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THE AIR FORCE IN VIETNAM
THE SEARCH FOR MILITARY ALTERNATIVES

1967

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by

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Office of Air Force History

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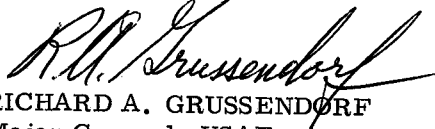
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FOREWORD

This study is the eleventh of a series of USAF historical reports dealing with the Vietnam war, prepared by the Office of Air Force History. While focusing on the Chief of Staff and Air Staff roles, the author necessarily has highlighted the plans and policies of higher authorities--the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff--and the recommendations of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Topics covered include plans for the military buildup in Southeast Asia, political considerations associated with new force deployments, and the continuing debate on war strategy and the conduct of the air campaign in the North. Because of the breadth and complexity of the subject, this study is considered only an initial overview of 1967 plans and policies. Future detailed historical studies of the role of the Air Force in Vietnam are planned.

Previous monographs in this series have covered USAF plans and policies in South Vietnam since 1961, research and development for Southeast Asia, logistics and base construction in the war zone, and the air campaign against North Vietnam.



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I. THE SITUATION IN EARLY 1967

(S-Gp 1) At the beginning of 1967, American officials were again fairly optimistic about the trend of the war in Southeast Asia. President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union message on 10 January, declared that, while the end of the conflict was "not yet in sight," Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) believed the enemy could "no longer succeed on the battlefield." The U.S. Ambassador to Saigon, Henry Cabot Lodge, on the 11th predicted that American war casualties would decrease in 1967 and that there would be "tremendous military progress." He emphasized the importance of continuing the bombing of North Vietnam. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, Special Consultant to the President, after a tour of the war zone, concluded at the end of January 1967: "I have a feeling that the Vietnamese situation may change drastically for the better by the end of 1967."¹

(U) Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, in testimony before congressional committees, was also hopeful. He saw substantial military progress, with search and destroy operations an "unqualified success," and air operations over South and North Vietnam producing good results. In addition, Mr. McNamara took comfort in such encouraging economic and political developments as South Vietnam's currency devaluation of 18 June 1966, which had arrested excessive inflation and promoted economic stability, and the election of 3 September 1966 in which 80 percent of the eligible voters cast ballots for a 117-man Constituent Assembly. This body would write a new constitution and help prepare for national elections leading to a new government. Another important event was the Manila Conference on 23-24

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October attended by representatives of the seven principal allied nations* participating in the war. The conferees affirmed their determination "that the South Vietnamese people shall not be conquered by aggressive force and shall enjoy the inherent right to choose their own way of life and their own form of government." They also attested to the non-aggressive character of the seven-nation effort and promised withdrawal of allied military forces within six months or sooner if North Vietnam stopped its aggression and pulled back its troops.²

The Joint Chiefs' and Air Force Views of the War

(S-Gp 1) The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) were not quite so sanguine. In a review of the war through 1966, they recognized several allied accomplishments: the prevention of a Communist takeover of South Vietnam, the infliction of heavy losses on the enemy, and the success of B-52 and ground forces "spoiling" operations. But the JCS found no "substantial trend" toward attaining the American objective of ending Communist efforts to conquer Southeast Asia. The Air Force view was especially sober. Its Chief of Staff, Gen. John P. McConnell, had generally supported JCS recommendations on building up U.S. forces in Southeast Asia, but he believed that more effective use should have been made of air power rather than to deploy so many ground troops.⁺ It was General McConnell's view that the military strategy being followed presaged a long, costly war of attrition and would require the use of even more troops.³

*Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Republic of Korea, South Vietnam, and the United States.

+For a summary of U.S. troop strength in South Vietnam and Thailand, see p 4.

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(S-Gp 1) The Air Force argued strongly for a reduction of the restraints on the use of air power, * especially against North Vietnam. It advocated striking at the remaining important war-supporting targets, particularly those in the "sanctuary" areas around Hanoi and Haiphong and in the "buffer" zone near China. It also wished to bomb or mine Haiphong harbor through which an estimated 85 percent of war-supporting imports entered from the Soviet Union, China, and other Communist (plus some non-Communist) states. With some exceptions, Adm. U. S. Grant Sharp, Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (CINCPAC), and the other members of the JCS shared these Air Force views.⁴

(U) Other high officials, especially Secretary McNamara, disagreed. The Secretary was apprehensive, as were other administration leaders, that removal of bombing restraints might precipitate a wider war. He considered air attacks on the North as a supplement to and not a substitute for military operations in South Vietnam where, in the final analysis, the war had to be won. Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown generally endorsed Mr. McNamara's position.⁵

U. S. and Allied Deployed Strength

(S-Gp 4) The administration, partly for political reasons, had avoided a callup of reserves or extending service tours of duty and, except for the initial commitment of combat troops in 1965, had dispatched U.S. forces in

*General McConnell informed a House committee in March 1967 that three types of restraints had been imposed on the use of aircraft: the geographical areas in which they could operate, the ordnance they could carry, and the targets they could hit.

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accordance with specific deployment plans. The most recent, designated "Southeast Asia Deployment Program 4" and approved by Secretary McNamara on 18 November 1966, established U.S. manpower ceilings in South Vietnam of 439,500 by June 1967, 463,300 by December 1967, and 469,300 by June 1968. The Air Force portion under this program was to remain stable, totaling 55,300, 55,400, 55,400, respectively. The June 1968 figure was about 52,900 less than the JCS had recommended. In addition to limiting the American commitment as much as possible, Mr. McNamara believed the manpower ceilings were needed to reduce excessive expenditures that might undermine South Vietnam's relative price stability, achieved following the 1966 currency devaluation. He pointed out that inflation hit hardest the Vietnamese soldiers and civil servants on whom success in the war largely depended.⁶

(S-Gp 1) At the end of 1966, American armed strength in South Vietnam stood at 390,568 (including 52,913 Air Force), and in Thailand, 34,489 (including 26,113 Air Force). In addition, the offshore U.S. Seventh Fleet possessed 36,300 personnel. South Vietnamese regular, regional, and popular forces numbered about 620,000 (including 15,070 in the Vietnamese Air Force), and other allied forces, about 52,580.^{*7}

(S-Gp 3) To prosecute the air war in South and North Vietnam and Laos, the United States had deployed more than 2,000 combat and support aircraft and 1,900 helicopters. Six hundred and thirty-nine combat aircraft belonged to the Air Force, 210 to the Navy, and 160 to the Marine Corps.

*The strength of other allied forces serving in South Vietnam at the end of 1966 was as follows: Australia, 4,533; New Zealand, 155; Philippines, 2,063; Republic of Korea, 45,605; and Thailand, 224.

Of the support aircraft, 534 were Air Force, 484 Army, 35 Navy, and 34 Marine Corps. The preponderant number of helicopters, 1,637, were operated by the Army. The Marine Corps possessed 229 and the Air Force 70.

(S-Gp 3) Augmenting these forces were 50 B-52 bombers on Guam and a Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) with about 100 tactical and 152 support aircraft and 43 helicopters. American tactical aircraft and B-52's at the end of 1966 were flying about 25,000 attack sorties per month in Southeast Asia. In December, 13,246 of these sorties were flown in South Vietnam, 6,672 in North Vietnam, and 4,841 in Laos. Both the number of aircraft authorized and the attack sortie rate were below JCS recommendations.

(S-Gp 1) The bulk of the Air Force's combat aircraft were F-4's, F-105's, and F-100's with smaller numbers of A-1's and B-57's. Its principal reconnaissance aircraft were RF-4's and RF-101's. In addition, it employed a growing number of special air warfare (SAW) and specially equipped aircraft such as EC-121's, EB/RB-66's, and EC/RC-47's for electronic countermeasures operations and reconnaissance. Gun-firing AC-47's also were used in close support operations, and UC-123's for chemical operations to destroy jungle growth and crops in selected areas.

(S-Gp 1) Arrayed against American, South Vietnamese, and other allied forces were about 275,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese personnel in South Vietnam, the latter estimated at about 45,000. Enemy infiltration into the South was placed at 5,300 to 9,000 per month.* To defend its war supplies

*Headquarters, Pacific Command (PACOM) early in 1967 estimated infiltration at 7,500 to 9,000 per month but Secretary McNamara thought this included confirmed and probable infiltrators. His "accepted" figure was an average of 5,300 infiltrators monthly over the past nine months, and he pointed to a two to three-month lag in estimates. For estimates at the end of 1967, see pp 61-62.

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and lines of communications (LOC's) from air attacks, the enemy had developed a highly sophisticated air defense system consisting of 37/57-mm and 85/100-mm antiaircraft weapons, surface-to-air missiles (SAM's), and a small air force. North Vietnam possessed about 54 MIG-15's and -17's and eight MIG-21's, plus a smaller number of MIG-15's and -17's and two IL-28 light bombers on the South China air bases of Yunnani and Peitan. Behind Hanoi's ground and air posture stood, of course, additional resources of North Vietnam and her principal suppliers, the Soviet Union, China, and other Communist states.¹¹

Adjustments in Deployment Planning

(S-Gp 4) On 16-19 January 1967, representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the services met in Hawaii, reviewed deployment program 4 and agreed to raise the American military personnel ceiling in South Vietnam to 471,623 by 30 June.* The revised service totals were: Air Force, 55,975; Navy (including Coast Guard), 28,431; Marine Corps, 71,000; and Army, 316,217.¹²

(S-Gp 3) During the first six months of 1967, administration-imposed restrictions prevented deployment of additional Air Force units into the theater, but other actions led to an overall increase in USAF aircraft there. On 1 January, the Army transferred 83 C-7A Caribou transports in South Vietnam to the Air Force. Two other theater changes approved by OSD on 13 February were the transfer of six AC-47's from the Philippines to South Vietnam and the retention of an A-37 squadron (which had completed its "Combat Dragon" tests in December 1966) by USAF special air warfare forces

*OSD confirmed the new ceiling on 31 March 1967.

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until an evaluation of its operations were completed.* Early in 1967 the United States also welcomed the decision of the Australian government to send one Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Canberra squadron of eight aircraft to South Vietnam.⁺¹³

(S-Gp 3) The beginning of 1967 also witnessed the redeployment of 25 USAF helicopters and 164 personnel from Thailand to South Vietnam, despite considerable Air Force and other opposition to the move. On 22 June 1966, Secretary McNamara had approved the temporary transfer of 10 USAF CH-3's and 11 UH-1F's from South Vietnam to Nakhom Phanom AB, Thailand, to augment the Air Force's 606th Air Commando Squadron (ACS) which then possessed four UH-1F's and other aircraft. On 12 January 1967, he ordered the return of all the helicopters to South Vietnam. His directive triggered a flurry of "reclamas" and compromise proposals by the Air Staff, JCS, PACOM, MACV, and the U.S. embassies in South Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos. Virtually all officials desired to keep the helicopters in Thailand in order to aid the Thai counterinsurgency program and to continue intelligence-gathering activities. Mr. McNamara, however, was opposed to more direct American involvement in the Thai program and, on 31 January, he reaffirmed his decision but allowed the four UH-1F's, initially assigned to the 606th, to remain in Thailand. However, he directed that they not be used in Thai counterinsurgency operations.¹⁴

(S-Gp 1) The early months of 1967 also witnessed a decision to deploy Strategic Air Command (SAC) B-52 bombers to Thailand for the first time.

*The A-37 squadron, based at Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam, began operational tests on 15 August 1966.⁷ Plans called for it to replace a USAF A-1 squadron in January 1968. Later that year, A-37's would begin entering the VNAF's inventory in lieu of A-1E's which would be returned to the Air Force.

+The RAAF unit began combat operations on 23 April 1967.

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The B-52 "Arc Light" program, approved by Secretary McNamara in late 1966, called for higher combat sortie rates than those recommended by the JCS. On 11 November 1966, the Secretary authorized 800 sorties per month beginning the following February. This decision required the dispatch of 20 additional bombers to the theater to join the 50 already on Guam. Numerous studies had been made on the possible stationing of some B-52's in South Vietnam, the Philippines, Okinawa, Taiwan, or Thailand to improve "reaction time." South Vietnamese bases, however, were deemed too insecure. Okinawa and Taiwan as B-52 base sites involved sensitive political questions. A site in the Philippines also posed political problems and would require costly and time-consuming base expansion. In the end, the planners were left with U-Tapao AB, Thailand, as the most promising location. The Air Staff, General McConnell, and other JCS members strongly favored that base since the flying time and cost of bomber missions from there against targets in South Vietnam would be substantially less than from Guam or other bases under consideration.

(S-Gp 1) After a preliminary White House decision in late 1966 to replace the B-52's in Thailand, U.S. Ambassador Graham A. Martin began final negotiations with Thai officials. Extended talks, which included a quid pro quo in the form of additional military assistance to Thailand, culminated in agreement on 2 March to station 15 B-52's at U-Tapao. On 23 March Secretary of State Dean Rusk publicly announced the decision. Three bombers arrived at the Thai base on 10 April and flew their first mission the same day. Other bombers deployed in May and June and the last five (of 15) on 9 July.

II. THE DEBATE OVER TROOP DEPLOYMENTS

(S-Gp 3) While the services undertook to build up their forces to the approved level of 471,623 by 30 June 1968 and simultaneously began work on an anti-infiltration system in Vietnam,* the President--under increasing fire from critics of U.S. involvement in the war--expressed a desire to accelerate military operations. On 17 February 1967, in response to the President's request, Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the JCS, directed the Joint Staff to prepare a range of military proposals that would assure "a definite and visible improvement" in the war by Christmas 1967.¹

(S-Gp 3) The Joint Staff quickly produced three proposals, each of which called for a progressive increase in air, ground, and naval pressure on the enemy. Concerning the air campaign against the North, the Air Staff prepared an integrated tactical target plan which outlined a series of attacks on certain key targets within the prohibited and restricted areas of Hanoi and Haiphong. In sending these proposals to higher authorities, the JCS recommended that operations begin at the onset of favorable weather in April to assure the desired results by the end of 1967.²

(S-Gp 3) On 22 February, the administration approved a limited number of the suggested actions. In the North, it authorized a modest increase in Rolling Thunder strikes, the mining of designated inland waterways and estuaries, and naval operations against certain targets ashore or in coastal waterways. It also approved extending special air and ground operations into Laos, and the use of artillery fire from South Vietnam against enemy targets

* See pp 40-41. Also, for a brief discussion of the background of the anti-infiltration system, see Herman S. Wolk, USAF Plans and Policies: Logistics and Base Construction in Southeast Asia, 1967 (AFCHO, October 1968, ch IV.)

