground rules, so that the President could take out of the discussions any question he felt should not be answered.

Mansfield several times repeated that he was merely reporting what went on, and that he was not making any recommendation. He indicated he knew where his responsibility as Majority Leader ended and where the President's commenced.

(MORE)

If such a meeting were to be arranged it would best be on February 15th, after the Lincoln Day recess, to allow the matter to simmer down, in Mansfield's view.

55c

J. W. FULBRIGHT, ARK., CHAIRMAN

JOHN SPARKMAN, ALA.
MIKE MANSFIELD, MONT.
WAYNE MORSE, OREG.
ALBERT GORE, TENN.
FRANK J. LAUSCHE, OHIO
FRANK CHURCH, IDAHO
STUART SYMINGTON, MO.
THOMAS J. DODD, CONN.
JOSEPH S. CLARK, PA.
CLAIBORNE PELL, R.I.
EUGENE J. MC CARTHY, MINN.

BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, IOWA
GEORGE D. AIKEN, VT.
FRANK CARLSON, KANS.
JOHN J. WILLIAMS, DEL.
KARL E. MUNDT, S. DAK.
CLIFFORD P. CASE, N.J.
JOHN SHERMAN COOPER, KY.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 7, 1968

CARL MARCY, CHIEF OF STAFF
ARTHUR M. KUML, CHIEF CLERK

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

Against the background of the grave situation confronting the nation in Viet Nam, the Committee this morning met in executive session to discuss a Member's motion calling for a renewal of past invitations to the Secretary of State to discuss our policies toward South-east Asia at a public hearing.


The letter of Secretary Rusk addressed to the Committee on December 8, 1967, which declined the opportunity to testify on the subject at an open session, was reviewed with full appreciation for the reasoning it presented. It was generally felt, however, that circumstances have changed dramatically since the dispatch of that communication.

In particular, Committee Members were deeply impressed with the critical nature of our involvement abroad at this juncture in the country's history. They took note of several public appearances this past weekend of the Secretary of State and other high-ranking foreign policy spokesmen, and recognized the merit of efforts to present information to the American people. At the same time, Members believed that such appearances in a limited forum provide no opportunity for public response, and thus cannot serve as a substitute for the constitutionally based and traditional method of consulting with the electorate's representatives at an open Congressional Committee hearing.

Certain Members felt strongly that what is now at stake is no less urgent a question than the Senate's constitutional duty to advise, as well as consent, in the sphere of foreign policy. They believed that there is a compelling responsibility for them to attempt to clarify for the Senate and for the American people the direction and implications of our policies toward Southeast Asia.

Accordingly, the Committee directed me to communicate its request that the Secretary of State, as your chief foreign policy spokesman, be made available to testify on those policies in public at a Committee hearing at an early appropriate time. I regret that without my knowledge the action of the Committee became public information.

Sincerely yours,


J. W. Fulbright
Chairman

INFORMATION

~~SECRET/CACTUS~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968
10:10 a. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Porter's message describing
Park's reaction to your aid offer
indicates the depth of our problem with
the South Koreans.

W. W. Rostow

Seoul 4083

~~SECRET/CACTUS~~

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By , NARA, Date 9-25-97

WWRostow:rin

Thursday, February 8, 1968

TEXT OF CABLE FROM SEOUL (4083)

I conveyed message to President Park this morning. He expressed appreciation for the increased military aid which he said would be useful in the present situation. He is convinced that a military buildup alone, however, is useless when dealing with a person like Kim Il-Sung. He said American policy seemed to consist of efforts to extract the Pueblo and crew and buildup on the Republic of Korea side, which means South Koreans must remain passive here in the face of continual provocation. So far, the anger of the Korean people has been contained because his government does not want war, but it will be impossible to remain passive when another incident occurs and he feels this is most likely. That will start a war in Korea again.

He had examined closely military posture and readiness of Korean and UN forces and they are certainly not ready for war as compared to the North Koreans. This means they would perhaps suffer heavy damage initially but they would suffer even more if they await attack and do not take preventive measures. He has given us assurance that he would not take unilateral action and he wants prior consultation with the United States. He also has faith in the competence and authority of the UN Command, but the lack of combat readiness disturbs him. He realizes that General Bonesteel has not been given a war mission but the fact remains that the entire position on our side now is such as to encourage Kim Il-Sung. He said an example of our unpreparedness is that approximately 200 U. S. military aircraft had come into the country and cannot be accommodated. There is even a problem of takeoff, and Korean Armed Forces planes were inferior to North Korean planes. A MIG-21 needs only to have a button pushed to take off, whereas the F-5 cannot start without auxiliary assistance. It is a bad thing to have to sit and wait attack. What would the United States have done if he and his family had been assassinated? Would we have proceeded to negotiate?

The foregoing indicates the pent-up emotions of the Korean President at this point and he gave me two and a half hours of it. I replied to his various points, emphasizing as I had done twice before that we depended on his leadership, restraint of hotheads, and undertaking consultations in advance with the U. S. regardless of the circumstances. On the question on Kim Il-Sung, I gave him a report of recent developments, to be reported separately.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-196
By is, NARA Date 8-28-97

Before I got to the subject, he launched into a strong denunciation of our move of the Enterprise southward. The Enterprise should have been moved northward, he said, with other carriers and placed off the Port of Wonsan. We should have announced the Port was closed until we got the men and ship back. If this brought no action, we should go in and take the ship, and neither the Russians nor the Chicoms would interfere.

When he finished this aspect of his statement, I gave him the rationale for this movement.

He brushed this aside, saying that Korea is a closest ally of the United States but our recent negotiating tactics are only encouraging Kim Il-Sung and creating distress among the Korean people. Kim Il-Sung is a pirate and a thief, and he took a ship and raided Seoul in a criminal manner, and now the U.S. expects to get results by talking to him. What makes us think such tactics will work?

I said I know he understands that our commitment in Korea is to protect the integrity and security of South Korea. That we are intent on doing so, as he could see from the very generous measures being taken, but we are not going to give up the possibility of achieving settlement of the Pueblo incident through peaceful means. If the population here is disturbed it is, as I told the Prime Minister and other ministers, because proper use had not been made of all of the statements of solidarity and support and all of the evidence of it provided by the United States since this crisis developed.

There was a great deal of repetitive material of similar nature in his remarks, and he made a special point of asking that they be transmitted to President Johnson. I said the President had made it clear in public announcements that President Park's views are heard and considered and acted upon on a daily basis. And he could rest assured that this would continue to be the case. However, we do expect him to understand, as the message said, that the two matters of DMZ violations and the Pueblo have to be handled separately. We are convinced that this is the only rational way to go about it.

The interview terminated and I left the President's office to find that the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs had been sitting outside with rather obvious ill humor for an hour. Shortly thereafter I received a phone call from a confidential interpreter who stated that the President, after rereading President Johnson's letter, wished to make it clear that he is against closed meetings at Panmunjom. I said I took note of this.

He had made no mention of this except in general terms of meetings at Panmunjom and did not voice to me his opposition to closed meetings. I did say to him at the beginning of our interview that there would be mention of Panmunjom in a message from the President but, as he knew, I would be discussing this matter as necessary with the Prime Minister and did not intend to get into it unless he wished to do so himself. Of course, during the message itself and subsequent conversation dealing with our general negotiating tactics, he made frequent reference to Panmunjom and, as he put it, the distrust aroused locally by our tactics.

I am seeing the Prime Minister shortly, who will probably reiterate their opposition to closed meetings. I intend to make it clear that we cannot see our only line of contact cut on this subject. Comment: We have had suggestions from various quarters that if we could accept a Korean officer at Panmunjom, not to participate but for show purposes, this would do much to allay their suspicions and would help with the public. I am not certain of the value of this argument because underlying all the heaving about is something else which we have described to you, which is their hungering desire, which Park shares, to close with the North Koreans. However, if you feel you can authorize this on an absolutely non-veto, non-delay basis, I would like to offer it to them.

You have suggested meeting be set up tomorrow. We can do this, but I would like your comments on this message if possible before proceeding because it is quite possible that we may be approaching a showdown stage with the Koreans on the issue of closed meetings at Panmunjom.

On the most important matter of restraining the Koreans, we may well be at a point where we should repeat the injunction to Syngman Rhee, who at one time also felt the need to go North. There is enough danger now without more provocation from the North Koreans, but the situation will become very much worse if that happens.

