

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**PRESERVATION COPY**

Reporting

31 Jan 68 -- Christian msg to Bunker and  
Westmoreland, Am Public Understanding ----- A

12 Feb 68 -- State msg to Saigon re factual reporting ----- B

16 Feb 68 -- Rostow msg to Bunker, briefing plan  
approved; requesting factual stories on four subjects ----- C

3 Feb 68 -- Rostow memo to President, background  
briefing by Amb Bunker, 3 Feb 68 ----- D

5 Feb 68 -- Rostow memo to President, comments on  
Harry McPherson's draft ----- E

9 Feb 68 -- Bunker statement to American community in  
Viet Nam ----- F

12 Feb 68 -- Outline of speech for the President ----- G

13 Feb 68 -- Questions and Answers to Goulding re  
Additional troops to Viet Nam ----- H

15 Feb 68 -- Nitze Ltr -- Are men being sent back to  
Viet Nam who have been there less than two years ago? ----- I

17 Feb 68 -- Remarks by President at Ft Bragg ----- J

17 Feb 68 -- Rostow memo to President, scheduled troop  
movements ----- K

17 Feb 68 -- Rostow memo to President, two jobs in hand ----- L

Face the Nation

15 Feb 68 -- Bunker msg to Christian ----- M

23 Feb 68 -- Saigon msg to State, Bunker briefs Thieu  
on themes for Face the Nation also "protective arrest"  
of certain political figures ----- N

25 Feb 68 -- Transcript of Thieu Interview ----- O

26 Feb 68 -- Questions and Answers, Bunker/Cronkite ----- P

<u>26 Feb 68</u> -- Saigon msg to State, interview of Bunker by Doug Kiker of NBC-TV -----	Q
<u>6 Mar 68</u> -- Background briefing, Saigon, SVN -----	R
<u>8 Mar 68</u> -- Southeast Asia Resolution of 1968, Rostow ----	S

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

LDX  
ENT 12:40 PM

TO: S/S Ben Read  
FROM: Bromley Smith

Per your request.

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~~SECRET~~

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SCNT 5:46 P.M.

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FM THE WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

TO ANAME SAIGON

ZEM

~~SECRET~~ EYES ONLY [REDACTED]

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FOR: AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND GEN. WESTMORELAND

INFO: ZORTHIAN AND SIDLE

FROM: GEORGE CHRISTIAN, PRESS SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT

WE ARE FACING, IN THESE NEXT FEW DAYS A CRITICAL PHASE IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC'S UNDERSTANDING AND CONFIDENCE TOWARD OUR EFFORT IN VIETNAM. THOSE OF US WHO HAVE FOLLOWED MOST INTIMATELY THE EVENTS OF THE PAST HOURS HAVE THE HIGHEST ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATIONS AND THE FIRMEST CONFIDENCE THAT WE WILL SUCCESSFULLY MEET THIS LATEST CHALLENGE. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE PUBLIC HERE AT HOME BE GIVEN THE UNDERSTANDING WHICH SUPPORTS THIS OUTLOOK. THERE IS NO MORE EFFECTIVE WAY IN WHICH THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED THAN THROUGH PERSONAL APPEARANCES BY EACH OF YOU WITH THE PRESS, AND PARTICULARLY ON TELEVISION, ALONG THE LINES WE HAD DISCUSSED EARLIER. WE CAN ALREADY SEE THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ARE BEING INADEQUATELY REPORTED AND INTERPRETED. UNLESS WE MOVE QUICKLY, MUCH OF THE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN PRESS COVERAGE ACHIEVED BY THE TWO OF YOU, GEN. SIDLE AND BARRY ZORTHIAN, WILL BE LOST. NO ONE CAN APPRECIATE BETTER THAN WE HERE AT THE WHITE HOUSE THE PRESSURES WHICH ARE UPON YOU JUST NOW. DESPITE THIS, AND DESPITE YOUR OWN NATURAL RESERVE ABOUT PUBLIC APPEARANCES, IT IS THE PRESIDENT'S FEELINGS -- WHICH WE ALL SHARE -- THAT NOW IS THE TIME FOR YOU TO STEP FORWARD AND GIVE YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS A FULL AND EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF OUR POSITION. IF YOU DO, THEY CANNOT HELP BUT RESPOND IN CONFIDENCE AND UNITY TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE MOMENT.

THIS CLEARLY IS AN ADDED BURDEN, BUT WE BELIEVE IT OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE THAT YOU FIND THE TIME AND THE OCCASIONS TO DO THIS JOB FOR US -- PARTICULARLY IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.

SEARCHED  
 Authority RAC 018-49-2-4  
 By [REDACTED] 11/2/15

WE ASKED THAT THIS MESSAGE BE PASSED ALSO TO BARRY  
HIAN AND TO GEN. STOLTZ BECAUSE WE EXPECT THEM TO EMPLOY  
R UTHMOST INGENUITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS IN SUPPORT OF THIS  
A EFFORT WHICH WE ARE ASKING OF YOU.

E SPECIFIC, NOTHING CAN MORE DRAMATICALLY COUNTER SCENES  
C DESTRUCTIVENESS THAN THE CONFIDENT PROFESSIONALISM OF  
COMMANDING GENERAL. SIMILARLY, THE DIRE PROGNOSTICATIONS OF  
COMMENTATORS CAN BEST BE PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE BY THE SHARED  
RIENCE AND WISDOM OF OUR AMBASSADOR.

ILL CONTINUE TO BACK YOU UP IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE, BUT IN  
IMMEDIATE SITUATION, APPEARANCES BY YOU WILL MAKE A  
TER IMPACT HERE AT HOME THAN MUCH OF WHAT WE CAN SAY.

~~SECRET~~

EYES ONLY





# Department of State

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 722

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PAGE 01 STATE 108715

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DRAFTED BY: EA: HABIB  
APPROVED BY: UNDER SECRETARY  
EA: BUNDY  
WH: ROSTOW  
WH: CHRISTIAN  
P: MCCLOSKEY  
DOD: GOULDING  
USIA: OLEKSIW (SUBS)  
S/S: READ

0 012355Z FEB 68 ZFF4  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 6178

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ STATE 108715

LIMDIS

1. MISSION AND MACV EFFORTS TO KEEP PRESS FACTUALLY INFORMED OF EVENTS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM IS THOROUGHLY REFLECTED LATEST PRESS REPORTS. AGREE FULLY WITH YOUR INTENTION TO MAINTAIN FULL FLOW OF INFORMATION, INCLUDING HIGH LEVEL PERSONAL APPEARANCES, AS BEST WAY TO GUIDE PRESS AWAY FROM INACCURATE AND SENSATIONAL REPORTING.

2. WE WILL BE LIMITING OUR OWN COMMENTS TO CONFORM WITH YOUR OUTPUT, MAKING CLEAR THAT SAIGON WILL ORIGINATE DETAILED COMMENTS AS THE SITUATION MOVES.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter MAR 14 1979

By ip, NARS, Date 6-25-79

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# Department of State

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PAGE 02 STATE 108715

PAGE 2 RUEHC 108715 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3. ON THE BASIS OF OUR READING OF COVERAGE HERE WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS FOR YOUR GUIDANCE:

A. IT IS PREFERABLE TO STAY AWAY FROM OVERPLAYING OUR QTE SUCESSEES UNQTE AT THIS STAGE. AS WE READ SITUATION IT WILL TAKE FEW DAYS BEFORE THINGS WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY IN HAND IN THE URBAN, PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AREAS AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT DESIRABLE TO APPEAR TO BE MAKING EXCESSIVE CLAIMS PREMATURELY. WE DO WISH, HOWEVER, TO PROJECT STANCE OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR OWN AND GVN ABILITY TO HANDLE THE SITUATION.

B. WE FEEL THAT CHANGES OF QTE DUPLICITY UNQTE ON PART OF VC SHOULD BE DOWNPLAYED RATHER THAN BEING MADE CENTRAL THEME OF OUR EXPLANATION FOR VC CAPABILITY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE SHOULD AVOID CALLING ATTENTION TO VC BREAKING AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TET TRUCE AND TRADITIONAL TET ATMOSPHERE.

C. WITH UNCERTAINTIES REMAINING AS TO THE COURSE OF EVENTS OVER THE NEAR TERM WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO PLACE OURSELVES IN A POSITION WHERE WE WOULD HAVE TO RETRACT STATED JUDGMENTS AND

PAGE 3 RUEHC 108715 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ANALYSIS. WE REALIZE THAT YOU WILL PLAY THIS CAUTIOUSLY BUT WE EXPECT THAT PRESS MAY TRY TO GET US OUT ON A LIMB.

D. WE ARE DRAWING NO REPEAT NO NEW CONCLUSIONS IN OUR COMMENTS TO THE PRESS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VC AND NVA CURRENT ACTIVITY AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF NEGOTIATION BEYOND THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT OF FEBRUARY 1: QTE UNTIL WE HAVE SOME BETTER SIGN THAN THESE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE PROVIDED THAT HE (THE NORTH VIETNAMESE) WILL NOT STEP UP THIS TERRORISM AND AGGRESSION IF WE HALT THE BOMBING, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO GIVE OUR MEN THE PROTECTION IT AFFORDS. UNQTE

E. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE RETALIATION, WE HAVE BEEN OFFERING QTE NO COMMENT UNQTE. WE DO NOT WISH TO GO BEYOND THIS EITHER ON OR OFF THE RECORD, OR TO SPECULATE IN ANY WAY. RUSK

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Authority State 7-5-78 and NSC 11-24-78 letters  
By ib NAKS, Date 3-19-79

~~SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

CAP32336

FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER FROM WALT ROSTOW.  
FEBRUARY 8, 1968

YOUR BRIEFING PLAN (SAIGON 445) APPROVED.  
FROM THIS END ANY HARD, FACTUAL STORIES YOU CAN GENERATE  
ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS WOULD BE STABILIZING AND HELPFUL:  
-- GOOD PERFORMANCE BY THE ARVN AND THE PROVINCE CHIEFS;  
-- THE EXECUTIVE VITALITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH  
FOOD, REFUGEES, ETC;  
-- SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT FROM THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH,  
POLITICAL LEADERS, AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS;  
-- EVIDENCE THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE CITIES, HAVING HAD A GOOD  
LOOK AT THE VC AND WAR, HAVE MOVED TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT  
AND A MORE POSITIVE ANTI-VC ATTITUDE.  
IN BRIEFINGS HERE WE HAVE ALSO FOUND EXTREMELY USEFUL THE  
PRISONER OF WAR INTERROGATIONS WHICH YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE  
WIDELY AVAILABLE IN SAIGON.

152

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COPY - Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

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C.A.P. 80396

February 8, 1968

FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER, EYES ONLY, FROM WALT ROSTOW

Your briefing plan (Saigon 445) approved.

From this end any hard, factual stories you can generate on the following subjects would be stabilizing and helpful:

- Good performance by the ARVN and the province chiefs;
- The executive vitality of the government in dealing with food, refugees, etc;
- Support for the government from the Legislative Branch, political leaders, and non-governmental groups;
- Evidence that the people in the cities, having<sup>had</sup>/a good look at the VC and war, have moved towards the government and a more positive anti-VC attitude.

In briefings here we have also found extremely useful the prisoner of war interrogations which you may wish to make widely available in Saigon.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~  
Authority RAC 018-492-5  
By JON, NALL, Date 11-2-15

February 5, 1968

TO: Walt Rostow

FROM: George Christian

I fully agree with Ambassador Bunker's  
suggestion regarding Westmoreland.



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IMMEDIATE PRECEDENCE USED FOR XMSN PURPOSE ONLY, ACTUAL PRECEDENCE  
IS PRIORITY.

*Copy should be  
sent to Christian  
Bics*

*Rostow*

~~SECRET~~ 051049Z FEB 68 VIA CAS CHANNELS  
PRIORITY ~~ROUTED TO~~  
FM AMB BUNKER SAIGON 445

TO THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVE FOR MR ROSTOW

REF: CAP 80386

1. WESTY AND I WILL, OF COURSE, BE RESPONSIVE TO THE PRESIDENT'S WISHES. WESTY GAVE EXCELLENT COMPREHENSIVE PRESS BRIEFING LAST FRIDAY AND WILL GIVE ONE TOMORROW ALSO. EARLIER FRIDAY, HE WAS PRECEDED BY GENERAL WEYAND WHO DID FIRST RATE JOB. HE HAD TO BE IN FIELD YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND GENERAL CHAISSON FILLED IN FOR HIM, ALSO TURNING IN EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE. I HAVE GIVEN TWO STATEMENTS TO PRESS, RADIO, AND TV AND HAD BACKGROUND CONFERENCE WITH PRESS YESTERDAY.

2. WESTY, BARRY ZORTHIAN, AND I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A SUGGESTION. WE BELIEVE THAT WESTY CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND HAVE MORE IMPACT WITH THE PRESS IF HE DOES NOT MAKE HIS BRIEFING A DAILY EVENT. IF IT BECOMES ROUTINE, ITS SIGNIFICANCE TENDS TO DIMINISH. ANOTHER READING MIGHT BE THAT IF THE TOP COMMANDER HAS TO APPEAR DAILY THE SITUATION HERE MUST BE EXTREMELY SERIOUS, CERTAINLY MORE SERIOUS THAN WE BELIEVE IT TO BE.

IF, AS IS CASE NOW, ENEMY ACTIVITY TAPERS OFF AND CLEANUP PROGRESSES THERE WILL BE LESS NEWS AND WE FELT THAT IF WESTY WERE TO GIVE A BRIEFING AT TIMES HE AND I THINK APPROPRIATE, SAY EVERY TWO OR THREE DAYS, IT WOULD HAVE MAXIMUM IMPACT WITH THE PRESS.

3. I WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE COMMENTS ON THE NON-MILITARY COURSE OF EVENTS AT APPROPRIATE TIMES AS YOU SUGGEST.

DECLASSIFIED

STATE letter MAR 14 1979

Authority

By *if*, NARS, Date 6-25-79



4. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR REACTION TO THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS.  
5. ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, ORGANIZATION OF THE JOINT GVN-US TASK FORCE GOT UNDERWAY YESTERDAY. AT MEETING WITH KY PRESIDING, IT WAS AGREED THAT PUBLICLY IT WOULD BE A GVN TEAM WITH U.S. IN SUPPORTING ROLE. ACTUALLY IT WILL FUNCTION AS WE HAD SUGGESTED (SAIGON 17607) WITH U.S. HAVING FULL PARTICIPATION WITH VIETNAMESE. BOB KOMER WAS PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF FIRST MEETING YESTERDAY AND I BELIEVE WE SHALL BE ON THE WAY PROMPTLY. I HAVE REPORTED MORE FULLY IN MY WEEKLY MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT, GETTING OFF TODAY.  
6. I AM ALSO GLAD TO REPORT THAT IN OTHER ACTIONS MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS RESPONDED MAGNIFICENTLY. IT HAS PRE-EMPTED SERVICES OF SOME 40 ARVN DOCTORS IN SAIGON, AND MINISTER LU Y HAS WORKED AROUND THE CLOCK FOR THE LAST THREE DAYS. THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS HAS ALSO PERFORMED EXTRAORDINARILY WELL. REPAIRS WERE QUICKLY MADE TO THE AQUEDUCT IN THE CITY AND ALL OF SAIGON HAS WATER. FOOD SUPPLIES ARE AMPLE, AID HAS BEEN ABLE TO RESTORE POWER OUTAGE OF TWO NIGHTS AGO, AND THERE IS FUEL ON HAND FOR AT LEAST TWENTY DAYS' SUPPLIES. YESTERDAY WE PICKED UP GVN LEAFLETS SHOWING PICTURE OF VC TERROR KILLING RECOUNTING THE NUMBER OF VC KILLED AND CAPTURED, PRAISING ARVN FOR ITS PROMPT RESPONSE TO THE VC ACTION, AND CALLING FOR THE PEOPLE TO STAND FAST IN THE FACE OF THE VC.

GP-1

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

42

Saturday, Feb. 3, 1968  
1:20 p. m.

Mr. President:

You will be interested in this background  
briefing by Ambassador Bunker on the  
afternoon of February 3, Saigon time.

Walt  
W. Rostow

Attachment

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 17608 01 OF 02 031505Z

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ACTION P 04

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*es Jank*

*Rostow*

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 17608

FOR DONNELLEY FROM ZORTHIAN

AMBASSADOR BUNKER HELD BACKGROUND BRIEFING ATTRIBUTABLE  
TO "SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS" AFTERNOON FEB. 3, ATTENDED BY  
SELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA,  
REUTERS AND AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS  
IN INTRODUCTION:

WHILE WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET  
CONG THINKING IN LAUNCHING WAVE OF ATTACKS THROUGHOUT REPUBLIC

~~PAGE TWO~~ ~~UNCLAS~~

THERE ARE MANY INDICATIONS CURRENT PHASE PART OF CAREFULLY-PLANNED  
OPERATION LEADING TO WHAT COMMUNISTS HAVE LONG THOUGHT WOULD BE  
FORERUNNER OF A GENERAL UPRISING. COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN SAYING  
THIS PUBLICLY, AND HAVE BEEN TELLING THIS TO THEIR TROOPS. *ve viet Cong*  
AND NORTH VIETNAMESE THOUGHT AS THEY ENTERED CITIES PEOPLE  
WOULD RISE UP TO SUPPORT THEM, OVERTHROW THE GVN AND JOIN THEM  
IN RESISTANCE AGAINST AMERICANS. THIS THESIS SUPPORTED BY STORIES

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~~PAGE 22 SAIGON 17528 21 OF 22 031555Z~~

FROM HANOI, LIBERATION RADIO BROADCASTS AND INCIDENTS LIKE ONES IN SAIGON WHERE VC WENT THROUGH NEIGHBORHOODS SAYING "WE ARE FROM THE NFL. WE HAVE COME TO LIBERATE SAIGON."

*National Liberation Front.*

IF THIS THEIR PURPOSE, THEN EFFORT HAS FAILED IN ITS ESSENCE. THIS IS NOT TO IMPLY COMMUNISTS HAVE FAILED TO GAIN HEADLINES IN WORLD PRESS AND MAKE IMPRESSION ON VIETNAM ITSELF. ENEMY HAS GIVEN DRAMATIC IMPRESSION OF ABILITY FOR TERROR AND DISRUPTION AND CREATED CONFUSION AND CERTAIN MILITARY PROBLEMS. BUT CLEARLY PEOPLE HAVE NOT RESPONDED WITH A "GENERAL UPRISING." THERE IS NO EVIDENCE FROM ANY CITIES ATTACKED THAT THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR VC. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME SMALL GROUPS UNDOUBTEDLY, PARTICULARLY IN CITY LIKE HUE,

~~PAGE 3 RUEHGN 17693/1 UNCLAS~~

WHO AIDED VC. BUT COMMUNIST CONCEPT OF "GENERAL UPRISING" FAILED TO MATERIALIZE. HOW MUCH HANOI LEADERSHIP ACTUALLY EXPECTED SUCH REACTION HARD TO JUDGE, BUT THIS THEY HAVE BEEN TELLING WORLD AND OWN PEOPLE. THEREFORE IF THIS THEIR BASIC PURPOSE, IT HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED.

