

What are the military advantages of holding the proposed Tet standdown to thirty-six hours vice, increasing the period to forty-eight hours?

1. Movement of Supplies in NVN.

Overall. The twelve additional hours would increase the enemy capability for moving supplies south in NVN from 3,300 tons to 14,400 tons.

Waterborne. For supplies moved south toward SVN by waterborne logistic craft (WBLC), the difference between a 36 hour ceasefire and a 48 hour ceasefire is:

a. No significant WBLC movement during a 36 hour ceasefire due to turn around time.

b. A heavy flow of WBLC during a 48 hour ceasefire.

Supplies moved by WBLC during a 48 hour ceasefire would amount to some 10,000 tons, over twice as much as could be moved by truck alone and enough to maintain an NVA division under moderate combat conditions for 100 days.

Truck. For supplies moved south by truck toward SVN, the difference between a 36 hour ceasefire and a 48 hour ceasefire is 12 additional hours of unrestricted truck movement, which means 1,100 additional tons of supplies.

2. Khe Sanh.

During the past several weeks NVA troops have moved south from North Vietnam into Laos in close proximity to the northern portion of SVN against Quang Tri Province. At the present time there are three NVA Division Headquarters and at least seven NVA regiments, totaling an estimated 15,500 enemy troops, located within a radius of 20 miles of Khe Sanh. This enemy threat has caused General Westmoreland to reinforce the northern portion of the I CTZ with major elements of the 1st Cavalry, movement of the ROKMC brigade from Chu Lai to Danang, thereby permitting the movement of US Marine Corps units to the north, positioning of naval gunfire ships for quick response in the northern portion of the I CTZ, and plans for sustained B-52 and tactical air strikes in the western portion of Quang Tri Province.

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~~TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE~~

Authority NLJ-C85 6

By iv, NARS, Date 8-28-84

This massing of enemy troops indicates an attack of major proportions on Khe Sanh is imminent. Khe Sanh may be an intermediate objective with the final objective of Quang Tri City or possibly Hue.

The attack could begin before or immediately following Tet. General Westmoreland estimates that the attack could well be initiated before Tet. If this is so, there could be no Tet standdown. If the ceasefire were 48 instead of 36 hours, forces attacking after Tet would have had 12 additional hours to prepare such attacks with impunity and to receive an additional 11,100 tons of ammunition and military supplies.