PORTER

INFORMATION

Thursday, February 8, 1968
8:40 AM

Situation Room Memorandum

Pres file

Subject: Aircraft lost over South Korea

A US reconnaissance aircraft on a training mission over South Korea is overdue and is presumed down. The training mission was to have been flown in the extreme southern section of the country. Search and rescue operations are in progress.

W. Rostow
Rostow

Pres file

February 8, 1968

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your recent message of appreciation for my Government's support of the Ecuadorean candidate for the Secretary Generalship of the Organization of American States. We share your view that the inter-American system needs vigorous and distinguished leadership in this critical phase of its history.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Otto Arosemena Gomez
Constitutional President of the
Republic of Ecuador

LBJ/WGB:mm

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-206
By cb, NARA Date 11-3-97

58a

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Ecuadorian President Arosemena's Message
of Appreciation for US Support of Galo-Plaza as OAS Secretary-General

"Quito - January 29, 1968

Dear Mr. President:

I have the honor to address myself to Your Excellency in order to express to the illustrious government of the United States and personally to you my profound gratitude for the backing which at all times you have been kind enough to give to the candidacy of Ecuador, represented in the person of ex-President Galo Plaza, for Secretary General of the OAS. The support which your government is giving is particularly valuable.

In presenting the candidacy of Sr. Plaza, my government has been concerned only with offering for the consideration of friendly countries the name of a person who fulfills the necessary conditions to carry out effectively and successfully the functions of the Secretary General of the OAS, since Ecuador is determined that the inter-American system should achieve the necessary strength for the maintenance of continental peace and security, and should promote more fraternal and expedient cooperation on an economic and social plane for the benefit of the great Latin American masses.

Accept, Your Excellency, my thanks and those of my government as well as the good wishes which I offer in a most sincere and auspicious manner for the success of your difficult and complex task in the Presidency of the illustrious people of the United States, with which we are bound by tight bonds of friendship and understanding.

I take this occasion to renew to Your Excellency the testimony of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

/s/ Otto Arosemena Gomez
Constitutional President of the Republic
of Ecuador."

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-191
By ing, NARA Date 11-25-96

PS
A

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Pres file

February 8, 1968

Mr. President:

Herewith Westy reports minor operations at Khe Sanh.

Weather operational for both resupply and tactical air support.

W. W. Rostow

Thursday, February 8, 1968

59a
90

Following is the text of a cable sent by General Westmoreland at 5:22 AM this morning.

This is the fourth report on the Khe Sanh area and covers the period from midnight EST February 7 to midnight EST February 8.

During this period the Khe Sanh combat base continued to receive sporadic shelling from mortar and rockets throughout the afternoon and night.

By 3:00am February 7 thirty two persons had been helilifted from the Lang Vei special forces camp, including 14 Americans. Three helicopters received enemy fire in the extraction resulting in one pilot being wounded. Three enemy tanks are reported to have been destroyed in the Lang Vei area.

At 4:25 pm the Marine outpost southwest of Khe Sanh started receiving rocket and mortar fire, followed by a ground attack. The attack continued until 5:45 pm. The enemy penetrated the wire of the platoon outpost but was repulsed. The enemy broke contact by 6:30 pm.

At 8:00 pm a Marine reinforcing element moved into position at the outpost. The position continued to receive sporadic incoming fire throughout the morning (last evening Washington time). The enemy fire was returned but with unknown results. During the period one Marine was reported killed, and two Marines were wounded and evacuated.

At 10:45 pm EST an air observer reported four enemy tanks southwest of Khe Sanh. Air strikes were run and it is believed that two of the tanks were disabled. An air observer also reported sighting 20 vehicles moving in a westerly direction five kilometers west of Lang Vei. Air strikes were conducted with unknown results.

During the period Marine tactical air flew 44 sorties in support of the area, the Air Force flew 98 sorties, the Navy 37, for a total of 179 sorties. Four Arc Light strikes (35 sorties) were flown against targets in the Niagara area. Reported bomb damage assessment as the result of the Arc Light strikes included three secondary fires and numerous secondary explosions.

The logistics status remains satisfactory in the Khe Sanh area. Airlift resupply provided 127 short tons of supplies, 94 tons of which was

ammunition. ~~Individual combat rations~~ were increased from 15~~1~~ to 26 days.

No COFRAM type ammunition was expended during this period.

For the period encompassing the 24-hours of February 8 EST, seven Arc Light strikes (45 sorties) will be flown in the Niagara area. Tactical sorties include 44 Marine, 48 Air Force, and 52 Navy, for a total of 144 sorties. The Marines will have 16 aircraft on call for the Khe Sanh area while the Air Force will have 120 sorties on alert. Additional sorties that could theoretically be diverted into the Khe Sanh area total 406 Air Force, 250 Navy, for a grand total of 656.

Enemy unit identifications in the Khe Sanh area remain the same as previously reported.

~~The weather on the afternoon of February 7 was marginal for flying with a ceiling of 1,500 feet. The period from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm was poor with low ceilings and visibility as low as one third to one half miles in fog. Weather conditions improved to marginal at 7:00 pm, with ceilings of 2,000 feet and good visibility.~~

~~The forecast is for marginal to good conditions in the afternoon and evening of today, with ceilings varying from 2,000 to 3,000 feet. Early tomorrow the weather will become poor, with low clouds and visibilities restricted to one quarter to one mile in fog. By morning the weather should improve again to marginal, with ceilings of 1,500 feet.~~

Thursday
February 8, 1968

Mr. President:

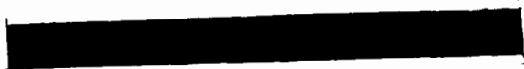
Presfile

Herewith further confirmation of good popular morale in Saigon. Food looks o.k. Prompt garbage removal appears major problem.

W. W. Rostow

1.5(c)
3A(b)(1)

Att:



~~sent/forward~~

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-159
By us, NARA Date 8-18-98

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Wade
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1968 FEB 8 08 10

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TO WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM
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SSO ARLINGTON HALL STATION
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DIA/ISIC
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DIRNSA COMMAND CENTER
STATE (RCI)
CIA-OCI
ZEM

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED] CITE [REDACTED]
COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
SUBJECT MINISTRY OF INTERIOR EVALUATION OF CONDITIONS
IN SAIGON

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-200
By us, NARA Date 7-10-98

15(c)
3.4(b)(1)

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (8 FEBRUARY 1968) FIELD NO. [REDACTED]

~~SOURCE~~ [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

1. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIALS FEEL THAT MORALE OF THE SAIGON CITY POPULATION, EXCEPT FOR THE DISTRICT OF CHOLON, IS VERY HIGH. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE VIET CONG (VC) ATTACKS ON SOUTH VIETNAMESE CITIES SHOWED THE CITY DWELLERS FOR THE FIRST TIME THE NATURE OF THE WAR AND THE ENEMY AND STRENGTHENED POPULAR SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

2. AN ASSOCIATION OF VIETNAMESE WOMEN HAS OFFERED THE SERVICES OF ITS MEMBERS TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY WHICH IS STILL UNDECIDED WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE OFFER, FEARING IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE THE WOMEN WITH SUFFICIENT POLICE PROTECTION. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY IS STILL WEIGHING THE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE MADE BY CVT LEADER TRAN QUAC BUU AND WILL PROBABLY ACCEPT IT.

3. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY IS PROCEEDING WITH PLANS TO ARM THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF SAIGON. THE CITY IS BEING DIVIDED INTO SECURE AREAS DESIGNATED AS "BLUE" AND INSECURE AREAS DESIGNATED AS "RED". THE "BLUE" AREAS ARE BEING DIVIDED INTO NEIGHBORHOODS, FOR EACH OF WHICH THE INTERIOR MINISTRY IS APPOINTING A CHIEF WHO WILL SUPERVISE THE DISTRIBUTION AND CONTROL OF WEAPONS WITHIN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT EACH NEIGHBORHOOD WILL HAVE A MINIMUM OF TEN AND A MAXIMUM OF THIRTY WEAPONS. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY HAS DELIVERED 1,000 CARBINES TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND

1. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIALS FEEL THAT MORALE OF THE SAIGON CITY POPULATION, EXCEPT FOR THE DISTRICT OF CHOLON, IS VERY HIGH. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE VIET CONG (VC) ATTACKS ON SOUTH VIETNAMESE CITIES SHOWED THE CITY DWELLERS FOR THE FIRST TIME THE NATURE OF THE WAR AND THE ENEMY AND STRENGTHENED POPULAR SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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4. FOOD SUPPLIES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ADEQUATE, LARGELY BECAUSE EACH HOUSEHOLD HAD STOCKED UP HEAVILY FOR THE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION. VAN VAN CUA, MAYOR OF SAIGON, REPORTED TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY ON 7 FEBRUARY THAT HE HAD DISTRIBUTED 200 TONS OF RICE THROUGHOUT SAIGON ON 6 AND 7 FEBRUARY. RICE IS DISTRIBUTED FREE TO THE 59 REFUGEE CENTERS IN SAIGON, AND IS SOLD TO MILITARY UNITS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AT A PRICE OF 2,200 PIASTERS PER 100 KILOGRAMS.

