

54

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 7-10-78, NSC 11-27-78

By ip, NARS, Date 4-6-79

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

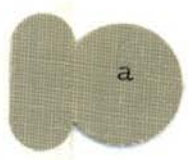
Thursday, February 8, 1968  
6:10 p.m.

Mr. President:

A note from Amb. Lodge.

*W. W. Rostow*  
W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

2A 5550

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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.

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Authority State 3-6-79 letter

By if, NARS, Date 3-21-79

~~SECRET~~

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(8)

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

(05)

Thursday, Feb. 8, 1968  
7:45 p. m.

Rec'd 8-52

MR. PRESIDENT:

Herewith General Walt's evaluation of the Khe  
Sanh position. As you see, it arose from a  
cocktail party conversation -- but outside of  
Georgetown.

W. alt Rostow

~~SECRET~~ attachment

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~~SECRET~~

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E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5

NLJ 96-198

By iss, NARA, Date 5-18-04

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HEADQUARTERS U. S. MARINE CORPS  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMANDANT  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20380

55a

8 February 1968

Mr. Walter Rostow  
The White House

Dear Mr. Rostow:

*(as the m. names)*

Last evening you asked if I would give you my personal opinion as to the situation at Khe Sanh, and also the defensibility of the Khe Sanh area.

First, let me say that I left South Vietnam on 1 June 1967 and have not returned since. I knew the ground defenses at Khe Sanh as they were at that time but since then many changes have been made. We have three times as many Marines there now and I cannot speak as to the details of their fortifications or the disposition of the troops.

I did feel then, and I do now, that the combat base is of extreme importance to us, both from the psychological and military points of view. I believe the psychological is obvious because of the nature of the war. Militarily, Khe Sanh is the northwest anchor for the entire Quang Tri-Thua Thien defense sector. Its loss would allow the enemy to close in on the Camp Carroll-Dong Ha-Quang Tri City areas to our serious discomfort. To the enemy, Khe Sanh lies at the junction of several natural routes of infiltration into South Vietnam from Laos to the West and North Vietnam itself. Our location denies him easy access to these routes, and forces him to take the long way around. Lastly, Khe Sanh, as you know, serves as a base for certain of our specialized operations in the general area. The maps which we have provided your office portray rather vividly the terrain implications in the area.

In short, Khe Sanh is tactically vital to us, in addition to the psychological factors which would beset us were we to evacuate it.

I am sure that the Lang Vei evacuation assumes significant importance to you. A couple of points are significant here. First, Lang Vei, like all the Special Forces camps, has a mission to provide security in the local area, to conduct reconnaissance, and to train and employ indigenous para-military people who are locally recruited. It did not have the mission to serve as a conventional outpost for the defense of Khe Sanh against large organized enemy formations.

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Significant also may be the perhaps forgotten concept of Special Forces camps--they were initially conceived as a mechanism which would recruit and employ persons who might otherwise be recruited by the other side. Only after we had had them on the payroll for a period of time did their other missions evolve.

Returning to Khe Sanh proper, all indications point to an attack on Khe Sanh in force, and soon. We can expect simultaneous efforts against Camp Carroll, Con Thien, Dong Ha, and Gio Linh, by fire at least and potentially by ground troops as well. Additionally, we can expect rocket/mortar attacks against Danang, Phu Bai and Chu Lai. The form of the attack against Khe Sanh itself will most probably come from the north, with probable diversionary effort from the west along Route 9. I base this probability on the nature of the terrain north of the base which provides the enemy more cover, which in turn permits him to move his supplies closer to the base and which subjects his troops to our supporting fires for a shorter time and over shorter distances.

I hope the foregoing may prove helpful. Rest assured that I share the assurance which the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others have expressed in our capability to retain our hold in the Khe Sanh area. Our 6,000 Marines there will insure this.

Sincerely,

  
L. W. WALT

~~SECRET~~

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INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET TRINE~~

Friday, February 9, 1968  
9:30 a.m.

Mr. President:

The marked passage indicates that the B-52 strikes are helping at Khe Sanh and the enemy -- as well as ourselves -- has reason for concern.

*W. W. Rostow*

~~TOP SECRET TRINE~~

57

Sent via LDX 20  
09/0900 ASD

Philly

~~SECRET~~

February 9, 1968

Send LDX URGENT for Secretary McNamara from Walt Rostow

The list of questions for the 10:30 a.m. meeting

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80

By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

~~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 affect 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~~

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, February 9, 1968 -- 4:00 p.m.

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Continuing review of prisoner interrogation reports and captured documents still support the original evidence that the VC/NVA had been led to expect the support of the populace in the recent uprising and that this failed to materialize. There is evidence to support the fact that in some areas the local people are providing food and shelter to the soldiers (whether from fear of reprisal or from belief in the cause is unknown).

Evidence continues to support the fact that withdrawal plans had not been prepared; that many VC/NVA were unfamiliar with the terrain in which they were fighting (perhaps indicating a stepping-up in the planning with a resultant lack of time for proper preparation), and that the troops had been ordered to "hold at all costs."

In addition, we are accumulating material to answer the question "What did the VC/NVA expect in the way of replacing the SVN Government?"

On January 30, 1968, 80 Viet Cong political cadres were captured by Provincial officials in Hieu Nhon District. They had been organized into a provincial government cadre group and included among their number the individual designated to be the Province Chief.

In Qui Nhon, the plan had been to capture the Province Chief and Police Chief (unsuccessful) and to force the Province Chief to broadcast over the captured radio station urging formation of a coalition government.

A prisoner captured in Chau Doc stated that the assault force which hit Chau Doc included ten party members who were to constitute the city front which was to organize a provisional government.

Prisoners captured in Bien Hoa stated that they had ~~come to~~ ~~receive the Province~~. They had been told that the "Americans" had negotiated with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam for the establishment of a coalition government. They had no knowledge of efforts to organize an "Alliance for Peace and Democracy" as a coalition movement to negotiate with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam.

On January 30, 1968, a Radio Liberation broadcast claimed the formation of an organization called the "Alliance of National and Peaceful Forces" (supposedly comprising representatives of all major economic, political, and religious groups in South Vietnam) which was calling for both withdrawal of US forces from the country and negotiations with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam in order to restore "peace, sovereignty, and independence" to South Vietnam. On February 1, 1968, Radio Liberation announced that in Hue the "Peaceful and Democratic National Alliance Front" was making similar appeals to the people. It also announced that the Viet Cong were in control in Saigon and setting up a "revolutionary administration" supported by the masses, thousands of militia, and many puppet troops.

According to two Viet Cong high ranking cadres who were captured and interrogated by Saigon police, the ~~Viet Cong plan to organize a "Coalition Front of People for Peace" to negotiate for peace.~~ This new Front plans to substitute General Duong Van Minh for Thieu and Ky as National Leader of South Vietnam. The Front will then contact top US officials to discuss a cease fire and a coalition government.

In Nha Trang, two prisoners claimed knowledge of similar Fronts. One, the Assistant Secretary of the Nha Trang Municipal Committee and a Candidate-Member of the Khanh Hoa Province Committee stated that he first heard of the "Alliance for Peace and Democracy" at a Committee Meeting in early December 1967. ~~He claimed that "Alliance for Peace and Democracy" was not the name of the Front; it was what the Front was. A name would be chosen later.~~ The second prisoner stated that he thought the National Liberation Front had formed an organization called "Alliance of the People's Forces for Democracy and Peace" which was to gather enough popular support to force the present government in South Vietnam out of power and put in power a new government which would then accept a coalition government.

W. C. F. Rostow

AmcC:sjb

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~~TOP SECRET~~

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 9, 1968  
Friday, 6:20 P.M.

Mr. President:

Here is General Westmoreland's latest estimate of the situation and his future strategy.

I understand General Wheeler has spoken to you ~~on the phone~~ about this message.

*W. Rostow*  
W. Rostow

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80

By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

59a

O 091633Z ZY4 ZFF-1

FM GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS WASH

ADM SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority OSD letter NOV 22 1978

By ij, NARS, Date 6-11-79

ZEM

~~TOP SECRET~~ MAC 01858 ~~EYES ONLY~~ SECTION ONE OF THREE

REFERENCES: A. JCS 01590, DTG 090021Z

B. CINCPAC DTG 090359Z

1. (U) SINCE REFERENCES A AND B CONCERN THE SAME GENERAL SUBJECT, I WILL ANSWER THEM COLLECTIVELY.

2. (S) TO PUT THE SITUATION IN CONTEXT, IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE TO GIVE YOU MY VIEWS OF THE ENEMY'S STRATEGY AND THE PLANS THAT HE DEVELOPED IN HANOI DURING EARLY FALL. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE ENEMY CONCLUDED THAT A PROTRACTED WAR WAS NOT IN HIS LONG-RANGE INTEREST IN VIEW OF THE SUCCESS OF OUR GROUND AND AIR ACTIONS AGAINST HIS FORCES, SUPPLIES, AND FACILITIES. HE THEREFORE DECIDED TO ADOPT AN ALTERNATE STRATEGY TO BRING THE WAR TO AN EARLY CONCLUSION. STEMMING FROM THIS STRATEGY, THERE EVOLVED A PLAN THAT I RECONSTRUCT IN THREE PHASES. PHASE I, WHICH STARTED AT THE END OF OCTOBER AND WAS SCHEDULED TO GO UNTIL THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, HAD AS ITS OBJECTIVE THE SEIZURE OF SELECTED AREAS IN REMOTE PROVINCES ALONG THE LAO AND CAMBODIAN BORDERS AND CONSOLIDATION OF THESE AREAS PENDING FURTHER OPERATIONS TO EXPAND HIS AREA OF CONTROL. ALSO DURING THIS PHASE, HE PROCEEDED TO CONCENTRATE ON DISTRICT TOWNS

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

TO DISRUPT THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONTROL STRUCTURE OUTSIDE OF THE CITIES. DURING THIS PHASE, WE SAW THE MAJOR ATTACK ON DAK TO; ATTACKS BY FIRE ON KONTUM, PLEIKU, AND BAN ME THUOT; AND MAJOR GROUND ATTACKS AGAINST LOC NINH, BU DOP, AND SONG BE; AND ATTACKS AGAINST INNUMERABLE DISTRICT TOWNS AND OUTPOSTS. AS YOU KNOW, THIS PHASE ACHIEVED VERY LIMITED SUCCESS, RESULTED IN LARGE CASUALTIES TO THE ENEMY, AND A FAILURE TO PHYSICALLY CONTROL MORE TERRITORY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. AN ENCLAVE STRATEGY WOULD HAVE PLAYED INTO HIS HANDS. THE SECOND PHASE, WHICH WE SAW START AT TET, INVOLVED INFILTRATION OF CITIES TO DESTROY THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONTROL APPARATUS AND TO BRING ABOUT A PUBLIC UPRISING. IN THE BORDER AREAS, THIS PHASE WAS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT HIS PLAN TO SEIZE CONTROL OF PLEIKU AND DARLAC PROVINCES WHICH WOULD GIVE HIM DE FACTO CONTROL OF THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE ASHAU VALLEY IN WESTERN THUA THIEN ALL THE WAY DOWN THROUGH WAR ZONE C IN NORTHERN TAY NINH. THE THIRD PHASE, WHICH IS YET TO BEGIN, WOULD INVOLVE CONSOLIDATION OF HIS POSITION AND STRONG ATTACKS ACROSS THE DMZ AND AGAINST KHE SANH WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF ESTABLISHING MILITARY CONTROL OVER THE TWO NORTHERN PROVINCES, THEREBY BRINGING ABOUT A DE FACTO PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY FROM WHEREIN HE WOULD CONTROL QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN, WESTERN QUANG NAM, WESTERN QUANG TIN, AND THE PROVINCES OF KONTUM, PLEIKU, DARLAC, QUANG DUC, AND AT LEAST THE NORTHERN PORTIONS OF PHUOC LONG, BIEN LONG, AND TAY NINH. UNDER THE

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

CIRCUMSTANCES, HE WOULD HAVE CREATED A SITUATION SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH NOW PREVAILS IN LAOS AND WOULD THEREFORE BE IN A STRONG NEGOTIATING POSITION, PARTICULARLY IF HE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN HIS DESIGN TO ASSUME CONTROL OF THE CITIES AND BRING ABOUT A PUBLIC UPRISING.

3. AS TO THE PRESENT SITUATION, AN ENEMY THREAT OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS IS STILL POSED NORTH OF THE DMZ AND AROUND KHE SANH. IN ADDITION, THE ENEMY IS APPLYING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO THE HUE AREA AND TO HIGHWAY 1 NORTH OF DANANG. FURTHERMORE, HE HAS A NUMBER OF BATTALIONS DIRECTLY SOUTH OF DANANG WHICH POSE A THREAT TO THE AIR FIELD AND THE CITY. THE 3D MAR DIV IS IN GOOD POSTURE AT KHE SANH AND SOUTH OF THE DMZ. THE 1ST CAV DIV IS IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE WITH TWO BATTALIONS IN BLOCKING POSITIONS NORTH OF HUE. A MARINE REGIMENT IS SECURING HUE/PHU BAI AND ASSISTING IN THE CLEARING OF HUE CITY. THE MARINES HAVE MADE EXCELLENT PROGRESS, BUT THE GOING BY THE ARVN IN THE CITADEL HAS BEEN SLOW AND THEY WILL PROBABLY BE WITH IT FOR SEVERAL MORE DAYS. THE ROAD OVER AI VAN PASS IS CUT, WITH LITTLE PROSPECT OF BEING OPENED UNTIL ADDITIONAL TROOPS AND ENGINEERS CAN BE PROVIDED. BECAUSE OF THIS SITUATION, I AM DEPLOYING BY AIR TOMORROW A BATTALION OF THE 101ST ABN DIV TO HUE/PHU BAI TO ASSIST IN THE SECURITY OF THAT IMPORTANT AREA AND WILL BE MOVING OUT BY LST A SECOND BATTALION OF THE 101ST TO DANANG ON THE 12TH WITH THE MISSION OF PROVIDING SECURITY FOR HIGHWAY 1 OVER AI VAN PASS. ALSO I AM SENDING BY SEA AN ARMY COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION TO WORK ON HIGHWAY 1. THE CONTROLLING FACTOR IN QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN IS LOGISTICS, NOW MARGINAL AT BEST. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE OPEN UP HIGHWAY 1 AND THE MARINES

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

CANNOT SPARE THE FORCES TO DO THE JOB. THE SITUATION IN HUE SHOULD IMPROVE BECAUSE A TASK FORCE OF THREE VIETNAMESE MARINE BATTALIONS THAT ARE IN GOOD STRENGTH WILL BE REPLACING THE THREE UNDERSTRENGTH ABN BNS NOW FIGHTING IN THE CITY ALONG WITH ELEMENTS OF THE ARVN 1ST DIV.

4. THE SITUATION IN II CORPS IS GENERALLY FAVORABLE BUT THERE IS SOME FIGHTING WITH ENEMY ELEMENTS IN DALAT AND A SIZEABLE THREAT EXISTS AT DAK TO. I BELIEVE WE HAVE ENOUGH FORCES IN AT DAK TO, BUT ROSSON IS PREPARED TO REINFORCE WITH ELEMENTS OF THE 173D.