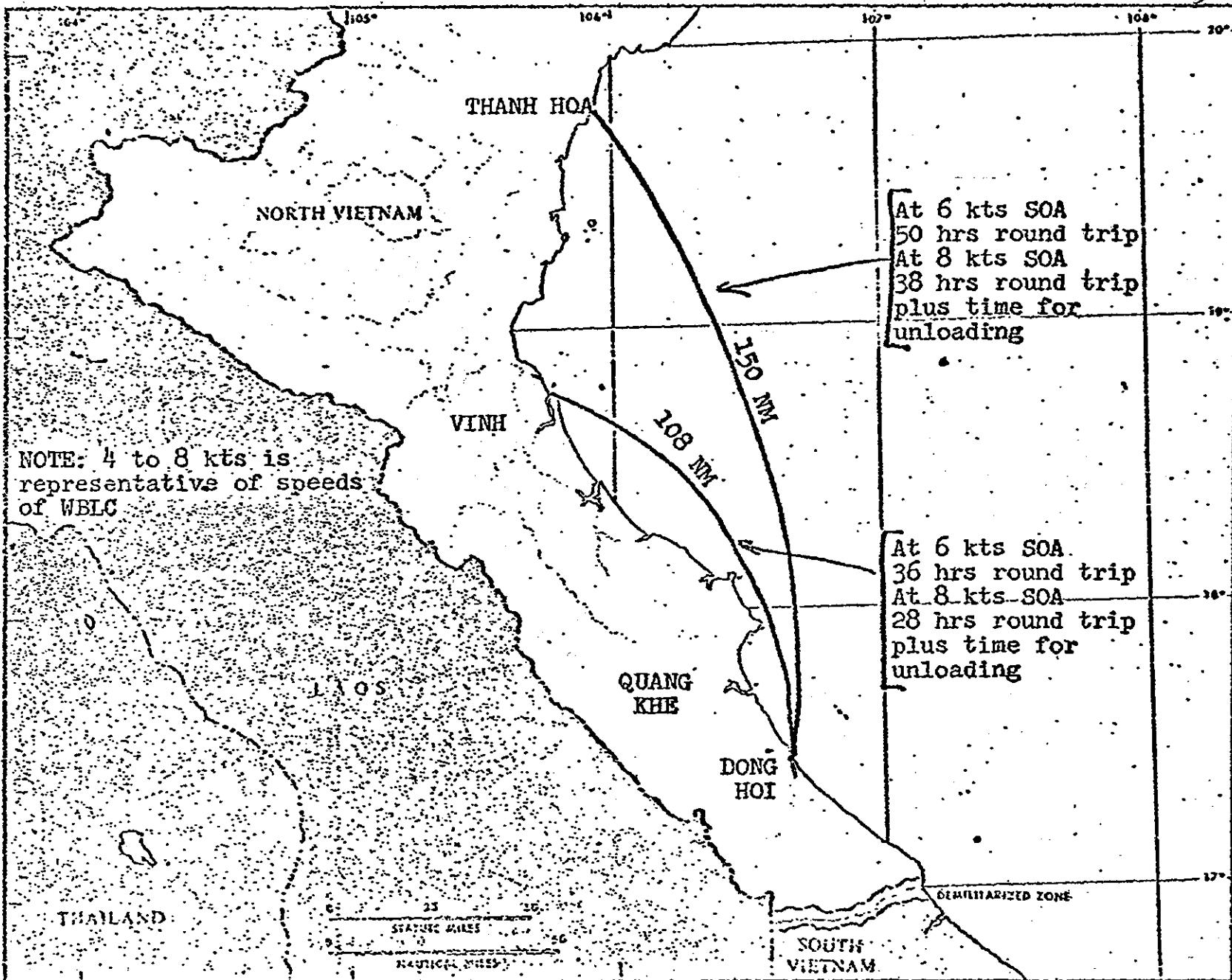
3. Enemy Posture.

The VC/NVN have aptly demonstrated their ability to use periods of ceasefire to improve their posture. Twelve additional hours afford the enemy more latitude in preparing for attacks on US or friendly forces at the time and place of his choosing.

19 Jan '68

Based on the foregoing, the JCS support Gen Westmoreland, Gen Vosen and Ambassador Bunker's recommendation for a 36-hour standdown. Please incorporate this in our message to the President.

Wheeler



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

62d  
Thursday, January 18, 1968

11:00 a.m.

~~SECRET~~

Rusk

Pres. file

MR. PRESIDENT:

Your judgment is needed on the following problem:

1. As you know, it was agreed sometime ago that there would be a 48-hour stand-down for Tet -- January 30.
2. Apparently Generals Westmoreland and Vien, without evidence of consultation with Ambassador Bunker, went to Thieu and, against his better judgment, persuaded him to cut the 48 hours to 36 hours. There are perfectly good military grounds for this, given the behavior of the Viet Cong during the Christmas and New Year's stand-downs.
3. Secretaries Rusk and McNamara believe that it is unwise to cut back from 48 to 36 hours, for two reasons:
  - Hanoi could regard it as our changing rules of the game in the middle of a tense period of communications;
  - We could be criticized further for toughening up our behavior in a delicate, potentially pre-negotiation situation. (There is apparently some criticism of your State of the Union message along these lines.)
4. Therefore, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara would like to go back to Bunker and Westy and reverse the decision, reinstalling the 48-hour Tet truce. Both do this reluctantly out of respect for Westy, and having whipsawed Thieu once already on this matter.

Walt Rostow  
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Authority NLJ-CBS-19

Stay with 36 \_\_\_\_\_ By ics NARS, Date 6-22-84

Back to 48 \_\_\_\_\_

See me        →(see attached) 1/19/68

~~SECRET~~