5. THE REFUGEE CENTERS ARE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE, AND ARE ADMINISTERED BY CATHOLIC WELFARE AGENCIES AND YOUTH GROUPS. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY SUSPECTS THAT THEY MAY BE A HAVEN FOR VC STRAGGLERS AND PLANS TO INSPECT THEM.

6. THE MOST SERIOUS WORK OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS IS THAT THE PILES OF GARBAGE WHICH HAVE BEEN FILLING CITY STREETS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION WILL BREED AN EPIDEMIC. THEY ASKED MAYOR CUA ON 6 FEBRUARY TO GIVE FIRM PRIORITY TO GARBAGE REMOVAL, BUT HE REPLIED THAT MOST OF THE SANITARY WORKERS LIVE IN THE SGO VAP DISTRICT IGIA DINH PROVINCE AND CANNOT FIND TRANSPORTATION INTO THE CITY. AS AN INTERIM MEASURE, CUA ORDERED THE BURNING OF GARBAGE ON THE STREETS. INTERIOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THIS SOLUTION, AND ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO GET THE GARBAGE REMOVED.

7. FIELD DISSEM: STATE MACV 7TH AIR FORCE JUSPAO (MR. ZORTHIAN ONLY) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF
REPORT CLASS SECRET [REDACTED] GROUP 1

050

SECRET [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Thursday
February 8, 1968

Mr. President:

Herewith a detailed picture of the mop
up problem in Saigon -- not too bad.

Pres file

Although his public relations leave a
lot to be desired, I'm not sure that
Loan isn't one of the heroes of this
battle thus far.

Att: [Redacted]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-199
By lis, NARA Date 8-19-98

TO WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM
SSO AC SI DA
SSO ARLINGTON HALL (ATION
AFSSO USAF
CNO
DIA/ISIC
JCS
NIC
DIRNSA COMMAND CENTER
STATE (RCI)
CIA-OCI
ZEM
CONFIDENTIAL [REDACTED] CITE [REDACTED]
COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 8 FEB 68
SUBJECT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN SAIGON AS OF 8 FEBRUARY 1968.
ACQ SAIGON, 8 FEB 1968 [REDACTED]
SOURCE [REDACTED]

WHCA

1968 FEB 07 59

61a

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ- 96-200
By [REDACTED], NARA Date 2-10-98

1. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 200-300 VC STILL OPERATING IN PRECINCTS 5, 6, 7 AND 8. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THESE ARE STILL IN THESE AREAS TO AWAIT THE COMING OF THE VC MAIN FORCES BUT PROBABLY DO NOT REALIZE THAT THESE FORCES HAVE BEEN STALEMATED BY U.S. AND ALLIED FORCES THROUGH THU DUC AND HOC MON IN GIA DINH PROVINCE. ONE VC COMPANY IS ESTIMATED IN PRECINCT 6 AND ONE IN PRECINCT 7.

2. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 100 VC AND SYMPATHIZERS IN PRECINCT 5. THESE ARE CONCENTRATED PRINCIPALLY IN TWO AREAS. ONE IS THE SOUTH OF THE PHU THO RACE TRACK. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL POLICE LOAN IS BLOCKING NGUYEN VAN THOAY STREET IN ORDER TO CONTAIN THIS GROUP, UTILIZING VIETNAMESE RANGERS. THE SECOND AREA IS THE AN QUANG PAGODA WHICH IS COMPOSED OF APPROXIMATELY FIVE CITY BLOCKS IN THE MINH MA IM AREA. LOAN IS ALSO CONTAINING THIS GROUP UTILIZING VIETNAMESE RANGERS TO HALT ANY INFILTRATIONS INTO PRECINCTS 2 AND 3 TO THE EAST. THESE GROUPINGS ARE REMNANTS OF THE SIXTH BATTALION, 165A VC REGIMENT ORIGINALLY FROM LONG AN PROVINCE.

3. TWO U.S. BATTALIONS WILL CONDUCT OPERATIONS TO SWEEP THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN AREA OF SAIGON FROM THE WEST BOUNDARY OF PRECINCT 4 THROUGH PRECINCT 8 TO THE WEST AND SOUTHWEST BOUNDARIES OF PRECINCT 7. (FIELD COMMENT: AS OF 1215 HOURS ON 8 FEBRUARY THE TWO BATTALION SWEEP WAS UNDERWAY.)

4. ONE BATTALION OF THE U.S. 199TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE IS PRESENTLY AT THE PHU THO RACE TRACK. THEY ARE COMPOSED OF FOUR RIFLE COMPANIES AND ONE REINFORCED CALVARY PLATOON EQUIPED WITH MODEL 106 TRACK VEHICLES. THEY WILL BE REINFORCED BY THE BRIGADE IF NECESSARY. ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS IS PRESENTLY WITH THE COMBINED SECURITY COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE THE OPERATION.

5. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE VC IN CHOLON (FIFTH PRECINCT) ARE BROKEN INTO SMALL GROUPS AND ARE BEING HARD PRESSED BY THE ARVN TROOPS THAT ARE BLOCKING THEM. IN ADDITION, TWO CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES IN THE EIGHTH PRECINCT AND A COMMUNITY IN THE SEVENTH PRECINCT HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES IN THE PAST FEW DAYS AND HAVE CONDUCTED SUCCESSFUL GUERRILLA WARFARE AGAINST THE VC. IT APPEARS AS THOUGH THE VC EFFORTS TO PENETRATE THE CITY FROM THE SOUTH AND THE WEST HAVE BEEN BLOCKED.

6. FIELD DISSEM: STATE MACV 7TH AIR FORCE JUSPAO (MR. ZORTHIAN ONLY) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF
REPOTR CLASS CONFIDENTIAL [REDACTED] GROUP 1

GP-1
450

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ [REDACTED]

62

Thursday
February 8, 1968

Mr. President:

Herewith Ayub sends his thanks for Dr. Hurst, but says he's recovering fine and the journey will not be necessary.

Pres file

W. W. Rostow

Att: Rawalpindi 3266

Secret

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1988
By mg, NARA, Date 1-31-91

~~SECRET~~

~~EXDIS~~

Hamilton

62a

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068 FEB 8 10 21

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-196
By us, NARA Date 8-28-97

~~SECRET~~ HCE357

PAGE 01 RAWALP 03266 081015Z

2
ACTION SS 39

INFO SSO 03, NSCE 03, CCO 00, MM 01, /331 W

0 081000Z FEB 68
FM AMEMBASSY RAWALPINDI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3083

~~SECRET~~ RAWALPINDI 3256

EXDIS

PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: RAWALPINDI 3224

1. MILITARY SECRETARY RAFI INFORMS ME THAT HE HAS SPOKEN TO
PRESIDENT AYUB ABOUT PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S OFFER TO SEND
DR. HURST, THAT PRESIDENT AYUB WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY THIS.

PAGE 2 RUQVGM 3256 ~~SECRET~~
THOUGHTFULNESS, BUT THAT A TRIP HERE BY DR. HURST WOULD NOT
REPEAT NOT BE NECESSARY SINCE HE, AYUB, IS RECUPERATING
VERY NICELY AND WILL BE HIS USUAL FIT SELF.

2. PRESIDENT AYUB'S IMPROVED CONDITION IS CONFIRMED BY FACT
THAT LONDON SPECIALIST HAS RETURNED HOME.

3. THIS WAS A MOST USEFUL EXERCISE AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR
YOUR PROMPT AND OUTGOING RESPONSE TO MY REQUEST.