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in the demilitarized zone (DMZ), North Vietnam, and Laos. This new authority for air strikes, while welcome, was still considered inadequate by the Air Staff which felt that the attenuated combat operations would not halt resurgent Viet Cong and North Vietnamese activities. The Air Staff's pessimism appeared to be justified when, in March, General Westmoreland proposed a reexamination of the overall U.S. strategy for Southeast Asia and recommended the deployment of additional forces beyond those previously approved by the administration. ³

General Westmoreland's Proposals

(S-Gp 1) Beginning on 18 March, General Westmoreland forwarded to the JCS his latest assessments of the enemy's strength. He estimated that the Communists had ground forces in the field equivalent to 10 infantry divisions and four infantry brigades, one armored and eight independent regiments, one artillery division, one antiaircraft division, 80 independent antiaircraft regiments, 32 SAM battalions, and seven transport units. He credited North Vietnam's home-based air force with the capability to launch 87 jet fighter and six jet bomber sorties on a single mission while 26 to 32 more jet fighters and two light bombers belonging to the North Vietnamese were based in South China.

(S-Gp 1) The MACV commander also reported that the Communists had achieved a net gain of 50,000 men, tantamount to an increase of nine to 12 divisions, despite battle losses of 127,000 between January 1966 and March 1967. Even with a projected loss of 140,000 men in 1967, they could increase their numbers by 27,000 through more infiltration and continued recruiting in the South, despite their diminishing success in obtaining new recruits. He believed that the Communists could sustain a sizable force until mid-1968

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and conduct operations one day in 30 with maneuver battalions of 70 to 80 percent of regular strength.

(S-Gp 1) According to General Westmoreland, the Communists had deployed one or two divisions north of the DMZ and other combat units available that could attack through Cambodia and Laos. In South China were seven (of 34) Chinese armies and 13 more could be dispatched southward. The Chinese also possessed 2,229 jet fighters and two medium and 235 light bombers, and both China and the Soviet Union showed every intention of supporting the conflict at current or even higher intensity.

(S-Gp 1) Accordingly, the MACV commander asked for the additional deployment by 1 July 1968 of a "minimum essential force" comprising two and one-third divisions and four USAF tactical fighter squadrons (TFS).^{*} After 1 July 1968, to avoid a protracted war, he would further require an "optimum force" of four and two-thirds divisions and 10 USAF tactical fighter squadrons. Admiral Sharp generally concurred with the Westmoreland requests.⁴

(S-Gp 3) Before forwarding these recommendations, General Wheeler asked the Joint Staff to analyze the proposed manpower increases under two "cases." Case I would avoid a reserve callup or extension of service tours; Case II would require both. In either "case," the services would be required to retain a capability to meet their North Atlantic Organization (NATO) commitments and make no change in the length of tours of duty in the war zone. Manpower deployments would be in addition to the latest program 4 personnel authorization of 471,623 for South Vietnam by June 1968.⁵

^{*}Revised shortly to five USAF squadrons.

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(TS-Gp 1) Air Staff and Joint Staff studies showed that the minimum essential force would provide 21 maneuver battalions (from two and one-third divisions), five fighter squadrons, one C-130 squadron, four river assault squadrons, 59 river patrol boats, and associated engineer and construction battalions. It would require a rise in American personnel in South Vietnam of about 78,000 and bring the 1967 total to 548,801. The optimum force after 1 July 1968 would provide 42 additional maneuver battalions (from four and two-third divisions), 10 USAF fighter squadrons, and require another air base and a complete mobile riverine unit. It would result in the dispatch of about 122,000 additional American servicemen to South Vietnam for an overall total of 671,616.⁶

(S-Gp 3) Early in April--at the request of Gen. John D. Ryan,^{*} Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces (CINCPACAF), Admiral Sharp, and the Air Staff--the Joint Staff agreed to consider incorporating 12,009 more Air Force personnel in General Westmoreland's minimum essential force. A total of 7,989 would be deployed to South Vietnam to support additional UH-1 and CH-3 helicopters in operations outside the country and for general augmentation of other on-going activities. Another 4,020 would be sent to Thailand to support three more tactical fighter squadrons and to convert Nam Phong AB, which was in a "bare base" status, into a main operational base.⁷

Air Staff-JCS Views of General Westmoreland's Requests

(S-Gp 3) The initial Joint Staff paper advocating increasing the approved June 1968 manpower levels in South Vietnam by another 200,000 men deeply

^{*}General Ryan became CINCPACAF on 1 February 1967, succeeding Gen. Hunter Harris, Jr.

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concerned the Air Staff and General McConnell. The Chief of Staff observed that U.S. strength during the past two years had risen "far in excess" of original requirements, yet the enemy was still a "potent threat." As evidence, he cited the recent shift of I Corps units in "Operation Oregon" from one critical area to reinforce another and he noted that the JCS was weighing alternate measures to blunt the Communist thrusts, including a possible lodgment in North Vietnam. *

Although current tactics might relieve pressure, General McConnell said they would not end Soviet or Chinese support of Hanoi. He believed that the fighting and staying power of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had been underestimated and he was not convinced that the addition of more troops, as contemplated by the Joint Staff, would bring about an early and decisive result.

(S-Gp 3) However, the Air Force chief stated he would "reluctantly" support General Westmoreland's plea for more manpower and a possible reserve callup because of the situation in I Corps and because he was loathe to deny a field commander the forces he deemed essential. However, he said he would endorse the plan only if the JCS also recommend an immediate, expanded, air and naval campaign against the North to reduce or possibly obviate the need for more forces in the South. "The effective application of our superior air and sea power against North Vietnam's vulnerabilities," he argued, "will cripple his capabilities to continue to support the war and will destroy his resolution to continue."⁸

(S-Gp 3) The Joint Staff generally accepted General McConnell's suggestion and reworked its preliminary paper. Subsequently, on 20 April,

*Called Mule Shoe, the JCS study on a possible lodgment in North Vietnam was completed early in April.

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the JCS recommended to Mr. McNamara that more American troops be dispatched to South Vietnam to maintain pressure against the enemy and that an expanded air campaign be authorized to further reduce the flow of men and supplies to the south. Specifically, the JCS proposed an increase of 127,111 "Case II" personnel in fiscal year 1968 above the number authorized in deployment program 4. The new total would include 4,350 Air Force personnel to man five tactical fighter squadrons (F-100's and A-1's), one civil engineering squadron, and augmentation elements. The Army portion would total 71,200, the Marines 43,098 (consisting of one division/wing team plus augmentations), and the Navy 8,463.

(S-Gp 3) In addition, the JCS recommended an increase of 10,288 "Case II" personnel for Thailand and other PACOM areas. These would be apportioned as follows: 4,025 Air Force for three tactical fighter squadrons, base augmentation, and other support; 3,650 Navy to strengthen forces in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin; 1,690 Marines for air units on Okinawa; and 923 Army for medical and other support in Japan.⁹ To support these additional requirements, the JCS recommended a reserve callup for a minimum of 24 months, a 12-month extension of current service tours of duty, and asked for authority and funds to obtain the necessary equipment and other resources.¹⁰

OSD Request for Studies of Alternate Force Postures

(S-Gp 3) There was no direct response to the JCS recommendations. Instead, on 26 April, Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus R. Vance asked the Joint Chiefs to examine as soon as they could, certain alternate force postures for Vietnam. One, which he listed as "course A," would add air, ground, and naval units totaling 250,000 men through fiscal year 1969 and possibly more

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later. This would permit greatly intensified military operations outside of South Vietnam to meet "ultimate" JCS requirements. The second, "course B," would add only 70,000 more troops during the next fiscal year. The Deputy Secretary requested an analysis of all aspects of course A: cost, reserve callups, service duty extensions, and military operations (the last to include possible Communist and free world reaction to an invasion of North Vietnam). He also asked for an analysis of bombing strategy for each course and desired special JCS consideration, under course B, of a bombing halt above the 20th parallel,^{*} and of a complete end to the bombing of all of North Vietnam to "maximize" the possibility of ending the war. Finally, he solicited advice on strengthening the South Vietnamese Army.¹¹

(S-Gp 3) For the next several weeks, the Joint Staff worked to prepare recommendations, coordinating its effort with the services, Admiral Sharp, and General Westmoreland. Meanwhile, at the request of General McConnell, the JCS prepared a separate plan for submission to OSD which called for an accelerated air campaign to reduce "external" imports into North Vietnam. The Air Force Chief of Staff, disturbed over past JCS failures to convince OSD and high administration officials of the importance of such an effort, had brought to the chief's attention a special target study employing a new "econometric" technique and produced at his request. He said it showed "beyond doubt the necessity for a realistic air campaign."¹²

*The rationale for limiting the bombing in North Vietnam to south of the 20th parallel originated in OSD. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs asserted that at least as much destruction per sortie was possible by missions flown below the 20th parallel as above. He argued, for example, that it was probably 20 times more worthwhile to destroy a truck after it had traveled all the way to route package I near the DMZ than if it were destroyed further north in route package V. The Air Staff and JCS strongly disagreed. See pp 20-21.

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(S-Gp 3) In forwarding the USAF proposal to Secretary McNamara on 20 May, the service chiefs cited the rise of war-sustaining imports into the North by sea,* and the possibility they might soon include more advanced offensive and defensive weapons. The Joint Chiefs urged "neutralizing" enemy logistic bases in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas employing a "shouldering out" bombing method. This would consist of striking first at peripheral areas, then the port targets, then other logistic sites, followed by the mining of Haiphong harbor. Simultaneously, the USAF and Navy air arms would conduct an intensive campaign against roads and railways leading from China and the eight major North Vietnamese airfields (of which only three had been hit thus far). Calling the proposal "a matter of urgency," the service chiefs asked Secretary McNamara to transmit it to the President.¹³

(S-Gp 3) The following day, 21 May, the JCS submitted to the Secretary its evaluation of the proposed courses "A" and "B" requested by Mr. Vance. For course A, the Joint Chiefs proposed a reserve callup, extension of terms of service, and adding 125,000 troops in fiscal years 1968 and 1969, respectively. In fiscal year 1968, they recommended adding to the Vietnam force three USAF tactical fighter squadrons, one and one-third Army division force equivalent, one Marine division wing-team (including two Marine tactical fighter squadrons), the remainder of the Navy's riverine mobile force, and other units. Outside of Vietnam, they proposed to increase military strength in Thailand by three USAF tactical fighter squadrons, and build up the Navy's

*The JCS indicated that about 85 percent of all war-sustaining materiel entered North Vietnam through its ports and about 15 percent by rail or road from China. The total volume had risen from about 800,000 metric tons in 1964 to more than 1.3 million tons in 1966 and was still on the upswing in early 1967.

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Seventh Fleet by adding one cruiser, five destroyers, one assault patrol boat (APB), eight landing ship tanks (LST), and other support. In fiscal year 1969 the principal forces earmarked for Vietnam would consist of five USAF tactical fighter squadrons, two and one-third Army divisions and, off-shore, one battleship.

(S-Gp 3) Under their proposed course B (providing 70,000 more men, the maximum possible without a reserve callup), augmentation in Vietnam would be limited to three USAF tactical fighter squadrons, one and one-third Army division force equivalent, the remainder of the Navy riverine mobile force, and other minor units. Deployments outside of Vietnam would consist of three USAF tactical fighter squadrons to Thailand and Seventh Fleet additions of one cruiser, five destroyers, one assault patrol boat, eight landing ship tanks, and other support.

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(S-Gp 3) The JCS believed that course A would allow the allies to continue the initiative, provide a better posture for combat operations into Laos, Cambodia, or North Vietnam without reducing pacification and other programs, and hasten an end to the war. On the other hand, course B would permit only more "in-country" deployment of forces to the I Corps which might not suffice to sustain American and South Vietnamese operations beyond the immediate future. Under either "course," the Joint Chiefs urged expanded and intensified air action with emphasis on striking the Hanoi-Haiphong logistic base and import facilities and the aerial mining of specific inland waterways, ports, and coastal areas north of Haiphong.

(S-Gp 3) Although heavier air and naval pressure against North Vietnam would lead to more Soviet and Chinese assistance to Hanoi, the JCS believed that neither Moscow nor Peking would intervene militarily. The

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Chinese could be expected to provide major reinforcements under three conditions: if requested by Hanoi's leaders, if the United States undertook a sizable ground invasion of North Vietnam, or if the Hanoi regime was in danger of collapse. General McConnell concurred with the above assessment but believed that the JCS strategy outlined on 20 April* would provide more assurance for ending the war on terms favorable to the United States.¹⁵

(S-Gp 3) In separate comments, General Wheeler urged "as a matter of high priority" the strengthening of South Vietnamese forces and renewed effort to obtain more free-world troops, although these steps would not lessen the need for additional American deployments. He also strongly opposed any partial or total bombing cessation of the North, arguing this would prove costly to the allies, prolong hostilities, and be interpreted by the Communists as an "aerial Dien Bien Phu."¹⁶

The Draft Memorandum to the President

(S-Gp 1) In late May, the Air Staff and JCS were also asked to comment on a draft OSD memorandum to the President on future action in Vietnam. Prepared by a study group within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, this paper made an overall analysis of the war and the proposed courses "A" and "B" deployment plans (as modified).

(S-Gp 1) The memorandum observed that the "big war" was going well. The enemy had suffered considerably and, beginning in March 1967 (according to General Westmoreland), the "cross-over" point was reached when his losses

*See pp 13-14.

began to exceed his replacements. Inflation was under control and the transition to responsible government in Saigon was proceeding as well as could be expected.

