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FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAPB0564

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Authority OSD Dec 13/79

By DP/rg, NARA, Date 3-29-82

88 FEB 25 14 24
SUNDAY

Free file

MR. ROSTOW WILL BE IN LATER THIS MORNING AND WILL HAVE
A COMMENT ON THIS REPORT FOR YOU.

TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND.

THIS IS REPORT NUMBER TWENTY-ONE ON THE SITUATION
IN THE KHE SANH/DNZ AREA AND COVERS THE 24-HOUR PERIOD
FEBRUARY 24, 1968.

ENEMY ACTION SLACKENED CONSIDERABLY IN NORTHERN
GUANG TRI PROVINCE YESTERDAY AS COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS
DAY'S ACTIVITIES. ENEMY SHELLING DECREASED GREATLY. THE
KHE SANH COMBAT BASE WAS AGAIN THE PRIMARY TARGET OF THE
ENEMY SHELLING AS THE FRIENDLY FORCES RECEIVED OVER HALF
OF THE 532 ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY, ROCKET, AND MORTAR ROUNDS
DIRECTED AGAINST OUR AREAS YESTERDAY. FRIENDLY CASUALTIES
AT KHE SANH AS THE RESULT OF THE ENEMY SHELLING AMOUNTED
TO SEVEN KILLED AND 20 WOUNDED, WITH 11 WOUNDED EVACUATED.

ENEMY EFFORTS RELAXED IN THE LANCASTER AREA AS ONLY ONE
MORTAR ROUND IMPACTED AT CAMP CARROLL. FOUR ROUNDS OF
MORTAR FELL AT DONG HA WITH FOUR ADDITIONAL ROUNDS
FALLING AT C-2. FIVE MARINES REQUIRED EVACUATION AT C-2.
ENEMY SHELLING INTENSIFIED AT CON THIEN, HOWEVER, AS
THAT BASE RECEIVED 237 EARLY AFTERNOON ROUNDS OF MORTAR
AND ARTILLERY, RESULTING IN TWO MARINES KILLED, AND FIVE
WOUNDED AND EVACUATED. AT CUA VIET, THE 1ST AMTRAC
BATTALION RECEIVED 18 ROUNDS OF 100MM ARTILLERY IN THE
AFTERNOON, WITH THREE MARINES REQUIRING EVACUATION.
OTHER THAN SHELLING, ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA CONSISTED OF
THREE SPORADIC CONTACTS INVOLVING THE 3D BATTALION,

3D MARINES AND THE 1ST BATTALION, 4TH MARINES IN OPERATION KENTUCKY. THEY ENGAGED AND KILLED 11 NVA WHILE SUSTAINING NO FRIENDLY CASUALTIES. IN AN OBSERVED FIRE MISSION YESTERDAY, FIVE NVA WERE KILLED IN THE OPEN ABOUT SEVEN KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF CAMP CARROLL. AT CUA VIET A NAVY CONVOY WITH THREE UTILITY LANDING CRAFTS, ONE MECHANIZED LANDING CRAFT, AND PATROL CRAFT, RECEIVED ANTI-TANK ROCKET, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE AND MORTAR FIRE, RESULTING IN TWO USN WOUNDED AND EVACUATED.

THERE WERE FIVE ROUNDS OF COFRAN TYPE ORDNANCE FIRED DURING THIS PERIOD, MIXED WITH HIGH EXPLOSIVES, ON TROOPS IN THE OPEN, WITH UNDETERMINED RESULTS DUE TO OBSERVER-TO-TARGET RANGE.

A TOTAL 294 TACTICAL AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN DURING THE PERIOD IN SUPPORT OF KHE SANH. MARINE AIRCRAFT FLEW 92 SORTIES, WITH BOMB DAMAGE INCLUDING THREE SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS, FOUR SECONDARY FIRES, AND TWO BUNKERS DESTROYED. THE AIR FORCE FLEW 162 SORTIES, THE NAVY FLEW 40, WITH 136 SORTIES ON COMBAT SKY-SPOT. VISUAL BOMB DAMAGE INCLUDED TWO SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS, SEVEN SECONDARY FIRES, FIVE MILITARY STRUCTURES DESTROYED, AND 30 MILITARY STRUCTURES DAMAGED. SEVEN B-52 STRIKES (36 SORTIES) WERE FLOWN IN THE NIAGARA AREA.

