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Thursday, October 12, 1967
2:15 p.m.

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Pres file

Mr. President:

I have had prepared this retrospective study of North Vietnamese operations at the DMZ, plus evidence on present dispositions and future intentions.

I think it will interest you.

W. W. Rostow

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WWRostow:rln

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By tg, NARA, Date 10-21-91

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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October 9, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW:

Each of the last three summers the communists have planned and initiated major offensives;

- In 1965, they hoped to cut South Vietnam in two.
- In 1966, their objective was more modest -- occupy and control of the northern part of South Vietnam.
- In 1967, they merely hoped to (1) divert our forces from support of RD/pacification and (2) inflict a "miniature Dien Bien Phu" on our forces.

All of these offensives failed. They achieved the greatest degree of success this year -- when their objectives were most modest. Although Con Thien did not become a Dien Bien Phu, their strategy was partially successful in diverting forces that would otherwise have been used for in-country initiatives. However, their offensive was costly and it did not stop -- but only slowed our progress within South Vietnam.

The most significant aspect of this latest DMZ offensive was the heavy use of artillery fires. He began deploying artillery to the DMZ area in March, and at the peak in September had more than 100 artillery pieces which he could bring to bear in the DMZ area.

Enemy tactical operations during this period went through three phases. The first phase probably began in late February - early March and was characterized by a build-up of North Vietnamese units and heightened tactical activity in the eastern part of the DMZ. This may have hit a peak in May with heavy fighting throughout the area resulting in numerous casualties on both sides.

From late May through July there was a partial withdrawal of these units. In early August a new build-up began.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 94-418

By leg, NARA, Date 7-27-95

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By mid-September, NVN strengths had probably reached a peak involving about 30,000 men -- the equivalent of three divisions supported by two regiments of artillery.

One measure of activity is shown by the comparison of fires delivered and received:

	<u>Fired by USMC</u>	<u>Fired by Enemy</u>
May	17,887	4,405
June	20,430	3,464
July	25,799	5,401
August	38,703	2,189
September	28,087*	7,302

Enemy fires were at their peak from 19 - 21 September and again on 25 September when they reached an all-time high. It was almost as though they had been ordered to use up all their ammunition, because from the 26th on there was a rapid decrease in their fire.

By 27 September, major elements had begun a withdrawal to the North. Most of the 324 B Division has withdrawn into the DMZ and at least two regiments have crossed back into North Vietnam. These units could probably be given new equipment and replacements and be ready for recommitment in two months. Since they remain in the general area, they could probably be recommitted immediately, if necessary.

The failure of the NV to achieve their 1967 summer objectives can be attributed to some combination of extremely bad weather, B-52 strikes, counter-battery fire, tactical air, naval gunfire and aggressive small unit Marine activity.

Meanwhile, we have detected a southward movement of the 325 C Division. This division could be used immediately in the Con Thien area, but we have no information on its mission.

* The decrease of artillery fire by Marines was due to the integration of artillery fires with tactical air support and B-52 bomber support. During September, over 700 sorties were flown in the DMZ area by B-52's delivering approximately 20,000 tons of bombs on enemy weapons positions, staging areas, and unit locations.

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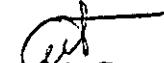
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In any event the North Vietnamese have the capability to resume infantry activity at the previous high level if they are willing to accept the costs. We do not know, however, if they can resume the previous high level of artillery fire because we have no information on artillery casualties, guns and ammunition destroyed or the extent to which weather and air strikes may have interdicted their ammunition supply.

Bob Ginsburgh

and


Art McCafferty

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Addendum A

US Deployments to the First Corps Area

A progressive buildup of US forces in the First Corps area has been under way since April 11 of this year as a result of the continued enemy threat in the DMZ and Quang Tri province.

On April 11, there were 73,761 combat Marine personnel and 4,167 combat Army personnel in the area. As of October 11, there were 76,728 combat Marine personnel and 22,198 combat Army personnel.

The Army units involved in this deployment have been:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Strength</u>
Apr 11	196th Brigade	Tay Nian	Chu Lai	4,500 Approx.
Apr 24	3rd Brigade of 4th Division	Pleiku	Chu Lai	4,500 Approx.
May 8	1st Brigade of 101st Airborne Division	Phan Rang	Chu Lai	5,000 Approx.
May 8	2nd Brigade of 11th Cavalry Division	Lang Bien	Chu Lai	1,500 Approx.
Sept 1	1st Squadron of 1st Cavalry Regiment	United States	Chu Lai	1,500 Approx.
Oct 3	3rd Brigade of 1st Cavalry Division	Binh Dinh	Chu Lai	3,100 Approx.

As can be seen, these units moved into the Marine positions in the Chu Lai area and permitted the diversion of Marine units into the northern two provinces of First Corps and the DMZ area to meet the threat there. At present, III MAF has the 3rd Marine Division deployed in the northern two provinces, Quang Tri and Thau Thien, with a total of five Infantry Regimental Headquarters and 13

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1968

By JL, NARA Date 10-31-91

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Infantry Battalions, plus artillery and other support. In the DMZ area (including Quang Tri province in this area) there are 10 Infantry Battalions and seven plus Artillery battalions. The attached map shows the present disposition of all Free World Forces in the First Corps area.

The effect of this has been to permit continuation of TAOR and pacification efforts around Chu Lai, with Army units, and provide sufficient force to counter enemy buildups. At the same time, although it has undoubtedly slowed operations in other areas through decreased troop levels, General Westmoreland has weighed carefully each move and has only diverted that force necessary for the job.

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