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Saturday, Feb. 17, 1968  
9:15 a.m.

~~SECRET~~

MR. PRESIDENT:

Today's DMZ report shows (marked passages):

- light mortaring;
- 191 tons of resupply;
- Khe Sanh attack expected "within a week";
- enemy 324B division heading for Quang Tri.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~-attachment (MAC 02269)

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD loc 1018-78

By wpjg, NARA, Date 2-20-92

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61a

Saturday, February 17, 1968

TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND (MAC 02269)

This is report number thirteen on the Khe Sanh/DMZ area and covers the 24-hour period of February 16, 1968.

During the reporting period the relative lull continued in northern Quang Tri province with interruptions caused by enemy shelling. While ground contacts were minimal, the Khe Sanh combat base and neighboring areas bordering the DMZ received a total of 222 rounds of mixed mortar, artillery and rocket rounds.

Characteristic of enemy shelling, Marine elements at Khe Sanh combat base bore the heaviest concentration as 85 mortar rounds and seven rounds of rocket impacted in the area. Casualties attributed to the shelling were one killed, 10 wounded (8 evacuated).

A mid-afternoon barrage brought 40 rocket rounds, 31 rounds of mortar and three artillery rounds to friendly elements at Camp Carroll, resulting in five wounded (two evacuated). The 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines at the rockpile counted two additional rounds of artillery in late evening. At Con Thien, the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines was the recipient of 18 rounds of mixed caliber mortars. Eight additional rounds of mortar were received by friendly elements at C-3 causing major injuries to three Marines.

Harassment moved northeasterly as a mid-day artillery barrage brought 14 rounds to friendly elements positioned at Gio Linh. Fourteen additional mortar rounds were received near the Cua Viet, at positions occupied by the 1st AMTRAC Battalion. Casualties attributed to the day's incoming were light and damage was reported minimal.

Significant contacts in northern Quang Tri centered in the DMZ with sightings of three reported enemy tanks 12 kilometers north of Con Thien. Reaction was instantaneous as friendly tanks and artillery fired several missions earmarked for their locations. Results are unknown at this time.

No COFRAM type ordnance was used during the period. There were no changes in the dispositions of friendly forces and Allied armament.

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Authority OSD 6a 1-3-71

By SP1/MG, NAM

In the Khe Sanh area, the enemy still threatens with two divisions, and most evidence points to an attempted assault within a week. Friendly firepower, however, is undoubtedly hurting the enemy there and may further disrupt his timing. New instructions to the 324B Division apparently committed it to a new assault on Quang Tri and they are moving in that direction. The 320th seems to have backed off from Camp Carroll to fill the void created by the departure of the 324B. Threat of major ground assault against Camp Carroll is apparently reduced.

Tactical Air Support for the Khe Sanh totalled 388 sorties. Marine aircraft flew 80 sorties in support of the Khe Sanh area. Bomb damage included one secondary explosion and one secondary fire. The Air Force flew 232 sorties and the Navy flew 76 (27 Navy sorties were diverted because of weather). Bomb Damage Assessment included 35 secondary explosions, eight secondary fires, and 10 mortar positions damaged. The secondary explosions and fires resulted from strikes put in against a supply area. The Forward Air Control reported yesterday that the enemy had made attempts to remove munitions and weapons from the area, however, there were still areas where supplies of weapons, munitions and rice remain. ARC LIGHT strikes for the period in the Niagara area totalled 16 strikes (44 sorties).

Khe Sanh was resupplied with 191 short tons on February 16. A total of 21 sorties were delivered, including seven air drops by C-130 aircraft. Seven Air Force C-123 aircraft landed at the airfield as did Marine helicopters.

During the next 24-hour period, the Marine Air Wing will fly 44 tactical air sorties in support of the Khe Sanh area, with 16 additional aircraft on call to run sorties as the situation indicates. The Air Force plans to run 150 sorties, and the Navy schedules 100 sorties. Total tactical air effort will be 294 sorties. The ARC LIGHT effort will total 16 strikes (48 sorties) in the Niagara area.

The weather for the period resulted in fog and stratus on both days reduced the ceiling and visibility to zero during the morning hours. The visibility improved to seven miles by noon of the 16th but was again lowered by fog after 11:00 p.m. Ceilings improved to 500-1000 feet during the afternoon and early evening hours. During the next 24-hour period, in the mornings of both days the visibility will be restricted to less than one mile by fog, but will increase to five miles or more from 12:00 Noon to 9:00 p.m. Ceilings will be 1000 feet or less except from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.