(S-Gp 1) However, the "other war" was unsatisfactory. The Saigon government's real control was limited to enclaves. There was widespread corruption and little evidence of remedial action for social and economic ills or of momentum in the pacification program. In the Mekong delta, the tempo of operations was slow, the population apathetic, and many government officials seemed to have working arrangements with the Viet Cong. Imports into South Vietnam were still rising as rice deliveries from the delta decreased. The Communists held large parts of the countryside and believed the United States could not translate military success into political gain for the Saigon government.

(S-Gp 1) With respect to increasing U.S. strength in Southeast Asia, the draft memorandum found "course A" unacceptable and unnecessary. It would introduce 200,000 or more troops into South Vietnam through fiscal year 1969, raising the total to about 670,000 in that country and to 770,000 within the theater. The additional cost in fiscal year 1968 alone would be \$10 billion.* Course A would also create "irresistible" U.S. pressure for ground action into Cambodia, Laos, and possibly North Vietnam, thereby risking Soviet, Chinese, and possibly North Vietnamese reaction to such moves, especially if accompanied by heavier American air attacks or mining of harbors. The

*General Westmoreland had said that without more U.S. forces above those authorized in deployment program 4, the war could go on for five years; with 100,000 more men, three years; and with 200,000 more men, two years. These estimates took into account a certain "degradation" of military effectiveness because of reserve callups, and morale and leadership problems.

Soviets, for example, might send more and improved rockets, jet aircraft, and other equipment to the North. Also there was no indication that bombing thus far had reduced Hanoi's will to resist, its ability to resupply the South, or increased its willingness to negotiate. In addition, North Vietnamese morale was probably sustained by continued Soviet and Chinese aid and the expectation that American policy toward the war would change after the forthcoming Presidential election in November 1968.

(S-Gp 1) The paper thus argued that course B deployments (as modified), providing a maximum of 30,000 to 50,000 more U.S. troops in South Vietnam by the end of 1968, would be more acceptable.* This restrained program would avoid extending the conflict, limit the bombing to south of the 20th parallel, improve prospects for negotiations, and contribute to advances in pacification that might follow adoption of a new Vietnamese constitution, national elections later in 1967, and an improved national reconciliation program.

(S-Gp 1) The draft OSD memorandum emphasized the importance of narrowing and understanding the limited American objective of the war, which was to allow South Vietnam to determine its own future. This did not mean a U.S. effort out of proportion to the South's in the face of coups, corruption, and indications of lack of Vietnamese cooperation. Nor did it mean American insistence on the rule of the country by certain groups or a non-Communist government, although certain groups and types of government were preferred to others.

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(S-Gp 1) The Air Staff's view was that the draft memorandum obviously was slanted toward a minimal buildup of U.S. forces and no significant step-up

*Course B as described by Deputy Secretary Vance, however, would have provided a maximum of 70,000 more U.S. men for South Vietnam in fiscal year 1968. See pp 14-15.

of military action. It called for little or no augmentation of air operations in South Vietnam and for more restraints on bombing in the North.¹⁸ As the other services were equally critical of the document, the Joint Chiefs on 1 June informed Secretary McNamara that the draft memorandum did not address the implications of free-world failure in South Vietnam. Deployment of 200,000 more U.S. troops and a callup of reserves (course A), they said, would be supported by the American people who did not want "peace at any price," nor would these two measures necessarily create an "irresistible drive" for military escalation. They also believed that an intensified air and naval effort against North Vietnam would not automatically result in a confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union or China.

(S-Gp 1) Course B deployments, the JCS continued, would prolong the war, reinforce Hanoi's belief in ultimate victory, and probably cost the United States much more in lives and money. The proposal to limit the bombing of the North to south of the 20th parallel would give the Hanoi government many advantages, induce it to redouble its efforts, and preclude a favorable end to the war. Observing that the OSD draft memorandum revealed an "alarming pattern" that augured a significant change in U.S. objectives for South Vietnam, the service chiefs reaffirmed their understanding of American policy as that embodied in national security action memorandum (NSAM) 288 of 17 March 1964, which called for a free, independent, non-Communist Saigon regime. They recommended against sending the document to the President, giving it further serious consideration, and asked for the approval of the JCS proposals of 20 April.^{*19}

*See pp 13-14.

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The U. S. Worldwide Military Posture

(S-Gp 3) The JCS view on the draft memorandum to the President elicited no formal response from OSD. Meanwhile, the service chiefs on 20 May also had informed Secretary McNamara of their concern about the declining U. S. worldwide military posture. They foresaw a loss of the American initiative in Southeast Asia, decried the force limitations, and warned of a weakening capability to meet other contingencies and commitments. The incremental and restrained U. S. response in the war, they averred, made "highly possible" further involvement in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, or Korea. The North Koreans, they observed, had recently committed a flagrant violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement of July 1953. Berlin, North Africa, and the Middle East were other trouble spots.

(S-Gp 3) The Joint Chiefs affirmed the need to sustain CINCPAC's fiscal year 1968 forces and simultaneously NATO requirements. They proposed earmarking a contingency force of 10 tactical fighter squadrons and three division force equivalents (DFE) for Southeast Asia, and establishing separately a smaller contingency force of three tactical fighter squadrons and one DFE.

(S-Gp 3) To regain the "strategic initiative, the JCS again recommended an expansion of American military strength beginning with a selected callup of reserves and extension by 12 months of service tours of duty. Concurrently, the allies in South Vietnam should apply more pressure against the Communists within that country and step up air and naval operations against North Vietnam.

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Secretary Brown's Views on Deployments and Bombing

(S-Gp 3) Simultaneous with the above top-level deliberations, the Secretaries of the Air Force and Navy, the JCS, and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)--at the request of Mr. McNamara--reviewed possible measures to reduce the flow of arms and men into South Vietnam. Observing the "considerable controversy" surrounding bombing policy, the Defense Secretary solicited comments on the two "most promising" alternatives. The first would concentrate the bombing on enemy lines of communication (LOC) in route packages I, II, and III (i. e., south of the 20th parallel) except for new or rebuilt targets. The second would emphasize bombing and armed reconnaissance on all LOC's in route packages VIA and VIB (i. e., primarily above the 20th parallel). Air strikes would be directed only against fixed targets associated with LOC's and MIG aircraft on airfields. A "sanctuary" running eight nautical miles outward from the center of both Hanoi and Haiphong would be exempt. In addition, two other alternatives might be considered: no bombing of the North's ports and port facilities, or using "every effort" to halt imports into the North (as recommended by the JCS on 20 May). Secretary McNamara also asked for estimates on aircraft losses and possible Soviet and Chinese reaction to these alternative courses of action. ²¹

(S-Gp 3) The Air Staff and JCS found both alternatives inadequate. The first would be most advantageous to the enemy and indicate a weakening of American resolve in the war. The service chiefs suggested a third alternative, permitting armed reconnaissance and strikes against all important fixed targets, including airfields, on LOC's in route packages VIA and VIB, and restricting the sanctuary area around Hanoi and Haiphong to eight and

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two nautical miles, respectively. There would be no bombing of the Haiphong wharf or mining of the harbor and commercial shipping waters north of the 20th parallel. But even these proposals, the JCS warned, would be insufficient to halt substantially Hanoi's imports and destroy other remaining resources in the North. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs reaffirmed their recommendations of 20 May.²²

(S-Gp 1) On 3 June Secretary Brown sent his report to Mr. McNamara. It contained a partial reply to the draft memorandum to the President. Reviewing American and South Vietnamese objectives, he perceived three deployment options: adding 200,000 more troops in fiscal years 1968 and 1969; sending only 30,000 more troops in calendar year 1968; and withdrawing 100,000 troops per year to see "what would happen" (although this appeared out of the question unless another political coup occurred in Saigon during the coming U.S. presidential election).

(S-Gp 1) The Air Force Secretary opposed deploying 200,000 more troops, arguing that a force this size would neither accelerate the pacification effort nor make the North Vietnamese "fade away." In all probability, it would provoke Hanoi into a larger military response, raise American casualties, and convince the South Vietnamese--seeing 700,000 U.S. troops in their country--that this was not their war, a danger that already existed. It would also create new pressure for expanded military operations in Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam and hazard an "unacceptable risk" of war with China. Secretary Brown favored his second option: providing only 30,000 more troops (which would add 10 maneuver battalions), possibly without a reserve callup or taking other mobilization actions. He thought this number could redress the military situation in I Corps and serve as a "buffer" while American troops conducted

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other operations in II and III Corps and the South Vietnamese combat and pacification activities in IV corps. This would avoid any great increase in U.S. casualties and the risk of further escalation in the war.

(S-Gp 1) Concerning air strategy against the North, Dr. Brown favored current policy rather than adopting the alternatives of concentrating the bombing in the area south of the 20th parallel or on designated LOC's and ports. Any major diminution in air activity between route packages IV and VI (i.e., above the 20th parallel) would eventually require more U.S. troops in the South, raise allied casualties, and possibly inhibit South Vietnam's political evolution. On air effectiveness, the Secretary observed, it was more difficult to estimate the impact of air strikes on infiltration in North Vietnam and Laos than in South Vietnam. The only thing certain about the present level of out-country air strikes was that it caused a significant diversion of enemy manpower (only five percent of the population but many persons with skills to man air defenses and to make road, rail, and bridge repairs).

(S-Gp 1) Secretary Brown's "optimum air strategy" called for maintaining the existing level of operations or reducing it somewhat where restrikes were unnecessary, using new air techniques. He was against striking the port of Haiphong, an act he felt would pose another "unacceptable risk." He also believed that the Joint Chiefs' recommended "shouldering out" air tactic* and a proposed "power play" concept (sent by General McConnell to the Chief of Naval Operations and calling for sinking American ships in channels 18 miles from Haiphong), could have grave consequences and possibly evoke a Soviet or Chinese response. In sum, he visualized the

*See p 16.

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air war against the North as similar to operations in the South--a "war of attrition."²³

(S-Gp 1) Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze, after analyzing the bombing alternatives raised by Mr. McNamara, concluded that intensive bombing in southern North Vietnam (i. e., south of the 20th parallel) would reduce the enemy's capability to maintain a supply flow to the south, much more so than if bombing was concentrated in areas above the 20th parallel.²⁴

(S-Gp 1) As part of the high level consideration of future deployment and bombing policy, Secretary Brown continued to send to OSD Air Staff reports on the effectiveness of air power. These included evaluations by the Air Staff's "Combat Strangler" task force* of the results of interdicting the North's petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) system and lines of communications, and of Air Force weapons used. He also submitted summaries of air plans and target studies, notably, an integrated strike and interdiction plan against southern North Vietnam and Laos, an econometric study on the potential effectiveness of an intensified air campaign against more targets in the North, and a "Combat Alley" plan for destroying the North's MIG air bases.²⁵

A number of these plans also were sent to the State Department.

*The task force was established in July 1966.

III. THE 525,000 U.S. TROOP CEILING FOR SOUTH VIETNAM

(S-Gp 3) In July 1967, Mr. McNamara and other high Washington officials flew to Saigon to review the deployment issue and allied strategy in the war. It was the Defense Secretary's ninth trip in five years. The news media accurately revealed that the American troop increases under consideration ranged from a low of 35,000 to 70,000 to a high of 200,000.¹

The Saigon Conference of 7-8 July

(S-Gp 3) Upon arrival on 7 July, Secretary McNamara and his aides were briefed by the principal American civilian and military officials in South Vietnam. In contrast with General Westmoreland's dark forebodings in March about the war, the mid-year review contained a more hopeful tone. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker* saw a greatly improved military situation following recent allied offensive operations and an encouraging South Vietnamese combat performance near the DMZ and elsewhere. Suffering from heavy casualties and a higher defection rate than in 1966, the Communist forces had failed to win a major victory. Politically, the Saigon government was moving toward a broader and more stable constitutional government. The pacification program was advancing faster and there was more economic activity and stability throughout the country.

(S-Gp 3) The American Ambassador admitted that serious difficulties remained. Enemy thrusts, while blunted, had not been stopped and infiltration--still the crux of the problem--was estimated at about 6,500 personnel per month. Poor leadership still plagued Saigon's armed forces, and South

*Mr. Bunker assumed his Saigon post on 4 April 1967, succeeding Ambassador Lodge.

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Vietnamese motivation and involvement was unsatisfactory due to apathy, inertia, widespread corruption, inadequate physical security, lack of social justice, and incompetence in civil administration. While there was no reliable opinion-taking organization such as in the Dominican Republic* to determine peoples attitudes outside of the cities, the Ambassador thought none of the problems were insuperable "if we stick with it long enough."

(S-Gp 3) General Westmoreland likewise pointed to military progress and stressed the high cost being paid by the enemy. The growing success of the air and sea offensive, he thought, was being matched by the less dramatic gains of the ground campaign. He urged stepped up military and pacification activities in South Vietnam, increased air pressure against the North, and new combat initiatives in Laos.

(S-Gp 3) Gen. William D. Momyer, Commander of the Seventh Air Force, and Admiral Sharp gave briefings on the overall air effort. With respect to operations in the South, General Momyer observed that about 30,000 close air support sorties were flown in 18 ground campaigns and the combined air and ground fire killed 19,928 of the enemy. The largest action thus far, called "Junction City," occurred in the northwest corner of III Corps. B-52's were averaging 27 sorties per day from bases in Guam and Thailand with about 30 percent of the sorties flying in support of ground operations.

(S-Gp 3) General Momyer reviewed the round-the-clock air operations in the North in the "Tally-Ho" area near the DMZ and in route package I, where about 18,500 attack sorties were flown from January through June 1967.

*Ambassador Bunker played a key role in American efforts to settle the revolution in the Dominican Republic in 1965-1966.

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With the arrival of better weather in May, a large portion of the air effort in Laos (i.e., the "Steel Tiger" and "Tiger Hound" programs) had been shifted to that region. Recent air strikes, he said, had depleted significantly the enemy's resources north of the DMZ. In the first six months of the year they had demolished or damaged 2,298 trucks, destroyed 6,297 tons of supplies, and caused 9,857 secondary fires or explosions which ruined another 1,593 tons of supplies. In addition, the air campaign had kept the North's aircraft out of South Vietnam, and prevented the Communists from moving anti-aircraft guns and SAM's to LOC's in southern North Vietnam.

