

INFORMATION

Pres. file

Monday, February 5, 1968 -- 8:50 a.m.

Mr. President:

While on night duty I asked Bob Ginsburgh to do a terse statistical comparison of the situation at Dien Bien Phu and that at Khe Sanh.

The numbers suggest why our military are confident.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rln

Monday, February 5, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu

The campaign for Dien Bien Phu lasted 209 days and the actual seige 56 days.

The French began with a strength of about 5,000 (including Montagnards, North Africans, Vietnamese and Foreign Legionnaires). Although a total of 15,000 participated, maximum strength on the French side at any one time was about 13,000. Total casualties were: 1,100 killed, 1,600 missing and 4,400 wounded.

The Viet-Minh totaled 49,500 combat troops plus 55,000 support troops.

By comparison we have 6,000 Americans at Khe Sanh versus an enemy strength of about 20,000. Thus the enemy's advantage is less than 4 to 1 rather than 8 to 1 as it was at Dien Bien Phu (including support troops). If we consider total strengths in I Corps north of Hue, the enemy has only 38,600 versus our 41,000 (including South Vietnamese).

Usable supplies parachuted to Dien Bien Phu averaged about 100 tons per day during the seige. General Westmoreland has a capability of 600 tons per day.

Total aircraft available to the French were 75 combat aircraft and 100 supply and reconnaissance aircraft. By comparison, the U.S. has more than 2,000 aircraft and 3,300 helicopters.

ROBERT N. GINSBURGH