I SAY THIS DESPITE FACT I RECOGNIZE IMPACT THEY HAVE HAD WORLDWIDE AND IN VIETNAM. THEY HAVE SHOWN THEY ARE STILL CAPABLE AT PRESENT OF CONSIDERABLE MILITARY CHALLENGE, WHETHER SHORT-LIVED OR NOT, AND THAT THEIR TROOP DISPLAY AND TACTICAL ABILITY IS STILL VERY GOOD. THIS, OF COURSE, HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED AT A CONSIDERABLE PRICE. WHATEVER ACTUAL FIGURES THEIR CASUALTIES ARE, THEY HAVE SUFFERED TREMENDOUS LOSSES, SOMEWHERE OVER 12,000 KILLED THUS FAR. THIS FIGURE VERY LIKELY TO INCREASE MORE. IT IS LIKELY MANY OF CASUALTIES ARE AMONG BEST TRAINED AND MOST EFFECTIVE SOLDIERS. THEY FOUGHT WELL AND IT WOULD BE LOGICAL THEY WOULD PICK MOST EFFECTIVE UNITS FOR TASK OF "LIBERATION." WE KNOW A NUMBER OF THEIR BATTALIONS FROM SUCH PLACES AS LONG AN ARE AMONG MOST SEASONED. LOSS OF THIS TYPE PERSONNEL CANNOT BE MADE UP QUICKLY THROUGH

~~PAGE 4 RUEHGN 17693/1 UNCLAS~~

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~~PAGE 03 SAIGON 17667 01 OF 02 031555Z~~

RECRUITMENT OR EVEN THROUGH INFILTRATION.

SO IN ADDITION TO LOSING IN NUMBERS, THEY HAVE LOST IN MILITARY QUALITY. CERTAINLY, THEY HAVE NOT ACHIEVED ANY SORT OF MILITARY OBJECTIVE. THEY HAVE CREATED HAVOC AND DISRUPTION, BUT HAVE BEEN UNABLE HOLD SINGLE OBJECTIVE OF MILITARY IMPORTANCE. ALSO, THEY ARE BEING PUSHED OUT OF FEW AREAS THEY STILL OCCUPY.

*with*  
I DO NOT MEAN TO IMPLY VC WILL HAVE COLLAPSED MILITARILY BECAUSE OF THESE LOSSES. IN FACT, OUR MILITARY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE CAPACITY FOR A SECOND WAVE OF ATTACKS ON SELECTED TARGETS SUCH AS SAIGON. FOR INSTANCE, THEY HAVE ELEMENTS OF THREE DIVISIONS: THE 7TH NORTH VIETNAMESE AND 5TH AND 9TH VC THAT THEY COULD USE IN SECOND EFFORT AT SAIGON. GENERAL WESTMORELAND ESTIMATES THAT THEY HAVE PROBABLY COMMITTED ONLY ABOUT 35,000 MEN TO FIRST WAVE OF ATTACKS. IN ADDITION TO SECOND WAVE POSSIBILITY, THEY ALSO HAVE MILITARY RESOURCES, LARGELY NVA, TO UNDERTAKE MAJOR EFFORT AT KHE SANH AND IN DMZ AREA. OUR MILITARY PEOPLE FULLY AWARE THESE POSSIBILITIES, ARE PREPARED

*North Vietnamese Army*

~~PAGE 5 RUENON 17668/1 UNCLAS~~

FOR THEM, AND EVEN THOUGH MILITARY CHALLENGE MAY BE CONSIDERABLE, THE FIGHTING BITTER, WE BELIEVE WE WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE ANYTHING VC OR NVA CAN THROW AT US IN THIS SITUATION. THUS, I WOULD THINK BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY OBJECTIVES OF VC WILL ESSENTIALLY FAIL, ALTHOUGH I HASTEN TO ADD AGAIN THAT THEY HAVE CERTAINLY MADE SOME IMMEDIATE IMPACT AND OBVIOUSLY HAVE CREATED PROBLEMS.

TURNING TO MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. WITH CHALLENGE IN CITIES ESSENTIALLY REPULSED, WE HAVE A NEED FOR VERY ENERGETIC EFFORT ON PART GVN, WITH OUR ASSISTANCE, TO MEET MULTITUDE PROBLEMS SITUATION HAS CREATED AMONG CIVIL POPULATION. STRIKING IN MIDDLE OF TET, VC FOUND GVN AT ITS WEAKEST IN TERMS OF MOBILIZING RESOURCES. OFFICIALS WERE ON HOLIDAY AND LACK OF NEWSPAPER AND OTHER MEANS COMMUNICATION MADE MOBILIZING GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE DIFFICULT. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT THIEU AND VICE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER HAVE BEEN ACTIVE ALL THROUGH

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PAGE 24 SAIGON 17693 51 OF 62 031505Z

PERIOD. I HAVE BEEN IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH THEM AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND ~~has~~ BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH THEIR MILITARY. FACT THAT VIETNAMESE MIGHT BE LESS AGGRESSIVE IN TERMS

PAGE 6 RUENON 17693 1 UNCLAS

THEIR PUBLIC VISIBILITY WITH WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS THAN WE ARE SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THEY HAVE BEEN STANDING STILL. PRESIDENT THIEU HELD NUMBER MEETINGS WITH CABINET AND LEADING ADVISORS AND WE HAVE ALSO HAD JOINT MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICERS. THEY HAVE ALREADY INITIATED SOME EMERGENCY STEPS, SUCH AS PROVISION OF FOOD IN MANY PARTS OF CITY TODAY, AND THERE IS MORE IN OFFING. THEY ARE PUTTING INTO EFFECT EMERGENCY PLANS FOR MOBILIZING THEIR RESOURCES TO MEET PROBLEMS OF FOOD, PUBLIC SERVICES, RECONSTRUCTION OF DEVASTATED AREAS, ETC. WE WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH EVERY ASSISTANCE WITHIN OUR MEANS.

GENERAL WESTMORELAND SAYS IN MANY AREAS ARVN PERFORMED EXCEEDINGLY WELL AND I AM HOPEFUL CIVIL SIDE OF GVN SHOWS PARALLEL CAPABILITY IN DAYS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD.  
BUNKER

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 17603 031625Z

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ACTION P 04

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UNCLAS SAIGON 17603 SECTION 2 OF 2

*Do not*  
THERE IS NO ~~DOUBT~~ PAST FEW DAYS CREATED PROBLEMS AND WILL  
TAX OUR ABILITIES TO UTMOST, BUT I AM HEARTENED BY FACT VIET-  
NAMESE PEOPLE HAVE PASSED THE TEST BY PROVIDING NEGATIVE  
ANSWERS TO VC APPEAL FOR GENERAL UPRISING. WHATEVER MILITARY  
CHALLENGE IS AHEAD, I THINK WE CAN FIND SOME STRENGTH IN  
ANSWERS VIETNAMESE HAVE GIVEN. AND, THEREFORE, WE CAN FIND AN  
OPPORTUNITY AHEAD TO MEET THESE PROBLEMS AND TO FORGE A  
BETTER SENSE OF NATIONAL PURPOSE. I SEE THUS A CHALLENGE  
TO US AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO TURN THESE EVENTS TO THE LONG/ RANGE  
DISADVANTAGE OF THE VC.

~~PAGE 2 RUZHON 1760372 UNCLAS~~

FOLLOWING POINTS WERE MADE DURING QUESTION AND ANSWER PORTION  
(SELECTED QUESTIONS ARE INCLUDED):

IN THE FIGHTING, THE ALLIES LOST 983 KILLED, OF WHICH  
381 WERE AMERICANS, 361 ARVN AND 4 FREE WORLD.

PRESIDENT THIEU MET WITH HIS SECURITY COUNCIL AND HAS

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~~PAGE 02 SAIGON 17603 031605Z~~

CALLED IN THE SENATE AND HOUSE FOR CONSULTATIONS. HE IS TRYING TO DRAW EVERYBODY INTO SITUATION EVERYWHERE IN COUNTRY IN AN APPEAL TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST. MISSION HAS ALSO MET WITH LEADERS, AND HAS FOUND FAVORABLE SUPPORT TO GOVERNMENT'S APPEAL.

IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION OF WHO WAS OFFERING SUPPORT TO SUCH APPEALS, AMBASSADOR REPLIED GOOD RESPONSE WAS COMING FROM OPPOSITION PEOPLE IN LOWER HOUSE AND SENATE AND FROM OTHER WALKS OF LIFE.

WE DO NOT YET HAVE RESPONSIBLE FIGURES ON NUMBER OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.

Q. HOW CAN THE MILITARY ACTION BE TURNED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S

~~PAGE 3 RUEHGN 1760342 UNCLAS~~

ADVANTAGE? A. THE ATTACKS WERE MADE DURING THE TET TRUCE PERIOD, ON A NATIONAL AND TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY. IT HAS CREATED A SENSE OF OUTRAGE AMONG THE PEOPLE. IF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT ACTS QUICKLY AND USES THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNIFY THE PEOPLE, IT SEEMS THIS CAN BE TURNED TO A VERY GOOD ADVANTAGE.

Q. IN THE PAST THE U.S. AND GVN HAVE SAID SECURITY WAS THE KEY FOR SUCCESS IN PACIFICATION, THEN HOW CAN THESE ATTACKS BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GVN? A. I THINK THE ATTACKS WILL SLOW DOWN THE PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM. BUT, BY THE SAME TOKEN I THINK MORE STRINGENT MEASURES CAN BE TAKEN IN GETTING MORE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.

Q. WHAT PLANS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR BETTER SECURITY? A. MORE STRINGENT MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO PROVIDE BETTER SECURITY. THE OFFENSIVE CAME AT A TIME WHEN THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WAS LEAST PREPARED FOR IT. THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE INCREASING ITS FORCES IN NEW MOBILIZATION MEASURES. IT WILL HAVE 65,000 MORE TROOPS BY THE END OF THIS YEAR. THIS IS A VERY SUBSTANTIAL

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~~PAGE 03 SAIGON 17658 031625Z~~

~~PAGE 4 RUENON 17658/2 UNCLAS~~  
FORCE FOR A COUNTRY OF THIS SIZE.

Q. HAS A LESSON BEEN LEARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT TAKE HOLIDAYS, EVEN AT TET? A. I THINK SO.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US SOME IDEA OF THE PLANS FOR SAIGON IN THE COMING WEEK? A. GOVERNMENT PEOPLE WILL RETURN TO WORK MONDAY. THERE ARE STILL VC IN THE CITY, PARTICULARLY IN THE 7TH AND 8TH DISTRICTS WHICH WILL TAKE UNTIL MONDAY OR TUESDAY TO CLEAN OUT. THE POLICE ARE GETTING TELEPHONE CALLS FROM THE POPULACE TELLING THEM WHERE THE VC ARE LOCATED.

Q. WHAT ARE THE CHANCES FOR NEGOTIATION NOW? WHAT WOULD BE THE SITUATION FOR TALKS IF WE HAD AGREED TO A BOMBING PAUSE A MONTH AGO? A. IF THEY HADN'T TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE TRUCE THERE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN AN ATTACK.

Q. IF YOU WERE ASKED TWO WEEKS AGO WHETHER THESE ATTACKS BY THE VC WERE POSSIBLE, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID? A. THAT IS

~~PAGE 5 RUENON 17658/2 UNCLAS~~

A HARD QUESTION. I THINK I WOULD HAVE SAID IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THEY HAD THE CAPABILITY.

Q. IF A SECOND WAVE OF ATTACKS COMES, WOULD IT BE IN AS MANY PLACES AND ON THE SAME SCALE? A. NO. NO, IT WOULD NOT BE IN AS MANY PLACES OR WITH THE SAME STRENGTH.

Q. DO YOU SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH HANOI?

A. IT IS NOT UP TO ME TO SAY. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT HANOI IS INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATIONS EXCEPT ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OWN FOUR POINTS. AS FOR THE IMMEDIATE POSITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM: THERE MIGHT BE A HARDENING ON ITS PART BECAUSE OF THE ATTACKS-THE OBVIOUS PURPOSE OF HANOI WAS TO TRY TO TAKE OVER IN THE SOUTH.

Q. CAN WE USE THE BASIS OF THESE ATTACKS NOW TO SAY TO

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~~PAGE 04 SAIGON 17623 231625Z~~

GENERAL VINH HE MUST CHANGE HIS MILITARY ORGANIZATION AND...?

A. ARVN HAS HAD THE BRUNT OF THESE ATTACKS, AND HAS PERFORMED WELL.

~~PAGE 6 RUEHGN 175084Z UNCLAS~~

ON ANOTHER QUESTION IMPLYING THE WEAKNESS OF THE GVN AND MILITARY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT SUCCESS THE ATTACKS HAD, THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THE ATTACKS WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL, THE GVN AND MILITARY HAD RECOVERED FROM THE ONSLAUGHT, WERE THROWING THE ENEMY OUT AND CAUSING HEAVY CASUALTIES.

ON ANOTHER QUESTION IMPLYING THE ATTACKS MEAN A FAILURE OF THE OVERALL EFFORT HERE, HE SAID: I DON'T THINK BECAUSE YOU HAVE HAD THIS KIND OF AN ATTACK THE SITUATION IS A FAILURE. WE HAVE HAD SETBACKS BEFORE. EVEN IN WORLD WAR II, THERE WAS THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE. I SAID WHEN I WAS IN WASHINGTON THE LAST TIME: "STEADY BUT NOT SPECTACULAR PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE." THIS HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY DEFEAT OF THE VC, BUT IT HAS CREATED SOME DIFFICULTIES, SOME SETBACKS, OF COURSE.  
BUNKER

UNCLASSIFIED

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

7E

43

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have gone over Harry McPherson's latest draft which looks to me basically good.

I shall put forward to him certain minor specific suggestions.

My major suggestion is that it requires -- perhaps just before the last paragraph on page 22 -- a passage like the following:

"In the end, the Communists' attacks are aimed against two political targets:

- the political life of South Viet Nam;
- the political life of the United States.

As for the South Vietnamese, the reports that I have been receiving are encouraging. The military and civilian leadership understand that this is a moment of opportunity, as well as crisis. The new Constitutional institutions of the country must be made to work on the basis of efficiency and national unity. Coordinated efforts are now under way of a kind we have not before seen in Saigon, to re-establish normal life and security in the cities, the towns, and the countryside. There is a chance that South Viet Nam will emerge in the weeks and months ahead with stronger political institutions and a greater sense of nationhood and common destiny than before. We shall help them to do that in every way we can; although they know that it is basically a job they must do for themselves.

The second target is the political life in the United States. They want us to believe that the struggle against them is hopeless: that we should settle not for self-determination and one-man, one-vote, but for turning power over to them."

With minor changes, the text would then proceed "responding to that pressure, etc."

W. W. Rostow

cc: Harry McPherson

(handcarried)

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 01871 091325Z

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UNCLAS SAIGON 18716

USIA FOR IBS, IPS.

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT MADE BY AMBASSADOR BUNKER ON  
ARMED FORCES RADIO AFTERNOON FEB. 9 ADDRESSED TO AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY IN VIET-NAM:  
BEGIN TEXT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE TET HOLIDAY ATTACKS BY  
NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG FORCES UPON MAJOR POPULATION  
CENTERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES  
TO ADDRESS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND TO  
REPORT TO YOU ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC.  
I ALSO WANT TO RELATE TO YOU THE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS WHICH  
IS BEING MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IN

PAGE 2 RUEHGN 18716 UNCLAS  
ITS EFFORTS TO RESTORE PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROVIDE RELIEF AND  
SECURITY FOR THE CIVILIAN POPULATION WHICH BORE THE BRUNT OF  
THE TERRORISTS' ATTACKS.

AT THE OUTSET, LET ME REPEAT TO THE ENTIRE AMERICAN COMMUNITY--

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 01871 091325Z

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN--WHAT I HAVE ALREADY SAID TO THE STAFF OF THE U.S. MISSION IN VIETNAM. I DEEPLY APPRECIATE THE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF AMERICANS ALL OVER THE REPUBLIC DURING THESE PAST ELEVEN DAYS. IN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TASKS RANGING FROM THE DEFENSE OF YOUR OWN LIVES AND HOMES TO THE CARE AND SHELTER OF VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF VIET CONG TERROR, AND OFTEN IN EXCEEDINGLY DANGEROUS CIRCUMSTANCES, AMERICAN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL HAVE PERFORMED WITH COURAGE AND DISTINCTION IN THIS TIME OF CHALLENGE.

I KNOW MANY OF YOU--THROUGH YOUR WORK WITH YOUR VIETNAMESE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN COUNTERPARTS--ARE ALREADY AWARE OF THE VIGOROUS RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF

PAGE 3 RUEHGN 18716 UNCLAS

VIETNAME TO THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF THE ATTACKS. THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THESE CRITICAL DAYS HAS OFFERED A POWERFUL DEMONSTRATION OF THE COMMITMENT OF ITS LEADERS TO THE WELFARE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND NATION AND TO MAINTAINING NATIONAL CONFIDENCE IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST AGGRESSION.

SOON AFTER THE INITIAL ATTACKS LAST WEEK THE GVN LEADERSHIP INAUGURATED A MASSIVE NATIONWIDE EFFORT TO CARE FOR THOSE LEFT HOMELESS OR INJURED. THIS EFFORT IS CONTINUING, SUPPORTED BY FREE WORLD AID EFFORTS. AT THE SAME TIME, MILITARY FORCES WERE MOVING RAPIDLY TO ELIMINATE THE THREAT POSED BY THE VIET CONG PRESENCE IN MAJOR CITIES AND TOWNS. AT THE DIRECTION OF PRESIDENT THIEU, A SPECIAL CABINET-LEVEL NATIONAL RECOVERY COMMITTEE HEADED BY VICE PRESIDENT KX HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND IS WORKING ACTIVELY TO COORDINATE RELIEF AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THIS COMMITTEE IS RECEIVING FULL SUPPORT AND COOPERATION FROM ALL U.S. AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL IN VIETNAM. I HAVE KEPT IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH PRESIDENT THIEU AND THE OTHER LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENT. I HAVE ASSURED THEM THAT WE STAND

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PAGE 03 SAIGON 01871 091325Z

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WILLING TO UNDERTAKE ANY ADDITIONAL EFFORTS WHICH MAY PROVE NECESSARY IN THE TASKS OF RELIEF AND RECOVERY.