(S-Gp 3) Admiral Sharp reported that the enemy was "hurting" and thought the allies were "at an important point in the conflict." He recommended greater latitude for commanders in planning and executing air strikes in the remaining months of good weather, and opposed any further strictures such as limiting the bombing to south of the 20th parallel. This, he said, "would have adverse and . . . disastrous effects." He reaffirmed the importance of bombing and mining the harbor at Haiphong and recommended attacks on six basic targets: electrical facilities, maritime ports, airfields, transportation, military complexes, and war-supporting industries. He called for integrated air strikes on all significant targets in North Vietnam and Laos, and singled out especially the need to reduce the size of prohibited areas around Hanoi and Haiphong.

(S-Gp 3) The PACOM Commander pointed to a "significant" downward trend in Hanoi's ability to support the war because of more efficient U.S. air operations. He cited the enemy's high aircraft losses and his inability to use three airfields (because of bombings) which lessened the danger from MIG's, more SAM firings with faulty guidance, reluctance to fire SAM's in good weather for fear of allied detection of sites, decreasing anti-aircraft fire along

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the northeast rail line and other sectors (also because of American bombings), and fewer U.S. aircraft losses to SAM's and anti-aircraft fire in route packages VIA and VIB.

(S-Gp 3) Discussing manpower needs, a MACV briefer noted that the latest approved deployment program authorized 483,222 spaces for South Vietnam^{*} and that an additional request for 13,124 for fiscal year 1967 would raise the total to 496,346. With respect to further troop increases as proposed in OSD's courses "A" and "B," he emphasized that the first--providing five tactical fighter squadrons and two and one-third divisions each for fiscal years 1968 and 1969--would provide greater assurance for maintaining pressure on the enemy and for shortening the war. Course B, allowing for only 70,000 more troops, would decrease American options and increase them for the Communists.²

(S-Gp 3) MACV officials also presented to Mr. McNamara and his aides five force "package" programs,⁺ one of which contained new proposals to strengthen South Vietnamese forces, including the VNAF.³

Approval of the 525,000 U.S. Troop Ceiling

(S-Gp 4) On 11 July, after spending five days in South Vietnam, Mr. McNamara and his party departed for the United States. On the 12th, General Westmoreland arrived in Washington and was invited to the White House, where he met again with the Defense Secretary and General Wheeler.

^{*}For earlier figures, see pp 4 and 6. The approved manpower totals for South Vietnam were under constant revision.

⁺See p 32.

⁺⁺Westmoreland flew home to attend the funeral of his mother in Columbia, S.C. He spent the night of 12 July at the White House and the morning of the 13th, during which time he and the President discussed Vietnam affairs.

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Without consulting the JCS, the three men agreed to establish the new U.S. troop ceiling in Vietnam at 525,000 men. This was about 45,000 above the currently authorized strength. President Johnson approved the figure the same day. There was no immediate public disclosure of it, although at a press conference on 13 July at the White House, attended by Generals Wheeler and Westmoreland and Secretary McNamara, the President made it clear they had agreed on future plans for Vietnam. The decision to limit the buildup of manpower--in contrast to the MACV commander's earlier desire for upwards of 200,000 men--apparently was based on a number of factors. They included the relative, if slow, success in the war (as described during the just completed Saigon conference), the administration's desire to avoid military or economic mobilization, concern about the inflationary impact of more troops on South Vietnam's fragile economy, and the possibility that an excessively large U.S. force would convince the South Vietnamese this was not their war and encourage military operations that might trigger Chinese intervention.

(U) In public statements on 12 and 13 July, the President and Secretary McNamara jointly agreed that the additional U.S. manpower to be sent to Vietnam would not result in a reserve callup or an extension of tours of duty. The Defense Secretary also stressed the need for more effective use of the 1,300,000 American, South Vietnamese, and other allied troops already in South Vietnam. He said progress had been made in the military, political, and economic fields, but in a fourth area, pacification, it was still very slow. The President and his aids agreed that, despite considerable enemy infiltration, the war was not stalemated.

*President Johnson did not disclose the new figure until 3 August when he announced that 45,000 to 50,000 more U.S. troops would go to South Vietnam by 30 June 1968. Subsequent planning called for the new U.S. manpower ceiling of 525,000 to be reached in March 1969. See p 78.

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(U) In air operations, Secretary McNamara said some "very significant" changes in technology had greatly enhanced U.S. capability to make all-weather attacks on LOC's in South and North Vietnam. These changes, in conjunction with new weapons and ordnance, substantially improved the effectiveness of air strikes and reduced aircraft losses. But he reaffirmed his belief that air power alone against the main LOC's in the North could not stop the flow of men and supplies to the South, no matter how competently it was managed or directed. Rather, it could reduce the amount of supplies and make the war more costly to the enemy. The objective of penalizing the enemy was being met, he said, citing as evidence PACOM data that showed 400,000 to 500,000 North Vietnamese engaged in repairing the LOC's.⁴

(S-Gp 4) Also on 13 July, Secretary McNamara orally informed the three service chiefs of the new manpower ceiling and asked them to submit a detailed troop list using the five force "packages" prepared by General Creighton M. Abrams, Deputy Commander of MACV and his staff and given to him in Saigon. Based on the just completed briefings in Saigon and MACV's fiscal year 1968 force requirements, the Abrams packages suggested how the 1968 goals might be achieved without a callup of reserves, extending terms of service, and by employing only minimum additional troops. General Abrams presented alternate choices on how to limit a further U.S. military buildup, such as using more South Vietnamese or Korean manpower, or substituting civilian contractor or direct hire personnel.* The packages incorporated General Westmoreland's additional fiscal year 1967 troop request into his fiscal year 1968 proposals.⁵

*On 13 June, Secretary McNamara had asked the JCS to expand its study on combat support to include the possible use of more South Vietnamese civilians, using as an example the Korean service corps, a quasi-military organization that worked for the Korean Army. In a separate action, General Westmoreland proposed increasing South Vietnam's regular, popular, and regional forces from 622,153 to 685,739 during fiscal year 1968. This was endorsed by Admiral Sharp on 29 July and approved by Mr. McNamara on 7 October. See p 45.

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Refinements in the U.S. Troop List

(S-Gp 4) In response to Mr. McNamara's request, the Joint Staff prepared and the JCS on 20 July sent to OSD a "troop list" proposing a "mix" of the following forces: 16 maneuver battalions (13 Army, three Marine), four USAF tactical fighter squadrons, the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB) (with two fighter squadrons), more units for the Navy mobile riverine force (to expand "Game Warden" operations on inland waterways and "Market Time" coastal patrols), and certain logistic and advisory units and personnel. Using the currently authorized strengths as a base, the services would increase their total manpower in South Vietnam in 1968 from 484,472 to 537,545 (including 59,528 Air Force), but would stay within the 52,000-man ceiling by converting 12,545 military to civilian direct hire and contractor personnel.⁶

(S-Gp 4) USAF strength would rise by 3,380 spaces and include two deployed A-1 fighter squadrons (963 personnel), two "ready-status" fighter squadrons (1,031 personnel) in the United States, 10 AC-47 and 22 O-2 aircraft plus crews, support personnel, and other augmentations (1,386 personnel).*

(S-Gp 4) Neither General McConnell, the Air Staff, nor the other service chiefs were satisfied with the troop list prepared, of course, under the guidelines laid down by the Defense Secretary. They believed all four USAF fighter squadrons were needed in South Vietnam and especially objected to including two squadrons scheduled to remain in the United States on a ready-status basis, within the 525,000 manpower ceiling. They were backed by

*The "other augmentations" were to include deployment of seven more UC-123 chemical defoliation aircraft, personnel to convert some F-4C's to F-4D's and O-1's to O-2's, a "Red Horse" civil engineering squadron, and more spaces for the public affairs office and communications center.

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General Momyer who, in reviewing his sortie needs, cited the Army's rising demand for preplanned close support sorties (i. e., to aid ground troops not in actual contact with the enemy). At present, he could fulfill only about 60 percent of the number requested. In addition, Secretary Brown previously had informed Mr. McNamara that, in the event the Marine Corps could not provide two more squadrons, the Air Force could make five available in fiscal year 1968: three A-1's, one F-4D and one F-100, the last from the European Command.

(S-Gp 4) The JCS also objected to including elements of the 9th MAB--temporarily engaged in South Vietnam--in the 525,000-man ceiling since it was a PACOM reserve unit based in Japan, subject to deployment anywhere, and already accounted for in previous manpower totals. The service chiefs warned it would be difficult to substitute civilian contractor and local direct hire personnel in lieu of U.S. military spaces. For the recruitment of suitable civilians would have to compete with Saigon government plans to draft more men for the South Vietnamese armed forces.

(S-Gp 4) Although the units in the JCS troop list would contribute significantly to prosecuting the war, the service chiefs noted that they provided less manpower than was recommended on 20 April.* They also reaffirmed the validity of their views of 20 May in which they addressed the nation's world-wide military posture.+

(S-Gp 4) After reviewing the troop list and JCS comments, Secretary McNamara on 21 July verbally directed the service chiefs to prepare, subject to OSD changes, the dispatch of additional forces in fiscal year 1968. The

*See pp 13-14.

+See p 22.

principal new Air Force units approved for deployment consisted of one F-4D ready-status squadron (to remain in the United States until needed), two A-1 squadrons, 10-AC-47's, and 22 O-2's. Air Force personnel in these units, and those needed to convert some F-4C's to F-4D's and O-1's to O-2's, totaled 2,242. The important deletions consisted of one A-1 ready-status squadron (351 spaces) and a "Red Horse" engineering squadron (600 spaces).

Mr. McNamara deferred--pending more justification--deployment of additional UC-123 aircraft. He thought the inclusion of the three USAF fighter squadrons (two deployed, one in ready-status) and the two Marine fighter squadrons (with the 9th MAB in Japan) adequate for the present. The latter would be sent only if the Air Force failed to meet Marine Corps air needs. The Secretary reaffirmed his decision to include the one USAF ready-status squadron, the 9th MAB, and a Navy APB unit (transferred from the offshore Navy to South Vietnam) as part of the 525,000 manpower program (which was designated deployment program 5 on 5 October).⁷

(S-Gp 4) On 10 August Mr McNamara--noting that some problems associated with the new deployment program 5 ceiling needed to be worked out--tentatively approved for planning purposes the following totals:

	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Total</u>
Program 4	56,148	30,039	74,550	323,755	484,472
FY 1968 Added					
Forces	<u>2,242</u>	<u>4,234</u>	<u>7,523</u>	<u>33,297</u>	<u>47,296</u>
Total	<u>58,390</u>	<u>34,273</u>	<u>82,073</u>	<u>357,052</u>	<u>531,768</u>
Civilians	<u>-542</u>	<u>-812</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>-5,414</u>	<u>-6,768</u>
Total	57,848	33,461	82,073	351,538	525,000

(S-Gp 4) With reference to JCS recommendations of 20 April, the Defense Secretary disapproved deploying additional "out-of-country" forces except five destroyers for gunfire support--to come from existing fleet

resources--and said he was considering activating a battleship. He asked for another "refined" troop list by 15 September containing justification for more units that might be desired with "trade-offs" from military to civilian spaces. Other directives indicated that OSD was firmly resolved to restrict further U.S. military buildup and spending in order to control South Vietnam's piaster expenditures and inflation.

(S-Gp 3) To provide the refined troop list requested by Mr. McNamara, Admiral Sharp on 23 August convened a special five-day conference in Honolulu, attended by representatives of the Air Force and other services and OSD. Reviewing existing plans, the conferees determined that more than 5,400 military spaces could be saved in deployment program 4 by inactivations, reorganizations and strength adjustments. This saving, plus the conversion of 12,545 military to civilian spaces, would permit the deployment of an additional 50,000 American personnel to South Vietnam during fiscal year 1968, and allow the services to remain within the 525,000-man troop ceiling for that country. The conferees also studied a new request for about 1,164 hospital and other medical personnel to assure more medical aid for South Vietnamese war casualties.* Although this was principally an Army program, 32 USAF medical personnel were required. These and other adjustments were incorporated into a new troop list sent to Secretary McNamara on 15 September (see chart, next page).

*Plans to expand the treatment of South Vietnamese war casualties began following President Johnson's visit to Southeast Asia in March 1967. The program received impetus as a result of findings by a Senate subcommittee in August headed by Senator Edward M. Kennedy. For a brief discussion of South Vietnamese casualties caused by both enemy and friendly forces, see MACV Command History (TS), 1967, Vol III, Annex B.

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SERVICE TROOP LIST FOR FISCAL YEAR 1968 DEPLOYMENTS TO SOUTH VIETNAM

15 September 1967

	<u>Program #4 End Strengths</u>	<u>Program #4 In-Country and Ordered Deployed</u>	<u>Program #4 Not Ordered Deployed</u>	<u>Total</u>
Air Force	56,148	55,987	161	56,148
Navy	30,039	28,740	1,299	30,039
Marine Corps	81,270*	81,270	0	81,270
Army	<u>323,735</u>	<u>309,417</u>	<u>9,693</u>	<u>319,110+</u>
Total	491,192	475,414	11,153	486,567

	<u>FY 67 Additional and FY 68 Adjusted Deployments</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Civilianization</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>
Air Force	3,161	59,309	-600	58,709
Navy	7,483	37,522	-2,050	35,472
Marine Corps	969	82,239	-300	81,939
Army	<u>39,365</u>	<u>358,575</u>	<u>-9,595</u>	<u>348,880</u>
Total	50,978	537,545	-12,545 **	525,000

*Includes elements of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade with a strength of 6,720 men.

+Includes Army space-saving adjustments totaling 4,625 as a result of certain unit inactivations, net strength adjustments to program #4, and adjustments from in-country audits.

