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Date: Mon, 29 Mar 1999 05:49:15 -0600  
From: "James R. Reckner" <jjrec@TTACS.TTU.EDU>  
Subject: Situation Report  
To:  
Cc: vrosa@TTACS.TTU.EDU

Dear Admirals, Phil:

While reading an "exciting" dissertation on a turn-of-the-century archaeologist this weekend, I had time to think about a couple of items I would like to present for your consideration, with the idea that we might be able to discuss them when you reach here.

1. FUTURE EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL. In earlier correspondence we agreed that we would go forward with invitations for the Senators Kerry and Senator McCain to be invited to join. I would like also to add to that "political" list Congressman Sam Johnson who, I feel certain, will be at the symposium. He is a former POW and thus attuned to our work, though he does not share our views about outreach to Vietnam. His support in the House would be important for the "Virtual Vietnam Archive" project.

2. HOW ABOUT EXPANDING THE COUNCIL TO BECOME "THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL"?

My idea here is that we consider inviting one senior officer/official from each of the principal allied nations who served with us in Vietnam to join us. I haven't any ideas about who they might be, but suspect we could locate one or two.

In this context, I want to float the idea that we might also invite Lt. Gen. Uoc to join the Council. I think it would be a sign that we intend to make a serious effort to cooperate with them, and might, in the longer term, encourage some more substantive connections as far as information exchange goes. [Though I am convinced that most of the flow of information inevitably will be from here to there and not the other direction.] I am uncertain as to how American Vietnam veterans would react to such an invitation; however, I am just putting out the idea for your consideration, and for further discussion next month.

3. COUNCIL OF SCHOLARS. A number of academics have proposed that we establish an academic equivalent of the National Council. There is some validity in this suggestion in that we at the Vietnam Center need to give scholars a more active role in our affairs. To date, I have tended to work almost exclusively with military officers, including academics who are retired military officers. I appreciate that if the Center is to increase its stature academically, we must enlist the support of a number of prominent scholars.

At the same time, there are a few pitfalls against which we must protect the organization. Any academic council must, in my view, contain a balance of points of view, and if there is any imbalance, I would like to ensure that it is in our favor. I think this can be arranged. I would hope that such a council could be relied upon to provide input on request, but that the individual members of the council will be made to appreciate that as Director I will always consider their advice, but will not be totally bound by it in the direction of the Center and its activities. This, I suspect would require a bit of tight-rope walking on my part.

4. OTHER MATTERS. We received a fairly agitated call from the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington last Friday, reporting that LTC Quan (General Uoc's interpreter/secretary) now indicates his English isn't good enough for him to function as interpreter, and can they send another interpreter with the General. Of course we agreed. This development, though, does bring into question just what LTC Quan's role actually will be. I suspect he is Gen. Uoc's political "minder."

I have been pretty critical of American students' command of geography. However, I was entertained to learn that the Vietnamese had scheduled General Uoc to arrive at Dallas, thinking that was where he should get off the plane!! They are now rescheduling him to arrive in Lubbock. He should get here a.m. 13 April. For Admiral Tidd: If you and Muggs are available for lunch with the General and his entourage on that day, I would much appreciate it. I anticipate Phil and I also would attend. I will get everything nailed down before you arrive.

5. VIETNAM CENTER BUILDING. A three-dimensional color drawing of the new building was circulated at the board meeting on last Thursday. Looks excellent!! Phil Price is working very hard on the promotional video, promotional brochure, etc., and we expect to have them ready before April 14.

At breakfast with Chancellor Montford last Saturday (20 Mar), the Chancellor expressed his strong conviction that he will have this project fully funded. He also added that he would like a copy of the Vietnam Wall on Texas Tech campus, and he has asked Glenna Goodacre to produce an original sculpture for the front of the building. [Ms. Goodacre is the young lady who produced the sculpture of the women in Vietnam which is near the Wall in Washington. She is a local, West Texas girl.]

6. AMERICAN STATE BANK SUPPORT. W.R. Collier of ASB is going all-out to host us this year, as he has done in 1993 and 1996. On Thursday night, 15 April, he will host a lavish reception at the bank for everyone at the symposium. Phil showed me the snack "menu" which is priced out at around \$12 per person and that doesn't include the alcoholic beverages. Theme will be TEXAS [What else would you expect?]. The bank will be decorated totally with US and Texas flags, a band will play nice "Riders of the Purple Sage" type of cowboy music, and the foods will highlight the Tex-Mex cuisine so popular here. Mayor Windy Sitton will greet guests; State Representative Carl Isett [LT, USNR] also will be there with greetings from Governor Bush, etc., unless, of course the Governor himself turns up. Carl invited him to join us for the big shindig.

7. GENERAL PLANNING. I think we are pretty well on track for everything at this point. The Board will meet one more time, on 8 April, to review final arrangements. Shortly thereafter, events will begin to unfold, and if we have planned properly, they will unfold --- and not unravel.

Very respectfully, Jim Reckner