

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

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10 March 1997

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.
1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 3105
Arlington, VA 22209-3901

Dear Admiral:

This is just a short note to forward a report of the contacts I developed while attending the McCormick Foundation - Naval Institute conference at Cantigny this year. With few exceptions, the people present this year were different from the meeting last year.

Among the significant developments, Mrs. Westmoreland approached me to say that she wanted to have the General's post-war papers housed at Texas Tech. Some detail of that discussion is contained in the attached "Contact Report". We also were offered, at the conference, all of the papers and materials related to production of the Vietnam video series developed from Stanley Karnow's book, *Vietnam: A History*. Again, details are contained in the attached report.

Concerning the 1997 conference, Daniel Ellsberg called on Friday, 28 February, to say that he now has a schedule conflict and cannot attend our conference. He suggested contacting another anti-war activist who, unfortunately, was out of town and would be so until the beginning of April. Therefore, while I was at the Cantigny meeting, I seized the opportunity to invite Peter Braestrup to fill in the opening created by Ellsberg's departure. I will follow up the verbal invitation with a written one today.

Ambassador Diem reports that he believes he has convinced Nguyen Cao Ky to attend the conference. At the same time, Nguyen Khanh also will be there. I asked General Khanh about how he and Ky get along these days, and he responded that there would be no problem. Also, he didn't envision any problems in interacting with the North Vietnamese. The only person he has problems with is President Thieu.

Please have Priscilla let us know when your travel arrangements are firm for your trip to Lubbock, so we can meet you at the airport.

Very respectfully,



James R. Reckner
Director

encl: Conference Contact Report

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

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7 March 1997

Report of Contacts Made at McCormick Foundation - Naval Institute Conference 4 - 6 March 1997

Evening, 4 March 1997: My flight to Chicago was much delayed due to a broken pilot's chair, and therefore I did not reach Chicago and the conference hotel until 9:00 p.m. After checking in, I greeted **General and Mrs. Westmoreland** and **Vice Admiral and Mrs. Stockdale**, who were then just leaving the dining room. Mrs. Westmoreland called me aside and said that they were "having a terrible problem with the General's papers" and wanted some time to talk with me about them before they left the conference.

After the Westmoreland party left the dining area, I chatted for a while with **Dr. Earl H. Tilford, Jr.**, (*Setup: What the Air Force Did in Vietnam and Why*) Director of Research at the Army War College, **Lieutenant Colonel Mark Clodfelter** (*The Limits of Airpower*), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, **Ambassador Bui Diem** (*In the Jaws of Victory*), and **PAVN Colonel Bui Tin** (*Following Ho Chi Minh*). I then had dinner with **Peter Braestrup** (*Big Picture*), Senior Editor and Director of Communications at the Library of Congress. We were joined by **Mr. Fred Rainbow**, editor of *Naval Institute Proceedings* and **Rear Admiral Jack Natter** of the Naval Institute Board. I took this opportunity to bring Mr. Braestrup up to speed on Vietnam Center developments, and invited him to speak at our April conference. I also took this opportunity to highlight Mr. Les Cullen's dissertation work on Admiral Zumwalt's biography and asked Mr. Fred Rainbow to get my forthcoming article, "Theodore Roosevelt and His Navy," pushed forward in their publication schedule. [I don't often see these people; therefore, I have to push forward a number of issues.]

Wednesday, 5 March 1997

Breakfast with **Brigadier General Edwin Simmons**, USMC (Ret), Director Emeritus of the Marine Corps Historical Center, and **Ambassador Stephen Lyne**. General Simmons --a longtime friend-- was highly complimentary of Texas Tech and the recent progress of our Vietnam project. Ambassador Lyne confirmed that he expects to spend at least part of the Spring 1998 semester at Texas Tech as a Visiting Scholar. This has already been arranged with Dr. Idris R. Traylor. Ambassador Lyne will be a speaker at our April 1997 conference.

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McCormick Foundation - Naval Institute Conference

At lunch I engaged in a lengthy discussion with PAVN Colonel Bui Tin, who I had originally met last year. Tin, a senior Vietnamese Communist Party member and editor of the party newspaper *Nhan Dan*, refused to return to Vietnam after a 1990 trip to Paris. He insists he has not defected; however, he now broadcasts programs to Vietnam for the BBC's overseas service, and has since published his memoirs (*Following Ho Chi Minh*, University of Hawaii Press, 1995) which are far from complimentary of the senior leadership.

I asked Colonel Tin if his family is with him in Paris. He responded that they were still in Hanoi; that they had been refused permission to join him; and that they also were forbidden to communicate directly with him. I commented that that must be terribly difficult. He responded that he still receives correspondence from them, usually mailed by friends, with Thai or Japanese postage, and that he still can get mail and money to his wife, indirectly, through Vietnamese travelling to Hanoi.