4. PLEASE EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO DR. HURST.

GP-1. OEHLERT

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~EXDIS~~

PRESERVATION COPY



Department of State

62/1
TELEGRAM

2

~~SECRET~~ 284

PAGE 01 RAWALP 03224 070828Z

2
ACTION SS 30

INFO SSO 00, NSCE 00, CCO 00, MM 01, /031 W

0 070750Z FEB 68
FM AMEMBASSY RAWALPINDI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3025

~~SECRET~~ RAWALPINDI 3224

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE

1. IN VIEW UNAVAILABILITY FIDA HASSEN BEFORE TOMORROW MORNING, CALLED ON MAJOR GENERAL RAFI, MILITARY SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT AYUB, TELLING HIM THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT PRESIDENT AYUB'S INDISPOSITION AND WHILE HE CERTAINLY HAD NO RPT NO WISH TO ATTEMPT INVOLVE US GRATUITOUSLY IN SITUATION, HE DID WANT PRESIDENT AYUB TO KNOW THAT HIS OWN PERSONAL PHYSICIAN, DR. HURST, WAS AVAILABLE TO COME HERE FOR CONSULTATIONS SHOULD THAT BE DESIRED.

PAGE 2 RUQVGM 3224 ~~SECRET~~

2. I POINTED OUT THAT DR. HURST WAS NOT RPT NOT THE WHITE HOUSE PHYSICIAN BUT RATHER HAD BEEN PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S PERSONAL PHYSICIAN AND INTIMATE FRIEND FOR MANY YEARS. I FELT THIS TO BE AN ACCEPTABLE WAY TO LET THEM KNOW OF HIS PERSONAL CREDENTIALS AND THAT HE WAS A HEART SPECIALIST WITHOUT INDICATING OPENLY THAT I KNEW TRUE NATURE OF AYUB ILLNESS.

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED
WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION
~~SECRET~~ EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-196
By us, NARA Date 8-28-97



Department of State

TELEGRAM

~~SECRET~~

PAGE 02 RAWALP 03224 070828Z

3. I NOTED THAT SHOULD DR. HURST COME HERE, BEING A RESIDENT OF ATLANTA HE WOULD COME AS A PRIVATE TOURIST SPENDING A FEW DAYS HERE WITH HIS OLD ATLANTA PAL.

4. RAFI WAS VISIBLY AND GENUINELY TOUCHED BY THIS THOUGHTFULNESS BUT UNDERSTANDABLY INDICATED THAT HE WOULD OF COURSE WANT TO TALK WITH PRESIDENT AYUB AND HIS PHYSICIANS BEFORE MAKING ANY RESPONSE TO THE OFFER.

5. NOT RPT NOT KNOWING EITHER THE NATURE OR TIME OF A RESPONSE AND PREFERRING KEEP ALL OPTIONS OPEN, I DID NOT RPT NOT MAKE ANY REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE ARRIVAL DATES.

GP-1 OEHLERT

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED
WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION
~~SECRET~~
OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Thursday
February 8, 1968

Mr. President:

Herewith the general tone of Gene Black's talk with Nasser -- sad and a bit sorry for himself.

Pres file

W. W. Rostow

Att: Cairo 1572

Secret

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By 18, NARA, Date 2-4-92



Department of State

TELEGRAM

63a
29

~~SECRET~~ 594 POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 071203Z

2

42
ACTION SS 30

INFO MM 01, FILE 01, /032 W

R 070820Z FEB 68
FM CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4371

DECLASSIFIED

Authority 719 91-450

By uplay, NARA, Date 2492

~~SECRET~~ CAIRO 1572

EXDIS

SUBJECT: BLACK-NASSER INTERVIEW/ ATMOSPHERICS

1. BLACK FOUND NASSER IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS. THEY MET IN ASWAN WHERE NASSER WAS TAKING A FEW DAYS OF COMPLETE REST AND SAID HE WAS NOT ANSWERING TELEPHONE AND MAKING NO DECISIONS.

2. NASSER EXPRESSED USUAL REMARKS ABOUT U.S. BIAS TOWARDS ISRAEL AND SO FORTH BUT BLACK REPORTS THESE WERE MADE MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER. BLACK SAID BOTH SHEIKH OF KUWAIT AND FEYSAL HAD BEEN MUCH MORE BITTER ON SUBJECT.

3. NASSER WENT INTO SOME LENGTH RE AMERICAN CR. NASSER SAID HE HAD TOLD AMER AFTER JUNE DEBACLE THAT DESPITE MILITARY BACKGROUNDS OF BOTH OF THEM, BOTH HAD BECOME CIVILIANS IN FIFTEEN YEARS SINCE 1952. IT THEREFORE ESSENTIAL CONTROL

PAGE 2 RUEIVCR 1572 ~~SECRET~~
OF UAR ARMED FORCES BE PUT INTO THE HANDS OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY. AMER HAD NOT ACCEPTED THIS.

4. NASSER THEN MUSED ON LONELINESS OF HIGH OFFICE, STATING

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED

~~SECRET~~ WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION
OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



Department of state

TELEGRAM

~~SECRET~~

PAGE 02 071203Z

THAT SINCE 1952 AMER HAD BEEN THE ONLY REAL FRIEND HE HAD.
AS PRESIDENT OF THE UAR HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO HAVE ANY
OTHER FRIENDS. THEREFORE AMER DISAPPEARANCE CAME AS AN
EXTREMELY HEAVY BLOW.

BERGUS

NOTE: # AS RECEIVED.
CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION
~~SECRET~~ OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

64
INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith Westy predicts:

1. Renewed attacks on Saigon, Danang, Dak To, and a determined attempt to hold Hue, based on hitherto uncommitted North Vietnamese forces.
2. The time for the second wave is now estimated for February 10 - 11.
3. The full scale attack at Khe Sanh and the DMZ area generally could come at any time.

W. Westy Rostow

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-206
By CB, NARA Date 11-3-97

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988
By ry, NARA Date 1-31-92

64a

~~SECRET/SAVIN~~

Thursday, February 8, 1968

THE FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND

The following is my assessment of recent enemy activity and strategy:

The enemy's objectives in the recent phase of his Winter-Spring Campaign are now clear. They were primarily psychological and political. The enemy sought first, to destroy the Government of Vietnamese governmental apparatus, second, to intimidate the people, and third, to bring about large scale defections from ARVN. All of these would add up to a "general uprising" in which the citizens would join the Viet Cong ranks and thus permit the enemy to take over the control of major cities and areas. The military objectives of this phase appear to be secondary. Here the attacks were directed primarily against Headquarters, air installations and aircraft with the view of injuring our control and our air power so as to hamper reinforcement and air support. Of course, there was a secondary military objective to disperse and divert our forces throughout South Vietnam.

Since he hoped to obtain Vietnamese support from his "general uprising," the enemy used Viet Cong troops to the largest extent possible. Obviously these were more appropriate for use in this psychological thrust than North Vietnamese Army troops. Some North Vietnamese Army troops in First and Second Corps were used where Viet Cong strength was inadequate. He withheld large formations, both North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong, apparently to reinforce local success or to recycle his offensive at some later date.

As to the timing, attacks in southern First and Second Corps (Military Region 5) commenced in the early hours of 30 January. Attacks in the Second Corps, Fourth Corps, and Tri-Thien commenced 24 hours later. This is as close to simultaneity as the enemy has ever come in launching widespread attacks, and probably is a result of a high-level (Hanoi) decision to use the Tet Holidays for cover. In the Khe Sanh/DMZ and Duc Co area of the Western Highlands, the enemy appeared ready to attack concurrent with his Tet offensive, but he probably was delayed because of friendly operations.

~~SECRET/SAVIN~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
NLJ/RAC 03-182
By is, NARA, Date 2-12-04

In my opinion, the enemy tactical scheme for the urban areas was simple, well planned, and, up to a point, effective. Viet Cong local force and sapper troops infiltrated the urban areas under cover of Tet celebrations and mingled with the people. Units then assembled, armed themselves, and attacked their targets. At the same time, supporting units outside the city launched attacks on airfields and other installations. Numerous POW Interrogations indicate that the initial attacking forces were to seize key installations, paralyze Government of Vietnam installations, and start a general uprising--all within two to three days. Then heavier units were to reinforce to eliminate remaining resistance and exploit the situation.

There was no general uprising, and the enemy holds totally no cities, though his units remain in city environs and continue harassment he achieved his greatest success in Hue. Also, enemy forces lost heavily (22,000 - 23,000 killed and 5,000 detainees since the commencement of his Tet offensive). On the other hand, the enemy has scored a psychological blow, possibly greater in Washington than in South Vietnam, since there are tentative signs that the populace is turning against the Viet Cong as a result of these attacks. In addition, the enemy has succeeded in temporarily disrupting the South Vietnam economy.

The enemy poses serious threats in the following areas:

A. Saigon: Remnants of the local force units are still in Saigon but the major threat consists of the 9th Viet Cong Division now located a few kilometers North of Saigon. Although the evidence is thus far inconclusive, I anticipate that this attack will be supported by rockets into the Saigon area--possibly the 240MM Rocket which a POW has stated is in the area.