I KNOW EACH OF YOU, AS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN VIETNAM, STANDS READY TO DO THE SAME. MANY PROBLEMS REMAIN. WE ARE ENTERING A TIME OF TESTING IN WHICH PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD BOTH THE GVN AND THE U.S. WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED BY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR JOINT RESPONSE TO THE GREAT NEEDS OF THE VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION. ALREADY THERE HAVE BEEN HEARTENING SIGNS OF A NATIONAL VIETNAMESE RESPONSE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS. I KNOW THAT WE AMERICANS IN VIETNAM WILL DO THE SAME. I WOULD ASK THREE THINGS OF EACH OF YOU IN THIS CRITICAL TIME: THAT YOU KEEP WORKING TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY ; THAT YOU GIVE NO CREDENCE TO UNCONFIRMED RUMORS WHICH ARE SO WIDESPREAD THESE DAYS; AND THAT YOU MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE VIETNAMESE IN THEIR OWN EFFORTS TO RESTORE NORMAL NATIONAL LIFE.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THE VIET CONG HAVE SUFFERED A MAJOR SETBACK IN THEIR MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST

PAGE 5 RUEHGN 18716 UNCLAF

THE VIETNAMESE AND ALLIED FORCES. SINCE THE ATTACKS BEGAN, THEIR LOSSES HAVE NUMBERED OVER TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND. THESE HAVE INCLUDED MANY OF THEIR BEST CADRE. IN ADDITION, ANY EXPECTATIONS THEY HAD FOR A GENERAL UPRISING IN SUPPORT OF THEIR ATTACKS DID NOT MATERIALIZE. INSTEAD, MUCH OF THE POPULATION THROUGHOUT VIETNAM COOPERATED WHERE EVER IT COULD IN LOCATING AND ELIMINATING THE VIET CONG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSORS. THE RUTHLESSNESS AND DESTRUCTION OF THEIR ATTACKS SHOULD BRING HOME EVEN MORE FORCEFULLY TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM THE STRATEGX AND GOALS OF HANOI AND THE VIET CONG.

LET ME REPEAT: WE STILL FACE DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES. THERE WILL BE A PERIOD OF CONTINUING INCONVENIENCE FOR ALL OF US IN VIETNAM, AND THE SECURITY SITUATION WILL REMAIN OF CONCERN. I KNOW THAT THE VIETNAMESE FORCES AND OUR OWN HAVE THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND. I KNOW ALSO THAT THE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AND

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PAGE 04 SAIGON 01871 091325Z

SELF-CONTROL WHICH YOU HAVE DISPLAYED DURING THIS DEMANDING PERIOD WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE YOUR FELLOW AMERICANS AT HOME,

AS IT HAS ME. EACH OF YOU HAS MY BEST WISHES AND MY GRATEFUL THANKS FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE. END TEXT.

PAGE 6 RUEHGN 18716 UNCLAS  
BUNKER



c. 12 Feb  
7E

## Outline of Speech for the President

45

*change of strategy*  
*with 10/1*

### 1. The Enemy's Winter-Spring Offensive

- What we knew beforehand: Maximum enemy effort, then negotiate on his terms.
- What actions we took: 102 of 106 battalions by Christmas; warning allies (Canberra); reject enemy 7-day truce and cancelled I Corps truce; U.S. forces on full alert.
- Nevertheless, by secrecy and violating Tet, important tactical surprise was achieved in the cities.

### 2. Results thus far.

- Positive: -- The people did not revolt;  
-- cities and towns held by the government;  
-- ARVN fought well;  
-- Government united and worked well with people on relief;  
-- very heavy enemy casualties inflicted and weapons lost by enemy. Two figures wholly consistent. Also many prisoners taken.
- Negative: -- troops concentrated on city protection;  
-- civilian casualties, destruction, and refugee. (Appeal for private relief aid?)
- severe ARVN and U.S. casualties, although better than 10/1;  
-- some temporary disruption of pacification;  
-- DMZ-Khe Sanh battle still to be fought.

### 3. Where are We?

We are in the midst of a great battle, perhaps the climactic battle of the Vietnamese war. We Americans have been there before: from Saratoga to Gettysburg; from the Battle of the Bulge to the Communist offensives in Korea in April and May 1951. We keep our heads; we put the handwringers aside; and get on with the business.

### 4. What Shall We Do?

- Work with the Vietnamese to expand and modernize their forces?
- Work with the Vietnamese in relief and recovery of the cities and towns?

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- Move rapidly to the 525,000 men we planned.
- Make sure Westy and our men go into the battles ahead with everything they need at hand and a united America back home.

5. Negotiate?

Of course, we want peace. Hanoi knows the kind of peace we want and are prepared to negotiate. But we shall make sure that, having failed in his ruthless and brutal assault on the life of the cities and towns, the enemy does not achieve by diplomacy and political pressure and soft headiness what he failed to achieve in the Tet attacks. We shall not abandon the people who voted for a Constitution, who voted for President and Vice President, who voted for a Senate and a Lower House, who turned their backs on the Communists when they appealed for an uprising.

When the other side is ready to talk about peace, we shall be ready. But we have had enough of phoney peace feelers and chicanery. It must be the real thing.

THIS IS NOT A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

46  
This is a summary of the questions and answers of Assistant Secretary of Defense Phil G. Goulding's meeting with newsmen in connection with the deployment of additional troops to Vietnam, at 12:15 p.m., February 13, 1968. This is not a verbatim transcript and should not be used as such.

Mr. Goulding: We have gotten several queries this morning on units already either alerted for movement or ordered to move to Vietnam, and therefore, I can say this: In compliance with General Westmoreland's request, we are deploying approximately 10,500 additional troops to South Vietnam.

Question: Is this in addition to the 525,000?

Answer: This is in addition to the 500,000 that are there now.

Question: Does this raise the ceiling?

Answer: It does not raise the ceiling above the 525,000. This deployment is within the 525,000 authorization.

Question: It would have been deployed anyway?

Answer: I didn't say these units would have been deployed anyway. But the deployment of these units is within the 525,000.

Question: Why did General Westmoreland request these? When?

Answer: When -- within the last few days and why -- for insurance purposes.

Question: These are ground units? Ground combat units? Army or Marine?

Answer: I cannot identify by Service or by unit designation any of them until they close in Vietnam. They will be identified according to the normal way at that time.

Question: Are they going by air?

Answer: If we get into where they are coming from, we get into possible identification.

Question: Are we talking about troops from NATO?

Answer: We are not talking about any pull out from NATO.

Question: (Garble)

Answer: I am not going to discuss deployment times. When they close in Vietnam, they will be announced.

Question: Are we talking about something very soon?

Question: They have gone already?

Question: This indicates a change of planning. Could you explain why different types of units are going than have been explained earlier?

Answer: I would rather not add to anything I have said on that. It is very important to keep the 525,000 in proper perspective. There has been no authorization to send more than 525,000 men to South Vietnam,...

Question: Are there other units that have been scheduled to go?

Answer: (Continuing) Above and beyond that, evaluations will have to be made.

Question: This is not routine?

Answer: I am not going to characterize it.

Question: (Garble) (Do you plan to call reserves?)

Answer: No decision has been made to do so.

Question: Without revealing the type of unit, is it an integral unit?

Answer: I'm not going to identify the units any further. When they close in Vietnam, they will be announced and identified. These are active units, not reserve units.

Question: Has the 82nd airborne been alerted for deployment?

Answer: "In compliance with General Westmoreland's request, we are deploying 10,500 additional troops to South Vietnam." I am not going to identify any of these units.

Question: Did he request over 525,000?

Answer: He has not. I won't go into details of the request. But the request he made is being filled.

Question: Is this a unit?

Answer: I am not going to break it down.

Question: Does this portend a reserve call up?

Answer: No decision has been made.

Question: Latest figure in Vietnam?

Answer: It is 500,000.

Question: Has this movement already begun?

Answer: No comment.

Question: Is this a speed up of movement of troops?

Answer: Yes, it is a speed up. I don't want to leave an erroneous impression about that.

Question: These units that had been earmarked for Southeast Asia for Vietnam, are they still going to go?



Answer: The full evaluation has not yet been made, and whether they will ever be above 525,000 has yet to be evaluated. These units are within the 525,000. Absolutely no decision has been made to raise 525,000 by a single man. Those are all that are authorized to go. These units are within that total.

Question: These are all ground combat units? Do they include logistic and support?

Answer: They are basically combat units.

Question: Are these maneuver battalions?

Answer: I won't identify them.

Question: Insurance against what?

Answer: Enemy threat.

Question: Papers did refer to a second cycle of attacks, could we assume ...?

Answer: I'm not going to discuss deployments that General Westmoreland is going to make of these troops.

Question: The schedule of additional 25,000 -- when were they called to be there?

Answer: The present schedule calls for 518,000 by June 30 and the additional 7,000 into the next fiscal year, I'm not sure how many months into the next fiscal year.

Question: Will this action change that time table?

Answer: Not necessarily. I don't know the answer. It won't raise the 525,000.

Question: Will a lot of guys be sent back for second tours?

Answer: Within the number are some that would be going back before the 24-month non-returnee policy.

Question: They aren't going to have time to cull out a lot of these people?

Answer: I don't want to say that.

Question: What is the purpose, magnitude of this? What proportion of these will be going back?

Answer: I have no notion at this time.

Question: Can you say if they are Army and Marines?

Answer: The answer is no I can't. I really can't.

Question: What is the source?

Answer: Any way you want it.

37 file  
MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

7E  
47  
INFORMATION

Thursday, February 15, 1968  
3:45 p. m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THRU: George Christian *gr*

Paul Nitze called me, at the instigation of his Public Affairs people, to say that they are beginning to face pressure on the following question: Are any men being sent back to Viet Nam who have been there less than two years ago?

In fact, some of the men going back have served there more recently.

He says that if we do not acknowledge that our policy has been temporarily modified in some respects, we shall be getting adverse press stories.

I told him to put it in writing, and I would transmit the matter to you, since I knew you had strong views on all publicity aspects of these troop movements.

*W. R.* Rostow



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

February 15, 1968

Honorable Walt W. Rostow  
Special Assistant to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Walt:

Following up on our phone conversation, I believe we face a barrage of criticism in the press and on the Hill if we do not answer a number of queries we now have from both sources concerning deployment modifications in our Vietnam assignment policies related to the deployment of 10,500 troops. As you know, our Public Affairs people have been declining to provide such information, because to do so would confirm officially what is widely known -- namely that both Army and Marine Corps units are involved. If there are overriding requirements to maintain our position, we shall certainly do so.

But I suggest that otherwise we would be much better off to make available to newsmen on a "Response to Queries" basis, the following information:

"We have been asked for the policy modifications which apply to the deployment to South Vietnam of approximately 10,500 additional ground forces.

"These forces are composed of both Army and Marine Corps personnel.

"The Army objective is to provide 25 months between tours in Vietnam or other short tour areas. Individuals who will have 60 days remaining in their terms of service and who may have returned from Vietnam not less than 60 days at the time their unit is ready for deployment will deploy with their unit in this case.



"The Marine Corps objective is to provide 24 months between assignments to Vietnam. Temporarily, and for a limited number of units, this policy has been changed reducing the CONUS tour to 12 months before reassignment overseas. Personnel with over four months obligated service remaining are eligible for assignment overseas."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature, possibly reading "Paul", written in dark ink.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 17, 1968

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT  
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA

AT 5:05 P.M. EST

General Seitz, General Johnson, General Walt,  
Troopers:

Wherever you are, wherever you go, each of you knows that you have with you always the devotion, the concern, the prayers of all of those dear to you and to whom you are very dear.

As you depart once again to answer the call from afar, I come here today as your President to tell you that on your journey the hearts of this Nation and the hopes of men in many nations fly with you and will follow with you until this duty is done.

It is never easy for men to leave. It is never easy to ask men to leave home and happiness for duty far, far away.

But the duties of freedom have never been easy. For your Nation, for all of its people, those duties may become more demanding, the trials may become more difficult, the tests more challenging, before we or the world shall know, again, that peace on this planet is once more secure.

In every capital where there was a prospect, in every forum where there was a promise, your Nation and its leadership has sought peace.

The answer of the enemy in Vietnam has been pillage. The enemy has launched a major counter-offensive against the Government and the people of South Vietnam. He has marshaled his power around the cities of South Vietnam, in I Corps and elsewhere.

After 2-1/2 years in which he has seen his grip on the people weaken, he has finally decided to try to win now -- this year. His aim is to shake the Government of South Vietnam to its foundations, to shake the confidence of the South Vietnamese people -- to destroy the will of your people, the American people -- to see this struggle through.

In his first attempt three weeks ago, he failed. He did inflict terrible wounds on the people, and he took terrible losses himself. He did prove, again, what the world has long known -- that terrorists can strike and can kill without warning before the forces of order can throw them back.

And now he has struck again. At this very hour, a second wave of terrorists is striking the cities. Our forces are ready. I know they will acquit themselves, as they always have, however tough the battle becomes, and wherever it comes.

MORE

There has never been a finer fighting force wearing the American uniform than you and the one that you are going to join.

We long to see this bloodshed come to an end. Month after month we sought to find an honorable solution to the struggle that has torn Vietnam for 20 years. The enemy's answer was clear. It is written in the towns and the cities that he struck three weeks ago -- in the homeless thousands who fled the scenes of battle -- in the army that he has massed in the North near the DMZ.

And our answer -- your answer -- must be just as clear: Unswerving resolution to resist these ruthless attacks, as we have resisted every other.

Now remember this: You, each of you, represent America's will -- America's commitment -- in a land where our own security, as well as South Vietnam's freedom, is now facing a deadly challenge. Men who have never been elected to anything are threatening an elected government and the painfully achieved institutions of democracy.

You -- each of you -- have a great role to play in this struggle. I believe -- I know -- that you will serve the cause of freedom just as your forefathers served it. You will serve it with bravery, you will serve it with skill, you will serve it with devotion.

We, all America, are proud of you. I came here to speak in behalf of all America, and to tell you that you are our finest because you are the Airborne.

(The troops responded with "All the way, sir.")

God bless you and keep you.

END

(AT 5:13 P.M. EST)

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

49

Saturday, February 17, 1968

37  
Mr. President:

Between 0100 this morning and 0100 tomorrow morning, the following troop movements by air to Vietnam are scheduled:

- 27th Marines, El Toro, California, 12 flights with 648 passengers;
- 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne, Fort Bragg, 18 flights, 564 passengers.

After today's departures, there will still be 1594 Marines still to go from the West Coast and 2185 Airborne troops still to go.

Therefore, there would seem to be no problem about arranging a departing group as a backdrop for your presence at either place.

*W. W. T.* Rostow

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Authority PAC 018-49-2-1

By JON \*ARA Date 11-2-15

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## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, February 17, 1968 -- 10:45 a.m.

Mr. President:

In response to your instruction, we have two jobs in hand:

-- Bill Jorden is working quietly with Amb. Bui Diem on a speech on the "illusions of U.S. critics" of our Vietnam policy. He will have an audience of 1500 in the Shoreham.

-- Marshall Wright is working on a major speech for the Senate.

*Walt* Rostow

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TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR GEORGE CHRISTIAN (PRIORITY)

REF: CAP 80383

WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR MESSAGE TO GENERAL WESTMORELAND AND ME REGARDING PUBLIC APPEARANCES AT APPROPRIATE TIMES, MARTIN AGRONSKY, WHO IS NOW HERE, HAS ASKED ME WHETHER I WOULD APPEAR ON "FACE THE NATION" THIS WEEK. I BELIEVE HE PLANS TO HAVE A PANEL CONSISTING OF HIMSELF, WALTER CRONKITE, AND ONE OTHER PERSON WHOM HE HAS NOT YET NAMED. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH BARRY ZORTHIAN AND THE ONLY RESERVATION BOTH OF US HAS IS THAT IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE EARLY IN THE GAME IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE HAVE NOT VERY COMPLETE INFORMATION YET ON THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAD TWELVE OF THE PRESS IN FOR LUNCH TODAY AND A BACKGROUND SESSION AFTERWARD, INCLUDING AGRONSKY, AND I THINK THE KIND OF QUESTIONS WHICH WERE PUT TO ME COULD BE HANDLED SATISFACTORILY. I COULD UNDOUBTEDLY DO A BETTER JOB A WEEK FROM NOW, BUT THIS DOES NOT SUIT AGRONSKY'S SCHEDULE SINCE HE HOPES TO HAVE THIEU ON NEXT WEEK. ON BALANCE, ZORTHIAN AND I ARE INCLINED TO GO AHEAD BUT I THOUGH I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR JUDGMENT ALSO. REGARDS. BUNKER

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Authority STATE letter MAR 14 1979

By if, NARS, Date 6-25-79

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~~SECRET~~

February 23, 1968

FROM WALT ROSTOW

FOR THE PRESIDENT

Herewith Amb. Bunker briefs Thieu on themes for Face The Nation and gets a firm commitment on dates for two new corps commanders (March 1) and new province chiefs (April 1). Also, an explanation for "protective arrest" of certain political figures.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 7-5-78 and NSC 11-24-78 letters

By if, NARS, Date 3-19-79

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Authority STATE letter MAR 14 1979

By ip, NARS, Date 6-25-79

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 20270 231158Z

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ACTION SS 30

INFO SSQ 00, NSCE 00, CCO 00, /030 W

O R 231130Z FEB 68 ZFF-1  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7280  
INFO CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EXDIS

1. I SAW PRESIDENT THIEU EARLY EVENING OF FEBRUARY 22 AND DISCUSSED WITH HIM THE POINTS THAT WE HOPED HE WOULD COVER IN HIS FACE THE NATION APPEARANCE (~~STATE 119400~~). HE APPRECIATED HAVING THESE SUGGESTIONS AND THE OTHER MATERIAL WE HAD GIVEN HIM TO PREPARE FOR HIS APPEARANCE. IN CONNECTION WITH THE MILITARY FIGURES CONVERNING THE NUMBER OF MEN UNDER ARMS IN VIETNAM AS AGAINST THE U.S., I SAID THAT THE PROPORTION IS REALLY VERY IMPRESSIVE AND MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE NOW LARGE THE ARMED FORCES IN

PAGE 2 ~~RUMJIR 20270 SECRET~~

VIETNAM ARE IN RELATION TO THE NATION'S ~~SIVLE~~ AND POPULATION. I ADDED THAT THIS FACT, PLUS THE PROPOSED INCREASE UNDER THE NEW DRAFT PROVISIONS, WILL HAVE A VERY POSITIVE EFFECT. I TOLD THIEU THAT I THOUGH HE WOULD ALSO BE CLOSELY QUESTIONED ON MATTERS RELATING TO NEGOTIATIONS AND COALITION GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANY REAL DIFFERENCES IN VIEWPOINT BETWEEN THE GVN AND THE USG.

CIVILIAN

~~SECRET~~

JORDEN  
For the President  
Walt Rostow  
Herbert Goldhamer  
Bunker  
Thieu on TV  
for the  
Nation and  
gets a firm  
commitment on  
died for two  
new cops  
communist  
(March 1)  
and new  
province  
chiefs  
(April 1).  
also an  
application  
for "protection"  
against  
certain  
political  
figures.

