

IV.C Evolution of the War (26 Vols.)

Direct Action: The Johnson Commitments, 1964-1968
(16 Vols.)

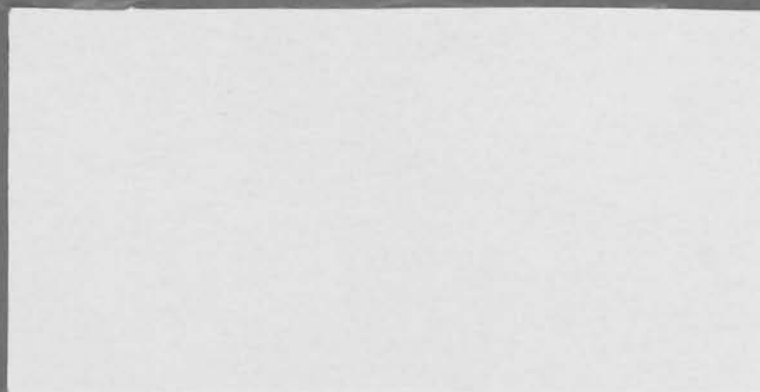
6. U.S. Ground Strategy and Force Deployments: 1965-1967
(3 Vols.)

b. Volume II: Program 5

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE



UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS
1945 - 1967



VIETNAM TASK FORCE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

SET #13

0295

See Def Cont No. 1-

IV.C.6. (b)

U.S. GROUND STRATEGY
AND FORCE DEPLOYMENTS
1965--1967

VOLUME II

TABLE OF CONTENTS
AND OUTLINE

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

VOLUME II
U.S. GROUND STRATEGY AND FORCE DEPLOYMENTS, 1965--1967

TABLE OF CONTENTS and OUTLINE

IV. PROGRAM 5

	<u>Page</u>
A. PRELUDE TO ACTION ON PROGRAM 5.....	1
1. Hedged Public Optimism Meets the New Year.....	1
2. Official Optimism and a Spur to Action: The Komer Memo.....	4
3. Fishing for Ideas With a Dragnet: The Abortive NSAM on Strategic Guidelines for Vietnam.....	7
4. The Strategic Concept Under Fire: Seeds of Doubt.....	13
FOOTNOTES.....	19
B. THE OPENING DIALOGUE ON PROGRAM 5.....	22
1. Reclamas to Program 4 - Fleshing Out.....	22
2. Vietnam Strategy: Attention Rivets on the Borders and Sanctuaries.....	24
3. Vietnam Strategy: On the Ground.....	33
4. Sanctuaries Revisited: Renewed and Heightened Concern About Laos and Cambodia.....	37
5. Infiltration -- Remains the Key.....	42
FOOTNOTES.....	52
C. THE MACV REQUEST AND THE SEARCH FOR OPTIONS.....	58
1. The Guam Conference, 20-21 March 1967.....	58
2. The MACV Request: "Essential" Looks Like "Optimum".....	61
3. The JCS Take Up the March: The CINCPAC Force Requirements Task Group and JCSM 218-67.....	67
4. The Stimulation of Inter-Agency Reviews: A Proliferation of Alternatives.....	77
5. Developments in the Ground War: Strategy Takes Shape.....	89
6. The Domestic Debate Continues: Polarization at Home.....	93
FOOTNOTES.....	100
D. RESISTANCE TO THE GROUND FORCE INCREASES CRYSTALLIZES.....	105
1. Systems Analysis -- Vanguard of the Reaction.....	105
2. A New Look at the "Plimsoll Line": Alternatives to Increases Restudied.....	129
3. The Quest for Capabilities: The Search for Limits.....	133
4. Bombing in the North: Its Contribution to the Ground War Reexamined.....	137
FOOTNOTES.....	142

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

	<u>Page</u>
E. DECISION.....	146
1. The McNaughton Draft Presidential Memorandum.....	146
2. JCSM 286-67, Persistent Pressure Up the Ladder--"Shouldering Out" the Parts.....	165
3. The Vance Options--Re-examination of Increases.....	168
4. The Last Interagency Round of Alternatives.....	178
5. The McNamara Visit to Saigon.....	192
6. The Compromise--Slightly More of the Same.....	209
7. Follow-Ons.....	215
FOOTNOTES.....	228

FIGURES

1. Major Operations and Approximate Locations (Jan 67).....	36
2. Selected Operations (over 100 enemy killed) Feb 67.....	91
3. Selected Operations (over 100 enemy killed) Mar 67.....	92
4. Selected Operations (over 100 enemy killed) Apr 67.....	94
5. Selected Operations, May - I Corps.....	95
6. Selected Operations, May - II Corps.....	96
7. Selected Operations, May - III Corps.....	97
8. Selected Operations, May - IV Corps.....	98

A. PRELUDE TO ACTION
ON PROGRAM 5

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

IV. PROGRAM 5

A. PRELUDE TO ACTION ON PROGRAM 5

1. Hedged Public Optimism Meets the New Year

The last month of 1966 was like all such months -- a time for official retrospection and tally. The mood was one of cautious optimism, buoyed by hopes that 1967 would prove to be the decisive year in Vietnam.

The indicators showed that great progress had been made -- quantitatively, anyway. The number of U.S. and FW maneuver battalions available for operations in South Vietnam had increased from 45 to 102. ARVN had added another 24 such units, bringing its total to 163, so altogether there were 265 battalions ready to commence operations in the new year. 1/ In short, the US-FW resources available for operations roughly doubled during the second year of the war, and they promised to be even higher during the third. 2/

Large ground operations were mounting in number and duration, and the trend promised to continue pointed sharply upward (see Figs. 1-8). This upswing in activity was attributed to the rapid infusion of U.S. battalions; indications were that such a high level of activity was not independent, but so strongly correlated with our presence that, if we willed, it could be "sustained indefinitely." 3/

More importantly, all of these gains seemed to be having a relevant impact on the enemy -- causing his battlefield fortunes to decline closer to the point where he would be forced to stop fighting or negotiate, or both. Even accepting the historical overstatement of enemy losses -- the bias is reasonably consistent -- and the trend in enemy losses to all causes was rising sharply. 4/ Kill ratios (enemy KIA vs. allied KIA) were up to 4.2 from 3.3 during the preceding six month period. RVNAF losses actually declined; but unfortunately US/FW KIA doubled -- a fact that the press was later to pick up and exploit in its criticism of the ARVN/GVN role in the war. (See Tables 4 and 5, Appendix B).

Observers believed that most of the enemy battalions, NVA and VC, were in place six months ahead of the U.S., and that only recently had the full consequences of our enlarged participation been reflected in enemy strength and OB figures. From July 1966, VC/NVA strength had appeared to decline slightly, although they had evidently been able to maintain their oft-cited target of 100,000 men in the field.

Irregular forces had apparently declined to about 180,000 (confirmed by a VC document captured on CEDAR FALLS) and their "solid" recruitment population base had shrunk. Another VC document contained an estimate that VC/NVA forces had lost about 1,000,000 people to GVN control during

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

the last half of 1966. There was increasing evidence that NVA was furnishing large numbers of replacements for damaged VC units, even for local forces and some units in the Delta. The great uncertainty, surely, if you accepted the indicators and the analysis of what they meant, was the infiltration rate and how successful we assumed we would be in controlling it.

Just as crucial seemed to be the level of VC/NVA activity as the year closed. Systems Analysis estimated that incidents were down 19% ("incidents" being attacks, terror, harassment and sabotage). Battalion-sized and larger enemy attacks in late 1966 were down to less than half those of the preceding six months, while small attacks nearly trebled. The significance of some relationships holding here was lost on decision-makers until much later in the new year when we began to seriously question the search and destroy strategy in Vietnam. The assumption that major enemy unit activity was a function of the total size of our forces, i.e., the more we have the more extensively active we can be in search, finding and destroying large units, is just not a convincing one when you look at enemy activity (large units) vs. our build-up. Also, leading from this, no one had yet questioned another assumption implicit in the COMUSMACV attrition strategy; we needed to ask: Who initiates the battles when they do occur?

Revolutionary development plans were moving ahead. By 9 January 1967, the provincial RD programs had been approved by General Thaing, Commissioner General of RD; some 1,091 hamlets with a total population of 1,272,950 people were to be the targets of extensive RD effort. However, inputs and plans do not constitute outputs or results and such flimsy evidence as this offered as proof of "progress" was surely transparent. Concurrently, however, the reaction of the enemy to pacification seemed to be confirmation that the program was making headway. Looking back to the 1964-1965 "pacification programs" the enemy hardly bothered to react to what he considered a minimal threat, and an unwanted diversion from his successful military campaign. Only in late 1966 did he begin to exert significant effort and begin attacking RD cadre teams. Many disagreed with this interpretation, but few could dispute the graphic evidence of basic RD weakness (security) the VC/NVA operations had revealed. RD cadre desertions increased markedly (33 to 84 per week from January to March 1967) and the program was grossly unable to meet its recruitment goals (approximately 10,000 short of the 41,000 CY 67 target). 5/

If military indicators were trending upward, the political indicators at the new year, both at home and abroad, were mixed. The Levy case had broken to the press and had become the temporary focus of anti-war group propaganda at the close of the year. U Thant had advanced his proposals for peace to the President who promised to give them "careful evaluation." 6/ Harrison Salisbury's dispatches from North Vietnam were generating an

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

explosive debate about the bombing. Not only had he questioned the "surgical" precision claimed for the bombing of military targets in populated areas, but he questioned the basic purpose of the strategy itself. In his view, civilian casualties were being inflicted deliberately to break the morale of the populace, a course both immoral and doomed to failure. The counter-attack mounted by bombing advocates (and apologists) combined with the predictable quick denunciations and denials from official sources helped generate a significant public reaction. 7/

The Pentagon reaction to the Salisbury articles touched off a new round of editorial comment about the credibility gap. Polls at the start of the year reflected the public's growing cynicism about public statements. One Harris poll indicated that the public of January 1967 was just as likely to blame the United States for truce violations (despite public announcements to the contrary) as the enemy. Two years earlier this had not been so. 8/ Salisbury happened to be in North Vietnam when Hanoi was first bombed -- whether by accident or design is uncertain. Consequently, his dispatches carried added sting -- he was reporting on the less appealing aspects of a major escalation in the bombing campaign which would have attracted headlines on its own merits. His "in depth" of such an important benchmark added markedly to its public impact. 9/ So great was the cry that President Johnson felt impelled to express "deep regret" over civilian casualties on both sides.

Actual war news seemed good. Draft calls were down with the policy of "keeping [the] induction rate at a reduced level for 1967." (McNamara press conference). Allies like Thailand were helping to ease our manpower and commitment problems, the Thais announced in January that they were dispatching 1,000 troops to South Vietnam. The U.S. 9th Infantry Division had commenced landing at Vang Tau, highlighting the continuing infusion of U.S. strength now reaching the 380,000-man mark. North Vietnam's MIG force had come up to engage our bombers over Hanoi on 7 January. The result was the foe's worst day of air war -- seven MIG's were downed. The United States made its first direct troop commitment to the Delta when Marines were landed at Thanh Phong Peninsula. This event generated a storm of criticism especially from Congressman Gerald Ford who attacked the Administration for expanding operations into the Delta without advising Congress. 10/

There was little to be hopeful about in regard to North Vietnam's resolution, it was not eroding. The Washington Star, in an exclusive, quoted Premier Phan Van Dong of the DRV as being convinced that American public opinion would eventually force the U.S. to leave South Vietnam. He confirmed the oft-expressed fears of U.S. officials who prophesied great danger of a wider and bloodier war if North Vietnam mis-read the peace marches and opposition to the war, interpreting it as lack of U.S. determination. 11/ Earlier, Salisbury had quoted the Premier when he discussed the bombing, saying "that once hostilities are brought to an end it would be possible to speak of other things." 12/ The North Vietnamese were evidently resigned to a long bitter war -- one they believed they could wait out better than we.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

To Walter Lippman, the New Year meant "there is hope only in a negotiated compromise" (emphasis added), but to others optimism was the keynote. Ambassador Lodge, in his New Year's statement, predicted that "allied forces will make sensational military gains in 1967" and "the war would end in an eventual fadeout once the allied pacification effort made enough progress to convince Hanoi that the jig was up." 13/ The New York Daily News informed 15 million New Yorkers that the "U.S. Expects to Crush Main Red Force in '67." 14/

As if to balance the cacophony of war dialogue, a final dissonant note was sounded during those first two weeks of the new year. The famous "Goldberg Reply" to U Thant's note of 30 December had angered and dismayed the Secretary General. At a news conference he discussed the U.S. reply to his message which had basically implored the U.S. to discontinue the bombing so some kind of talks could open. The U.S. rejection, outlining its condition of "reciprocal acts" on the part of North Vietnam, he said was "much regretted," for in his estimation it was based upon an unfortunate misreading of history and the current situation as well as the result of misguided assumptions about the "domino theory," which he rejected. The strong opposition he voiced created important political "ripples" in the United Nations, Washington, and abroad. A certain mood of frustration and opposition which had already taken root was nourished and sustained by the incident. 15/

2. Official Optimism and a Spur to Action: The Komer Memo

Seeds of optimism were not restricted to the public at large, but also found sustenance in official circles -- primarily in the White House staff. R. W. Komer, in what he titled a "Vietnam Prognosis for 1967-68," provided a markedly optimistic view of the future and a firm conviction that the military situation was manageable, if not well in hand. He was convinced that COMUSMACV's "spoiling strategy" had thrown Hanoi's calculations badly out of balance, and put us "well past the first turning point where we stopped losing the war." 16/ In this he agreed with the McNamara 14 October DPM; both believed that we had stopped losing. He saw other major turning points. He suspected that we had reached a point where we were killing, defecting or otherwise attriting more VC/NVA strength than the enemy could build up -- in the vernacular, the "cross-over" point. He cited the favorable indicators, but he neither sounded completely convinced nor conclusive.

A critical psychological turning point may have been crossed, he believed, because he detected that the bulk of SVN's population increasingly believed that we were winning the war. (He saw this as the chief significance of the 80% voter turnout on 11 September.) He concluded his introduction with:

"In sum--slow, painful, and incredibly expensive though it may be--we're beginning to 'win' the war in Vietnam. This is a far cry from saying, however, that we're going to win it --in any meaningful sense,"

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

He saw quite clearly the imponderables which made any prognosis a hazardous undertaking:

"A. Will Hanoi materially increase its infiltration rate? I gather this is feasible (though will the barrier make a major difference?).

"B. Will the enemy escalate? Aside from increasing infiltration, I see little more Hanoi itself could do. Or Moscow. Peking could intervene in Vietnam or widen the area of hostilities in SEA, but this seems quite unlikely.

"C. Will the enemy revert to a guerrilla strategy? This could be a serious complication before we get a major pacification effort underway. But the evidence suggests that the VC are still attempting to organize regiments and divisions. I'd also agree with Doug Pike's conclusion in his new book, 'Viet Cong' that such de-escalation would shatter VC morale.

"D. Will Hanoi play the negotiating card, and how? If I'm right about the trend line, Hanoi would find it wiser to negotiate. The only other options are escalation, growing attrition, or fading away. If Hanoi decides to talk sometime in 1967, a whole new calculus intervenes, involving questions of cease-fire, standstill, bombing pauses, etc. In this case we'll have to do a new prognosis.

"E. Will the GVN fall apart politically? While it was a risk worth taking, we've opened Pandora's box by promoting a political evolution to representative government. A series of coups or political crises in Cochin China or Annam could so undermine GVN cohesiveness as to cause a major setback of popular revulsion in the U.S. I expect plenty of political trouble, but would hazard that a crisis of such magnitude can be avoided in 1967 if we work hard at it.

"F. Will our new pacification program work? This too is a major imponderable. But we've nowhere to go but up. We're at long last planning a major new resource input plus the necessary focus on improving US management and redirecting ARVN assets. So to me the chief variable is how much progress we can make how soon. Will it be enough to make a significant difference in 1967 or even 1968?

"G. Last but not least, will the US appear to settle down for a long pull if necessary? This is hardest to predict, yet crucial from the standpoint of SVN and NVN reactions." 17/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Trends as he saw them would continue up (even sifting out the imponderables). The only explanation for under-achievement militarily, in pacification, and political development, would be "something unforeseeable" (not specified). We would be on the high-side of the curve, as he termed it, with the key issue one of "whether the U.S. appears prepared to stick it out as long as necessary or to be tiring of the war."

He closed by drawing the lessons imbedded in his analysis:

"...My prognosis of what is more likely than not to happen in Vietnam is reasonable only if we and the GVN mount a maximum effort in 1967-68 to make it so. The key is better orchestration and management of our Vietnam effort--both in Washington and Saigon. To me, the most important ingredient of such an outcome is less another 200,000 troops, or stepped-up bombing, or a \$2 billion civil aid program--than it is more effective use of the assets we already have.

"A. The war will be 'won' (if we can use that term) in the South. Now that we are successfully countering NVA infiltration and the enemy's semi-conventional strategy, what needs to be added is increasing erosion of southern VC strength (it has probably already peaked out).

"B. Assuming the above is broadly valid, the key to success in the South is an effective pacification program, plus a stepped-up defection program and successful evolution toward a more dynamic, representative and thus more attractive GVN. These efforts will reinforce each other in convincing the Southern VC and Hanoi that they are losing.

"C. Our most important under-utilized asset is the RVNAF. Getting greater efficiency out of the 700,000 men we're already supporting and financing is the cheapest and soundest way to get results in pacification.

"D. By themselves, none of our Vietnam programs offer high confidence of a successful outcome (forcing the enemy either to fade away or to negotiate). Cumulatively, however, they can produce enough of a bandwagon psychology among the southerners to lead to such results by end-1967 or sometime in 1968. At any rate, do we have a better option?" 18/

Komer's primary misgivings related to the ability of GVN to exploit military successes and to convert them into meaningful steps forward in the nation-building program. Creating and sustaining viable political institutions in a revolutionary environment has never been easy, and

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

many agreed with Komer's apprehensions. A widely circulated National Intelligence Estimate, published shortly thereafter, detailed the fragile nature of political development in South Vietnam, characterizing it as "a day-to-day, month-to-month phenomenon for some time to come, with periodic upheavals and crises [that will] threaten the entire process." 19/

Despite a cautiously optimistic approach to the prospects for a more stable political situation, the same NIE identified serious potential sources of instability in the small nation. It saw regionalism as a factor whose influence might burgeon as political events quickened. The military domination of the political life of the country remained an explosive issue. Finally, United States presence and objectives remained a major consideration in analyzing the future behavior of the political actors in South Vietnam. Confidence in the American commitment and steadfastness in our objectives could remain as a counterweight to disruptive SVN political effects and could at least tentatively submerge the politically debilitating civilian-military rivalries, the bickering and jockeying for influence from within and without. 20/

3. Fishing for Ideas With a Dragnet: The Abortive NSAM on Strategic Guidelines for Vietnam

With the new year it was becoming increasingly clear that American resolution, our massive presence and the determined pursuit of our objectives in South Vietnam would heavily influence political events there, but the nature of our objectives, the political bases of our resolution and the desirable magnitude of our presence were less than clear. In an effort to crystallize our thinking in these areas and to provide some more carefully delineated guidance for operations, the President asked Walt Rostow to float a draft NSAM embracing strategic guidelines for 1967 in Vietnam. 21/

The draft NSAM, too, in the Komer vein, was basically optimistic in tone, opening with the observation that "skillful use of U.S. forces has greatly improved our military position....it is imperative that we mount and effectively orchestrate a concerted military, civil, and political effort to achieve a satisfactory outcome as soon as possible." 22/ Accordingly, the draft laid out our strategic aims in 1967. They were to:

"A. Maximize the prospects for a satisfactory outcome in Vietnam by December 1967 or, if this is not possible, put us in the best position for the longer pull.

