

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET SENSITIVE~~

Friday, February 2, 1968 -- 8:30 a.m.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE PRESIDENT

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 92-357

By ij, NARA, Date 2-14-94

Mr. President:

One reason for my particular concern for the battle of Khe Sanh is a desire to avoid a situation of battlefield crisis in which Westy and the JCS would ask you to release tactical nuclear weapons.

I have felt that every action ought to be taken now that could prevent such a circumstance from arising.

That is why it may be worth offering Westy now an extra reserve division; although, if the 81st Airborne and/or the two Marine brigades were sent out, you would undoubtedly have to call up the reserves.

I am not making that recommendation. But you may wish to talk privately with Clark Clifford about the advisability of:

(A) -- communicating privately to Bus Wheeler that it is his duty to minimize the likelihood that the nuclear issue would be raised by the JCS;

-- asking Westy back-channel if he wants an extra airborne division or other reserve forces on the spot. (He would -- almost surely -- accept.)

why K-S not stated?

W. 1. Hoping Westy would move forces south to meet "opening"

2. Good weather: US air and artillery effective.

3. Westy expects attack - shortly. W.W. Rostow

W. will go out to Westy to ask how he would handle bad weather and long artillery on airfield and chopper pads: Westy to reply to earlier question.

OVER-

~~SECRET--SENSITIVE~~

NSF, Files of Walt Rostow,
box 7, "Nuclear Weapons--
Contingency Plng"

The President communicated A to
Gen Wheeler.

He replied:

- contingency most remote, although
planning going forward.
- Wrtly "Confident"
- Like McNamara he believes
troops would come on ground.
- Will accelerated answer to
key questions from wrty:
 - What if bad weather protracted?
 - What if artillery too
continuous for a/c
and choppers.

5:35 p.m.

2 Feb. 1968