AERIAL RESUPPLY TO KHE SANH FOR THE PERIOD AMOUNTED TO 152 SHORT TONS. SIXTY-NINE PASSENGERS WERE LANDED AT THE AIRFIELD. RESUPPLY SORTIES TOTALLED 24 ON 24 FEBRUARY. NINE C-130 AIRCRAFT COMPLETED NINE AIR-DROPS. FIVE C-123 AIRCRAFT LANDED AT THE AIRFIELD AS DID TEN MARINE HELICOPTERS.

FOR THE NEXT 24 HOURS 288 TACTICAL AIR SORTIES WILL BE FLOWN IN SUPPORT OF KHE SANH. THERE WILL BE SEVEN ARC LIGHT STRIKES (39 SORTIES) FLOWN IN THE NIAGARA AREA.

WEATHER AT KHE SANH DURING THE PERIOD REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME. CLOUDS REDUCED THE CEILING TO LESS THAN 600 FEET AND DENSE FOG LOWERED THE SURFACE VISIBILITY TO LESS THAN THREE MILES. FROM 11:00AM - 5:00PM THERE WAS SOME IMPROVEMENT AS THE CEILING LIFTED TO 1700 FEET AND THE VISIBILITY TO SEVEN MILES. THE FORECAST FOR 25 - 26 FEBRUARY DOES NOT INDICATE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE.

I AM VERY PLEASED TO REPORT THAT HUE CITADEL WAS CLEARED OF ENEMY AND SECURED AT 7:30AM. I HAVE JUST SENT MY CONGRATULATIONS TO GEN TRUONG.

~~SECRET~~

DTG 25/1335Z FEB 67

1968 FEB 24 17 24
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FROM VALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP 80543

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority Dec 10 1978 NSC 8-1900

By SP112, NARA, Date 3-3-92

Profile

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SENT
SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 24, 1968

HEREWITH GEN. JOHNSON'S REPORT OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION
WITH WESTY AND ABRAMS.

IN THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A TONE OF SOMEWHAT INCREASED CONFIDENCE IS EMERGING FROM OUR MILITARY IN SAIGON -- AS IF THE SCALE AND LIMITS OF THE TASK AHEAD HAD BECOME MORE MEASURABLE AND MANAGEABLE. BUT MUCH OBSCURITY STILL BECLOUDS THE COUNTRY-SIDE WHERE MOST OF THE PEOPLE ARE.

1. GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S DAILY CABLE REPORTS ON ACTIVITY AT KHE SANH AND IN THE DMZ AREA. FOLLOWING HEAVY ARTILLERY, MORTAR AND ROCKET FIRE AT KHE SANH ON THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF 23 FEBRUARY, REPORTS FOR 24 FEBRUARY INDICATE ONLY LIGHT AND SPORADIC FIRE AT KHE SANH.

2. VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE CAPTURED THE PALACE INSIDE THE CITADEL AND THE VC FLAG THAT WAS FLYING OVER THE PALACE IS NOW IN THE FIRST ARVN DIVISION COMMAND POST. FRIENDLY FORCES HOLD ALL OF HUE EXCEPT A QUARTER CIRCLE 500 METERS IN RADIUS AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE CITADEL WALL. GENERAL WESTMORELAND COMMENTED THAT IT APPEARED THAT ENEMY RESISTANCE WAS CRUMBLING. PRESIDENT THIEU PLANS TO VISIT HUE ON 25 FEBRUARY, ALTHOUGH GENERAL WESTMORELAND INDICATED THAT THE WEATHER FORECAST IS SUCH THAT PRESIDENT THIEU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO LAND. GENERAL ABRAMS REPORTS A NUMBER OF GALLANT ACTIONS BY THE FIRST ARVN DIVISION STARTING WITH ATTACK ON CITADEL WEST WALL AT 0200 HOURS ON 24 FEBRUARY AND CULMINATING IN SEIZURE OF THE PALACE AFTER DAYLIGHT. THE RESPONSIBLE COMPANY COMMANDER WAS PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN ON THE SPOT BY THE VIETNAMESE DIVISION COMMANDER. THE REMAINING ENEMY-HELD AREA IS TIGHTLY ENCIRCLED. ENEMY WITHDRAWAL IS EXPECTED.

