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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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CM-2971-68
7 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Situation in the Khe Sanh Area

1. The enemy has renewed his efforts against US and South Vietnamese forces in the Khe Sanh - Lang Vei area. During the early morning hours yesterday (approximately 3:00 PM on 6 February, South Vietnam time) the Khe Sanh Combat Base and US Marine units in the surrounding area received 58 rounds of mixed mortar fire and an undetermined number of rockets resulting in five US Marines wounded. At 11:45 AM EST yesterday (12:45 AM on 7 February, South Vietnam time), the Khe Sanh Combat Base began receiving a heavy volume of rocket and mortar fire. At approximately the same time, the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp came under a heavy ground attack by an estimated enemy infantry company supported by nine armored vehicles believed to be Soviet PT-76 Amphibious Tanks (description attached). By 1:50 PM EST (2:50 AM on 7 February, South Vietnam time) five of the tanks were reported to have been damaged or destroyed. The attacking enemy also directed heavy supporting mortar and artillery fire on the Lang Vei defenses, and an aerial observer saw the enemy employing flame-throwers in the assault on Lang Vei. Despite poor weather conditions US tactical aircraft provided continual close air support during the heavy fighting and the Khe Sanh Combat Base delivered a large volume of supporting artillery fire throughout the battle. The supporting fire included 28 rounds of 105-mm COFRAM ammunition, but no report of its effectiveness has been received. The intensity of the fighting began to diminish at 10:00 PM EST last night (11:00 AM on 7 February, South Vietnam time). US tactical aircraft continued to strike enemy concentrations throughout the Khe Sanh - Lang Vei area during the day (7 February, South Vietnam time). A reaction force was en route to Lang Vei at 3:30 AM EST this morning (4:30 PM on 7 February, South Vietnam time). Latest reports indicate fighting still prevails, but on a limited scale. There are no reports as yet of the exact extent of enemy or friendly casualties, but a preliminary report states

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that 16 US Special Forces advisors, who had been wounded, were evacuated from Lang Vei at 2:00 AM EST today (3:00 PM on 7 February, South Vietnam time). Fourteen wounded South Vietnamese were also evacuated at the same time. A preliminary report also indicates that all buildings in the Lang Vei camp were destroyed. The military population of the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp included 18 US Army Special Forces advisors, 494 members of the South Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group organized into three companies and a mobile strike force, and 29 other South Vietnamese personnel. The Khe Sanh Combat Base continued to receive enemy fire throughout the night and early morning hours (South Vietnam time) until it ceased completely at 9:47 PM EST last night (10:47 AM on 7 February, South Vietnam time). The runway at Khe Sanh airfield was cratered, but it was repaired and the airfield was fully operational at 9:30 PM EST last night (10:30 AM on 7 February, South Vietnam time). In another action at 9:40 AM EST yesterday (10:40 PM on 6 February, South Vietnam time), the US Marine company on Hill 861 was hit by a light ground attack from the southeast. The attack ended about one hour later. The results of the attack have not yet been reported.

2. During the past 24 hours, US Air Force B-52 bombers flew 30 sorties against enemy targets in the Khe Sanh area. The number of B-52 sorties flown in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area since 15 January 1968 now totals 684 with approximately 19,900 total tons of bombs delivered on the enemy.

3. US tactical aircraft flew 199 strike sorties in support of units at Khe Sanh during the past 24 hours (83 US Air Force, 67 US Marine Corps, 49 US Navy). Bomb damage assessment of the reported air sorties was somewhat hindered by weather, however, one very large explosion and 15 other secondary explosions were reported by tactical support aircraft.

4. During the period, 136 short tons of supplies were delivered to the Khe Sanh Combat Base by air, over half of which was ammunition.

5. The latest weather observation at 5:00 AM EST (6:00 PM 7 February, South Vietnam time) today in the Khe Sanh area reflects cloudy conditions with visibility at five miles in fog. The forecast for the next 14 hours is cloudy with low ceilings, poor visibility, drizzle and fog. From 9:00 PM EST, 7 February (10:00 AM, 8 February, South Vietnam time) until 7:00 AM EST, 8 February (8:00 PM, 8 February, South Vietnam time) the outlook is improved: cloudy with intermittent light rain, higher ceilings and visibility at seven miles.

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6. Planned operations in support of Khe Sanh:

a. During the next 24 hours, 39 US Air Force B-52 sorties are scheduled against targets in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area. Four of the targets are in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, and one target is adjacent to the Demilitarized Zone, approximately six miles north-northwest of Camp Carroll.

b. For the period until 11:00 PM EST today (12:00 noon 8 February, South Vietnam time) 152 tactical air sorties are scheduled into the Khe Sanh area. 16 additional sorties are available on immediate call to augment the scheduled sorties. An additional 396 US Air Force and 250 US Navy sorties could be diverted into the Khe Sanh area, for a total of 646 additional sorties.