**Tentative

Source: JCSM-505-67 (TS), 15 Sep 67

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(S-Gp 3) In forwarding the troop list to Secretary McNamara on 15 September, the JCS simultaneously expressed its reservations about some of its provisions. They said that a successful conversion of 12,545 military to civilian spaces was "highly conjectural" from the standpoint of civilian recruitment, reliability and financing. They opposed the Secretary's inclusion within the 525,000 manpower ceiling, three non-deploying squadrons, a Marine unit temporarily assigned to South Vietnam, and new hospital spaces. Because additional manpower would have to come largely from the U.S. strategic reserve, the service chiefs indicated they had begun another study on how best to reconstitute it, observing that Mr. McNamara had not yet replied to their views of 20 May on the weakening U.S. worldwide military posture. ⁹

(S-Gp 4) Overriding all JCS objections, Secretary McNamara on 5 October approved the troop list with its provisions for civilianization of certain military spaces and additional deployments. He said deployment program 5 would be revised to reflect the manpower changes, and instructed the service chiefs to review continuously their forces, deleting those no longer required to reduce the impact of more U.S. troops on South Vietnam's economy. He said that requests to send more high priority units should contain appropriate "trade-offs" of civilians for military spaces to assure no breaching of the 525,000 military manpower ceiling. Costs and resources for additional deployments or adjustments should be included in revised service budget estimates for fiscal years 1968 and 1969 in accordance with established procedures. An ¹⁰ initial report on service civilianization efforts was desired by the end of 1967.

(S-Gp 4) On 13 October, Secretary McNamara also imposed a ceiling of 45,724 U.S. military personnel in Thailand, asserting that number should suffice

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to meet foreseeable needs in that country. He stipulated that the "ground rules" for sending new units or augmentations into Thailand would be the same as those for South Vietnam. He also cited a recent study by OSD's Systems Analysis office showing that Air Force base support in Thailand could be reduced by 500 spaces below requests and was necessary to remain within the manpower ceiling. This conclusion was contrary to an Air Staff view, based on the findings of the office of Inspector General, that with few exceptions no reduction in air base support was possible.¹¹

Plans to Increase South Vietnamese Forces

(S-Gp 4) Concurrent with the above planning, the Defense Secretary on 7 October also approved a JCS recommendation--based on proposals submitted by General Westmoreland and Admiral Sharp--to boost the strength of South Vietnamese forces from 622,153 to 685,739 personnel by the end of fiscal year 1968. The Air Staff supported the increase, agreeing it was desirable to transfer to the Saigon government a large share of the military effort, improve the balance between combat and combat support elements, and provide more forces for the pacification and railway repair and security programs.

(S-Gp 4) Service allocations for the 63,586-man raise in South Vietnamese military strength were as follows: VNAF, 761; regular army, 12,843; Marines, 131; regional forces, 34,353; and popular forces, 15,610. The Navy would lose 112 spaces. The VNAF portion would be primarily for headquarters support, political warfare, counterintelligence, security, clandestine operations, helicopter maintenance, and for personnel and dependent's needs. Pending receipt of more information, Mr. McNamara deferred a decision on another

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proposal by Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland to raise the strength of South Vietnamese regular, regional, and popular forces from 685,739 to 763,953 in fiscal year 1969.¹²

Other Deployment Actions

(S-Gp 3) There were, meanwhile, other significant developments affecting the Air Force. One followed a severe fire on the carrier Forrestal on 29 July which killed 133 personnel, destroyed 21 aircraft, damaged 30, and forced the carrier's return to the United States for repairs. To compensate for the loss of Navy air support, the Air Force was directed to deploy to South Vietnam six USAF F-100's and 10 B-57's from the Philippines and the Marines were asked to send two squadrons from Japan. In addition, the carrier Constellation was temporarily assigned to "Yankee Station" off of North Vietnam. Approving these changes on 13 September, Secretary McNamara directed, however, that the additional USAF and Marine aircraft could remain in South Vietnam only until 15 November. By that date, bad weather over the North would reduce combat requirements and the other air resources available to PACOM should enable Admiral Sharp to meet priority sortie needs.¹³

(S-Gp 3) The summer months also witnessed accelerated planning for construction of a linear strong point obstacle system (SPOS) extending inland about 13 kilometers (later lengthened to 23 kilometers) from the South China Sea just below the DMZ, and an air-supported anti-infiltration system for Laos.* By 7 August, Mr. McNamara had approved the use of 11,567 U.S. military personnel already in the theater or newly deployed to build and support the two systems. Of these, 7,822, largely Army, were earmarked for the SPOS in

*Personnel and supporting aircraft for the Laos system would be based in Thailand. See p 41.

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South Vietnam and 3,745, largely Air Force, were scheduled for the air-supported system in Laos. Still considered additive to deployment program 4, the manpower for the two projects was later included in the manning list for deployment program 5 (issued on 5 October).

(S-Gp 3) Air Force Brigadier General William P. McBride was appointed manager of the air-supported anti-infiltration system (designated "Muscle Shoals" on 8 September) with headquarters at Nakhom Phanom, Royal Thai AFB. General McBride arrived at the base on 18 October as commander of the Seventh Air Force Task Force (unofficially called Task Force Alpha). He immediately began organizing a special unit to operate the Air Force-staffed anti-infiltration surveillance center (ISC). Several supporting air units, specially equipped for communications relay or for dropping sensing devices and special "gravel" munitions, arrived at Thai air bases between September and 20 December. They operated 21 USAF EC-121's at Korat, and eight Navy OP-2E's, 19 USAF A-1E's, and 12 USAF CH-3's at Nakhom Phanom. Twelve Army UH-1F armed helicopters also arrived at Nakhom Phanom from South Vietnam to fly escort missions for the CH-3's. In addition, 18 F-4's were earmarked for stationing at Ubon on 1 March 1968. Approximately 400 USAF personnel arrived between October and December 1967 to staff the ISC and related operational, communication, and weather facilities. This figure was boosted to more than 500 in early 1968.

(S-Gp 3) In another action under the aegis of the new deployment program 5, Secretary McNamara on 23 October approved the movement of 13 more USAF EB-66 aircraft and 902 personnel to Thailand. This increased the U.S. manpower ceiling of 45,724 set by Mr. McNamara 10 days earlier. Five hundred and ninety-two personnel were associated with the 13 aircraft and the rest were allocated to the expanding electronic warfare program in the theater.

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When deployed, 41 EB/RB-66 aircraft would be operating in Southeast Asia.

The Air Force's electronic warfare and intelligence collecting capability

was also expected to be enhanced by converting 11 more C-47 to EC-47

aircraft by June 1968, a decision to this effect being made in September.

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A total of 40 of these aircraft were in Southeast Asia at the end of December.

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IV. NEW STUDIES ON DEESCALATION AND MILITARY ACTION

(U) The administration's decision in mid-1967 to limit American strength in South Vietnam to 525,000 personnel coincided with another relatively "optimistic" period in the war. The hopeful briefings in July in Saigon for Secretary McNamara by air and ground commanders were followed, in August, by more publicized reports that "the pressures are beginning to tell on the enemy." In the same month, Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, declared that the recently approved 45,000 U.S. personnel increase for South Vietnam would be adequate, and he foresaw some reduction in American forces in 18 months. However, by September, the intractable North Vietnamese launched new thrusts against allied troops in I Corps.¹

The Threat in the Demilitarized Zone

(S-Gp 1) On 12 September, after a White House conference of top officials examined a proposal from the U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Saigon, Eugene M. Locke, for improving the allied war effort, the President asked General Wheeler for a JCS list of actions which would increase military pressure against North Vietnam. Secretary McNamara specifically requested a plan for a 12-month air campaign against the North to begin on 1 November.²

(S-Gp 4) Meanwhile, the administration's immediate attention centered on developments in I Corps near the DMZ. There the enemy had built up his strength and launched artillery, rocket, and mortar bombardments of allied positions at Dong Ha, Con Thien, and Gia Lien. The intensified attacks, General Westmoreland warned the JCS, threatened to halt construction work on the anti-infiltration strong point obstacle system. To silence the Communist batteries, the MACV commander on 11 September launched Operation Neutralize, using principally Seventh Air Force and Marine tactical air units and B-52's to



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knock out enemy gun positions. Meanwhile, a partially stepped up air campaign in the North, devised largely by the Air Staff and which began in August, attempted to isolate Hanoi from Haiphong and both cities from the rest of the country. The Air Force also hit 10 new targets in the buffer zone near China.³

(S-Gp 4) The enemy threat near the DMZ, however, did not abate and, with deteriorating weather tending to hinder air operations, the President on 20 September asked Gen. Wallace M. Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corps-- whose troops were primarily responsible for the defense of I Corps--to suggest several courses of action to deal with the situation. General Greene proposed five possible actions, all using existing forces in Vietnam and requiring only a modest change in combat restraints: (1) continue operations with current strength (i. e., maintain the status quo); (2) attack north of the DMZ to destroy enemy positions; (3) reorient the allied strategy to a mobile defense; (4) reinforce I Corps by at least two regiments and concentrate on enemy battalions and firing positions; and (5) increase the effectiveness of air and naval gunfire north of the DMZ where the bulk of enemy infiltration, supplies, and firing positions were located. The Marine commandant recommended only the last two, but also asked for a Joint Staff study of the situation.⁴

(S-Gp 3) In reply to still another White House request on 27 September, General Wheeler sent through Deputy Secretary Vance additional suggestions for dealing with the enemy in both North and South Vietnam. Some were long-term actions but all required White House approval. The JCS chairman proposed boosting B-52 sorties from 800 to 1,200 per month, authorizing B-52 overflights of Laos, employing 2,000-pound and heavier bombs such as the MK-84, permitting Air Force-Navy tests as soon as possible of MK-36 weapons, augmenting naval gunfire and Army batteries in the DMZ area, accelerating the movement

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of units approved for deployment program 5, raising the level of South Vietnamese forces and equipping them more rapidly with the M-16 rifle, and intensifying research and development on finding concealed enemy artillery. He indicated preparatory steps had been taken to carry out these measures quickly, and awaited only official approval.⁵

(S-Gp 3) The Air Staff generally supported these recommendations but expressed reservations about greater use of B-52's. In the absence of more precise targeting information, increasing the B-52 rate to 1,200 sorties per month or using larger bombs--which also could be carried by tactical aircraft--seemed an inefficient way to employ the SAC bombers. The Air Staff favored a modest increase in the monthly rate to 900 sorties and only a 48-hour "surge" capability of 1,200 sorties.⁶

(S-Gp 3) OSD and the White House subsequently approved some of the recommendations made by Generals Greene and Wheeler. The MACV commander was authorized to reinforce Quang Tri Province in I Corps, and to augment his air, naval, and artillery firepower there including the use of more B-52 sorties. On 7 October, Secretary McNamara authorized a buildup of South Vietnamese forces from 622,153 to 685,739 by the end of fiscal year 1968.⁷

Deescalation Studies and Other Possible Actions

(U) Concurrent with these military developments, Air Force officials noted indications of a possible shift in administration policy toward the war. On 21 September, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur J. Goldberg, in an address before the General Assembly, appeared to suggest that the United States might consider halting the bombing of North Vietnam if it

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could be assured of serious peace negotiations with Hanoi. This was followed, on 29 September, by a major address by President Johnson in San Antonio, Tex., in which he presented a "formula" for beginning negotiations with the Communists.^{*8}

(S-Gp 1) These administration soundings triggered new "courses of action" studies by the Air Staff and Joint Staff. The principal ones concerned lowering the intensity of the fighting if the Communists reduced their activities or showed other evidence of weakening support for the war (i. e., "tacit deescalation"); lessening military activity because of congressional pressure, public debate, and other influences; and possible acceptance by Hanoi of President Johnson's San Antonio "formula" for ceasing air and naval bombardment of North Vietnam. Other studies centered on increasing military pressure on the Communists throughout Southeast Asia and launching a 12-month air campaign against the North or a four-month military campaign in Southeast Asia. All reflected the President's growing preoccupation with finding the right combination of political actions or military pressures to reduce the tempo of the war and to hasten its settlement.⁹

(S-Gp 1) With respect to the first study, the Joint Staff prepared two "flimsies" or working papers on a possible American response to any tacit deescalation in fighting by the Communists, both providing, in effect, for a step-by-step decrease in hostilities. The Air Staff opposed this approach,

*The President said in part: "As we have told Hanoi time and time again, the heart of the matter is this: The United States is willing immediately to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We would, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Vietnam will not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation." It was subsequently disclosed that the U.S. government sent the substance of the San Antonio formula secretly to Hanoi on 25 August.

believing it would be disadvantageous to the United States. It would permit the North Vietnamese to control the level and intensity of the war, possibly lessen allied air and ground activity, and negate the administration's objective of attaining peace in the shortest practicable time. The Air Staff also observed that tacit deescalation was but one of several alternatives open to Hanoi to reduce the tempo of the war. Since the Navy and Marine Corps endorsed the Air Force position, the Joint Staff decided to consider all of the alternatives that appeared open to North Vietnam in reducing military operations. No final action was taken on this subject by the end of 1967.¹⁰

(S-Gp 1) In the second study, the Air Staff agreed with the Joint Staff that a lessening of allied activity could augur a major change in the conflict and possibly lead to a bombing halt of the North, signal other acts to decrease the fighting, and even result in a withdrawal of troops from South Vietnam. Accordingly, the service chiefs decided to review their major policy papers since November 1964 to determine if a lessening of warfare would permit the United States to achieve its goals or whether it would necessitate a change in them and, in turn, require the JCS to alter its strategy.¹¹

(S-Gp 1) The third study (on Hanoi's possible acceptance of the San Antonio "formula") was the most comprehensive examination to date of possible ways to negotiate an end to the war. Entitled "Sea Cabin," it was undertaken by an ad hoc group composed of Joint Staff, DIA, and OSD members and chaired by Lt. Gen. Andrew J. Goodpaster, Commandant of the National War College. A draft of the study was completed in December. Because an Air Staff analysis showed it included outdated intelligence, contained statements inconsistent with previous JCS judgments, and needed further review, General McConnell proposed, and the other service chiefs agreed, that the JCS merely note it and submit