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2. I THEN RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE ARRESTS OF CERTAIN POLITICAL FIGURES WHICH I HAD DISCUSSED WITH HIM THE DAY BEFORE (~~SAIGON 20174~~). THIEU SAID THAT THIS DECISION HAD BEEN MADE AT A CABINET MEETING ON FEBRUARY 20 AND EMPHASIZED THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE BEING "INVITED" TO THE POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH COMPOUND FOR THEIR OWN PROTECTION AND FOR THE SECURITY OF THE NATION. HE REITERATED THAT THE GVN HAD INTELLIGENCE THAT THE VC WISHED TO EXPLOIT THESE PERSONS TO PROMOTE "PEACE" AND "COALITION GOVERNMENT". HE SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE NEITHER ARRESTED NOR INTERROGATED AND WOULD BE KEPT IN COMFORTABLE QUARTERS. HE ADDED THAT A NUMBER OF OTHERS WHO WERE ON THIS REPORTED VIET CONG LIST WOULD BE INVITED TO COOPERATE UNDER

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SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. I STRESSED ONCE AGAIN THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND POLICE AUTHORITIES TO COORDINATE CAREFULLY WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INFORMATION SINCE THIS WHOLE MATTER MADE AN EXTREMELY BAD IMPRESSION ABROAD. I OBSERVED THAT IF THE SECURITY OF THE NATION WAS IN FACT INVOLVED AND THE PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THIS, THEN THEY WOULD SUPPORT IT.

THIEU AGREED AND SAID THAT HE WOULD SEE THAT THIS WAS PROPERLY HANDLED.

4. WE DISCUSSED AGAIN THE SWITCH IN CONTROL OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER, AND THIEU REITERATED THAT THIS HAD BEEN FULLY AGREED AMONG KY, LOC, AND HIMSELF. IN ADDITION TO THE REGULAR MORNING MEETINGS, UNDER THE (PY), THIEU SAID THAT HE PLANNED TO MEET AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK WITH THEM IN HIS OWN SITUATION ROOM IN ORDER TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE PROGRESS BEING MADE. KY ALSO WOULD KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE. HE ADDED THAT WITH RESPECT TO MY EARLIER SUGGESTION THAT THERE BE A BAN PLACED ON PRIVATE LUXURY CONSTRUCTION, HE EXPECTED TO TAKE ACTION SHORTLY TO

PRIME MINISTER

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PLACE SUCH A BAN IN EFFECT FOR A PERIOD OF EIGHT MONTHS TO YEAR.

5. THIEU THEN DESCRIBED SOME OTHER ACTIONS WHICH HE IS TAKING TO MOVE PRIORITY MATTERS ALONG. HE SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE CHANGE IN CONTROL MACHINERY FOR PROVINCE CHIEFS, WOULD TAKE EFFECT ON MARCH 1. HE ADDED THAT HE WILL SIGN THE REORGANIZATION DECREE, WHICH SETS FORTH THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES, THIS WEEK. THE PRIME MINISTER AND INTERIOR MINISTER WILL SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUE IMPLEMENTING DECREES EXPLAINING IN DETAIL HOW THIS NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT WILL FUNCTION. AFTER A ONE-MONTH TRIAL PERIOD, A SEMINAR WOULD BE HELD TO REVIEW THE OPERATIONS AND DETERMINE WHETHER THE REORGANIZATION HAD WORKED EFFECTIVELY, AND WHETHER CHANGES WERE NEEDED.

6. THIEU REMARKED THAT THE NEW TRAINING COURSE FOR PROVINCE CHIEFS WOULD BEGIN AT THE SAME TIME, NAMELY MARCH 1. DURING THE PERIOD MARCH 1 TO APRIL 1 THE PRESENT PROVINCE CHIEFS WOULD CONTINUE IN OFFICE ALTHOUGH OPERATING UNDER THE REORGANIZED

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ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. CERTAIN PROVINCE CHIEFS WOULD THEN BE CHANGED ON APRIL 1 WHEN THE TRAINING COURSE HAS

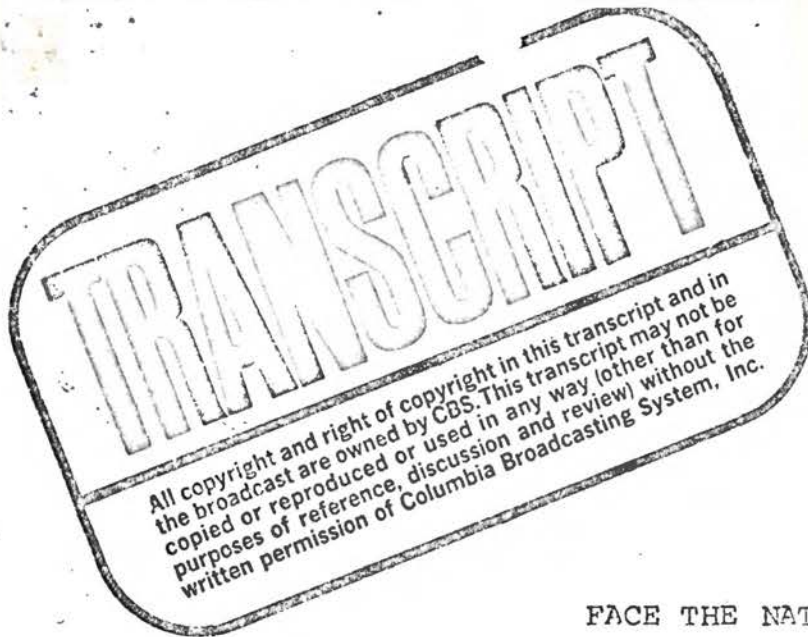
FINISHED. HE ALSO SAID HE PLANNED TO MAKE THE CHANGE IN II AND IV CORPS COMMANDERS ON MARCH 1. SENDING GENERAL LAN TO II CORPS AND GENERAL THANG TO IV CORPS. WITH RESPECT TO THE DRAFT OF THE YOUNGER AGE CLASSES, THE CALL-UP OF 19-YEAR OLDS WOULD NOW BEGIN MARCH 1 AND CARRY THROUGH APRIL 30; THE 18-YEAR OLDS WOULD BE CALLED UP BETWEEN MAY 1 AND JUNE 30. IN REPLY TO MY QUERY, HE SAID THIS SPEED-UP IN DRAFT WAS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE.

BUNKER

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CBS NEWS  
2020 M Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

FOR RELEASE: 12:30 PM EST  
SUNDAY, FEB. 25  
53

FACE THE NATION

as broadcast over the

CBS Television Network

and the

CBS Radio Network

Sunday, February 25, 1968 - 12:30-1:00 PM EST

GUEST: NGUYEN VAN THIEU  
President of South Vietnam

NEWS CORRESPONDENTS:

Martin Agronsky  
CBS News

Robert Shaplen  
New Yorker Magazine

Robert Schakne  
CBS News

PRODUCERS: Prentiss Childs and Sylvia Westerman

PRODUCER-DIRECTOR IN SAIGON: Robert Vitarelli

NOTE TO EDITORS: This broadcast was video-taped on  
Friday, February 23, in Saigon.

1 ANNOUNCER: The following program was recorded in Saigon on  
2 Friday.

3 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, as you know, the U.N. Secretary  
4 General, U Thant, has just met with President Johnson and said  
5 he thought that if American bombing of North Vietnam was  
6 stopped Hanoi would enter peace talks within two weeks. Are  
7 you in favor of that?

8 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that I support what President  
9 Johnson has declared before, in his so-called San Antonio  
10 conditions. I believe it could be the minimum for us to have  
11 some insurance that we could have some fruitful negotiations.

12 ANNOUNCER: From Saigon, South Vietnam, FACE THE NATION, a  
13 spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview, with the President  
14 of South Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu. President Thieu will be  
15 questions by CBS News Correspondent Robert Schakne, Robert  
16 Shaplen of the New Yorker Magazine, and CBS News Correspondent  
17 Martin Agronsky.

18

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19 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, I understand that you stand on  
20 the President's San Antonio formula, but the question that I  
21 would like you to address yourself to is do you think the  
22 bombing of the North should be stopped now, as a way to  
23 initiate peace negotiations, as the U.N. Secretary General  
24 suggests?

25 PRESIDENT THIEU: I don't believe that any cease of bombing in



1 North Vietnam could help to reach any fruitful negotiations if  
2 Hanoi does not show his willingness for peace talks and to have  
3 a gesture of reciprocity. I believe that with the experience  
4 we have had in the past and with the experience of the recent  
5 Tet offensive, I believe that Hanoi still has the hope and  
6 would like to exploit any occasion possible to infiltrate more  
7 troops into South Vietnam and to have a bigger attack against  
8 South Vietnam. And I believe our position still is that we  
9 demand reciprocity from Hanoi.

10 MR. SHAPLEN: Mr. President, you have said before that, in the  
11 interest of building bridges, you would be willing to talk to  
12 some elements of the National Liberation Front at the lower  
13 levels. Don't you feel that sooner or later there has to be  
14 an accommodation on both sides that the element of affront will  
15 have to be met half way in some sort of discussions?

16 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that before I said if any element  
17 from the NLF would like to contact us and to suggest anything  
18 to us, we would like to hear them, and this depends upon what  
19 they have to tell us so we have our reply, and we have our de-  
20 cision on that. It does not mean that we accept already and at  
21 once any coalition or any cooperation with them.

22 MR. SCHAKNE: Mr. President, you have spoken out rather strongly  
23 in the past month against the idea of any coalition; but, in  
24 fact, unless you expect the other side to surrender completely  
25 -- that is to say North Vietnam to withdraw all its troops and



1 the Viet Cong to give up all their military force -- what other  
2 kind of peace could there be except some kind of coalition with  
3 the dissident forces, who are certainly large?

4 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe it is very simple. There is an  
5 invasion war here from the North to the South and the NLF is an  
6 instrument of the invasion, of North Vietnam. Now, if the in-  
7 vasion ceases, we have a peace, the war will cease and we will  
8 have peace. Now, the coalition with North Vietnam or with the  
9 NLF means coalition with the Communists. And we have seen many  
10 experiences in the past in the neighboring countries that the  
11 coalition with the Communists means Communist invasion. And I  
12 believe that kind of peace we can have right now with the  
13 coalition, with the Communists, it does not mean that we win  
14 peace. It just means encouragement of war, not only the war in  
15 Vietnam but war in Southeast asia and in the world.

16 MR. SCHAKNE: In effect, then, you're asking or your condition  
17 for peace is that the other side give up and surrender?

18 PRESIDENT THIEU: I don't say surrender. I never intended to  
19 invade North Vietnam and to ask North Vietnam to surrender. I  
20 never intended to ask the NLF to surrender. I just asked them  
21 to stop the invasion.

22 MR. AGRONSKY: Yes, but Mr. President, really, if you take  
23 this position that you can under no circumstances accept a  
24 coalition government, and Hanoi and the Viet Cong are not going  
25 to quit unless they have some prospect of participating in a

1 government here, then the war becomes endless. How will it  
2 ever end?

3 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that first we have to prevent them  
4 from any military victory. Secondly, our people should know  
5 what to do against the Communist expansion and to fight against  
6 any form of the Communist invasion from the conventional war,  
7 to the guerrilla war, to the ideological war.

8 MR. SHAPLEN: Mr. President, I think we all agree that there is  
9 such a thing as a southern revolutionary movement in its own  
10 right going on. There exist a number of people in the front or  
11 around the front who believe in a separate southern revolution-  
12 ary government apart from the North. Is there a possibility of  
13 your getting together with some of these people and creating  
14 some kind of solid revolutionary front in the South which could  
15 stand alone?

16 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that when we mean the revolutionary  
17 government we don't mean a revolutionary government with par-  
18 ticipation of the Communists. We have to build a revolutionary  
19 society here and this means a better society for the Vietnamese  
20 people, and the Vietnamese people on this side with the govern-  
21 ment could bring a revolutionary life, a revolutionary society,  
22 a better society to the Vietnamese people, and the best society  
23 would not be Communist.

24 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, I am sure you're aware that there  
25 is a great concern in the United States, one that has been



1 constantly voiced by many Senators in our country, that truly if  
2 you persist in your position that you not accept a coalition  
3 government, the war cannot end. And they feel that you take  
4 this position because you are fearful that under a coalition  
5 you would not have sufficient backing, sufficient support among  
6 the population to continue to dominate such a coalition. Is  
7 that what your concern is?

8 PRESIDENT THIEU: I don't believe that even on our side we have  
9 the support, the full support of the population. It does not  
10 mean that there is enough for us to accept the coalition with  
11 the Communists. The Vietnamese people do not like the  
12 Communists at all, under any form. That is the problem, be-  
13 cause we know that the Communists are like the batteries that  
14 cause the mess in our society. And even if we have to build a  
15 good society on our side and we accept the Communists in this  
16 society, this society will be defeated. This is the main point.

17 MR. SCHAKNE: Mr. President, do you foresee the likelihood or  
18 the possibility or the realistic hope of negotiations in the  
19 immediate future or at any time or do you think the war will  
20 have to be fought to a military conclusion?

21 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that the Communists are now more con-  
22 vinced they cannot win a military war, like they believed in  
23 1965. But the problem for them is how to cease the war with  
24 winning some political concessions. I believe that the  
25 Communists would like to have a general offensive this year

1 because they judge that this is the most politically vulnerable  
2 year in the United States because of your elections, and they  
3 know well that after the elections, even without President  
4 Johnson, the United States people, the government will continue  
5 to fight and to defend the freedom in this part of the world.  
6 Now, materially, the North Vietnamese believe that at the last  
7 moment they still have the capability to do something and to  
8 try to win some military victories and to bring that to the  
9 negotiating table as a strong bargaining position. After this  
10 year they will be weaker and weaker and they cannot win the  
11 war either politically nor -- neither politically nor militarily.  
12 So the guerrilla by itself will not be decisive and they have  
13 no hope to win the war, for I believe that it is the last year  
14 for the VC.

15 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, on what do you base this optimism  
16 of yours?

17 PRESIDENT THIEU: What kind of optimism is that?

18 MR. AGRONSKY: That they are losing the war, that this will be  
19 the last year of the war, that they are being defeated.

20 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe they are hurt very severely in North  
21 Vietnam, after three years of bombing, and they have lost many  
22 countryside areas so they have difficulty to recruit men, to  
23 have supplies, and, most important, they are believing now,  
24 they are like fish thrown out of the water because they have no  
25 people in the countryside.



1 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, isn't it a fact that in the  
2 countryside in South Vietnam that the entire pacification pro-  
3 gram has practically broken down, that all of the efforts at  
4 revolutionary development have had to stop because of this  
5 offensive, that there are at this very moment elements of four  
6 Viet Cong divisions in the vicinity of the city? How can you  
7 deduce from that that they have been defeated, lost their  
8 capability to attack or that you are en route to victory?

9 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that the Tet offensive of the VC in  
10 the city does not mean that our pacification area was completely  
11 spoiled. I can show you much proof that, with the Tet  
12 offensive, the VC has committed all of their regular units,  
13 local forces, and also they bring to the city some guerrilla  
14 units from the village to help the other units to burn houses  
15 of the civilian population. So since four weeks there is no  
16 attack at all against the outposts of the villages, there is no  
17 attack on any new hamlets in the countryside. And fifty per  
18 cent of the regular units will still remain in the pacification  
19 area, except for those provinces whose security demand the pull-  
20 out of regular unit to conduct a temporary mobile operation,  
21 they have to take away one or two battalions for twenty-four  
22 hours operation. And I have given very serious direction to  
23 the corps commander not to pull away those regular units who  
24 are supporting the pacification program. And also we  
25 continue to move forward on our pacification program previously

1 planned for 1968.

2 MR. SHAPLEN: Mr. President, how was it possible, even so, how  
3 was it possible for the Communists to attack on such a broad  
4 scale in such large numbers without being detected if they did  
5 not have the support of a great many people on their way into  
6 the cities through the countryside?

7 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that many times I said that attack  
8 on the city is not impossible, first because we have a very  
9 large area to be defended. I believe that the ARVN are not  
10 enough to do many things at the same time, are not enough to  
11 carry on many responsibilities. If we use all of our armed  
12 forces to surround a city and to prevent any infiltration from  
13 the countryside, it could be more possible to prevent such an  
14 attack in the city.

15 MR. SHAPLEN: But aren't the cities just as insecure as the  
16 countryside?

17 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that we have accepted the calculated  
18 risk that to let a few troops around the city and to prevent  
19 infiltration, is not enough. Meanwhile, we have to expend  
20 more troops for mobile operations, search and destroy, opera-  
21 tion in the VC areas, and to secure the protection, to guarantee  
22 the protection of most of the population in the countryside.

23 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, as a general certainly you  
24 wouldn't contend that the picture you've just drawn is the  
25 picture of a military situation in which you are achieving a



1 victory. This seems to be a military situation in which you  
2 are doing everything you can to prevent the enemy from smacking  
3 you once more.

4 PRESIDENT THIEU: I don't believe that the fact that they have  
5 launched the offensive, it does not mean a victory for the VC.  
6 I believe the VC have met with complete failure with the Tet  
7 offensive. In three weeks they have suffered 40,000 casualties.  
8 In 1967, for the whole year, they had only 90,000, so 50 per  
9 cent of the casualties of the whole year 1967. What they have  
10 realized in the city is that the people were against them, so  
11 I believe that the general uprising they had hoped for has not  
12 happened. They have met with the united Communist sentiment  
13 from the people in the city, so they fell in both countryside  
14 and city.

15 MR. SCHAKNE: Mr. President, if this is so, if you think they  
16 failed to achieve the popular support they were hoping for, why  
17 is it that your government found it necessary to impose a very  
18 rigid censorship on the press and, even more recently, to  
19 arrest two prominent opposition figures -- I mean Au Truong  
20 Thanh and lawyer Dzu?

21 PRESIDENT THIEU: I can explain that. We still have a state of  
22 war and have had since 1955, and the martial law I have decreed  
23 three weeks ago is just to remind the people that the state of  
24 war still exists. Now, there are three most important things  
25 in martial law, such as the curfew hours. The curfew hours

1 will be released as soon as possible, as we have finished  
2 cleaning up the city. It is for the security of the people,  
3 not to jeopardize their lives. The second most important is  
4 the military tribunal that exists for the looter and for the  
5 murderer, for the security of the people. The third is the  
6 censorship, because we are lacking the line of communication.  
7 The reporter cannot go here and there very easily. I don't  
8 like it. In the period we had a very great emotion among the  
9 people after the Tet offensive. We don't like it that the  
10 newspaper spreads publicity rumors and speculation which created  
11 more emotion among the people and which helped the Communists  
12 in that way. Now, for those men I believe that this is for  
13 their security and for the security of the nation, too. We  
14 have not arrested them as a precedent, we have just protected  
15 them against any kidnapping from the VC and to permit the VC  
16 to exploit those men as the members of the coalition front,  
17 members of the coalition government, and this should create  
18 more or less some --

19 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, why should you only be concerned  
20 with arresting your critics and preventing them from kidnapping,  
21 why don't you arrest your supporters if that is your concern?

22 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that the VC has exploited them. I  
23 believe the VC has bought our -- has bought our supporter.  
24 And, as you know, we have not arrested those gentlemen before  
25 the offensive. It is just for now. And when the city is safer,



1 is better, I believe we --

2 MR. SHAPLEN: Mr. President, a few days ago a new political  
3 front composed of many different political and religious  
4 leaders was formed to help unite and save the nation. It is  
5 headed, as you know, by Senator Don. I understand this group  
6 has won your approval and that you have promised to help pro-  
7 vide transportation so that it can hold a convention of about  
8 a thousand people in Saigon in perhaps two weeks, people from  
9 all over the country. Is that correct?