B. Khe Sanh/DMZ: The enemy deployment in the DMZ is well known and his recent attacks in the Khe Sanh area indicate he has surrounded that camp with two divisions. A major offensive is imminent.

C. Danang: The 2d North Vietnamese Army Division, deployed west of Danang, is preparing for an attack.

D. Dak To: The 1st North Vietnamese Army Division has again deployed its three regiments in the immediate Dak To area and an attack supported by mortars and rockets appears imminent.

E. Hue: The enemy occupies the southern portion of Hue and pockets of strong resistance exist in the Citadel Proper. The disposition of the 6th Regiment and Headquarters Tri-Thien Military Region coupled with resupply activity indicates a possible attack recycle against the city. Certainly, the enemy will remain until forced to withdraw.

We have a number of indications as to the time frame for the next phase of the enemys offensive. Two POWs in Third Corps indicate a new phase will begin on 10 and 11 February. In First and Second Corps COMINT indicates the new phase will begin on 8 and 9 February. Additionally, two North Vietnamese Army officers captured in Laos state that the date for the renewed offensive is 10 February.

I believe the enemy will continue to strain the will of the people by maintaining pressure on the populated areas with his forces already committed. He probably will attempt to coordinate major offensives indicated above and current intelligence points to a recycle of attacks in the Saigon area, probably to commence on 10 or 11 February.

INFORMATION

65

Pres file

~~SECRET~~

Wednesday, February 7, 1968
7:25 p.m.

Mr. President:

You will be interested to see how
the South Vietnamese evaluate the
attack on the cities.

W. W. Rostow

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)



~~SECRET~~

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-199
By us, NARA Date 8-19-98

WWRostow:rla

65a

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Intelligence Information Cable

PRIORITY

IN 46118

PAGE 1 OF 4 PAGES

STATE/INR DIA NMCC/MC (SECDEF JCS ARMY NAVY AIR) CIA/NMCC NIC NSA SDO ONE CRS
DDI EXO OER FBIS DCS IRS AID USIA

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~~GROUP~~
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

[Redacted]

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.

~~SECRET~~

071858Z CITE [Redacted]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

SANTIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

DIST 7 FEBRUARY 1968

NLJ 96-200

By isa, NARA Date 7-10-98

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 6 FEBRUARY 1968
SUBJECT VIETNAMESE ANALYSIS OF VIET CONG TET OFFENSIVE

Restow

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (6 FEBRUARY 1968) FIELD NO. [Redacted]

SOURCE [Redacted]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

[Redacted]

1. THERE HAS BEEN NEAR UNANIMOUS PRAISE BY SOUTH VIETNAMESE LEADERS FOR NORTH VIETNAMESE GENERAL VO NGUYEN GIAP'S PLAN OF ATTACK, WHICH WAS BRILLIANTLY CONCEIVED AND AUDACIOUSLY EXECUTED. HOWEVER, IN RETROSPECT THERE WERE ALSO SERIOUS ERRORS IN THE PLAN. THE LACK OF ARTILLERY IN THE ATTACK ON SAIGON IS

~~SECRET~~ [Redacted]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

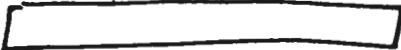
(classification)

(dissem controls)

SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. A NUMBER OF THEORIES ARE ADVANCED, ONE BEING THE DISCOVERY OF A LARGE ARTILLERY CACHE BY THE AMERICANS. ANOTHER ATTRIBUTES THE ABSENCE OF ARTILLERY TO THE ELIMINATION OF A NUMBER OF KEY ENEMY LEADERS IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE ATTACK, CAUSING A BREADOWN IN COMMAND DECISIONS. IN OTHER WORDS, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, THE VIET CONG (VC) / NORTH VIETNAMESE (DRV) LEADERS WANTED TO HOLD OFF ON THE USE OF ARTILLERY IN ORDER NOT TO JEOPARDIZE THE HOPE THAT THE POPULACE WOULD RISE AND SUPPORT THEM. POSSIBLY, IT IS CONJECTURED, IF THIS PART OF THE PLAN FAILED, A COMMAND DECISION COULD BE MADE TO BRING UP SUPPORTING FIREPOWER. HOWEVER, BY THE TIME THE LACK OF A POPULAR UPRISING BECAME APPARENT, KEY ENEMY LEADERS HAD EITHER BEEN KILLED OR PUT TO FLIGHT OR WERE WITHOUT COMMUNICATIONS WITH THEIR TROOPS.

2. MANY GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) OFFICIALS FEEL THAT THE BREAKDOWN OF WHAT HAD TO BE A VERY INTRICATE AND DELICATE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK MAY HAVE BEEN A SERIOUS FLAW IN THE VC MASTER PLAN. COVERT AND COORDINATED, NOT TO MENTION COMPARTMENTED, MOVEMENT OF SUCH LARGE NUMBERS OF PERSONNEL INTO SAIGON AND THE OTHER POPULATED AREAS ATTACKED, MUST HAVE PLACED A SEVERE STRAIN ON AN ALREADY DIFFICULT COMMUNICATION PROBLEM. IN THE EARLY

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ORGANIZATION PHASE THE ENEMY WAS ABLE TO BENEFIT GREATLY FROM THE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE OF TET, A PERIOD WHEN THERE IS MUCH MOVEMENT IN THE CITY. BUT THESE FRAGILE COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS MUST HAVE BROKEN DOWN FAIRLY RAPIDLY TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE ATTACKING FORCE.

3. THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT AREA KNOWLEDGE BY THOSE MEMBERS OF THE ATTACK FORCE NOT INDIGENOUS TO SAIGON WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY CONSIDERED. AFTER INDIGENOUS LEADERS WERE KILLED, OTHERS IN THE ATTACK FORCE MADE SERIOUS ERRORS DUE TO A LACK OF PROPER AREA KNOWLEDGE, LEADING TO THEIR CAPTURE OR DESTRUCTION.

4. THE MAJOR FLAW IN GIAP'S PLAN WAS LACK OF TRUE APPRECIATION FOR THE FEELINGS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. PROBABLY VC CADRES FROM SAIGON AND ELSEWHERE HAD CONVINCED THE DRV THAT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WERE SO DISCONTENTED WITH THE THIEU/KY GOVERNMENT THAT THEY WOULD RISE UP AND WELCOME THE INVADERS AS COMRADES IN ARMS, ESPECIALLY IF THE INVADERS COULD MAKE AN IMPRESSIVE SHOW OF FORCE. THE TOTAL LACK OF SUPPORT MAY CAUSE THE DRV TO REEVALUATE ITS PRESENT POSITION IN THE SOUTH.

5. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF INFLUENTIAL VIETNAMESE THINK THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A LAST GASP EFFORT BY THE VC AND THEIR DRV

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3.4(b)(1)



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1.5(c)
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ALLIES. THEY POINT OUT THAT MOST BRILLIANT LAST GASP EFFORTS SUCH AS THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN AND MANY OF THE MOVES OF FIELD MARSHAL ROMMEL WERE STAGED "BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY COURSE OF ACTION OPEN TO THEM AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME IN HISTORY". IN BRIEF, IT IS ALTOGETHER POSSIBLE THAT GIAP ORDERED THE ATTACK NOT BECAUSE HE FELT THAT HE WAS OPERATING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH, BUT BECAUSE HE WAS OPERATING FROM A POSITION OF DESPERATION.

6. FIELD DISSEM: STATE USMACV 7TH AIR FORCE DIR/JUSPAO (MR. ZORTHIAN ONLY) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF

REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~  ~~GROUP 1~~

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~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, February 7, 1968 -- 7:20 p. m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: News Media Contacts *For file*

Today I met, separately, with Saville Davis, Christian Science Monitor, Jack Leacacos, Cleveland Plain Dealer, and Jack Sutherland, U. S. News and World Report, on the situation in Vietnam.

Leacacos was easy to deal with because he understands that we are in the middle of a battle and now is no time for hand-wringing. He had studied the documents. He believes that the only failure that could be held against us -- and this is only in terms of standards of history -- is a failure of imagination in the field: they knew something was going to happen at Tet; they all knew about the great uprising; but they did not translate -- at least by insisting that the South Vietnamese act -- on the possibility of the generalized attack on the cities. He does not plan to write about this. He has been trying to keep his editors cool and the battle in perspective.

