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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20315

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14 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Telephone conversation with General Eisenhower,
14 February 1968

General Eisenhower phoned me this morning to raise several questions, discussed below. My responses, indicated below, were given in part during the initial phone call, and in part during a second call after I had discussed the matter by phone with General Wheeler.

General Eisenhower recalled that he had several times said he thought it was necessary for General Westmoreland to have a "corps of maneuver" of about one corps in size. He could use this force if ever he got the enemy into a position where he could really do a job on them. Now he has noticed that we are finding it necessary to send an additional 10,500 troops suddenly to Vietnam. This suggests to him that we may not have enough troops there to fight the kind of campaign we want to fight, and are so much scattered and committed that we can not hit the enemy when he concentrates, for example, around Khe Sanh. His questions were: Has Westmoreland really been given the forces he is asking for; if he has asked for 525,000 men why didn't we send them sooner, and are we going to have enough in the area to provide a "corps of maneuver"? He said that moving a relatively small force of this size sounds as though we have been on a shoestring, suggests weakness on our part to the enemy, and gives the critics of what we are doing in Vietnam a target.

I told him that General Westmoreland has had in mind freeing one division as a maneuver force in the northern half of the country and one in the southern half of the country, and had in fact done so. I added that General Westmoreland has in fact an excess of one division (actually, nearly two) poised to counter the enemy in the Khe Sanh area at an appropriate moment.

With regard to the question of forces, General Westmoreland

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Authority 71C982-289

By hch/af, NARA, Date 2-21-92

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agreed to the 525,000. He was still four battalions short of this figure, and these were scheduled in late March or early April, since they are being formed and would not be ready until that time. To avoid the delay, he has now asked for the brigade from the 82nd Division and a Marine Regional Landing Team. (He has also indicated that he is not binding himself, that he will not ask for the remainder of the 82nd Division and an additional RLT at a later time, if needed).

One of his problems in the 1st Corps is logistics. He is very limited in road net and is working to improve the road and the railroad from the main supply base at Danang. At the moment he is waiting for the enemy to commit himself in the Khe Sanh area. Elsewhere in the country U. S. forces are on the offensive in several areas.

As to further forces available in the U. S., I told General Eisenhower that we have essentially exhausted our reserves. I told him this matter is under urgent study at the present time. He said he would certainly support calling up reserves, if necessary. He thought that we should have a combat-ready corps ready for deployment at all times.

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A. J. GOODPASTER
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army