10 PRESIDENT THIEU: That is correct.

11 MR. SHAPLEN: Well, now, many people seem to feel that would it  
12 not be better, although you approve of this group, at a moment  
13 of crisis such as this, for you and Vice President Ky to get  
14 together and form a broad coalition group or widen the scope of  
15 the government, and that you should do it yourselves rather  
16 than let another group do it or perhaps the two of them to-  
17 gether.

18 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that if the government organized  
19 that, I believe that there are many men who would be reluctant  
20 and would wrongly believe that the government would like to use  
21 them as a tool of the government. I believe that Senator Tran  
22 Van Don and the others in the standing committee now, from  
23 the people they have some prestige among the people, and I  
24 believe that, with the help of the government, they will  
25 organize it themselves, they elected their committee,

1 they are leading the committee themselves, and they will be  
2 more independent from the government. They are really inde-  
3 pendent from the government. It is up to them to support the  
4 government if the government is to do well or to criticize the  
5 government if we are doing badly, or to advise the government,  
6 to suggest any recommendation as they like.

7 MR. SHAPLEN: But in view of the fact that there have been  
8 some differences in the past between you and Vice President Ky,  
9 or people imagine there are such differences, wouldn't it be  
10 more meaningful for the people to say that here are the two  
11 leaders of the nation getting together, creating their own  
12 front and broadening the base of the government? Wouldn't  
13 that have a bigger impact?

14 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that first there is no schism  
15 between General Ky and me, first. And I believe that it depends  
16 upon how the congress would be handled and what results he  
17 would have and we would consider how it could help the govern-  
18 ment and how we could receive from them the collaboration with  
19 the government.

20 MR. SHAPLEN: But there have been reports of another group  
21 around yourself, Mr. Huong and Mr. Tran Van Don and others who  
22 are supposedly starting a separate group. Doesn't that create  
23 a division of opinion?

24 PRESIDENT THIEU: I have no political party at all and I have  
25 not organized any group for myself. I believe that if



1 Senator Tran Van Don invited all of them around the country to  
2 sit down together, they would not agree to do that.

3 MR. SCHAKNE: Mr. President, there was considerable concern ex-  
4 pressed right at the time of the Tet offensive and since then  
5 that one of the problems of your government is that although it  
6 was inaugurated in the end of October, it has failed to take  
7 the action that was hoped from a legally elected government,  
8 that you made promises in your inauguration that, in fact, have  
9 not been accomplished. For example, you called for greater  
10 mobilization but the mobilization decree has not been enforced.  
11 You called for a fight against corruption but very little has  
12 been done and the constitutionally designated inspectorate  
13 against corruption hasn't even been formed; that your govern-  
14 ment in fact, in its first three months, has not accomplished  
15 in the way of reforms anything that previous governments had  
16 promised and failed to accomplish.

17 PRESIDENT THIEU: I have heard many times that many men in the  
18 United States accuse me as a do-nothing one or an immobile one.  
19 This is not right. I believe it is completely wrong. First,  
20 any program that could be carried on within four months of our  
21 administration -- and while it is a really new administration,  
22 it is not a continuing administration from a former President  
23 to the other President, it is not a second term of myself --  
24 but I believe that Prime Minister Loc, in his speech of Tet, to  
25 the people, he mentioned what he has done during the first

1 three months. Now, for the mobilization I believe that we have  
2 issued a partial mobilization even before the inauguration day.  
3 If we have some correction to do in that, it is because the  
4 Senate has asked us to do that. But Now I believe that, with  
5 the circumstances -- those circumstances, we have to speed up  
6 our partial mobilization for the first six months of '68, and  
7 the drafting of the 19 years of age would begin on the first  
8 of March, and 18 years of age would begin on the first of May.  
9 It depends on the training capability, on the equipment cap-  
10 ability, too. Now, for the fight on corruption. You should  
11 remember that during four months of my administration, for  
12 years under the national leadership committee, how many gen-  
13 erals, how many province chiefs in the districts have been  
14 removed. I believe the facts are we are fighting corruption.

15 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President --

16 PRESIDENT THIEU: Now, I plan to have reorganization of some  
17 places in the army, reorganization of the administration as a  
18 whole, to promote the new province chiefs, to have a change of  
19 province chiefs on the first of March. And I believe that  
20 after four months this is progress.

21 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. President, the Mayor of Vung Tau was dis-  
22 missed for corruption. Last month he was given a high military  
23 command. How do you explain this?

24 PRESIDENT THIEU: This is not only the Mayor of Vung Tau; this  
25 is also the province chief of Phuoc Tuy, and some of the other



1 province chiefs who have been removed. But I believe it is  
2 the matter of investigation. I haven't yet the report from  
3 the investigation agency for that and I am ready to take any  
4 measures possible when I have the report of that.

5 MR. AGRONSKY: Why did you give him a high military command  
6 before the investigation was concluded?

7 PRESIDENT THIEU: I believe that because we have not yet the  
8 results of the investigation and I believe that some time, when  
9 we have not enough proof for that, we have also to remove from  
10 those functions. It is very difficult to have the proof. But  
11 to fight corruption is not only based on proof, sometimes we  
12 know that the man is corrupted but we have to remove them. Now  
13 to give them a military function, and because we have not yet  
14 the proof, we have not yet result of investigation. When we  
15 have that we will remove them again.

16 MR. AGRONSKY: I regret very much, Mr. President, we have run  
17 out of time. Thank you very much for being here to FACE THE  
18 NATION.

19 PRESIDENT THIEU: You're welcome.

20 - - -

21 ANNOUNCER: Today, on FACE THE NATION, the President of South  
22 Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu, was interviewed by CBS News  
23 Correspondent Robert Schakne, Robert Shaplen of the New Yorker  
24 Magazine, CBS News Correspondent Martin Agronsky led the  
25 questioning. Next week, another prominent figure in the news

1 will FACE THE NATION.

2  
3 ANNOUNCER: FACE THE NATION was recorded in Saigon on Friday  
4 through the facilities of the Armed Forces Vietnam Network.  
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## TELEGRAM

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 20461 262822Z

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R 260624Z FEB 68

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7404

INFO USIA 4788

UNCLAS SAIGON 20461

1. FOLLOWING SUMMARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS OF AMBASSADOR AND WALTER CRONKITE FILMED HERE FOR SHOWING ON EVENING CBS/TV NEWS SHOW FEB 27:

2. QUESTION: WHAT WAS ENEMY'S OBJECTIVE IN TET OFFENSIVE?

3. ANSWER: HIS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WAS TO TAKE OVER SOME OF THE CITIES... TO REMAIN IN SOME OF THEM. FROM CAPTURED ENEMY DOCUMENTS AND PRISONER INTERROGATIONS WE KNOW ENEMY EXPECTED AN UPRISING OF PEOPLE AND DEFECTIONS FROM SVN ARMED FORCES. ENEMY THAT CAME INTO CITIES HAD NOT RPT NOT BEEN GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL, AND HAD EVEN BEEN PROMISE

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REINFORCEMENTS. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO RPT NO UPRISING OF THE PEOPLE; THERE WERE NO RPT NO DEFECTIONS FROM ARMED FORCES; AND, WITH EXCEPTIONS OF HUE AND SAIGON WHERE THERE ARE STILL SMALL POCKETS OF ENEMY, THE ENEMY FAILED TO TAKE OVER OR REMAIN IN ANY CITY. HIS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE DID NOT SUCCEED.

4. QUESTION: WHAT DID HE ACCOMPLISH?

5. ANSWER: HE CREATED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE; CAUSED A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES. AS OF TODAY THERE ARE OVER

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400,000 REFUGEES, HOWEVER 30 TO 40 PER CENT ARE NOT TRUE REFUGEES BUT RATHER PEOPLE WHO LEFT HOMES FOR PROTECTION AND ARE GOING BACK. HE ALSO CAUSED DISRUPTION TO PACIFICATION EFFORT FOR THE TIME BEING, FOR HOW LONG I DON'T KNOW YET. HE CAUSED DISRUPTION TO LINES OF COMMUNICATION. WHAT EFFECT THESE ATTACKS HAD ON PEOPLE IS NOT KNOWN YET, BUT THERE HAS BEEN A WIDE-SPREAD RALLY TO GVN SIDE. THERE IS VERY WIDE SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT EFFORTS.

6. QUESTION: CAN YOU SAY HOW LONG THIS HAS SET BACK OUR

PAGE 2 RUEHGN 20461 UNCLAS  
PROGRAM

7. ANSWER: NO RPT NO. THERE ARE NOT RPT NOT ENOUGH DETAILS YET TO KNOW HOW LONG... I WON'T HAZARD A GUESS.

8. QUESTION: HAS THE EFFECT BEEN THAT WE CAN NOT RPT NOT MILITARILY WIN THE WAR?

9. ANSWER: NO RPT NO. IN REPELLING ATTACKS THE PERFORMANCE OF VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES WAS VERY GOOD. THIS GAVE CONFIDENCE TO THE MILITARY AND TO PEOPLE TO ACT. QUICK REACTION OF GVN ALSO VERY POSITIVE. I CAN'T SAY NOW WHAT THE FUTURE MILITARY OBJECTIVES OF VIET CONG AND HANOI MAY BE, BUT, AS ALWAYS, COMMUNIST STRATEGY CALLS FOR MESHING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL OBJECTIVES WITH THAT OF MILITARY.

10. QUESTION: HOW HAS THIS EFFECTED NEGOTIATIONS?

11. ANSWER: ONE OF FALL-BACK OBJECTIVES OF ENEMY WAS TO PUT SELF IN STRONG POSITION FOR NEGOTIATIONS. ATTACKS WERE PART

PAGE 4 RUEHGN 20461 UNCLAS  
OF RECENT PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFORTS ABROAD--JUST RECENTLY IN SCANDINAVIA AND OTHER PLACES-- TO PROMOTE FOREIGN MINISTER TRINH'S PROPOSALS FOR NEGOTIATION. I THINK IT VERY POSSIBLE THAT STRATEGY OF THIS TET CAMPAIGN WAS TO GET TO NEGOTIATIONS

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THROUGH A POINT OF STRENGTH, BUT, AS OF NOW, THERE HAS BEEN NO RPT NO GIVEON ENEMY'S SIDE IN REFERENCE TO SAN ANTONIO FORMULA. WE HAVE SAID WE WOULD STOP THE BOMING, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO RPT NO RECIPROCATON ON ENEMY'S SIDE.

12. QUESTION: SINCE ENEMY FAILED ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES, DOES THIS DELAY NEGOTIATIONS?

13. ANSWER: SINCE GETTING TO NEGOTIATIONS VERY MUCH AN ELEMENT OF TIMING, IT IS HARD TO SAY. SOUTH VIETNAMESE FEEL ENEMY'S OBJECTIVE MAY BE TO KEEP UP PRESSURE DURING THE SMER WITH BELIEF THAT BY THE END OF YEAR HE MAY BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE A MILITARY STALEMATE TO PUT HIM IN A STRONG POSITION FOR NEGOTIATIONS. BUNKER

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P R 261130Z FEB 68  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7434  
INFO USIA WASHDC 4797

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 20510

USIA FOR IPS, IBS

1. FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF AMBASSADOR BY DOUG KIKER OF NBC-TV. SAIGON NBC UNDERSTANDS INTERVIEW WILL BE RUN AS SEGMENT HUNTLEY-BRINKLEY NEWS SHOW FEB 26. FIRST QUESTION, TO BE REDONE BY NBC BUT DEALING WITH OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF VC-NVA ATTACK, IS OMITTED.

2. A/ THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG HAVE SUFFERED  
A  
VERY HEAVY SETBACK MILITARILY. THEIR LOSSES, AS YOU KNOW, HAVE BEEN TREMENDOUS. IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT THEY DID NOT GAIN THEIR OBJECTIVES, ONE OF WHICH WAS TO REMAIN IN THE CITIES.

~~PAGE 2 RUEHGN 20510/1 UNCLAS~~

IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT THEY SUFFERED A MAJOR MISCALCULATION IN THEIR VIEW THAT THERE WOULD BE AN UPRISING AMONG THE PEOPLE, THAT THERE WOULD BE DEFECTIONS IN THE ARMED FORCES. NONE OF THOSE THINGS HAPPENED. CONSEQUENTLY, I THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THEY DID NOT OBTAIN THEIR OBJECTIVES. I THINK PROBABLY ANOTHER OF THEIR OBJECTIVES WAS TO ATTEMPT TO GO INTO NEGOTIATIONS IN A STRONG POSITION. BUT, IN THIS, OBVIOUSLY, I THINK THEY HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED.

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 20510 01 OF 03 26134Z

Q: I THINK A QUESTION THAT MOST AMERICANS WOULD LIKE TO ASK AMIDST ALL THIS CONFUSION: CAN YOU JUST GENERALLY SAY WHAT IS HAPPENING IN VIET NAM TODAY? IN SUMMARY WE HEAR THAT THE CITIES ARE UNDER SEIGE, THAT THERE IS A CAPABILITY FOR ANOTHER ATTACK, THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE MASSED LARGE FORCES TO THE NORTH OF US, THAT SUDDENLY WE ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE IN THIS WAR AND YET OTHER PEOPLE SAY WE ARE NOT ON THE DEFENSIVE. ANXU#COULD CLEAR AWAY THE DEBRIS?

A: WELL, I SUPPOSE THIS IS A QUESTION THAT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO ANSWER, ACTUALLY, TO DO IT BRIEFLY IS RATHER DIFFICULT.

~~PAGE 3 RUEHGN 20510/1 UNCLAS~~

IT IS QUITE TRUE--THIS IS WELL-KNOWN--THAT THE ENEMY HAS SOME FOUR DIVISIONS IN THE NORTHERN I CORPS AREA. IT IS ALSO TRUE, I THINK, BASED ON PRISONER INTERROGATIONS AND CAPTURED DOCUMENTS, THAT HE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW-UP IN THE CITIES WITH REINFORCEMENTS, WHICH HE DID NOT DO. FAILING THAT, THERE WAS SOME BELIEF THAT HE WOULD FOLLOW-UP STRONGLY WITH A SECOND WAVE. THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED. WHAT HE HAS DONE IS TO FALL BACK ON MORTAR FIRE AND HARASSMENT. THIS, I THINK, MAY BE CONTINUED. IN FACT, I THINK THAT PRESIDENT THIEU'S VIEWS OF WHAT THE ENEMY'S INTENTIONS MAY BE ARE QUITE INTERESTING, AND QUITE LOGICAL. THAT , HE WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP PRESSURE ON US IN THE NORTHERN I CORPS AND IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN ORDER TO PIN DOWN AS MANY OF OUR TROOPS AS HE CAN; THAT HE WILL TRY TO KEEP UP HARASSMENT IN THE CITIES HOPING TO KEEP THE PEOPLE NERVOUS--WHAT HE CALLS POLITICAL SPOILING: PROPAGANDA, INFILTRATION WHERE POSSIBLE--AND THAT HE WILL ALSO ATTEMPT TO TRY TO REGAIN SOME OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH HE HAS LOST--ALL WITH THE POLITICAL PURPOSE OF EVENTUALLY COMING TO NEGOTIATIONS IN A STRONG ENOUGH POSITION TO TRY TO GET HIS VIEWS ACCEPTED. WELL, THIS MAY GO ON FOR QUITE A WHILE, IT MAY GO ON THROUGH THE SUMMER, I

~~PAGE 4 RUEHGN 20510/1 UNCLAS~~

DON'T KNOW. BUT, AS ALWAYS THE COMMUNISTS' MILITARY STRATEGY IS KEYED INTO THEIR POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES.

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5. Q: AMBASSADOR BUNKER, THERE ARE MANY CRITICS OF OUR POLICY HERE IN VIET NAM. SOME OF THE MORE SOPHISTICATED CRITICS CHARGE THAT THE UNITED STATES, TIME AND AGAIN, AND AT A DEARER PRICE EACH TIME, HAS BOUGHT TIME IN VIET NAM ONLY TO USE IT NOT AT ALL WISELY IN AN EFFORT TO SHOW SHORT-TERM DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROFIT FROM IT ALL. WHAT WOULD BE YOUR RESPONSE... AND LET ME ADD THAT THEY ARE SAYING THAT EVEN MORE FORCEFULLY NOW AFTER THE CITY ATTACKS. WHAT WOULD BE YOUR RESPONSE, SIR?

6. A: I DON'T AGREE WITH THAT AT ALL. I DON'T THINK THE RECORD INDICATES THAT, CERTAINLY NOT SINCE WE MADE UP OUR MINDS TO COME HERE IN FORCE IN 1965, SOME TWO AND A HALF YEARS AGO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK WE HAVE FOLLOWED A VERY CONSISTENT POLICY. FIRST, ON THE POLITICAL SIDE IN HELPING THE VIETNAMESE TO DEVELOP THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS, WHICH THEY HAVE DONE THROUGH THE COURSE OF HOLDING FIVE ELECTIONS HERE IN A PERIOD OF 14 MONTHS--WHICH IN ITSELF IS QUITE A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

~~PAGE 5 RUEHGN 20510/1 UNCLAS~~

IN A COUNTRY AT WAR. A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INSTALLED. IT HAS DEVELOPED A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL REFORM, FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; IT HAS ALSO DEVELOPED, WITH OUR SUPPORT, A PROGRAM FOR PACIFICATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. (THIS IS A TERM WHICH I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE, SINCE I DON'T THINK IT IS DESCRIPTIVE OF WHAT IS REALLY INVOLVED. THE VIETNAMESE REFER TO IT AS "NATION BUILDING"--WHICH I THINK IS MORE ACCURATE--OR AS "RURAL RECONSTRUCTION AND REDEVELOPMENT.") THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON STEADILY; EXPANDING SLOWLY AT FIRST, IT PICKED UP MORE RAPIDLY LAST YEAR. IT WILL BE SET BACK BECAUSE OF THIS OFFENSIVE; THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT. THERE WILL BE SOME LAG, NOW, UNTIL THE SECURITY FORCES GET BACK INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE AND BEGIN AGAIN ON THE PROGRAM. THIS HAS BEEN, OBVIOUSLY, A MAJOR EFFORT BY THE ENEMY; AND HE HAS SUFFERED GREAT LOSSES. BUT, IN MY VIEW, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE COURSE WE HAVE FOLLOWED HAS NOT BEEN CONSISTENT AND THAT IT HASN'T SHOWN RESULTS. I THINK ANYBODY WHO WAS HERE AT THE TIME WHEN WE CAME IN, WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS PRETTY CLOSE TO COLLAPSE, WOULD TELL YOU THE SAME THING.

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~~PAGE 6 RUEHGN 20510/1 UNCLAS~~

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P R 261130Z FEB 68  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7435  
INFO USIA WASHDC 4798

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 20510

7. Q: HOW WELL COULD THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIET NAM ABSORB  
ANOTHER ATTACK ON THE CITIES, WHICH MANY PEOPLE FEEL WILL COME?