"B. Be equally suited to (a) forcing Hanoi to negotiate; (b) weakening the VC/NVA to the point where Hanoi will opt to fade away; or (c) at the minimum, making it patently clear to all that the war is demonstrably being won.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"C. Complement our anti-main force campaign and bombing offensive by greatly increased efforts to pacify the countryside and increase the attractive power of the GVN - all these to the end of accelerating the erosion of southern VC strength and creating a bandwagon psychology among the people of SVN. This strategy is also well suited to exploiting any possibilities of a Hanoi/NLF split." 23/

To achieve these objectives, nine program areas each "requiring a maximum continuing effort" were listed. These included pacification, mounting a major national reconciliation program, pressing for emergence of a popularly based GVN, continuing to strive for other objectives of the Manila Program (local government, land reform, anti-corruption), and keeping the lid on the economy. More relevant to our concerns were the four directly concerned with the land war:

"B. Step up the Anti-Main Force Spoiling Offensive, as made feasible by the increase in FW maneuver battalions.

1. Introduce modest US forces into certain key Delta areas.
2. Stress offensive actions to clear VC base areas and LOCs around Saigon.
3. Lay on a major re-examination of our intelligence on VC/NVA strength.

"C. Make More Effective Programs to Limit Infiltration and Impose a Cost on Hanoi for the Aggression.

1. Refine the bombing offensive with respect to both efficiency of route harassment and quality of targets.
2. Press forward with barrier system.
3. Examine other ways to apply military pressure on the North.

* * * * *

"H. Devise a Pre-Negotiating and Negotiating Strategy Consistent with the Above.

1. Take such initiatives as will credibly enhance our posture that we are always ready to talk and ever alert for new avenues to negotiation.
2. Vigorously pursue serious negotiating leads.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"I. Mount a Major Information Campaign to inform both the US electorate and world opinion of the realities in Vietnam, finding ways of credibly to measure progress." 24/

The first two (B. and C.) would require force increases of varying magnitudes, dependent upon whose estimates of enemy capability and U.S. relative effectiveness you accept -- JCS or DoD's or Komer's. Programs B. and C. patently endorse the offensive nature of our operations, but leave their extent or intensity undefined. Interpretation of the third item (H.) rests heavily upon what assumptions were held about negotiations; were they synonymous with military defeat and capitulation or something less emotionally loaded, and less satisfying, like compromise. Implicit in the last point (I.), concerning public information, is the acceptance of a certain "reality" that we wanted to advertise, this being also the mood that pervades the entire NSAM -- victory is near.

The principal interest in this paper, however, derives not from disagreement as to technique and programs (nor even their basic configuration) but from the open discussion of basic objectives in South Vietnam which it prompted. Formal Department of Defense comment on the draft centered in two places: with McNaughton in ISA and in the JCS.

McNaughton's comments seem to reflect a growing concern with our diminishing prospects of early success and a desire not to irreversibly lock ourselves into either any fixed strategy or excessive ground commitments. These views were apparently shared with the Secretary of Defense. In his draft reply to Rostow (through McNamara) McNaughton essentially "loads the dice" against significant alteration of the strategic concept. In the preamble paragraph he states that...

"...The national commitment of the United States in South Vietnam (SVN), as stated in Manila, is 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. The United States is committed to continue our military and all other efforts, as firmly and as long as may be necessary, in close consultation with our allies until the aggression is ended." 25/

In the draft, the Assistant Secretary was painstakingly developing alternatives to continued widespread U.S. military involvement over time. His additions (or line-ins) placed emphasis upon participation by other Asian nations, development of a "rapid and effective" R/D effort, and continued...

"...reorientation of the bulk of RVNAF toward and into a steadily increasing role in R/D operations in coordination with regional and local civil and military forces. The goal is the establishment of security to permit revolutionary development to take place." 26/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The reference to Manila was less than accidental. Paragraph 28 of the Joint Communique for the conference issued on the 25th of October 1966 stated:

"The other participating governments reviewed and endorsed these as essential elements of peace and agreed they would act on this basis in close consultation among themselves in regard to settlement of the conflict. In particular, they declared that Allied forces are in the Republic of Vietnam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, and ceases infiltration, and as the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled."

McNaughton noted that President Johnson himself, in private session with the Heads of State, had negotiated the language of this paragraph. According to McNaughton's account, "the President was determined to get the language in, including the reference to 'six months' (opposed by State, supported by me)." 27/

He also qualified statements in the White House draft which seemingly disregarded considerations of feasibility, for instance, adding that such increments of the barrier system "as are determined to be militarily and politically useful and feasible only" should be completed at the early date specified and that expansion of the scope of offensive operations should be done only "as made feasible by the increase in FW forces." These seemingly minor alterations loom significant as indicators of a subtle shift in approach by both McNamara and McNaughton -- one which was more skeptical of the familiar projected claims of success and rapid solution to the South Vietnam problem.

JCS reaction to the draft was three-fold. They wanted to not only "refine" the bombing offensive, but to "adjust the air and naval offensive with respect to the extent and quality of targets." 28/ This was predictable, but the deeper disagreement about national objectives was more difficult to foretell. This cleavage appeared over two points in the draft.

The idea of developing any kind of contingency plan on how to handle VC/NLF in the approaching elections was abhorrent to the JCS. Just as distasteful was an enlargement of efforts to establish contacts with the VC/NLF. To them it was

"...Inconsistent with the attainment of the US national objective. It is inconceivable that the VC, instilled with

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

ideals of communist domination for all of Vietnam, would peacefully contribute to shaping the destiny of SVN in conformity with democratic principles and without any foreign interference. To encourage contact with the VC would constitute a major shift in US policy in Southeast Asia which would certainly appear to the communists as a sign of weakness and lack of firmness of purpose and undermine the resolve of the GVN." 29/

Furthermore, the JCS detected an unacceptable fraternization with the negotiating option which in their eyes might be justified by future attainment of some degree of representative government and political development. They stressed the "military role" in the GVN in both nation-building and national security, arguing that regardless of the eventual political outcomes and the success or failure of representative government, the extent of the present U.S. commitment had eliminated the option of "abandoning" the country on the grounds that "the government is not established by constitutional or legal processes and might be changed by illegal methods." 30/

The crucial difference, however, arose over what the national objectives in South Vietnam should really be. In contrast to McNaughton's view, the Chiefs believed that the

"...national objective of the United States in South Vietnam (SVN) is an independent nation free of communist subversion and able to determine its own government and national aspirations." 31/

and that to achieve this required three interdependent undertakings:

"a. In the North - Take the war to the enemy by unremitting and selective application of US military power.

"b. In the South - Seek out and destroy communist forces and infrastructure in concert with the GVN/FWMAF.

"c. Nation Building - Extend the secure areas of South Vietnam by coordinated civil/military operations and assist the GVN in building an independent, viable, noncommunist society." 32/

The JCS were actually insisting upon the achievement of a non-communist South Vietnam and their military aims accorded with that view. They were holding to the basic strategic concept written in JCSM 702-66, a month earlier, one which had elicited so little reaction from either McNamara or his staff. 33/ No doubt the resistance of the JCS was heavily influenced by the COMUSMACV-CINCPAC reaction to the

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

draft NSAM. The language of the Pacific commanders had been less cautious, and their message unmistakable -- we were militarily in South Vietnam to convincingly defeat the VC/NVA, that the war could be long and difficult, and the field commander should be granted the operational flexibility and resources he needed to do the job as he perceived it. To insure success, CINCPAC cabled, it was imperative that we get our guidance and objectives unequivocally and clearly laid down:

"A. The hard fact is that, even if there were no war in progress in Vietnam, many of the objectives listed in the civil and political fields could not be realized in the 1967 time frame. The draft paper does not assess the adequacy of resources to carry out the Program B. The objectives listed for accomplishment are so all inclusive that publication in a national policy paper, one likely to receive wide publicity, is to invite future criticism if many objectives are not realized.

"C. It could be interpreted that all aims and programs are to be pursued equally and simultaneously. It should be recognized that forces and other resources currently approved for South Vietnam do not provide the capabilities to accomplish all these programs in 1967.

"4. There is a danger that the detailed and specific guidance in the paper would reduce the flexibility required by the operational commander in utilizing assets available to him to best accomplish his mission. The situation in Vietnam is fluid and dynamic requiring that decisions in use of forces and other assets be made in accordance with the dictates of the situation. It is therefore recommended that NSAM be restricted to a clear, concise statement of national policy for Vietnam, accompanied by a broad statement of integrated military, civil and political objectives to be pursued in 1967 under that policy.

"5. The long range implications of the proposed actions for 1967 in Vietnam are of such magnitude that it is imperative that they be in consonance with our national objectives for South Vietnam. It is recommended that the NSAM stipulate in the preamble that 'actions taken to terminate hostilities shall be in accordance with our national objective to assist the government of Vietnam and its armed forces to defeat externally directed and supported communist subversion and aggression, and attain an independent non-communist society in South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment.'" 34/

We see that the problem of understanding and interpreting the country's objectives in South Vietnam was not limited to the JCS-Secretary of

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Defense-President trio, it went to the major field commanders charged with its execution as well. Events, as much conscious rational decisions, were to shape the outcome of the disagreement, but before the gap was closed, and people began to understand (if not accept) the dynamic and complex nature of our objectives in South Vietnam the divergence between Washington policy and the ground direction of the war was to assume important proportions.

4. The Strategic Concept Under Fire: Seeds of Doubt

State Department concern about the current strategic concept paralleled the debate in DoD. A paper prepared in Under Secretary Katzenbach's office historically analyzed the evolution (or more precisely non-evolution) of the strategic concept in Vietnam. It observed that:

"Basic precepts behind the counterinsurgency doctrine have survived in principle but have been little applied in practice. As program has succeeded program, not only have the principal deficiencies in implementation become increasingly clear, but it has also become evident that these deficiencies have been essentially the same ones from the outset. They may be summarized as follows:

1. With rare exceptions arising from the attributes of individual commanders, the Vietnamese Army (ARVN) has never escaped from its conventional warfare mold. Both in its military tactics and in its relations with the people, it has all too often acted counter to the basic principles of counterinsurgency rather than in support of them. The US military leadership in Vietnam has, on balance, done little to reorient ARVN toward counterinsurgency. In the meantime, the paramilitary forces, locally recruited and locally based and theoretically the backbone of any counterinsurgency effort, have been repeatedly ignored or misused.

2. Despite elaborate planning and creation of machinery to execute and sustain a combined political-military pacification campaign, relatively few Vietnamese leaders have clearly understood the goals of pacification or articulated them effectively through the supporting administrative apparatus. Some leaders have viewed pacification largely in a military context while others, however committed to the political principles involved, have lacked either a pragmatic appreciation of their impact on the peasant or a willingness to approach pacification in revolutionary terms.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

3. As a result, the GVN, despite increasing US assistance in men and materiel, has been relatively ineffectual in meeting the Communist military and subversive threat at the rice-roots level. Pacification has thus far failed to give the peasant sufficient confidence in the GVN's ability to maintain security, the first prerequisite in pacification, or, in longer run, to redress basic economic, political, and social inequities." 35/

The current strategic concept was viewed as a reaction to our basic assumption that the military and political situation in South Vietnam in the spring and early summer of 1965 was irretrievably lost unless the U.S. committed substantial combat forces and unless Hanoi was forced to cease its support of the Viet Cong. From this beginning emerged a current strategy which...

"...divides the Vietnam conflict into two wars: (1) a conventional war against the main Communist forces in the northern provinces of South Vietnam and against their logistic resources in North Vietnam and (2) an unconventional war or counterinsurgency effort against Communist control of the peasant in the southern provinces. The two wars are intended to be mutually supporting and pursued simultaneously, with relative equal priority.

"The conventional war is an effort to obtain quick military results by purely military means. It seeks to reduce or terminate the infiltration of men and supplies into South Vietnam by continuing air strikes over North Vietnam and Laos, and to destroy regular North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong units and their logistic bases in the sparsely settled areas. In this war, the primary role is played by US combat forces deployed largely in the highlands area of Corps I and II where the bulk of North Vietnamese forces are committed, and where the enemy appears willing to engage in large formations. Major battles can occur without the danger of large civilian casualties. In support of their activities, the US forces maintain direct control of their own logistic, communications, and intelligence resources. In short, the highlands and the defense perimeters around certain strategic installations in effect constitute a US theater of operations.

"The unconventional war or counterinsurgency effort continues to give priority to political-military pacification of the populated areas in the Mekong delta and coastal lowlands. It is thus a continuation of the long-term effort to give the population security and to win its support of the government by measures responsive to popular needs. These war areas remain under GVN control, despite the presence of thousands

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

of US civilian and military advisors. ARVN, relieved of many of its combat and defense responsibilities elsewhere, is theoretically able to commit more forces to pacification as well as search-and-destroy missions, directed against the Viet Cong mainforce. The paramilitary forces retain their normal village-hamlet defense and pacification responsibilities." 36/

The author then turned to the problems in South Vietnam which he saw as the direct or indirect result of our strategic emphasis:

"There is no clear delineation of the conventional and unconventional wars either along territorial or population lines. US combat forces have been increasingly committed in search-and-destroy operations even outside the highlands area, as far south as Long An and Hau Nghia provinces around Saigon and as far east as the coastal regions of Binh Dinh province. US marines around Danang, in attempting to secure and expand their defense perimeter, have attempted to engage in pacification operations, as have the Korean forces in Corps II. On balance, however, US combat forces remain essentially oriented toward conventional warfare, making adjustments (which are at times ingenious) as needed for the unusual physical settings in which their efforts take place.

"ARVN meanwhile is also fighting essentially conventional war whether in sparsely settled areas or in populated ones such as the Mekong delta. Its commitment to pacification is negligible, and it continues to regard its mission essentially in conventional military terms. Even in areas where ARVN is engaged in pacification, the fairly low level of ARVN casualties shows that its commanders still remain unwilling to commit their troops in a manner best suited to finding the Viet Cong, and for periods of time sufficient to establish a realistic base of security from which pacification can begin. The principal if not the only security force in most pacification areas continues to be the under-manned and inadequately trained paramilitary forces, which of all Vietnamese forces are now suffering the greatest number of killed-in-action casualties over the past year.

"The claims of top US and GVN military officials notwithstanding, the waging of a conventional war has overriding priority, perhaps as much as 9 to 1, according to the personal judgments of some US advisors. Saturation bombing by artillery and airstrikes, for example, is an accepted tactic, and there is probably no province where this tactic has not been widely employed...." 37/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The new concept which appeared to be emerging, of recommitment of ARVN infantry divisions to pacification primarily in and around pacification areas did not, on the surface, appear to be anything but a long-term process, very sensitive to ARVN acceptance of the role. It failed the twin tests of being a panacea -- it would not be fast, it would not be cheap. There was little doubt that most ARVN division and corps commanders continued to regard pacification operations as dull, less prestigious, and generally not in keeping with the basic mission, past tradition and organization of ARVN. This should not have been startling to the American observer -- after all, U.S. units and commanders found pacification no more palatable, and they had nowhere near the same political or economic stakes in its consequences as their Vietnamese contemporaries.

The conclusions of the paper were not heartening. State believed that even assuming that all the attitudinal problems of ARVN could be overcome, many of its basic weaknesses would undermine its effectiveness in pacification -- just as it had in conventional combat. These included:

"a) poor leadership, preoccupation with political maneuvering at the senior officer level, the lack of experienced junior officers whose recruitment and promotion is based more on considerations having to do with economic and family status than with motivation or ability and whose assignments frequently reflect the use of influence to obtain headquarters or other safe and prestigious posts, and the lack also of competent and experienced NCOs;

"b) poor morale (reflected not only in a continuous rise in desertions dating from at least 1962 but also in a very high battlefield missing-in-action rate) resulting from low pay rates; inadequate dependent housing, concern over the welfare of families, infrequent rotation of units in isolated outposts, and inadequate medical care;

"c) poor relations with the population who, on the one hand, have had little reason for confidence in the ability of the military to afford them any lasting protection and, on the other, have all too frequently been victimized by them;

"d) low operational capabilities including poor coordination, tactical rigidity, overdependence on air and artillery support arising in part from inadequate firepower, overdependence on vehicular convoy, unwillingness to remain in the field at night or over adequately long periods, and lack of aggressiveness." 38/

Deployment of U.S. forces to the highly populated Mekong Delta would, in the writer's eyes, carry potentially adverse political repercussions. MACV was criticized for underestimating the impact on the grounds that

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

they would be operating in remote and relatively unpopulated areas, the same justification used to generate State support for large operations in the border regions. But "remote" did not necessarily mean "remote," as the memorandum explained:

"...But even these areas, which do exist in the delta, are less remote and more populated than areas in the highlands where large US combat forces are currently committed. Moreover, the unpopulated stretches between populated areas are far smaller in size in the delta than in the highlands, and therefore there is greater danger that US forces operating in unpopulated areas could be drawn in the populated areas. Nor is it entirely certain that US forces will restrict their missions to search-and-destroy operations against Viet Cong mainforces. Indeed, it is to be expected that some US units will eventually participate in pacification, as in Danang for example, in order to protect the perimeters of US base facilities or encampments. As the size of the US force increases, it would be logical for MACV to attempt to expand these defense perimeters regardless of the proximity of populated areas. There is also the possibility that US commanders will be inclined to commit their units to pacification simply on the grounds that the Vietnamese are not doing the job efficiently.

"Finally, although it is generally accepted that a military stalemate has existed for sometime in the Mekong delta, it is by no means certain that the GVN's inability to shift the balance against Viet Cong forces in the area is the result of lack of manpower resources. The basic problem is the manner in which ARVN forces are deployed in the delta rather than in the number of ARVN forces committed there. The current ratio of ARVN to Viet Cong mainforces in Corps IV is already more than 2:1, better than in any other Corps area, and, if plans to reorient ARVN to pacification are implemented, the ratio of combat forces should theoretically improve in ARVN's favor since more ARVN units would be committed against the Viet Cong for greater periods of time." 39/

In effect, the presence of large numbers of active U.S. units would not only risk civilian disruption and casualties, but may tempt U.S. units to "moonlight" in pacification, possibly alienating, or at least relieving the ARVN primarily charged with the mission. It was in vogue in the United States at the time to number as one of the causes of ARVN combat ineffectiveness and lack of aggressiveness the rapid assumption by the United States of the major combat role, leading the Vietnamese to "let George do it." Katzenbach's staff seemed to sense the same danger in "too much" U.S. pacification.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The memorandum was directed toward a rethinking of strategic concepts -- in that it failed. It seemed to resolve the problem of achieving a unified strategic concept by leaving the same undefined. As long as the crucial force deployment and political settlement questions could be deferred, a concept sufficiently ambiguous or undefined appeared to be the best one to preserve harmony and encourage continued support. However, the memorandum was useful to point up a basically faulty premise about ARVN effectiveness in the pacification/security mission. If they were inadequate to assess the pacification task, as Katzenbach's staff contended, then our strategy and our manpower requirements could become quite different than was originally calculated as we pursued the elusive objective of "winning the war." As he astutely pointed out, the cleavage between the mainforce and guerrilla wars was more imagined than real, and we could not hope to win them serially -- they had to be controlled simultaneously or failing that, probably not at all. All of the clues were there, it only remained for someone to articulate the fear that so many decision-makers held -- massive U.S. forces, engaged in every activity, provided the only reasonable probability of "winning" in Vietnam.

The NSAM effort was abortive. 40/ The evident division in DoD over the concept and objectives coupled with State's lukewarm response to producing any clear definition of aims/concepts convinced the White House that the best way to retain flexibility in South Vietnam and at home was to allow the ambiguity and uncertainty to continue.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

1. It is of some interest that in early December COMUSMACV reported that for the previous five months ARVN had the following numbers of battalions with "minimally acceptable operational maneuver strength" (or 450 present for operations):

<u>Month</u>	<u>Total Bns</u>
May	33
June	35
July	31
August	33
September	52
October	78

See MACV 52414, op. cit.

