

TEXAS TECH
UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

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February 5, 1996

The Honorable Larry Combest
1527 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Admiral:

These copies are for your info.

*Larry Combest is a strong supporter of the
Vietnam Center.*
JR JR

Dear Mr. Combest:

Rob Lehman updated me last week on the progress of your efforts to have the CIA release a long list of 15,000 Vietnam-era document to the Archive of the Vietnam Conflict. I wanted to take just a minute of your time to thank you for this and for your strong and continuing support for the Vietnam project at Texas Tech University. What we are doing with the Vietnam project is right. It is remarkable that no other university in the nation is at present following the same course; this only magnifies the importance of our project. The archive we are assembling --with your great assistance-- will be an important legacy to future generations of Texas Tech students, and to scholars throughout the nation. I think it is important enough to have devoted more than six years of my life to the project, and I plan to devote many more.

As you know, we are in the final planning stages of our second triennial Vietnam symposium, slated for 18 - 20 April of this year in Lubbock. I know that you have a very demanding schedule, and that the circumstances of the current Congress make long-term planning difficult for you, but we would be particularly honored if you could attend the symposium banquet on the evening of 18 April at the McInturff Center, or any of the other planned events - either sessions at the symposium, reception at the American State Bank on Friday, 19 April, or barbecue dinner at the Ranching Heritage Center on the evening of Saturday, 20 April.

Many of the key figures of the Vietnam war will be in Lubbock for the meeting: Admiral Zumwalt, General Westmoreland, William Colby, Walt Rostow, a number of former South Vietnamese officials, and it now seems we will have a delegation of North Vietnamese generals. Admiral Zumwalt has been working for the past eighteen months to organize a panel discussion with General Westmoreland, Admiral Zumwalt, and General Vo Nguyen Giap, the leader of the North Vietnamese Army during the war. While we still lack a firm commitment from General Giap, we have had acceptances from two other North Vietnamese general officers, including General Giap's brother-in-law, Lieutenant General Pham Hong Son, who apparently has written a book about strategy for defeating the Americans! A panel discussion involving him, General Westmoreland and Admiral Zumwalt should be most informative. And I think the symbolism of such a meeting might go very far toward helping those Vietnam veterans who are still unreconciled with normalization of relations to reconsider their position.

VIETNAM CENTER NATIONAL COUNCIL
Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN (RET), Chairman
General William C. Westmoreland, Hon. William E. Colby
Hon. William P. Bundy, Hon. Bui Diem, Professor Douglas Pike

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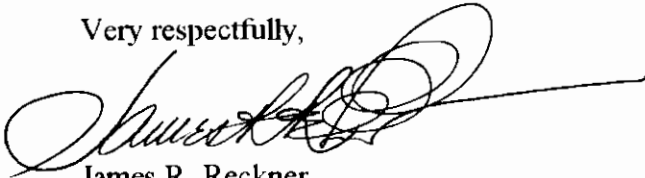
Hon. Larry Combest

The symposium has attracted considerable media interest. UPI will definitely be covering it, along with AP. *Wall Street Journal*, *Stars & Stripes*, CNN, C-Span, ABC Sunday Morning, and *Time Magazine* have indicated interest, and I understand that Joe Galloway of *U.S. News & World Report* probably will attend and at the same time cover the event. Such media coverage offers rare opportunities to advertise Lubbock and its attractions as well as Texas Tech and the Vietnam Center, and I have alerted the Chamber of Commerce to this potential source of positive publicity.

I enclose with this letter a number of copies of our latest newsletter, which includes a full program for the symposium, as well as information about recent acquisitions for the Vietnam Archive. We have been most fortunate in receiving a \$52,000 grant from the Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation of Dallas, for the purchase of Vietnam research materials on microfilm. The details are outlined on the cover page of the newsletter.

Hoping that you will find it possible to join us in Lubbock in April, I remain,

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James R. Reckner", written over a horizontal line.

James R. Reckner

Director

encl: Vietnam Center newsletters

bcc: Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.