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

O 091633Z ZY4 ZFF-1

FM GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS WASH

ADM SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII

ZEM

~~TOP SECRET~~ MAC 01850 ~~EYES ONLY~~ SECTION TWO OF THREE

5. IN III CORPS, FIGHTING CONTINUES IN SAIGON, BUT THIS SITUATION SHOULD BE CLEARED UP SHORTLY, DESPITE THE FACT THAT I EXPECT THE ENEMY TO INCREASE HIS EFFORT THERE IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. TODAY I DEPLOYED A US BATTALION IN THE AREA IN ORDER TO ENERGIZE THE ARVN AND TO PERMIT THEM TO REDEPLOY A BATTALION TO ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY. NORTH AND EAST OF SAIGON THERE ARE ELEMENTS OF THE 9TH AND 5TH VC DIVISIONS AND FURTHER NORTH WE HAVE THE 7TH NVA DIV. THE 5TH AND 9TH DIVISIONS HAVE BEEN HURT BY RECENT ACTIONS AND THEIR CAPABILITY IS CONSIDERED LIMITED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE 7TH DIV IS IN FAIR SHAPE, BUT WE HAVE BEEN PUTTING THE PRESSURE ON THEM THROUGH GROUND RAIDS, ARTILLERY, AND AIR STRIKES DURING THE LAST WEEK, WHICH HAS PROBABLY DEGRADED THEIR CAPABILITY. WEYAND HAS SO DISPOSED HIS FORCES THAT THE ENEMY WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING AN ATTACK OFF THE GROUND AND COULD ONLY DO SO AT GREAT RISK. DURING THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, SAIGON HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY TWO MARINE BATTALIONS WHICH WERE DEPLOYED FROM THE II CORPS. I AM PLANNING TO MOVE THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE INTO LONG AN ON THE 12TH AND IF NECESSARY CAN REINFORCE WITH TROOPS NOW IN THE IV CORPS ON SHORT NOTICE. FINALLY, THERE IS AN AIRBORNE BATTALION AT PHAN THIEP WHICH I CAN USE TO FURTHER REINFORCE IF REQUIRED. IN SUMMARY, DESPITE

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

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~~EYES ONLY~~

THE DEPLOYMENT OF TWO AIRBORNE BATTALIONS TO I CORPS, I FEEL THAT OUR POSTURE IN III CORPS IS ADEQUATE TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION.

IN IV CORPS, I NOW HAVE FIVE BATTALIONS ON THE 9TH DIV, TO INCLUDE THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE. THEY HAVE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB AND IN MY OPINION HAVE SAVED THE SITUATION IN MY THOAND BEN TRE. YESTERDAY I PLANNED TO MOV THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE TO LONG AN ON THE 10TH, BUT BECAUSE OF CONTINUED ACTIVITY NEAR MY THO I HAVE DECIDED TO LEAVE THEM IN THAT AREA UNTIL THE 12TH.

S 6. THE ONLY REALLY SERIOUS THREAT THAT FACES ME NOW IS IN I CO AREA, WHERE WE ARE LIMITED BY LOGISTICS, WEATHER, THE CLOSURE OF HIGHWAY 1 AND ENEMY INITIATIVES. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I REINFORCE SOONEST WITH A MINIMUM OF TWO BATTALIONS.

7. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT CONCERNS ME IS THE SHORTAGE OF STRENGTH IN THE ARVN UNITE. THE SITUATION WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY HIGH CASUALTIES DURING THE PAST WEEK AND ABSENTEES FROM THE UNITS BECAUSE OF TET. MOST OF THESE ABSENTEES WERE AUTHORIZED IN THAT LEAVES WERE PERMITTED AND THE TROOPS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET BACK TO THEIR UNITS. ON THE OTHER HAND, I THINK WE MUST REALISTICALLY EXPECT DESERTIONS TO BE HIGH. IT IS GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME TO BUILD THE ARVN BACK UP TO STRENGTH. I HAVE EMPHASIZED THIS TO PRES. THIEU AND URGED THAT HE PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO DRAFT 19-YEAR-OLDS, TO BE FOLLOWED AS NEEDED BY THE DRAFTING OF YOUTHS OF 18. FURTHERMORE, WE PLAN TO INCREASE THE VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES BY 65,000, AND THIEU HAS RECENTLY ASKED IF WE CAN SUPPORT AN EVEN GREATER BUILD-UP. IN MY OPINION, WE WILL HAVE NO DIFFICULTY SUPPORTING ANY BUILD-UP THAT THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH. AFTER FILLING THEIR DEPLETED RANKS, I DOUBT

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

THEIR ABILITY TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN UNITS BEYOND THE PLANNED STRENGTH INCREASE OF 65,000.

8. I HAVE NOW DEPLOYED TO I CORPS THE 1ST CAVDIV LESS A BRIGADE, PLUS A BRIGADE OF THE 101ST ABN DIV. I WILL BE DEPLOYING SHORTLY TWO ADDITIONAL BATTALIONS OF THE 101ST AND WILL BE PREPARED TO DEPLOY A THIRD BATTALION WITH A BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AT A LATER TIME. IN MY OPINION, THIS IS THE MINIMUM FORCE THAT I WILL NEED TO INSURE STABILITY OF THE SITUATION IN THE TWO NORTHERN PROVINCES, BUT EVEN THIS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH. I MAY HAVE TO EMPLOY THE ENTIRE 101ST DIV AND AM PREPARED TO DO SO, DEPENDING UPON ENEMY ACTIONS. HOWEVER, LOGISTICS IS THE KEY AND THIS MEANS OPENING HIGHWAY 1. DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS, I WOULD MOVE INTO THE ASHAU VALLEY AND CLEAN IT OUT AND TO OPEN UP THE ROAD TO KHE SANH. ON THE OTHER HAND, I WILL HAVE TO GIVE PRIORITY TO MOVING AGAINST THE ENEMY ONCE HE HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF. I AM NOT HAPPY ABOUT THINNING OUT III CORPS, BUT THE DEPARTURE OF THE 101ST WILL NOT PRESENT AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK; IT WILL SLOW DOWN PROGRESS THAT COULD OTHERWISE BE MADE IN DEFEATING MAIN FORCE UNITS IN THE AREA AND IN SUPPORTING PACIFICATION.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

O 091633Z ZY4 ZFF-1

FM GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS

ADM SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII

ZEM

~~TOP SECRET MAC 31858 EYES ONLY FINAL SECTION OF THREE~~

9. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I WOULD WELCOME REINFORCEMENTS AT ANY TIME THEY CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE:

A. TO PUT ME IN A STRONGER POSTURE TO CONTAIN THE ENEMY'S MAJOR CAMPAIGN IN THE DMZ-QUANG TRI-THUA THIEN AREA AND TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE AS SOON AS HIS ATTACK IS SPENT.

B. TO PERMIT ME TO CARRY OUT MY CAMPAIGN PLANS DESPITE THE ENEMY'S REINFORCEMENTS FROM NORTH VIETNAM WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED MY DEPLOYMENTS AND PLANS.

C. TO OFF-SET THE WEAKENED VIETNAMESE FORCES RESULTING FROM CASUALTIES AND TET DESERTIONS. REALISTICALLY, WE MUST ASSUME THAT IT WILL TAKE THEM AT LEAST SIX MONTHS TO REGAIN THE MILITARY POSTURE OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. I SHOULD POINT OUT IN THIS CONNECTION THAT WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THE CASUALTIES INFLICTED ON THE ENEMY, THIS IS NOT AN EXPECTED PRICE TO PAY.

D. TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENEMY'S WEAKENED POSITION BY GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST HIM.

10. IF THE ONE-HALF MARINE DIVISION WERE MADE AVAILABLE NOW, I WOULD OF COURSE ASSIGN IT TO III MAF, FOR EITHER NORTH OF DANANG OR IN QUANG TIN PROVINCE THEREBY RELEASING ELEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN DIVISION FOR DEPLOYMENT FURTHER SOUTH. IF THE 82D ABN DIV WERE

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

AVAILABLE NOW, I WOULD WANT IT TO ARRIVE AT DANANG AND BE DEPLOYED NORTH IN THE AI VAN PASS AND THENCE TO THE HUE/PHU BAI AREA FOR POSSIBLE OPERATIONS IN BASE AREA 117 AND LATER PERHAPS IN BASE AREA 101. THIS DIVISION WOULD OPERATE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 1ST CAV DIV. SUBSEQUENTLY, ALONG WITH THE 1ST CAV DIV, AND ELEMENTS OF THE III MAF, IT COULD EFFECT A LAND LINK-UP WITH KHE SANH AND THENCE MOVE INTO THE ASIAU VALLEY AND CLEAN IT OUT. (YORK II) THE SEQUENCE OF OBJECTIVES WOULD BE DETERMINED AFTER CONSIDERING THE FACTORS AT THE TIME. I ENVISION THE 82D WOULD MOVE BY FOOT AND ROAD TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE SO AS TO ECONOMIZE ON THE USE OF HELICOPTERS. SUCH DEPLOYMENT WOULD PERMIT ME TO RELIEVE ELEMENTS, IF NOT ALL, OF THE 101ST ABN DIV TO RETURN TO THE III CORPS TO ASSIST IN OPERATIONS THERE.

WHEN WEATHER PERMITS, IT WILL BE DESIRABLE, IF NOT ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH A BEACH SUPPORT AREA SOUTH OF QUANG TRI.

THIS IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND ECONOMICAL WAY OF PROVIDING LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE AREA. IT WILL BE FEASIBLE TO SUPPORT THE 82D INITIALLY FROM DANANG ALONG HIGHWAY 1, PROVIDE NECESSARY TROOPS ARE COMMITTED TO KEEP THE ROAD OPEN. WITH THE COMMITMENT OF SUCH TROOPS, IT MIGHT ALSO BE PRACTICAL TO PUT THE RAILROAD IN OPERATION AND THIS WOULD FURTHER INCREASE THE TONNAGE. HOWEVER, I DO NOT YET HAVE A SURVEY AS TO THE COSTS AND TIME INVOLVED IN OPENING RAILROAD, BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A MAJOR TASK.

11. IN SUMMARY, I WOULD MUCH PREFER A BIRD IN THE HAND THAN TWO IN THE BUSH, BUT WOULD LIKE THE BIRDS TO BE DEPLOYED TO THE I CORPS AREA AND NOT IN THE II CORPS OR III CORPS. ELEMENTS THAT I HAVE HAD

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

TO DEPLOY FROM III CORPS COULD PERHAPS BE RETURNED AND THERFORE  
EXPAND OUR OPERATIONS IN THAT AREA. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT A SIX-MONTH  
LOAN OF THESE UNITS WOULD TURN THE TIDE TO THE POINT WHERE THE ENEMY  
MIGHT SEE THE LIGHT OR BE SO WEAKENED THAT WE COULD RETURN THEM,  
PARTICULARLY IF THE ARVN CAN REBUILD ITSELF FOLLOWING ITS RECENT  
BATTLES AND IMPROVES ITS FIGHTING QUALITY BY VIRTURE OF THE MODERN  
WEAPONS IT IS SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE.

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

(185)  
INFORMATION  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

Saturday, February 10, 1968  
6:45 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith George Carver's  
perceptive analysis of the situation  
in Vietnam.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80

By JK ing, NARS, Date 8-29-80

~~SECRET~~

22  
60a

10 February 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Current VC Campaign

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority OSD letter NOV 22 1978  
By ip, NARS, Date 6-11-79

Recent enemy activity must be reviewed within the framework of the overall aims of his winter-spring campaign -- to break the will of U.S. to continue the war, and to create conditions favorable for a settlement on Communist terms. In this context, the winter phase of the campaign (October - January) was intended to set the stage for a "decisive" period of the war during the spring phase. The winter phase was characterized by major operations in outlying areas (Dak To, DMZ, Loc Ninh) to draw out and engage U.S. mobile forces, coupled with attacks on US-GVN bases and administrative centers and intensive guerrilla pressure against the pacification program to tie down allied forces. It also included preparation for a major (conventional) warfare campaign of potentially climactic character in the Khe Sanh and general DMZ area. These activities were accompanied by political and subversive actions preparatory to a "general uprising" in urban areas.

The Tet offensive represents the beginning of the spring phase -- which our adversaries have described as the decisive phase of the war. There is abundant evidence to demonstrate that this phase aims at a "general offensive" combined with a "general uprising." The VC hope that this offensive will inflict major defeats on U.S. forces, disintegrate the Vietnamese forces, and collapse the GVN. The Communists evidently believe that major successes along these lines will create irresistible international and domestic pressures on the U.S. to open negotiations on Communist terms.

The evidence available suggests that the Communists hoped to accomplish a great deal more than they did in their initial assaults on the cities. They had made arrangements to seize control of the radio stations, seize key officials, destroy the local GVN apparatus, and organize and manipulate the populace. This they failed to accomplish except in portions of a handful of cities. This failure, coupled with the heavy losses they have suffered, must be regarded as a setback to their campaign.

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On the other hand, other reports, the basic documents pertaining to the winter-spring campaign, and analysis of the pattern of recent operations, suggest that the Tet offensive may have been only the spectacular initial onslaught of a sustained offensive, with a successful uprising as an ultimate, rather than the immediate goal.

Although they probably are disappointed to some extent with the results, they probably also believe that they have created conditions favorable for the attainment of the basic objectives of their winter-spring campaign. They have dealt a severe psychological blow to the urban population -- much of which had sought sanctuary in the cities from the terrors of the war in the provinces. Although it is true that the urban populace did not rise against the GVN, it did not depart from its normally passive, neutral stances. The Communist attacks have resulted in widespread devastation and imposed substantial new economic and social burdens on an already overtaxed GVN administration. They have also inflicted significant damage on US and ARVN military installations and materiel, and tied allied military forces down to an effort to restore security to urban areas, to some degree at the expense of protecting pacified areas. These limited accomplishments may satisfy the minimum objectives of the Tet offensive and encourage the Communists to pursue their basic strategy.

There are numerous indications that the Communists intend to continue their pressure in many areas, probably in concert with major operations in the Khe Sanh - DMZ region. In that sector, North Vietnamese units comprising two divisions are probing outposts of the Khe Sanh base camp while extending their entrenchments in siege-like fashion. Another two divisions remain capable of attacking U.S. positions in the central and eastern DMZ area.

In the coastal plain, strong Communist forces -- two or three regiments -- remain in the districts surrounding Quang Tri city, and U.S. officials expect further attacks there. Another regiment or two are in the vicinity of Hue, and may attempt to reinforce those units still contesting allied control for that city. In Quang Nam province, the North Vietnamese 2d Division, reinforced by the 31st Regiment of the 341st Division and possibly the 4th Regiment, has moved into the area between Hoi An and Danang, and may attempt strong attacks against either or both of these cities. Strong Communist forces reportedly remain close to the cities of Tam Ky and Quang Ngai.

In II Corps, all three regiments of the North Vietnamese 1st Division are now located near Dak To, and major action appears imminent. Reports from Darlac province indicate that the North Vietnamese 33d Regiment is

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being reinforced from Pleiku and that new attacks are expected. In the central coastal provinces, Qui Nhon and Nha Trang anticipate mortar attacks, but no major ground assaults. Two or three battalions are reported west of Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen province, however, and new attacks are expected.

In III Corps, the 7th Division apparently remains in northern Binh Duong province with the mission of maintaining pressure on bases of the U.S. 1st and 25th Divisions. The status of the 9th Division is not clear; major elements have been reported in action in the area north of Saigon, but there are indications that others are located further north in Binh Long province. The 5th Division, which attacked Bien Hoa, has disengaged and may have withdrawn temporarily to regroup.

