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DTG 190151Z

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INFO ADMIRAL SHARP

FROM LTGEN KRULAK

A. COMUSMACV 130205Z 1 AUG 67 (C)

1. ADM SHARP HAS GIVEN ME REF ALFA FOR COMMENT AND HAS AUTHORIZED ME TO SEND YOU MY VIEWS DIRECTLY.

2. FIRST MAY I ADDRESS PARAGRAPH FOUR. YOUR ACTION IN SEEKING THE OPTIMUM ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT SHOULD NOT BE SERVICE - SENSITIVE. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT AND, WHERE MY FORCES ARE CONCERNED,

THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO SAY WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS ORGANIZATIONALLY BEST TO ATTAIN YOUR ENDS. I SEE NO REASON AT ALL FOR YOUR CONCERN REGARDING PAROCHIALISM OR EMOTIONAL HEAT.

3. YOUR GENERAL PROPOSITION THAT WE CAN BRING AN ADDITIONAL REGIMENT (3,707 MEN) AND AN ADDITIONAL RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION (1,070 MEN) OUT OF OUR EXISTING FORCE IS APPEALING. THE FACT IS, HOWEVER, IF WE COULD MANAGE ANYTHING OF THIS MAGNITUDE, WE WOULD

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HAVE BEEN DERELICT ALL ALONG IN NOT HAVING DONE SO. FIRST, A WORD ON THE BASIC ARITHMETIC. WE HAVE 74,550 MARINES AUTHORIZED IN III MAF. FIRST, TAKE OUT 14,726 MEN, WHICH IS THE FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING. THEN TAKE OUT 7,125 MEN, WHICH MAKE UP A VERY AUSTERE LOGISTIC COMMAND. THEN TAKE OUT THE III MAF HEADQUARTERS ELEMENT OF 970; A RELATIVELY SMALL COMMAND ECHELON FOR AN AIR/GROUND FORCE OF THIS SIZE, BY VIETNAM OR OTHER STANDARDS. THAT REALLY LEAVES 52,696, FROM WHICH GROUP THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF WRINGING OUT 4,267 SPACES TO MAKE UP THE UNITS YOU MENTION. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE CANNOT FIND SOME UNPRODUCTIVE AREAS IN OUR TASK ORGANIZATION. WE CAN AND, AS YOU WILL SEE BELOW, WE ALREADY HAVE; WITH THE SPACES SAVED BEING APPLIED PRODUCTIVELY ELSEWHERE. OUR COMBAT - TO - LOGISTIC SUPPORT PERSONNEL RATIO IS 6.3 TO 1 NOW. OUR DIVISION SLICE IS 22,343; AND I DOUBT IF THERE IS ANY MODERN PRECEDENT FOR EXPECTING IT TO BE MUCH SMALLER.

2. WE HAVE KEPT OUR ORGANIZATIONAL THINKING PRETTY LOOSE, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, BOTH IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE, AND IN TERMS OF ADAPTING WHAT WE HAVE TO THE VIETNAM ENVIRONMENT. WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN OVER FIFTY ORGANIZATIONAL MODIFICATIONS DESIGNED TO BRING OUR FORCES MORE NEARLY INTO CONGRUENCE WITH THE TASKS AT HAND. THIS

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HAS NOT BEEN EASY. I CTZ, AS YOU KNOW SO WELL, EMBODIES A WIDE
RANGE OF TERRAIN AND TACTICAL VARIATIONS, FROM THE PROBLEMS OF HARD
CORE COMBAT WITH LARGE FORCES OF COMBINED ARMS NEAR THE DMZ
SANCTUARY TO THE INTENSE ANTI - GUERRILLA WAR AROUND DANANG.
A FEW OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES ORIGINATED SINCE THE FIGHT
BEGAN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. WE HAVE PROPOSED AN ADDITIONAL RECONNAISSANCE SQUAD FOR EACH
RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON, AS WELL AS TWO ADDITIONAL RECONNAISSANCE
COMPANIES OF FOUR (4) PLATOONS EACH.

B. WE HAVE ALREADY CREATED A SCOUT - SNIPER PLATOON FOR EACH
INFANTRY REGIMENT AND EACH RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION, OUT OF
EXISTING RESOURCES; - - SOME 278 MEN.

C. WE HAVE ACTIVATED AND MANNED 23 ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY
PIECES, OVER AND ABOVE ALL ALLOWANCES, THE PERSONNEL BEING
WRUNG OUT OF OUR OWN HIDE; - - 123 MEN.