3. THERE WAS LITTLE ACTIVITY IN THE II CORPS AREA.

4. IN III CORPS AREA THE MAJOR ACTIVITY WAS THE ROCKET ATTACK ON TAN SON NHUT AND THE AREA AROUND TAN SON NHUT. ONE ROUND LANDED NOT FAR FROM THE HOUSE WHERE GENERAL WHEELER WAS SPENDING THE NIGHT. GENERAL WHEELER AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND ARE SPENDING THE NIGHT OF 24-25 FEBRUARY IN GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S HEADQUARTERS.

5. IN IV CORPS AREA 19 SEPARATE OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CORPS AREA RESULTED IN 109 ENEMY KILLED AT A COST OF 30 VIETNAMESE KILLED. TWO BATTALIONS OF THE U.S. RIVERINE FORCE SWEPT AN ISLAND IN THE RIVER IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF CAN THO AND BINH TUY AIRFIELD AND PICKED UP A NUMBER OF VIET CONG SUSPECTS. THIS ISLAND HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF FIRE AGAINST RIVER PATROL CRAFT AND HAS CONSTITUTED A LONG-TIME NUISANCE. HIGHWAY 4 WAS OPEN FROM SAIGON TO BAC LIEU ON 24 FEBRUARY.

6. I QUESTIONED GENERAL WESTMORELAND CONCERNING INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT INDICATE AN EARLY ATTACK ON DA NANG. GENERAL WESTMORELAND INDICATED THAT HE AND GENERAL WHEELER VISITED DA NANG ON 24 FEBRUARY AND THAT THE THREAT OF GROUND ATTACK ON DA NANG DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE SIGNIFICANT. I ALSO QUESTIONED HIM ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL ENEMY FORCES FROM THE NORTH INTO THE SAIGON AREA. HE BELIEVES THAT THE THREE DIVISIONS REPORTED IN THE AREA HAVE SUFFERED SUBSTANTIAL CASUALTIES IN EARLIER CONTACTS AND THAT THE FORCES GUARDING SAIGON CAN HANDLE THE SITUATION. GENERAL WESTMORELAND HAS THE CAPABILITY TO REINFORCE SAIGON PROMPTLY.

7. FOLLOWING THE VISIT TO DA NANG, GENERAL WHEELER AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND MET WITH PRESIDENT THIEU, VICE PRESIDENT KY AND GENERAL VIEN. TOPICS DISCUSSED WERE NOT REVIEWED BY GENERAL WESTMORELAND, BUT HE INDICATED A WIDE-RANGING, USEFUL AND REALISTIC EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

8. GENERAL WESTMORELAND IS ENDEAVORING TO DIVERT SOME B-52 STRIKES INTO THE A SHAU VALLEY WHERE HE REPORTS THAT 30 GROUND TARGETS EXIST THAT CONSTITUTE WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE AN ALTERNATE LOGISTICS COMPLEX BUILT UP TO SUPPORT THE ATTACK ON HUE. DIVERSIONS OF B-52 STRIKES WILL NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF A CONTINUES POUNDING AROUND KHE SANH. IN ADDITION, INTELLIGENCE TEAMS WILL BE INSERTED IN AND NEAR A SHAU VALLEY AS WEATHER PERMITS; UNFAVORABLE WEATHER HAS PREVENTED ATTEMPS MADE DURING THIS PAST WEEK.

DTG: 241617Z FEB 68