In IV Corps, Viet Cong concentrations continue to be reported in the immediate vicinity of several province capitals, maintaining limited pressure through sporadic mortar attacks.

Numerous reports from various parts of South Vietnam indicate that many of the threats enumerated above will result in new attacks in the period between 9 and 15 February; the most frequently mentioned date is the 10th. These actions would be intended to further disrupt allied control in the cities, to demonstrate the ability for repeated attacks, to further intimidate the populace, and thus contribute to the ultimate goal of a general uprising.

One ominous aspect of the current posture of the enemy military forces is their apparent implantation in the immediate vicinities of the district towns and province capitals. This pattern, reported in many parts of the country, suggests that the Communists have moved into and reasserted authority over the rural populace in formerly pacified areas. The current flow of refugees into district and provincial capitals would seem to be further evidence of this; the refugees could be fleeing their homes for fear of allied air attacks on the Communist forces occupying their hamlets.

Several documents have suggested that the winter-spring campaign entailed the creation of new guerrilla forces. A number of recent reports indicate that the Viet Cong are organizing and arming new guerrilla elements, both in the cities and in adjacent hamlets. Since Communist plans for the general uprising must have provided for arming additional guerrilla and militia elements, these reports are plausible. Some reports have suggested that these newly organized guerrillas will be used in renewed attacks on the cities. The fragmentary nature of available information precludes a firm estimate of the numbers that may be involved, but it is

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conceivable that they may be sufficient to offset, at least in part, the heavy losses incurred by the Viet Cong in their recent attacks. While the quality of such elements would be low, they could be used as replacements for the depleted main and local force units.

There is also a disturbing lack of information on the status of RVNAF soldiers who were home on leave during Tet, and hence possibly trapped in hamlets now occupied by the Viet Cong. We also have received little information on the status of RF and PF outposts in the areas engulfed by the Viet Cong. These isolated elements would seem to be vulnerable to Communist propaganda claims of urban successes, and hence another source of potential manpower for depleted Viet Cong units.

There are indications that the intensified offensive in South Vietnam may be coupled with some form of air action by the North Vietnamese Air Force, by ground attacks in Laos, and possibly by terrorist attacks on U.S. bases in Thailand. Recent unusual flight activity by North Vietnamese MIG-21's and IL-14's and the movement of IL-28's from China back into the Hanoi area could be indicative of preparations for some new form of hostile air action. Reports from Laos indicate impending Communist attacks against government installations in the North (e.g. Site 85) and South (e.g. Saravane). Some reports say Saravane is to be attacked on the 10th or 12th -- a timeframe coinciding with the indicated new wave of attacks in South Vietnam. Reports from Thailand reflect rumors of impending terrorist action against U.S. air bases. While the Communists have not previously reflected the interest in, or the capability for such far-flung coordinated actions, an attempt in this direction would not be inconsistent with the general concept of distracting attention from the main theater of operations and exercising all available capabilities in order to decisively alter the situation in the Communists' favor.

The Communists, in the weeks ahead, thus seem likely to confront the U.S. and the GVN with the most serious political-military challenge since the introduction of our combat forces in 1965. We cannot be certain how the initial phase of the spring offensive has affected Communist plans and capabilities. The evidence, however, strongly suggests there will be renewed and repeated attacks on some urban areas and nearby military installations, and a major campaign against Khe Sanh and along the DMZ. If this effort materializes, it will indicate the Communists remain committed to pressing an "all out" endeavor to bring the war to an early and favorable conclusion.

-4-

~~SECRET~~

Mr. President  
Herewith  
the CIA  
order of battle  
estimate.

4:20 p.m., 2.11.68.

20

~~SECRET~~

11 February 1968

W.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSB 11-22-78, CIA 1-31-80

By if, NARS, Date 7-22-80

61

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Increase in Enemy Forces in Vietnam Since December

1. A review of COMUSMACV's order of battle figures for the period December-January reflects no significant change in the confirmed strength of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong Main Force and Local Force combat units. There have been changes in the listing of non-combat elements (combat support and administrative support, etc.) of a bookkeeping character which do not really reflect changes in the enemy's combat potential.

2. In early December, COMUSMACV listed the enemy strengths as follows:

	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Support Personnel</u>	<u>Total</u>
Main and Local Force	109,860	25,653	134,513
Paramilitary	<u>112,760*</u>	<u>39,165**</u>	<u>151,925</u>
Total	222,620	64,818	286,438

\*Included Self-Defense Militia

\*\*Political cadre

3. As of January, COMUSMACV shifted to the new basis, dropping the Self-Defense Militia and the Political cadre from the accounting, establishing new categories for support personnel, and significantly increasing the strength of the latter. The 22 January figures reported by COMUSMACV are as follows:

	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Combat Support</u>	<u>Admin Support</u>	<u>Total</u>
Main and Local Force	110,286	14,155	38,000	162,441
Guerrillas	<u>73,500</u>	<u>-----</u>	<u>-----</u>	<u>73,500</u>
Total	183,786	14,155	38,000	235,941

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4. A comparison of the two tables reflects an increase of 28,828 in total Main Force and Local Force strength in January over December. This increase results, as indicated above, from changes in accounting techniques for support elements -- it does not represent an increase in combat strength.

5. COMUSMACV has not yet, to our knowledge, added to his confirmed order of battle holdings for combat forces those North Vietnamese Army units known to have infiltrated into South Vietnam since November. These include the 304th and 320th Divisions, which have moved into the area south of the DMZ, and the 31st Regiment of the 341st Division, which has moved down into Quang Nam province from its former location north of the DMZ. These units represent from 22,000 to 27,000 troops which should be considered as additional to the 110,286 Main Force and Local Force elements listed in paragraph 3 above.

6. Because of numerous indications of significant increases in the strength of enemy combat units throughout the country just prior to and since the beginning of the Tet offensive, we believe it would be premature to attempt any recomputation of enemy combat strength on the basis of the casualties reported since 29 January. These indications suggest a widespread recruiting campaign to bring all units up to full strength (significantly above MACV's "confirmed" figure) just before the offensive, and the creation and arming of substantial numbers of guerrillas in populated areas into which the enemy has moved since the offensive began. Thus, while the enemy KIA figures reported from Saigon almost certainly have resulted in a qualitative decrease in the enemy's combat potential, we are not confident that there has been a significant quantitative decrease.

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File date  
10 Feb 68 20

Did the enemy expect an uprising in the cities?

We don't know what Hanoi really expected to achieve.

But we do know what they were telling the troops.

The troops were told that the objective of the assault on the cities was a general uprising. Most units had no contingency plans for withdrawal if the assault failed. Although some prisoners have indicated that they did not expect an uprising, it appears that the majority believed what they were told by their leaders.

Most seem to have been shocked that an uprising failed to materialize.

Obviously, the enemy had to have some help from VC sympathizers within the cities. But these sympathizers, in combination with the assault forces, utterly failed to stimulate any popular revolt in the cities.

The offensive was costly to the South Vietnamese -- and not all of the costs have yet been added up -- decreased confidence in the government's ability to protect the people -- disruption of the revolutionary development program -- as well as the costs of reconstruction and reconstitution.

But the primary objective of an uprising was not achieved.

Did the enemy expect to shake the Government of South Vietnam?

Beginning last fall the enemy began talking about a coalition government.

Their view of a coalition government was one which:

- was to be dominated by the NLF,
- could include non-communist elements, and
- would have no place for Thieu, Ky, or other influential members of the present GVN.

Obviously, a prerequisite of such a coalition government was the destruction of the present government.

In addition to a military assault and an uprising in the cities, the enemy's plan called for:

- elimination or capture of key military and civilian officials at all governmental levels,
- creation of a chaotic condition which the GVN would be unable to cope with, and
- establishment of a new political front which would serve as a rallying point for a confused, frightened, and disillusioned populace.

The enemy failed. The new front has fizzled. The government of South Vietnam is a going concern. Nevertheless, it is faced with a tremendous task of leadership in restoring order, regaining the confidence of the people, and stimulating the whole populace to a sense of commitment and engagement in tackling the difficult problems created by the enemy offensive.

Was it costly to the enemy?

The most obvious costs to the enemy are the casualties they suffered: more than 22,000 killed in action and almost 5,000 detainees (many of whom will turn out to be prisoners of war). They lost about 5,900 weapons captured.

Enemy killed in action were more than ten times friendly killed in action. This is about double the normal ratio.

In addition, there are other less tangible costs to the enemy:

- some loss of confidence in their leadership,
  - decrease in morale resulting from failure to achieve their objectives and heavy casualties,
  - loss of many of their best-trained, most dedicated people and organizations,
  - uncovering of many of the covert VC sympathizers, and
  - a large number of prisoners captured by the ARVN and U.S. -- which should yield valuable intelligence for future operations against them.
-

What are the key indicators to look for?

The most important indicator will be the vitality of the government leadership -- both executive and legislative branches -- in tackling the tremendous problems created by the TET offensive.

Other indicators:

- a major enemy assault on Khe Sanh and the DMZ area,
- possible offensives in other areas,
- possibly a second round of attacks on the cities,
- progress in restoring order in the villages and hamlets, recouping losses and revitalizing the revolutionary development program,
- the development of a national political party, and
- the stability of U.S. public opinion.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 12, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WHEELER, CHAIRMAN JCS

You should know that the President currently looks to the Situation Room in the White House as a source of full, detailed and current information on the military situation in Vietnam.

Although I hesitate to add an additional requirement, we need additional assistance in meeting this Presidential requirement. You will recall that in the early days of the Situation Room, the Joint Chiefs volunteered to provide additional support upon request.

The kind of additional support I am now requesting consists of an instruction to the NMCC and DIA to provide to the Situation Room on a continuing basis the following:

1. large separate display maps showing:
  - a. enemy force dispositions within South Vietnam
  - b. Allied force dispositions within South Vietnam
  - c. the situation in the Khe Sanh area
  - d. the situation along the DMZ and in Quang Tri Province
2. a chart showing the present supply status at Khe Sanh and a comparison with the previous 24-hour period.
3. a weather report covering the next 48 hours for Khe Sanh, Hue and Danang with notations as to capability for fixed wing and helicopter flights.
4. the present status of Route 1 between Danang and Hue.
5. the present status of Route 4 in Fourth Corps.

I am assigning Col. McGowan from Gen. Taylor's staff and Arthur McCafferty from my staff to work out the details with Gen. Wisman's office in the NMCC.

*Walt* Rostow

*Dispatched 7/12/68*

*Outside Rept.*

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INFORM \* TION  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET -- EYES ONLY~~

Monday, February 12, 1968  
9:35 a.m. *Rec'd 9:42*

Mr. President:

Herewith Westy's message:

loud and clear and, in my judgment,  
correct.

*W. W. F.* Rostow

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-25-78; NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

~~EYES ONLY~~

63

12 FEB 1968  
Z 120612Z ZYM ZFF-1

FM GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON

TO ADM SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII

GEN WHEELER CJCS WASH

ZEM

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD letter NOV 22 1978

By is, NARS, Date 6-11-79

~~TOP SECRET LIMITED DISTRIBUTION~~ MAC 01975 EYES ONLY

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION AND REQUIREMENTS

1. SINCE LAST OCTOBER, THE ENEMY HAS LAUNCHED A MAJOR CAMPAIGN SIGNALING A CHANGE OF STRATEGY FROM ONE OF PROTRACTED WAR TO ONE OF QUICK MILITARY/POLITICAL VICTORY DURING THE AMERICAN ELECTION YEAR. HIS FIRST PHASE, DESIGNED TO SECURE THE BORDER AREAS, HAS FAILED. THE SECOND PHASE, LAUNCHED ON THE OCCASION OF TET AND DESIGNED TO INITIATE PUBLIC UPRISING, TO DISRUPT THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE VIETNAMESE FORCES, AND TO ISOLATE THE CITIES, HAS ALSO FAILED. NEVERTHELESS, THE ENEMY'S THIRD PHASE, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO SEIZE QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN PROVINCES HAS JUST BEGUN. THIS WILL BE A MAXIMUM EFFORT BY THE ENEMY, CAPITALIZING ON HIS SHORT LINES OF COMMUNICATION, THE POOR WEATHER PREVAILING IN THE AREA FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, AND HIS ABILITY TO BRING ARTILLERY AND ROCKET FIRE TO BEAR ON INSTALLATIONS FROM POSITIONS IN THE DMZ AND NORTH AND FROM LAOS TO THE WEST. FURTHERMORE, HE CAN BRING ARMOR TO BEAR ON THE BATTLEFIELD. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ENEMY HAS DECIDED HE CAN NOT "STRIKE OUT" IN THIS PHASE AS A MATTER OF FACE. WE CAN THEREFORE EXPECT HIM TO EXERT ON THE BATTLEFIELD THE MAXIMUM MILITARY POWER AVAILABLE

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~~EYES ONLY~~

TO HIM. IN ADDITION, WE MUST EXPECT HIM TO TRY TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE IN ALL OTHER AREAS.

2. IF THE ENEMY HAS CHANGED HIS STRATEGY, WE MUST CHANGE OURS. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT IS OUR NATIONAL POLICY TO PROHIBIT THE ENEMY FROM SEIZING AND PERMANENTLY OCCUPYING THE TWO NORTHERN PROVINCES, I INTEND TO HOLD THEM AT ALL COST. HOWEVER, TO DO SO I MUST REINFORCE FROM OTHER AREAS AND ACCEPT A MAJOR RISK, UNLESS I CAN GET REINFORCEMENTS, WHICH I DESPERATELY NEED.

3. TO BRING THE MAXIMUM MILITARY POWER TO BEAR ON THE ENEMY IN QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN AND TO PREVENT THE GRADUAL EROSION OF THESE TWO PROVINCES, I MUST OPEN UP HIGHWAY 1 FROM DANANG AND HIGHWAY 9 TO KHE SANH. THESE TWO TASKS ARE NOT UNREASONABLE, PROVIDED THAT I CAN DIVERT THE TROOPS TO PROVIDE SECURITY AND COMMIT THE ENGINEERS TO THE TASK. I THEREFORE MUST MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT IN TROOPS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE LOGISTICS TO SUPPORT IN FULLY ADEQUATE FASHION TROOPS NOW DEPLOYED AND REINFORCEMENTS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED. FIRST, IT WILL REQUIRE A MARINE REGIMENT OR AN ARMY BRIGADE TO SECURE THE AI VAN PASS FROM QUANG TRI TO HUE/PHU BAI. ANOTHER REGIMENT OR BRIGADE WILL BE REQUIRED BETWEEN HUE AND QUANG TRI. FINALLY, A THIRD REGIMENT OR BRIGADE WILL BE REQUIRED TO SECURE HIGHWAY 9 TO THE KHE SANH AREA. I CANNOT AFFORD TO DIVERT TROOPS NOW DEPLOYED IN THAT AREA FOR THE PURPOSE AND AM THEREFORE FORCED TO DEPLOY THE 101ST ABN DIV FROM THE III CORPS; THIS IS NOW IN THE PROCESS AND WILL BE DONE AS FAST AS TRANSPORTATION CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE. EVEN THE COMMITMENT OF THE 101ST WILL

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C PUT ME IN NO BETTER THAN A MARGINAL POSTURE TO COPE WITH THE  
C SITUATION AT HAND.