With Saville Davis and Jack Sutherland, I used the same materials: prisoner of war reports; reports from the field on cooperation and revival in the Delta; material on casualties; an account of reorganization of the Vietnamese government; etc. I took the line we were in the middle of an important battle; the first stage had not gone badly for our side; the battle was not yet over and its outcome would depend on the scale of further attacks on the cities and how they ^{were} handled; the continued vitality of the Vietnamese government; the outcome of Khe Sanh and other frontier battles; and the steadiness of U. S. public opinion.

I told Saville Davis this was no time for hand-wringing but for his newspaper to explain intelligently what was in fact going on and what facts we now have.

My problem with Jack Sutherland was different. U. S. News and World Report plans an issue devoted to "alternative new policies in Vietnam," ranging from all-out nuclear war to bug-out. Having often briefed Jack Sutherland on the winter-spring offensive -- and given him all the documents -- I argued that the proper thing for them to do was discuss the battle under way; not the problems that might or might not arise once the battle was over. I gave him much the same materials on the shape of the battle that I gave to Saville Davis. I told him that I hoped the U. S. News and World Report would behave in the midst of the affair like Americans and not like Frenchmen -- all this is with old friends and in good spirit.

Yesterday, February 6, I had a good session with Tom Lambert, Los Angeles Times, briefing him along the same lines I did the three men today. He said it was important because the Los Angeles Times "was getting wobbly." I told him to tell his bosses to study the facts and keep cool; that this wasn't the first important battle in which Americans had ever been involved.

W. *Whit* Rostow

INFORMATION

67

Wednesday, February 7, 1968 -- 4:30 PM

Pres file

Mr. President:

Ben Oehlert offered Dr. Hurst's services for Ayub as instructed. The response was a warm thank you and a promise to let us know if and when he is needed.

Dr. Hurst wants us to be sure to tell you that he is ready to go at any time. We are in close contact with him and can get him on his way whenever we get a signal from Pakistan.

W. W. Rostow

EKH/vmr

INFORMATION

68

~~SECRET~~

Wednesday, February 7, 1968
4:00 p. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith our air inventory in South-east Asia, totals and by country: detailed, by types, attached. The total, in response to your question, proves to be not 5900 but 5614.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By 149, NARA, Date 1-31-92

~~SECRET~~

68a

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DECLASSIFIED

Authority Group 4
By ky, NARA, Date 13192

February 7, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Aircraft Deployed in Southeast Asia (U)

This memorandum is to respond to your request for information concerning aircraft deployed in Southeast Asia. Attached is a summary table setting forth aircraft deployed in operational units in Southeast Asia as of January 24, 1968, by aircraft model and by Service. These data, excluding support aircraft on Guam, Taiwan, and Okinawa are briefly summarized as follows:

<u>Total U. S. aircraft by type</u>	<u>Actual January 24, 1968</u>
Fighter/attack aircraft	972
Other fixed-wing aircraft	1,635
Helicopters	<u>3,007</u>
 Total U. S. aircraft in Southeast Asia	 5,614*
 <u>Total U. S. aircraft by country</u>	
Vietnam in-country	4,810
Carriers off Vietnam	264
Thailand	<u>540</u>
 Total U. S. aircraft in Southeast Asia	 5,614*

*Does not include 115 aircraft on Guam, Taiwan, and Okinawa assigned to support SEA operations.

Robert S. McNamee

Enclosure

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years.
DOD Dir. 5200.10

~~SECRET~~

Sec Def Cont' Nr. X-

0830

As of 24 January 1968

~~SECRET~~

68-6

Aircraft Model	Air Force	Army	Navy	Marines	Total
FIXED WING					
A-1	41	-	11	-	52
EA-1	-	-	3	-	3
EA-3	-	-	6	-	6
KA-3	-	-	12	-	12
RA-3	-	-	3	-	3
A-4	-	-	61	55	116
TA-4	-	-	-	5	5
RA-5	-	-	11	-	11
A-6	-	-	24	23	47
EA-6	-	-	-	4	4
A-7	-	-	14	-	14
A-37	25	-	-	-	25
A-26	12	-	-	-	12
T-28	8	-	-	-	8
B-52	67	-	-	-	67
B-57	23	-	-	-	23
RB-57	3	-	-	-	3
EB-66	24	-	-	-	24
F-4	206	-	57	50	313
RF-4	73	-	-	21	94
F-8	-	-	-	14	14
RF-8	-	-	3	-	3
TF-9	-	-	-	3	3
EF-10	-	-	-	8	8
F-100	199	-	-	-	199
RF-101	17	-	-	-	17
F-102	24	-	-	-	24
F-105	105	-	-	-	105
E-1	-	-	-	-	-
E-2	-	-	12	-	12
OP-2	-	-	8	-	8
SP-2	-	6	13	-	19
P-3	-	-	6	-	6
S-2	-	-	-	-	-
C-1	-	-	3	-	3
C-7 (CV-2)	82	-	-	-	82
C-47	15	-	-	-	15
AC-47	29	-	-	-	29
EC-47	44	-	-	-	44
C-117	-	-	-	7	7
EC-121	28	-	4	-	32
C/UC-123	82	-	-	-	82
C-130	110	-	-	-	110
HC-130	14	-	-	-	14
KC-130	-	-	-	5	5
KC-135	80	-	-	-	80
RC-135	6	-	-	-	6

Pg 1 of 2 Pgs

Directorate for Statistical Services
Office of the Secretary of Defense

1 February 1968

Source - JCS

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5

NLJ 96-198

By us, NARA, Date 8-12-04

~~SECRET~~

Sec Def Cont No. X

0830

Aircraft Model	Air Force	Army	Navy	Marines	Total
<u>FIXED WING - Continued</u>					
OV-1	-	88	-	-	88
O-1	175	298	-	14	487
O-2	150	-	-	-	150
U-1	-	38	-	-	38
U-2	2	-	-	-	2
U-6	-	69	-	-	69
U-8	-	44	-	-	44
U-10	32	-	-	-	32
U-21	-	41	-	-	41
US-2	-	-	-	2	2
Total U.S. Fixed Wing	1,676	584	251	211	2,722
<u>HELICOPTERS</u>					
AH-1	-	23	-	-	23
UH-1	12	1,983	20	71	2,086
UH-2	-	-	9	-	9
CH-3	3	-	-	-	3
HH-3	14	-	-	-	14
SH-3	-	-	-	-	-
OH-6	-	77	-	-	77
OH-13	-	125	-	-	125
OH-23	-	161	-	-	161
UH-34	-	-	-	110	110
HH-43	30	-	-	-	30
CH-46	-	-	-	109	109
CH-47	-	209	-	-	209
CH-53	-	-	-	30	30
HH-53	6	-	-	-	6
CH-54	-	15	-	-	15
Total Helicopters	65	2,593	29	320	3,007
<u>TOTAL U.S. AIRCRAFT</u>	1,741	3,177	280	531	5,729 *
<u>VNAF AIRCRAFT</u>					
A-1					70
F-5					19
C/RC-47					32
Utility (O-1, U-6, U-17)					114
Helicopter (CH-34)					68
					303
<u>THAI AIRCRAFT</u>					
Fighter (F-86)					41
Anti-submarine (S-2)					6
Transport					22
Trainer					99
Utility					12
Helicopter					41
					221
<u>TOTAL SOUTHEAST ASIA</u>	1,741	3,177	280	531	6,253

*Includes 115 support aircraft on Guam, Taiwan, and Okinawa

DECLASSIFIED

INFORMATION

Authority OSD LA 10-25-78, NSL 8-1480

By plg, NARA, Date 2-3-92

Pres file

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Wednesday, February 7, 1968 -- 3:30 p.m.

Mr. President:

With respect to the ECONOMIST article:

1. I agree with the basic conclusion: This Is It.

2. Exactly as the document said, they have, for whatever reasons, decided to win or lose the war in the weeks and months ahead.

3. We do not know how much they have left after the first attack on the cities, but it is my feeling at the present time that they will continue to use whatever assets they have to continue to attack the cities with two objectives:

-- To try to exhaust the Vietnamese military and civil apparatus which has taken the first shock well but has little depth;

-- To force Westy to commit to the battle in the cities the reserves needed to hold Khe Sanh.

In short, the ECONOMIST may assume that the battle of the cities, as a serious diversionary operation, is more nearly over than, in fact, it will prove to be.

4. In this connection, I must tell you that I found Bus Wheeler's statements at the NSC meeting like a firebell in the night; that is, a most serious warning. Westy has been forced to commit some of his units from the Air Cav Division and the 101st Airborne to support the battle for the cities. Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese units opposite Dak To and elsewhere along the western frontier have not been committed.

