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

CM-3031-68
20 Feb 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL WESTMORELAND

1. You have already received General Westmoreland's 16th report on the situation in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area. In addition, I am attaching hereto the Presidential operational/intelligence brief (you may have already seen this but I wish to make sure that it comes to your personal attention). Moreover, I am attaching a sheet setting forth two or three late items of interest.

2. I talked to General Westmoreland at 0810 hours this morning. He made the following comments:

a. After talking to General Vien and analyzing information from intelligence reports, he has called a full alert tonight in the Saigon area, and he is particularly arranging to defend the Tan Son Nhut airbase. There is a reported increased threat north of Saigon with fresh elements of the 7th NVA and 9th VC Divisions moving into the area. It is also reported that villagers are fleeing to get out of the way of their advance. Among other precautionary measures, General Westmoreland has organized a provisional defense battalion from the MACV Staff.

b. A few rocket rounds were fired in the direction of Tan Son Nhut today; one fell on the runway; one landed in an open field, and one apparently went into the city. He now has complete aerial photographic reconnaissance of the rocket site area and the photo interpreters have picked up several suspected rocket sites for attack by air.

c. A new rocket round was found north of Saigon today; it is a 170 mm round in diameter and has a range of about 9,000 meters.

d. In general, the enemy is hanging in close to Saigon and gives no indication of withdrawal.

e. The Song Be situation has cleared up; the enemy has been driven out of the town.

f. The city of Phan Thiet has been cleared of the enemy after a hard fight.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

Authority DCI 10-3-78

By copy, NARA, Date 8-20-92

g. The enemy has been cleared out of Vinh Long, but there seems to be a buildup commencing south of Can Tho by a new enemy battalion of picked-up troops.

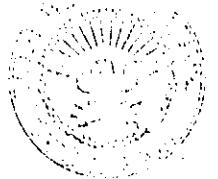
3. He conferred with General Vien today. The latter is concerned about the fatigue factor on the ARVN. They have been fighting continuously now for over two weeks. He has been trying to push the ARVN out into the country, but this is difficult to do when the enemy continues to stay in close to the populated areas.

4. Enemy KIA now stands at over 38,000. General Westmoreland recognizes that some of them are undoubtedly porters and other support elements. He has charged his J-2 with trying to get a break out of the enemy casualties so that he will be able to estimate the effect of enemy losses on his combat elements.

5. As a general observation, after visiting all of the Corps Areas and senior commanders, if General Westmoreland had to make an estimate now as to further troop reinforcements he will need, he will probably require the remainder of the 82d Airborne Division. He is not asking for it at this time because he believes that he will have a better feel for the problems facing him when I visit him within the next couple of days.



EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff



CONFIDENTIAL
THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

20 February 1968
0830 EST

22 b

THE JOINT STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Update Information on Ground Operations in South Vietnam

2D CORPS

In Phan Thiet as of 192210 EST, the province hospital was recaptured and the city was reported quiet except for sporadic firing in northwest and northeast outskirts. Cumulative results of the Phan Thiet action (17 February through 19 February) are: Friendly - 35 killed (10 US, 24 ARVN, 1 CIDG), 223 wounded (34 US, 157 ARVN, 25 CIDG, 7 MSF), one CH-47 helo damaged, 40,000 gallons POL destroyed; Enemy - 266 killed, 18 persons detained, 54 individual and 15 crew-served weapons seized.

3D CORPS

An update on the elements of 2 US battalions and 1 ARVN battalion contact Northwest of Song Be indicates the following casualties: Friendly - 14 killed (8 US, 6 ARVN), 56 wounded (26 US, 30 ARVN); Enemy - 253 killed, 24 persons detained, 3 individual and 24 crew-served weapons seized.

At 192355 EST, an ARVN Ranger Battalion engaged an unknown size enemy force. A helicopter light fire team supported and the enemy broke contact after 45 minutes. An additional Ranger Battalion moved in from the south and both battalions are maneuvering in an attempt to trap the enemy force. No results are available in this contact 2 nautical miles west of Saigon.

Marshall B. GARTH

MARSHALL B. GARTH
Brigadier General, USA
Deputy Director for
Operations (NMCC)

Distribution:
(see page 2)

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By LG, NARA Date 1-20-92