C 4. THIS HAS BEEN A LIMITED WAR WITH LIMITED OBJECTIVES,  
C FOUGHT WITH LIMITED MEANS AND PROGRAMMED FOR THE UTILIZATION  
C OF LIMITED RESOURCES. THIS WAS A FEASIBLE PROPOSITION ON THE  
C ASSUMPTION THAT THE ENEMY WAS TO FIGHT A PROTRACTED WAR. WE ARE  
C NOW IN A NEW BALL GAME WHERE WE FACE A DETERMINED, HIGHLY  
C DISCIPLINED ENEMY, FULLY MOBILIZED TO ACHIEVE A QUICK VICTORY.  
C HE IS IN THE PROCESS OF THROWING IN ALL HIS "MILITARY CHIPS TO  
C GO FOR BROKE." HE REALIZES AND I REALIZE THAT HIS GREATEST  
C OPPORTUNITY TO DO THIS IS IN QUANG TRI-THUA THIEN. WE CANNOT  
C PERMIT THIS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MUST SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY  
C TO CRUSH HIM. AT THE SAME TIME, WE CANNOT PERMIT HIM TO  
C MAKE GAINS IN THE OTHER CORPS AREAS, AND I AM OBLIGATED TO  
C MAINTAIN THE MINIMUM ESSENTIAL TROOPS IN THESE AREAS  
C TO INSURE STABILITY OF THE SITUATION AND TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE.  
C EQUAL IN PRIORITY TO THE ENEMY IS THE SAIGON AREA AND  
C A HIGH RISK IN THIS AREA IS UNACCEPTABLE. I NOW HAVE APPROXIMATELY  
C 500,000 US TROOPS AND 60,981 FREE WORLD MILITARY ASSISTANCE  
C TROOPS. FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE THAIS AND KOREANS ARE  
C MONTHS AWAY. I HAVE BEEN PROMISED 525,000 TROOPS, WHICH  
C ACCORDING TO PRESENT PROGRAMS WILL NOT MATERIALIZE UNTIL  
C 1969. I NEED THESE 525,000 TROOPS NOW. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT  
C THIS CEILING ASSUMED THE SUBSTANTIAL REPLACEMENT OF MILITARY  
C BY CIVILIANS, WHICH NOW APPEARS IMPRACTICAL. I NEED REINFORCEMENTS  
C IN TERMS OF COMBAT ELEMENTS. I THEREFORE URGE THAT THERE BE

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DEPLOYED IMMEDIATELY A MARINE REGIMENT PACKAGE AND A BRIGADE PACKAGE OF THE 82D ABN DIV AND THAT THE REMAINING ELEMENTS OF THOSE TWO DIVISIONS BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW AT A LATER TIME. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

5. I MUST STRESS EQUALLY THAT WE FACE A SITUATION OF GREAT OPPORTUNITY AS WELL AS HEIGHTENED RISK. HOWEVER, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE HERE, TOO. I DO NOT SEE HOW THE ENEMY CAN LONG SUSTAIN THE HEAVY LOSSES WHICH HIS NEW STRATEGY IS ENABLING US TO INFLICT ON HIM. THEREFORE, ADEQUATE REINFORCEMENTS SHOULD PERMIT ME NOT ONLY TO CONTAIN HIS I CORPS OFFENSIVE BUT ALSO TO CAPITALIZE ON HIS LOSSES BY SEIZING THE INITIATIVE IN OTHER AREAS. EXPLOITING THIS OPPORTUNITY COULD MATERIALLY SHORTEN THE WAR.

6. IF CINCPAC CONCURS, REQUEST THAT THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF BE INFORMED OF MY POSITION.

7. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS MESSAGE IN DETAIL WITH AMB BUNKER AND HE CONCURS.

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

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64

INFORMATION  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

Monday, February 12, 1968  
9:50 a.m.

Mr. President:

*Rec'd  
GSS*

Herewith Adm. Sharp concurs  
in Westy's analysis and request of  
this morning.

*W. Rostow*  
W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSD 10-25-78; NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (ing), NARS, Date 8-29-80

EYES ONLY

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ADM MOORER CNO WASH DC  
ZEN/GEN CHAPMAN CMC WASH DC  
O P 120350Z ZYH ZFF6  
M ADM SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII  
TO GEN WHEELER CJCS WASH DC  
INFO GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON  
ZEM

DECLASSIFIED

Authority JCS 10-10-78 letter  
By ig, NARS, Date 3-29-79

~~TOP SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION AND REQUIREMENTS

A. MACV 01975/120612Z FEB 68

1. I DO INDEED CONCUR IN YOUR ANALYSIS IN REF A AND HAD ALREADY RELEASED A MESSAGE CONFIRMING OUR CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL FORCES SOUTH OF AI VAN PASS. I RECOMMEND THEY BE AUTHORIZED FOR DEPLOYMENT AT ONCE.
2. IF ENEMY ACTIONS REFLECT HIS DESPERATION, THESE ADDITIVE FORCES CAN ASSIST IN DELIVERY OF A DECISIVE BLOW. IF HIS STRENGTH AND DETERMINATION HAVE BEEN UNDERESTIMATED WE WILL NEED THEM EVEN MORE. WARM REGARDS.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS  
225

NNNN

~~TOP SECRET~~

EYES ONLY

65

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Monday, February 12, 1968  
10:30 a. m.

(PS)

Rec'd  
10:46 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith today's Khe Sanh supply situation  
as compared to yesterday.

We shall file each day in this form.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~ attachment

~~SECRET~~



THE JOINT STAFF

THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD letter NOV 22 1978

By ip, NARS, Date 6-11-79

12 February 1968  
0930 EST

2A

65a

MEMORANDUM FOR WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

Subject: Supply Status at Khe Sanh as of 112300 EST  
(121200 SVN)

1. The Khe Sanh Dump or Ammunition Supply Point (ASP)  
status as of the above time is as follows:

	<u>Days supply on hand</u>	<u>Previous status 102300 EST (111200 SVN)</u>
Class I (Rations) (Meal, individual, combat)	9 days	10 days
Class III (Fuel)		
Aviation Gas (AVGAS)	12 days	12 days
JP-4 (Jet fuel)	4 days	4 days
Motor Gasoline (MOGAS)	5 days	6 days
Diesel	5 days	6 days
Class V (Ammunition)		
a. High explosive		
60 mm mortar	+ 15 days	12 days
81 mm mortar	12 days	17 days
90 mm recoilless rifle	+ 109 days	94 days
4.2" mortar	30 days	36 days
105 mm howitzer	+ 17 days	10 days
155 mm howitzer	23 days	25 days
b. Anti-tank	<u>Rounds on hand</u>	
90 mm recoilless rifle	478	478
60 mm rocket (light 190 anti-tank weapon - LAW)		190

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SECRET

Anti-tank mines (M-19)	100	100
106 mm recoilless rifle	316	316
(HEP-T) (High explosive plastic - tracer)		

Class V (COFRAM)	<u>Days supply on hand</u>	<u>Previous status</u>
		102300 EST
		(111200 SVN)
105 mm howitzer	5 days	5 days
155 mm howitzer	5 days	5 days
40 mm grenade launcher	5 days	5 days
Hand grenades	10 days	10 days

2. The foregoing information has been extracted from Gen Westmoreland's eighth report to Gen Wheeler on the Khe Sanh area covering the period 102300 EST (111200 SVN) to 112300 EST (121200 SVN).

*W. R. Mc Clendon*

W. R. MC CLENDON  
Rear Admiral, USN  
Deputy Director for  
Operations (NMCC)

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COMMUNICATIONS BOOK COPY

FROM: General Wheeler, CJCS

TO: General Westmoreland, COMUSMACV

INFO: Admiral Sharp, CINCPAC

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

CJCS

~~SECRET - EYES ONLY~~ - JCS #01695 Feb 68

(DELIVER SOONEST DURING WAKING HOURS)

DECLASSIFIED

Authority JCS 10-10-78 letter  
By inf, NARS, Date 3-24-79

EYES ONLY

MODIS

ZFF-3

DATE	TIME
11	2008
MONTH	YEAR
Feb	1968
PAGE NO.	NO. OF PAGES

EYES ONLY

D R A F T E R	TYPED NAME AND TITLE	SIGNATURE
	<del>SECRET</del>	<i>Paul M. Kearney</i>
TYPED (or stamped) NAME AND TITLE		
Mr. Paul M. Kearney, AdmAsst C/CS		
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION		REGRADING INSTRUCTIONS

DD FORM 173  
1 NOV 63

REPLACES EDITION OF 1 MAY 66 WHICH WILL BE USED.

~~SECRET~~  
~~SECRET~~  
~~SECRET~~  
EYES ONLY

OK  
W

~~SECRET~~ - CABLE - EYES ONLY - IMMEDIATE

FM GEN EARLE G. WHEELER, CJCS  
TO GEN W. C. WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV  
INFO: ADM U.S.G. SHARP, CINCPAC  
DELIVER SOONEST DURING WAKING HOURS

REF: MAC. 01858

1. At a meeting at the White House this afternoon attended by Secy Rusk, Secy McNamara, Mr. Helms, General Max Taylor, Mr. Clark Clifford, Walt Rostow and myself there was ~~very~~ much discussion of the referenced message. The critical question addressed centered around paragraph 9 of the reference which leads off that you would welcome reinforcements at any time they can be made available and stated the purposes to which you would put these forces. Specifically, your message is interpreted here as expressing the following:

a. You could use additional U.S. troop units, but you are not expressing a firm demand for them; <sup>in sum,</sup> ~~you~~ you do not fear defeat if you are not reinforced.

b. You are concerned as to the possible status of the ARVN as a result of recent combat actions.

c. You are concerned about the reliability of your logistic system into northern I Corps Tactical Zone and believe that you must control and use Highway 1 through the Ai Van Pass.

d. Additional forces would give you increased capability to regain the initiative and go on the offensive at an appropriate time.

~~SECRET~~  
EYES ONLY

EYES ONLY

~~SECRET~~

EYES ONLY

2. ~~There was~~ Considerable discussion of the situation centered about the change in enemy strategy, its effect, and why the change was instituted. The question arose as to whether or not we too should not change our strategy. For example, one conferee stated that priority 1 should be to clear the cities; priority 2, give away no territory of value but avoid combat with the enemy in terrain and weather favoring him. You will perceive the thought in priority 2 that perhaps we are making a mistake by attempting to hold the Khe Sanh area and perhaps should concentrate our defenses further to the east. A further thought cited by the same conferee concerned the desirability of using U.S. troops now in the Delta as your reserve, leaving IV Corps operations to the ARVN.

3. I will telephone you at the usual time tomorrow. I would particularly appreciate having your views at that time ~~on~~ <sup>regarding</sup> to the content of paragraph 1 of this message. Moreover, I would appreciate having your views by return message on all of the questions raised in this message.

4. FYI: I am considering a trip to visit with you sometime in the next few days in order to obtain at firsthand your thoughts as to the situation and corrective measures needed. If the trip comes off, I will quite probably stop in Hawaii en route to South Vietnam for about a half day to talk things over with you, Oley. Warm regards to you both.

~~SECRET~~

EYES ONLY

67  
n

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Monday, February 12, 1968  
11:30 a. m.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Mr. President:

Herewith Bus Wheeler's supplement and commentary to Westy's cable of this morning.

Para. 5 is interesting. We'll get the full text soonest.

*Rec'd 11:31 a*  
*W. W. Rostow*

~~TOP SECRET-NO DIS~~ attachment



~~TOP SECRET~~

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

NODIS

CM-3003-68

12 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Reinforcements for South Vietnam

1. General Westmoreland's message (MAC 01975) which I furnished to you earlier today is not in response to a message I sent to him last night, copy of which is attached hereto. General Westmoreland is drafting now a response to my message.

2. General Westmoreland repeated over the telephone to me at 0815 hours the gist of his earlier message; namely, he believes the VC struck out in Phases 1 and 2 of their offensive. He considers he has opportunities available to exploit the enemy's failures. He needs soonest one brigade of the 82d Airborne Division and a Marine Corps Regiment. He considers that he can hold off on a decision to request the remainder of the 82d Airborne Division and the other three battalions of Marines until later. He can absorb logistically the troops that he asks for now. It is conceivable that the troops he asks for will be needed only for six months; he will not bind himself that he will not need more troops at a later time. He pointed out that the forces he is requesting are within the 525,000 ceiling to which he agreed. Parenthetically, he commented that he doesn't know how sacrosanct that figure is. In response to the questions posed in my message to him, attached hereto, he made the following comments:

a. He does not anticipate "defeat," but he desperately needs the troop elements requested in order to capitalize on opportunities available to him. The enemy has been repulsed in II, III and IV Corps areas, but I Corps must be reinforced. If requested troops are not made available, he would have to undertake an unacceptably risky course of drawing additional forces

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Authority AFS 10-10-78 letter  
By if, NARS, Date 3-29-79

~~TOP SECRET~~

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~~TOP SECRET~~

from elsewhere in South Vietnam.

b. On balance the ARVN has done a good job. He does not know the status of Regional Force and Popular Force troop elements. He believes it will be 1 April before the status of ARVN is known.

c. He can support logistically the forces he has requested; however, it is mandatory that he open and keep open Highways 1 and 9 and this will cost troops.

d. Additional forces will give him increased capability to regain the initiative and go on the offensive at an appropriate time.

3. As to paragraph 2 of my cable regarding strategy, General Westmoreland says they are good questions which he will respond to more fully in a message now being drafted. His brief responses to the thoughts expressed in paragraph 2 of my message are as follows:

a. His Priority One objective is to clear the cities.

b. He agrees with the expressed Priority Two of giving away no territory of value but he points out that sometimes he must fight in unfavorable terrain and weather in order not to give up important ground.

c. As to holding Khe Sanh, he has prepared on a close hold basis contingency plans to execute a tactical withdrawal if this becomes desirable and necessary. However, he believes strongly that retention of Khe Sanh will afford him in future opportunities to exploit the enemy's commitment of troops in and around Khe Sanh and deal him a severe and perhaps a knock out blow.

d. As to the Delta, he does have contingency plans to move forces from there as required. He points out that the battalions committed (US) in the Delta have stiffened the ARVN and have helped them to repulse the enemy with heavy losses. His Riverine Force is now being used in the vicinity of Can Tho with good effect.

~~TOP SECRET~~

4. He reports that the damaged C-130 at Khe Sanh Airfield is undergoing repair and he hopes to get it out today. He intends to use C-123s and Caribou aircraft from now on to resupply Khe Sanh in order to conserve his C-130 assets. He is disseminating gravel in large quantities in and around Khe Sanh in those areas which he does not anticipate his forces will have to enter; there is evidence that the gravel is giving the enemy trouble. He is employing his B-52s with effect in bombing enemy forces and installations in the Khe Sanh area.

5. A senior VC political cadre was captured yesterday at Danang. This man had on him a long document, now being translated, which apparently represents the results of a high level conference of VC officials. The first quick examination of the document indicates that its contents reflect the view that the VC made a mistake in launching their Tet offensive at the time and in the manner they did. Specifically, the country was not ready for a mass uprising and US/ARVN military strength was seriously underestimated by VC/NVA forces.

6. While the decisions and requests made in his message of today are his, he has consulted closely with Ambassador Bunker, General Abrams and Mr. Komer who all agree as to the validity of his assessments and request for additional troop strength.

*Earle G. Wheeler*

EARLE G. WHEELER

Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

## MEMORANDUM

2C  
INFORMATION

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 12, 1968

11:45 a.m.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

MR. PRESIDENT: Authority DSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

For what it may be worth, here are my thoughts.