I asked how official Vietnamese now respond to him. He told me that officially they condemn his actions, but that privately a great many have told him that they envy him, and that they still treat him with respect, as he had held a senior Vietnamese Communist Party position. In fact, he added, Lieutenant General Pham Hong Son (who is invited to our April conference, and who is General Giap's brother-in-law) had to share an official car with another officer, while Bui Tin had had his own official car which he didn't have to share with anyone, because of his higher party standing. [Such distinctions, I assume, are important in "classless" societies.]

Colonel Tin expressed a strong desire to attend our April conference; however, I did not extend an invitation. I would very much like to have him visit Texas Tech, particularly for our graduate students to be able to interview him, but I am concerned that his presence might act as a deterrent to the North Vietnamese group we have already invited. Toward the end of the conference, I was approached by Dr. John Votaw (my host at the conference) and Mr. Fred Rainbow of the Naval Institute to cooperate in getting Colonel Tin to attend our conference as well as one in Annapolis immediately following ours. I expressed again my reservations about inviting him, and then sought Ambassador Diem's advice, as he is a member of our National Council and has many contacts in Hanoi. He promised to talk with folks in Hanoi before responding. And thus I left the situation.

Reception Wednesday Evening, held in the library of the McCormick mansion. I had an extended discussion with Mrs. Kitsy Westmoreland about General Westmoreland's papers. She wanted to know the cost and other details regarding the microfilm edition of the General's papers. I promised to provide that information.

She reports that the General's official papers from Vietnam and also his papers as Army Chief of Staff are already in government hands, as both collections had much classified material which the General didn't want to have to deal with.

McCormick Foundation - Naval Institute Conference

Since the war General Westmoreland has collected a mass of materials relating to the war: books, correspondence, etc. West Point, the McCormick Foundation, the South Carolina State Museum, and other organizations have approached the General for these materials, but Mrs. Westmoreland says she wants them all to go to Texas Tech University if we are interested. If they went to West Point, she feels, they would be lost amongst all of the papers already there. If they go to Texas Tech, she said, they would be in an archive focused exclusively on Vietnam, where they would be used by researchers. The other institutions which had asked for the papers, she said, should get copies of the microfilmed materials. I assured Mrs. Westmoreland that Texas Tech was very much interested in having the Westmoreland post-war papers. [I might add that we have never asked the Westmorelands for these papers; the Westmorelands themselves have initiated this discussion. This is a reflection of the growing esteem in which Texas Tech is held relating to Vietnam.]

Mrs. Westmoreland did not have a precise estimate of the extent of the papers. She said they are overflowing a guest house they have on their estate which the General uses as his office. It has reached the point where no more materials can be filed anywhere, and they are just piling up. Additionally, there is an unknown number of boxes of materials currently being stored on board the USS *Valley Forge*, a historic ship in Charleston harbor. [I use the term "historic" with some feeling: it is one of the ships I served on in the early 1960s, before the Vietnam War.]

Acquisition of this collection is important beyond the actual value of the papers. If Texas Tech becomes the home of the Westmoreland Papers, it will become a magnet for other veterans' papers, thus ensuring the continuing growth of the collection. General Westmoreland continues to be held in extremely high esteem by Vietnam veterans. I am certain that an appeal to preserve their papers alongside the General's will have a tremendous impact.

Shortly after this discussion, **President Gerald Ford** arrived. **Former Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh** introduced me to the President as the director of "the most important Vietnam project in the United States today." While there was little time to talk with the President then as he made his way through the crowd, the following morning I engaged in a conversation with him and handed him materials relating to the Vietnam Center and Archive. [No one, regardless of rank, escaped from the conference without material from Texas Tech.] When he discovered that Texas Tech was in Lubbock, he became quite animated discussing Congressman Mahon, who he described as one of his closest friends. I will call this to the attention of Dr. Lawrence Graves, as he is currently working on a biography of Congressman Mahon.

At the reception, Ambassador Bui Diem brought former **Undersecretary of State Townsend Hoopes** over to me and insisted that he listen while I briefed him on the Vietnam project. In fact, he became very animatedly excited about the project, and very pleased to learn of it, and expressed warm support for it. [I haven't figured out how to exploit this contact yet, but there must be some way.]

McCormick Foundation - Naval Institute Conference

At dinner, I shared a table with the **Hon. James Buckley** (former independent senator from New York), Ambassador Bui Diem, Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh, Lieutenant General Orwin C. Talbott, Major General Dick Behrenhausen (Chief Operating Office of the McCormick Tribune Foundation) and Mr. Fred Rainbow, Editor of the Naval Institute Press.