7. US Marine units defending the Khe Sanh area have a vast amount of fire support available to them from external sources (16 175-mm guns, all-weather tactical aircraft, armed helicopters, and B-52 bombers). These units also have considerable fire power from their own assigned weapons, which, in addition to a large number of automatic weapons, include 102 mortars (60-mm, 81-mm, and 4.2 inch), 32 106-mm recoilless rifles, and 24 howitzers (105-mm and 155-mm). Also available are two vehicles which mount four .50 caliber machine guns (quad 50s) each and two track-type armored vehicles with two 40-mm guns (twin 40s) on each vehicle. The quad 50s and twin 40s are dual-purpose and can be used either for air defense or against ground targets. In addition, there are five M48 tanks (90-mm guns) and ten light track-type vehicles (ONTOS) on each of which are mounted six 106-mm recoilless rifles. Because of the significant fire power of the units defending Khe Sanh and the reinforcing fires immediately available from the heavy artillery east of Khe Sanh along with the supporting strikes of tactical aircraft, armed helicopters and B-52 bombers which can be delivered against the enemy, it is not considered necessary to deploy additional supporting weapons and forces to the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Moreover, additional weapons and units within the Khe Sanh defensive perimeter would inordinately increase the concentration of our resources in a relatively confined area, correspondingly increasing the risk of losses to enemy fire, and would add a significant amount of logistic support requirements. It is considered preferable to retain additional fire support means for employment in concert with counter-attacking and exploitation forces when they are committed.

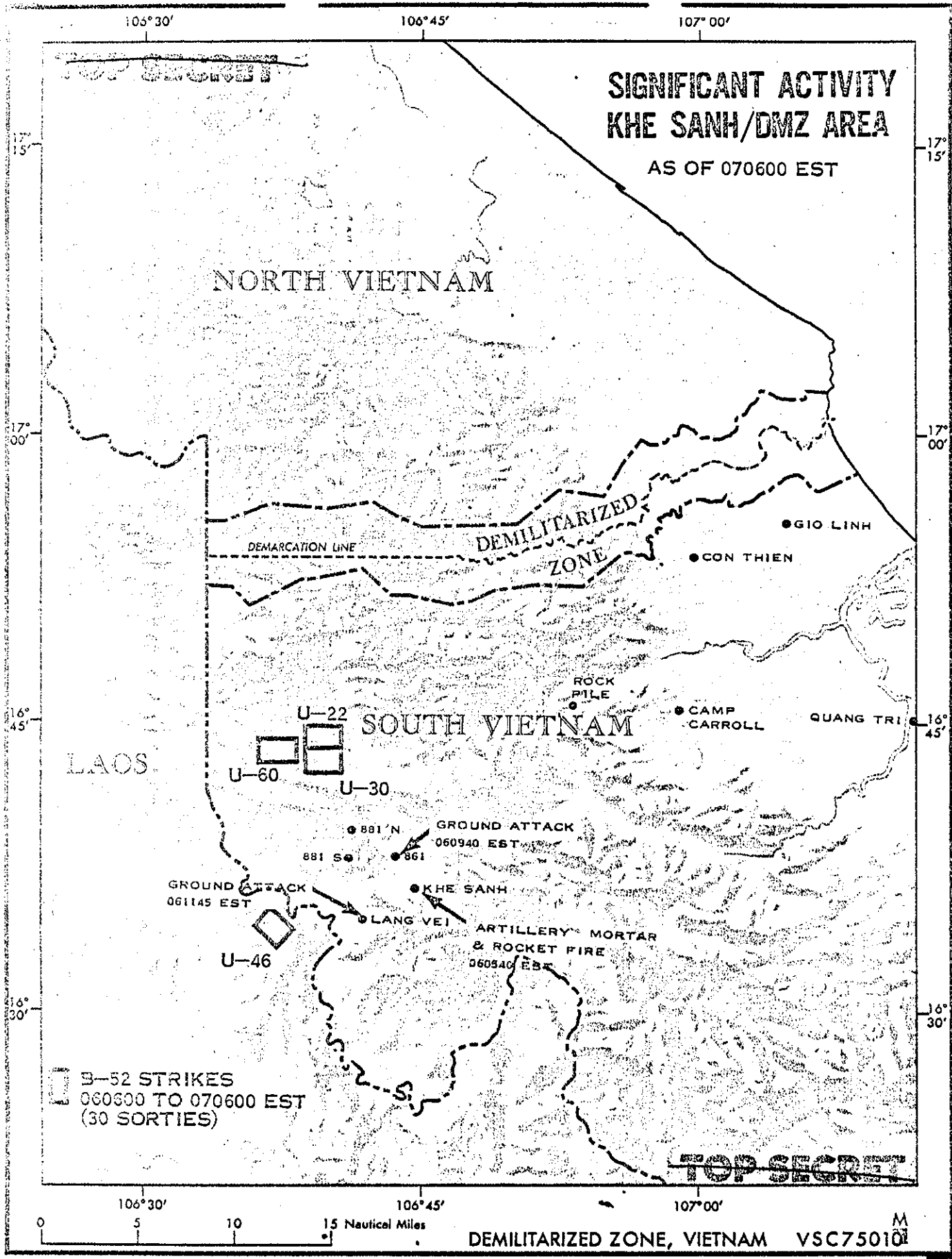
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Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