2. OASD/SA, "An Assessment of the Course of the War in Vietnam," undated, but probably prepared in early December 1967.
3. Ibid.
4. The New York Times wrote that VC defections were up 82% to 20,242 in 1966 with 2,500 in each November and December.
5. All of the above discussion on military indicators is from OASD/SA "Assessment," op. cit., plus additional sources noted.
6. The New York Times, 31 December 1966.
7. One reaction from the "Hawk" side came from Chairman Mendel Rivers of the House Armed Services Committee, who called on the U.S. to "flatten Hanoi if necessary and let world opinion go fly a kite." Concern in the columns focused upon a fear that the Johnson Administration might heed the cry, because, in Rivers' own words "...they have not ignored others in the past." The New York Times, 30 December 1966.
8. The New York Times, 2 January 1967.
9. The New York Times, 2 January - 18 January 1967.
10. The New York Times, 11 January 1967. He observed: "The Administration is embarking on a major military operation in the Mekong Delta...as far as I know this was never told to the American people or to Congress in the last two years as a prospective operation."
11. The Washington Star, 10 January 1967.
12. The New York Times, 3 January 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

13. The New York Times, 9 January 1967.
14. The Daily News, 9 January 1967.
15. The New York Times, 11 January 1967.
16. R. W. Komer, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "Vietnam Prognosis for 1967-68," dated 29 November 1966.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. National Intelligence Estimate, Nr. 53-66, Subj: "Problems of Political Development in South Vietnam Over the Next Year or So," dated 15 December 1966.
20. Ibid.
21. Memorandum to Secretary of Defense and Acting Secretary of State from W. W. Rostow, no subject, dated 12 December 1966, with Draft NSAM, Subj: "Strategic Guidelines for 1967 in Vietnam," dated 10 December 1966, as an attachment.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense from John T. McNaughton, ASD(ISA), Subj: "Draft NSAM on Strategic Guidelines for 1967 in Vietnam," ISA 1-20383/67, dated 20 January 1967.
26. Ibid.
27. "Manila Summit Conference Joint Communique," October 24-25, 1966. Copy in the McNaughton papers with annotated comments by McNaughton. Files in VNS 2, L.
28. Emphasis added. JCSM 792-66, Subj: "Draft NSAM," dated 27 December 1966. Comment for this JCSM was obtained from CINCPAC and COMUSMACV. See JCS message 1363, 142018Z December 1966 and the reply CINCPAC to JCS, 200805Z December 1966.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

29. JCSM 792-66, op. cit.
30. Ibid. A choice of wording directly attacking the "inherent right to choose" insertion made by ISA.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. JCSM 702-66, op. cit., dated 4 November 1966. See Section I, C., pp. 32 for a discussion of the memorandum. The Joint Strategic Objectives Plan for FY 1969-1976 (JSOP 69-76), Appendix A to JCSM 798-66, dated 30 December 1966 prepared concurrently with JCSM 792-66 is vague on objectives, but repeats a view that military winning in SVN was vital to the collective security posture of the United States.
34. CINCPAC message 200805Z December 1966 to JCS.
35. "Strategic Concept for Vietnam: An Analysis," State Department, unsigned memorandum believed to have been prepared by Richard C. Holbrooke for Under Secretary Katzenbach, dated 12 December 1966.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid. A December CIA report substantiated these views about the ARVN effectiveness and congenital weaknesses.
39. Ibid.
40. The ASD(ISA) draft of McNaughton's was approved and forwarded by Deputy Secretary of Defense Vance on 28 January 1967. See: Memorandum from Deputy Secretary of Defense for W. W. Rostow, Subject: "Draft NSAM on Strategic Guidelines for 1967 in Vietnam," dated 28 January 1967.

B. THE OPENING DIALOGUE
ON PROGRAM 5

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

B. THE OPENING DIALOGUE ON PROGRAM 5

1. Reclamas to Program 4 - Fleshing Out

The turn of the year policy debate over basic U.S. objectives and strategic concepts was played out in the midst of a continuing dialogue within DoD, one which focused upon the adequacy and composition of Program 4. An exchange of memoranda between the JCS and SecDef in December 1966 and January 1967 fleshed out the profile of the program to near the 470,000-man figure.

The major reclama to Secretary McNamara's 18 November Program 4 decision was a sharply worded JCSM in which the Chiefs attacked the premise (ostensibly supported by the Secretary of Defense) that the restoration of economic stability in SVN was of overriding importance. They not only took issue with the use of the plaster ceiling employed to develop the force limit, but firmly regarded the ceiling of 470,000 men as inadequate and restrictive, a situation which might necessitate, in their words, "subsequent adjustments," especially in view of the I CTZ tactical situation. Additionally, they noted:

"...projected opening of land lines of communication (LOCs) in II, III, and IV CTZs, important to military operations and the Revolutionary Development Program, will be curtailed. US operations in the IV CTZ will be impeded and the capability to conduct riverine operations in this area will be reduced to a critical degree. The over-all US military capability to support extension of control by the Government of Vietnam in SVN will be limited and flexibility will be curtailed....

"....while the restoration of economic stability in SVN is most important, the achievement of such stability will depend primarily on the capabilities of military and paramilitary forces to defeat the enemy, to provide the secure environment required for political, economic, and social development, and, concurrently, to provide essential impetus to the Revolutionary Development Program. Further, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that, in comparison to the forces requested by them on 4 November 1966, the forces listed in Program 4 will reduce the military capability to achieve our national objectives and execute our military tasks in SVN. The rate at which Program 4 can undertake area control, open land LOCs, and provide essential security for Revolutionary Development and other associated programs will be

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

slower than was estimated with the forces previously requested. The intensity and frequency of combat operations may therefore be restricted, resulting in a slower rate of progress in SVN, some loss of momentum in operations, and possibly a longer war at increasing costs in casualties and materiel...." 1/

Despite such protestations and recounting of dire outcomes, the recommendations of JCSM 739-66 primarily concerned no more than direct substitution of units below the 470,000-man ceiling (with no increase in plaster expenditures) and these were approved by the Secretary of Defense a week later. 2/

While the actual numbers of troops and amounts of equipment involved in the reclaims were minor, the underlying nature of the dispute over Program 4, of which the small adjustments were barely symptomatic, had been more basic from its inception and both the press and Capitol Hill were picking up the tempo of debate between the Chiefs and their civilian superiors. General Wheeler was busy denying in a press conference that the civilian chiefs prevented General Westmoreland from receiving the troops he felt necessary. Simultaneously, Secretary Rusk was spending a long four hours before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, defending the Administration's basic policies and those pursued by its Vietnam commander. 3/

Two days later a poll of nineteen predominantly hawkish Senators revealed two basic areas of consensus; they believed we should give our military leaders more support (presumably troops) and we should hit North Vietnam harder (notably in Haiphong). More political pressure was generated on the troop issue by Senator Stennis' declaration that General Westmoreland's requests for troops should be met, "even if it should require mobilization or partial mobilization." Stennis publicly estimated that we were 100,000 men shy of the total needed to contain the Viet Cong militarily. A similar figure often appeared in classified studies at the time. 4/

A public statement by Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson, probably intended to be reassuring, only heightened the sense of cost in manpower and national energy which the war might require. He said that withdrawal of U.S. units may be possible in $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$ years because enemy strength was being broken down into small units that could be contained by smaller American units. 5/ Few people, as the commentators were quick to observe, were enamored with the thought of any American units in Vietnam in $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, whatever the size! As if to underline the costs of an increasingly expanding war, Operation CEDAR FALLS in the Iron Triangle had produced a record number of U.S. deaths in a single week, 144, along with 1,044 wounded and 6 missing. The prospect of suffering 1,194 casualties per week for the next indeterminate number of years was hardly an appealing prospect, and a substantial number of the American people

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

seemed to believe that political restraints imposed upon our military leaders were the chief cause of so little concrete progress. This belief and the potential untapped political support it revealed, was to be a powerful lever in the hands of the JCS as they pressed for force increases during Program 5. 6/

Manpower, though, was becoming the crucial issue -- its political ramifications were enormous, and politicians were prone to best detect them. Senator Ted Kennedy delivered a major speech on the draft to the National Press Club, urging reform. On the same day, Senator Mike Mansfield reintroduced his resolution calling for a "substantial reduction" in the number of American troops in Europe. 7/ Men, money and political will were the crux issues of the domestic debate; by the end of January all three had highlighted the news. The troop issue outstanding between the JCS and McNamara had been wrung out in public, \$73.1 billion had been asked for defense and on 23 January, The Arrogance of Power was published. 8/

2. Vietnam Strategy: Attention Rivets on the Borders and Sanctuaries

We have already described how MACV attention shifted to the borders and sanctuaries in late 1966. By January and February of the next year (1967), COMUSMACV and CINCPAC were riveted upon these crucial areas where major enemy units were being found and fought.

COMUSMACV assumed that a new phase of the struggle was beginning, one which demanded that we reexamine our military strategy. To take advantage of the existing opportunities which he detected, he decided to mount a "general offensive" designed to:

"A. Maintain the momentum of the offensive on a seven-day-a-week, around-the-clock basis.

"B. Decimate enemy forces, destroy his base areas and disrupt the VC infrastructure.

"C. Interdict enemy land and water lines of communication, denying him the opportunity to resupply and reinforce his units and bases in South Vietnam.

"D. Open, secure and use land and water lines of communication.

"E. Convince the enemy, through the vigor of our offensives and accompanying psychological operations, that he faces defeat.

"F. Support political and economic progress in SVN...." 9/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

He envisioned a sustained series of offensives against enemy base areas and main forces thereby destroying the VC/NVA combat potential, and threatening his supply systems, which he described as "the Achilles Heel of the VC/NVA." Westmoreland provided a solution to the build-up problem at the end of the NVN-Laos funnel, but again no real solution for stopping the flow:

"...The enemy is dependent on the buildup of weapons, equipment, food and medical supplies which are located in his base areas. Destruction of established enemy base areas denies him the opportunity to rest, retrain, recuperate and resupply easily. Thorough, meticulous search in areas in which our forces are operating is a key to the successful accomplishment of this important task. If we can neutralize the enemy base areas and prevent replenishment of the material captured or destroyed, we will have taken a long stride toward ultimate victory...." 10/

Westmoreland also stated what was to become a growing concern among Americans at all echelons:

"...It is essential that the effectiveness of RVNAF be improved. Concurrently, the image of the military forces of South Vietnam in the eyes of the world and especially in the United States must reflect the contribution which has been and is being made to the overall effort in SVN. Much of the press reporting on this subject is unfair and indicates a lack of understanding of the RVNAF contribution. This, in turn, has a deleterious effect on RVNAF morale and effectiveness. RVNAF must be made to realize that there are military tasks as well as non-military tasks associated with RD. Every influence must be used to get RVNAF to cease conducting an intermittent war and instead to maintain continuous pressure on enemy forces. We must insure that maximum use is made of RVN forces in all our planned major offensives and that they are given tasks which are important and which will contribute to their continued growth potential. We then must insure that full credit is given to their accomplishments in each of these operations." 11/

COMUSMACV's "command guidance" from which this is quoted, must be taken in context; ringing proclamations like these are directed to the troops. They are the things command histories are made of, but they seldom provide an undistorted picture of tactical or strategic reality.

The 1967 MACV Campaign Plan had focused upon the areas outlined in the COMUSMACV message, but it contained less bandwagon psychology and more careful evaluation of enemy capabilities and strategy. The Campaign Plan had been broadly based upon Westmoreland's assessment

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

of the enemy's situation and his strategy, views which he repeated in a year end cable to General Wheeler and Admiral Sharp. 12/

He wrote:

"...Forces currently available to the enemy in SVN as identified in MACV order of battle are nine division headquarters, 34 regimental headquarters, 152 combat battalions, 34 combat support battalions, 196 separate companies, and 70 separate platoons totaling some 128,600, plus at least 112,800 militia and at least 39,175 political cadre. The principal threats posed are in the DMZ area, the Chu-Pong region, and the Tay-Ninh/Phuoc Long area of northern III CTZ. Although enemy forces in these areas have been punished in operations during 1966, they have not been destroyed and are continuing efforts to reinforce, resupply, and plan for resumption of operations in a winter-spring campaign. Enemy capabilities throughout SVN are summarized in the following paragraphs:

"A. Attack. The enemy can attack at any time selected targets in I, II, and III CTZ in up to division strength and in IV CTZ in up to regimental strength, supported by local force and guerrillas. Simultaneously, he can continue harassing attacks throughout SVN.

(1) In I CTZ, he can attack objectives in the DMZ area (Quang Tri Province) with elements of the 324B and 341st NVA divisions supported by one separate regiment. Additionally, he can attack objectives in Quang Tin or Quang Ngai Provinces with the 2d NVA division and two regiments of the 3d NVA division. In Thua Tien and Quang Nam Provinces he can attack in up to regimental strength.

(2) In II CTZ, he has the capability to attack in Western Pleiku, Southern Kontum, or Northern Darlac Provinces with elements of the 1st and 10th NVA divisions, in Northern Binh Dinh Province with one regiment of the 3d NVA Division, and in Phu Yen and Northern Khanh Hoa Provinces with elements of the two regiments of the 5th NVA Division.

(3) In III CTZ, he can attack with the 9th VC and possibly the 7th NVA Divisions in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, Binh Duong, or Phuoc Long Provinces, and in Phuoc Tuy and Southern Long Khanh Provinces with elements of the two regiments of the 5th VC Division. He also can sabotage

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

GVN and FW shipping transiting the Rung Sat Special Zone with a Sapper Battalion; harass installations and LOC's in Gia Ding Province with elements of the 165A VC Regiment. He has the capability of continuing his terror campaign in Saigon/Cholon.

(4) In IV CTZ, he can attack in up to regimental strength in Chuong Thien and Dinh Tuong Provinces, and in up to reinforced battalion strength throughout the rest of the CTZ. Militia and guerrilla forces predominate, and emphasis is on harassing attacks and local actions to consolidate and extend his control...." 13/

Westmoreland also expected what he labeled "political attack" and "economic attack" to continue. These he described as efforts to...

"...Destroy the effectiveness of hamlet, village, district, provincial, and national governments by elimination, intimidation, and subversion of GVN officials; discredit and erode GVN political authority at all levels by conducting propaganda attacks against elected and appointed GVN officials and against GVN programs.

"...Enemy to intensify efforts to impose an economic blockade against the GVN by denying the latter access to its own resources; conduct overt and covert operations throughout SVN against targets of vital economic significance to the maintenance and growth of the GVN economy; stimulate inflation by diverting commodities destined for SVN markets and by denying commodities from markets through interdiction and harassment of LOC's; and undermine the people's confidence in SVN currency by propaganda and possible counterfeiting." 14/

COMUSMACV then addressed the crucial question of enemy reinforcement capability:

"...The enemy has the demonstrated capability to reinforce in SVN by infiltrating personnel and units from NVN at a rate of about 8,400 men per month and by in-country recruitment of about 3,500 per month in VC Main and Local Forces. In the tactical sense, his dependence on foot movement normally precludes major reinforcement on the battlefield beyond attack forces initially committed. Defensively, he normally conducts holding actions to enable extrication of the main body rather than reinforcing.

(1) In I CTZ, he can reinforce his attack or defense through the DMZ and from Laos within three to ten

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

days after commencing movement with three divisions, three infantry regiments, and eight infantry battalions. He can reinforce his attack or defense with one infantry division from Binh Dinh Province in II CTZ and one infantry regiment from Kontum Province in II CTZ in twelve days after commencing movement. Many of these units are presently understrength.

(2) In II CTZ, he can reinforce his attack or defense in Northern II CTZ within ten days by elements of one infantry division from Southern I CTZ and in Southern II CTZ within five to ten days after commencing movement by up to two regiments from III CTZ.

(3) In III CTZ, he can reinforce his attack or defense in the Northern portion with three separate battalions from II CTZ and with one regiment from IV CTZ within three to ten days after commencing movement.

(4) Preponderance of militia and local forces in IV Corps and the reliance upon encroachment through local and harassing action makes large unit reinforcement unlikely in IV CTZ...." 15/

COMUSMACV continued by divining the enemy's overall strategy:

"...The conclusion to be drawn from the enemy's strength increase of some 42,000 during 1966 is that despite known losses, he has been able to maintain a proportional counter buildup to the growth of US/FWMA forces. Sources of this increase are in-country conscription and foot infiltration down the trails from NVN through the DMZ, but principally through Laos and the Cambodian extension. To understand what the enemy is doing and is likely to do in the coming year, it is essential to understand his objectives, strategy, and major tactics, all of which derive from the principles of insurgency warfare (or "Wars of National Liberation") which essentially are political in nature and which have been described by Mao Tse Tung, Vo Nguyen Giap, and others such as Chi Guevara with clarity and conviction. To aid in conveying this picture I have summarized in the succeeding subparagraphs my estimate of his overall strategy and its probable continued application.

"A. Objectives: The enemy's objectives in SVN may be expressed under two dual headings: to extend his control over the population of SVN and to

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

prevent the GVN from controlling that population; to reduce the will to resist of the RKF/FWMAF and their governments and correspondingly to strengthen his own posture and will.

"B. Strategy: The enemy's favored doctrine of "strategic mobility" has been the subject of debate in NVN. Politburo member Nguyen Chi Thanh has held that the proper application is to initiate mobile warfare with simultaneous attacks throughout SVN. Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap, whose view has prevailed as soon by our experience, favors a "defensive/offensive" version of strategic mobility consisting of these factors:

(1) Developing strong, multi-division forces in dispersed regions accessible to supplies and security.

(2) Enticing AF/FWMA forces into prepared positions where dug-in communist forces may inflict heavy casualties upon them.

(3) Conducting concurrent, intensified guerrilla and harassment pressure counter-wide to tie down our forces, destroy small units, attack morale, and extend his control.

"4. Evaluation:

"A. Present enemy dispositions, logistics, and level of combat indicate a continued adherence to the doctrine of strategic mobility implemented by Giap's "defense/offensive" major tactics. Our intelligence does not indicate a change in enemy strategy, tactics, or weapons now or in the coming year, although this possibility remains under continuous scrutiny. Specifically, we have no evidence of an intent to fragment his main-forces and revert exclusively to guerrilla-type operations.

"B. The enemy was hurt during 1966 in many areas, and his principal concentrations near sanctuaries at the DMZ, in the Chu Pong region, and in the Tay Ninh/Binh Long areas have been contained by our preemptive operations as a result of which he has suffered heavy losses. He is avoiding major contact by fighting defensively when forced to do so, and attempting to rebuild

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

and reinforce for winter-spring campaign operations. It would be premature to assume that an apparent decrease in activity in December just prior to holiday stand-downs is indicative of a change in trend. Further, it would be erroneous to conclude that VC Main Force and NVA formations are no longer dangerous, that their unit integrity has been destroyed, or that their logistical capability has fallen below that needed to sustain his war of conquest by attrition.

"C. On level of battalion imbalance the enemy has maintained throughout 1966 is about 1 day in 30. [sic] This level is consistent with his strategy of conserving his forces while attriting US/FWMA forces, and is within his capability to support logistically. If forced to a higher level such as 1 day in 15, he will encounter difficulty.

"D. It is probable that the enemy during the coming year will attempt to infiltrate men and supplies into SVN by sea, through Laos and Cambodia, and across the DMZ to: Counter-balance the US/FWMAF build-up; maintain a credible threat posture, attrite friendly forces and determination by inflicting casualties and prolonging the conflict; maintain and promote expansion of the insurgency base (intra-structure [sic] and militia); and continue his protracted war to control the people of SVN." 16/

The emphasis in the assessment is unmistakable -- the crucial strategic areas would continue to be the highland border areas, the DMZ-I CTZ area and the sanctuaries of Laos and Cambodia. The 1966 MACV Command History reveals that the enemy camp envisioned the highlands of MR5 as a "killing zone" where the mountainous and juggled terrain favored VC/NVA operations; additionally the area was comfortably close to buildup areas near the DMZ and the secure areas in Laos and Cambodia. 17/

When General Westmoreland claimed to have "taken the initiative" he usually appears to have referred to the manner in which FW forces (U.S. in particular) had prohibited the shift by VC/NVA into what counterinsurgent scholars call the "final battle of annihilation phase." MACV evidence indicated that VC/NVA were prepared to do this as far back as 1965. However, as an alternative (and this remained an important MACV operating assumption), MACV believed that the enemy was attempting to build up large forces in certain geographically distant areas -- again in accordance with Giap's version of "strategic mobility." These areas were Quang Tri Province in I CTZ and the highland border areas in II CTZ. It also appeared that the opponent might create a holding force between the Delta and highlands (in III CTZ) to pin down friendly units and prevent FWMAF from reinforcing against the main threat in the highlands. 18/ An

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

American strategy intent upon retaining the initiative (or gaining it) would logically concentrate upon enemy actions which promised to contest it. Giap's creation of "killing grounds" and "holding forces" were the kind of initiatives which COMUSMACV believed he had to disrupt ("spoil") before they materialized as integral parts of a coordinated strategy. This kind of thinking would lead U.S. forces to the border region battles, the clearing of in-country redoubts and sanctuaries and to major unit commitments in I CTZ in the North.