8. A: I THINK THEY ARE IN GOOD SHAPE TO ABSORB IT. IN FACT, THE  
SUCCESS OF THIS PAST ATTACK WAS DUE TO THE FACT OF SURPRISE AND  
TREACHERY. CERTAINLY, THEY ARE NOT GOING TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE  
AGAIN. IT IS THE FIRST TIME THAT TET HAS BEEN VIOLATED IN A  
THOUSAND YEARS, AND I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND THEM CAUGHT  
AGAIN IN THE SAME POSITION. BESIDES THAT, I THINK THEY HAVE  
DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY CAN HANDLE AN ATTACK OF THIS SIZE.  
ALSO, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT THE ENEMY HAS BEEN  
ABLE TO FOLLOW-UP ON A SECOND WAVE, YET; ANYWAY, IN THE SAME

~~PAGE 2 RUENGN 20510/2 UNCLAS~~  
STRENGTH OR WITH THE SAME INTENSITY.

9. Q: FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE ENEMY HAS DRAMATICALLY  
ESCALATED THIS WAR, WHETHER TO HAVE A STRONG POSITION FOR  
NEGOTIATIONS, OR IN AN ATTEMPT TO TALK TO THE GOVERNMENT.  
BECAUSE OF THIS ESCALATION ISN'T IT INEVITABLE THAT OUR ONLY  
RESPONSE, THE ONLY U.S. RESPONSE, CAN BE ESCALATION IN KIND?  
MUST WE ANSWER THIS WITH ESCALATION EVENTUALLY?

10. A: I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH ESCALATION THERE WILL HAVE TO BE,

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OR WHAT, BUT CERTAINLY I THINK THAT WE WILL BE GOING BACK ON THE OFFENSIVE. THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT.

11. Q: WELL, LET ME PHRASE IT ANOTHER WAY: THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN A POOR SETTLEMENT WOULD BE, LET US SAY, A POOR SETTLEMENT TWO YEARS FROM NOW. TO PREVENT THAT, TO GAIN A POSITION OF STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE, HOW CAN WE DO THAT WITHOUT ESCALATING OUR TROOP COMMITMENT HERE, AND PERHAPS THE WAR ITSELF?

12. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT WE ARE IN A POSITION--AND I THINK WE

~~PAGE 3 RUEHGN 205107Z UNCLAS~~

DEMONSTRATED IT IN THIS LAST ACTION, WHICH CAME, AS I SAY, WITH A SURPRISE ATTACK--TO ABSORB WHATEVER THE ENEMY CAN THROW AT US. THE VIETNAMESE FORCES CERTAINLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY ARE COMPETENT, AND MUCH MORE SO THAN I THINK MANY PEOPLE THOUGHT. THEY DID A GOOD JOB. AND THEY ARE, AS YOU KNOW, INCREASING THEIR FORCES AND SPEEDING UP THE DRAFTING, MOBILIZATION, THE INCREASE IN FORCES. OUR FORCES HAVE NOT YET REACHED THE CEILING WHICH WE HAD PUT ON THEM. SO I WOULD ASSUME THAT WE WOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FORCES TO MEET THE SITUATION.

3. Q: I KNOW THAT I AM ASKING A LOT OF "IFFY" QUESTIONS, BUT I THINK THE SITUATION HERE, AT LEAST LARGELY IN MY MIND, IS "IFFY." HERE IS ANOTHER ONE: IF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, AS EVERYONE THINKS THEY MAY, DO ATTACK AND BESIEGE KHE SANH AND PLACE OUR MARINES THERE IN A TENUOUS POSITION, WILL THERE BE IN YOUR ESTIMATION PRESSURES TO GO UP THROUGH THE DMZ--OR PERHAPS LAUNCH AN INCHON-TYPE OF AMPHIBIOUS LANDING NORTH OF KHE SANH--A LITTLE INVASION TO THE NORTH?  
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P R 261130Z FEB 63  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7436  
INFO USIA WASHDC 4799

UNCLAS SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 20510

14. A: NO. I DON'T THINK THAT IS UNDER CONTEMPLATION AT ALL.

15. Q: AMBASSADOR BUNKER, AFTER THE INITIAL CITY ATTACKS YOU  
SAID THAT IT WAS YOUR OPINION THAT THIS GAVE THE GOVERNMENT OF  
SOUTH VIET NAM A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO ACT MORE QUICKLY, TO  
PROVIDE RELIEF, TO THUS GAIN A GREATER RESPECT AMONG THE PEOPLE.  
DO YOU BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT IS FULFILLING THIS CAPACITY?

16. A: YES, I DO. I THINK THEY HAVE MOVED SWIFTLY, WITH  
DECISIVENESS, ON THE RECOVERY PROGRAM WHICH IS THE FIRST  
CONSIDERATION, OF COURSE. TAKING CARE OF THE REFUGEES, GOING AHEAD  
WITH PLANS FOR REBUILDING THE HOUSES THAT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED,

~~PAGE 2 RUEHGN 20510/3 UNCLAS~~

FOR RESTORING ORDER AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE CITIES, PROVIDING  
FOOD, PROVIDING UTILITIES. I THINK THE CENTRAL RECOVERY  
COMMITTEE HAS ACTED QUICKLY, HAS ACTED EFFECTIVELY. I THINK AN  
INDICATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE WELL IS THE FACT THAT  
THE PUBLIC RESPONSE AND THE INDICATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE  
GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN QUITE OUTSTANDING. THE SOME 37 VOLUNTARY  
ORGANIZATIONS HERE IN SAIGON, FOR EXAMPLE, CAME FORWARD AND  
OFFERED THEIR ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMITTEE. COUNTLESS INDIVIDUALS,  
THE CONGRESS FOR DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY, THE GROUPS WHICH THE  
PRESIDENT HAS BEEN CONFERRING WITH...RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL...

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ALL HAVE COME FORWARD TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, EXPERIENCED OBSERVERS WHO HAVE BEEN HERE MUCH LONGER THAN I HAVE SAY THAT TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE THERE HAS NEVER BEEN SUCH WIDE SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT. SO, I THINK THE GOVERNMENT HAD THIS OPPORTUNITY, HAS SEIZED IT, AND IF IT CONTINUES ON I THINK IT CAN TURN IT TO ADVANTAGE.

17. Q: MANY PEOPLE THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE THE YEAR OF DECISION IN VIET NAM. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THIS WAR, THIS PROBLEM, IS GOING TO BE DECIDED THIS YEAR. DO YOU SHARE THAT VIEW?

~~PAGE 3 RUEHGN 20510/3 UNCLAS~~

18. A: WELL, I THINK IT IS POSSIBLE. I THINK THAT IF, FOR EXAMPLE, HANOI, AND GIAP, WHO SEEMS TO BE RUNNING THIS CAMPAIGN, IS WILLING TO THROW IN HIS FORCES AND TAKE HEAVY LOSSES IN AN EFFORT TO COME TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH A STRONG POSITION LOOKING TOWARD, LET US SAY, SOME TIME THIS YEAR, THE LATTER PART OF THIS YEAR, THE EARLY PART OF NEXT YEAR, IT COULD BE A YEAR OF DECISION.

19. Q: AND YOU THINK THE UNITED STATES' POSSIBILITIES ARE GOOD?

20. A: I DO. YES.

.. Q: IF IT IS A YEAR OF DECISION?

22. A: YES, IF IT IS A YEAR OF DECISION.

23. Q: IF IT IS A YEAR OF DECISION, THE YEAR IS IN OUR FAVOR?

24. A: YES, I THINK SO. DECIDEDLY.

~~PAGE 4 RUEHGN 20510/3 UNCLAS~~

25. THANK YOU, SIR.  
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Q  
2/21

## BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Saigon, South Vietnam

56

March 6, 1968.

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen, I thought that since the dust had settled on the battlefield and the smoke had almost cleared in the field of combat--although combat continues--it might be helpful if I discuss the young situation with you.

I would like, as I go into my discussion, to consider this background, non-attributable. And then I will entertain questions, and, during the course of the questions, I will answer the questions as a senior military official, unless I specify to the contrary.

I find this little blackboard helpful in saving words, describing the situation. I'm sure you recognize it as an outline of South Vietnam, divided between the three and four active zones. The dots being the major cities--Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and Thailand.

As I reconstruct the enemy's strategy, which I think was planned following the death of Nguyen Chi Than, who was killed or died back in July, last year, 1967. The leadership in Hanoi decided to change their strategy and instead of pursuing a war of attrition, they decided to make a major military psychological attack.

I believe that they had concluded that time was not on their side in the pursuit of a war of attrition, of a protracted war.

R

1 It's interesting that, having made this decision as I  
2 reconstruct the situation, that their propaganda continued to  
3 talk about a protracted war, wherein they would wear us down not  
4 only physically but also wear down the will of the people who  
5 support our efforts.

6 I believe that this campaign was conceived in two  
7 phases. The first phase started near the end of October and  
8 continued into November. As you recall, on the first of November,  
9 the Government--the new Government--was inaugurated. President  
10 Thieu installed. There were a number of dignitaries in town from  
11 the free world countries at the time, and by initiating his first  
12 phase at that time, he captured the headlines--or hoped to capture  
13 the headlines from the political progress that was manifest by  
14 the inauguration of the new government. But at the same time he  
15 had in mind certain military objectives.

16 You'll recall the battle of Dak To, which in my opinion,  
17 was designed to take over Kon Tum Province. He had sufficient  
18 strength there, according to his plans to do so. You'll recall  
19 the battles around Loc Ninh, Song Be and Bu Dop and these were  
20 designed to control Phuoc Long (?), Phuoc Dinh (?) and the northern  
21 part of Tay Ninh, War Zone C.

22 This would set the stage for preparations for the  
23 second phase.

24 During the interim ~~(XXXXXXXXXX)~~ he concentrated on ~~(XXXXXXXXXX)~~ RF/PF outposts  
25 and attempted to recruit in the countryside to fill up his de-  
pleted ranks, and his ranks had indeed been depleted over the



1 period of the previous years, and he was having very serious re-  
2 cruiting problems.

3 During this period of time he initiated a major cam-  
4 paign along the coastline of the southern I Corps, namely, in  
5 Quang Ngai (?) Province and Quang Tinh (?) Province.

6 This was designed to hopefully divert forces as I re-  
7 construct the situation from the DMZ area; in other words, force  
8 a concentration of forces in this particular area (indicating)  
9 in Southern I Corps, and distract our attention from the buildup  
10 which was already starting up in the DMZ area.

11 His Phase II was started at Tet and which was supposed  
12 to be coordinated and which was not in that the VC and the North  
13 Vietnamese forces in the II Corps area jumped off one day ahead  
14 of those in the III Corps. This was a major undertaking as history  
15 has reported. It involved the infiltration of the cities for the  
16 purpose of creating a <sup>public</sup> ~~support~~ uprising. He had prepared his plans  
17 very well in that regard to include his propaganda themes. It  
18 included the assassination or kidnapping of senior ARVN officials,  
19 and he had hoped that he could intimidate a number of the <sup>military</sup> /command-  
20 ers to defect their entire units.

21 He used to infiltrate the cities in the main, local  
22 forces; some main forces however were utilized, and some North  
23 Vietnamese troops, approximately 30 per cent we feel, of the  
24 initial force were North Vietnamese.

25 However, the percentage of North Vietnamese was far  
greater in I Corps and II Corps than in III and IV Corps.





1 Now, in the Highlands, there was a special purpose to  
2 the attacks at Kontum City, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot. There was  
3 a special to the ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>attack</sup> across the DMZ, the overrunning of Khe  
4 Sanh, the seizure of Quang Tri and Hue.

5 And as I reconstruct the situation this particular cam-  
6 paign was an important part of the Phase II, and directly associat-  
7 ed with the effort to create a ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>public</sup> uprising in the cities.

8 By seizing the cities ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>in the highlands</sup> in addition to  
9 the public uprising taking over the government control apparatus,  
10 the enemy would have brought about a de facto partition of the  
11 country. He holds ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>A Shau</sup> ---this is pretty much wilder-  
12 ness, no-man's-land here. If he had taken Khe Sanh, Quang Tri, Hue  
13 and had been able to hold it, and if he had been able to take  
14 over Kontum, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot, which he desperately tried  
15 to do, he would have brought about a partition of the country.

16 The result would have been a situation that existed in  
17 Laos in 1954. And regardless of the success of his public up-  
18 risings, in other parts of the country, he would have established  
19 for himself a very strong political and psychological position.

20 As I look back over the situation I say again that I be-  
21 lieve that the campaign in I Corps North--northern I Corps--was  
22 planned as a part of the second phase, which started at Tet.

23 This was preempted by our air strikes which were massive  
24 and which started in the middle of January, and the enemy in  
25 that area has not been able to get himself squared away since,

1 to the point he could muster the control in order to launch an  
2 attack, that had--that he thought had a reasonable chance of success.

3 Now, Let me talk a moment about the situation that has  
4 evolved, and the results of this major campaign.

5 First, starting in Norther I Corps, which we refer to  
6 now as I Corps North. The enemy did seize Hue and it took some  
7 time to dislodge him. Those of you who have visited Hue fully  
8 understand why, because of the--the Citadel is a formidable forti-  
9 fication.

10 The enemy placed in Hue a considerable number of troops,  
11 perhaps the equivalent of a division. He had the benefit of  
12 very poor weather, (unintelligible) weather, which made it very  
13 difficult to use airpower or to use even--fly helicopters. He  
14 was successful in seizing Hue and concurrently he attempted to  
15 seize Quang Tri but was very, very badly defeated at Quang Tri.  
16 Concurrently, he expected to overrun Khe Sanh.

17 And that would have put our troops in Quang Tri in  
18 Thua Thien ~~XX~~ Province in almost an untenable position.

19 Now I'm sure most of you realize that these two northern  
20 provinces have been under ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ MR-4 located at Vinh ~~XX~~  
21 for sometime. We've had any number of prisoners tell us that  
22 the Tri Ten ~~XX~~ Military District, which consists of Quang Tri  
23 and Thua Thien ~~XX~~ Provinces, are a part of the Southern District  
24 of North Vietnam, which is known as the North Vietnamese Military  
25 District ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~<sup>4</sup>. That is why they've ignored the Demili-



1 tarized Zone (containing) that these two provinces are a part of  
2 North Vietnam.

3 And they frequently refer to Hue as the gateway to South  
4 Vietnam. We received a prisoner the other day who referred to  
5 this city Hue as the gateway to South Vietnam.

6 In anticipation of this offensive action which we did  
7 foresee and accordingly made certain logistic preparations in the  
8 area and certain troops were deployed from other areas to reinforce  
9 I had to think of the command-<sup>and</sup>-control arrangements in I Corps  
10 North, Quang Tri-Thua Thien, which became--which was destined to  
11 become, in effect, a war zone. And we do indeed have there a  
12 different type of war going on than we have in the rest of the  
13 country, although there are needless to say some common (?)  
14 characteristics.

15 One of the major problems there was logistics and al-  
16 though we had been anticipating this <sup>contingency</sup> ~~contingency~~ for well over a  
17 year and had taken certain, made certain preparations, it was  
18 necessary to finalize those preparations. The period of the year  
19 was certainly not optimum. The particular area is under the  
20 command of the Commanding General of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>Third Marine Amphibious Force. Gen.</sup>, a man for <sup>Cushman</sup>  
21 whom I have a very high regard, as a Marine and as a soldier and  
22 as a man. However, as we reenforced up there and as we proceeded  
23 to make logistic preparations which concerned considerable engin-  
24 eer effort, the complexity and the expand of control became great-  
25 er than the ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>Third Marine Amphibious Force</sup> headquarters could control because they

1 were designed to control two Marine divisions, nothing more. In  
2 addition, of course, as you know, he served as senior ~~(xxxxxx)~~ advisor to  
3 ~~xxxxxx~~ General Lam.

4 Concerning the logistic preparations, we had not only  
5 Marine troops to control but we had to--I had to develop a rather  
6 large Army logistic operation. The Air Force had to expand their  
7 logistic operations, and of course, the Navy that provides a major  
8 share of the logistics for the Marines. But the naval support  
9 activity reports to the naval component commander but the Navy  
10 was very much ~~xxxxxx~~ involved.

11 So this whole activity became a joint undertaking. I  
12 had my choice of three courses of action. I could delegate to  
13 Gen. Cushman ~~xxxxxx~~ joint authority, which would not have been fair to him  
14 because he could not--he would have devoted too much of his energy  
15 to this undertaking as opposed to commanding his own troops.

16 I could have made the decisions from here and sent up  
17 by telephone calls and cables and so forth made the appropriate  
18 decisions. I rule this out because this is not an effective way  
19 of making timely decisions.

20 I could have gone up myself but with all the activities  
21 here in Saigon and my association with the Ambassador and the  
22 whole scope of my responsibilities this did not seem to be  
23 practical.

24 So I sent up my deputy ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Abrams, my alter ego, to make  
25 the appropriate decisions involving all the services concerned



1 with the logistic buildup in the deployment of troops that had  
2 been programmed and we established a MACV forward headquarters so  
3 that <sup>Gen. Abrams</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ would have a staff to deal with.

4 And in accordance with my general guidance and we were  
5 on the telephone from time to time, and frequently exchanged visits,  
6 <sup>Gen. Abrams</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ gave the necessary instructions to the Marines, the  
7 Air Force, the Navy and to the Army elements that were moving in  
8 in order to get ourselves established, so that we could deploy  
9 and support troops of the magnitude that I felt would be needed.

10 Now, on about the 10th of this month in accordance with  
11 my plan and <sup>this</sup> ~~xxx~~ you have not heard about it before for obvious  
12 reasons, the MACV forward headquarters will be redesignated as  
13 Provisional Corps Vietnam with the short title of PROV Corps.

14 It will be commanded by <sup>Lt. Gen. Rosson,</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ who has--at one time was my  
15 chief-of-staff. He activated Task Force <sup>Oregon</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ which became  
16 subsequently the <sup>Americal</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ Division. He has been commanding  
17 I Force <sup>V</sup> ~~X~~ at <sup>Nha Trang</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ for some period of time. He worked for  
18 <sup>Gen. Cushman</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ when he commanded the <sup>Americal</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ Division. He is junior  
19 to <sup>Gen. Cushman</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ and is a very well qualified soldier and commander.

20 He will take care of this provisional corps; his staff will be a  
21 joint staff, mainly Army and Marine with a few naval and Air Force  
22 officers.

23 <sup>V</sup>  
24 PROV Corps ~~X~~, a provisional corps, PROV Corps, will be  
25 under the command of <sup>Gen. Cushman,</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~, who commands the <sup>Third Marine</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ Am-  
phibious Force, who has the overall responsibility as my representa-

1 tive for all U. S. troops, ground troops in the I Corps tactical  
2 Gen. Cushman  
zone. ~~xxxxxx~~ will be serving tactically speaking and organi-  
3 zationally speaking at the field army level. This is indeed a  
4 unique arrangement, but almost everything in Vietnam is unique.

5 And I've attempted to organize and tailor this command  
6 not to any doctrine, not to any experience in past wars, but to  
7 the situation we face here on the ground, which has no historical  
8 precedent.

