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INFORMATION

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Saturday, March 9, 1968 -- 9:35 a.m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

At Khe Sanh:

- third consecutive day of good weather;
- 1813 friendly rounds;
- 370 sorties plus 45 B-52's;
- 201 tons delivered.

Later today I will file with you a report on enemy dispositions at Khe Sanh and the DMZ area indicating the enemy threat at Khe Sanh may consist of 6-8000 men, rather than the 20,000 we have been carrying in our heads.

W. W. Bestow

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E.O. 12816, Sec. 3.4(n)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 3/27/92

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E.O. 12816, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1988
By rg, NARA Date 3-27-90

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Saturday, March 9, 1968

TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND

This is report number thirty-four on the situation in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area for the 24-hour period of March 8, 1968.

For the third consecutive day, good weather conditions existed at Khe Sanh. Daytime visibility up to seven miles provided excellent flying conditions. Fire support elements expended 1813 rounds in 83 missions, 60 percent of which were observed. Aircraft landed at Khe Sanh, with no unusual interference. A total of 12 enemy anti-air incidents were recorded during the period. Two aircraft were hit with only minor damage. Weather conditions today continue favorable.

Enemy ground activity centered east of the Khe Sanh air strip. At 9:30 a. m. three patrols from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion engaged an unknown size enemy force at that location and confirmed 27 enemy killed, with no friendly casualties reported. At 7:30 a.m., Marine artillery in the base camp received recoilless rifle fire at their location. They expended 10 rounds of high explosives in direct fire and observed two North Vietnamese Army killed. At 5:30 p.m., four North Vietnamese Army were observed 800 meters east of Khe Sanh. A 60mm mortar mission was fired resulting in one North Vietnamese killed. At 5:35 p.m., an air observed air strike five kilometers northwest of Hill 881 killed two North Vietnamese Army and destroyed a machine gun position. At 7:15 p.m., a wire detail from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion was taken under fire while repairing their defensive wire. One ARVN Ranger was killed.

At 6:45 p.m., air strikes were called in 200-600 meters east of Khe Sanh, resulting in the destruction of numerous trench lines and bunkers, and the killing of three enemy. Enemy incoming during the reporting period totalled 297 rounds of mixed mortar, artillery and rockets. As a result of the shelling, 27 Marines were wounded, with 10 evacuated. Other than incoming rounds, there was no enemy activity reported at outlying positions of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Elsewhere along the DMZ, major enemy activity was limited to incoming rockets, artillery and mortar rounds. At Camp Carroll and neighboring areas, 11 rounds fell between 4:00 and 5:20 p.m. No damage or casualties were reported.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

AF Guide, SEA Records, 4/1/88

By 1/2 NARA, Date 3/27/92

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988

By 1/2 NARA, Date 3/27/92

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Thirty-four artillery rounds fell at Con Thien, with injuries to one Marine. At 11:30 p.m., 10 rounds of artillery struck the Dong Ha Combat Base. No casualties or damage was reported.

Enemy ground activity in northern Quang Tri province yesterday was comparatively light, with only small unit contacts reported. At 11:12 a.m., one Marine was killed and one injured when they detonated an enemy explosive device located 10 kilometers southwest of Camp Carroll. A patrol from the 9th Marines came under small arms fire at 1:30 p.m., six kilometers northwest of Camp Carroll. Four Marines were wounded. The enemy withdrew. An 81mm mortar mission was fired in support with undetermined results. At 5:55 p.m., a reconnaissance team made contact with 15 North Vietnamese Army six kilometers south of the rock pile. In an exchange of small arms fire, one Marine was killed. The enemy withdrew leaving five North Vietnamese Army bodies behind.

In Operation NAPOLEON/SALINE, an AMTRAC hit a 150 pound mine totally destroying the vehicle. One Marine was killed and two injured. ARVN elements located 28 140mm rockets four kilometers east of C-1. All were destroyed. At 11:40 a.m., a forward observer with the 4th Marines spotted 13 North Vietnamese in the open north of Cua Viet River. An artillery mission was fired resulting in four North Vietnamese killed.

There was one COFRAM mission of eight rounds fired, with undetermined results.

Marine aircraft flew 121 sorties in support of Khe Sanh, the Air Force flew 140, the Navy 109, for a total of 370 sorties. Bomb damage included 124 secondary explosions, 81 secondary fires, 28 bunkers destroyed, 100 meters of trench destroyed, 12 road cuts, and 11 enemy killed. Five ARC LIGHT strikes (30 sorties) were scheduled for the Khe Sanh area, but nine aircraft went to secondary targets owing to targeting equipment malfunctions. Two of the strikes were against close-in targets, 1200 meters from friendly forces. One mission reported 14 secondary explosions. For the past week (March 2-8) a total of 45 ARC LIGHT strikes, consisting of 264 sorties, were flown against troop concentrations, artillery positions, and supply/storage areas in the Niagara area. SAC aircrews reported a total of 118 secondary explosions.

Air resupply for the Khe Sanh totalled 201 short tons. Class I amounted to 35.5 short tons, Class II 18 tons, Class III 1.5 short tons, Class IV 3.5 short tons, Class V 142.5 short tons. Forty-six passengers were landed. Resupply sorties totalled 38. Ten C-130's and two C-123's completed air drops. Four CH-53's and 22 CH-46's delivered passengers and cargo.

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Three hundred-seven tactical air sorties are planned for the next period in support of Khe Sanh. The Marines schedule 88, the Air Force 119, and the Navy 100. The Air Force will have 120 additional sorties on call, the Marines will have 16 aircraft on call. Five ARC LIGHT strikes (21 sorties) are scheduled for the area.

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