1. As Westy said today, and you understood for a long time, the enemy decided to abandon his attritional strategy and go for broke. In strategic terms, Saigon and Washington understood this. Tactically, it was understood with respect to I Corps and the DMZ offensive. What was not understood and budgeted for was an attack on the cities and towns on the scale, with the concentration, and with the timing that it occurred.

2. The enemy failed in his maximum objective. But he achieved these secondary objectives:

- he shook U. S. public opinion;
- he shook world opinion;
- he shook the governmental structure;
- he shook the RF and PF and imposed high casualties on the ARVN;
- he forced a significant piecemeal diversion of Westy's slim reserve forces for the I Corps offensive.

3. He now evidently hopes to force a major setback on us in I Corps while continuing to harass the cities, pick up pieces of the countryside, and prevent Westy from concentrating sufficient force in I Corps.

4. So far as U. S. and world opinion are concerned, there is only one satisfactory answer: a clear defeat of the enemy in I Corps, while rallying the South Vietnamese to get back on their feet elsewhere. Moreover, I Corps is -- or should be -- our kind of battle. It has guerrilla elements, but is much more nearly conventional war. It should be our kind of war if Westy is not strapped for men, aircraft, and supplies.

5. Only such a demonstration is likely to permit us to end the war on honorable terms.

6. Therefore, I am for a very strong response to Westy's cable. Only you can make the political assessment of what it would cost to call up the reserves; but that would be the most impressive demonstration to Hanoi and its friends.

7. As for the issue Clark Clifford raised -- how do you explain this in terms of past statements of progress -- I believe the outline for a talk I gave you yesterday handles it with one exception.

We begin by explaining the kind of rural war it was since 1965 and the

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2-

progress we were making. Evidently, Hanoi decided that this attritional war was not moving its way: they were losing population; a legitimate constitutional government was being created. They thought their position would be worse a year from now than at present.

Therefore, they designed this go-for-broke offensive. We knew about it; but they achieved tactical surprise in the cities.

They failed at the frontier (Loc Ninh and Dak To).

They hit the government and ARVN and urban population hard;  
but they failed.

Now they are rounding on I Corps; and we're not going to let them have it.

We are sending men to assure Westy the reserves he needs; we are calling up reserves to make sure no one gets the idea that we can't handle our other world commitments.

*W. C. Rostow*

~~TOP SECRET~~

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INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

Monday, February 12, 1968  
1:00 p.m.

Mr. President:

*Rec'd 1:10 P*

Herewith fairly clear information  
that the road from Danang to Hue is  
open.

*W. W. Rostow*  
W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (ing), NARS, Date 8-29-80

~~SECRET~~



THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

12 February 1968  
1105 EST

THE JOINT STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

Subject: I Corps Road Status

The following information is provided in response to Mr. McCafferty's questions:

a. The Hai Van (Ai Van) Pass is open. The bridge reported blown at 080800 EST has been repaired. No enemy activity reported near the pass.

b. Highway 1 from Da Nang to Dong Ha is open, except at a point just north of the Ai Van Pass. There, a large culvert was reported destroyed at 112000 EST (120900 SVN). The estimated time for completion of repairs is unknown. However, MACV advises that it is a relatively small engineering task.

*W. R. MC Clendon*

W. R. MC CLENDON  
Rear Admiral, USN  
Deputy Director for  
Operations (NMCC)

Distribution

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PAC Desk

DECLASSIFIED  
OSD letter NOV 22 1978  
Authority \_\_\_\_\_  
By *if*, NARS, Date *6-11-79*

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

26  
72  
INFORMATION

Monday, February 12, 1968  
5:20 p. m.

*Rec'd  
6:08p*

MR. PRESIDENT:

As of February 11, enemy killed in action since 29 January is estimated at 31,816. U. S. killed in action 1012; ARVN 2105; other free world forces 62. Total friendly killed in action 3179.

The ratio over the whole period is, then, almost exactly 10 to 1.

Total enemy weapons captured is 8799. The proportion between enemy killed in action and weapons captured is 3.6 to 1.

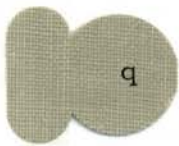
This is approximately in the range of previous experience. For example, in 1967 the average enemy killed in action per week was 1690. Average weekly weapons captured 598. The proportion: 2.84 to 1.

In addition, 5828 of the enemy were detained. The exact number who were Communist military has not yet been established.

*W. W. Rostow*

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Authority OSD 10-25-78, NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (ing), NARS, Date 8-29-80



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

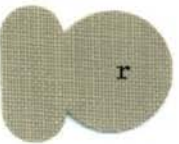
Monday, Feb. 12, 1968  
7:15 p. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Herewith Sect. McNamara's proposed press  
statement on the battalions.

*W. Rostow*

Attachment



~~SECRET~~

2c

71a

DRAFT - 12 Feb 1968

Six additional battalions of combat troops are being deployed to South Vietnam, totaling approximately 10,500 men.

Three battalions are army units from the 82d airborne division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Three are Marine Corps units from the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California, and the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

These forces are being deployed at the request of General William C. Westmoreland as insurance against the threat of the North Vietnamese regular Army's campaign in the DMZ-Quang Tri-Thua Thien area.

The North Vietnamese have introduced some 24,000 additional regular Army troops -- the 304th and 320th Divisions -- into the Khe Sanh area in December and January.

There are currently approximately 500,000 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam. The deployment of 525,000 has been authorized.

No decision has yet been made on whether these will eventually be in addition to the 525,000 or part of that total.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority OSD letter NOV 22 1978  
By if, NARS, Date 6-11-79

~~SECRET~~

*file*

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Monday, Feb. 12, 1968

8:20 p.m. *rec'd 8:40p*

Mr. President:

You may wish to consider adding to the third paragraph of Sect. McNamara's proposed statement -- after the word "area" -- "and the possibility of renewed attack on the cities."

Reason:

-- It is true, since Westy needs his reserve for either purpose;

-- It avoids the charge that he was fooled on the cities and now he's about to be fooled on I Corps.

*Walt*  
W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~ attachment



~~SECRET~~

2c

72a

DRAFT - 12 Feb 1968

1. *Revised*  
Six additional battalions of combat troops are being deployed to South Vietnam, totaling *less than the 1/2 of the 15,000 remaining of the 525 authorized* approximately 10,500 men. *previous approval*
2. Three battalions are army units from the 82d airborne division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Three are Marine Corps units from the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California, and the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
3. These forces are being deployed at the request of General William C. Westmoreland as insurance against the threat of the North Vietnamese regular Army's campaign in the DMZ-Quang Tri-Thua Thien area. *all the possibility of recent attacks on the cities*
4. The North Vietnamese have introduced some 24,000 additional regular Army troops -- the 304th and 320th Divisions -- into the Khe Sanh area in December and January.
5. There are currently approximately 500,000 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam. The deployment of 525,000 has been authorized.
6. *present policy*  
No decision has yet been made *affecting the* on whether these will eventually be in addition to the 525,000 or part of that total.

DECLASSIFIED  
letter NOV 22 1978

Authority

By

NARS, Date

6-11-79

Additional troops are being deployed to South Vietnam, totaling less than one half of those <sup>25,000</sup> previously authorized and approved.

~~SECRET~~

INFORMATION

*Suspense*

Monday, Feb. 12, 1968  
8:20 p. m.

72b

Mr. President:

You may wish to consider adding to the third paragraph of Sect. McNamara's proposed statement -- after the word "area" -- "and the possibility of renewed attack on the cities."

Reason:

-- It is true, since Westy needs his reserve for either purpose;

-- It avoids the charge that he was fooled on the cities and now he's about to be fooled on I Corps.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~ attachment

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

72c

DRAFT - 12 Feb 1968

Authority OSD letter NOV 22 1978

By if, NARS, Date 6-11-79

1. Six additional battalions of combat troops are being deployed to South Vietnam, totaling approximately 10,500 men.
2. Three battalions are army units from the 82d airborne division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Three are Marine Corps units from the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California, and the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
3. These forces are being deployed at the request of General William C. Westmoreland as insurance against the threat of the North Vietnamese regular Army's campaign in the DMZ-Quang Tri-Thua Thien area. *+ possible general attack*
4. The North Vietnamese have introduced some 24,000 additional regular Army troops -- the 304th and 320th Divisions -- into the Khe Sanh area in December and January. *on 1/15*
5. There are currently approximately 500,000 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam. The deployment of 525,000 has been authorized.
6. No decision has yet been made on whether these will eventually be in addition to the 525,000 or part of that total.

*of the 525,000 approved - 500,000 about 1/2 remain*  
*Several battalions of combat troops as in the Gulf of the 525,000*  
*totally less than 525,000*  
*525,000*

~~SECRET~~

73

ps

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

Monday, February 12, 1968  
9:00 p.m.

Mr. President:

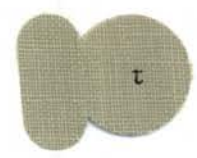
Here is Gen. Westmoreland's  
further reply to the questions asked  
by Gen. Wheeler.

*Brown*  
Bromley Smith

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-25-78; NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80



FM GEN WESTMORELAND  
TO GENERAL WHEELER CJCS  
INFO ADMIRAL SHARP CINCPAC

~~TOP SECRET~~ MAC 02018 EYES ONLY SECTION ONE OF TWO  
REF: JCS 01695 - *a-1-1-1*

1. FIRST, WITH REGARD TO THE INTERPRETATION WHICH  
YOU HAVE PLACED ON MY EARLIER MESSAGE.

A. I AM EXPRESSING A FIRM REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL  
TROOPS, NOT BECAUSE I FEAR DEFEAT IF I AM NOT REINFORCED,  
BUT BECAUSE I DO NOT FEEL THAT I CAN FULLY GRASP THE  
INITIATIVE FROM THE RECENTLY REINFORCED ENEMY WITHOUT  
THEM. ON THE OTHER HAND A SET BACK IS FULLY POSSIBLE  
IF I AM NOT REINFORCED AND IT IS LIKELY THAT WE WILL  
LOSE GROUND IN OTHER AREAS IF I AM REQUIRED TO MAKE

SUBSTANTIAL REINFORCEMENT TO I CORPS.

B. THE STATUS OF THE ARVN IS HARD TO DETERMINE AT  
THIS TIME. VIEN IS ENCOURAGED BY THE ABSENCE OF PENETRATION;  
BY THE EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DIVISION COMMANDERS;  
AND BY THE NUMBER OF TROOPS THAT ARE VOLUNTARILY REPORTING  
INTO ARVN HEADQUARTERS FROM A LEAVE STATUS, TO TAKE THEIR  
POSITIONS IN PROVISIONAL UNITS WHILE AWAITING RETURN TO THEIR  
OWN ORGANIZATION. THE BIG QUESTION MARK IS THE RF/PF. *(Original Forces and Popular Forces)*

HAVE ASKED FOR A COMPLETE STATUS REPORT BY 29 FEB. BY  
THIS TIME THE TRUE ARVN SITUATION SHOULD BE SIFTED OUT.  
IN THE MEANWHILE, I AM HOPING FOR THE BEST BUT RECOGNIZE  
THAT THERE WILL BE MANY DIFFICULTIES.

*Comm* C. THE CAPACITY OF OUR LOGISTIC SYSTEM IN NORTHERN  
I CTZ MUST BE BUILT UP AS WE INCREASE THE TROOP DENSITY.  
WE HAVE HAD VERY LITTLE MARGIN OVER OUR REQUIREMENTS. THEREFORE,  
A FIRMLY CONTROLLED LAND LOC IS A NECESSARY ADJUNCT TO THE  
SEA AND AIR LOC'S. HIGHWAY ONE IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO SUSTAIN  
ADDITIONAL TROOPS NORTH OF AI VAN PASS. MY PLANS FOR REINFORCING  
NORTHERN I CTZ INCLUDE OPENING THIS LOC. *Line of Communication*

D. THE NEED FOR TROOPS TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE WAS EXPRESSED,

DECLASSIFIED  
OSD letter NOV 22 1978

Authority                       
By if, NARS, Date 6-11-79

IN PARAGRAPH A ABOVE.

2. THE FOLLOWING IS IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER OR NOT WE SHOULD CHANGE OUR STRATEGY.

3. I DO NOT PLAN TO CHANGE MY LOCAL STRATEGY. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN CENTERED ON DEFEATING THE ENEMY MAIN FORCES WHILE PROVIDING A SHIELD OF SECURITY BEHIND WHICH THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY COULD BE RE-ESTABLISHED. THIS HAD TO BE TIED IN CLOSELY-- PARTICULARLY IN THE SECOND ASPECT--WITH THE ARVN FORCES.

4. CERTAINLY, THE MAJOR POLITICO - MILITARY OFFENSIVE WHICH THE ENEMY LAUNCHED AT TET HAS CAUSED US TO RE-EVALUATE OUR PRIORITIES. WE HAVE HAD TO REVISE OUR OFFENSIVE PLANS, ESPECIALLY IN III CTZ, AND FACE THE REALITIES OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. WE HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO DIVERT MORE SUPPORT TO THE ARVN IN PROTECTING THE POPULATED AREAS. THIS WAS DONE BEFORE THE TET AGGRESSION BASED ON INTELLIGENCE AND *my* ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION.

5. I AGREE WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT CLEARING THE CITIES IS OF HIGHEST PRIORITY. TO THIS END THE ARVN ARE DEVOTING A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THEIR ASSETS. THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE DELTA WHERE A LARGE NUMBER OF CITIES HAVE BEEN ATTACKED, BUT HAVE BEEN CLEARED; IN SAIGON WHERE UP TO SIXTEEN GENERAL RESERVE BATTALIONS HAVE

BEEN EMPLOYED; THROUGHOUT II CTZ WHERE ALL OF THE CITIES HAVE BEEN CLEARED OF VC UNITS, AND IN HUE. IN MANY OF THESE ACTIONS, US FORCES HAVE BEEN COMMITTED. IN THE DELTA, AN ADDITIONAL US BRIGADE OF TWO BATTALIONS WAS REQUIRED TO SAVE THE SITUATION AT BEN TRE AND AT MY THO. THE MRF TONIGHT IS HEADING TOWARDS CAN THO TO STAVE OFF A THREAT TO THE CAPITOL. THIS IS THE FARTHEST SOUTH THAT THE MRF HAS BEEN COMMITTED. IN SAIGON, ONE OF OUR BATTALIONS IS IN THE CITY AND SEVERAL OTHERS ARE MANEUVERING AGAINST THE ENEMY FORCES THAT ARE IN THE AREA. DANANG IS ALMOST ENTIRELY PROTECTED BY US FORCES. IN HUE AND QUANG TRI, US ELEMENTS PARTICIPATED HEAVILY IN THE CLEARING OPERATIONS.

6. DESPITE THE HIGH PRIORITY ACCORDED TO THE CITIES, I STILL SEE THE ENEMY POSITION IN THE KHE SANH/DMZ AREA AS THE GREATEST SINGLE THREAT. IT MUST BE STOPPED OR ALL OF NORTHERN I CTZ WILL BE IN JEOPARDY. TO DEFEAT THIS ENEMY, WHO HAS CLOSE TO 50,000 TROOPS IN THE AREA, WE HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO DEPLOY 28 US BATTALIONS PLUS HEAVY COMBAT SUPPORT FORCES TO THAT SECTOR.

