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Thursday, February 8, 1968
10:30 a. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

You asked yesterday when did you decide to accept Bunker's and Westy's recommendation that the Tet truce be cancelled in I Corps and that there be no bombing halt south of Vinh.

The message was received here at 9:05 a. m., Wednesday, January 24. It was considered by State and Defense during the day. I informed you that Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, as well as the JCS, supported the recommendation sometime early in the evening of January 24. Washington's concurrence in the recommendation was dispatched at 8:09 p. m., January 24, after I informed State of your concurrence.

Incidentally, I recall that when I made the proposal to you, your response was not only instantaneous, but you said something like: "I'm ready to cancel the whole thing."

The relevant cables are attached, including Bunker's and Westy's approach to Thieu, and the announced cancellation which was held purposely until January 29 so that the enemy would not be alerted to our change in posture.

W. W. Rostow

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920

PAGE 01 SAIGON 16851 (241301Z

41
ACTION SS 25

INFO SSO 00, NSCSE 00, CCO 00, MM 01, 1026 W

0 R 241230Z JAN 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5005
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO CINCPAC
CJCS

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EXDIS

JOINT EMBASSY/MACV MESSAGE

SUBJ: TET CEASIRE

THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE AND THE ADJOINING DMZ AND LAOS AREAS RAISES THE QUESTION IN GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S AND MY MINDS OF THE FEASIBILITY OF OBSERVING A TET CEASIRE IN THAT GENERAL AREA. IN OUR VIEW THE OVERT AND MASSIVE INVASION OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN STRENGTH BY FRESH, WELL-ARMED AND WELL-EQUIPPED NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS MAKES IT CLEARLY UNDESIRABLE FOR

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US TO BE A PARTY TO A TRUCE IN QUANG TRI, THE DMZ, AND IN AT LEAST PART OF NVN AT THIS TIME. THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF THEIR AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS IS THE OVERRUNNING TODAY OF THE FAR POST AT BAN HOUET SANE ON HIGHWAY 9 IN LAOS WEST OF KHE SANH.

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Authority State ltr 7/3/79
By Clip, NARA, Date 5/1/96

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2. BY HIS ACCELERATED AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST LAOS AND NORTHWEST RVN THE ENEMY HAS NULLIFIED COMPLETELY ANY PEACEFUL POTENTIAL THAT MAY HAVE ATTENDED A TRUCE IN THAT AREA AT TET, ONCE AGAIN CLARIFYING HANOI'S REPEATEDLY STATED AND DEMONSTRATED OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO SOUTH VIETNAM. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH PAST HOLIDAY CEASE-FIRES GIVES US LITTLE REASON TO PRESUME THAT NVN FORCES INTEND TO OBSERVE THE CEASE-FIRE THEMSELVES ON THIS OCCASION WHERE IT IS NOT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. THE PRESENT COMMUNIST POSTURE ALONG THE DMZ AND IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE REMOVES ANY DOUBT AS TO THIS. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO IMPROVE HIS RELATIVE MILITARY POSITION IN THIS AREA DURING THE CEASE-FIRE AT THE COST OF US AND VN LIVES.

3. OUR CONCERN ALSO RELATES TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING OF NVN SINCE THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO MOVE MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF MEN AND MUNITIONS SOUTH TO SUPPORT HIS OPEN INVASION OF SOUTH VIETNAM. IT IS NOT CONSIDERED POLITICALLY FEASIBLE TO

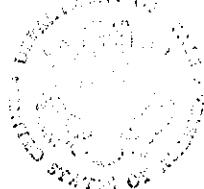
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MAINTAIN BOMBING THROUGHOUT NVN DURING THE TET TRUCE. WE CONSIDER THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONINUE THE BOMBING IN THE AREAS THROUGH WHICH THE MAIN MOVEMENT IS FUNNELING. THIS WOULD BE SOUTH OF THE GENERAL AREA OF VINH, ABOUT HALF-WAY BETWEEN THE 18TH AND 19TH PARRELS, AND WOULD INCLUDE THE TALLY HO AND ROUTE PACKAGE ONE AREAS. TO DO LESS WOULD, IN WESTMORELAND'S VIEW, COMMIT OUR FORCES IN QUANG TRI TO GREATLY INCREASED CASUALTIES AND DECIDEDLY DISADVANTAGEOUS TACTICAL POSITIONING.