One Pacific commander during this time period, General Beach, put his views on strategy and escalation in unequivocal terms. Determinedly, he argued that we must "win" the war, and he outlined a plan which magnified the issues central to the COMUSMACV strategy by its direct presentation of the major ground strategy issues -- the sanctuaries, the infiltration (and its relationship to the bombing), and the course which he believed would best counter the enemy's strategy of tying down large numbers of our forces away from the sensitive populated areas. 19/

The USARPAC commander also felt that operations in the base areas....

"...must be pursued on a sustained basis and must fully penetrate, thoroughly cover, and sanitize these areas. Subsequently, these areas must be denied to the enemy's reentry by leaving behind occupying forces. Concurrently, forces should be deployed astride major routes the enemy habitually uses between these bases and to his sanctuaries to interdict his movements. If the enemy will stand and fight anywhere, he will stand and fight for these bases if they are seriously threatened. Moreover, serious inroads into the enemy supply base in SVN would tend to force the local guerrilla out of his lair to provide increased support to the main forces, thus facilitating our efforts to find, fix and destroy him. Destruction of enemy in-country bases and tactical stockpiles will have the most immediate adverse effect on enemy operations in SVN. COMUSMACV's campaign plan envisions such operations. The suggestion of this headquarters relates to ensuring that we penetrate the base areas completely and then leave forces behind to prevent reoccupancy by the enemy...." 20/

Beach accepted the "killing ground/holding" version of the enemy strategic plan noting that:

"...The enemy is developing large forces in bases or sanctuary north of the DMZ near I CTZ, and on Cambodia, in the vicinity of Chu Pong Massif bordering II CTZ, and opposite Tay Ninh/Binh Long Provinces in III CTZ. These bases and forces, now politically beyond our reach, will

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

pose a constant and serious threat. The enemy will attempt to tie down large numbers of our forces to preclude their support of RD and conduct of offensive operations as well as draw them into engagements staged in his favor. Our forces must not meet the enemy where we cannot engage him decisively. Rather, we should keep him under surveillance and be prepared to concentrate rapidly to engage him at a time and on ground of our choosing...." 21/

Infiltration also occupied his thoughts, but he was concerned lest our efforts elsewhere become weakened by an undue emphasis on stemming the flow.

"...I concur with your position to resist pressures to devote a great share of our energies and resources to trying to stem the flow of men and materiel into SVN from the North. It is virtually impossible to stop or appreciably impede infiltration into SVN with ground forces now available or programmed for the theater, especially in light of the contiguous sanctuaries the enemy now enjoys. Although it would be desirable to stop or measurably impede infiltration, such action is not imperative to our winning a military victory. Moreover, maintaining that long and difficult LOC saps a sizeable measure of the enemy's effort and resources. It has, assuredly, exacted its toll on the fighting capabilities of NVA units. Our air and naval interdiction operations must be continued at the present level and, if possible, they must be expanded. Although not in themselves capable of quelling infiltration, their effects against the enemy and his movement of personnel and equipment to the South are appreciable." 22/

While Beach's pessimism about stopping the infiltration jibes with that of COMUSMACV and CINCPAC, his view of how it would affect the chances of military victory were surely not. If killing VC/NVA was to be the indicator of military success or "victory," could not an unimpeded infiltration keep troops coming faster than they could be killed? And furthermore, could not free (or freer) flow of supplies degrade your kill capability/unit cost, e.g., your kill ratio could be adversely affected by the improved status of his equipment and logistics which the infiltration afforded. These negative aspects were not discussed, but surely if Beach clearly believed that the infiltration was not crucial, he would not have evinced less concern about the sanctuary routes and the bombing. He closed with two observations:

"...Our country harbors a natural desire to ease the hardships in the Vietnam conflict. The military, however, must press to

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

go all out at all levels in SVN if we are to win. We are faced with a full blown and difficult war and our government has committed a huge amount of combat power to this conflict, yet we are still a long way away from achieving our objectives. If we are to reach an acceptable military decision in Vietnam, we must not permit our operational tactics to reflect the reticence which currently characterizes some bodies of public and official opinion. Our ground forces must take the field on long term, sustained combat operations. We must be prepared to accept heavier casualties in our initial operations and not permit our hesitance to take greater losses to inhibit our tactical aggressiveness. If greater hardships are accepted now we will, in the long run, achieve a military success sooner and at less overall cost in lives and money....

"In summary, it is my opinion that the MACV campaign plan for 1967 is adequate to meet the anticipated enemy threat. However, within the plan's overall concept four aspects of offensive action must be emphasized. First, we must relentlessly attack and destroy enemy base areas in SVN. Secondly, we must avoid pinning down sizeable forces against his border-sanctuary areas. Rather, we should deal with forays by his major forces into SVN at times and locations of our choosing. Thirdly, we must press forward with an aggressive effort to destroy the guerrilla and his underground government in support of revolutionary development. Finally, we must avoid devoting too great a measure of our effort to anti-infiltration at the expense of more important operations. We should continue and, if possible, expand our air and naval interdiction of his infiltration system." 23/

3. Vietnam Strategy: On the Ground

On the ground, large unit operations increased during January to 341, but the number having "significant results" decreased for the third consecutive month (from 24 to 19). Total enemy killed reached a new monthly high of 5,954, contributing to a total loss figure of 10,440, also a wartime high. 24/ Major military operations in January did not yet clearly reflect the thinking Westmoreland had revealed in his early January assessments and strategic prognosis; evidently MACV was still in the planning stage preparing for the major operations of February and March on the borders and in the sanctuaries. Furthermore, the magnitude of the threat in the DMZ-I CTZ that was to prompt the massive dislocation of troops to the North under TF OREGON in April was not yet clear, and operations were moving slow motion.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Operation CEDAR FALLS in the Iron Triangle, which began on 8 January, was the most significant operation of the month and the largest operation of the war in terms of forces employed. The operation was aimed at clearing the Triangle, an area denied to the GVN for over 20 years. In the estimation of the MACV staff it gained outstanding results, capturing large numbers of weapons, ammunition and other war materials, plus nearly a half-million pages of enemy documents. 25/ MACV concluded that CEDAR FALLS had destroyed the Iron Triangle as a secure VC base area (although the operation which superseded CEDAR FALLS, JUNCTION CITY, was in basically the same area).

Operation THAYER II conducted by the 1st Cavalry Division in Binh Dinh Province reported killing over 500 enemy, the second consecutive month such a figure was reached in that province. FAIRFAX, an open-ended operation which was to continue in one form or another for months, aimed at destroying enemy forces and eliminating the VC infrastructure in Gia Dinh Province southeast of Saigon was "meeting significant results." Operation ADAMS in Phu Yen Province, a "search and destroy rice harvest security and road clearing operation" was specifically designed "to provide a shield behind which Revolutionary Development [was] progressing." 26/ This was the precursor of the USMC Operation DESOTO in the Quang Ngai salt flats later that month. In preparation for DESOTO, ROK Marines conducted Operation SEINE in Quang Ngai, a ten-day search and destroy operation, which killed over 110 enemy in the period. The most significant RVNAF operations were conducted in the Capital Military District and in IV CTZ. 27/ Three areas were being closely watched for increased enemy activities, possibly large unit operations. In I CTZ the enemy troop build-up, resupply harassment, and reconnaissance increased in the DMZ area. Elements of the NVA 324th and 341st Divisions were confirmed as infiltrated south into Quang Tri Province. From every indication there would be future widespread enemy activity in that area. Enemy forces in II CTZ continued to evade friendly forces throughout the month, although the NVA NT 1 and NT 10 divisions located near the Kontum/Pleiku border were believed preparing to move, or actually moving, into those provinces. In III CTZ, despite the disruptive effects of CEDAR FALLS in the Iron Triangle, there were strong indications that elements of six VC/NVA divisions were preparing for future offensive operations in the Tay Ninh-Binh Long-Binh Tuong Province areas. 28/

January was characterized by the insertion of more ARVN battalions into the role of direct support of revolutionary development for 1967. In-country, there were 120 ARVN infantry battalions assigned to 10 divisional tactical areas and two special zones. Of these, 50 were to have been assigned missions of direct support of revolutionary development for 1967. Operational control of these RD battalions varied throughout the country and included command under the province chief, the regimental commander, special zone commander or the division commander. In

TOP SECRET -- Sensitive

addition, three ranger, one marine and three airborne battalions were to have been assigned a mission of direct support of RD. There were eight U.S. battalions with an RD mission and other FWMAF contributed three battalions. 29/ Some American observers, however, were less than pleased with the ardor for RD which the Vietnamese were displaying. One source in III CTZ observed that:

"...The late 1966 enthusiasm which helped to launch 1967 RD progress has yet to work its way down to the district and village level where the impact must be realized.

"The monthly meeting of the III CTZ RD council, scheduled for 3 February, was postponed, probably due to preparations for TET. The efficiency of the RD cadre teams continues in most areas to be marginal. Since the success of the entire 1967 hamlet program will be largely dependent upon the performance and accomplishments of these teams, their efficiency must be improved...." 30/

Such views undoubtedly contributed to the basic uneasiness about whether ARVN could (or would) "cut the RD mustard," a fear voiced by Holbrooke a month earlier.

Briefly, analyzing the pattern of operations (see "Major Operations and Approximate Locations," next page) some sixty-two of the United States maneuver battalions in Vietnam were engaged at some time on what MACV termed "large operations." Realizing that the criterion for large operations of "100 or more enemy dead" is not necessarily the best for our purposes, and that such actions were influenced by the monsoon patterns, at least a rough picture of the operational center of gravity can be developed. Of the sixty-two battalions so engaged, twenty-six were participating on missions which had an RD component -- either protecting the harvest, screening the local population, or keeping routes open so the crops could reach market. Thus, the U.S. was devoting approximately 25-30% of its forces in January 1967 to RD effort country-wide, although this simple statistic is misleading because some of the operations listed were combination search and destroy/RD actions. No major ARVN combat operations were specifically designed to support RD objectives, although as we noted earlier, on a battalion level basis an increasing number of Vietnamese units were being assigned such tasks. 31/

TOP SECRET -- Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

MAJOR OPERATIONS
 AND APPROXIMATE
 LOCATIONS

JANUARY LARGE OPERATIONS

	ENEMY KILLED
SEINE	140
THAYER II	549 (1529)
MAENG HO 8	158
ADAMS	118 (282)
CEDAR FALLS	720
TTB TAN BINH	118
FAIRFAX	153 (246)
DECK HOUSE V	13
DAN CHI 275B/S/D	181

() DENOTES CUMULATIVE KIA
 TOTALS FOR THE OPERATION.

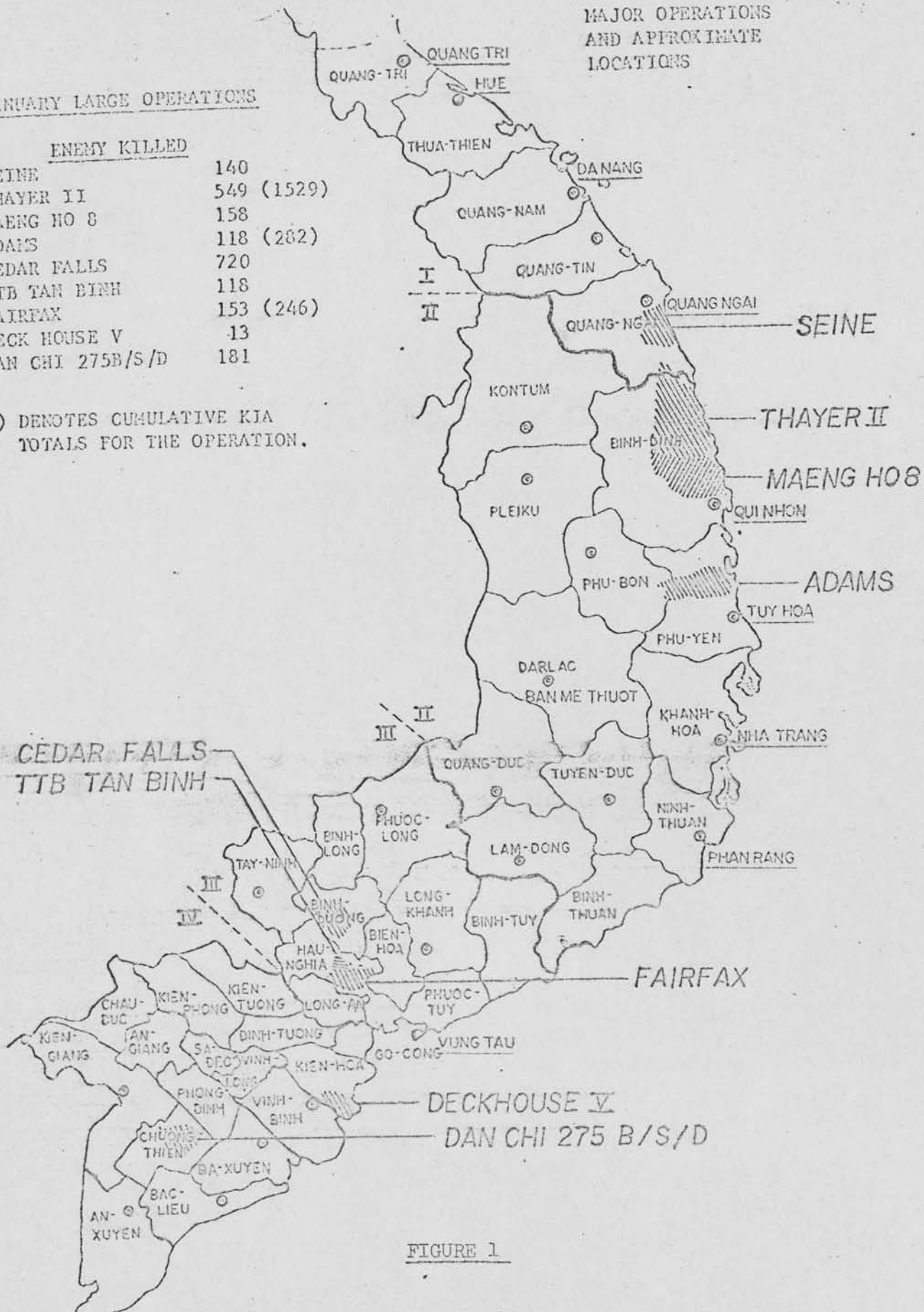


FIGURE 1

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

4. Sanctuaries Revisited: Renewed and Heightened Concern About Laos and Cambodia

As the ground war pursued the path just described, concern about the infiltration and the importance of the sanctuaries deepened. On 18 January CINCPAC had come into the JCS with a request to expand the bombing in NVN to twenty-five "remunerative targets" to counter infiltration. ^{32/} This request was followed on 25 January by a detailed cable addressing the broader range of anti-infiltration measures. After pleading for a more "balanced" program, the message turned to a major recommendation:

"...The enemy's capability to supply his forces in SVN has been degraded by our air interdiction campaign in SVN, Laos and NVN, and by our offensive ground operations in SVN. The confusion of his supply situation may account, in part, for his attempts to avoid significant contact with our forces. The enemy is dependent upon external sources for most of his weapons, ammunition, medical supplies and assorted technical equipment. The closing of Haiphong would disrupt the enemy's logistical capability to supply these items to SVN. Therefore, I recommend and will shortly submit a plan for closing the port of Haiphong, and other minor ports in NVN. Closing these ports would be the single most effective and economical method of drastically reducing the enemy's capability to carry on the war in SVN. The military advantages of this action would be manifold. It would still be necessary, however, to recognize the significance of infiltration throughout Cambodia. The more successful our operations in NVN and Laos become, the more communist pressure will be brought to bear on Cambodia to increase use of her ports and LOC's or infiltration of supplies into SVN.

"Measures to improve the counter infiltration aspects of our current programs are aimed at striking at the enemy's vulnerabilities and countering his strength. These include:

- "A. Destroying his military and logistics bases.
- B. Interdicting his LOC's.
- C. Forcing the enemy into sustained combat operations.
- D. Providing security for the SVN population to prevent impressment and to assist their economic, social, and political development."

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Continuing, he reviewed various programs (MARKET TIME, GAME WARDEN, DANIEL BOONE, SEA DRAGON) and the detailed plans to broaden them, but once more the Pacific commander returned to the subject of the sanctuaries:

"The problem of sanctuaries has been mentioned several times. Those in NVN and Laos are limited sanctuaries since they are subject to air attacks, albeit, with certain restrictions. The sanctuary in Cambodia, however, is complete. It would appear appropriate to undertake actions at an early date aimed at persuading the Cambodian leadership to adopt a more neutral position. Pursuant to a request by DOD it is understood that a Joint State, Defense, and CIA committee is considering this problem. It is hoped that recommendations from this group will be forthcoming at an early date which will indicate positive measures which may be taken. The importance of Cambodia as sanctuary and as a source of supplies, particularly rice, cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, we must get on with a strong program to inhibit this use of Cambodia, preferably by non-belligerent political and diplomatic means. If we do not achieve the required degree of success by these means then we must be prepared in all respects to use the necessary degree of force to attain our objectives.

"In summary, the problem of countering infiltration of enemy forces into SVN is just one aspect of the total military problem in SEASIA. While infiltration cannot be absolutely stopped by direct military action, it can be made costly and its effectiveness blunted. The enemy's prodigious efforts to provide air defense and to repair damaged LOC's are strong evidence of the effectiveness of our air campaigns in NVN, Laos and SVN. Increasing interdiction of his supply system, especially by closing his ports, would be the most effective measure we could take against his capability to infiltrate. Additionally, shifting Rolling Thunder emphasis to attack selective target systems should have a significant impact upon his will to continue support to the insurgency in SVN. The more successful our operations become in NVN and Laos, the more use the enemy will seek to make of his supply sources and channels in Cambodia. To achieve our objectives in SEASIA our current strategy, a combination of carefully balanced military programs must be pursued in close coordination with political, economic, and sociological programs." 34/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The next day, attention shifted to a ground anti-infiltration program when General Westmoreland came in with his PRACTICE NINE Requirements Plan, the study of his manpower and logistics requirements to implement the barrier plan outlined a month earlier. The cover memorandum on the plan prepared by the JCS made a determined case against the proposed time frame (a target date of 1 November 1967 had been set), and argued for providing the additional forces from outside resources rather than relying upon assignment of in-country forces already programmed for use elsewhere in the 1967 Campaign Plan. 35/ In light of the anticipated manpower draw-down within South Vietnam, the plan was relatively austere.

COMUSMACV was protecting plans already approved and rolling; accordingly he considered his plan to be no more than "the optimum which [was] reasonably attainable without an unacceptable impact upon the objectives of the 1967 Combined Campaign Plan." 36/

MACV envisioned a strong point and obstacle system constructed on the eastern portion of northern Quang Tri Province to impede infiltration and to detect invasions. The plan visualized that the system of strong points and obstacles would serve as a base for possible future expansion of the system into the western portion of Quang Tri Province to the Laotian border; this expansion being contingent upon time, forces, material and security conditions. COMUSMACV also indicated a preference for extension of the strong point/obstacle system into the Western Sector instead of reliance on air delivered munitions and sensors.

His force requirement provided the excitement. In his words:

"To have an effective obstacle system across SVN, south of the DMZ, would require a minimum additional force of one division and one armored cavalry regiment." 37/

The concept of operations for employment of these forces contemplated two operational areas, an eastern sector and a western sector. Force availability and logistical limitations would permit operations initially only in the eastern section with the exception of one area in the Western portion, that near Khe Sanh. An Army brigade (or Marine RCT) and an ARVN regimental force would construct and man the strong point obstacle system, with artillery, air and NFG fires supporting along the entire trace. III MAF would be prepared to reinforce threatened areas and provide depth to the defense. Two Marine battalions (as a minimum) were earmarked for positioning in the Dong Ha and Khe Sanh areas "until relieved." This large additional troop requirement of nearly two division equivalents and the basic COMUSMACV concept in the plan was to quickly reappear in a CINCPAC message early in February, one which discussed the barrier and infiltration in broader terms. 38/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The JCS agreed with COMUSMACV citing objections which revolved around that they believed were two fundamental disadvantages:

"The increased anti-infiltration capability that would be established would be located in northeastern South Vietnam where North Vietnamese infiltration has been minimal.