D. WE FLY 12 EXTRA OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT, MANNED OUT OF OUR OWN HIDE;
- - 62 OFFICERS AND MEN.

E. WE HAVE ADDED 60 OF THE OTHER MARGINAL TERRAIN VEHICLES,
MANNED OUT OF EXISTING RESOURCES; - - 120 MEN.

F. WE HAVE ADDED A COMM MORTAR SECTION TO EACH RIFLE COMPANY.

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G. WE HAVE 75 COMBINED WEAPON PLATOONS : - - 1322 OFFICER AND MEN, OF WHOM 210 ARE OUT OF OUR HIDE.

H. WE HAVE ADDED THREE (3) ADDITIONAL DIRECT AIR SUPPORT CENTERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DISPERSED ENVIRONMENT; - - 66 OFFICERS AND MEN, OUT OF OUR OWN HIDE.

I. WE HAVE SPREAD THE AIRBASE AND CONTROL ELEMENTS OF OUR ONE MARINE AIRCRAFT WING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RUNNING SIX AIRFIELDS.

J. WE ARE PROVIDING ESSENTIALLY TOTAL LOGISTIC SUPPORT FROM THE FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND TO THE ROKMC BRIGADE, A TASK REQUIRING THE EFFORTS OF ABOUT 300 MEN.

K. WE ARE PROVIDING, OUT OF OUR OWN HIDE, 21 STAFF PERSONNEL FOR DYE MARKER PURPOSES ONLY.

L. WE HAVE ADDED A SPECIAL STAFF SECTION TO EVERY UNIT OF BATTALION OR LARGER SIZE FOR CIVIL AFFAIRS/CIVIC ACTION; - - 226 OFFICERS AND MEN.

5. YOU MENTION THE ONTOS AS ONE SOURCE OF PERSONNEL. I AGREE. YOU WILL RECALL THAT I MENTIONED THIS UNIT TO YOU AS BEING UNPRODUCTIVE, WHEN WE TALKED IN YOUR OFFICE ON JUNE 29 TH. AT THAT TIME I HAD ALREADY RECOMMENDED REDUCING THE ONTOS INVESTMENT IN III MAF FROM 762 MEN TO 232 MEN, WITH THE SAVINGS TO BE APPLIED TO ORGANIZING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL GROUND RECONNAISSANCE COMPANIES OF FOUR (4) PLATOONS EACH. GENERAL GREENE CONCURRED IN THIS, ABOUT A MONTH AGO. I WOULD HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO PROPOSE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF THE ONTOS, WERE IT NOT FOR THE RECURRENT REPORTS

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OF NVN TANKS AND ARMORED VEHICLES.

6. ALL OF THE FOREGOING CHANGES; STEMMING DIRECTLY FROM THE COMBAT ENVIRONMENT, HAVE DRAWN DOWN HEAVILY ON OUR BASIC FORCE STRUCTURE. THESE ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERATIONS HAVE BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY RECASTING VARIOUS OF OUR EXISTING AMPHIBIOUS UNITS IN A NEW IMAGE TO MEET THE VIETNAM PROBLEM. FOR INSTANCE:

A. THE SHORE PARTY BATTALIONS (ONE PER MARINE DIVISION) DESIGNED TO FULFILL A SPECIALIZED LOGISTIC FUNCTION OF THE SHORE LINE, HAVE BEEN CONVERTED TO AIR HEAD AND HELICOPTER-LANDING ZONE OPERATIONS, AS WELL AS TO HEAVY ENGINEER TASKS. ON OCCASION, SUCH AS AT DONG HA, THEY ARE USED TO RUN A PORT.

B. THE DIVISION SERVICE BATTALION, DESIGNED TO GIVE EACH MARINE DIVISION LOGISTIC BALANCE IN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS, HAVE BOTH BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM THE DIVISIONS, AND COMBINED TO FORM THE HARD CORE OF THE FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND.

C. THE TWO MARINE AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR BATTALIONS, DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR TROOP TRANSPORT IN THE SHIP-TO-SHORE MOVEMENT IN THE AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT, HAVE BEEN CONVERTED TO ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER, RIVER

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PATROL AND TERRESTRIAL LOGISTIC TASKS. WE FIND THEM FREQUENTLY OPERATING TEN OR TWENTY MILES FROM THE SEA.

D. THE ARMORED AMPHIBIAN UNITS, DESIGNED TO SPEARHEAD THE SURFACE LANDING ATTACK WITH DIRECT FIRE SUPPORT, HAVE BEEN DIVERTED TO RIVER MONITOR TASKS AND TO MOBILE ARTILLERY FUNCTIONS, WHERE THEIR 105MM HOWITZERS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE.