9 Now, let me diagram this to be sure you understand it.

10 (Pointing to map on blackboard)

11 This is ~~xxxxxx~~ Third MAF Gen. Cushman.  
12 under him (marking on board) ~~xxxxxx~~ Prov Corps V Gen. Rosson  
13 be the tactical ground maneuver elements in the area-- the  
14 ~~xxxxxx~~ Third Marine First Cavalry  
~~xxxxxx~~ Division, the ~~xxxxxx~~ Division, and any other ground  
15 tactical units that I choose to send up to that war zone in order  
16 to confront the North Vietnamese Army invasion.

17 Also, under ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman First Marine  
18 and the ~~xxxxxx~~ Americal ~~xxxxxx~~ Americal  
19 serving at the field army level with a tactical corps under his  
20 command and ~~xxxxxx~~ two divisions under his command or other elements. This

21 unit here (indicating on blackboard) will command north of the

22 Hai Van  
Aideo Pass, control all tactical elements that are in command

23 control and management, and he will command directly the ~~xxxxxx~~ First Marine

24 and the ~~xxxxxx~~ Americal ~~xxxxxx~~ Division, which are of course, as you well know,

25 Hai Van  
south of the Aideo Pass.



Now, he can adjust this as he sees fit. He can transfer  
 Gen. Rosson's units to ~~xxxxxx~~'s command or he can pull units from ~~xxxxxx~~'s  
 Gen. Rosson's  
 command and assign them, or put them under the operation of his  
 control, of these <sup>two</sup> ~~(xxxxxx)~~ division level elements, and as you  
 I  
 well know he's the counterpart to the CG ~~(xxxxxx)~~ Corps, who is  
 Len Lam ARVN First  
~~xxxxxx~~. Now the ~~(xxxxxx)~~ infantry division is also north of  
 Hai Van Gen. Rosson  
 the/Aideo Pass and ~~xxxxxx~~ will be working very, very closely  
 Gen. Trang ARVN First  
 in day-to-day association with ~~xxxxxx~~ who commands the ~~(xxxxxx)~~  
 division, who, incidentally did a magnificent job during the past  
 several weeks.

It is my plan to activate this arrangement and publicly  
 announce it on or about the 10th; it may be later. But I wanted  
 you to know about it now.

Now, since we have a Marine division here, and we have  
 an Army division here, and we have some Marines here and some  
 Army troops actually just south of Hue (marking on board), you  
 can see this is indeed a joint Army-Marine command, with more  
 Army troops than Marines, or more Army units than Marines, there-  
 Gen. Rosson Gen. Cushman Brig Gen. Flannagan  
 fore ~~xxxxxx~~ commands, but ~~xxxxxx~~ has on his staff ~~xxxxxx~~  
 who is his deputy chief of staff for operations.

Gen. Cushman's Third MAF  
 And ~~xxxxxx~~ staff has been augmented by a number of  
 Army officers, so that his staff, although it will still be  
 Third Marine Marine Corps  
 designated as the ~~xxxxxx~~ amphibious force, ~~xxxxxx~~ staff,  
 Gen. Rosson  
 it has been augmented by Army officers. ~~xxxxxx~~'s staff will  
 be--will comprise mostly army but will be augmented by a number



1 of Marines, with a seeding (?) of Air Force and Navy.

2 Now, by virtue of this arrangement, it has become nec-  
 3 essary to better integrate our tactical air efforts. This will be  
 4 done under ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Momyer who is my deputy commander for ~~xxxxxx~~ Air Operations  
 5 ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Momyer will be integrating the entire tactical air effort that  
 6 will be supporting ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman Gen. Rosson ~~xxxxxx~~ and other elements of  
 7 this Corps as he does in the other field force areas.

8 He will integrate his total air effort--Air Force, Marine--  
 9 but the Marines will still be given close support by their own  
 10 flyers. However, the system that has been developed which provides  
 11 for integration to a better degree and a more effective degree than  
 12 in the past, will provide for Air Force planes to support Marines  
 13 if it is expedient to do so. By the same token, Marine planes  
 14 can support Army ground troops if they can get there quicker, in  
 15 other words, if its tactically expedient for them to do so. so  
 16 we have full flexibility in connection with our tactical air  
 17 support.

18 Now I might pause for a moment and see if there are  
 19 any questions as to this, and maybe I could clarify it.

20 QUESTION: General on that chart you have there, with General's  
~~xxxxxx~~ Cushman and Rosson, could you fill in  
 21 Gen. Abrams?

21 SPOKESMAN: Oh, yes. You see I sent ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Abrams  
 22 to establish ~~xxxxxx~~ MACV forward (Marking on blackboard) He went up there  
 23 as my alter ego in order to sort out the joint aspects of the  
 24 logistics, the construction, the deployments, to make decisions  
 25 which could not be delegated to a field commander; that had to be

1 made either by me or by my alter ego. And, to assist him in doing  
 2 it, I gave him a staff to assist him. It's a long way between  
 3 here and Hue, as you well know. So he needed a staff. Now, there  
 4 was a second purpose for that, and that was--I did this in order  
 5 to start building this Corps headquarters, so while serving ~~for~~  
 6 Gen. Abrams ~~xxxxxx~~ in carrying out this function I delegated to him, he was  
 7 building this Corps headquarters and the headquarters is almost  
 8 built and I hope that by the 10th it will be the--it will be fully  
 9 constituted, well-shaken down, so that it can become immediately  
 10 operational.

Gen. Abrams

11 And then ~~xxxxxx~~ comes back here to Saigon--because I  
 12 need him, because I look to him to assist the ARVN, the Vietnamese  
 13 Armed Forces, and his--the primary function that I delegate to  
 14 him routinely is to work with the Vietnamese Armed Forces, and  
 15 help them in every way he can.

Gen. Abram

16 QUESTION: In other words ~~xxxxxx~~'s move was just a  
 17 temporary move--

18 SPOKESMAN: Oh, it was an expediency, just an expediency.  
 19 It was a managerial expediency, a managerial expediency, but served  
 20 another purpose, and that is to get established this corps head-  
 21 quarters, and it had been my plan all the time to redesignate it  
 22 as a corps headquarters once it was established and when I thought  
 23 the time was ripe.

24 QUESTION: ~~xxxxxx~~ Is V for Five?

25 SPOKESMAN: Pardon me?



1 QUESTION: ~~xxxxxxx~~ Is "V" for five?

2 SPOKESMAN: No, these were Vietnam.

3 QUESTION: (Inaudible)

4 ANSWER: (Deleted).

5 QUESTION: (Inaudible)?

6 SPOKESMAN: No, it's for Vietnam. Vietnam.

7 QUESTION: Well, in effect it's been then---

8 SPOKESMAN: Provisional Corps, Vietnam. Yes.

9 QUESTION: Yes.

10 You have created another corps, however provisional.

11 SPOKESMAN: It is provisional, correct.

12 I created a tactical corps. It is provisional at this  
13 time, because I don't have the authority to do anything else. But  
14 I do have the authority to create provisional organizations which  
15 I've done on a number of occasions. Usually it's an interim  
16 measure before they are institutionalized. And say, authorized  
17 as a bookkeeping proposition where you could requisition for  
18 officers, et cetera.

19 In other words, I've taken these officers out of my  
20 hide and I must say that ~~xxxxxx~~ we're beginning to feel the pinch at  
21 this headquarters, so I've asked for additional authorization of  
22 staff officer's ~~xxxxxxx~~ and men.

23 QUESTION: (Deleted), does that mean ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman's  
24 quarters is a higher echelon than the other corps--

25 SPOKESMAN: Yes. He is serving at the field army level



15  
He has coordination of the Corps.  
1 and that he'll be commanding a corps. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~

2 Is that to say there's a  
3 QUESTION: ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ possibility of putting  
4 field field  
5 ~~xxxx~~ force one and ~~xxxx~~ force two-- at the same level?

6 SPOKESMAN: No, no. Let me--let me go back.

7 When I designed this military organization which is  
8 unique which as you will know, and unprecedented and tailored to  
9 the situation I chose the words "field force" and I created the  
10 term field force. I knew that under these field force headquar-  
11 ters which would be a counterpart to the Vietnamese corps, I knew  
12 that they would have divisions under them. This was our plan.  
13 I do not choose to call them corps, for several reasons. One was  
14 it would have been awkward to have a set of Vietnamese territorial  
15 corps and a set of U. S. corps. It would have been very confusing.  
16 So I created the name field force, because it is a unique arrange-  
17 ment where he is senior advisor to his counterpart, the Vietnamese,  
18 and he has other responsibilities other than those normally invest-  
19 ed in a tactical corps. But he has those responsibilities also.

20 As an example he has <sup>the</sup> ~~x~~ corps responsibility. Now, also  
21 I call them field forces because I anticipated they might--that  
22 the day might come when I might want to organize a corps and  
23 subordinate it to one of the field forces, and I did not want to  
24 get involved in a lot of awkward terminology so I created the  
25 word field force because under a field force you could put a  
26 division, you can put a brigade, you can put a corps.

Now, it would be conceivable that a corps could be

I II  
1 organized and put under xx field force or ~~xxxx~~ field forces. This  
2 is not contemplated at this time, but it could be done and I had  
3 this in mind for any of the corps depending on what the tactical re-  
4 quirements or the managerial requirements; in other words, concern-  
5 ed with span ~~xx~~ and control.

6 So, there's no plan to do this, Bill, but it is con-  
7 ceivable, yes, and we'll have the flexibility.

8 QUESTION: I was wondering, we got into this what you're <sup>probably</sup>  
9 call ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>this problem</sup> of integrating the air in Korea--

10 SPOKESMAN: Yes. Yes.

11 QUESTION (continuing): --and I guess everybody knows  
12 the arguments and irritations-- the delay for me thing --

13 SPOKESMAN: Yes.

14 QUESTION (continuing): --and so on, that ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>is this going to cause</sup>  
15 ~~xxxxx~~ any delay up there?  
16 ~~xxxxx~~ Has this been avoided up there?

17 SPOKESMAN: This has not. I do not foresee any pro-  
18 blems whatsoever in this. As a matter of fact, it's going to give  
19 support for  
20 us--it's going to give more flexibility for/the Marines, more  
21 flexibility <sup>to support</sup> ~~for~~ the Army troops; it will be by far a better  
22 arrangement.

23 QUESTION: Is it going to be handled--I believe in  
24 Korea it was a <sup>common</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ tactical control center that all  
25 requests for strikes had to go through--

26 SPOKESMAN: Well, well--I tell you this is a very com-  
27 plex thing. There are all types of strikes. The pre-planned



1 strikes. The pre-planned strikes will be processed through a  
2 control center where they'll be ~~traged~~ <sup>traged</sup>. On the immediates,  
3 immediates can be--will be available to the Marines at any time.  
4 On diverts, the diverts can come from the Air Force, they can come  
5 from the--from the Marines. In other words, if we got a plane  
6 heading toward North Vietnam and the Marines need a strike and  
7 they don't <sup>happen to</sup> have an ARVN airplane in the air, that plane can be  
8 diverted. It gives us far more flexibility. And it's no major  
9 change; the Marines air-ground team will still obtain. They  
10 will, in the main, in general, the Marines will be supported by  
11 their own pilots, but they can be in an emergency or under un-  
12 usual circumstances the system is so flexible you can bring in  
13 Air Force.

14 By the same token you could bring in Marines to support  
15 the First Cavalry. ~~the~~ After all, they're up there, too. In other words,  
16 it's again a managerial arrangement and one designed to provide  
17 for flexibility.

18 QUESTION: ~~Gen. Trang~~ Two Viet Generals being discussed here.

19 SPOKESMAN: ~~Gen. Trang~~ <sup>Gen. Trang</sup> No, ~~Gen. Lam~~ <sup>Gen. Lam</sup> will be under  
20 the command of ~~Gen. Lam~~ <sup>Gen. Lam</sup>, but ~~Gen. Rosson~~ <sup>Gen. Rosson</sup> will no doubt ask him to  
21 work <sup>in</sup> close coordination with ~~Gen. Rosson~~ <sup>Gen. Rosson</sup> Gen. Rosson.

22 QUESTION: ~~Gen. Lam~~ Gen. Lam still has the political power/

23 SPOKESMAN: Correct. Now, I am glad you brought that  
24 up, because I neglected to mention this.

25 In I Corps, ~~Gen. Cushman~~ <sup>Gen. Cushman</sup> still has the ~~Gen. Cushman~~ <sup>cords'</sup> responsi-



Gen. Lam  
 1 bility, on the U. S. side. ~~xxxxxx~~ has the RD and the adminis-  
 2 trative responsibility. In other words, ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Rosson  
 3 command. Now, in addition, ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman has the log--the logistics  
 4 are pretty well squared away now. Division of labor has been  
 5 worked out, and all the services are involved in this logistic  
 6 complex, but ~~xxxxxx~~ Ben. Cushman now has the job of insuring coordination  
 7 of this. Now, fortunately, ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman has got a deputy whose  
 8 former assignment was the ~~xxxxxx~~ G-4 with the U.S. Marine Corps.  
 9 and he will be spending most of his time on logistics to insure  
 10 coordination of all of the logistic elements, Army logistics  
 11 for the Army, Marine and Navy supporting the Marines troops, et  
 12 cetera.

13 QUESTION: (Inaudible)? With the battle going on Gen. Rosson  
 would be in command?

14 SPOKESMAN: (No response)

15 QUESTION: (Deleted), I wonder if you could go--

16 SPOKESMAN: Let me say--

17 QUESTION: Yes.

18 SPOKESMAN: --in passing, can you imagine the difficulty  
 19 that Gen. Cushman with ~~xxxxxx~~ would have without having a control ~~xxxxxx~~ agency.  
 20 Couldn't do it at Da Nang and with all the other responsibilities  
 21 he had his span of control would be completely out of reach.

22 QUESTION: ~~xxxxxx~~ If a battle is going on around  
 23 Danang say instead of the DMZ, Gen. Rosson would be in charge?

24 SPOKESMAN: No. ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman has the responsibility ~~of~~ only for  
 the tactical units north of Hue, north of ~~xxxxxx~~ Hai Van  
 Aideo Pass. ~~xxxxxx~~

25 QUESTION: If the  
 main battle is below that line ~~xxxxxx~~ Gen. Cushman is in charge?

1 Well, Gen. Cushman is in command, but Gen. Rosson is subordinate  
 2 to him for the battle Quang Tri-Thua Thien. Now if the battle is  
 3 in Quang Nam, Gen. Robertson Division who commands the 1st Marine/ reports to  
 4 him and fights that battle. If the battle is in Quang Ngai, Gen. Custer,  
 5 who commands the Americal Division.

6  
 7  
 8 QUESTION: --Can you tell us--some of us have been to  
 9 Khe Sanh, and we're a little disturbed by the state of the en-  
 10 trenchments. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit more  
 11 about the planning that led to the establishment of the garrison  
 12 in Khe Sanh. I went there once, I think two days after you did in  
 13 Sept. '66 and a captain said you had your eye on it then, a Special  
 14 Forces camp. And I'd like to get a little background on how  
 15 the decision was made to go in there in such strength when it had  
 16 been sort of weakly held, and, secondly, why wasn't it built up  
 17 a little more physically--this may be a / ) personal reaction to incoming,  
 18 and, a little more background on why the enemy sort of hasn't gone  
 19 in there, given the terrain and so on.

20 SPOKESMAN: Well, I'll have to address it briefly be-  
 21 cause I'm going to have to meet the Ambassador in about 45 minutes  
 22 and that's a lot of material to cover, but we'll address it briefly.

23 Khe Sanh, of course, has been an outpost for some time.  
 24 It is an important outpost. If it wasn't an important outpost,  
 25 certainly we wouldn't have reenforced it. But it became evident



1 that the enemy had designs on it. The extent of the reenforcement  
2 was determined by Gen. / <sup>Cushman who</sup> had the responsibility as the  
3 Division commander. There was one battalion there and this was  
4 reenforced over a period of time to its present level.

5       Once the troops moved in, they proceeded to dig in.  
6 Now, how fast they dug in, of course, is the responsibility  
7 of the local commander. The transportation of materials in there  
8 was no problem. It is fundamental military doctrine that one  
9 digs in when one fortifies, and I've--I know that it has been the  
10 intention of Gen. Cushman and Gen. <sup>Trang</sup> to dig in and they are dug  
11 in.

12       They didn't have mechanical equipment to do it with,  
13 no. The enemy's reenforcement with several divisions of course  
14 We did receive some prisoners that gave us indications of this  
15 reenforcement, but we didn't know--the reenforcements could have  
16 gone to the Highlands or they could have gone to Saigon, or they  
17 could have gone anywhere. It was not my desire nor the responsi-  
18 ble commander on the scene's desire to reenforce that area until  
19 we had judged the enemy's intentions. And then to reenforce it  
20 with what we considered the minimum essential force.

21       And this was done on a very timely basis. Now, the  
22 enemy's plans have been set back. He intended an offensive in  
23 my opinion to overrun the place and by virtue of his massing he  
24 exposed himself to multiple air strikes in the area and 200 second-  
25 ary explosions, many of course, the B-52 strikes have been at



1 night under zero-zero conditions--

2 QUESTION: 200 or 2,000?

3 SPOKESMAN: 2,000 secondary explosions and of course,  
4 this was not the total, I'm sure, because<sup>of</sup> the weather conditions.  
5 when the bombs were dropped. I think the enemy has had great  
6 difficulty getting themselves set for this--for this final assault  
7 and I'm not suggesting he won't try it. I'm sure he realizes  
8 the risks involved. He has diverted a number of troops to an  
9 investiture of the area and of course he's exposed himself accord-  
10 ingly.

11 The area is important and has a motorable road that  
12 goes in from Laos, that went out to Khe Sanh. He could move wheeled  
13 artillery, tanks, rockets; make a logistic base on that  
14 plateau, and Quang Tri province in my opinion can be ulti-  
15 mately untenable.

16 As far as Quang Tri Province is concerned, and the  
17 defenses there of Khe Sanh, is important.

18 Now, I'd like to just cover a few other things so we'll  
19 have time for questions.

20 Now, as I review the enemy's campaign I think his in-  
21 telligence was faulty in two respects. He had been led to believe  
22 that he could create a public uprising.  
23 He had been led to believe that the morale and fighting spirit in  
24 the Viet<sup>nam</sup> armed forces was low, and that they could be defeated  
25 or persuaded to defect. The fact is the Vietnamese/There are very  
fought well.

1 few exceptions to his statement.

2 The enemy as of midnight last night has lost over 50,000  
3 people. And I consider this a reasonably valid statement (?).

4 There have been questions asked, "Well, how in the world if it's  
5 50,113?". And that happens to be the figure. Well, if you're  
6 going to deal in statistics you have to deal in definitive numbers.  
7 You have to have a diciplined system that comes in with numbers,  
8 any numbers, and add it up.

9 Now, I'm not trying to suggest by any means that there  
10 were not supporters in that group. I'm sure there were and as you  
11 well appreciate, there were a number of very young<sup>men</sup>, maybe 15 to  
12 20 per cent teenagers, scraped up,

13 given arms, and pushed into battle. There  
14 were a number of these.