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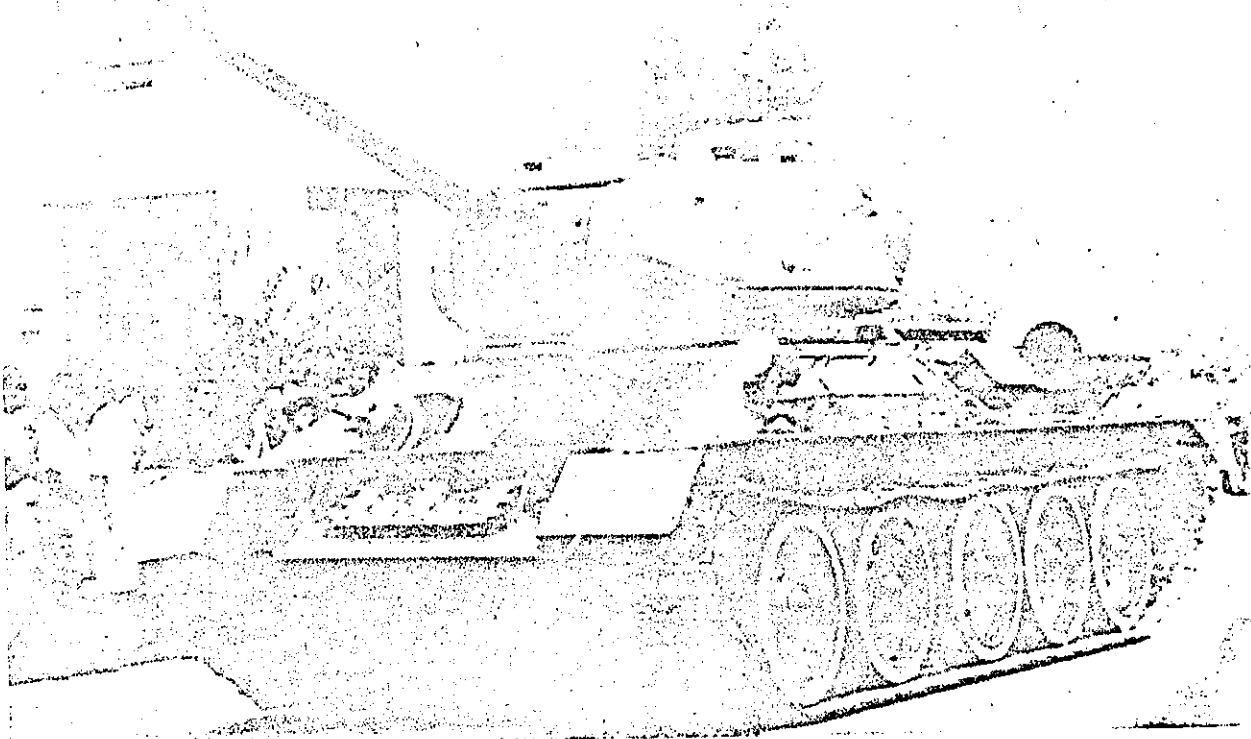
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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NEL 96-204

By C6, NARA Date 3-2-97



T-34/85 MEDIUM TANK

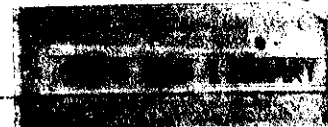
The T-34 medium tank was the principal Soviet combat vehicle in World War II. The original version (T-34/76) mounted a short-barreled 76-mm gun, giving way later to a longer barreled version. In 1944, an 85-mm weapon was mounted in an improved turret. Although outmoded and to a large extent replaced by more modern tanks, the T-34/85 is still found in some Soviet units as well as in other Communist armies. In addition, it has also been supplied to many non-Communist forces.

From a technical standpoint, the T-34 remains an interesting example of excellent tank design, featuring low silhouette, sloped armor, a cast turret, relatively heavy main armament, and good over-all cross-country performance. It employs a flat track suspension system with large individually suspended road wheels which serve as a principal recognition feature.