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only preliminary comments to OSD. Accordingly, Secretary McNamara was advised that the study contained insufficient reliable intelligence on the overall impact of the air campaign on the North. The Joint Chiefs reaffirmed their judgment on how bombing could contribute to achieving American objectives, acknowledged the existence of diverse U.S. agency views on negotiating with the Communists while maintaining pressure on them, and suggested an interdepartmental examination of the problem with JCS participation. Deputy Defense Secretary Vance subsequently concurred with the last proposal and asked Secretary of State Rusk to establish an interdepartmental group.¹²

(S-Gp 1) The fourth study on "increased pressure" combined earlier Joint Chiefs' views on possible "ultimate" U.S. military requirements as suggested by OSD,^{*} with their response to the White House request of 12 September for a "pressure paper." General McConnell considered this study the proper "vehicle" for conveying the position of the service chiefs to OSD and the President on further prosecution of the war. Observing that no one could predict how long it would take to defeat the Communists, he said it was now very evident that the strategy employed in the past three years had not produced the desired result.¹³

(S-Gp 1) Sent to Secretary McNamara on 17 October and later to the White House, the document cited basic policy as outlined in NSAM-288, 17 March 1964 (calling for an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam), other policy guidelines, and the principal JCS recommendations for attaining American objectives. It also pointed to certain administration restraints on JCS action, such as requiring "graduated" pressure on the enemy, permitting

*See pp 14-18

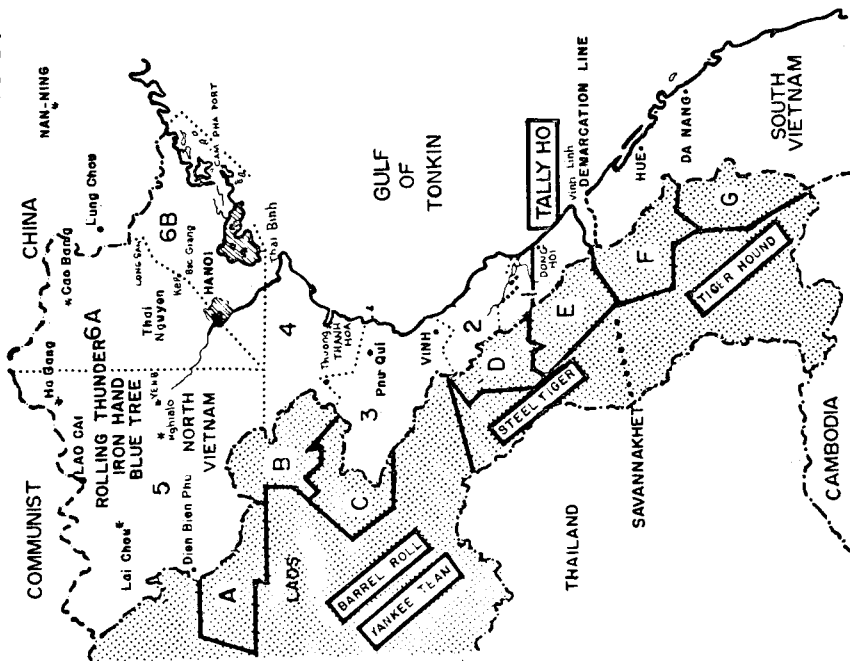
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"sanctuary" areas in North Vietnam (particularly around Hanoi and Haiphong and in the buffer zone near China), and limiting special operations in Laos and Cambodia.

(TS-Gp 1) Under current policy, the JCS said, North Vietnam was paying heavily for its aggression and had lost the initiative in the South. While the "trend" was with the free-world forces, South Vietnam was making slow military, political and economic advances. To accelerate the rate of progress called for more military pressure. The service chiefs advocated 10 major additional steps, none requiring an increase in U.S. deployments. Several pertained to removing restrictions on air operations in the North: reducing the size of "prohibited" areas around Hanoi and Haiphong to the cities proper, thus making more important targets available to air strikes; shrinking the "buffer" zone area near China to permit unrestricted air attacks on rail lines and roads up to five miles from the Chinese border; authorizing CINCPAC to strike or restrike all targets outside of newly defined restricted areas; and permitting the JCS to authorize air strikes within restricted areas such as Haiphong on a "case-by-case" basis.

(TS-Gp 1) The JCS further recommended the mining of deep water ports, inland waterways, and estuaries north of the 20th parallel, and extending naval (Sea Dragon) operations. They favored emplacing Talos surface-to-air missiles on U.S. ships, stepping up air strikes in Laos and along North Vietnam's borders, and establishing "saturation bombing" zones in certain areas of Laos, as in the region northwest of the DMZ, the Nape, and Mu Gia Pass. They urged eliminating restrictions on B-52 overflights of and air strikes in Laos, and ending a "cover" requirement for air strikes in South Vietnam when the targets were in Laos.

**USAF STRIKE AND RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAMS
NORTH VIETNAM ROUTE PACKAGE AREAS
LAOS SECTOR AREAS
1967**



ARC LIGHT
Strikes by B-52 aircraft against personnel and equipment from North Vietnam and Viet Cong.

BARREL ROLL
Strikes in Laos against personnel and equipment from North Vietnam in support of Pathet - Lao/Viet Minh.

BLUE TREE
Reconnaissance North of 20th parallel in North Vietnam.

IRON HAND
Strikes against SAM Sites in North Vietnam.

ROLLING THUNDER
Strikes in North Vietnam.

STEEL TIGER
Strikes in southern Laos against personnel and equipment from North Vietnam in support of Viet Cong.

TALLY HO
Strikes in Southern North Vietnam (South of 17 30) and Northern half of DMZ.

TIGER HOUND
Strikes in Steel Tiger Area south of a line from DMZ to Savannakhet.

YANKEE TEAM
Reconnaissance in Laos.

SOURCE: MACV Comd Hist
1967, Vol I, p 424

(S-Gp 1) In addition, the JCS proposed expanding current "Daniel Boone" operations into Cambodia (to detect Communist activity) to the full length of the South Vietnamese-Cambodian border, allowing limited sabotage destruction activities, air strikes on border targets and unlimited helicopter missions near the border, and enlarging special programs in North Vietnam to improve the credibility of a resistance movement. The service chiefs believed that the major Soviet and Chinese reaction to all of these actions would be limited principally to providing more assistance to North Vietnam and to propaganda.

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(S-Gp 1) High administration officials rejected these proposals, since, instead of offering "new thinking" for carrying the war against the enemy, principally within South Vietnam, they would greatly expand military operations in Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam which was contrary to Presidential policy. However, the administration was not yet through exploring alternate ways that could somehow accelerate allied progress in the war and simultaneously contribute to deescalating the fighting or negotiations to end it. Two more plans now came under JCS consideration. One concerned the 12-month air campaign against the North requested by Mr. McNamara and the other, requested by Secretary Rusk on 8 November, related to military operations in Southeast Asia in the immediate ensuing four-month period.

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(S-Gp 4) Because the Defense Secretary wanted the 12-month campaign plan developed at the Washington level (only a concept had been prepared by PACOM in September), the JCS chairman on 14 October established a nine-man planning group headed by Air Force Lt. Gen. John C. Meyer, Director of Operations, Joint Staff. It included representatives from the Air Staff and other services, the Joint Staff, PACOM, and DIA. The group's terms of

reference called for an air plan that would be an integral part of the overall U.S. strategy in Southeast Asia.¹⁶

(S-Gp 1) The draft of a plan acceptable to General McConnell and the Air Staff was completed on 29 November. It was a variation of many previous JCS recommendations. In essence, it emphasized air and naval operations in North Vietnam against port cities, materiel distribution lines (especially those running southward), and other targets. It would require only the use of currently deployed or programmed Air Force and Navy units but possibly more B-52 sorties. One of the plan's assumptions was that the stepped up operations would not trigger a Soviet or Chinese response. Transmission of the document to Mr. McNamara was delayed, however, until the service chiefs could complete the four-month plan for Southeast Asia requested by Secretary Rusk on 8 November.¹⁷

(S-Gp 1) Mr. Rusk envisaged a State-Defense paper that would preclude the need for a weekly examination and approval of many small, short-range military operations and also accelerate in a very brief period allied progress in the war. The JCS input was sent through Secretary McNamara. Under current policy guidance, said the service chiefs, no new program could increase significantly the rate of allied progress in the near future. This was especially true with regards to efforts to expand the South Vietnamese armed forces and the pacification program and to improve the effectiveness of both. Taking a long view, they affirmed their belief that the present integrated military strategy for Southeast Asia (which they thought was generally being followed) was sound and would eventually achieve the objectives of NSAM-288, 17 March 1964, and those enunciated by the JCS on 1 June 1967.* However, they thought

*See p 21.

there could be some improvement in the next four months if the United States avoided military truces (e.g., during the coming Christmas, New Year, and Tet holidays) and maintained pressure on the enemy. Again hoping to persuade administration authorities, the JCS also listed a series of measures for stepping up operations against the Communists, some of which were in the draft 12-month air campaign paper and in other JCS documents. These would require more action against North Vietnam in the form of air strikes on 24 important targets, mining the harbors of Haiphong, Hon Gai, and Cam Pha, ending bombing restrictions around Hanoi and Haiphong, allowing reconnaissance patrols in the northern half of the DMZ, launching Operation York II in the A-Shau Valley concurrently with limited South Vietnamese raids into Laos, and conducting other operations in both Laos and Cambodia.

(S-Gp 1) Although General McConnell had approved these recommendations, he and the Air Staff had misgivings about Operation York II and sending reconnaissance patrols into the Communist side of the DMZ as both might increase significantly manpower needs and require a major change in policy.

(S-Gp 3) Not unexpectedly, the administration disapproved the renewed JCS proposals for mining of harbors, striking targets in prohibited areas, or removing other major air restraints. In fact, the administration's response to the numerous "courses of action" papers indicated it desired no major change in military policy in Southeast Asia. Rather, it was moving toward making improvements in "in-country" programs, hoping this might contribute to de-escalation of the war and possibly negotiations. This trend became clearer in November when General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker and their staffs arrived in Washington to participate in another review of war policy.

V. OTHER PROPOSALS TO SPEED UP PROGRESS IN THE WAR

(S-Gp 1) By November 1967 the administration had additional reasons to adhere to its current military strategy in the war. From Saigon, it had received increasing optimistic reports which cited the high casualties suffered by the enemy, because of allied air and ground operations, and his failure to win any major battles. Political and economic conditions in South Vietnam also seemed much improved. In mid-November, General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker arrived in Washington to attest personally to the more favorable developments, to discuss new administration proposals to speed up allied progress and to seek approval of their own recommendations.

The Administration's Eight Programs for South Vietnam

(S-Gp 1) To prepare for the Westmoreland-Bunker visit, the JCS had informed MACV that the White House was considering giving top priority to eight programs in South Vietnam over the next six months. These would consist of: coordinated allied attacks on the Viet Cong infrastructure (including the construction of detention centers for 10,000 to 20,000 Communists); more integrated South Vietnamese-U.S. military operations; more South Vietnamese army search and destroy and security operations against Viet Cong battalions; more U.S. advisors for regional and popular forces; opening up and making the LOC's more secure; stepping up programs such as land reform, agricultural productivity, and universal education; encouraging more local government responsibility and attacking corruption; and employing locally trained personnel to support military research and development efforts.

(S-Gp 3) General Westmoreland subsequently added a ninth for "top priority" attention: improvement of South Vietnamese armed forces. He noted

that each program would require additional authorizations from the JCS or other high officials with respect to personnel, equipment, funds, and adjustments in priorities.

(S-Gp 3) After studying the nine programs, the director of the Joint Staff foresaw some "maximum impact" arising from the quick dispatch of more American military advisors, greater effort in destroying the Viet Cong infrastructure, and building detention centers. But it would be more rewarding, he thought, to modernize South Vietnamese forces in order to accelerate the war's progress. However, this effort would take 12 months to gather "momentum" and would require, in allocating equipment, giving preference to South Vietnamese over American units.

The Westmoreland-Bunker Briefings

(U) In Washington, Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland participated in public as well as in White House, congressional, and Pentagon briefings on the war. The Ambassador said that about 67 percent of the South Vietnamese people were now under Saigon's control (compared with 55 percent a year earlier), about 17 percent were under Viet Cong influence, and the remainder were in contested areas. He cited political gains, such as the inauguration of the Thieu government on 31 October, and reported that the South Vietnamese armed forces were improving, pacification was progressing, and the new government was taking steps against corruption. He believed that another bombing pause against the North should be contingent on some "reciprocity" by the Hanoi regime.

(U) General Westmoreland said he had "never been more encouraged in my four years in Vietnam." He saw the war entering a new phase and

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predicted, with continued military success, that the United States could begin shifting the burden of combat to the South Vietnamese in about two years. He opposed any lengthy bombing halt in either North or South Vietnam during the approaching holiday season, but said he could "live" with a short pause.⁵

(S-Gp 3) In a briefing for the JCS (similar to one given to Mr. McNamara), the MACV commander's "main theme" was on operations to improve the military situation in Southeast Asia during the next six to eight months. Stressing that real military pressure had been applied against the Communists for only one year, General Westmoreland outlined his current strategy. It consisted of "grinding down" guerrilla forces, driving main units into the jungles, mountains and border areas, and destroying enemy bases; opening roads for commerce and for Saigon's economic and social programs; blocking infiltration and bombing LOC's; forcing the North Vietnamese to divert more manpower to air defense and its transportation system; and preparing the South Vietnamese forces for a larger role in the war.

(S-Gp 3) This strategy, General Westmoreland thought, had severely hurt the Communists, driven them to the border areas, and decreased recruitment which was down to 3,500 men per month compared with 7,000 per month a year earlier. Air and ground action had caused serious losses of personnel and supplies, and the Navy's sea blockade against infiltration had forced the enemy to use the treacherous land routes through Laos. Conversely, South Vietnamese forces were becoming more professional, self-confident, and effective, and within the country there was political progress and some initial steps toward social reform. Roads were being opened.

(S-Gp 3) For the future, the MACV commander advocated continuing the present policy at an accelerated rate, including the bombing of North Vietnam.