7. ALL OF THIS BRINGS US TO KHE SANH. SHOULD WE DEFEND THERE, OR WITHDRAW?

8. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE MAINTAINED OUR POSITION IN KHE SANH,

SO THAT WE WOULD HAVE A FORWARD OPERATING BASE FROM WHICH WE COULD CONDUCT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE KEY INFILTRATION ROUTES IN EASTERN LAOS. TO BE SURE, OUR POSITION THERE HAS NOT STOPPED INFILTRATION, BUT THERE IS GOOD EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT IF WE HADN'T HELD AT KHE SANH THE ENEMY WOULD HAVE HAD CLEAR SAILING STRAIGHT DOWN TO QUANG TRI AND EVEN HUE WITH ~~absolutely~~ <sup>absolutely</sup> NOTHING IN HIS PATH FROM THE NORTH-WEST. THE WHOLE QUANG TRI POSITION WOULD HAVE BEEN FLANKED AND THE VERY BATTLE FOR WHICH WE ARE NOW GIRDING AT KHE SANH WOULD BE ON OUR HANDS ALONG THE POPULATED BELT OF I CTZ. THIS IS NOT THE PREFERRED PLACE TO FIGHT SUCH BATTLES AS EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK HAVE INDICATED

~~SECRET~~ MAC 02013 EYES ONLY FINAL SECTION OF TWO

9. TWICE BEFORE KHE SANH HAS BEEN THREATENED. LAST SPRING AT LEAST TWO REGIMENTS MOVED AGAINST IT BUT WERE DRIVEN OFF. THIS TIME THE ENEMY BUILD UP HAS BEEN GREATER THAN BEFORE WHICH HEIGHTENS THE RISK. HOWEVER, TO WITHDRAW FROM KHE SANH WOULD HAVE CERTAIN TACTICAL DISADVANTAGES, AND WOULD BE A DIFFICULT MANEUVER. MUCH OF THE HEAVY EQUIPMENT ON BASE CAN ONLY BE EXTRACTED BY ROAD. FINALLY, THERE IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF A WITHDRAWAL. TO DO SO NOW, AFTER THE RECENT VC SPLURGE IN THE CITIES, AND THE LOSS OF LANG VEI WOULD BE A HEAVY BLOW TO THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF SVN, AND POSSIBLY TO A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. I

MUST HOLD THE POSITION AND I THINK WE WILL HOLD IT. ON THE OTHER HAND AS REPORTED TO YOU, I INTEND TO OPEN HY 9 WHICH WILL GIVE US A NUMBER OF OPTIONS AND COMPLICATE THE ENEMYS' PROBLEM.

10. LASTLY, WITH REGARD TO THE SUGGESTION THAT I PULL MY TROOPS OUT OF THE DELTA TO USE THEM AS A RESERVE, LEAVING THE DELTA TO ARVN. RIGHT NOW, AS I EXPLAINED ABOVE, WE ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN PROTECTING THE POPULATION CENTERS OF THE DELTA WITH THE COMBINATION OF US/ARVN FORCES. I HAD HOPED TO MOVE A TWO BATTALION BRIGADE UP TO LONG AN PROVINCE TODAY, BUT THE THREAT TO CAN THO CHANGED MY MIND. AS YOU ARE AWARE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE TO BE VERY FAR FROM THIS BATTLEFIELD AND MAKE FINITE SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE IN RESERVE. THE SITUATION CHANGES TOO RAPIDLY. I FIND THAT I MUST WEIGH EVERY PIECE OF EVIDENCE CAREFULLY AND CONTINUALLY RE-EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVES. I CAN REINFORCE ONE AREA FROM ANY OTHER AND THE DELTA IS NO EXCEPTION.

11. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE YOU VISIT. #

## JOINT MESSAGEFORM

RESERVED FOR COMMUNICATION CENTER

## SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

~~TOP SECRET~~

TYPE MSG

BOOK

MULTI

SINGLE

X

## PRECEDENCE

ACTION

IMMEDIATE

INFO

IMMEDIATE

DIST: CJCS-1(4) DJS-3(5-7) SJCS-3(8-10)  
J3-8(11-18) J4-3(19-21) J5-2(22-23) J6-2(24-26)  
SACSA-3(27-29) NMGC-4(30-33) SASM-5(34-38)  
SDEF-5(39-43) WH-4(44-47) STATE-1(48) CSA-1(49)  
CSAF-1(50) (ANMCC/NEACP/NECPA) FILE-1(1)WD  
CY#2-DACC  
CY#3 COMEBACK COPY

DTG 122343Z FEB68

FROM: JCS

TO: CINCPAC  
CINCLANT  
CINCSRIKEINFO: CSA /ZEN  
CNO  
CSAF /ZEN  
CMC  
CINCARSTRIKE  
CINCPACFLT  
CGFMFPAC  
CGFMFLANT  
CO MAC  
CG 3D ARMY ATLANTA GA  
CG FORT BRAGG NC  
CG MCB CAMP LEJEUNE NC  
CG MCB CAMP PENDLETON CALIF

IMMEDIATE

DECLASSIFIED

Authority E.O. 11652 SEC. 5(A) and (D)

By ins, NARS, Date 3-29-78

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

## DISTRIBUTION

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COORD:

SASM  
MGEN  
SHERRILL

~~TOP SECRET~~ JCS

9911

J-3 SENDS.

SUBJ: DEPLOYMENT OF ARMY AND MARINE CORPS  
FORCES TO SVN (S)

THIS MESSAGE IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I FOR ALL.

1.(TS) THIS IS AN ALERT FOR UNIT DEPLOY-  
MENTS TO SVN. ALL UNITS WILL MOVE BY AIR TO  
CLOSE SVN NLT 262300Z FEB 68. EXECUTE

DATE	TIME
12	1820
MONTH	YEAR
FEB	1968
PAGE NO	NO. OF PAGES
1	2

PED NAME AND TITLE

V. HOYT, COL USA

PHONE

56119

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SIGNATURE

TYPED (or PRINTED) NAME AND TITLE

GEORGE B. PICKETT, JR.  
Major General, USA

LOCATION

~~TOP SECRET~~

REGARDING (or IN CONNECTION WITH) Operations

GP-4

ABBREVIATED JOINT MESSAGEFORM  
AND/OR CONTINUATION SHEET

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

~~TOP SECRET~~

PRECEDENCE	RELEASED BY	DRAFTED BY	PHONE
ACTION			
INFO			

MESSAGES AND ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL GUIDANCE WILL  
BE ISSUED SEPARATELY. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN WILL BE DISSEMINATED ON A NEED TO KNOW  
BASIS ONLY.

PART II FOR CINCSRIKE.

2. {S} ALERT ONE BRIGADE TF, 82D AIRBORNE  
DIVISION FOR AERIAL MOVEMENT COMMENCING NL  
142300Z FEB 68.

PART III FOR CINCPAC.

3. {S} ALERT ONE USMC RLT-MINUS 1 BLT FOR  
AERIAL MOVEMENT TO SVN.

PART IV FOR CINCLANT.

4. {S} ALERT ONE USMC BLT FOR AERIAL MOVEMENT  
TO SVN. GP-4.

CONTROL NO.	TOR/TOD	PAGE NO.	NO. OF PAGES	MESSAGE IDENTIFICATION	INITIALS
		2	2	9911	
REGARDING INSTRUCTIONS				SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	
				<del>TOP SECRET</del>	



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO

Op-601C3/tr  
Op-60 BM 000239-68  
12 February 1968

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Subj: Emergency Reinforcement of COMUSMACV (S)

1. ~~(TS)~~—I concur in the deployment of additional ground forces for the emergency reinforcement of COMUSMACV as requested by General Westmoreland. In my view, such deployment must be accompanied by a call-up of Reserves commensurate with the extent of the deployment and the drawdown on the Strategic Reserve. These deployments should also be accompanied by a request for authority to extend enlistments of personnel on active duty, and for selective call-up of individual Reserves.
2. ~~(TS)~~—General Westmoreland indicated that his request is for initial deployments and that remaining elements of the two divisions should be prepared to follow on at a later time. If this follow on deployment is a strong possibility then I recommend that we call up the necessary replacements now in preparation for this contingency. We must maintain a rotation and training base as well as the Strategic Reserve necessary to support our world-wide commitments.

*T.H. Moorer*  
T. H. MOORER

Copy to:  
CSA  
CSAF  
CMC

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5  
NLJ/RAC 99-76  
By ius, NARA, Date 7-29-04

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Intelligence Information Cable

IN

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STATE/DIR NIC (HENDRICKSON ONLY) EXO D/NE DDI ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

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CITE TDCSDB-315/00518-68

SANITIZED

DIST 12 FEBRUARY 1968

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

Authority CIA 12-21-78 letter

DOI 12 FEBRUARY 1968

By if, NARS, Date 4-6-79

SUBJECT SITUATION APPRAISAL: ANALYSIS OF VIET CONG TET OFFENSIVE

(40)

ACQ

SOURCE

SUMMARY: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE VIET CONG (VC) OFFENSIVE WERE TO DESTROY THE GVN/ALLIED FORCES, ELIMINATE THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE, CREATE A GENERAL UPRISING, AND ESTABLISH A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT DOMINATED BY THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NLF). THE VC FAILED IN THESE OBJECTIVES IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN ALMOST INCREDIBLE MISCALCULATION OF THEIR OWN MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND THE SUPPORT THEY WOULD GET FROM THE PEOPLE. PERHAPS MORE THAN HALF THE VC FORCES USED IN THE OFFENSIVE HAVE BEEN KILLED. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF STRENGTH THAT NETTED A PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY

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ABROAD, DEALT THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM A SERIOUS BLOW, AND CREATED PROBLEMS THAT WILL OCCUPY THE GOVERNMENT FOR MANY MONTHS. THE MILITARY STRATEGY ENVISIONED A TWO-PHASE ATTACK; LOCAL FORCES WERE USED LARGELY IN THE FIRST PHASE WITH VC/NVA MAIN FORCES LARGELY HELD FOR THE SECOND. THE PASSIVE RESISTANCE OF THE PEOPLE PLUS THE FIERCE REACTION FORCED CANCELLATION OF THE SECOND PHASE WHICH IS STILL AVAILABLE FOR NEW ATTACKS WHICH ARE EXPECTED. ALTHOUGH WEAKENED BY HIS LOSSES, THE ENEMY IS NOT ON THE VERGE OF DESPERATION AND HE COULD CUT HIS LOSSES BY RESORT TO THE MORE TRADITIONAL HARASSING ATTACKS, ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT LOWER MORALE IN HIS RANKS. PACIFICATION IS SET BACK AND IT WILL BE MANY MONTHS BEFORE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE PREVIOUSLY SECURED HAMLETS CAN BE RESTORED. END SUMMARY.

1.

1. THE YEAR OF THE MONKEY HAD AN INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AS THE VC/NVA FORCES VIOLATED THE SACRED TET HOLIDAYS AND LAUNCHED VIRTUALLY SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS AGAINST 36 PROVINCE CAPITALS, FIVE OF THE SIX AUTONOMOUS CITIES, AND NUMEROUS OTHER POPULATION CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THEIR OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN CLEARLY SPELLED OUT IN CAPTURED DOCUMENTS -- TO DESTROY OR SUBVERT THE GVN/ALLIED FORCES, ELIMINATE THE GVN GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE, CREATE A GENERAL UPRISING AMONG THE PEOPLE, AND ESTABLISH A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT DOMINATED BY THE NATIONAL

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LIBERATION FRONT. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN ALMOST INCREDIBLE MISCALCULATION OF THEIR OWN MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT THEY COULD COMMAND FROM THE PEOPLE, THE COMMUNISTS FAILED TO ACHIEVE THESE STATED OBJECTIVES. IT HAS COST THEM DEARLY IN MANPOWER -- IN 12 DAYS SOME 31,000 KILLED, 5,700 DETAINED, PROBABLY ANOTHER 10,000 DEAD FROM WOUNDS, AN UNKNOWN NUMBER DEAD FROM AIR AND ARTILLERY STRIKES -- A TOTAL PROBABLY AMOUNTING TO MORE THAN HALF OF THE FORCES USED IN THIS ATTACK. NEVERTHELESS, THE ENEMY'S WELL-PLANNED, COORDINATED SERIES OF ATTACKS WAS AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF STRENGTH WHICH HAS GIVEN HIM A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY ABROAD, DEALT A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM, AND CREATED PROBLEMS THAT WILL TAX THE ENERGIES AND RESOURCES OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR MANY MONTHS TO COME.

2. THE ENEMY'S MILITARY STRATEGY CONSISTED OF A TWO-PHASE OFFENSIVE. WHEREVER POSSIBLE, THE FIRST PHASE ASSAULTS WERE CONDUCTED BY VC LOCAL FORCES. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THIS WAS MORE APPROPRIATE THAN USING NVA UNITS, GIVEN THE ENEMY'S OBJECTIVE OF WINNING THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE. VNA FORCES WERE USED IN I AND II CORPS WHERE VC FORCES WERE INADEQUATE, BUT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY MOST VC/NVA MAIN FORCES WERE WITHHELD FOR THE SECOND PHASE WHEN THEY WOULD MOVE IN TO CAPITALIZE ON THE EXPECTED SHAOS AND GENERAL UPRISING.

3. THE PASSIVE REACTION OF THE POPULATION, THE FIERCENESS OF THE FREE WORLD AND ARVN COUNTEROFFENSIVES AFTER THE INITIAL SURPRISE AND CONFUSION, AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
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4 MASSIVE AIR AND ARTILLERY FIRE OBVIOUSLY FORCED CANCELLATION OF THE COMMITMENT 5  
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2 OF VC/NVA MAIN FORCES. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT SLIGHTLY LESS THAN HALF OF THE 3  
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ENEMY'S MAIN FORCE MANEUVER UNITS OUTSIDE OF THOSE IN THE DMZ, BUT WELL OVER HALF OF HIS LOCAL FORCE UNITS, PARTICIPATED IN THE ATTACKS. THUS, HE STILL HAS SUBSTANTIAL UNCOMMITTED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR A NEW "SECOND PHASE" ATTACK.

4. IN SPITE OF THE ENEMY'S HEAVY LOSSES, HE APPARENTLY STILL PLANS A RESUMPTION OF THE OFFENSIVE ON A LARGE SCALE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE FAILURE OF COMMITTED FORCES TO WITHDRAW COMPLETELY TO SAFEHAVENS AND CURRENT DISPOSITION OF PREVIOUSLY UNCOMMITTED UNITS LEND CREDENCE TO PRISONERS' STATEMENTS THAT THE SECOND PHASE OFFENSIVE WILL SOON BE INITIATED. ALTHOUGH THE VC/NVA MAIN FORCES WOULD SUPPOSEDLY BE BETTER EQUIPPED, TRAINED, AND DISCIPLINED THAN THE PRIMARILY LOW-LEVEL TROOPS (CANNON FODDER) WHICH LAUNCHED THE FIRST OFFENSIVE, THE ENEMY HAS LOST THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, DOES NOT HAVE THE COVER OF A TET TRUCE, AND HAS ALREADY EXPENDED A GREAT DEAL IN THE WAY OF MEN AND MATERIEL. THE CONSEQUENCE OF A SECOND "ALL-OUT" SERIES OF ATTACKS WOULD PROBABLY BE AS DISASTROUS MILITARILY AS THE FIRST PHASE. IF, INDEED, THE ENEMY IS PREPARING FOR LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS AT KHE SANH, QUANG TRI, HUE, DANANG, DAK TO, PHY MY, TUY HOA, SAIGON, CAN THO, AND MY THO, THEN HE MUST STRIKE QUICKLY. THOUGH STRETCHED THIN, ALLIED FORCES HAVE CONSOLIDATED THEIR GAINS, REGROUPED, AND INITIATED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY'S MASSED MAIN FORCES WITH NOTABLE SUCCESS. AS TIME PASSES, HIS POSITION IS BECOMING MORE TENUOUS AND THERE WILL BE LESS AND LESS OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE HIS IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES.

