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**CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE
VIETNAM CONFLICT****Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX 79409-1013
Fax: (806) 742-1060****FAX COVER SHEET**

Date: 29 June 1995

To: Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Fax: (703) 528-5795

From: James R. Reckner

Subject: 1997 Conference Proposal

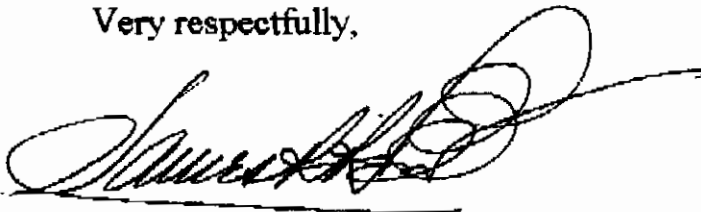
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Dear Admiral:

Enclosed for your information is a preliminary proposal I today submitted to Brigadier General John Mountcastle, the head of the Center for Military History, for a small conference to be held during fiscal year 1997 (any time after 1 September 1996, but preferably in April 1997). We think it would yield most interesting results; however, we must await some response from General Mountcastle before taking it any further.

Very respectfully,



James R. Reckner

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

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June 29, 1995

Brigadier General John Mountcastle, USA
Center for Military History
1099 14th St.
Washington, DC 20005-3442

Fax: (202) 761-5390

Dear General Mountcastle:

The purpose of this letter is to provide a bit of background information concerning the Center for the Study of the Vietnam Conflict at Texas Tech University, and to make a preliminary proposal for cohosting a small conference.

The Center for the Study of the Vietnam Conflict at Texas Tech University was established by the Board of Regents of Texas Tech University in November 1989, to encourage the study of all aspects of the Vietnam War, and to assist the growth of the Archive of the Vietnam Conflict at Texas Tech, which had been established in the preceding month. The Center is guided locally by a group of Vietnam veterans in the community, the most senior members of which are Lieutenant General Bernhard T. Mittenmeyer, USA (Ret) and Major General Dudley Faver, USAF (Ret). The remainder of the board are successful businessmen in the community. To assist us at the national level, the president of the university invited Admiral Zumwalt, General Westmoreland, Mr. Colby, Mr. Bundy, former South Vietnamese Ambassador Bui Diem and Vietnam historian Douglas Pike to form a national council. I am the Center's director, and am a retired naval officer who served two tours of duty with the riverine forces in Vietnam. I am now a tenured associate professor of history at Texas Tech University teaching courses in military/naval history.

The Center hosted its first major symposium in April 1993, and settled upon a program of triennial symposia as our principal conference effort. The next such symposium, scheduled for 18-20 April 1996, is entitled *After the Cold War: Reassessing Vietnam*. Already committed speakers include Admiral Zumwalt, Mr. Colby, Dr. Rostow, Ambassador Diem, and many of the leading historians in the field. An early planning program for the symposium is attached. On 31 March - 1 April of this year we cohosted with the Army War College's SS1 a Vietnam Roundtable entitled *On Winning and Losing: The Summers Thesis and the Vietnam War*. The proceedings of that roundtable are being published by Texas Tech University.

Last week I participated in discussions with the SRV delegation currently visiting the United States (they were scheduled to be briefed at the Pentagon on Tuesday of this week). In the course of the meetings we had considerable discussion about the Center's invitation, hand-delivered to General Giap by Admiral Zumwalt last September, for the general to participate in our 1996 symposium. Apparently no final decision has been made

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

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about the general's participation; however, Ambassador Nguyen Quang Tao, the head of the Vietnamese delegation, specifically requested that I extend an invitation to Generals Tran Van Tra and Tran Van Duong. The former commanded the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in 1975; the latter currently heads the national veterans organization in Vietnam.

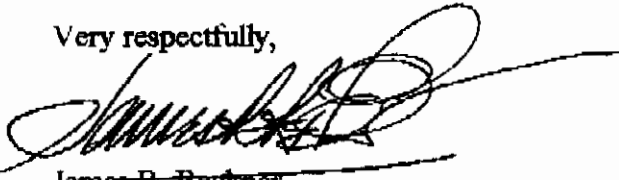
The Vietnamese delegation, which also included two active duty PAVN officers representing the PAVN general staff (a colonel and a lieutenant colonel), also indicated an active interest to send a delegation of military historians to the 1996 symposium. Although we have already committed nearly \$40,000 for the 1996 symposium, we hadn't budgeted for a Vietnamese delegation. We are currently working on independent funding for that and we are hopeful that the Vietnamese will arrive and will participate.

This Vietnamese interest in participating has led me to the idea that it might be possible to host a much smaller meeting exclusively between U.S. and Vietnamese military historians or military historians and a limited number of flag/general officers at a future date under the auspices of a nongovernmental organization such as ours. For fiscal year 1997 (beginning 1 September 1996), the Center has about \$10,000 already allocated for a Vietnam conference. That amount, however, would be insufficient to host a delegation from Vietnam, sponsor military historians from within the United States, and publish the proceedings. Therefore, my idea is to inquire whether some other organization (i.e., Center for Military History, Army War College, or some other appropriate organization) might wish to collaborate to conduct such a conference.

The format of the conference, of course, could be mutually agreed upon. I would suggest that perhaps the conference focus narrowly upon one particular aspect of the war: perhaps the Tet Offensive, or the 1972 Easter Campaign. Having settled upon the topic, we could then approach the appropriate historians and/or officers to comprise the American delegation. I would suggest, too, that the conference be held with a minimum of publicity, unlike the 1996 symposium which will be attended by a considerable media coverage. Venue for the proposed conference would be the International Cultural Center at Texas Tech University, which is scheduled for completion in March 1995, and which will offer the most modern meeting facilities.

Well, that is the outline of my proposal. I am sending it to you initially, without prior coordination with Admiral Zumwalt. However, I will fax a copy of it to him today. Of course, I haven't the slightest intention of approaching the Vietnamese on this topic unless the concept is accepted in general and a decision is made to proceed.

Very respectfully,



James R. Reckner
Director

encl: 1996 Vietnam Symposium Planning Program