The captured documents indicate that Hanoi's generals are very conscious of the limit to Westy's own reserve forces.

5. Since this is a battle which may determine the shape of Asia for a very long time -- as well as the U.S. position on the world scene -- it is a battle that must be won. Therefore, I am inclined to think, as of this afternoon, that we are close to the time when we should:

-- Fly the 81st Airborne out to Vietnam;

-- Extend enlistments in Vietnam and elsewhere;

-- Call up reserves; etc.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2-

6. We may be able to wait a day or so because it is possible that we have so damaged the Viet Cong main force units that attacked the cities that they will not have the capacity to extend for long the fight in Hue, Cholon, Danang, and Dalat. But for what it is worth, my gut feeling is this is one where we had better be safe than sorry.

Having said that, I would underline that my military qualifications consist in once having risen as high as the rank of Major in the planning of bombing operations.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rla

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



This Is It

General Giap has set it rolling. This is the big battle, at last. Beautifully synchronised, and timed for the middle of the truce, the action he opened this week should settle the Vietnam war one way or the other. General Giap is one of the best tactical commanders of our generation. He seizes the local initiative by moving his troops faster than anyone has a right to expect given the other side's control of the air. And he is a master of the surprise diversion. This week's attacks by the Vietcong on eleven South Vietnamese cities unmistakably bear his stamp: though the Vietcong is nominally an independent army, its last known commander was a North Vietnamese general and it does not plunge in like this unless General Giap gives the word. In all these things—and in the way he cannot stop himself jumping in to take tactical control at the key moment in the fight—General Giap is remarkably like another great tactical commander: Erwin Rommel.

But he may resemble Rommel in another way too. Rommel in north-west Europe in 1944 was a master-tactician trying to cope with what he knew was in the long run a strategically hopeless situation. The more one looks at the offensive General Giap has been running since the autumn, and which led to the attacks on the towns this week, the more it looks as if its real aim is not a military one at all. Its aim is political: if possible, to shake American public opinion into electing a peace-making president in November; failing that, to get negotiations going on relatively favourable terms before the Americans' firepower eats deeper and deeper into the communists' hold of the back-country. General Giap might have preferred to hold his hand until closer to November, but he is obliged to strike now because the weather will turn against him in the spring. It is an attempt, conducted with brilliant tactical dash, to force a settlement before it is too late.

Three years ago, before the Americans sent their army in, these attacks on South Vietnam's cities would have been the last stage of the guerrillas' war: having mastered the countryside, they would have been mopping up the towns according to Mao's schedule. Unless everybody has been wrong about Vietnam, they are not capable of this now. The Americans have been made to look foolish by losing control of part of their own embassy in Saigon. They will be in serious trouble if they and their allies cannot root the Vietcong squads out of all the cities attacked this week. But it is very difficult for little bands of men with small arms to hold out in street-fighting against a determined regular army. The last people

who tried holding a city against armoured troops were the Hungarians in 1956, and remember what happened to them. And if the allies do regain control, this week's attacks will look in retrospect like a pretty desperate adventure. The casualty count—it was 5,000 Vietcong against 530 allied dead by Thursday, though the figures may conceal a lot of civilian casualties—was bound to go against the attackers: that is what happens when you throw yourselves at the enemy's strongpoints. The probability is that it will also end up as a propaganda defeat for the Vietcong. Certainly the Vietcong could not be stopped from getting into the cities. That will impress the nervous. But in doing so the suicide squads have caused a lot of civilian deaths. This time it is the Vietcong's victims in the horror-pictures: that should help to restore the balance of emotion about this war.

For a time, at mid-week, a lot of people thought that this was the big attack and that the communist build-up around Khe Sanh in the north-west corner of the country was a diversion to pull American troops away. It is almost certainly the other way round. It is at Khe Sanh that General Giap is looking for a victory that will achieve his political purpose; the raids on the cities are a diversion to draw the Americans' attention away from the testing place.

The campaign that General Giap launched at the end of last summer has followed a perfectly clear pattern. First he made an artillery attack on the marines' base at Con Thien, near the demilitarised zone in the far north. The Americans duly sent reinforcements scurrying up from farther south. He then launched his North Vietnamese and Vietcong infantry, from jumping-off points in Cambodia and Laos, into a series of attacks starting in the south and moving steadily northwards: at Loc Ninh, Dak To and now Khe Sanh. The fact that each new attack has taken place to the north of the previous one is a tribute to the effect of the Americans' bombing of his supply lines. It takes him about eight weeks, under this hammering from the air, to assemble a force big enough for a major fight. If President Johnson had called off the bombing, General Giap could have put in more attacks, at quicker intervals, and he could have darted from point to point much more nimbly. At Khe Sanh he is now at the stump-end of his supply lines. The battle that is presumably going to take place at Khe Sanh this month may be his last chance of taking the offensive before the monsoon clears away from this part of Vietnam in April; and when the

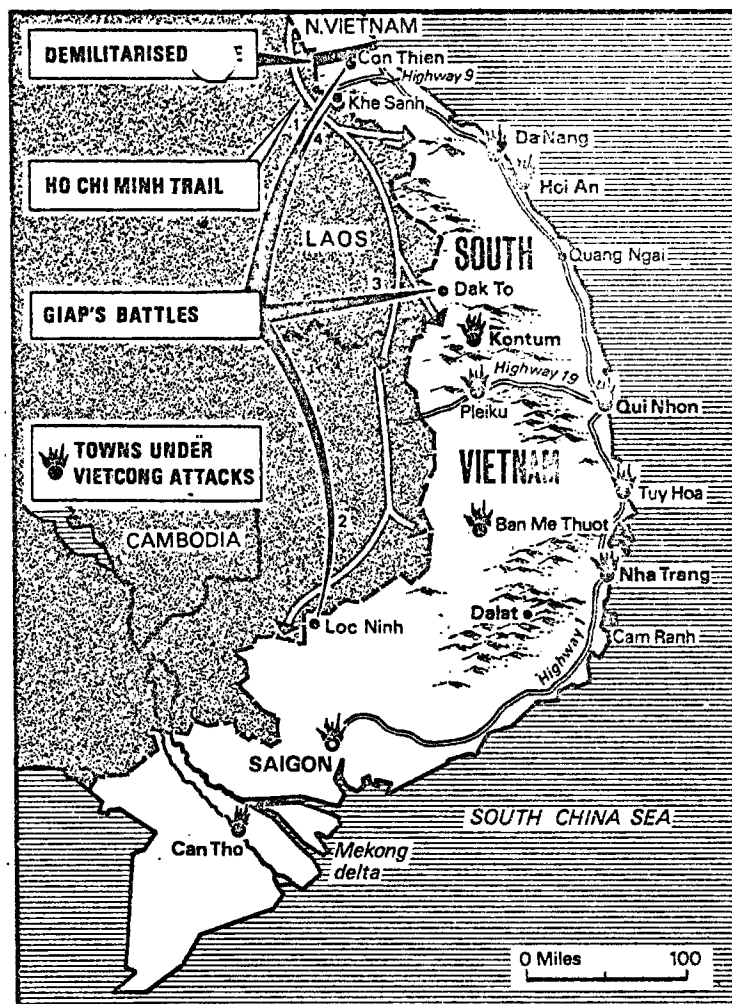
monsoon goes the sky will be wide open to the Americans' airpower.

This was the setting for this week's attacks on the cities. The decision to set the whole campaign under way was presumably taken in the middle of last summer, when the American public opinion polls began to show a sharp decline in the Americans' popular support for the war. The communist attacks at Loc Ninh and Dak To were bloody failures, and in December the polls seemed to show that the Americans were recovering their self-confidence. It is all the more important for North Vietnam that the Khe Sanh attack should succeed. This must be why President Ho Chi Minh took the enormous risk of giving the Vietcong the order to go for the cities. It is something he never dared to do before, even in the chaotic months of 1965 and early 1966 when the Saigon government was rocking on its feet and the Americans had just started coming ashore to help it out. If he is taking the risk now, it is because he feels he must.

The confrontation now taking place could well be decisive. President Ho and General Giap know the score. So far this winter they have lost the big-unit battles. The communists have taken far heavier casualties than the Americans have; American opinion at home has hardened in support of the war. Nor has the decision to draw the Americans into a series of big battles stopped the allies from slowly whittling down the area the Vietcong controls. The statistics are moving against the communists where it matters: in the number of people under each side's governance; in the miles of roads relatively secure from attack; in the casualty ratios. They are moving slowly, but they are moving. And North Vietnam's leaders know that after the presidential election there will be very little they can do to recapture the advantage.