CHARACTERISTICS AND PERFORMANCE

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|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Vehicle: | | |
| Weight | 35.2 short tons | 32 mt |
| Length over-all (w/gun) | 26.5 ft | 8.08 m |
| Width | 9.8 ft | 3 m |
| Height | 7.9 ft | 2.4 m |
| Engine | 493-hp @ 1,800 rpm, V-12 Diesel | |
| Crew | 5 | |
| Speed | 35 mph | 56 km/h. |
| Cruising range | 190 miles (on main fuel tanks) | 306 km |
| Maximum gradeability | 35° | |
| Trench crossing ability | 7.5 ft | 2.29 m |
| Vertical obstacle ability | 2.3 ft | 0.7 m |
| Fording depth | 4.2 ft (12-15 ft w/snorkel) | 1.28 m |
| Infrared | No (can be added) | |
| Maximum armor (hull) | 1.8 in (46 mm) @ 60° | |
| Maximum armor (turret) | 3.25 in (83 mm) @ 20° | |
| Armament: | | |
| Main | 85-mm Tank Gun M1944 (ZIS-S53) | 815 m/s |
| Muzzle velocity (AP-T) | 2,670 fps | 1,030 m/s |
| (HVAP-T) | 3,380 fps | |
| Armor penetration | 550 yd (500 m) | 1,100 yd (1,000 m) |
| 0° obliquity (AP-T) (BR-365K) | 4.4 in (111 mm) | 4.0 in (102 mm) |
| (HVAP-T)(BR-365P) | 5.6 in (143 mm) | 4.1 in (103 mm) |
| Secondary armament | Two 7.62-mm DTM machineguns (one coaxial and one front hull mounted) | |

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PT-76 AMPHIBIOUS TANK

The PT-76, introduced in 1952, is the standard tactical reconnaissance tank of the Soviet and some Eastern European Communist armies. It has been supplied to Cuba and has also appeared in Laos. The chassis has proven to be rather versatile, being used for the BTR-50P armored personnel carrier and, in a non-amphibious mode, for the FROG-2, 3, 4, and 5 rocket launchers. Propulsion in the water is achieved by a hydrojet system with intake ports on both sides of the hull bottom and exhaust ports in the rear.

The PT-76 pictured above has the 76-mm gun D-56TM which was installed in the PT-76 after 1957. Earlier PT-76 tanks mount the 76-mm gun D-56T with a multibaffle muzzle brake. Performance figures for the two guns are the same.

Although classified by the Soviets as a tank, the PT-76 is very lightly armored (only 0.63 inch maximum) and mounts only a moderately effective 76-mm weapon which makes it undergunned by present standards. Essentially, the tank is a member of the Soviet light armored vehicle family, which includes armored personnel carriers (BTR-40, BTR-152), amphibious armored personnel carriers (BTR-50P, BTR-60P), and an amphibious armored reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM).

CHARACTERISTICS AND PERFORMANCE

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|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Vehicle: | | |
| Weight | 15.4 short tons | 14 mt |
| Length over-all (w/gun) | 25.0 ft | 7.6 m |
| Width | 10.29 ft | 3.14 m |
| Height | 7.4 ft | 2.2 m |
| Engine | 237-hp @ 1,800 rpm, in-line 6 Diesel | |
| Crew | 3 | |
| Speed (land) | 27.3 mph | 44 km/h |
| Speed (water) | 6.3 mph | 10.1 km/h |
| Cruising range | 149 miles (on main fuel tanks) | 239.7 km |
| Maximum gradeability | 38° | |
| Trench crossing ability | 9.2 ft | 2.8 m |
| Vertical obstacle ability | 3.6 ft | 1.09 m |
| Fording depth | Amphibious | |
| Infrared | Yes (on some models) | |
| Maximum armor (hull) | 0.56 in (14 mm) @ 45° | |
| Maximum armor (turret) | 0.63 in (16 mm) @ 33° | |
| Armament: | | |
| Main | 76-mm Tank Gun D-56T or (after 1957) D-56TM | |
| Muzzle velocity (AP-T)(BR-350B) | 2,172 fps | 663 m/s |
| (HVAP-T)(BR-354P) | 3,167 fps | 965 m/s |
| (HEAT)(BP-354) | 1,065 fps | 325 m/s |
| Armor penetration | 550 yd (500 m) | 1,100 yd (1,000 m) |
| 0° obliquity (AP-T)(BR-350B) | 2.7 in (69 mm) | 2.40 in (61 mm) |
| (HVAP-T)(BR-354P) | 3.6 in (92 mm) | 2.3 in (58 mm) |
| (HEAT)(BP-354) | 4.7 in (120 mm) | 4.7 in (120 mm) |
| Secondary armament | One 7.62-mm SGMT machinegun (coaxial) | |

1/ For PT-76 constructed after 1957.

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By cb, NARA Date 2-23-1998