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5. ALTHOUGH THE ENEMY HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED, HE IS NOT ON THE VERGE  
OF DESPERATION. HE HAS OVER HALF OF HIS MAIN FORCES BASICALLY INTACT WITH MORE

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MEN AND MATERIEL ENROUTE OR AVAILABLE FROM NVN. HE HAS TAKEN SUBSTANTIAL LOSSES IN THE PAST AND SHOWN AN AMAZING DEGREE OF RESILIENCY. ON THE OTHER HAND, HIS LOGISTICS AND RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS WILL BE GREATLY INCREASED WITH SUCH HEAVY LOSSES FROM THE LOCAL AND GUERRILLA FORCES WHO PROVIDE MANPOWER FOR SUPPORT AND COMBAT.

6. AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO A SECOND ASSAULT AGAINST THE CITIES, THE ENEMY COULD ELECT TO CUT HIS LOSSES BY REVERTING TO MORE TRADITIONAL HARASSING ATTACKS WHILE ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE HIS POSITION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE RECENT WELL-COORDINATED ATTACKS OVER WIDESPREAD AREAS PROVED THE ENEMY'S CAPABILITY TO UTILIZE THIS TACTIC. SUCH ATTACKS ON A SMALLER SCALE WOULD STILL GAIN HEADLINES AND HAVE CONSIDERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPEAL AND VALUE TO THE ENEMY AS THEY RERAISE QUESTIONS IN SVN AND THE WORLD AS TO THE ABILITY OF THE ALLIES TO PROVIDE SECURITY TO THE PEOPLE. HOWEVER, AFTER SUCH EXTENSIVE INDOCTRINATION ON THE INEVITABILITY OF IMMINENT VICTORY, A REVERSION TO ESSENTIALLY GUERRILLA WARFARE WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE SEVERE PROBLEMS OF MORALE AMONG THE CADRES AND A LOSS OF IMPETUS FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY EFFORT.

7. IT IS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO MAKE A FIRM ASSESSMENT OF THE DAMAGE WHICH HAS BEEN CAUSED TO THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM, BUT IT PROBABLY HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE. THE PACIFIED AREAS DID NOT AT LEAST INITIALLY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A PRIORITY TARGET, PROBABLY BECAUSE MOST OF THE VC GUERRILLAS WERE DRAWN INTO LOCAL FORCE UNITS FOR THE CITY BATTLES OR WERE ENGAGED IN INTERDICTING LOCS. HOWEVER, GVN FORCES PROVIDING SECURITY FOR THE PACIFIED

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4 AREAS AND THE RD TEAMS WERE IN MANY CASES WITHDRAWN TO ASSIST IN THE DEFENSE OF 5  
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2 URBAN AREAS, LEAVING THE VC FREE TO PENETRATE PREVIOUSLY SECURED HAMLETS AND 3  
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CONDUCT PROPAGANDA, RECRUIT, ACQUIRE FOOD, ELIMINATE THE GVN ADMINISTRATION, AND OCCASIONALLY TERRORIZE THE POPULATION. THE IMPACT OF THE VC PRESENCE WAS ESPECIALLY SEVERE IN THE LARGER HAMLETS WHICH GENERALLY ARE LOCATED CLOSE TO THE POPULATION CENTERS AND WERE ON THE VC ROUTE OF ENTRY. THIS ACTIVITY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PART OF THE LARGE REFUGEE FLOW INTO THE CITIES.

8. WITH MANY OF THE CITIES IN SHAMBLES AND REQUIRING PRIORITY RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION EFFORTS, THE DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM ALMOST INEVITABLY WILL SUFFER. IN ANY EVENT, IT WILL BE MANY MONTHS BEFORE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE PREVIOUSLY SECURED HAMLETS CAN BE RESTORED, SOME OF WHICH FELT THE VC PRESENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME. ONE POSSIBLY HOPEFUL SIGN IS THAT MANY OF THE VC EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE RELATIVE PROSPERITY OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GVN AREAS, CONTRARY TO WHAT THEY HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE. THIS, TOGETHER WITH THE MILITARY DEFEAT AND HEAVY LOSSES, SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO SOME FUTURE DEFECTIONS.

9. THERE HAS NATURALLY BEEN A MIXED REACTION FROM THE PEOPLE TO THE COMMUNIST ONSLAUGHT -- INITIALLY, IT WAS ONE OF SHOCK AT THE STRENGTH OF THE ATTACK, AND ANGER AT ITS PERFIDY. HOWEVER, EVEN THOSE SKEPTICS WHO WOULD NOT PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE LARGE ELECTORAL TURNOUTS, THE INABILITY OF THE VC TO GET A RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR A GENERAL STRIKE, AND THE ALMOST TOTALLY CONSCRIPT NATURE OF THE VC FORCES WERE PROOF THAT THE VC LACKED POPULAR SUPPORT, CAN HARDLY DENY IT NOW. DESPITE THE CREATION OF A REVOLUTIONARY

ADMINISTRATION, SUPPOSEDLY UNTAINTED BY ASSOCIATION WITH THE NLF, NO SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF THE POPULATION OR OF THE ARMED FORCES DEFECTED. THE REFUSAL OF THE

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PEOPLE TO RESPOND TO THE VC CALL FOR AN UPRISING, AND IN FACT OFTEN TO RENDER ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT FORCES, WAS THE KEY TO THE FAILURE OF THE VC PLAN, AND IS ONE OF THE MOST ENCOURAGING ASPECTS OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

10. THERE ARE NEGATIVE FACTORS, OF COURSE -- THE PEOPLE NOW HAVE A GREATER RESPECT FOR THE CAPABILITIES OF THE VC, AND THIS WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN SOME CASES IN A MORE CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD OPEN SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT. THERE IS CRITICISM OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF PREPAREDNESS, CHARGES OF EXCESSIVE PROPERTY DAMAGE AND CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, AND LOOTING BY THE COUNTERREACTION FORCES, AND A PERSISTENT BELIEF THAT SOMEHOW THE UNITED STATES WAS IN COLLUSION WITH THE VC. HOWEVER, THE POPULATION IS UNIVERSALLY ANGRY AT THE VC FOR VIOLATING BOTH A SACRED HOLIDAY AND THEIR OWN TRUCE, AND THE BLAME FOR ALL OF THE ILLS IS GENERALLY PLACED ON THE VC. THERE WAS LEFT NO DOUBT IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE AS TO THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT FORCES AND AS TO WHO WON THIS ENGAGEMENT. ON BALANCE, WE FEEL THAT IN THE CONTEST FOR THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE, THE VC HAVE SO FAR SUFFERED A SEVERE LOSS. IN COMMON DANGER, THERE WAS A TENDENCY TO UNITE BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT. WITH A RESIDUE OF ILL WILL TOWARD THE VC WHICH WILL NOT BE EASILY ERASED, THE TASK OF NATION-BUILDING, AT LEAST IN THOSE AREAS STILL UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL, SHOULD BECOME A LITTLE EASIER. MUCH WILL DEPEND, HOWEVER, ON THE SKILL AND ALACRITY WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HANDLES THE SEVERE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IT FACES.

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11. THE DAYS AHEAD CONSTITUTE A SEVERE TEST FOR THE GVN. THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SUFFERED A SERIOUS LOSS OF PRESTIGE BY ITS

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INABILITY TO DEFEND ITS CITIES, NOTWITHSTANDING, THERE HAS BEEN AT LEAST A TEMPORARY TENDENCY ON THE PART OF NATIONALIST ELEMENTS TO SET ASIDE THEIR PAROCHIAL INTERESTS AND RALLY BEHIND THE LEADERSHIP. THIS IS BY NO MEANS UNIVERSAL -- THE MILITANT BUDDHISTS, THE DAI VIETS, AND SOME OTHERS STILL HAVE REFUSED EITHER PUBLICLY TO CONDEMN THE VC OR TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT ACTIVELY. ALTHOUGH IT WAS AN AMERICAN IDEA, CLEARLY THE MOST EFFECTIVE ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT SO FAR WAS THE CREATION OF THE JOINT VIETNAMESE/AMERICAN TASK FORCE UNDER VICE PRESIDENT KY TO HANDLE THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OF REHABILITATION. WHATEVER CLOSING OF RANKS BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT THAT HAS ACCRUED CAN BE CREDITED LARGELY TO KY, WHO HAS EMERGED AS THE "MAN OF THE HOUR." DESPITE AGGRAVATING AND BUREAUCRATIC PROBLEMS, SOME FORWARD MOVEMENT HAS BEEN MADE IN RE-ESTABLISHING ESSENTIAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES. KY MAY WELL HAVE SAVED THE GVN FROM PROJECTING ITS USUAL IMAGE OF INACTIVITY.

12. WE ARE NOT SANGUINE ABOUT FUTURE POLITICAL PROBLEMS. THE SCHISMS WHICH DIVIDE THIS SOCIETY ARE DEEPLY ROOTED, AND WILL INEVITABLY ARISE AGAIN AS THE FIRST FLUSH OF UNITY BEGINS TO FADE. DEMANDS WILL BE MADE FOR THE REMOVAL OF OFFICIALS, BOTH NATIONAL AND LOCAL, WHO PROVED UNEQUAL TO THE TASK IN A CRISIS, AND THIS WILL BE CERTAIN TO RESTORE THE ENDEMIC FACTIONAL INFIGHTING. THE MILITARY, SOME OF THE CATHOLICS, AND THOSE FAVORING A ROUGH, DIRECTED SYSTEM WILL FAULT THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT BEING TOUGH ENOUGH, WHILE OTHERS WILL BE CONCERNED OVER EVEN THE TEMPORARY SACRIFICE OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

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4 AND THE CONTINUED PRE-EMINENT ROLE OF THE MILITARY. THE CRISIS HAS IGNITED A SPARK  
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2 OF UNITY, BUT TO SUSTAIN IT WILL REQUIRE A SUCCESSFUL RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION  
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AND A SUBLIMATION OF PERSONAL AND PARTISAN POLITICAL INTERESTS WHICH THIS SOCIETY HAS NEVER BEFORE DEMONSTRATED.

13. THE COMMUNISTS CAN BE CREDITED WITH HAVING MAINTAINED EXCELLENT SECURITY FOR SUCH A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, BUT THEY ARE GUILTY OF A MASSIVE INTELLIGENCE FAILURE. DOCUMENTS CAPTURED OVER THE PAST FOUR MONTHS AND INTERROGATIONS OF THE PRISONERS INVOLVED IN THE RECENT ATTACKS INDICATE QUITE CLEARLY THAT THE VC DID INTEND TO TAKE AND HOLD THE CITIES, DID EXPECT A GENERAL UPRISING, AND DID PLAN TO INSTALL A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, AS EVIDENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF A STANDBY VC ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE MAJOR CITIES. IT MAY SEEM INCREDIBLE THAT VC EXPECTATIONS SHOULD HAVE BEEN SO DIVORCED FROM REALITY, BUT THERE ARE THREE FACTORS WHICH PROBABLY EXPLAIN THIS. FIRST, THE COMMUNISTS ARE AND ALWAYS HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF THEIR DOCTRINE, AND IN THE PRESENT CASE THE ARTICLES OF FAITH WERE: "THE LONGER WE FIGHT, THE STRONGER WE BECOME;" AND, "THE MORE VICIOUSLY THE ENEMY FIGHTS, THE CLOSER HE IS TO COLLAPSE;" AND, "THE PEOPLE SUPPORT US AND WHEN THE URBAN PEOPLE HAVE THE CHANCE TO RISE UP, OUR VICTORY WILL BE ASSURED." SECOND, THE LEADERS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY AND GREATLY MISINFORMED BY LOWER CADRES. GIVEN THE DOCTRINAL BIAS ALLUDED TO ABOVE AND THE ORIENTAL PENCHANT FOR TELLING PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR, THE REPORTS GOING UPWARD HAVE SO MISINTERPRETED THE FACTS THAT THE LEADERS COULD NOT BASE THEIR DECISIONS ON REALITY. THIRD, THE NEED FOR A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY AFTER TWO YEARS OF DROUGHT MAY HAVE INTRODUCED A LACK OF PRUDENCE. BY ANY RATIONAL STAND-

5 NORTH VIETNAM HAS BEEN LOSING TOO MUCH IN ORDER TO GAIN TOO LITTLE. FOR TOO LONG, 5  
4 VC STRENGTH AND SUPPORT HAS BEEN DWINDLING. THE ENTIRE NATURE OF THE WAR, THE 4  
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ENTIRE ENVIRONMENT OF THE STRUGGLE, CHANGED WITH THE MASSIVE UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT. THE TET ASSAULT MUST HAVE BEEN PART OF AN EXPECTED VC PLAN TO INFLICT HEAVY PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE IN HOPE OF GAINING, IF NOT ALL THEIR OBJECTIVES, SOMETHING WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS A VICTORY.

14. WE ARE VERY MUCH AWARE THAT WE HAVE PROBABLY SEEN ONLY THE FIRST OF A TWO-ACT DRAMA. IF THE SECOND ACT REPEATS THE SCENARIO, WE WILL SERIOUSLY QUESTION THE ABILITY OF HANOI TO CONTINUE TO CARRY ON THIS KIND OF CONVENTIONAL WARFARE FOR A PROTRACTED PERIOD. WHATEVER ELSE MAY FOLLOW, THE TET OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM, CONTRARY TO MUCH FOREIGN OPINION, IS NOT POPULARLY REGARDED HERE EITHER AS A VC VICTORY OR EVEN AS AN INDICATION OF THEIR EVENTUAL SUCCESS. THERE IS A SOBERING THOUGHT FOR THE FUTURE, HOWEVER -- IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE PRESENCE OF UNITED STATES FORCES, THE VC FLAY WOULD BE FLYING OVER MUCH OF SOUTH VIETNAM TODAY.

15.

STATE USMACV 7TH AF DIR/ JUSPAO (MR. ZORTHIAN ONLY)

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REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES RVNAF

1. Pre-TET Situation

Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) combat forces prior to TET consisted of 120 Infantry, 20 Ranger, nine Airborne, and six Marine Battalions. The operating field strength of the infantry battalion, that is the number of troops that could be put in the field to fight, averaged about 400. Since the average operating strength desired was 450, the pre-TET strength of ARVN forces was somewhat less than desired. A battalion with an operating field strength of 450 would have an overall authorized strength of about 650-700.

2. Strengths During TET

a. RVNAF commanders had authority to grant leaves up to 50 per cent of the assigned strengths of their units. Accordingly, the operating field strengths of many battalions at the onset of TET dropped to an average of 200. In a few instances, a unit commander knew an attack was coming in that area and did not grant leave for TET. Battalion strengths in these cases remained at 400 or at 500 if a ranger or airborne battalion.

b. At least in some divisions, ARVN troops began to return to their units on 3 February. For example, in the 7th Division, it was reported that 250 troops returned on 3 February and 100 more on the 4th. In one case, Go Cong, they were formed into a provisional reaction company. How general this return of troops to their units has been is not known.