"The diversion of resources required for execution of the plan would reduce the emphasis and impetus of essential on-going programs now approved for the conduct of the war in South Vietnam." 39/

Furthermore, they observed that such diversion of resources and efforts might come at a crucial point...

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that military actions now in progress in Southeast Asia, in support of the concepts and courses of action approved by them are demonstrating substantial successes toward national objectives and that if expanded and pressed with continued vigor, these successes will accelerate. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, less the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, conclude that any additional resources that might be provided can be used to a greater advantage in executing CINCPAC's concept of operations for Southeast Asia." 40/

There was no solid consensus among high officers on the barrier issue. In late February, General Wheeler wrote in reply to JCSM 97-67 that he believed, contrary to COMUSMACV and JCS conclusions, that the implementation of the PRACTICE NINE Plan might enhance rather than inhibit the flexibility available to COMUSMACV. He wrote:

"...although I support much of the paper (JCSM 97-67, PRACTICE NINE Requirements Plan), I disagree with the recommendation that the plan not be approved for execution.

"Although I recognize that the eastern portion of the DMZ does not now represent a major active infiltration corridor, it does possess a substantial potential for the rapid introduction of sizeable forces from the north; in fact, this portion of the border area provides the quickest and most trafficable routes from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. Thus, an obstacle system impeding enemy capability to exercise such an option seems to me to represent a prudent military action.

"Again, while I recognize that the obstacle system reflected in the COMUSMACV plan may require an undesirable diversion of in-country resources, it is not clear to me

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

that this will of necessity be so; it is also possible that the level of activity in the vicinity of the DMZ will require the commitment of comparable forces to that area whether or not construction of the obstacle system envisaged by COMUSMACV is undertaken. Furthermore, proceeding now with the actions required to provide additive assets for support of the MACV plan does not, in my view, rule out a subsequent decision to utilize these assets in other ways should the turn of events so require. Thus, it is my view that proceeding now with preparatory actions to implement the COMUSMACV plan may enhance rather than inhibit the flexibility available to COMUSMACV." 41/

In other words, the Chairman was displaying considerably more prescience than his military colleagues. Either this or he was the only one who really believed the MACV-CINCPAC reports of activity and assessment of the threat in I CTZ. He anticipated that events might outrun the requirement for decision on the barrier troop issue -- an apprehension which materialized in rapid fashion.

The next day, the Central Intelligence Agency published a study entitled "Significance of Cambodia to the Vietnamese War Effort" in which it, too, disagreed with the assessment the military commanders had been making. 42/ Although the availability of Cambodian territory was granted to be of considerable psychological and military advantage to the Communists, and the access to the Cambodian rice surplus had evidently obviated any need to move substantial quantities of food down the Laotian route system to feed Communist forces in the rice-deficit Vietnamese highlands and Laotian panhandle, the study concluded:

"Denying the Communists the use of Cambodian territory and supplies would make life more difficult for them; it would not constitute a decisive element in their ability to conduct military operations in South Vietnam." 43/

The caveat added to this rather surprising conclusion noted that probably during 1967 Communist use of Cambodia would increase primarily due to:

"The logistic burdens imposed on the Communists by their own military build-up and the increasing pressures imposed by allied forces." 44/

If this were true, then, a very good argument could be made that as of the moment denial of Cambodia "would not be decisive," but as the weight of U.S. military pressure increased, and the Cambodian sanctuary and supply aspects increased in importance to the enemy, then it may become decisive. The decisive nature of denial of Cambodia to the VC/NVA would be a function of its increasing value to them.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

5. Infiltration -- Remains the Key

Into February, infiltration held the focus of attention. Following up his 18 January request, on the first of February, CINCPAC requested authorization to conduct offensive mining against the North Vietnamese ports. 45/ He stated his case:

"A drastic reduction of external support to the enemy would be a major influence in achieving our objectives in NVN. Despite fewer ship arrivals in 1966 compared to recent years the tonnage of imports has increased. This increase demonstrates the rising need for external support in NVN. While the nature of cargoes discharged cannot be stated with precision, there is little doubt that a major portion contains war supporting materials. Additionally, the ability of NVN to export products to other nations through its seaports contributes significantly to its capability to support hostilities in RVN. The closure of selected NVN ports would result in a severely strained economy and reduce Hanoi's capability to support military actions in SVN.

"Closure of the port of Haiphong to ocean-going ships is of paramount importance and would be effective in compounding NVN logistic problems for the reasons indicated below:

"A. 85 percent of imports come through Haiphong. There is no satisfactory alternate port.

"B. Soviet cargo presently entering NVN through Haiphong would have to be re-routed through Communist China or off-loaded in time-consuming barge operations. Thus far the CHICOMs have not permitted the Soviets unlimited use of their rail systems.

"C. The ability of CHICOM/NVN rail systems to function as a substitute means to provide logistic support is marginal. A demand for increased rolling stock as well as new port facilities would be generated.

"Closure of NVN ports would be a sign of U.S. determination to prosecute the war successfully thus bringing increased pressure on Hanoi to terminate hostilities...." 46/

If Admiral Sharp received the "go" to conduct offensive mining against the NVN ports, initial efforts would be directed at Haiphong. He saw this action as...

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"an effective means of depriving the enemy of imports required to continue the war. If used in conjunction with RT air strikes against the port system, Haiphong can be virtually sealed as a source of war supplies." 47/

This CINCPAC bombing request message was followed on 6 February by a comprehensive PRACTICE NINE cable, which reviewed the "barrier plan" and discussed the previous MACV-CINCPAC planning. 48/ In it CINCPAC reemphasized that unless the additional troops COMUSMACV had requested were forthcoming the target date to reach the required levels of effectiveness could not be met.

He summarized the operational and logistical considerations by saying:

"The COMUSMACV plan responds to the requirement for submission of an anti-infiltration plan in the north-eastern area of Quang Tri Province, south of the DMZ.

"Within the constraints imposed, the concept is feasible. The system of obstacles and strong points, with forces assigned, would be capable of impeding infiltration to a degree, and detecting any overt invasion threat.

"The additive forces requested are essential to implementation of this plan. Furthermore, the diversion of in-country forces which would be required to support the plan would have an adverse impact on other necessary programs." 49/

Then the message took a surprising turn:

"The level of infiltration in the area the obstacle system is to be installed does not justify diversion of the effort required to construct and man such a system. Moreover, there is no indication that present operations are inadequate to cope with what has been an insignificant infiltration problem in this particular area of SVN.

"Extension and expansion of the system of obstacles westward from Dong Ha mountain to the Laotian border to provide an effective anti-infiltration system is contingent upon additional forces, i.e., an infantry division and an armored cavalry regiment.

"A rigid operational capability date of 1 November 67 should not obtain." 50/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Consistent with this, the summary stressed General Westmoreland's concern...

"...over the inflexible time frame, the need for additional forces to construct and man the obstacle system, and the impact of using in-country or programmed forces. He has made clear that the U.S. brigade or regiment requested in the plan is but the first increment of a full division and armored cavalry regiment force required to man an effective obstacle system south of the DMZ. Finally, he emphasizes that the course of action set forth in the plan would not in itself stop infiltration. In view of the numerous disadvantages listed above, and in light of the need to maintain balance in all anti-infiltration programs, CINCPAC recommends that the plan not be implemented within the time-frame envisioned." 51/

All of which seems to be saying that if the troops required (1 division plus 1 regiment) were assigned to the barrier, it would probably reach the desired effectiveness, but since they most likely will not come from "outside" resources, and COMUSMACV does not desire to draw down other forces for them, the barrier would probably not be very effective or meet a real threat anyway.

On the ground in SEA observers were painstakingly searching the infiltration figures for indications of "reciprocal moves" on the part of the VC/NVA, or the "fade-out" various individuals had been predicting. The press was also speculating upon the political intent of North Vietnam, led there by MACV's year-end infiltration statistics. A MACV "backgrounder" in late 1966 had indicated a drastic falling off from earlier infiltration levels. Little had been done in the interim to correct (or update) these figures and speculation was rife in early February. Phil Goulding was frantically quizzing MACV for explanations. Military attaches were experiencing pressure from their ambassadors for interpretations and analysis. 52/ PACOM-MACV answered queries with a detailed discussion outlining the problems of interpreting (or even developing) infiltration estimates; information which may be useful at this point to highlight the problems and pitfalls of "infiltration watching." CINCPAC wrote that it was:

"Our position... that the NVA must continue to infiltrate at significant levels to maintain maturing force structure. The VC cannot replace total communist losses as well as provide additional personnel to flesh out their joint (VC/NVA) planned force structure. It is true that figures may appear to suggest that infiltration dropped off sharply during last half 1966. Although statistical data indicates infiltration appears to have dropped during latter

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

half 1966, the figures for last five months of year are not complete. Also, data after September 1966 represents only partial returns subject to considerable upward revision. Recent intensive community-wide review of the foregoing at CINCPAC resulted in an agreed data base with Oct 65 through Dec 66 time frame. (Oct 65 selected as historical start point attributable to initiation intensive NVA build-up). The mean monthly infiltration during this time frame has been about 6-7,000.

"An example of late data recently incorporated in infiltration statistics follows: The 165 NVA regiment began infiltrating into SVN in March 1966 but did not complete infiltration until about July 66. Sufficient information became available in January 1967 to permit the acceptance of the 165 NVA regiment in the order of battle. It had been unidentified and unknown earlier. As the result, confirmed infiltration figures for July 1966 were revised upward in January 1967 by 1,950 to reflect the 165th regiment's strength upon reorganization in SVN. Review of statistical infiltration data also shows that figures require 90 to 180 day time frame to be developed. Concur, that the NVA may be approaching their current planned force structure in SVN. In the future, it will probably be even more difficult to generate short-term infiltration data. Infiltrators may enter SVN more often in groups vice large units. Groups may break up shortly after infiltration as replacements compounding the problem for our intelligence gathering agencies, and further complicating the statistical problem.

"This is an estimate and we feel more time is required to gain substantiating information.

"We take particular exception with statement in the reference that Hanoi may be willing to enter into negotiations to get bombing stopped.

"CINCPAC position is there are no repeat no indications that indicate NVN has changed previously stated terms for negotiation which is basis for USG resumption of bombing just ordered. Negotiations embodying NVN terms would, in effect, require the surrender of our stated objectives in SVN.

"In addition, there are no repeat no indications available here that NVN has changed original intent to vigorously prosecute the war notwithstanding allied bombing which has caused NVN severe difficulty." 53/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

In late February, as the debate over roles and missions (AB 142), progress in pacification, ARVN effectiveness, PRACTICE NINE Requirements, enemy intentions and infiltration reached a crescendo, it became clear that the deployment debate was centered upon one major uncertainty -- How many more U.S. troops would it require to achieve U.S. objectives in SVN, and more basically in the face of the infiltration trends past and present could our massive infusions of U.S. forces turn the trick.

Operation CEDAR FALLS, deep into the Iron Triangle, redoubt had produced a windfall of enemy documents and plans, many of which bore directly upon enemy strategy and indirectly conditioned our expectations and confidence in our calculations. Some of them revealed a "new strategy developed after the entry of substantial US and Free World forces into South Vietnam." 54/ COMUSMACV, recounting the information obtained in the document, had stated that for the enemy:

"...The main emphasis is on continued reinforcement from North Vietnam to defeat US and RVN forces in South Vietnam. This strategy reaffirms the concept of the necessity for a protracted war, but nonetheless stresses the need both to seize and to create opportunities for decisive tactical victories of high impact effect in a relatively short time. At the same time it stresses intensified guerrilla action and public disturbances, all featuring the customary coordination between military and political action. It appears that the principal objective area is the highlands, the secondary areas being Quang Tri and Thua Thien and the coastal provinces of the II Corps. It is understood, of course, that the Saigon area is the ultimate objective.

"Analysis of the broad strategic guidance contained in the early 1966 document just mentioned, along with later prisoner interrogations suggests the conceptual framework of enemy planning. This would include attacks in the I Corps and II Corps coastal areas to cause our forces to be redeployed. If the enemy could then succeed in weakening our forces in the highlands by luring part of them into the coastal areas and then pinning them down, conditions might be achieved which he would consider favorable for a spectacular victory in the highlands employing main forces already located there and possibly reinforced by continued infiltration from North Vietnam. Such an attempt probably would not be with the intent to hold ground permanently, but rather to create a psychological shock designed to affect US public opinion against continuation of the war, to bolster his own morale, and to improve his position for negotiation or further combat. To achieve this, his favored objective, as shown by documentary evidence, would be the entrapment and "annihilation" of a large US unit,

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

preferably a battalion of the 1st Air Cav Division; or alternatively, employment of a sweep against Pleiku, including destruction of installations, rapid withdrawal, and the ambush of reaction forces.

"The present disposition of enemy forces can be analyzed in relation to such a strategy. Despite several major defeats and heavy casualties, the enemy still maintains three divisions near the demilitarized zone. Elements of these forces have infiltrated again into Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces. They pose a constant threat to territory and installations in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces and have forced the prolonged deployment of four US Marine battalions and four ARVN battalions to northern Quang Tri Province, enemy initiative in Quang Tri and Thua Thien has increased during the past several months and is expected to increase further. The enemy has the capability of launching large scale attacks across the DMZ at any time. This is not meant to imply that massive multi-division attacks necessarily will occur. More probably, by an increased buildup and tempo of coordinated main force/guerrilla operations, the enemy may attempt to expand his forces southward and gradually overwhelm the area below the DMZ. Whether by attack or encroachment, such efforts would serve to force the deployment of additional US and Vietnamese troops to the area and thereby thin out those forces in support of Revolutionary Development. The enemy's deployment of a division to Quang Ngai has served to increase his pressure in that Province. His division formerly in Binh Dinh has been mauled by the 1st Cavalry Division and either has dispersed in Binh Dinh Province or has withdrawn to Quang Ngai. The enemy division that was deployed to Phu Yen has been dispersed; however, one regiment has attempted to consolidate itself in Khanh Hoa. The enemy's strategy in attempting to pin down allied forces in the coastal areas in order to divert attention from the highlands has been unsuccessful thus far. However, his concentration of two divisions in Cambodia west of Pleiku and Kontum Provinces has forced the deployment of a minimum of four US battalions to the highlands to provide surveillance over the border areas. These minimum forces had to be reinforced during the past year from other areas, and further reinforcement probably will be necessary during the coming month when these two North Vietnamese Divisions ready themselves for offensive operations. In the III Corps area the enemy has adopted a similar strategy. He has deployed two divisions in the northwestern quadrant of the III Corps Tactical Zone and has been developing a base and assembling a division in the mountainous and jungle-covered areas of Phouc Tuy Province.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"7. The enemy's implementation of his strategy is characterized by:

A. Increasing his guerrilla forces and their tempo of operations with emphasis on the sabotage of US installations.

B. Expanding his local forces as manpower will permit for the purpose of harassing RVN, FW and US installations and forces and disrupting Revolutionary Development.

C. Concentrating North Vietnamese Army and VC main forces in numerous remote areas, thereby posing a continual strategic threat intended to prevent concentration of our forces in particular regions. These are areas from which enemy forces can conduct training and supply operations with minimum risk, and from which they may be deployed when ready. These areas are:

- (1) The DMZ.
- (2) In Laos opposite Hua Thien Province.
- (3) In Eastern Cambodia adjacent to the Central Highlands.
- (4) The jungle-covered areas of Northwestern III Corps (and the adjacent areas in Cambodia) and of Phuoc Tuy Province.
- (5) The mountainous areas adjacent to the fertile coastal plains of Central Vietnam in the Provinces of Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Pu Yen and Khanh Hoa.

.....

"In summary, the enemy's strategy is a practical and clever one designed to continue a protracted war, inflict unacceptable casualties on our forces, establish a favorable political posture, minimize risks to main forces, and maintain in the option of going on the military offensive of his covert troop deployment.

"Considering the desire of the world population to see a peaceful solution to the conflict in Vietnam during the coming months, it is likely that the enemy will attempt to parlay this desire for peace and American impatience with the war into major concessions prior to, or during, negotiations undertaken between opposing sides. This strategy

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

has been used effectively by the communists in the past, as the record of the Korean negotiations will reflect." 55/

To counter such a broad, coordinated strategy would require large numbers of troops -- even more than those listed under Program #4. To many observers the concept of "sheer mass" doing the job was appealing. Robert Komer returned from a mid-February trip to Vietnam no less optimistic than before. Ever the inveterate optimist he reported to the President that:

"After almost a year full-time in Vietnam, and six trips there, I felt able to learn a good deal more from my 11 days in-country, 13-23 February. I return more optimistic than ever before. The cumulative change since my first visit last April is dramatic, if not yet visibly demonstrable in all respects. Indeed, I'll reaffirm even more vigorously my prognosis of last November which would be achieved in 1967 on almost every front in Vietnam." 56/

He firmly believed that in time we would just overwhelm the VC in SVN:

"Wastefully, expensively, but nonetheless indisputably, we are winning the war in the South. Few of our programs -- civil or military -- are very efficient, but we are grinding the enemy down by sheer weight and mass. And the cumulative impact of all we have set in motion is beginning to tell. Pacification still lags the most, yet even it is moving forward." 57/

Finally, and contrary to all military reports, he saw some let-up in the pressures for additional resources:

"Indeed my broad feeling, with due allowance for over-simplification, is that our side now has in presently programmed levels all the men, money and other resources needed to achieve success...." 58/

The preceding statement curiously seems to contradict the tenor of the previous ones which plainly indicate the requirement for a massive influx of U.S. forces. Nevertheless, such optimism, even considering the source was surely to tell upon a President deeply engrossed in weighing alternatives in Vietnam and comparing their risks and benefits.

The most significant assessment of alternative strategies for Vietnam in late February was a short analysis prepared for the President's night reading by ISA and the JCS with an assist from Department of State. 59/ The assessment commenced with the presentation of three programs -- A, B and C -- each one analyzed in terms of its specific actions, the authority required and the policy changes required to implement them and the risk or political impact attendant to each. (See Table, p. 50.) The programs

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

MILITARY ACTION PROGRAMS FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA - SUMMARY

RISKS/IMPACT

ACTIONS

AUTHORITIES/POLICY CHANGES

1. ROLLING THUNDER - Electric Power System, Thai Nguyen Steel Plant, Haiphong Cement Plant, All Unoccupied Airfields; eliminate 10 NM Hanoi Prohibited Area.
2. NAVAL SURFACE OPERATIONS - Expand offensive operations to include valid military targets ashore south of 19° N.
3. SHINING BRASS - Within current operational limits delegate authorities now held at DOD/STATE level to CINCPAC in coordination with Embassy Vientiane.
4. LAOS OPERATIONS - Continue as at present plus Operation POP EYE to reduce trafficability along infiltration routes.
5. B-52s - Base part of operations at U-Tapao.
6. LAND ARTILLERY - Fire from positions in SVN against valid military targets in and immediately north of DMZ.
7. DEPLOYMENTS - Accelerate Program #4 Deployments (including 3 Army Maneuver Battalions).
8. ROLLING THUNDER - Elements of 3 ports, MIG airfields less those from which international civil transport operate, selected rail facilities, ammo dump, machine/tool plant, 7 locks; reduce Haiphong Restricted Area to 4 NM.
9. MINE INLAND WATERWAYS AND ESTUARIES SOUTH OF 20° N.
10. NAVAL SURFACE OPERATIONS - Extend to 20° N.
11. SHINING BRASS - Expand operational limits to 20 KM into Laos, increase helo operations, authorize larger forces, increase frequency of operations, decentralize control to CINCPAC in coordination with Embassy Vientiane.
12. LAND ARTILLERY - Fire from positions in SVN against valid military targets in Laos.
13. DEPLOYMENTS - Deploy the 9th MAB (3 BLT, 2 TFS, 2 HMM) from Okinawa/Japan to the I CTZ in March 1967.
14. ROLLING THUNDER - 4 ports, remaining MIG airfields, AD HQ, Ministry Defense HQ, dikes; eliminate prohibited/restricted areas.
15. MINE MAJOR PORTS AND APPROACHES. Mine INLAND WATERWAYS and estuaries north of 20° N.
16. NAVAL SURFACE OPERATIONS - Expand north of 20° N.
17. SHINING BRASS - Battalion size exploitation forces - start guerrilla warfare.
18. DEPLOYMENTS - Deploy up to 4 US Divisions (3 Army, 1 USMC); and up to 9 TFS (5 AF, 4 USMC).

