

**CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE
VIETNAM CONFLICT**

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FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 28 February 1996

**To: Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.
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From: James R. Reckner

Subject: Vietnam Symposium Arrangements

Number of Pages (Including Cover Sheet): 3

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28 February, 1996

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.
1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Admiral:

I want to take just a moment or two of your time to update you on developments related to the Vietnam symposium.

As you already know, I have invited Major General Tran Hai Phung and also the fighter pilot, Lt. Col. Le Thanh Chon. I was unable to get a fax through to Colonel Chon, so Jim very graciously provided me with the fax number of Mr. Phu Van Nguyen at the Belgian Consulate in Saigon. He has now hand-delivered the invitation. He has also recommended inviting an individual who covered the war for the media from the other side, Mr. Tran Cong Tan. After discussing this with the local advisory board, I am faxing the invitation to him today.

I received a lengthy telephone call from General Westmoreland yesterday in which he declined again our invitation to attend the symposium.

(Please keep this confidential.) In the discussion, the general went on at some considerable length about Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Sorley, who is scheduled to present a paper at the luncheon session on Saturday, 20 April. The essence of the general's comments related to the fact that he is convinced that Sorley is engaged in a personal vendetta against him.

This conclusion was drawn from a letter that Sorley wrote to Lieutenant General Phillip Davidson (who died just a few weeks ago from cancer). General Westmoreland visited with Mrs. Davidson to offer his condolences, and while there Mrs. Davidson showed the general this letter, which, he said, in essence accused General Westmoreland of being involved in a clique to influence the course of the war against the national interest.

The general then mentioned that Sorley had served on his staff and retired from there, not having been promoted. He is concerned that that might be the underlying cause of the animosity. The general also commented about LTC Sorley's father (also a lieutenant colonel) and his grandfather who had at one point been the eldest living West Point graduate.

Concerning Sorley's paper I will listen with great interest, and if I am provided a copy, I have agreed to send a photocopy to the general. Of course, I indicated to the

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.

general that in a conference of this type I could take no steps to prevent him from speaking, but I pointed out that whatever he might say, he (Sorley) will have to live with the impressions it might create amongst his peers. General Westmoreland is convinced that it will be terribly biased against him. I guess we will have to wait and see.

My manner of approach to this entire issue is that I am advising you confidentially, and then I will say nothing at all publicly.

At any rate, I conclude that General Westmoreland simply does not wish to face the possible aggravation of attending the symposium, which doubtless will have more than one individual who will adopt a position antagonistic to him. I well understand this position. After all, General Westmoreland has faced more than his fair share of antagonism in the years since the war.

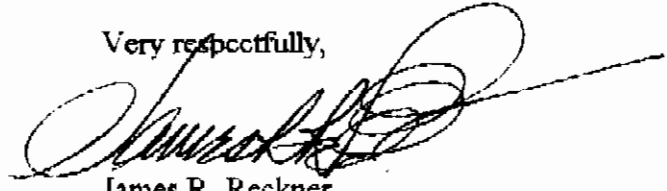
In further discussion, the general did agree to come to Lubbock at some other time, probably in the Fall. I know everyone connected with the Vietnam Center and Archive would be delighted to host a visit from him. It is possible we could organize such a low-keyed visit that would present no antagonists, and perhaps organize for him to cut the ribbon officially opening the Archive in the new building, or possibly opening the offices of the Center. He would have the opportunity, too, to visit with Generals Brownfield and Mittermeyer, both of whom are old acquaintances.

Attire for Symposium Banquet. We have indicated in our latest newsletter that attire for the symposium banquet will be either black tie/military dinner dress uniform or business suit/service dress. Brigadier General Ted Mataxis has written to inquire whether you intend to wear miniature medals, or what. I told him I would check with you.

All else seems to be on track for the symposium, sir. Vice Admiral and Mrs. Tidd are arriving on the Sunday before the symposium, and unknown to them, we have already programmed them into a reception and dinner on Monday night and a dinner at a local country club Tuesday night. I will get a letter to them in the next day or two.

I am sending by surface mail a bundle of our latest newsletter so that you might have a few copies to circulate, should you encounter anyone who you think might be interested.

Very respectfully,



James R. Reckner
Director