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Authority OSD 11-22-78, State 4-25-79

By isf, NARS, Date 11-7-79

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### 3. Reductions in RVNAF Strengths

#### a. Casualties During the TET Offensive

Reported casualties for ARVN units for the period 291800 January to 101200 February consisted of 1,900 killed, 7,135 wounded, and 86 missing in action.

The total of approximately 9,100 casualties represented about three per cent of the total ARVN force.

#### b. Desertions

There have been few reports received of desertions or defections. Elements of the ARVN 45th Regiment in Ban Me Thuot may have joined the Viet Cong; troops in ARVN uniforms and in vehicles of that unit fired on a US civilian compound, and the Communists claim the defection of parts of that unit. No information is available to confirm Communist claims of defections of elements of the 1st Division in Hue, or of troops in Ba Xuyen Province; however, due to the confused situation in Hue, their claims cannot be either confirmed or denied and remain "possibly true." Various Government of Vietnam (GVN) officials have mentioned defections by individual officers assigned to headquarters and support units in the Saigon area, but details on identifications and circumstances are lacking. In Sa Dec Province, however, the VC reportedly occupied a number of outposts (presumably Regional Force (RF) and Popular Force (PF)) in rural areas, and Liberation Front flags were reported flying

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over them. Also in that province, RD cadres reportedly "melted away." In Chau Doc, some officials reportedly doffed their uniforms when the VC entered the city, but put them back on after the enemy was driven off. There is almost no information available on the status of RVNAF elements at the district village, and hamlet level, where the VC have been active in several provinces, nor on the status of RVNAF (RF and PF) elements on leave in rural areas during TET. These elements would seem to be vulnerable to local VC propaganda claims of success.

#### 4. Performance During the TET Offensive

a. Although the data are incomplete, reflecting the fragmentary reporting, the effectiveness of RVNAF in combating enemy attacks during this period varied markedly. In general, the data reflect a mixed situation, with GVN forces reacting aggressively and courageously in some areas, but ineffectively and with malfeasance in others. No clear-cut geographic patterns are evident, except that most reports of ineffective performance come from IV Corps. Generally, however, the reaction of GVN forces seems to have varied in direct relation to the professional competence and performance of their leaders.

b. Leadership at the national and Corps levels apparently was effective. General Vien himself was reportedly being steady and dedicated, and the Commanders of the Rangers and National Police effectively led their forces in the Saigon fighting. The III Corps Commander, General Khang, reportedly performed well, but the I Corps

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Commander, General Lam, has been implicitly criticized for an overly defensive posture in I Corps. The 22d and 23d Division Commanders in II Corps reportedly had their troops on alert during TET, and had restricted TET leaves; there are indications, however, that this alert was not fully honored in at least one province (Khanh Hoa).

c. At lower levels, the Commander of the 24th Special Sector (Kontum) reportedly performed very poorly, drawing criticism for his preoccupation with his personal safety and for the destruction caused by his heavy reliance on armor. The Province Chief in Ba Xuyen reportedly became hysterical and lost control, and the Chief of Quang Tri Province was ineffective. The Kien Hoa Province Chief, however, reportedly performed creditably even after receiving news that his family had been murdered by the Viet Cong in Saigon. In Binh Thuan, the Province Chief and his Police Chief squabbled and blamed each other for deficiencies in security before the attack. The Kontum Province Chief reacted quickly and effectively, demonstrating excellent leadership. The Thua Thien Province Chief was forced to hide for several days when <sup>the</sup> Viet Cong occupied his house. The Quang Nam Chief was quite effective in organizing and directing his forces and in attempting to maintain civil morale. No specific reports have been received on other officials at that level.

d. The alert posture of RVNAF elements varied, but seems to have been generally adequate, considering their normal standards observed during the TET holidays. Major deficiencies were noted in Chau Doc

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Province, where defenses apparently were totally relaxed for TET.

Quang Ngai forces, on the other hand, reportedly were not granted TET leave.

e. Some ARVN infantry units were effective in managing to resist repeated assaults of the enemy. However, it was reported that other units, after initial pindown by sniper fire, maneuvered only slightly or not at all, but called in armor or armed helicopter strikes often resulting in heavy volumes of fire being directed into civilian dwellings causing resentment against RVNAF troops. The initial reaction of RVNAF and other security elements to the Viet Cong attacks were generally described as fair to good with the notable exception of the forces in Vinh Long, Chau Doc, and Sa Dec Provinces. There was no organized resistance to the attack in Chau Doc, and Rangers in Vinh Long were slow in reacting and unaggressive afterwards. In Sa Dec, provincial authorities initially "refused to operate." Considerable confusion was reported in the early defense of Vinh Long. ARVN units in Ba Xuyen were reported ineffective. In Phong Dinh, the reaction was slow but once the troops rallied, they displayed exceptional bravery and esprit. Outstanding defensive performances were recorded by ARVN units in An Xuyen, Khanh Hoa, Dinh Tuong, and Kien Hoa. A lack of planning and organization was reported, however, in Kien Hoa.

f. ARVN's performance, after the initial enemy attacks were repelled and the cities were secured, seems generally to have lacked aggressiveness. In only a few Provinces (Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and

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Dinh Tuong) were there indications of reasonably aggressive pursuit and a determination to maintain pressure on the enemy. In Quang Tri, ARVN units reacted slowly to attacks on district towns near the province capital, and their tactics tended to maximize property damage. "Over-reaction" or excessive destruction was reported in other areas, including Kontum, Vinh Long, and Chau Doc. In IV Corps, ARVN forces were generally described as passive, unaggressive, and preoccupied with defensive -- rather than offensive -- operations, except in those areas where US troops were brought in to assist in clearing the provincial capitals. In one instance, the presence of US forces was described as "electrifying" in its impact on ARVN. The ARVN 7th Division (colocated with a brigade of the US 9th Division in My Tho), however, has had its troops out on operations during the past few days.

#### 5. Current Situation

a. There are few reports indicative of current RVNAF combat effectiveness. In Quang Tri, concern has been expressed about dwindling ammunition, gasoline, and other supplies and the absence of resupply movements from the beleaguered 1st Division headquarters in Hue. Reports on casualties in individual units have been rare. In two instances ARVN units are reported at considerably reduced strength; one battalion reinforcing Vinh Long reportedly had only 90 men, while another battalion in Chau Doc reportedly had only 200 men present for duty of an assigned strength of 600. Many units are considerably below strength because of the apparently widespread disruption of communications and

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transportation facilities which probably has delayed the return of troops from TET leave. Moreover, the psychological impact of the Viet Cong offensive may add to the normally high AWOL and desertion rates associated with TET.

b. There are virtually no reports specifically describing RVNAF morale as other than fair to good. Other indicators -- lack of aggressiveness, indiscipline in the form of looting and pilfering -- may suggest that morale has been shaken to some extent. Moreover, some officers have expressed concern at the lack of US military support in certain areas, and others have repeated rumors prevalent among the civil populace alleging US collusion in various forms with the Viet Cong. Vietnamese Marines fighting in Saigon have expressed dissatisfaction with the US M-16 rifle, alleging it is inferior to the AK-47 automatic rifles with which the Viet Cong are equipped. This concern has not been reported elsewhere, but other RVNAF elements, not so well-equipped as the Marines, may be once again apprehensive over their relatively limited firepower as they were when they first encountered enemy units armed with the new family of 7.62-mm small arms in 1964-65. The Vietnamese Marines have also reflected concern with the apparently plentiful supply of B-40 and B-41 rocket launchers in the hands of Viet Cong units in Saigon; they have also been used extensively in other areas and may have adversely impressed other RVNAF elements.

c. Popular reactions to ARVN performance have been mixed. In two instances (Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa), the populace reportedly

indicated gratitude or appreciation for ARVN's performance. In most areas, the people are reported to be confused, frightened, traditionally passive or non-committal, while in other areas (Quang Tri, Phan Thiet, Long Khanh, Vinh Binh, Vinh Long, Ba Xuyen, and Chau Doc) the popular reaction has been generally unfavorable to RVNAF. A mixture of these reactions has been reported in the Saigon-Gia Dinh area. Criticism of the RVNAF ranges from complaints about the lack of security to bitterness at the allegedly wanton destruction of property. In several areas (Vinh Long, Ba Xuyen, and Saigon) looting and pilfering by ARVN and police elements has been charged.

d. There are no uncommitted RVNAF forces in RVN at this time. At present, four RVNAF battalions are technically listed as uncommitted. In point of fact, in each Corps tactical zone one battalion is held as a reaction force.

The RVNAF response to the current emergency situation is summarized in the battalion mission assignments as of 29 January and 10 February.

	<u>29 January</u>	<u>10 February</u>
Combat Operations	62	90
Security	24	29
Training	3	0
Reserve	15	4
Pacification	51	32
TOTAL	<u>155</u>	<u>155</u>

e. An assessment of ARVN battalion effectiveness at this time is complicated by several factors: the reduction in strength of approximately 9,100 troops killed, wounded or missing; the aftermath of the TET holiday leave situation (3,000 have been given transportation back to their units, many others await transportation); an untabulated number of unauthorized absences stemming from TET leave; and continuing recruiting problems. Using a criteria of a minimum of 60 per cent personnel present for duty constituting an effective unit, RVNAF battalion effectiveness is indicated as:

ARVN Infantry (120 Battalions)	* Effective
Ranger (20 Battalions)	* Effective
Airborne (9 Battalions)	4 Effective
VN MC (6 Battalions)	6 Effective

\* Battalion strength breakdowns for ARVN Infantry and Ranger Battalions are not available at this time, but based on authorized strengths, the over-all per cent for duty level on 7 February was: ARVN Infantry 50 per cent, Ranger 43 per cent. As of 7 February, the average present-for-duty strength of RVNAF Battalions was:

	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>Present</u>
ARVN Infantry	639	320
Ranger	755	320
Airborne	836	350
VNMC	876	500

As an example of unit strength deficiencies, the 9th Airborne Battalion

present for duty totals range from a low of 157 to a high of 500 out of the authorized strength of 836.

f. In sum, in view of the incomplete information available it is difficult to generalize with confidence. It does appear that most ARVN units reacted reasonably well to the initial attacks. Subsequently there seemed generally to have been a lack of aggressiveness, and some breakdowns in discipline were reported. Although morale and confidence seem to have been shaken, morale does not appear to have collapsed. Because of the disruption of communications, RVNAF units are probably not well informed of the situation and thus susceptible to the same rumors that seem to be upsetting the civil populace. Thus their vulnerability to Viet Cong propaganda has probably increased. All factors considered, some ARVN elements would seem to be ill-prepared for sustained or renewed pressure without a respite for several weeks or even months, and some in isolated areas operating without close US support might disintegrate. However, many of the units can be expected to still give a good account of themselves.

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

CM-2973-68  
13 February 68



MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WALT W. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: Status of RVNAF

1. The attached report represents a compilation of information on the status and general condition of RVNAF through 12 February. The information on which this report is based is, of course, fragmentary and therefore must be considered extremely tentative in nature. General Westmoreland has requested a complete report on RVNAF units by 29 February. By then, the situation should have stabilized sufficiently to obtain a better picture. This report will be provided to you when received.

2. In addition, the information set forth below was received in a late message from General Palmer.

a. ARVN

(1) Advisors in II, III and IV CTZ's rate all maneuver battalions as combat effective. On the basis of information available at this point, most of the units were at about 40-50 percent of strength on 29 January because of Tet leaves. Reports indicate that of those personnel present for duty when the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (VC/NVA) offensive started, their alert posture varied from no preparation at all to those units in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces which were fully prepared for an enemy attack. At this point in time the consensus seems to be that ARVN units are at about 75 percent of strength. Soldiers are finding it difficult to get back to their units because of transportation problems, especially in IV Corps.

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Authority JCS 10-10-78 letter

By JP, NARS, Date 3-29-79

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(2) Advisors report generally that ARVN units, though understrength, performed as well or better than was expected of them. These units took the brunt of the initial attack against the urban areas and in many of the smaller cities they were able to keep the enemy from taking control. It is significant, however, that in all the larger province capitals which came under attack, as well as in Saigon, US forces had to be employed. Dalat, the only major province capital in which US forces were not used, is still in dispute as of this morning (12 February).

(3) The leadership of ARVN during this crisis cannot be completely assessed. There have been actions in which units were aggressive and decisive. In others, leaders have been criticized for lack of aggressiveness, and some commanders and province chiefs were relieved.

(4) Commanders of US units tend to report less favorably than advisors on the combat actions of ARVN units in their area. This is only natural.

b. RD and RF/PF. Information on pacification in the countryside is necessarily spotty because the focus has been first on defense of cities, emergency actions, and recovery measures. Now that the crisis has passed and communications no longer are loaded with 100 percent operational traffic, district advisors have been instructed to urge district chiefs to move forces out beyond the confines of district towns. Ambassador Komer has directed a quick assessment of the territorial security situation, to include locations, strengths, current missions of RF/PF units, RD support battalions, RD cadre teams of all types, National Police Field Force companies, province and district police and Provincial Reconnaissance Units. The first assessment is to be submitted by 15 February. Ambassador Komer is also taking steps to recover the pacification initiative. General Westmoreland's message to senior corps and province advisors states: "Wherever the tactical situation is so justified in your judgment, US advisors at all levels should exert maximum advisory pressure to get RVNAF moving out again to resume its

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territorial security role. RD battalions should be returned to their areas soonest, RF/PF should be urged to seek out the enemy, and RD teams should return promptly to their assigned hamlets. Otherwise a major pacification set-back could occur largely through default." Current information indicates more than half of the 55 RD support battalions have been withdrawn for defense of cities. By and large, RF/PF are defending their outposts, securing district towns, and maintaining guard of bridges and critical installations. In many cases, RF/PF are reinforcing ARVN battalions to beef up low strengths resulting from Tet leave and the continuing inability of soldiers to rejoin their units. For the most part, RD hamlets have not been objectives of VC Tet actions. MACV's efforts to assess conditions accurately and in detail should produce a reasonably accurate picture soon.

3. As a matter of further interest, General Vien is reported to be encouraged by the absence of VC penetration into RVNAF units; the generally effective performance of ARVN division commanders; and the number of troops that are voluntarily reporting into various headquarters from leave status to take their places in provisional units while awaiting return to their own organizations.

*Earle G. Wheeler*

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 13, 1968

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DOF

FOR WALT ROSTOW

FROM: Tom Johnson

The President mentioned these action items for you to get the appropriate people moving:

1. Ask Westy and Bunker to utilize civilian road and construction experts maximum possible. If appropriate, have them replace military people in order that the military road and construction units can move up and assist in clearing Routes 1 and 9. (P)
2. Urge Cy Vance to get the South Koreans moving on their progress to send another division. Advise them that we are closing our commitment for 525,000 as quickly as possible and ask them to do likewise. ✓
3. Have the Ambassador in Thailand get to the Thai officials exactly what we are doing in Vietnam. Tell them we are getting them their equipment soonest. See what they can do with their forces. —
4. Speed up the chopper shipments. (Secretary McNamara) ✓
5. Check out the report of a possible air strike against Seoul (General Wheeler) ✓
6. Determine U.S. draft age (General Wheeler) ✓
7. Determine what is the status of the C-130s (Westmoreland's request and our response to that request) ✓
8. Get Bunker and Westmoreland to push on the 18 and 19 year old draft issue in South Vietnam. (This seems to have been taken care of according to press reports last night.) ✓