4. WE BOTH STRONGLY URGE EARLY ACCEPTACE OF THIS POSITION. WE WOULD THEN PLAN TO DISCUSS IT WITH PRESIDENT THIEU INFORM OUR SEVEN NATIONS ALLIES HEREIN AND ANNOUNCE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN TERMS WHICH WOULD GAIN THE MAXIMUM PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE FOR THE FREE WORLD FORCES.

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ACTION SS 30

INFO SSO 00, NSCCE, 00, CCO 00, MM 01, 1/68 1'W

O 260920Z JAN 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5140

~~TOP SECRET~~ SAIGON 17006

EXDIS

REF: SAIGON 16917

SUBJ: TET CEASE FIRE

FOLLOWING IS OUR DRAFT OF GVN ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH WE WOULD PROPOSE TO DISCUSS WITH THIEU AFTER RECEIVING DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS.

BEGIN TEXT: IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST FEW DAYS THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING EVIDENCE AND VISIBLE MILITARY ACTIONS WHICH ESTABLISH CONCLUSIVELY THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES ARE ENGAGED IN A MAJOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE NORTHERN AREAS OF SOUTH VIETNAM. THERE HAS BEEN AN EXTENSIVE BUILD-UP OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES AROUND KHE SANH, INCLUDING LARGE NUMBERS OF TROOPS IN NEIGHBORING AREAS OF LAOS. IN ADDITION, THERE IS VISIBLE SUPPLY ACTIVITY ON A LARGE SCALE IN THE SOUTH.

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ERN AREAS OF NORTH VIETNAM OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THIS OFFENSIVE.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE DRAMATIC FURTHER EVIDENCE OF

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Authority State memo 9/11/96
By JLg, NARA, Date 4/29/96

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OPEN NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM. COMBINED WITH THE WHOLESALE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG VIOLATIONS OF THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS TRUCES, THESE THREATENING PREPARATIONS AND ACTIONS UNDERLINE HOW LITTLE RESPECT THE AGGRESSORS HAVE FOR THE PEACEFUL PURPOSES BEHIND OUR PROPOSALS FOR TRUCES DURING THESE TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS.

IN THIS SITUATION THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAS DECIDED, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THAT THE EARLIER ANNOUNCED PROVISIONS OF THE TET TRUCE CAN NOT BE APPLIED IN CERTAIN AREAS WITHOUT SERIOUS RISK TO THE LIVES OF THE DEFENDING SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND AMERICAN FORCES. IN ORDER TO PROTECT THESE DEFENDING FORCES, THEREFORE, THE TET TRUCE WILL NOT BE APPLIED BY VIETNAMESE AND ALLIED FORCES IN THE I CORPS AREA OF SOUTH VIETNAM. MOREOVER, IN THE FACE OF THE MASSIVE LOGISTICAL BUILDUP IN SUPPORT OF THIS OFFENSIVE, IT HAS ALSO BEEN DECIDED THAT THE PREVIOUSLY PLANNED CESSATION

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OF THE BOMBING OF SUPPLY ROUTES IN NORTH VIETNAM WILL NOT BE APPLIED IN THE AREA SOUTH OF VINH THROUGH WHICH THESE SUPPLIES ARE FLOWING. IT IS A SOURCE OF GENUINE REGRET TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM THAT THE ENEMY'S ACTIONS HAVE NECESSITATED THESE DEFENSIVE MEASURES AND HAVE MADE IMPOSSIBLE THE PEACEFUL OBSERVANCE OF THE TRADITIONAL TET HOLIDAYS IN THESE AREAS.

THE FOREGOING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE OTHER MANILA CONFERENCE POWERS. END TEXT.

BUNKER

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