PROGRAM
A B C

PROGRAM A

PROGRAM B

PROGRAM C

No change in operation authorities except deletion of 10 KM radius around Hanoi where ordnance delivery is prohibited. This area then becomes part of 30 NM Restricted Area. No policy changes.

Forces now engaged in SEA DRAGON operations require authorization for offensive action against shore targets.

Delegate existing authorities to CINCPAC in coordination with Embassy Vientiane. No policy changes.

Authorization required to implement operational phase of weather modification process previously successfully tested and evaluated in same area.

Requires country clearance for aircraft and personnel to enter Thailand.

No significant policy changes; requires approval of targets only.

Requires by 1 March 1967 decision to accelerate deployments. Requires corresponding end strength authorization.

Requires significant policy change to attack MIG airfields.

Operations can be authorized and conducted within framework of ROLLING THUNDER.

Requires authorization for offensive action against shore targets.

Requires delegation of authority to CINCPAC/Embassy Vientiane. Policy change required to extend operational limits.

Minor policy change required.

Requires by 1 March 1967 decision to accelerate deployments. Requires corresponding end strength authorization.

Requires significant policy change, although operations can be conducted within framework of current ROLLING THUNDER program.

Major policy change required.

Moderate policy change required.

Significant policy change required.

Requires decision by 1 March 1967 to call up reserves, extend tours and terms of service, repetitive tours, increase service strengths, and partial industrial mobilization.

Risk to US forces consistent with normal ROLLING THUNDER operations in the heavily defended north-east area. Loss rates should not exceed acceptable limits commensurate with results to be achieved. Political risks are negligible.

No military risk beyond normal combat. Political risk is low since US ships now fire against shore targets in self defense and against waterborne logistic craft beached and in rivers.

No increase in military or political risk over that associated with current operations.

Normal military operational risks. Risk of compromise is minimal.

No significant military risk. Political risk negligible; however, criticism is to be expected.

No significant military risk. Negligible political risk.

Reduction of CONUS strategic reserve.

Military risks are consistent with operations in heavily defended NE area. Loss rates acceptable in terms of expected results. Moderate political risk due to possibility endangering foreign ships, and increased civilian casualties.

Negligible military risk. Insignificant political risk.

Military risk/losses commensurate with ROLLING THUNDER operations in NVN. Political risk is acceptable.

Will increase to minor degree risk of exposure of activity. Political risks increased only slightly over present levels.

Negligible military risk. Political risk less than that associated with current air strikes and SHINING BRASS in Laos.

Moderate military risk associated with loss of PACOM amphibious reserve. Political risk less than moderate.

Military risk commensurate with objectives to be achieved. Higher losses initially, but lower thereafter as air defenses degraded. Political risk moderate or higher. Usual propaganda reaction expected on basis of "escalation."

Military risk no greater than associated ROLLING THUNDER programs in port area. Political risk is acceptable - no direct military confrontation likely; no realignment of power blocs. Propaganda outcry severe. Possible increase in USSR/China cooperation to NVN.

Moderate military risk. Less than moderate political risk.

Moderate military risk associated with increased size/duration of operations. Political risk moderate, but acceptable. Deniability is lessened, but operations defensible on basis enemy conduct.

Military risk significant in that strategic reserves degraded until end CY 67. Political/domestic risk in terms of increased draft, call up of reserves.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

themselves had been prepared by JCS at the request of Deputy Secretary Vance and they actually incorporated the various separate proposals made by the JCS over the past two months.

For instance, Program A included ROLLING THUNDER, naval surface operations, SHINING BRASS, Laos operations, land artillery firing across the DMZ and ground force deployments. The deployments recommended under Program A consisted of merely accelerating Program 4 deployments and possibly adding three Army maneuver battalions. The remainder of Program A represented no more than minor expansions in operations, recommendations for which the JCS had been on record since last fall. Program B featured expanded ROLLING THUNDER operations to include attacking the North Vietnamese ports, mining the inland waterways and estuaries south of 20° North, attacking the MIG airfields previously excepted, expansion of SHINING BRASS operations into Laos and, significantly, the deployment of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade from Okinawa/Japan to the I Corps Tactical Zone in March 1967. Program C subsumed all of the recommendations of the two preceding Programs A and B, but added an expansion of the mining quantitatively, to include all of approaches and inland waterways north of 20°, authorized battalion-sized expedition forces in the SHINING BRASS area and recommended deployments of up to four U.S. divisions (3 Army, 1 USMC) and up to nine tactical fighter squadrons (5 Air Force, 4 USMC).

Major authorization would be required from the President to expand the air attacks to the ports and MIG airfields as recommended in Program B, but other than that, only minor policy changes were required to initiate Programs A and B. In order to deploy the 9th MAB by 1 March 1967, a decision had to be made concerning acceleration of deployments, some corresponding end strength increases for Program 4 had to be authorized. Program C, of course, was the major deployment proposal, one which the JCS believed would require a decision by 1 March 1967 to call up Reserves, to extend tours and terms of service, to authorize repetitive tours, to increase service strengths, and effect partial industrial mobilization. None of the recommendations included in all of these programs possessed more than "moderate military risk" in the eyes of the JCS. Some, such as expansion of ROLLING THUNDER to the port targets, were rated as possessing "moderate or higher" political risks. The major deployment recommendation requiring Reserve mobilization carried "significant military risk in that strategic Reserves would be degraded until the end of the Calendar Year" and "political domestic risk in terms of increased draft and call-up of Reserves," but again the JCS played down the seriousness of such a move.

The documents available do not indicate what usage the President made of this particular analysis. However, it remains interesting as an historical event, being the first explicit presentation of new alternative programs in the development of Program 5.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

1. JCSM 739-66, "Deployments to Southeast Asia and Other PACOM Areas (U)," dated 2 December 1966. See Section I, above, for the discussion of deployment decisions prior to this memorandum.
2. See Memorandum for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from Secretary of Defense, Subj: "Deployments to SEA and Other PACOM Areas (U)," dated 9 December 1966. The JCS asked direct substitution of approximately 15,000 troops to provide "balanced forces." SecDef approved JCS recommendations for an additional A-1 squadron in Thailand, but advised that "...any additional requests to out-of-country areas should be fully justified as to their relation to the conflict in SEA." Another related issue, broached by Systems Analysis, was whether or not to announce to the Chiefs that the barrier plan about to be approved would be manned by MACV from forces within currently approved personnel strengths. If so, SA recommended that JCS should be requested to resubmit their recommendations on that basis. This was not done. See Memorandum from ASD(SA) for Secretary of Defense, Subj: "Deployments to SEA and Other PACOM Areas," dated 7 December 1966.
3. The New York Times, 16 January 1967.
4. The New York Times, 18 January 1967. See Section I for discussion of the 100,000-man figure in COMUSMACV-CINCPAC messages.
5. The New York Times, 22 January 1967.
6. The CIA Analysis of ROLLING THUNDER (CIA SC No. 04442/67, January 1967) had fallen into Senator Fulbright's hands and he was threatening to use it in his Vietnam hearings. Its conclusion, that the bombing was relatively ineffective given the political constraints, was confirmed by the McNamara testimony before the joint session of the House Armed Services Committee and Senate Sub-Committee on 23 January 1967.
7. A JCSM published a week later reveals that the JCS firmly believed "...that, in their judgment, there [was] no military justification to reduce the strength of U.S. forces in Europe." (JCSM 46-67, Subj: "Redeployment of U.S. Forces Withdrawn from Europe (U)," dated 28 January 1967). One can speculate ad infinitum about Mansfield's motives and about with whom he was allied, but one can hardly deny that he, the Chiefs, the President and the Secretary of Defense were not acutely aware of just about at what point CONUS military manpower resources would be exhausted.
8. The New York Times, January 1967. There was an audible sigh of relief when the Salisbury dispatches ended on 18 January. However, five days later, Bill Boggs, of the Miami News, was filing reports from Hanoi which substantially corroborated Salisbury's stories about civilian casualties and the bombing.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

9. COMUSMACV 02916 (Westmoreland Sends) to Deputy Commanding General, USARV, "Command Guidance (U)," dated 24 January 1967.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. The public relations aspect was real. Less than a month later, R. W. Apple, of the New York Times, was to write a major piece, cutting away the facade of "good" PR which had covered RVNAF performance to discuss the lack of effectiveness of such units as he found them.
12. COMUSMACV 00610 to CINCPAC for Admiral Sharp and General Wheeler from General Westmoreland, Subj: "Year-End Assessment of Enemy Situation and Enemy Strategy (U)," dated 2 January 1967.
13. Ibid. These figures roughly conform to corrected OB and strength estimates developed later in the year, when MACV reported 116,552 combat, 41,700 administrative service and 126,200 guerrilla troops for a total of 283,900 compared to 280,575 in this cable. See: MACV Monthly Order of Battle Summary, 31 October 1967.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid. This infiltration figure of 8400 per month is slightly below the figure of 9100 contained in the MACV Command History 1966. At the end of 1966, MACV accepted a figure of 48,400 infiltrators during the year, plus an additional 25,600 "may have infiltrated into South Vietnam on the basis of information evaluated as possibly true." This total of 74,000 "possible" and "accepted" provided the base for MACV calculations at the time. See: USMACV Command History 1966, "Infiltration Into RVN," p. 22. A 7 November 1967 OSD STAT Summary gave an "accepted" figure of 55,300 infiltrators, or if you add the MACV "possible" figure about 9000 per month. See: "Southeast Asia Analysis Report," OASD(SA)SEA Programs Directorate, No. 8-0054 (Special Supplement). The recruitment figure conforms to a more sophisticated estimate on VC recruitment, one which concluded that the MACV estimate of 7000 VC recruited per month in 1966 was probably not valid for 1967. The key finding of the study was that the VC probable rate was near 3500 men per month. See: CICV Study ST 67-081, "VC In-Country Recruitment" dated 15 September 1967, and Ibid., SEA Analysis Report.
16. Ibid.
17. MACV Command History, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
18. Ibid.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

19. CINCPAC to JCS, Exclusive for General Wheeler and General Westmoreland from Admiral Sharp, Subj: "Memo from General Beach Reference USARPAC Views Relative to Probable Enemy Actions," dated 3 January 1967. This message refers to a verbal request from PACOM for such views of major commanders and is a follow-up to a 24 December 1966 memorandum by General Beach devoted to the same subject.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. Emphasis added.
23. Ibid. The author never explained what he thought were "more important operations," but one can gather from the preceding paragraphs that he meant ground operations in the base areas and against main force units.
24. USMACV "Monthly Evaluation" January 1967, p. 3.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid. There were 136,591 small unit operations reported with 1,065 enemy contacts, 235 of these at night.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid. The problem of operational control of RD battalions is one of many "little" problems that complicated the greater problem of COMUSMACV in allocating personnel between "shield" and "shelter" and optimizing his strategic gains. In January, the Joint General Staff, RVNAF, published a directive stating that ARVN units employed in support of RD may operate under the operational control of either division or sector as appropriate. The authority that exercised control would designate a tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) to be approved by the Corps Commander concerned. Units would not be withdrawn from their assigned TAOR by division or sector without prior approval of Corps. However, in an emergency (e.g., when the unit was needed to assist a friendly force that came under attack suddenly), the unit might be used outside the TAOR for a period not to exceed six hours, provided other local military resources were already committed, and a minimum security force remained in the TAOR while the unit was away. See Ibid., p. 12-13.
30. Ibid., p. 24.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

31. Ibid. This was derived from the lists of "Significant Engagements" and "Major Operations Map" on the monthly evaluation. Total activity of both GVN and US units for January was reported as:

	<u>Operations (Bn or Larger/With Contact)</u>	<u>Battalion Days</u>
GVN	292/152	2,165
US	38/35	1,400

32. CINCPAC 182210Z January 1967. Destruction and interdiction missions in the Laotian Panhandle had not been as productive in November and December 1966 as everyone had hoped, and as military calculations increasingly turned on infiltration figures, efforts were made in mid-January to seek improved measures. On 15 January 1967, General Westmoreland, LTG Momyer and their staffs met with Ambassadors Martin and Sullivan at Udorn. [See: COMUSMACV 01819 (Section I and II) for Admiral Sharp, info to General Wheeler from General Westmoreland, Subj: "Udorn Conference," dated 16 January 1967.] Little came of the conference except renewed efforts to cut reaction times and improve coordination. COMUSMACV's efforts to amend rules of engagement met State resistance, a harbinger of the resistance that was to meet future efforts to expand operations in Laos and Cambodia.
33. CINCPAC 252126Z January 1967 to JCS, "Modifications to Current Programs to Improve the Anti-Infiltration Aspect of Our Overall Strategy," 25 January 1967.
34. Ibid.
35. COMUSMACV "Practice Nine Requirements Plan," 26 January 1967, forwarded under CM 2134-67 (22 February 1967) and JCSM 97-67.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid. See the discussion of CINCPAC 060820Z February 1967 in the following pages.
39. JCSM-97-67, Subj: "MACV PRACTICE NINE Requirements Plan," dated 22 February 1967.
40. Ibid.
41. CM-2134-67, "PRACTICE NINE Requirements Plan, dated 26 January 1967, (U)," dated 22 February 1967.
42. CIA SNIE 57-67, "Significance of Cambodia to the Vietnamese Communist War Effort," dated 26 January 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. CINCPAC 012005Z February 1967, to JCS, Subj: "Closing NVN Ports"
46. Ibid. CINCPAC 182210Z January 1967 requested authorization to hit 25 "selected lucrative targets in Haiphong" as a package. Essentially the same reasons were outlined in the January message. See Note 32, p. 28.
47. Ibid.
48. CINCPAC 060820Z February 1967 to JCS, Subj: "Barrier Plan." It may be helpful to trace the discussion and planning leading to this document. JCS 0619Z January 1967 initiated COMUSMACV-CINCPAC detailed planning to support the barrier concept, according to criteria and guidance contained in the DCRG Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subj: "Plan for Increased Anti-Infiltration Capability for SEA," dated 22 December 1966. On 11 and 17 January CINCPAC directed COMUSMACV to submit an overall plan. (CINCPAC 112347Z January 1967 and 170051Z January 1967). COMUSMACV PRACTICE NINE Requirement Plans, 26 January 1967, was submitted in response to the CINCPAC order. The CINCPAC cable on 25 January seems an attempt to balance the barrier concept in light of COMUSMACV's requirements plan, and to present some anti-infiltration alternatives to PRACTICE NINE. The message being discussed tried to tie all of the proposals together.
49. CINCPAC 060820Z February 1967, Ibid.
50. Ibid. The general rejection of the concept implied in the opening paragraph probably refers to only the eastern sector, although it may be interpreted as a more sweeping denial.
51. Ibid.
52. See DEF 5563, 041758 February 1967, to COMUSMACV/CINCPAC, Subj: "Infiltration Statistics"; and CINCPAC 140433Z February 1967.
53. CINCPAC 140433Z February 1967 to USMIIADREP SEATO.
54. COMUSMACV 06497 to JCS (CINCPAC info), Subj: "Assessment of the Military Situation," dated 23 February 1967.
55. Ibid.
56. R. W. Komer, Memorandum to the President, February 28, 1967.
57. Ibid.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

58. Ibid.
59. Memorandum from the Deputy Secretary of Defense to the Honorable Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, Under Secretary of State, Subj: "Military Action Programs for Southeast Asia," dated 21 February 1967.

C. THE MACV REQUEST AND
THE SEARCH FOR OPTIONS

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

C. THE MACV REQUEST AND THE SEARCH FOR OPTIONS

1. The Guam Conference, 20-21 March 1967

In late March, President Johnson, along with members of the White House Staff, DoD and State met with President Thieu, Premier Ky, General Westmoreland and other key military officials at Guam. The President was determined to accelerate the rate of progress in the collective military and nation-building task confronting the United States and South Vietnam and he believed that a face-to-face meeting with Thieu and Ky could best speed up the process and possibly relieve some of the heavy political pressures on what he termed "the absolutely vital political base in the country." 1/ The basic objectives of the Guam meeting in the Secretary of State's words were to:

"1. Stimulate good relations between them [Thieu and Ky] and our new team [Bunker and Locke].

2. Provide an opportunity to impress upon them the high importance of expeditiously completing and bringing the constitutions into effect, and holding effective and honest elections. Continued GVN unity and broadly based government are critical to the maintenance of the U.S. political base.

3. Help to dramatize post-war planning and the role of David Lilienthal and his opposite number.

4. Closely examine the current status of the land reform program and determine what steps can be taken to accelerate the rate of progress in this field."

Noticeably missing from the list of objectives was any detailed discussion or reevaluation of the military situation. In fact, the Agenda for the conference included but two short sessions on the military effort. 2/ President Johnson had publicly announced that his purpose in calling the Guam Conference was to introduce the newly appointed U.S. team of Bunker, Locke and Komer to the leaders of the GVN. 3/ Just as the Agenda had indicated it would, and as had been the case in the two previous occasions of top US-GVN talks (Honolulu and Manila), the conference communique of the two-day meeting emphasized political, economic and social concerns. 4/ The military picture was presumed to be so encouraging and improving that it required no special attention. However, three general impressions about the thrust of the military briefings emerge from the conference documents and notes.

First, is the basically optimistic view held by General Westmoreland. He noted that we were pursuing a constant strategy aimed at destroying the enemy's main forces, providing security for the populace so that pacification could proceed, improving the lot of the people, pressing the North

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Vietnamese through the ROLLING THUNDER program and, finally, creating conditions favorable for settlement on U.S. terms. Westmoreland's main conclusions revolved around a new assessment that the enemy was weakening, that ROLLING THUNDER did help, and that the enemy's losses would soon exceed his gains. To buttress these views he quoted a number of "indicators": that intensity of allied operations was up versus those of last year; that the enemy's losses had doubled; that we were taking four times the number of prisoners we had; that the number of defectors had doubled; that the enemy was losing $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the weapons that he had in the past year; and that 18% more major roads in South Vietnam had been opened in the past three months. Enemy weakness was evident from the fact that 54 of his maneuver battalions were rated only 50% combat effective compared to ARVN's performance in having all but 7 of its 154 battalions combat effective. ARVN leadership was also cited as being "better." 5/

COMUSMACV's analysis of RVNAF effectiveness was based upon a MACV study completed early in 1967, one devoted to determining the shortfalls, weaknesses and limitations of that organization. The analysis indicated that the ARVN kill ratio had risen from 3.6 in 1965 to 3.7 in 1966 and that there was a noticeable decline (27%) in personnel missing in action. The MACV study had concluded "that it was apparent that both the Vietnamese Army and Vietnamese Air Force had made significant improvements during the year. 6/

A Systems Analysis study completed in DoD just prior to the Guam Conference concluded that U.S. and ARVN forces had surprisingly equal effectiveness per battalion day on search and destroy operations when the relative strengths of the battalions were taken into account. 7/ At a time when American decision-makers were casting about for any favorable reports on Vietnamese performance, these descriptions of ARVN progress were surely welcome. Unfortunately, they only contributed to the unrealistic military euphoria which pervaded the Guam discussions.