During the dinner, Ambassador Diem reported that he had talked with former **South Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky** and he has agreed to attend our April conference. Prime Minister Khanh, who listened to this discussion, said he also will attend. I asked him if he would have any difficulty appearing with Ky or with the North Vietnamese. He responded in the negative, and added that the only one he wouldn't appear with is former South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu. Thus, it now appears that the South Vietnamese representation at our 1997 conference will include two former prime ministers and one ambassador.

Thursday Morning.

Enroute to the conference, had a lengthy discussion with **Vice Admiral Jerry Miller** of the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, during which I provided him essential background relating to the Vietnam project at Texas Tech. Afterward, I heard the Admiral tell the conference organizers that learning about Texas Tech's Vietnam project in itself made his trip to Chicago worthwhile. He told me that his second wife is a Texas Tech alumnus and that he would now consider sending his son to Texas Tech. The Admiral promised to return to Washington and spread the word about our work.

Vice Admiral James Stockdale. I also had an opportunity to discuss the Vietnam project with Vice Admiral James and Mrs. Sybil Stockdale. Admiral Stockdale was the senior U.S. officer in captivity in Vietnam, and is a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. I briefed both on the Vietnam project and provided them with a copy of a very recently released Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) dealing with Vietnamese attitudes toward the POW/MIA issue. The document had reached me on Monday morning, just before I left for the conference. Written in 1987 and originally classified "Secret - No Foreign Dissemination," the document, among other things, concluded that the U.S. government could not say with absolute certainty that the Vietnamese were not still holding POWs. The Admiral indicated that he would respond favorably to an invitation to speak at Texas Tech. [We already have one former POW, Colonel Norman McDaniel, scheduled to speak at the 1997 conference.]

Media. Responding to a request from Mr. Paul Montgomery of Gehrung, Inc., I contacted Mr. **Bill Mullen** of the *Chicago Tribune* on Wednesday afternoon, 5 March, and gave a telephone interview. He was very interested in the topic, though he was uncertain whether he could get a story accepted in the *Tribune*. I promised to send him some materials, which will be in the mail on Monday, 10 March.

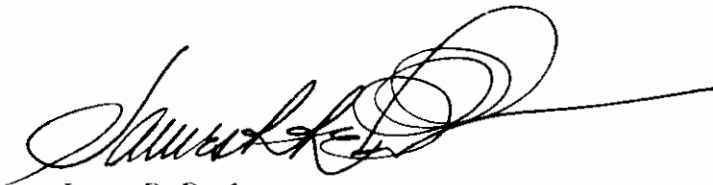
McCormick Foundation - Naval Institute Conference

A number of other media representatives were at the conference. Of them, Mr. Robert Timberg, Deputy Chief of the Washington Bureau of the *Baltimore Sun* seemed most interested. A graduate of the Naval Academy and a former Marine Corps officer, Mr. Timberg was extensively burnt in Vietnam, and has an abiding interest in Vietnam, and thus in our project. He authored a book entitled *The Nightingale's Song*. He, like all conference participants, received our latest newsletter and a listing of the holdings in our Vietnam Archive. I have agreed to provide him additional information, which will be in the mail to him on Monday, 10 March.

Other media people at the conference included Michael Barone of *Reader's Digest*, Peter Braestrup of the Library of Congress, Elizabeth Becker of *The New York Times* Washington Bureau, Paul Hendrickson of *The Washington Post* and David Hartman of *U.S. News & World Report*. All, of course, received a newsletter and Archive listing. All also will receive a personal follow-up letter which will be in the mail on Monday, 10 March.

Archive. In addition to the Westmoreland Papers (discussed above), I was approached by Dr. Larry Lichty of the Department of Radio, Television and Film of Northwestern University. Dr. Lichty was involved in production of the massive Vietnam television series based on Stanley Karnow's book, *Vietnam: A History*. He wishes to donate all of the materials --including research papers-- relating to the production of this series to Texas Tech. He tells me the material fills his attic and basement at home, and (I believe I understood him correctly) he has some 10,000 video tapes he wishes to donate. I expressed our desire to receive this particular collection.

Summary: My participation in this conference was particularly useful for the Vietnam project at Texas Tech, both in the context of contacts for future development, and also in the area of enlarging the collection of the Vietnam Archive. In the case of Colonel Bui Tin, there is the promise of a cooperative effort with the Naval Institute and the McCormick Foundation which will create an atmosphere for future cooperation which would be much to our benefit. Though I much dislike travel, particularly when it disrupts teaching, the results of this trip reinforce the need for Texas Tech to have an active proselytizing presence at such conferences whenever possible.



James R. Reckner
Director