He warned that "there was no better way to prolong the war than to stop the bombing of the North." In two years or less, he believed that South Vietnamese forces would be able to bear an increasing share of the war, thus permitting a phasing down of the American effort. He made three basic recommendations: modernize the South Vietnamese forces as rapidly as possible and as fast as they could receive equipment; send deployment program 5 forces as soon as possible; and increase B-52 sorties to 1,200 per month.⁶

(S-Gp 1) With respect to his first recommendation, General Westmoreland asked the JCS and OSD to approve his entire South Vietnamese program for fiscal years 1968 and 1969. This included accelerating shipments of M-16 rifles, M-60 machine guns, M-29 18-mm mortars, M-79 grenade launchers, 105-mm and 155-mm howitzers, AN/PRC-25 radios, trucks and other items, and assuring that the South Vietnamese possessed sufficient helicopters. With new and additional equipment the burden of the war in 1968, described as "Phase II," would shift more onto the shoulders of the South Vietnamese and they would assume a major share of front line defense of the DMZ area, although U. S. assistance in the delta region (IV Corps) would increase. Under this program, General Westmoreland saw no need to raise the 525,000 U. S. military ceiling for South Vietnam. The President concurred.⁷

(S-Gp 1) As part of the Joint Staff's examination of the Saigon government's military needs, the Air Staff summarized approved VNAF programs and urged they be fully supported. These consisted mainly of aircraft conversion projects. Thus, one VNAF squadron of C-47's would convert to AC-47's and two C-47 squadrons to C-119's in fiscal year 1968; three A-1 squadrons to A-37's by the end of fiscal year 1969; and four H-34 helicopter squadrons to UH-1H's by the end of fiscal year 1972. An important problem was finding

enough H-34 aircraft to bring the VNAF's helicopter strength up to the authorized five squadrons plus "extras" for attrition. ⁸

(S-Gp 3) Secretary McNamara supported the stepped-up modernization of South Vietnamese forces "in principal" but asked for more data as soon as possible before giving final approval. ⁹

(S-Gp 4) In connection with General Westmoreland's second recommendation to speed up the movement of deployment program 5 forces, the JCS had anticipated it. On 9 October it had requested the services to again determine what units and personnel could be dispatched to Southeast Asia by 1 March 1968. In their replies, they reported on actions taken since 6 September to assure the movement of 18,000 additional troops (including 148 Air Force personnel and four UC-123's) to South Vietnam. However, another 27,900 troops remained to be deployed including 1,100 USAF officers and men. No estimate was available for 3,700 other Army and Navy personnel. The Air Staff, urged to reexamine its schedule, on 15 November determined that only 388 of the remaining USAF personnel could be sent by 1 March 1968. ¹⁰

(U) The expedited deployment of two brigades of the Army's 101st Airborne Division--approved by Secretary McNamara on 23 October--produced the largest single Air Force airlift of the war. This operation, designated Eagle Thrust, witnessed the air movement of 10,024 men and 5,357 tons of support equipment from Campbell Airfield, Ky., to Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam, between 17 November and 29 December 1967. The entire operation required 369 C-141 and 22 C-133 missions. The two brigades arrived in the war theater about six weeks ahead of the original schedule. ¹¹

(S-Gp 3) Concerning General Westmoreland's third recommendation, Secretary McNamara on 21 November authorized an increase in the B-52

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sortie rate from 800 to 1,200 per month.* The ground work for this capability was laid on 6 November when the Defense Secretary, after obtaining Thai government approval, sanctioned an increase from 15 to 25 B-52's at U-Tapao AB, Thailand (although the JCS recommended 30), plus about 1,000 additional military personnel. At that time he was responding to a JCS recommendation to consent to only a "surge" rate up to 1,200 sorties per month for 60 days, if necessary, with 72 hours advance notice. The service chiefs observed that the deployment of additional bombers and personnel to Thailand (by June 1968) would reduce somewhat the Air Force's capability to support the current strategic integrated plan (SIOP). The B-52 operations were eased by another administration decision on 5 December, which, with approval of the Lao government, authorized overflights of Laos. This change promised to save about \$18 million per year, the difference in cost for 25 B-52's flying directly from U-Tapao to South and North Vietnamese targets versus detouring around Cambodia.

12

U. S. Strategy and Strength at the End of 1967

(S-Gp 1) Thus, at year's end the administration was engaged in stepping up its civilian and military programs within South Vietnam. Pacification and economic stability would continue to receive high priority. "In-country" military activity against the Communists would include more air-supported ground offensives, more B-52 sorties, and limited incursions into border areas. There would be a "crash" effort to complete the linear strong point obstacle system

*In April 1967, General Westmoreland had asked for a sustained 1,200 per month B-52 sortie rate as soon as possible. Subsequently, Secretary Brown informed Mr. McNamara that the SAC bombers could fly this rate, if necessary, starting 1 February 1968 from bases in Thailand and Guam. Upon completion of construction at U-Tapao AB in June 1968, the B-52's would be able to provide 750 sorties per month from that base alone.

[REDACTED]

in South Vietnam and the air-supported anti-infiltration system in Laos.* To strengthen South Vietnam's military posture, steps would be taken to accelerate the training and equipping of Saigon's regular, regional, and popular forces (to total 685,739 by June 1968), and most of the U.S. deployment program 5 forces would be sent by March 1968. American military strength in Thailand would be held to about 48,000.

(S-Gp 1) To avoid precipitating a wider conflict, the air effort in North Vietnam or Laos would not be significantly intensified. Large-scale air and ground assaults against enemy troops in Laos, Cambodia or North Vietnam would be prohibited. By public statements and internal policy, the administration was exhibiting a greater desire to deescalate or negotiate a settlement of the war. During a brief Southeast Asian visit in December, President Johnson, while restating America's war objectives, also asserted that he now favored talks between the Saigon government and the Communist-led National Liberation Front.
13

(S-Gp 4) In seeking a lower military tempo and possibly negotiations, the administration was buoyed by reports of increasing losses of and strains on North Vietnam's military and civilian resources. Both Air Staff and MACV analyses of 1967 military operation in South and North Vietnam and Laos, compared with those in 1966, showed considerably greater enemy casualties,+ an

*Portions of the 600-meter wide strong point obstacle system became operational in late 1967, and the anti-vehicular (Mud River) section of the air-supported anti-infiltration system attained an initial operational capability (IOC) on 1 December 1967.

+MACV estimated overall enemy losses for 1967 at 169,200, including 24,000 non-battle casualties. This contrasted with enemy manpower replacement by infiltration and recruitment of 113,700 for a net loss of 55,500. (In March 1967, General Westmoreland had anticipated a net increase in Communist strength by the end of the year. See p 10). Air Staff figures showed an increase in enemy killed in action in South Vietnam from 55,524 in 1966 to 87,468 in 1967.

apparent reduction toward year's end in the infiltration rate, * higher truck, rolling stock, and watercraft losses, + increased need for imports, and reduced war-supporting capacity. In addition, pacification reports were encouraging. 14

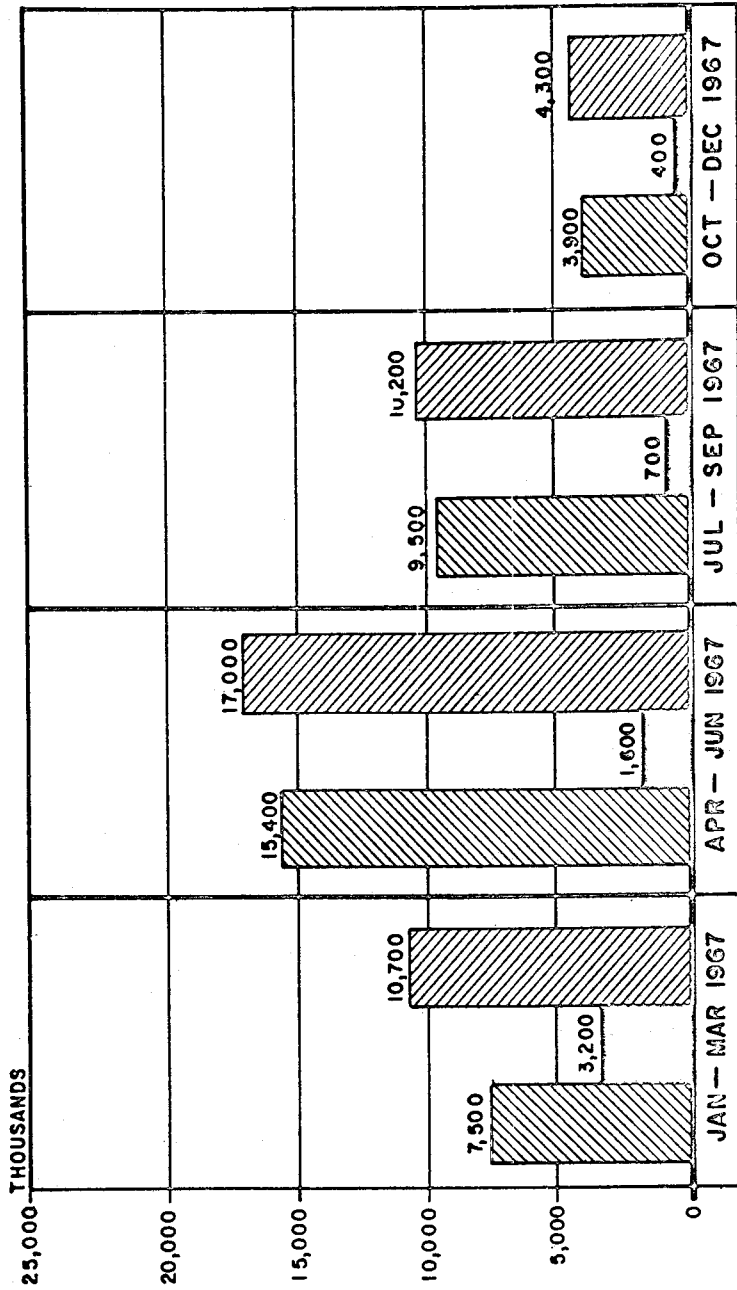
(S-Gp 3) However, there was also concern that past and current "progress" indicators were not sufficiently thorough or reliable. This was manifested in the Air Force by Secretary Brown's requests for better analyses of the results of the air effort. One consequence was the issuance, beginning in September 1967, of a monthly publication entitled: "Trends, Indicators, and Analyses," by the Operations Review Group, Directorate of Operations. It sought to evaluate progress toward achieving the three basic objectives of the air war in North Vietnam. ++ In the same month, also at Secretary Brown's request, the Air Staff formed a joint Operations Analysis-Rand Corporation study group to better pinpoint operational issues and analyze the effects of the air war in Southeast Asia. At a higher level, the White House on 25 October directed the creation of an interagency task force, chaired by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to improve accuracy in estimating enemy casualties, weapon losses, extent of population control, the effect of the Chieu Hoi or "open arms" reconciliation program, and other "progress" indicators. 15

*Although infiltration figures lagged by at least six months, MACV estimates showed a considerable drop between the second and fourth quarters of 1967 (see p 62). In January 1968 MACV estimated 1967 infiltration to have totaled about 54,000 but expected the final total to be about equal to the 1966 total of 87,200.

+MACV estimated that air attacks in North Vietnam and Laos from 1 January through 20 December 1967 destroyed or damaged 5,261 motor vehicles, 2,475 pieces of rolling stock and 11,425 watercraft. The Air Staff concluded that 1967 witnessed for the first time a net enemy loss of about 2,000 trucks above imports with about 9,000 to 10,000 trucks still in North Vietnam's inventory.

++These were: reducing the flow of men and materiel moving from North to South Vietnam, increasing the cost of the war to the North, and convincing Hanoi it could not continue its aggression without incurring severe penalties.

NORTH VIETNAMESE INFILTRATION INTO SOUTH VIETNAM
1967



(A) CONFIRMED - CONFIRMED UNIT/GROUP DETERMINED BY MINIMUM OF TWO CAPTIVES, RETURNEES OR CAPTURED DOCUMENT. (ANY COMBINATION)

(B) PROBABLE - PROBABLE INFILTRATION UNIT/GROUP BELIEVED TO EXIST BASED ON INFORMATION WHICH CAN BE EVALUATED AS PROBABLY TRUE PROVIDED BY ONE CAPTIVE, RETURNEE OR CAPTURED DOCUMENT.

CONFIRMED (A)
 PROBABLE (B)
 TOTAL ACCEPTED

Source: MACV Comd Hist, 1967 Vol I, p 36

(S-Gp 1) Both the strategy and deployment levels in South Vietnam and Thailand were, as has been noted, less than desired by General McConnell and the other service chiefs. In the JCS deliberations during the year, the Air Force Chief of Staff remained a consistent advocate of the use of more air power against North Vietnam, convinced this would minimize the need for more troops, decrease allied casualties, and shorten the war. In the absence of more authority for stronger air programs, he agreed with the other service chiefs on virtually all measures they mutually thought might shorten the conflict, such as mining or blocking Haiphong harbor, narrowing "sanctuary" areas to hit more war-supporting targets, calling up U.S. reserves, and modernizing Vietnamese forces.*

(S-Gp 4) Despite the Joint Staff's frequent advocacy of heavier air attacks against North Vietnam, the administration refused to alter its air policy. Testifying before a Senate committee early in 1968, Secretary McNamara asserted that few strategically important targets remained in the North and that the agrarian economy there could not be collapsed by bombing. Further, the enemy's low combat requirements precluded "pinching off" the flow of supplies to the South. Mr. McNamara emphasized that, except for manpower, Hanoi's war effort was sustained principally by military and economic aid from Communist countries valued, in 1967, at about one billion dollars.

(S-Gp 1) As 1967 ended, 486,600 American troops were in South Vietnam (including 55,900 Air Force) and 44,500 in Thailand (including 33,500 Air Force). This represented an increase during the year of 96,032 and 10,011

*See especially the views of General McConnell, other Air Force commanders, Admiral Sharp, and the JCS in hearings in August before the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 90th Congress, 1st Session, Air War Against North Vietnam, parts 1 through 5.