The second major impression one takes from reviewing the military briefings at Guam was that some increases in the Program 4 levels would be necessary, but these would not be major. The enemy strategy was reiterated; nothing found on CEDAR FALLS or other recent operations did anything but confirm the MACV year-end assessment of VC/NVA strategy. Recent American successes reinforced the belief that we had hit upon the key to winning -- despite continued large scale infiltration, Westmoreland and others on his staff believed we were again flirting with the illusive "crossover point" when enemy total strength would begin to decline, battle, disease and desertion losses would exceed gains. 8/ Yet, despite the indicators, infiltration remained an uncertainty, as did the continued good performance of ARVN. Without a relatively efficient RVNAF performance, pacification (especially as its roles and missions were allocated) was doomed to failure. The hope generated by the encouraging report on ARVN (from both MACV and OASD/SA) and the favorable outcomes of US current operations, seemed to confirm what most were led to believe: any forthcoming Program 4 requests would be small. 9/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The briefing papers prepared for the conference merely affirmed the prevalent belief when one concluded that:

"...There does not appear to be any great return to be realized from further force increases. The best alternatives are to increase the effectiveness of the force already employed. This may be done through improved tactics and intelligence as well as through greater firepower and mobility." 10/

The same paper listed some of the factors that it believed might lead to significant changes in Program #4. They were:

a) PRACTICE NINE - Should this concept be implemented significant troop increases may be necessary. The physical barrier on the east flank would require (according to MACV) about 7700 additional personnel - 1 brigade, support and 2 NMCBs. The remainder of the system would generate requirements for 2 or 3 more brigades (possibly ROK), an armored cavalry squadron and support - a total Practice 9 force of about 40,000.

b) Assuming the presently planned force levels and combat pace, some minor reductions in construction and support personnel should be possible in CY 1968. The magnitude and phasing cannot be determined at this time but might total 10-15,000 personnel, beginning mid CY 1968.

c) If the war against the hard-core VC/NVA units should drop off sharply next year, it may be possible to withdraw a major slice of U.S. combat and support units - perhaps as many as 100,000. This would encompass one or two divisions and support and five to ten tactical fighter squadrons. Such a step would reduce the overall cost of the war to the U.S.A. and hopefully stimulate the GVN to play a more responsible role. It would also lessen the economic dislocations caused by the massive U.S. presence, and ease the burden in the U.S. of supporting the effort in SEA. 11/

Interestingly only one of the three dealt with an increase while the others concentrated upon step-downs in U.S. strength. 12/ The barrier remained a high probability -- planning as we have seen (as well as some stationing) was proceeding; the other two were definitely low probability events. All of these considerations at Guam could only lead the decision-makers to conclude that although more troops would probably be requested, their numbers would be relatively small.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Finally, the third thrust of the military discussions at Guam could be detected in the military briefings which repeatedly stressed MACV's alarm about the enemy campaigns unfolding in I CTZ. He believed that the VC/NVA main force operations concentrated in the I CTZ area were part of their initial attempt to seize the tactical initiative. Westmoreland was more than ever impressed by the size and equipment of those enemy forces in the area; in his eyes they posed a serious threat to U.S. operations not only in I CTZ but all of SVN. The General also saw opportunity beckon, for here the decisive battles would be fought -- present and portended combat in I CTZ had become the schwerpunkt. 13/

The record of what additional views were exchanged between COMUSMACV and the Washington leaders remains unclear. One can speculate that Westmoreland surely indicated he might require more troops, but he probably did not use any but round numbers, if he used them at all. At one point in John McNaughton's notes the notation "100,000 more troops to VN?" is listed under "Dirties," or unpleasant subjects for consideration, but other than that no formal record of force level discussions remains. 14/

Guam 1967, was attacked in the press as a political jaunt that impressed few and exhausted many. Symbolic as it may have been, it hardly seemed worth a trip to the distant Pacific to introduce some new ambassadors and award some air crew medals in the rain. 15/ The rapid transit through time zones and wearing nature of the discussions generated little enthusiasm among the official entourage, a malaise reflected throughout the newspaper and official accounts of the trip. 16/ The mood of optimism about the ground war situation and the general low pressure aspect of the military side of the Guam Conference did little to prepare the decision-makers for the MACV-CINCPAC force requests which broke in late March.

2. The MACV Request: "Essential" Looks Like "Optimum"

On 18 March, General Westmoreland submitted his analysis of current MACV force requirements projected through FY 68. This request was to furnish the base line for all further force deployment calculations during the Program 5 period. In preface to his specific request, COMUSMACV reviewed his earlier CY 67 requirement which asked for 124 maneuver battalions with their necessary combat and combat service support, a total strength of 555,741. This figure was the maximum figure requested during the Program 4 deliberations. The approved Program 4 package included only 470,366 and was considerably below the MACV request, a fact which led to the series of reclusas described in Section II. Westmoreland related that MACV-CINCPAC had not strongly objected earlier to the 470,000 man ceiling because of adverse plaster impact and the realities of service capabilities, but, subsequent reassessment of the situation had indicated clearly to him that the Program 4 force, although enabling U.S. force to gain the initiative did not "permit sustained operations of the scope and intensity required to avoid an unreasonably protracted war." 17/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

As the cable continued, the American commander in Vietnam briefly restated his earlier assessment of enemy trends: That the enemy had increased his force structure appreciably and was now confronting Free World Military Forces with large bodies of troops in and above the DMZ, in the Laotian and Cambodian sanctuaries and certain areas within SVN. In light of this new appraisal, he had established an early requirement for an additional 2-1/3 divisions which he proposed be accommodated by restructuring the original 555,741-man force package proposed during Program 4. This force was required "as soon as possible but not later than 1 July 1968." Part of the reasoning was that this in effect constituted no more than a 6-month "extension" of the CY 67 program and as such would permit shifting force programming from a Calendar Year to a Fiscal Year basis, a shift long needed in COMUSMACV's estimation to make force programming for Vietnam compatible with other programs and to provide essential lead time in the procurement of hardware. Westmoreland then looked further ahead, noting:

"...It is entirely possible that additional forces, over and above the immediate requirement for 2-1/3 Divisions, will materialize. Present planning, which will undergo continued refinement, suggests an additional 2-1/3 division equivalents whose availability is seen as extending beyond FY 68." 18/

Then as if to take the edge off his request, COMUSMACV turned attention to two programs which were becoming increasingly attractive to American decision-makers. These were development of an improved RVNAF and an increase in the other Free World Military Forces committed to the war in Vietnam. He commented that despite the force ceiling on RVNAF currently in effect some selective increase in Vietnamese capabilities was required, such as creation of a suitable base for establishing a constabulary, an organization vital to the success of the Revolutionary Development program. Westmoreland stated that it was the position of his headquarters that provision for any and all Free World Military Forces was welcomed as "additive reinforcements," but they would be treated as additions only, thereby having no effect upon U.S. force computations.

The concept of operations under which the new forces he requested were to be employed varied little in its essential aspects from that outlined in MACV's February "Assessment of the Military Situation and Concept of Operations," 19/ which had reached Washington but a week earlier. However, the new cable integrated the new forces as part of the MACV operational forces. Westmoreland reviewed the period just past then turned to the future:

"...our operations were primarily holding actions characterized by border surveillance, reconnaissance to locate enemy forces, and spoiling attacks to disrupt the enemy offensive. As a result of our buildup and successes,

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

we were able to plan and initiate a general offensive. We now have gained the tactical initiative, and are conducting continuous small and occasional large-scale offensive operations to decimate the enemy forces; to destroy enemy base areas and disrupt his infrastructure; to interdict his land and water LOC's and to convince him, through the vigor of our offensive and accompanying psychological operations, that he faces inevitable defeat.

"Military success alone will not achieve the US objectives in Vietnam. Political, economic, and psychological victory is equally important, and support of Revolutionary Development program is mandatory. The basic precept for the role of the military in support of Revolutionary Development is to provide a secure environment for the population so that the civil aspects of RD can progress." 20/

He then detailed corps by corps the two troop request requirements labeling them the "optimum force" (4-2/3 Divs) and the "minimum essential force" (2-1/3 Divs):

"B. Force requirements FY 68

(1) The MACV objectives for 1967 were based on the assumption that the CY 67 force requirements would be approved and provided expeditiously within the capabilities of the services. However, with the implementation of Program Four, it was recognized that our accomplishments might fall short of our objectives. With the additional forces cited above, we would have had the capability to extend offensive operations into an exploitation phase designed to take advantage of our successes.

(2) With requisite forces, we shall be able to complete more quickly the destruction or neutralization of the enemy main forces and bases and, by continued presence, deny to him those areas in RVN long considered safe havens. As the enemy main forces are destroyed or broken up, increasingly greater efforts can be devoted to rooting out and destroying the VC guerrilla and communist infrastructure. Moreover, increased assistance can be provided the RVNAF in support of its effort to provide the required level of security for the expanding areas undergoing Revolutionary Development.

(3) Optimum Force. The optimum force required implement the concept of operations and to exploit success is considered 4-2/3 divisions or the equivalent; 10 tactical

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

fighter squadrons with one additional base; and the full mobile riverine force. The order of magnitude estimate is 201,250 spaces in addition to the 1967 ceiling of 470,366 for a total of 671,616.

(A) In I Corps, the situation is the most critical with respect to existing and potential force ratios. As a minimum, a division plus a regiment is required for Quang Tri Province as a containment force. The latter has been justified previously in another plan. Employment of this force in the containment role would release the units now engaged there for expansion of the DaNang, Hue-Phu Bai and Chu Lai TAOR's as well as increase security and control along the corps northern coastal areas. One of the most critical areas in RVN today is Quang Ngai Province even if a major operation were conducted in this area during 1967, the relief would be no more than temporary. A force is needed in the province to maintain continuous pressure on the enemy to eliminate his forces and numerous base areas, and to remove his control over the large population and food reserves. The sustained employment of a division of 10 battalions is mandatory in Quang Ngai Province if desired results are to be realized. Employment of this force would provide security for the vital coastal areas, facilitate opening and securing Route 1 and the railroad and, perhaps equally important, relieve pressure on northern Binh Dinh Province.

(B) In II Corps, the task is two fold: destroy the enemy main and guerrilla forces in the coastal areas; and contain the infiltration of NVA forces from Cambodia and Laos. Continual expansion both north and south of the present capital coastal TARO's opening and securing Route 1 and the railroad, securing Route 20 from Dalat south to the III Corps boundary, destruction of enemy forces in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces, and containment of the enemy forces in the Cambodian and Laotian sanctuaries are all tasks to be accomplished given the large area in II Corps and the continuous enemy threat, an optimum force augmentation of four separate brigades is required to execute effectively an exploitation of our successes. An infantry brigade is needed in northern Binh Dinh Province to expand security along the coastal area and to facilitate operations in Quang Ngai Province to the north. A mechanized brigade in the western highlands will assist in offensive and containment operations in the Pleiku-Kontum area. An infantry brigade in the region of Ban Me Thout is needed to conduct operations against enemy forces and bases there and to add security to this portion

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

of II Corps now manned with limited ARVN forces, and finally, a mechanized brigade is needed in Binh Thuan Province to neutralize the enemy forces and bases in the southern coastal area, and to open and secure highway 1 and the national railroad to the III Corps boundary.

(C) In III Corps, operations to destroy VC/NVA main forces and bases in the northwestern & central parts of the corps area and to intensify the campaign against the enemy's infrastructure are being conducted. These operations are to be completed by intensive efforts to open and secure the principal land and water LOC's throughout the Corps Zone. However, deployment of the US 9th Div to IV Corps will create a gap in the forces available in III Corps to operate against seen significant base areas in Phuoc Tuy, Binh Tuy, and Long Lanh Provinces. These areas constitute the home base of the still formidable 5th VC Division. This unit must be destroyed, its bases neutralized and Route 1 and the national railroad opened and secured. Other critical locales that will require considerable effort are War Zone D and Phuoc Long area in which the VC 7th Division is believed to be located. With the forces operating currently in III Corps, substantial progress can be made, but to exploit effectively our successes an addition of one division, preferably air mobile is required. By basing this division in Bien Hoa Province just north of the RSSZ, it would be in position to conduct operations against the 5th Div, and War Zone D, as well as to reinforce the US 9th Div in Delta operations as required.

(D) In IV Corps, with deployment of the US 9th Div to the Corps area and with increasing success of ARVN operations there, the situation will be greatly improved. Primary emphasis will be given to destroying VC main and guerrilla units and their bases, to intensifying operations to extend GVN control, to stopping the flow of food stuffs and materials to the enemy through Cambodia, and to assisting in the flow of goods to GVN outlets in Saigon. In addition emphasis will be accorded the opening and securing of principal water and land LOC's which are the key to all operations in the Delta. It is noteworthy on this score, that effectiveness of forces available is hampered severely by an inadequate mobile riverine force. In IV Corps, the essential requirement is to flesh out the mobile riverine force with three APB's (Barracks Ships) one ARL (repair ship), and two RAS (river assault squadrons).

(4) The Minimum Essential Force necessary to exploit success of the current offensive and to retain

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

effective control of the expanding areas being cleaned of enemy influence is 2-1/3 divisions with a total of 21 maneuver battalions. One division, with nine infantry battalions -- each with 4 rifle companies -- and an ACR of three squadrons are required. The other division of nine maneuver battalions, each battalion organized with four rifle companies is required in Quang Ngai Province. Four tactical fighter squadrons, each generating 113 sorties per month per identified maneuver battalion, are required. Two squadrons will be stationed at Phu Cat and two at Tuy Hoa. One C-130 or equivalent type squadron can provide adequate airlift and is justified on the basis of current planning factors: This SQD would be based at Cam Ranh Bay. A minimum essential logistic base can be provided by selective augmentation of NSA Danang, and by provision for lift capability equivalent to eight LST's in addition to two LST's identified previously for the containment force in Quang Tri Province. Two non-divisional Army combat engineer battalions and four Army construction battalions will be required to support divisional engineering effort to augment two navy construction battalions that previously have been identified with the containment force in Quang Tri Province.

(B) Effectiveness of the US 9th Division's operations in IV Corps will be degraded unacceptably without adequate mobility on the waterways. For this reason, addition of two river assault squadrons with their associated support is deemed essential. The Mekong Delta Mobile Riverine Force originally was tailored and justified as a four RAS level. This requirement still is valid. The primary media of transport in the Delta are air and water. Air mobility is recognized as critical to success of operations in the area, but the size of offensive operations that can be mounted is limited by the inherent physical limitations of airborne vehicles. Accordingly, any sizeable offensive operation such as those visualized for the US 9th Division must utilize the 300km of waterways in the Delta to exploit tactical mobility. Maintenance of LOC's and population control in the areas secured by the division's operations, along with extension of the interdiction effort, necessitates expansion of the game warden operation. Fifty PBR's can provide this capability based on experience factors accrued thus far. 21/

The piaster impact of this request to which much lip-service was still being paid varied from 44 billion piasters for the 4-2/3 division optimum force to 41.7 billion piasters for the minimum essential force.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The proposed increase added an estimated 1.1 billion piasters to the 1967 program for a total estimated cost of 46.7 billion estimated additional costs for CY 68 under the projected programs would total 2.8 billion piasters, 1.2 billion coming during January through June and the remaining 1.6 billion for July through December.

Westmoreland concluded the long request with an observation which was to provide the basis for considerable dispute within the government. He wrote:

"...Whereas deployment of additional US forces in FY 68 will obviate the requirement for a major expansion of the RVNAF, selective increases are necessary to optimize combat effectiveness. Regular forces proposed for FY 68 total 328,322, an increase of 6,367 spaces of the FY 67 authorization. As US, Free World and RVNAF operations are expanded, additional areas will be made available for the conduct of Revolutionary Development operations. Based on experience gained thus far, an increase of 50,000 RF/PF spaces will be required to provide a planning figure of 350,000 spaces for this force. The increase will accommodate necessary support of Revolutionary Development and concomitantly, will be compatible with requirements incident to implementation of the constabulary concept. 22/

His emphasis upon RF/PF spaces in lieu of expansion of the RVNAF which could theoretically substitute for additional U.S. troops prompted many who disagreed with the basic increases to ask why the US should meet such expanded troop requirements when the Government of South Vietnam would neither mobilize its manpower nor effectively employ it according to US wishes. 23/

3. The JCS Take Up the March: The CINCPAC Force Requirements Task Group and JCSM-218-67.

JCS reaction to the COMUSMACV message was predictably rapid. The Chiefs realized that the general analysis provided in the original MACV request would prove to be inadequate for the SecDef to either assess the validity of the requirements or the sufficiency of the means of meeting them. Consequently, they directed that detailed analyses be submitted to them from MACV/CINCPAC on a time-phased basis commencing on 26 March. 24/ In a realistic reflection of the feasibility of the two proposals, the JCS required that the minimum essential force be addressed in as much detail as time permitted and that the optimum force be addressed in only general terms. They asked that the analysis include not only an expansion of the concept but: (1) a listing of the force requirements additive to OSD Program 4; (2) the rationale to validate these increased requirements; (3) the service capabilities to provide validated force requirements;

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

(4) the logistic implications and the discussion of any problem areas which they (MACV) anticipated in meeting them. 25/

On 26 March COMUSMACV submitted to the CINCPAC Requirements Task Group a detailed troop listing for the 2-1/3 division "minimum essential force." Other than providing a detailed list of TO&E's and unit small strengths, the document provides little of interest. It did stipulate that the northern portion of the minimum essential force would be directed toward an expanded infiltration interdiction mission and that the southern portion of the force would pursue "presently prescribed operations." 26/

In a follow-up message to the Task Requirements Group on the 28th of March COMUSMACV again commented on the restrictive aspects of Program 4. 27/ This in turn was picked up and amplified by CINCPAC in a message to the JCS on the same day. 28/ CINCPAC pointed out that as of 9 March 1967 Program 4 was 38,241 spaces short of full implementation and that this figure included spaces for five battalions or their equivalents which could not be considered for trade-off purposes. All of these spaces, especially the battalion equivalents, were significant elements when considered within the perspective of MACV's operational requirements and could not be deleted without seriously impairing MACV capability to achieve its objectives. In light of this shortfall in Program 4 CINCPAC requested that the JCS reconsider its earlier proposal that a 4th rifle company be added to all U.S. Army infantry battalions in Vietnam. The logic behind such a raise in program ceiling which would increase materially the combat power and effectiveness of the infantry without increasing unit overhead was irrefutable in CINCPAC's eyes. CINCPAC proposed that the addition of the rifle companies, a total of 8,821 men, be added to the Program 4 ceiling for a total of 479,231 of all services. The space requirements for the 2-1/3 division minimum essential force reflected in the COMUSMACV request would then be added on to the adjusted Program 4 total of 479,000. However, in the event that any or all of the spaces reflected in that 479,000 were not approved or that the package itself would be reduced, the Pacific Commander predicted grave curtailment in MACV operations and a danger that the operational objectives set for the force requirements initially would not be achieved.

By 28 March the JCS through the CINCPAC group had the detailed justification and planning calculations for the COMUSMACV 67 force requirements in hand. MACV had added little that was new in the way of strategic concept other than to reaffirm their intention to concentrate on certain priority areas in each corps tactical zone. Priority areas themselves were selected because they seemed best suited to achieve destruction or neutralization of enemy main forces and bases -- persistently prime MACV goals. Despite this strong declaration of intent MACV hedged by noting that "the enemy will be struck wherever he presents a lucrative target." 29/ Forces would also be maintained by MACV outside the priority areas to contain the enemy in his out of country sanctuaries. In this connection, the planners anticipated that there would be large scale offensive operations continuously conducted during FY 68 to detect and destroy infiltration or invasion forces in the DMZ-Highland Border regions.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

If the forces outlined under the optimum force request were granted priority was to be accorded to the expansion of secure areas. The RVNAF would be given the primary responsibility of providing military support of Revolutionary Development activities and Revolutionary Development operations would be intensified throughout the country as the pacified areas were expanded. MACV explained that such increased demands on the RVNAF would establish a concomitant demand for additional U.S. force resources to fill the operational void resulting from the intensified Revolutionary Development orientation of the RVNAF. The long message also broke out the minimum essential and optimum package forces by service and by total troops as shown in the table below. 30/

	STRENGTH (2-1/3 Div Min essential Force)	STRENGTH (2-1/3 Div Addi- tion for optimum force package)	STRENGTH (Total Opti- mum Force)
Army	69,359	100,527 *	169,886
Navy	5,739	8,023	13,762
Air Force	5,368	9,891	15,259
Marines	110	0	110
TOTAL	80,576	118,441	119,017

* Includes 5,547 spaces required to incorporate MACOV Study recommendations.

The total optimum force end strength was 678,248 arrived at by adding the approved Program 4 strength of 470,000 to the earlier MACV reclama of 8,821 (see page 68 this section) and the "optimum force" additive of 199,017. The justification for additional forces broken out by corps tactical zones were essentially the same as those presented in the original MACV request on 18 March. However, the later document prepared at PACOM Hqs on the 28th reflected the increased concern with the enemy threat developing in the I Corps tactical zone. Concerning this threat, COMUSMACV wrote:

"In I Corps tactical zone, the bulk of the population and the food producing regions are within 15 miles of the coast. In the northern part of the zone, multiple NVA Divisions possess the capability to move south of the DMZ. Additionally, there is constant enemy activity in much of the coastal area. The topography of I Corps lends itself to the establishment and maintenance of enemy base areas in the remote, sparsely populated regions. The enemy has operated for years virtually unmolested throughout most of Quang Ngai Province because friendly forces could not be diverted from other important tasks.

