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ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET)

C O N F I D E N T I A L

January 4, 1994

The Honorable Richard Schifter
Special Assistant to the President
and Counselor
National Security Council
Old Executive Office Building
17th & Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20506

Subj: General Westmoreland's position relifting sanctions on
Vietnam

Dear Dick:

As you know, the President suggested I contact General Westmoreland to ascertain whether he was willing to support the lifting of the sanctions against Vietnam. I did so this date. Since the conversation contained more detail than the President may have time to deal with, I send it to you with the request that you abstract what is appropriate. Westy's position is as follows:

1. He does not believe any POWs remain alive.
2. He believes that Vietnam now is, and must continue, to remain within the sphere of influence of the PRC, given the differences in the relative power of the two nations.
3. In the battle between Vietnam and the PRC at the border in the 80s, he believes that, in one-third of a week, 20,000 Chinese military were killed in an embarrassing defeat for the PRC. When he was in the PRC five years ago on a cruise ship, although the State Department had informed the Chinese government that he would be there, the PRC did nothing but put him up in a mediocre government facility. But on his return to the ship, a PRC ship captain had sent him a friendly note with two copies of Westy's book "A Soldier's Report" in the Chinese translation, with the explanation that it was translated after the above defeat because the Chinese in that battle had a terrible problem of rivalry and lack of coordination between three arms: artillery, tanks, and infantry.

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4. The Chinese now having compensated from the lessons learned, make Vietnam look and feel like "small potatoes."

5. In the current discourse over the Spratly Islands, he believes Vietnam has accommodated to China.

6. He doesn't believe U.S. recognition of the Vietnamese government would cause Vietnam to depart from China's sphere of influence.

7. Notwithstanding the above, he thinks it is timely to lift sanctions--however, he later qualified this by stating "sometime in '94 it might be appropriate."

8. Westy acknowledges that it would be good for U.S. business to have the sanctions lifted.

9. He has a good friend, Steven Young, in the law firm of Mahoney, Hagburg and Weiss in Minneapolis married to a Vietnamese. Young has strong contacts in the Vietnamese/American community and has invited Westy to participate in a seminar in Los Angeles in the latter part of January this year. He has been told by Steve Young that this seminar has been requested by two reputable Vietnamese newspapers. Westy is concerned about the fact that a seminar scheduled to have been held in Vietnam toward the end of 1993 was canceled and that Steve Young was interrogated for 18 hours and kept in jail for a period of time. Two Vietnamese/Americans from California who were involved in that seminar were arrested and are still in jail.

10. With regard to whether he would publicly support, he needs to "mull it over."

Although the foregoing is not a definitive commitment, I believe there is a 70 percent chance that I could bring Westy to support a public announcement and a 90 percent chance if Warren Christopher were to call him on the matter.

Perhaps something along the following lines would be adequate for the President:

"Bud Zumwalt reports that, as you requested, he contacted General Westmoreland concerning lifting of sanctions against Vietnam and that General Westmoreland's views are as follows:

1. He believes no POWs remain alive.

2. He believes sometime in 1994 it would be timely to lift the sanctions and that this would be good for U.S. business.

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3. He wants to "mull over" the question of public support for a Presidential decision to lift sanctions.

4. Bud believes there is a respectable prospect he can get General Westmoreland's public support if and when you decide to lift sanctions and that this possibility would be further optimized by a call from Warren Christopher."

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

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