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INFORMATION

~~Secret~~

Wednesday, February 14, 1968
10:05 a.m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith Khe Sanh daily.

W. W. Rostow

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WWRostow:rln

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

Bry, NARA, Date 2-18-92



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

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CM-3010-68
14 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Telephone Conversation with General Westmoreland

1. I talked to General Westmoreland for some forty minutes beginning at 0800 hours this morning. In addition to his tenth report on the Khe Sanh area which you have already received, and the attachment to this memorandum setting forth combat operations throughout the country, General Westmoreland reported several interesting developments:

a. He spent yesterday (last night Washington time) visiting the I Corps Tactical Zone. He met with General Lam, Commander I Corps; General Cushman, and other senior US and ARVN commanders. He also visited the ARVN 51st Infantry Regiment and the American 7th Marine Regiment. He says that the ARVN troops have their tails up; they are proud of themselves because of the way they defeated the enemy.

b. General Lam had been marked for assassination at the outset of the attack on Danang when he was scheduled to visit a pagoda to pay his respects to his ancestors. Lam got wind of this, went to another pagoda to worship and arranged for a force to seize the assassination group.

c. Lam states that the young VC captured (mostly NVA) have been propagandized that the South Vietnamese wouldn't fight and that there would be an uprising; also that there would be peace in six months under a coalition government. As a matter of fact, there was no uprising and in certain instances some South Vietnamese civilians actually captured NVA soldiers and turned them over to the authorities.

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Authority JCS/la 10-3-78

By sp1rg, NARA, Date 2-20-92

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d. The attack on Danang, according to General Lam, was poorly planned, hastily put together, and not too well executed. Regional Force and Popular Force units acquitted themselves well.

e. The food situation in Danang is satisfactory. The local citizens have voluntarily donated 600,000 piasters to provide assistance to the homeless.

2. In Hue, the remaining enemy is bottled up in three or four strong points; they are short of food. The weather is better today and flyable, and General Westmoreland has ordered General Cushman to use Napalm on these strong points in order to reduce them. The people in Hue have been generally cooperative with US and ARVN troops; they have voluntarily provided food and water to friendly forces. The radio station is operating and electricity is available throughout the town. There was no uprising in Hue.

3. As to ARVN combat effectiveness, General Westmoreland reports that in the First ARVN Division, which is an excellent fighting outfit, the 1st Regiment has an average strength present of 420 per battalion; the 2d Regiment an average of 320 per battalion; the 3d Regiment (which was heavily engaged) has only about 200 effective per battalion. The Ranger Battalions in I Corps are in good shape as are the 2d ARVN Division and the 51st ARVN Regiment. The Vietnamese Joint General Staff is taking extra-ordinary actions to provide replacements for under-strength units.

4. The elements of the Americal Division, which attacked the 2d NVA Division south of Danang, is still finding additional dead enemy in the very extensive area over which they fought. Westmoreland still does not have an accurate estimate of the very heavy losses sustained in that area by the enemy. Parenthetically, he remarked that he saw 500 POWs being held in a compound at General Lam's I Corps Headquarters. Lam states that the people are indignant at the violation of Tet by the VC and the brutality they have displayed towards civilians and their homes.

5. General Abrams has been at Headquarters MACV Forward, located in the Hue/Phu Bai area, for a couple of days. The headquarters has been operational for several days, has a strong staff, and is prepared to control all military operations north of the Ai Van Pass.

6. On his return to Saigon late yesterday, after consulting with Ambassador Bunker, he informed President Thieu, in the presence of General Vien, of the additional US reinforcements being sent. Both were very happy to learn of this fact. President Thieu has agreed to replace General Vinh Loc, Commander II CTZ, this week. Westmoreland has urged, and Thieu has agreed, that General Thang should assume command of IV CTZ at an early date.

7. Yesterday, near Quang Ngai, a refugee center was overrun and burned. Casualties and destruction are unknown at this time. Moreover, there was a contact in this area with the NVA 33rd Regiment resulting in 30 enemy KIA. General Westmoreland has instructed General Rosson, Commander II FFV, to seek out and destroy this already battered enemy unit.

8. North of Saigon, an ARVN unit searching for the enemy made a rather heavy contact in which they killed 70 enemy while losing four of their own men.

9. The Riverine Force, which, as I reported to you yesterday, had moved into the Can Tho area in the Delta, had a light contact with the enemy yesterday. However, they located and captured a cache of large quantities of ammunition to include rocket and mortar rounds.

10. The weather opened up briefly in the Mu Gia Pass area and a North Vietnamese POL convoy was seen in the open. General Momoyer put 36 tactical air sorties on it. Results not yet known.

11. The Army Engineer Battalion is working to open Highway 1 through the Ai Van Pass. General Westmoreland believes he can restore the railroad part way to the north and establish a rail head from which he can shuttle supplies by truck.

12. He is moving an Armored Cavalry Battalion from the II Corps area into the northern I CTZ in order to provide additional highway security as well as an anti-tank capability in the Con Thien/Gio Linh area where he anticipates the enemy may employ PT-76 light Soviet tanks.

13. General Westmoreland discussed with Ambassador Bunker yesterday the establishment of a Tet Assistance Relief Fund (TARF) to be funded by donations from American troops in South Vietnam, to provide relief to those unfortunate South Vietnamese who were made homeless and destitute by the recent enemy attacks. General Westmoreland considers that this fund will not only create good will between the people and the US Military Forces, but will help to establish a good image of the American soldier - that is, that he is not a cold blooded killer but is compassionate to the unfortunate. Ambassador Bunker may well query State on this matter in order to receive guidance of a policy nature.



EARLE G. WHEELER

Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

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