The next President, if he is still committed to the war, will have three years in which he can ram the allies' military superiority home virtually at will. The Russians and the Chinese have made their position pretty plain. One or both of them might intervene if North Vietnam were invaded, though even that is far from certain. But short of that they are leaving it to the North Vietnamese. If the Vietnamese communists accept the failure of their attempt to put their sort of government into power in Saigon, Russia and China will accept it too.

So unless General Giap's regulars and the Vietcong irregulars do something about it now, they will be on a long, unstoppable slide downhill. And "now" means by April, when the planes will once more have an uninterrupted view through the clouds in the northern part of the country, which is the part General Giap can still get at. It has always been obvious that this war will have to end in a political settlement. Neither side wants, or has the power, to kill or capture the entire



enemy army. The question is whether it will be a settlement that makes South Vietnam into a communist-run country or leaves it to develop under a pluralist system. It is a decision that will send its effects rippling through the rest of southern Asia. The big push that has now begun—General Giap's right-hook at Khe Sanh, coupled with the Vietcong's demonstration in the towns—is intended to hustle Mr Johnson into accepting the sort of negotiations that will eventually leave South Vietnam to the communists; or, if Mr Johnson won't, to frighten the Americans into electing someone else who will. It is up to the soldiers. If the allies cannot reassert their control over Saigon and the other big towns, the Americans will have to negotiate their way on to the troopships. But if they hold the towns, and stop Giap at Khe Sanh, they will have won the upper hand in the war, and in the peace talks.

Who'll Talk to Pyongyang?

President Johnson is playing it cool in the other Asian crisis with North Korea over the *Pueblo*

When Vietnam exploded President Johnson was still trying to find a way out of his other Asian crisis: the one in Korea. The first and obvious American reactions to the North Korean seizure of the *Pueblo* were to send warships into the Sea of Japan and urgent messages to Moscow. To nobody's surprise, the arrival of the carrier *Enterprise* near the Korean coast did not bring about the immediate return of the seized ship or the 83 members of its crew. The White House

revealed on January 24th that the initial request for Russian help in securing a quick retrieval "had not had satisfactory results." President Johnson proceeded to call up his diplomatic reserves as well as air force ones. His ambassador in Moscow embarked on what may become a series of visits to the Soviet foreign ministry. Similar moves began in Warsaw and the capitals of other communist countries (the United States has no man in Pyongyang). Discretion surrounds this

kind of action, but it can be assumed that quite a number of non-communist governments that have relations with North Korea have also been asked to approach it. Indonesia's foreign minister has revealed that it is one of them.

Washington rightly refused to take the first Soviet rebuff as final, or as meaning that the Russians could not see their own interest in getting this affair settled peacefully. It is a double interest. Russia is outstandingly reliant on intelligence ships of the *Pueblo* type, and could hardly afford to let their seizure become an established custom. This reinforces the Soviet disinclination to let the Korean situation itself get right out of hand, or worsen to such an extent that it would eclipse all prospect of further Russo-American collaboration on the non-proliferation treaty or anything else. It was, again, no surprise when Mr Kosygin and the officials who accompanied him on his trip to India last week started to drop encouraging hints about Korea there, even while back in Moscow the party press was making routine rude noises and keeping mum about any idea of Russian conciliation.

Mr Kosygin was quoted as depicting the *Pueblo* affair as a very minor one, susceptible of being cleared up without widespread international involvement; and his entourage gave a reminder that last year three Russian vessels were fined for fishing in American coastal waters, and then duly released. Also attributed to the Soviet visitors in India was a suggestion that the crew of the *Pueblo* might be exchanged for communist infiltrators captured in South Korea. This idea was at once dismissed as "preposterous" by a South Korean government spokesman, and in fairness to the Russians it should be said that there is no confirmation that they initiated any such idea.

Meanwhile the Americans worked steadily through all the available international mechanisms, from the Red Cross to the group of 16 countries whose troops fought under the United Nations flag in the Korean war. But at first they were justifiably reluctant to seek a public debate in the UN. Since the last bid to conclude a formal peace in Korea failed at the 1954 Geneva conference, the UN has continued to figure in North Korea's eyes as the opposing party on the other side of the famous table at Panmunjom across which so many charges of violations of the armistice have been vainly hurled. To Pyongyang even more than to Peking, the UN remains the "enemy."

Successive General Assemblies have extended the life of the UN commission on Korean reunification, called for nation-wide free elections, and approved the retention in South Korea of residual UN forces (almost entirely American) as long as may prove necessary. A resolution covering these points was duly adopted last November, after a familiar tussle about inviting North Korea to take part in the debate, and after a less usual, more ominous, report (presented by Mr Goldberg) had shown that armistice violations and similar incidents had multiplied twelvefold in 1967's first ten months.

Pyongyang, like Peking, has few really enthusiastic friends among the UN member states these days; it was left to Cambodia, Congo-Brazzaville and Yemen to present the latest demand for the winding up of the reunification commission, although Russia gave them its backing. The assembly rejected the communist states' proposal that North Korea should participate in the debate without conditions; it ruled that Pyongyang must first acknowledge the UN's competence and authority in Korean matters; and this condition, as usual, proved unacceptable to the North Koreans.

When Mr Johnson did resort to the UN last week, he did so more in order to offset the demands for swift military action that were resounding through Congress than in hope of getting satisfactory results. The Security Council debate opened to the accompaniment of a North Korean announce-

ment that it was "entirely illegal" and that any resolution it might produce would be "null and void." In the council, however, only Algeria joined Russia and Hungary in opposing the American request for a debate; and the adjournment for private consultations after the second day of speechmaking at least kept open possibilities of progress that might have been closed by too many formal statements of position.

Mr Goldberg, in his opening statement, stressed the American desire to settle the affair by diplomatic means "if at all possible," but argued that the removal of the threat to peace required not only the prompt release of the *Pueblo* and its crew but also the ending of the "pattern of armed transgressions" against South Korea. In fact the early release of the crew alone would defuse this crisis, as things now stand. Optimists have found hope for this possibility in the North Koreans' remarks at Panmunjom about their intention of keeping the ship—with no reference to its crew; their playing up of its captain's purported "confession"; and their delay in committing themselves to staging a "trial."

Some people are now recalling Mr Hammarskjöld's venture to Peking in 1955, which led China to return 15 American airmen whom it had not released after the Korean armistice and had sentenced to imprisonment. The then Secretary-General had been asked to do whatever he could to this end by an assembly resolution from which, however, he skilfully detached himself, knowing that the Chinese would not even start talking if he referred to a text that condemned their action and emanated from a body that excluded them. This experience may have influenced Canada's initiative last week. Its ambassador at the UN, Mr George Ignatieff, sought agreement that a "good offices" intermediary should go to Pyongyang—without formal Security Council authority. He noted with keen interest the offer of "such assistance as may be possible" made by Mr Torsten Nilsson, the foreign minister of Sweden, which still maintains a tenuous position in Korea as a member of the neutral supervisory commission formed in 1953.

Almost simultaneously the Ethiopian ambassador, Mr Makonnen, proposed inviting North Korea to expound its side of the *Pueblo* case before the Security Council. Mr Goldberg's reaction was that the crew should first be returned. But Mr Makonnen's proposal, which the Russians publicly endorsed, remained prominent in the continuing consultations among Security Council members, along with suggestions that both sides should ease the atmosphere by making reciprocal gestures—the Americans perhaps halting their military build-up while the North Koreans disclaimed the idea of staging a trial—and that talks might start in Geneva.

Some bringing together of the Canadian and Ethiopian approaches might yet bear fruit. An emissary might have a chance of getting a fair hearing in Pyongyang if the North Koreans wanted to have the opportunity of sounding off in New York. But one obvious risk is that a fiery North Korean debut at the UN—with an inevitable South Korean counterpoint, and all this against the grim backdrop of the latest news from Vietnam—could seriously reduce the room for manoeuvre that Mr Johnson has managed to establish.

Meanwhile, the present activity at the UN is fulfilling its sound old function of winning time—time for passions to cool and for the possibilities of discreet leverage on the North Koreans to be exploited. Maybe they will not listen to a Swede, or an Indonesian, or a Pakistani or Algerian; maybe they will not even pay much heed to a Russian in their present mood. But the Americans have given everyone their chance: of all the UN's diplomats, there may yet be one destined to go down in history as the man who averted the second Korean war.