E. THE TWO MARINE MP BATTALIONS, DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND RELATED ACTIONS IN THE BEACH HEAD AREA, HAVE BEEN CONVERTED TO AIRFIELD DEFENSE UNITS, FREEING THE EQUIVALENT OF 1 1/2 INFANTRY BATTALIONS FOR OTHER EMPLOYMENT.

7. THE ABOVE DIVERSIONS AND RECONSTITUTION OF FORCES TO MEET THE VIETNAM SITUATION EXHIBIT THAT THE MARINE AMPHIBIOUS ORGANIZATION IS EXTRAORDINARILY FLEXIBLE, AND FORM THE BASIS FOR MY NEXT COMMENT. YOU SPEAK OF THE MARINE RIFLE COMPANY AS BEING DESIGNED FOR AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT. THIS IS NOT ACTUALLY THE CASE. IT IS THE MARINE DIVISION THAT IS DESIGNED FOR AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT - - AS EVIDENCED IN ITS SHORE CARRY UNITS, AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR UNITS AND ITS STRONG CAPABILITY FOR OVER-THE-BEACH LOGISTICS. BUT THE REGIMENTS, BATTALIONS AND COMPANIES ARE DESIGNED ONLY TO BE THE MOST VERSATILE, MOST POWERFUL INFANTRY FORMATIONS WE CAN DEVISE

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8. THE 216/MARINE RIFLE COMPANY IS, IN MY VIEW, A BALANCED, MUSCULAR INFANTRY UNIT, EMBODYING ENDURANCE, SHOCK POWER AND MANUEVER CAPABILITY. ITS HEART IS FOUND IN THE 14 MAN RIFLE SQUAD, COMPRISED OF THREE HOMOGENEOUS FIRE TEAMS, EACH CAPABLE OF EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUAL OR COORDINATED ACTION. THE TRIANGULAR SYSTEM WITHIN THE SQUAD GIVES IT GREAT FLEXIBILITY. THE 22 MAN ANTITANK ROCKET PLATOON TO WHICH YOU REFER, IS ACTUALLY A 13 MAN ASSAULT SECTION. IT IS A LEAN UNIT, WHOSE 6 ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND 6 DEMOLITION MEN GIVE THE COMPANY ON - THE - SPOT SHOCK AND FIRE POWER THAT HAS PAID OFF REPEATEDLY. IN THE HILL 881 BATTLE AND IN OPERATION UNION, REPORTS OF THIS SMALL UNIT'S EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST DUG IN ENEMY WERE WIDESPREAD. THE 6 ROCKET TEAMS OF THE ASSAULT SECTION ACTUALLY FULFILL THE SAME FUNCTION AS DO THE SIX (6) 90MM RECOILLESS RIFLE TEAMS IN THE ARMY INFANTRY COMPANY. AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WOULD WISH TO SEE A RIFLE COMPANY DENIED ITS ORGANIC MACHINE GUNS. AS IN THE CASE OF THE ARMY, OUR COMPANY HAS SIX GUNS. I WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE INVESTED 13 MEN IN MANNING 3 60 MM MORTARS, AN ACTION WHICH OUR EXPERIENCE IN THE VIETNAM SITUATION CAUSED US TO TAKE THIS CLOSE - IN INFANTRY WEAPONS IS LIKEWISE DOING A FINE JOB.

ALL IN ALL, OUR RIFLE COMPANY HAS STOOD UP WELL IN EVERY FORM

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OF COMBAT WE HAVE FACED IN RVN, WHETHER BROKEN DOWN TO PLATOONS OR
SQUADS IN COUNTER - GUERRILLA ACTION, OR IN MANEUVERING UNDER HEAVY
FIRE SUPPORT TO DESTROY DUG-IN FIRST LINE NVN UNITS NEAR THE DMZ.
I COULD NOT SUPPORT CUTTING THE SIZE OF THIS, OUR GUT INFANTRY UNIT,
JUST TO MAKE MORE OF THEM. IN THE END WE WOULD LOSE MORE THAN WE
WOULD GAIN.

10. OVERALL, HOWEVER, WE CERTAINLY DO HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO BEAR
DOWN WHEREVER ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MAY BE INDICATED, OR WHERE FAT MAY
BE FOUND. I PROPOSE TO SEE THE PROCESS CONTINUED VIGOROUSLY, AND HOPE,
WHERE YOU SEE POSSIBLE BENEFICIAL STEPS, THAT YOU WILL BE FREE
TO SAY SO. WARM REGARDS. CP-4

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