



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
 HEADQUARTERS, II FIELD FORCE VIETNAM  
 APO SAN FRANCISCO 96266  
PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

7 March 1968

*Share with Genert only please!*  
*Jan*  
*RW*  
 (27)

Mr. Leroy Wehrle  
 Deputy Director  
 Vietnam Bureau  
 Agency for International Development  
 Department of State  
 Washington, D. C. 20521

Dear Roy:

Attached as Enclosure 1 is a memo prepared by Bob Crownover dealing with our meeting on the new supply regulations on January 22, 1968. I think the memo speaks for itself on the subjects that we discussed when I was in Washington.

Also enclosed are attitude survey reports dealing with the situation here in III CTZ as of the 15th, 22nd and 29th of February. I think you will find them of interest.

I finally secured a copy of your memo for the record of my visit and conversation with you in Washington. Despite the limited number of addressees, it apparently received rather wide distribution in Saigon. I found no inadequacies in your interpretation of what I said or meant and I think the events of the past five weeks tend to support the observations I made then.

I had an interesting visit with Phil Habib when he came over with General Wheeler, and subsequent to that, I had a three hour private luncheon with Ambassador Bunker. Both gentlemen received a considerably different evaluation of the events of the last five weeks than they had received through MACV channels. Both seemed to accept the fact that the MACV reporting system had a built-in upgrading factor which makes military assessments far more optimistic than is justified.

I participated (as a spectator) this past Monday (4 March) in an update briefing of General Westmoreland. I could not help but feel sorry for General Westmoreland since the purpose of his visit to our command was to kick ass and energize offensive operations, and all the wind was

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taken out of his sails by briefings (both US and Vietnamese) which indicated to him: there does not seem to be any concerted effort being made in the

a. The reported enemy KIA within III CTZ since 29 January of 16,000 was "absolutely valid," and did not contain a large number of recently recruited youths or ammunition bearers.

b. Further, the General was smothered with statistics as to the number of offensive operations that had been conducted during the month of February and the fact that we were consistently killing 300 VC a day.

c. Not a single word of the briefing given to the General dwelt upon the many problems of GVN inactivity and the clutched-up defensive attitude of most province and district chiefs and their troops that exists within this CTZ.

d. Not one mention was made of the fact that the VC guerrillas were being given more freedom to intimidate the rural population than ever before in the past two and one half years.

The regrettable thing about all this is that General Westmoreland apparently came out (almost for the first time) specifically to challenge some of our claims and to do a little ass-kicking. Even with the counterattack received, the General did make a rather excellent speech emphasizing the need to go on the offensive and to take advantage of the obviously weakened and exposed condition of the VC. As I said at the start, I feel sorry for him because even his best subordinates (and I consider General Weyand his best) continually screen him from the realities of the situation in Vietnam. As an honorable man, he has no choice but to accept what they say and to report it all to his superiors.

I am also enclosing a message I sent to my troops on or about the 20th of February emphasizing the need to take advantage of the enemy's exposed position. You may find it of interest. I will admit to you that I attempted to be (as an incentive to the troops) more positive in my message than the situation actually warranted. Nevertheless, to quote an old Roosevelt saying, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." God knows the Vietnamese could not be more (at province and district level) in a defensive posture than they have continued to be since the first day of Tet. To sum it up, I consider that the enemy has less capability and is more vulnerable today than at any time before and that he has never been permitted freer access to the population than he has today. Obviously, we must correct this and do it fast.

I find it quite insulting (to Ambassador Bunker) that such criticism as was leveled by the press was leveled only at General Westmoreland. Quite obviously, the failures here in Vietnam have been more than failures in the military and failures in intelligence. I find it distressing

*NID copy in TG file, speaks  
Lester - 4/21 2 good head*

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS JAGHEAD FORCE VICTORY  
477 SAN FRANCISCO 96226

*John P. Vann*  
*Share with Grist*  
*please*

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that there does not seem to be any concerted effort being made in the intelligence community to assess the reasons for the massive intelligence failure that occurred. It is almost inconceivable that our penetrations and intelligence operations are so inept as to have permitted this to happen. I say this in recognition that we may have had "strategic" intelligence on the movement of the enemy forces toward the population centers, but we had a complete void of "tactical" intelligence that specified the targets, the methods of infiltration, the time and dates and locations.

Washington, D. C. 20321  
I find it strange that no significant responsible official on either the Vietnamese or the US side is being relieved as a result of the VC Tet offensive. (The change of command in II and IV Corps had nothing to do with this subject.)  
I'm a memo prepared by Bob Crowder dealing with the new supply regulations on January 20 1968. Well, enough for now. Will appreciate hearing from you when you have a chance. I was in Washington.

Also enclosed are attitude survey reports dealing with the situation here in III CTZ as of the 15th, 22nd and 29th of February. I think you will find them of interest.

Sincerely,

*John P. Vann*  
John P. Vann  
Dep/CORDS

I finally secured a copy of your memo on the record of my visit and conversations with you in Washington. The limited number of addressees, it apparently received rather wide distribution in Saigon. I found no inadequacies in your interpretation of what I said or those of Mr. Dale Pfeiffer will be visiting in Washington while on home leave around the 18th of March. I have asked him to stop in and

I think it would be well worth your time to spend an hour or so with him. I had an interesting visit with Phil Habib when he came over with General Wheeler, and subsequent to that I had a Texas tour. Just found out that Dale Pfeiffer is not on consultation orders to visit AID/W. Strongly recommend you have his orders modified for five days consultation in Washington because I think he could be very valuable to you in giving details on the recent Tet offensive. (He will visit of his own expense if no orders come today) Dale is an up-date briefing of General Westmoreland. I could not help but feel sorry for General Westmoreland since the purpose of the offensive was to kill his reporting system and a built-in upgrading factor which the military assessment is more realistic than is recalled.

I participated (as a special advisor) in an up-date briefing of General Westmoreland. I could not help but feel sorry for General Westmoreland since the purpose of the offensive was to kill his reporting system and a built-in upgrading factor which the military assessment is more realistic than is recalled.

*served for 2 years previously as an INCO rep in T3 with, speaks Vietnamese - & has a good head*