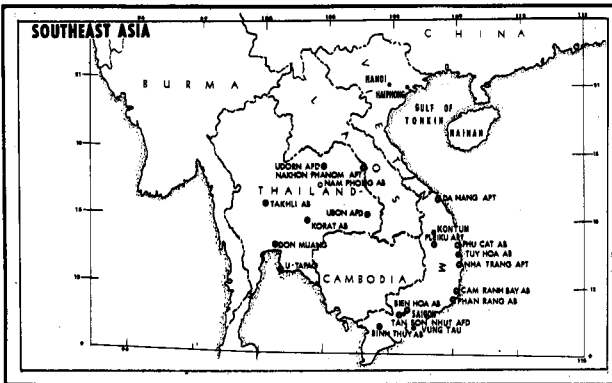
THAILAND USAF AIRCRAFT DEPLOYMENT* SOUTH VIETNAM

UBOH		KORAT		PHUNG THUY		TUY HOA		KONTUM		PHU CAT			
C130	8	EC121	30	C7	25	AC47	6	C130	11	UH1	7	AC47	6
F4	78	F105	53			C47	2	F100	51			C7	25
HH43	2	HH43	2			HH43	2	HC130	10			F100	38
						O1	32	HH43	2			HH43	1
						O2	10						
						U10	6						
TOTAL	88	TOTAL	85	TOTAL	25	TOTAL	58	TOTAL	74	TOTAL	7	TOTAL	70

TAKHLI		PHAN RANG	
EB66	24	B57	23
F105	53	C123	37
HH43	3	F100	53
KC135	8	HH43	2
TOTAL	88	TOTAL	115

BANGKOK		CAN KANH DAY	
C7	2	C7	26
C130	4	C130	31
F102	4	F4*	66
TOTAL	10	HH43	2
		TOTAL	125

U-TAPAO		HOORN		NAKHON PHANOM		BAN SON NHUT		NHA TRANG		PHU KY		BIEN HOA		DA NANG	
B52	15	A1	18	A1	17	C47	2	AC47	5	A37	7	A37	18	C7	4
KC135	32	C47	3	A26	12	C123	16	C47	6	AC47	5	AC47	5	C47	2
TOTAL	47	C130	5	CH3	9	C130	27	C130	4	C47	2	C47	2	F4	50
		CH3	5	HH3	7	EC47	15	EC47	12	EC47	13	DC130	2	F102	6
		F4	19	O2	34	HH43	2	HH43	2	HH43	2	F100	51	HH3	9
		F102	6	T28	8	RB57	4	O1	65	O2	5	F102	6	HH43	2
		HH43	2	U10	12	RF4	34	O2	12			HH43	3	O1	16
		HH53	4	UC123	4	RF101	17	U10	3			O1	68	O2	76
		RF4	40					UH1	5			U2	2		
		TOTAL	102	TOTAL	103	TOTAL	117	TOTAL	114	TOTAL	34	TOTAL	181	TOTAL	165



WESTERN PACIFIC

PHILIPPINES CLARK		TAIWAN TAIWAN		OKINAWA KADENA		KOREA OSAN		JAPAN TACHIKAWA		JAPAN YOKOTA	
B57	23	EC121	5	F105	24	F4	4	C124	16	EB57	4
C130	10	F4	2	HH43	3	HH43	2	C130	10	F4	11
F4	24			KC135	44			HC130	3	F105	13
F100	8			RC135	5					HH43	2
F102	25			RF4	14						
HH43	2										
HU16	3										
TOTAL	95	TOTAL	7	TOTAL	90	TOTAL	6	TOTAL	29	TOTAL	30

MACTAN		CHING CHUAN KANG		NAHA		KUNSAN		MISAWA		GUAM ANDERSEN	
C130	11	C130	20	C130	30	F4	2	F4	16	B52	36
				F102	25			HH43	2	HC130	5
				HU16	6					KC135	2
TOTAL	11	TOTAL	20	TOTAL	61	TOTAL	2	TOTAL	18	TOTAL	43

* Transit and administrative support aircraft not included.

Source: PACAF Status of Forces Report, 1 Jan 68

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personnel in the two countries, respectively. While Air Force deployments to South Vietnam were relatively small, amounting to only 2,987 personnel, they were substantial in Thailand where they increased by 7,297. South Vietnamese regular, regional, and popular forces totaled 641,000 (including 16,253 VNAF), an augmentation of 21,000. There were also 42,000 in the civilian irregular defense group and 73,400 in the national police. The last was boosted by 13,400 men during the year to assure more internal security. Other allied forces totaled about 60,000,^{*} an increase of 7,678 including a Royal Australian Air Force Unit.¹⁷

(S-Gp 1) Although the number of American, South Vietnamese, and other allied personnel in South Vietnam and Thailand thus rose by 134,000 during the year, there was a slight decrease in U.S. combat aircraft in the two countries and with the Seventh Fleet. The total dropped from 1,009 (including 639 Air Force) at the end of 1966 to 922 (including 650 Air Force) at the end of 1967. Non-combat aircraft and helicopter arrivals, on the other hand, rose substantially with the Army sending nearly 1,000 more helicopters to the theater during the year. USAF aircraft strength in 1967 was also changed by more modernization. A number of F-104's, F-105's and F-4C's were replaced by F-4D's, and FAC O-1's by O-2's.¹⁸ (U.S. manpower and aircraft strengths during 1967 and proposed strengths through 1969 are included in the appendix).

*Principal allied strength at the end of 1967 was as follows: Australia 6,600 (including one squadron of eight B-57's); New Zealand, 500; Philippines, 2,000; Thailand, 2,400; and Republic of Korea, 48,800.

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12. Ltr (S), C. E. Hutchins, Jr., DCS/P&O Hq PACOM to SECDEF et al, 2 Jun 67, subj: Prog 4 Strength Accounting; DJSM-331-67, 15 Mar 67; memo (S), Dep SECDEF to JCS, 31 Mar 67, subj: Prog 4 Pers Strengths in SVN: Hist (S) Seventh Air Force, Jan-66-Jun 67, p 70.
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GLOSSARY

AB	Air Base
Addn	Additional
Admin	Administration
AFCHO	Office of Air Force History
AID	Agency for International Development
Altn	Alternate
APB	Assault Patrol Boat
Appns	Appropriations
Asst	Assistant
Atch	Attached
Auth	Authorized
C/A	Course of Action
CG	Commanding General, Coast Guard
Ch	Chapter
CHECO	Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
CINCPACAF	Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces
CINCSAC	Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command
CM	Chairman's Memo
CMC	Commandant, Marine Corps
CMCM	Commandant, Marine Corps Memo
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
Comd	Command
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
Const	Construction
CSAF	Chief of Staff, Air Force
CSAFM	Chief of Staff, Air Force Memo
DCPG	Defense Communications Planning Group
DCS/P&O	Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations
DCS/S&L	Deputy Chief of Staff, Systems and Logistics
Def	Defense
Dep	Deputy
Dev	Development
DFE	Division Force Equivalent
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
Dir	Director, Directorate
Dir/Ops	Directorate of Operations
Dir/Plans	Directorate of Plans
Div	Division
DJSM	Director, Joint Staff Memo
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
Docs	Documents
DOD	Department of Defense

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Eval	Evaluation
FAC	Forward Air Controller
FY	Fiscal Year
Gp	Group
Hist	History
IDA	Institute of Defense Analysis
I&L	Installation and Logistics
ISA	International Security Affairs
ISC	Infiltration Surveillance Center
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JCSM	Joint Chiefs of Staff Memo
Jt	Joint
JTF	Joint Task Force
Ltr	Letter
LOC	Lines of Communication
LST	Landing Ship Tank
MAB	Marine Amphibious Brigade
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MC	Marine Corps
Mgt	Management
Mil	Military
MR	Memo for Record
NVN	North Vietnam
NSAM	National Security Action Memo
NSC	National Security Council
Ofc	Office
Off	Officer
Ops	Operations
OSAF	Office, Secretary of the Air Force
OSD	Office, Secretary of Defense

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PACOM	Pacific Command
PACAF	Pacific Air Forces
Pers	Personnel
PMDL	Provisional Military Demarcation Line
Pres	President
Procur	Procurement
Prog	Program
Proj	Project
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
Rprt	Report
Rqmts	Requirements
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SA	Systems Analysis, Secretary of the Army
SACSA	Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities
SAF	Secretary of the Air Force
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SAW	Special Air Warfare
SEA	Southeast Asia
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
Secys	Secretaries
Sit	Situation
SN	Secretary of the Navy
SPOS	Strong Point Obstacle System
Stmt	Statement
STRAF	Strategic Army Force
Strat	Strategic
Tac	Tactical
TFS	Tactical Fighter Squadron
TP	Talking Paper
VN	Vietnam
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force

APPENDIX

U.S. MILITARY AND AIRCRAFT STRENGTH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

20 December 1967

U.S. Military Strength in South Vietnam

	<u>Jun 67*</u>	<u>Dec 67*</u>	<u>Jun 68⁺</u>	<u>Dec 68⁺</u>	<u>Jun 69⁺</u>	<u>Dec 69⁺</u>
USAF	55,700	55,900	57,900	58,000	58,700	-
USN & CG	29,000	32,200	33,100	34,800	35,500	-
USMC	78,400	78,000	81,800	81,800	81,900	-
USA	285,700	320,500	344,700	346,700	348,900	-
Total	<u>448,800</u>	<u>486,600</u>	<u>517,500</u>	<u>521,300</u>	<u>525,000⁺⁺</u>	

U.S. Military Strength in Thailand

USAF	28,300	33,400	35,300	35,300	35,300	-
USN-USMC & CG	400	800	500	500	500	-
USA	10,300	10,300	12,200	12,200	12,200	-
Total	<u>39,000</u>	<u>44,500</u>	<u>48,000</u>	<u>48,000</u>	<u>48,000</u>	

Off-shore Navy

	41,300	36,500	42,000	42,000	42,000	
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U.S. Fighter and Attack Aircraft in Southeast Asia

USAF	621	650	704	704	698	698
USN	182	188	203	198	212	213
USMC	153	154	170	170	170	170
USA	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	<u>956</u>	<u>992</u>	<u>1,077</u>	<u>1,072</u>	<u>1,080</u>	<u>1,081</u>

B-52's

Thailand	10	15	25	25	25	25
Guam	54	36	#	#	#	#

Allied Fighter and Attack Aircraft in Southeast Asia

VNAF	108	90	72	99	108	108
RAAF	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total	<u>116</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>116</u>

*Actual (Military strength figures include TDY personnel).

+Current Plan

++The 525,000-man U.S. ceiling would be reached in March 1969.

#Not indicated.

U.S. Fixed Wing Non-Attack Aircraft in Southeast Asia

	<u>Jun 67*</u>	<u>Dec 67*</u>	<u>Jun 68+</u>	<u>Dec 68+</u>	<u>Jun 69+</u>	<u>Dec 69+</u>
USAF	662	793	851	854	854	854
USN	37	52	43	40	45	42
USMC	37	46	47	49	61	61
USA	384	550	594	609	609	609
Total	<u>1,120</u>	<u>1,440</u>	<u>1,535</u>	<u>1,552</u>	<u>1,569</u>	<u>1,566</u>

U.S. Helicopters in Southeast Asia

USAF	62	69	97	97	97	97
USN	-	-	-	-	-	-
USMC	301	296	304	292	280	280
USA	2,036	2,600	2,968	3,103	3,242	3,235
Total	<u>2,399</u>	<u>2,965</u>	<u>3,369</u>	<u>3,492</u>	<u>3,619</u>	<u>3,612</u>

USAF Fighter and Attack Aircraft in Southeast Asia

A-1	31	41	61	61	61	61
A-26	8	12	12	12	12	12
B-57	21	23	24	24	0	0
F-100	199	197	198	198	198	180
F-102	24	24	30	30	30	30
F-104	16	0	0	0	0	0
F-105	132	107	108	90	72	54
F-4	179	213	234	252	288	324
F-5	0	0	0	0	0	0
T-28	11	8	12	12	12	12
A-37	0	25	25	25	25	25
Total	<u>621</u>	<u>650</u>	<u>704</u>	<u>704</u>	<u>698</u>	<u>698</u>

USAF Fixed-Wing Non-Attack Aircraft in Southeast Asia

RB-57	3	3	4	4	4	4
EB-66	19	28	41	41	41	41
RF-4	60	74	76	76	76	76
RF-101	25	17	16	16	16	16
AC/C-47	35	40	46	46	46	46
EC-47	42	40	47	47	47	47
EC-121	6	30	27	27	27	27
C-123	84	75	88	91	91	91
WC/HC/C-130	16	17	17	17	17	17
KC-135	39	40	40	40	40	40
C-7A	84	85	96	96	96	96
O-1	202	182	103	50	34	34
O-2	18	137	191	191	191	191
OV-10	0	0	27	80	96	96
U-10	25	25	32	32	32	32
HU-16	4	0	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>662</u>	<u>793</u>	<u>851</u>	<u>854</u>	<u>854</u>	<u>854</u>

*Actual

+Current Plan

USAF Helicopters in Southeast Asia

	<u>Jun 67*</u>	<u>Dec 67*</u>	<u>Jun 68+</u>	<u>Dec 68+</u>	<u>Jun 69+</u>	<u>Dec 69+</u>
UH-1	13	12	15	15	15	15
HH-43	25	30	32	32	32	32
HH-53	0	4	8	10	10	10
HH-3	14	16	20	18	18	18
CH-3	10	7	22	22	22	22
Total	<u>62</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>

U.S. and VNAF Fighter and Attack Aircraft Sorties

South Vietnam	16,544	15,200	15,256	14,893	15,347	-
Laos	1,441	6,700	1,874	6,340	1,807	-
North Vietnam	<u>11,471</u>	<u>5,700</u>	<u>11,514</u>	<u>7,623</u>	<u>11,570</u>	-
Total	<u>29,456</u>	<u>27,600</u>	<u>28,644</u>	<u>28,856</u>	<u>28,724</u>	

B-52 Sorties

	832	800	1,200	1,200	1,200	-
	<u>832</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,200</u>	

*Actual
+Current Plan

Source: Memos (S), Asst SECDEF (SA) to Secys of Mil Depts et al, 29 Dec 67 and 15 Feb 68.