15 As a matter of interest, these enemy casualties amount  
16 to 87 per cent of the total enemy killed in 1966 and 56 per cent  
17 of the total enemy killed according to our records in 1967. The  
18 number of weapons that were captured were large. 16,609 indivi-  
19 dual weapons, 6,255 crew served weapons in as of midnight last  
20 night.

21 Weapons amount to 88 per cent of the total weapons  
22 captured in '66; 53 per cent of the total weapons captured in 1967.

23 Now, as we look to the future it appears to me that the  
24 contest is one of rebuilding forces, a member of my staff reported  
25 yesterday when we were discussing the situation in the battle to



1 rebuild. And we wish to say the enemy has the formidable task  
 2 in recruiting to rebuild his forces. There's evidence he's at-  
 3 tempting to round up all the manpower he can by persuasion<sup>or</sup>/at the  
 4 point of a gun in the countryside. I've no doubt he will con-  
 5 tinue to move to the South numbers of <sup>North</sup> Vietnamese troops.

6 It was noted during the campaign some of the North  
 7 Vietnamese are young and not well trained because of the haste  
 8 of preparing troops for this major campaign.

9 As far as the ARVN is concerned, they're working hard to  
 10 recover their losses. Vietnamese ground forces suffered almost  
 11 10,000 casualties, but so far they have been able to provide  
 12 over 14,000 replacements. These are figures that have been  
 13 gathered by my staff for me that shows the losses suffered by the  
 14 divisions and the number of replacements that they're receiving.

15 You'll note the 1st Divisions suffered very heavy losses,  
 16 because they bore the brunt of the battle in Hue. But they have  
 17 been able to provide over 2,000 replacements for them.

18 Now this manpower is being provided by a number of  
 19 sources. The men in the reserves were recalled. And men--graduated  
 20 men from their training centers early. They were giving them a  
 21 13-week training program. Now they're giving them a 9-week train-  
 22 ing program and some of these even had less than that, during the  
 23 last several weeks when manpower was important and they cleared the  
 24 training centers to fill up the units. Their labor units<sup>that</sup>/were  
 25 established about a year ago primarily for deserters have been



1 given amnesty and returned to duty and as a matter of fact some of  
2 the military jails have been emptied in order to provide the man-  
3 power.

4 As far as the RFPF, are concerned, my figures, or I  
5 would say our reports from the field which are not conclusive,  
6 are that most of the RF companies are intact and on their posts.

7 And they have in general fought very well. But.

8 66 per cent of the popular forces are at their posts. Some are  
9 still in provincial towns and cities. Some of the posts are over-  
10 killed or captured.

11 run and members / About 60 per cent of the cadre are  
12 reportedly at their posts.

13 The training centers are now beginning to operate again.

14 Of the nine national training centers some of them have resumed  
15 training. The Dong Da training center which is near Hue

16 has been severely damaged, in other words the  
17 facilities have been damaged in the fighting to the point where  
18 some reconstruction is in order before they can start training  
19 those troops again.

20 And the ranger--the unit training center at Trung Hoa,  
21 north of here, which is ready to go as soon as a Ranger battalion  
22 can be made available.

23 Seventeen of the 24 ARVN schools have resumed full or  
24 parttime training. Those schools that have not resumed training  
25 are the administration, finance, school; the C&GS  
college, the intelligence school, the logistics school, the national

1 defense college, the full war college and the quartermaster  
2 school.

3 Four of the 10 division training centers have resumed  
4 operations.

5 Popular forces--8 of the 37 popular force training  
6 centers have resumed training and more are being activated every  
7 day.

8 Air Force and Marine centers have resumed normal train-  
9 ing as well as the three Navy training centers. And the CIDG  
10 training centers, five of those are conducting normal training.

11 According to our present count, this 623,000 refugees  
12 who have been created by the Tet aggression; 72,000 homes de-  
13 stroyed. Ten cities received major damage through battles that  
14 ensued. (List given but too fast to be recognized.)

15 In some way the best analogy that comes to my mind  
16 from history and I reviewed the <sup>events</sup> in the last several weeks,  
17 is that of the Battle of the Bulge, initiated by the Germans on  
18 16 December 1944. The Germans achieved surprise at that time  
19 to counter their successes required major redeployment of U. S.  
20 forces, in reaction. Many of you were there. So was I. I know  
21 (deleted) was there.

22 It was about seven weeks later before things were back  
23 to normal.

24 We're on our sixth week now and things are getting back  
25 to normal in this country. It will take some time to recover from



1 the damage we inflicted.

2 But I'm very heartened about the progress that's being  
3 made.

4 Now, with that general summary, I will entertain  
5 questions--I will answer these as senior military spokesman unless  
6 I specify to the contrary.

7 QUESTION: (Deleted), I wonder if you could go back to  
8 the statements I think that were made earlier that the enemy still  
9 has--because he did not commit so many of his main force in NVA  
10 units--what is his capability now. We get thinking about a third  
11 wave and a second wave.

12 SPOKESMAN: I don't believe the enemy has any great  
13 capability to resume a major offensive action in the near future.  
14 He's been hurt, he's been hurt badly. Obviously from the losses  
15 that I just announced to you. He's tired. His logistic efforts  
16 were adequate to support his campaigns thus far, but there is  
17 evidence <sup>is</sup> he/ developing logistic problems.

18 He will continue, in my opinion, to try to spoil the  
19 countryside, having failed to take over the cities--not to be  
20 unexpected--will concentrate on the RD, RTPF outposts, or to secure  
21 control in the countryside, interdict lines of communication and  
22 to accumulate manpower to fill his depleted ranks. He will con-  
23 tinue standoff rocket and mortar fire against the populated areas  
24 for the purpose of hopefully keeping the troops in and around the  
25 populated areas; keeping the people nervous, suggesting that he is



1 stronger than he really is.

2 Now, having said all this, I do give him a capability  
3 in I Corps---I Corps North---where he has large forces near Hue and  
4 in my opinion, Hue is his next objective. I think this will be  
5 his next big battleground.

6 VOICE: Another try in Hue.

7 SPOKESMAN: Yeah.

8 And I don't rule out an attack against Khe Sanh, but my  
9 impression is he has greater interest in Hue than in Khe Sanh at this  
10 point of time. I think this will be his next big batt

11 QUESTION: He may do both?

12 SPOKESMAN: He may do both.

13 Now, he has also some interest in Quang Tri. And he  
14 has forces up there to a point where he could attack, but of course  
15 the risks will be great.

16 I don't think he--I don't believe his plans visualize  
17 that he will be able to deploy troops and develop the forces  
18 that have been possible. We have capability and further reen-  
19 forcement if required.

20 QUESTION: Immediately after the Tet offensive you gave  
21 very slim chances on the enemy's not attacking Khe Sanh (inaud-  
22 ible). What do you think of changing that opinion?

23 SPOKESMAN: Well, of course, my objective was that he  
24 not attack it. What I think I said was, I think that it was his  
25 plan, his intention to attack, and it was, in my opinion. The

1 fact that he hasn't attacked it is because of our counteractions,  
2 our preemptive actions through the use of our firepower, and that's  
3 the only reason in my opinion he hasn't attacked. As I said before  
4 I don't rule out an attack in the future.

5 QUESTION: How do you explain despite all these pre-  
6 emptive measures that you've taken in the area, that the enemy  
7 still managed to trench right up to the outer wire.

8 SPOKESMAN: He has dug some trenches toward the base,  
9 and he's had a number of enemy killed in those trenches too.

10 He will continue in my opinion, to entrench. I don't  
11 think--he hasn't given up his objective. I think his leadership  
12 is driving him hard to accomplish his objectives, but the weather  
13 is now--well, let us put it this way: the bad weather is, has  
14 been in his favor except we have been able to run air strikes  
15 without the benefit of visual conditions, but as the weather im-  
16 proves and we have had better days during the past week than we've  
17 had in the previous month. We can get visual strikes in and he  
18 will become far more vulnerable than he's been.

19 QUESTION: Irrespective of military systems, (inaudible)  
20 psychological and political (inaudible), there's a great deal of  
21 feeling that we had to some way change the psychological and  
22 political (inaudible) military action. Can you address yourself  
23 to that problem.

24 SPOKESMAN: I think it was basic to this campaign, was  
25 a psychological objective, and I agree with you that he has achieved



1 success in that regard but now that the dust has settled I think  
2 that success is not as great as it was apparent two weeks ago.

3 The Vietnamese are ready, willing and able to go on  
4 the offensive. They're reconstituting their forces, their strength  
5 is being built up as I indicated a moment ago and they--they're  
6 mad.

7 They're capable of going on the offensive and in my  
8 opinion will.

9 QUESTION: (Deleted), the relocation of significant  
10 numbers of American troops up to the northern provinces and the  
11 certain weakening in other parts of the country, what do you see  
12 are the long-run results if the situation continues?

13 SPOKESMAN: We haven't materially weakened other parts  
14 of the country. I've had to redeploy troops from other areas,  
15 but not at the expense of incurring any major risks in other areas.

16 QUESTION: Well, significant numbers of troops have  
17 left the central towns and you have the 1st Air Cav up north now.  
18 Doesn't this sort of create a vacuum for the 4th division  
19 still there?

20 SPOKESMAN: I think we're in good solid shape in the  
21 Highlands.

22 SPOKESMAN: Come again?

23 QUESTION: How many enemy troops would you estimate are  
24 around Hue?

25 SPOKESMAN: Around Hue?



1 QUESTION Yes.

2 SPOKESMAN: I would say better than a division. Better  
3 than a division.

4  
5 SPOKESMAN: Pardon me, again now?

6 QUESTION: Where did you get info about Khe Sanh and Hue?

7 SPOKESMAN: Oh, from prisoners, yes...

8 QUESTION: (Inaudible)?

9 SPOKESMAN: Yes. Or, from prisoners we've identified  
10 units that were around in the DMZ area, that are now around Hue.

11 QUESTION: (Inaudible)?

12 SPOKESMAN: No, both.

13 QUESTION: (Inaudible)?

14 SPOKESMAN: Come again?

15 QUESTION: This division plus that's around Hue, is  
16 this all North Vietnamese?

17 SPOKESMAN: Mostly, yes. There are some local units,  
18 but mostly NVA.

19 QUESTION: (Deleted), are we in a position to go on the  
20 offensive now ?

21 SPOKESMAN: I can't answer that on the public record.

22 QUESTION: Can you answer off the record? Do you have  
23 the capability to go on the offensive?

24 SPOKESMAN: We're on the verge of going on the offen-  
25 sive. Off the record, yes.

1 QUESTION In the event fighting develops in Hue, then  
2 Rosson would not command that fighting. In other words, he  
3 commands forces North.

4 SPOKESMAN: No. No. That's in his area, Quang Tri-  
5 Phou Thien. He could-- Rosson) commands all U. S. troops in  
6 Quang Tri-Phou Thien. Yes?

7 QUESTION: Of the 50,000 can you give us a comparison  
8 of allied losses in that period.

9 SPOKESMAN: Yes.

10  
11 SPOKESMAN: Yes. Yes. We lost approx. 2,000 Americans  
12 and 4,000 Vietnamese.

13 QUESTION: KIA?

14 SPOKESMAN: Yeah.

15 QUESTION: You're figuring now from the 29th of January  
16 to the present for the 50,000?

17 SPOKESMAN: Yes. 1800 hours on the 29th to Midnight  
18 last night.

19 QUESTION: Can you deduct the 50,000 from the enemy's pre-Tet  
20 strength?

21 SPOKESMAN: No. No. No, we've--I think--and our  
22 calculations are that he scraped up a lot of manpower at the last  
23 moment, a lot of young people, and swelled his ranks with untrained  
24 types.

25 QUESTION: Were those the people primarily that you killed?

SPOKESMAN: Our best estimate 10 to 15 per cent were

1 in the teenage category, but frankly, this is really an estimate.  
2 We'll have better data on that in due time.

3 QUESTION: 15-20%?

4 SPOKESMAN: I thought I said 10 to 15.

5 QUESTION: 15 to 20.

6 SPOKESMAN: 15 to 20? All right, I'll stand by 15 to  
7 20.

8 (Laughter)

9 SPOKESMAN: I mean--frankly, it's a guesstimate, really.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

11 SPOKESMAN: My J-2 I talked with him this morning--I  
12 guess he did say, I think that was probably right. I think as I  
13 recall, he--his best estimate was 15 to 20. My first comment was  
14 what he advises me.

15 QUESTION: Net loss out of the 50,000?

16 SPOKESMAN: Well, we're studying that now. Our best  
17 estimate is about 30,000. About 30,000 net loss. That's our best  
18 estimate for the moment.

19 QUESTION: Do you have any breakdown (deleted) on the  
20 Hue casualties, the Hue area--

21 SPOKESMAN: Enemy casualties in the Hue area?

22 Gee, I'd have to--I'd have to research this. My recol-  
23 lection is at about 4,000.

24 QUESTION: Why now would the Communists' interest be  
25 more at Hue than at Khe Sanh, after they've been driven out of



1 there once?

2 SPOKESMAN: I think for political reasons and prisoners-  
3 they've referred to this as the gateway to South Vietnam. Politi-  
4 cal and psychological reasons.

5 QUESTION: Hue area situation, can we quote you by name?

6 SPOKESMAN: Well, let's say culpable.

7 QUESTION: Your statement about enemy objective being Hue.

8 SPOKESMAN: Let me say parenthetically that--I'm very  
9 sensitive on this area here from a security viewpoint. Extremely  
10 sensitive on it. And that's why--in other words, I don't want  
11 through the medium of the press to give the enemy any more in-  
12 telligence on our strengths and weaknesses than we possibly can.  
13 I'm sure you understand my concern, and you've been in general,  
14 very good about recognizing this, but, of course, sometimes it is  
15 difficult to judge as to what he knows and what he doesn't know.  
16 But I'm inclined to lean over backwards and not give him any more  
17 information than we have to.

18 As an example, if we're going to tell the enemy that  
19 the First Cavalry Division is short of POL or had an X number of  
20 helicopters destroyed in a mortar raid, I'd like to--very much to  
21 know where the enemy's short POL and when. So, I'm really rather  
22 sensitive about the general security in that war zone. And that's  
23 why I've been rather delicate in handling your questions, you  
24 understand, I'm sure.

25 QUESTION: Will you clarify your quotation as to Hue

1 attributable to you by name?

2 QUESTION: That was my question earlier.

3 SPOKESMAN: I'm sorry. I didn't understand that.

4 QUESTION: My question earlier was would it be possible  
5 to quote you by name saying that--

6 SPOKESMAN: No, senior military spokesman.

7 QUESTION: (Deleted), what about the plan for the pro-  
8 visional corps. Did you say the U. S. Command has this in mind  
9 or will we have to wait until you announce it?

10 SPOKESMAN: I'm going to announce it just as soon as I  
11 can. A couple of developments should have to occur before I want  
12 to announce it.

13 QUESTION: We ran into the same situation as the America--  
14 people who are not here--

15 SPOKESMAN: Yes. Yes. That's correct.

16 QUESTION: (continuing) --and other people who aren't  
17 here--

18 SPOKESMAN: Yes. Right. I realize your--

19 QUESTION: --(inaudible)?

20 SPOKESMAN: Yeah. All Right. In all fairness to your  
21 colleagues--I don't believe I can give this to you on the record  
22 today, but I will do so as soon as I can.

23 QUESTION: In other words everything you said about the  
24 provisional corps is off-the-record until you announce it?

25 SPOKESMAN: Well, I said background non attribution.

QUESTION: Can we attribute this to sources (inaudible)?



1 SPOKESMAN: What do you advise on that?

2 VOICE: (Inaudible).

3 SPOKESMAN: Well, I'll tell you what I had in mind. I  
4 wanted to give you the rationale and the background so that when  
5 it was announced you would know why. Now, of course, these back-  
6 ground sessions are not designed to bring forth news stories.  
7 They're designed to give you the rationale and the background.

8 Now, let me tell you this, Bill. I shall--I'll do  
9 every--I will release this as soon as I practically can, but I  
10 cannot do it today.

11 QUESTION: Do you mean that you would regard it as a breach  
12 of confidence if we speculate on this?

13 (Laughter)

14 SPOKESMAN: I would say please hold it. Please hold it.

15 VOICE: In effect, it's off-the-record.

16 SPOKESMAN: Let's put it this way: I will ask you to  
17 hold it for 48 hours, during which time there will be a public  
18 announcement on it. So I would say to get down to simplest terms,  
19 I ask you to consider it off-the-record, until you get an announce-  
20 ment.

21 QUESTION: Are the statistics attributable?

22 SPOKESMAN: Right.

23 QUESTION: Do you have 525,000 troops?

24 SPOKESMAN: Well, I don't have the 525 yet.

25 QUESTION: Sir, one more question. I believe (deleted)  
backgrounder yesterday said that he didn't think that Giap



1 was the commander of this more or less (unintelligible), the  
2 enemy's operations. Do you concur in that or---

3 SPOKESMAN: I just don't know.

4 QUESTION: (Inaudible)?

5 SPOKESMAN: It's continuing to flow, and I'd say we're  
6 ready (inaudible).

7 (Mixed voices)

8 SPOKESMAN: Pardon me?

9 QUESTION: What is the time usually to--

10 SPOKESMAN: Well, we have the men in the replacement  
11 depots. It's just the physical matter of getting men.

12 QUESTION: (Deleted), do you expect the enemy to match  
13 buildup by buildup? In other words, what I'm driving at is that  
14 any level that we can arrive in our combat troop strength where  
15 we will gain the advantage?

16 SPOKESMAN: I won't speculate on that.

17 I will do my best to put out a public release on the  
18 Prov Corps. I cannot do it today for reasons that I won't attempt  
19 to explain.

20 But I will--if you will just hold that and consider it  
21 off-the-record until you get the release and my explanation was  
22 designed to give you the background and the rationale.

23 Now, since there have been some stories suggesting that  
24 I do not have confidence in the Marines, I do have one--and this  
25 has been associated with speculation on Abrams going North and

1 so forth which I've explained.

2 I do have a statement for the record which will be  
3 passed out to you in writing, which will make my position known in  
4 this regard.

5 Have you got those? Fine. You'll pass them out as the  
6 gentlemen leave the room.

7 Well, I guess I better be on my way to see the Ambassador.

8 v. 51

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INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Friday, March 8, 1968  
2:00 p. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Just to see what it looked like -- in case you might consider this as one option -- I have drafted a Southeast Asia Resolution of 1968. You may wish to discuss it at lunch -- or drop it in the wastebasket.

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

Attachment



(3/8/68)

SOUTHEAST ASIA RESOLUTION OF 1968

Whereas there are now major units of the Army of North Vietnam engaged in aggressive action in South Vietnam contrary to the Geneva Accords of 1954; and

Whereas there are major forces of North Vietnam engaged in aggressive action in Laos and in the transit of Laos with military men and supplies in violation of the Geneva Accords of 1962; and

Whereas the United States has joined with six nations of Asia and the Pacific to frustrate the aggression against South Vietnam and to permit the people of South Vietnam to exercise the rights of self-determination without external coercion: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to defeat the aggression against South Vietnam and to restore peace to Vietnam and Southeast Asia at the earliest possible time, on terms consonant with our national commitments and interests.

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