"There are several important tasks which must be performed in I Corps. Security of bases and key population

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

centers must be maintained. The area under GVN control must be extended by expanding existing TAOR's, and by opening and securing major LOC's, particularly Route 1. The enemy must be contained in his sanctuaries, and denied use of infiltration and invasion routes. Enemy main forces and bases must be sought out and destroyed. Surveillance and reconnaissance in force throughout the CTZ must complement the tasks discussed above.

"The deployment of a division and an armored cavalry regiment to Quang Tri Province, south of the DMZ, would make it possible for Marine Corps units now conducting containment operations to secure and expand tactical areas of responsibility (TAOR's).

"The RVNAF and US/FWMAF will intensify operations against organized enemy forces and base areas in and near the populated and food producing areas of the coastal plains thus denying them access to population and food resources.

"Clearing and securing operations will be pursued to facilitate the expansion of the secured areas, the ultimate goal being to connect the Hue-Phu Bai, Danang, and Chu Lai TAOR's. The following major LOC's will be opened and secured: Route 9, from Route 1 to Thon San Lam; and Route 1 and the railroad throughout the entire length of I CTZ, including the spur to the An Hoa industrial complex.

"One of the most critical areas in the RVN today is Quang Ngai Province. A division is required there to maintain continuous pressure on the enemy, to eliminate his forces and numerous base areas, and to remove his control over large population and food resources.

"Sustained employment of a division in Quang Ngai would obviate the necessity to use other forces to meet a critical requirement. The division would provide security for the coastal area, facilitate opening and securing Route 1 and the railroad, and relieve some of the pressure on northern Binh Dinh Province. Of particular significance is the support which would be provided to the RVNAF in securing the important Mo Duc Area with its dense population and three annual rice crops. Additionally, deployment of the division as discussed above would allow III MAF to expand its clearing and securing operations into the heavily populated Tam Ky area north of the Chu Lai TAOR. Long term security must be provided for

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

both of these areas so that Revolutionary Development can progress.

"Failure to provide two and one-third divisions for I CTZ would result in the diversion of existing forces from other tasks to deny and defeat infiltration or invasion. Security in support of Revolutionary Development could not be increased to the desired degree in the coastal area, the major LOC's could not be opened throughout the CTZ, and the enemy would be able to continue operating virtually unmolested throughout the key Quang Ngai Province.

"It is emphasized that the relationship of the two and one-third division force requirement for I Corps to that of Practice Nine is coincidental. This force is the minimum essential required to support operations planned for FY 68 without reference to Practice Nine.

...." 31/

The next most dangerous situation appeared to be that in II Corps, a diverse geographical area which included major population centers along the coastal plains as well as sizeable population centers and military bases on the western plateau, such as Binh Dinh, Anke, Kontum, and Pleiku. Here the enemy, orienting himself on the population, presented a different problem which, in the words of General Westmoreland, required "a high degree of mobility and flexibility in U.S./FVMAF/RVNAF." As he analysed the corps tactical situation, Westmoreland reemphasized what he had already said about containing the large enemy military forces at the boundaries of the sanctuaries:

"Enemy forces in the Pleiku and Kontum areas must be destroyed, and infiltration from Cambodia and Laos must be contained. Forces in-country will continue to make progress in areas of current deployment. Those programmed for deployment will augment this effort. However, there are gaps, as discussed below, that must be filled before success can be exploited and minimum essential security can be provided within the II Corps area.

"Large enemy forces remaining in heavily populated Binh Dinh Province must be destroyed. Security must be established and maintained in the northern portion of the province, particularly along the coastal area, so that Revolutionary Development can progress, these security forces also will facilitate the conduct of operations in Quang Ngai Province.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"Inadequacy of forces in the border areas is a significant weakness in II Corps. Reinforcement of units in the western highlands is needed to assist in the conduct of offensive and containment operations. With the large enemy forces located in border sanctuaries, II Corps is faced constantly with the possible requirement to divert critical resources from priority tasks to counter large scale intrusion." 32/

The most pressing military objective in III Corps area was to expand security radially from the Saigon-Cholon area. MACV planned to accomplish this primarily by standard clearing and security operations featuring an intensified campaign conducted to root out the VC infrastructure. In conjunction with this, continuous pressure presumably in the form of search and destroy operations would be applied to the enemy in War Zones C and D, the Iron Triangle, and the base area clusters in the Phuoc Long area. Denial of these areas to the enemy would provide a protective shield behind which the Revolutionary Development programs could operate. However, deployment of the U.S. 9th Division to the 4th Corps area would create a gap in the forces available in III Corps and seriously degrade the capability to provide this shield. The possible repositioning of the assets existing within III Corps to either I CTZ in the north or the 9th Division relocation just to the south just mentioned could also seriously limit the offensive capabilities in the northern and central portion of III Corps. Accordingly, COMUSMACV expressed an urgent requirement for an additional division for III Corps. This unit would be positioned just north of the Rung Sat operation zone and would assist in maintaining the protective shield around Saigon-Cholon. Revolutionary Development operations would then be able to proceed unhindered and operations against the VC 5th Division could be reinforced if required. 33/

Throughout the force requirement justifications, one is immediately struck by the implicit ordering of the priorities for assignment of forces and missions. It is quite clear that the "minimum essential force" which COMUSMACV requested was intended to be employed against VC/NVA main force units in a containment role in the border areas and a destruction-disruption mode in I CTZ as well as the base areas within the country itself. Those forces over and above the "minimum essential," so labelled the "optimum force," were those intended to take up the slack in the RD "shield" role. MACV, probably rightly, calculated that not even minimal gains such as were forthcoming in the under-manned RD program would be possible unless the VC/NVA main force operations could be stymied and kept from directly assaulting the "shields."

Before the JCS could formally ratify the COMUSMACV-CINCPAC FY 68 force requirements, two other events transpired which had significant influence on the development of ground force requirements. On 7 April, as the situation in I CTZ deteriorated COMUSMACV posted a provisional division named Task Force OREGON to Quang Ngai Province. This development caused a reappraisal of the 2-1/2 division minimum essential force

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

requirement submitted in the 28 March message. In effect, the requirement for a division in Quang Ngai Province which was identified in the late March cable was being filled by Task Force OREGON. 34/ The provisional division was composed of the 3rd Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Permanent assignment of the airborne brigade to the north had an especially adverse impact because it was the sole reserve of the First Field Force. This shifting of forces created an undesirable situation in that MACV would possibly be forced to assign a mechanized battalion as the Field Force reserve. Accordingly, COMUSMACV cancelled his urgent request for a cavalry unit in the north and asked to delay further discussions on this subject until during his visit to Washington in the next two weeks. 35/ Concurrent with the movement of Task Force OREGON to the north COMUSMACV submitted via CINCPAC to the JCS a request to deploy the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade from Okinawa to South Vietnam. JCSM 208-67, prepared by the Chiefs on the subject, proposed that two special landing forces from the brigade be stationed off the Vietnamese coast to be committed when required by COMUSMACV and the remainder of the MAB placed on 15-day call in Okinawa. The proviso that unless these forces were employed on a contingency basis they would revert to their normal schedules by 1 September was inserted in the recommendation at CINCPAC's request. He disagreed with the dismemberment of the PACOM strategic reserve. This proposal was approved by the Secretary of Defense on 14 April and the brigade removed to Vietnamese waters shortly thereafter. 36/

On 20 April, the JCS, in JCSM-218-67, formally reported to the Secretary of Defense that MACV required additional forces to achieve the objectives they considered the U.S. was pursuing in Vietnam. The JCS announcement came as little surprise to the Secretary of Defense since as early as 23 March he had seen the original message in which COMUSMACV had outlined the minimum essential and optimum force requirements. 37/

JCSM-128-67 reaffirmed the basic objectives and strategic concepts contained in JCSM 702-66 dated 4 November 1966. Briefly, these entailed a national objective of attaining a stable and independent non-communist government in South Vietnam and a four-fold military contribution toward achieving the objectives of:

"(a) Making it as difficult and costly as possible for the NVA to continue effective support of the VC and to cause North Vietnam to cease direction of the VC insurgency.

"(b) To defeat the VC/NVA and force the withdrawal of NVA forces.

"(c) Extend government dominion, direction and control.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"(d) To deter Chinese Communists from direct intervention in SEA.

The JCS listed three general areas of military effort that they felt should be pursued in the war:

"(1) Operations against the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (VC/NVA) forces in SVN while concurrently assisting the South Vietnamese Government in their nation-building efforts.

"(2) Operations to obstruct and reduce the flow of men and materials from North Vietnam (NV) to SVN.

"(3) Operations to obstruct and reduce imports of war-sustaining materials into NVN.

They continued by assessing the achievements of the US and allies in these three areas:

"In the first area, the United States and its allies have achieved considerable success in operations against VC/NVA forces. However, sufficient friendly forces have not been made available to bring that degree of pressure to bear on the enemy throughout SVN which would be beyond his ability to accommodate and which would provide the secure environment essential to sustained progress in Revolutionary Development. The current reinforcement of I CTZ by diversion of forces from II and III CTZs reduces the existing pressure in those areas and inevitably will cause a loss of momentum that must be restored at the earliest practicable date.

"In the second area, US efforts have achieved appreciable success. Greater success could be realized if an expanded system of targets were made available.

"In the third area, relatively little effort has been permitted. This failure to obstruct and reduce imports of war-sustaining materials into NVN has affected unfavorably the desired degree of success of operations in the other areas. 39/

The Joint Chiefs strongly recommended not only the approval of additional forces to provide an increased level of effort in SVN but that action be taken to reduce and obstruct the enemy capability to import the material support required to sustain the war effort. They argued that the cumulative effect of all these operations, in South Vietnam, in North Vietnam and against the enemy's strategic lines of communication would hasten the successful conclusion of the war and would most likely reduce the overall ultimate force requirements. Their rationale for the 1968 forces was summarized as follows:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"The FY 1968 force for SVN is primarily needed to offset the enemy's increased posture in the vicinity of the DMZ and to improve the environment for Revolutionary Development in I and IV CTZs. To achieve the secure environment for lasting progress in SVN, additional military forces must be provided in order to (1) destroy the enemy main force, (2) locate and destroy district and provincial guerrilla forces, and (3) provide security for the population. The increased effort required to offset VC/NVA main forces' pressure is diminishing the military capability to provide a secure environment to villages and hamlets. Diversion of forces from within SVN and the employment of elements of CINCPAC's reserve are temporary measures at the expense of high-priority programs in other parts of SVN. Thus, if sufficient units are to be available to provide both direct and indirect support to Revolutionary Development throughout SVN, added forces must be deployed.

"The three-TFS force for Thailand and the additional Navy forces in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin are required to bring increased pressures to bear on NVN." 40/

The service capabilities to meet the force requirements which the chiefs recommended presented another problem. The JCS examined these capabilities under two alternative cases:

"Case I - No Reserve callup or extension of terms of service. Present tour and rotation policies would be maintained. By July 1968, only a one and one-third Army division force, a part of the mobile riverine force, and no additional Marine Corps forces could be in place in SVN. A second Army division force to fill out the FY 1968 requirement probably could not be provided until the first half of FY 1970. The additional 8" gun cruiser, five additional destroyers, and about half of the in-country naval forces could be provided in FY 1968, but only by the undesirable expedient of extending present periods of deployment. The three TFS in Thailand and five in SVN requested by CINCPAC could be furnished in FY 1968. Three TFS in SVN would be required to meet the need for air support of the one and one-third divisions that could be deployed in FY 1968.

"Case II -- Callup of Reserves and a twelve-month involuntary extension of terms of service. Present tour and rotation policies would be maintained. A Reserve callup and the collateral actions enumerated below would enable the Services to provide the major combat forces required in

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

PACOM not later than end FY 1968. The forces would include one and one-third Army divisions, three US Air Force TFS, one Marine division/wing team which includes two TFS, the major portion of the mobile riverine force, naval patrol forces, and most of the required support forces for SVN; three US Air Force TFS in Thailand; one additional 8" gun cruiser and five additional destroyers." 41/

Prominently identified in each of these cases were issues revolving around requirements for calling up of the Reserves and extension of terms of service, end strength increases above current force levels, expansion of the CONUS sustaining base, additional funds in the FY 68 budget, draw-down of the war reserve and preposition stocks and partial mobilization of the industry. Fundamental to the development of the service plans was the effort to minimize the impact on the overall U.S. military posture but even the Chiefs concluded that:

"Considering our current worldwide commitments a Reserve callup for a minimum of 24 months and involuntary extension of terms of service for twelve months are the only feasible means of meeting the additional FY 1968 requirements in the stipulated time frame. The effect of a 24-month limitation on callup of Reserves is that the Armed Forces would expend their major reserve assets by end FY 1972 as a result of successive callup and commitment of Reserve units. This would be avoided if Reserve units were held for the duration of the emergency. Authority to do this and to extend terms of service involuntarily would require Congressional action." 42/

and consequently recommended that:

"a. The military strategy for the conduct of the war in Southeast Asia, as described in Appendix A, be approved in principle.

"b. The list of forces in Appendix C, Case II $\sqrt{2\frac{1}{2}}$ Divisions, approx. 71,000 Army and 5 TFSS⁷ less forces approved on 8 April 1967, be approved for deployment.

"c. Authority be obtained for a Reserve callup for a minimum of 24 months and involuntary extension of terms of service for twelve months in order to meet FY 1968 force requirements and to prepare for possible future requirements.

"d. To support the preceding recommended actions, authority be granted to provide for:

"(1) Access to equipment from sources in the following priority:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"(a) CONUS depot assets and programmed production deliveries not committed to higher priority requirements.

"(b) Operational project stocks.

"(c) Contingency stocks.

"(d) Reserve components not scheduled for callup.

"(e) Pre-positioned equipment in Europe.

"(f) Diversion of items for recently activated units.

"(g) Drawdown from nondeploying active units in CONUS.

"(2) Reopening of CONUS inactive installations, as required." 43/

4. The Stimulation of Inter-Agency Reviews: A Proliferation of Alternatives.

The Chiefs' recommendations, if carried out, promised to spawn significant political and economic repercussions and they stimulated a plethora of inter-agency reviews and studies of the situation in Vietnam. The majority of these in one way or another examined the wisdom of sending more forces there. The first of these reviews originated in the State Department, in the office of Undersecretary Nicholas deB. Katzenbach. In a memorandum, he listed three jobs which he felt had to be done in Vietnam.

"1. Assess the current situation in Viet-Nam and the various political and military actions which could be taken to bring this to a successful conclusion;

"2. Review the possibilities for negotiation, including an assessment of the ultimate U.S. position in relationship to the DRV and NLF; and

"3. Assess the military and political effects of intensification of the war in South Viet-Nam and in North Viet-Nam." 44/

He asked that the responsible agencies (Defense, White House, CIA, State) prepare relevant study papers under the three tasks which he outlined. DOD was asked to define and analyze consequences of two likely alternatives: the first, Course A, added a minimum of 200,000 men and greatly intensified military actions outside the south especially against the north. This option included two deployment phases. The first coinciding to the minimum essential force which General Westmoreland and the JCS had requested, that is 100,000 troops (2-1/3 divisions plus 4 tactical air squadrons) to be deployed in FY 67 and a second phase of another 100,000

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

(2-1/3 divisions and 6 tactical air squadrons) to be deployed in FY 67. Course A, as Katzenbach described it, also included "more later to fulfill the JCS alternate requirements." Course B confined troop increases to "those that could be generated without calling up the reserves" -- perhaps 9 battalions or about 10,000 men in the next year. 45/

The first option, Course A, was to be analyzed across a matrix of many factors such as cost, actions required, trends, call up of reserves, extension of tours, enlargement of uniformed strength, effect on U.S. force deployment, involvement in pacification, possible stimulation by this course of great intensification of military actions outside South Vietnam including invasion of North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The domestic reaction including possible polarization of opinion and stimulation of pressures for actions outside Vietnam, the manner in which to approach the public and the Congress on this course, and finally the international reactions on the part of the North Vietnamese, Soviets, Chinese and other nations were also to be examined. The Undersecretary also asked for an analysis of the effect of Course A on the possibilities for a settlement.

In addition to addressing the same considerations as under Course A in Part B, the respondents were asked to analyze how our military strategy under this meager troop level increase would differ from that of the larger level, how the level of actions against North Vietnam and Cambodia would look, the effect of such a small added increment on our flexibility, and the effect on the VC/NVA. Finally, McNaughton representing DOD was requested to analyze possible bombing strategies in the North as they related to both courses of action.

Katzenbach suggested consideration of measures which could be taken in the south to strengthen the GVN and develop the RVNAF as a substitute for more U.S. troops, thereby placing primary emphasis on the war in the South and perhaps allow us to cut back on the bombing in the North. Katzenbach also felt that some consideration should be given to a study of the present use of U.S. forces and whether they are being used in the most efficient ways possible, in effect a reappraisal of ground force strategy. He asked that such measures as the following be discussed:

(a) Expansion of RF/PF by 100,000 in FY 1968;

(b) Efforts to improve RVNAF leadership, including insistence on dismissal of incompetent commanders, withholding of MAP from ineffective units, and some sort of US rewards for competent commanders;

(c) A Joint Command;

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

- (d) A great expansion of the US advisory structure, especially with RF/PF;
- (e) Increased training for ARVN;
- (f) Increase RVNAF pay, housing, rations and other incentives; push for a better promotion policy;
- (g) Improve RVNAF equipment." 46/

On the same day, 24 April, Robert Komer, upon his departure from Washington for Saigon submitted a memo to the President in which he presented his thoughts on future strategy in Vietnam. He began by lamenting the emergence of a tendency on the part of the United States to resort in our frustration to actions in Vietnam which we could control, e.g. bombing operations, U.S. ground force operations in lieu of what he termed "the much tougher, slower and less certain measures required to make the Vietnamese pull their weight." 47/ He recommended that we re-examine trade-offs for making the Vietnamese do their part because, in his estimation, measures which had been previously rejected looked a great deal more appealing now when matched against the potential alternatives of major troop increases or a widened bombing offensive. He concluded that the critical variable in the equation for success in Vietnam during the following 12-18 months was the conflict in the South. He saw the VC as the "weak sister" of the enemy team; in fact, he believed that the NVA strategy in I Corps was designed to take pressure off the VC in the south. Then he addressed ways to maximize the chances of a breakthrough in the South:

"Therefore, if we could maximize the pressures of all kinds on the VC--direct and indirect--political, economic, psychological and military--we might at the optimum force Hanoi to fade away, or at the minimum achieve such success as to make clear to all that the war was being won. Such a course would also reinforce the pressures for negotiation. But if we can't get a settlement in 12-18 months, at the least we should shoot for such concrete results in South Vietnam that it might permit us to start bringing a few troops home rather than sending ever more out.

"I confess here to a strong bias that we are already winning the war in the South. No one who compares the situation today to that of April 1966 (much less April 1965) can deny we're doing better. But many contend we've just stopped losing, not started winning. Much depends on one's confidence in our O/B estimates, which I for one flatly question--especially with regard to VC recruiting rates and losses in the South. Much also depends on how much weight one gives to political trends, changing popular

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

attitudes, etc. But I won't argue the case here--time will tell who's right. In any case, we're not drawing ahead clearly enough or fast enough to optimize our confidence in achieving a 12-18 month turnaround." 48/

Finally, he questioned the rationale for the major force increases COMUSMACV had asked:

"How Much Would We Achieve from a Major New US Force Commitment? COMUSMACV is asking for 210,000 men no later than June 1968 and roughly 100,000 as soon as possible (on top of the 470,000 plus 60,000 ROK's, etc. already programmed). However, MACV's justification for these added forces needs further review. To what extent are they based on inflated O/B estimates of enemy strength? If enemy main force strength is now levelling off because of high kill ratios, etc., would the added US forces be used for pacification? General De Puy estimates that 50% of US/ROK maneuver battalions are already supporting RD by dealing with the "middle war", the VC main force provincial battalions. How good are US forces at pacification-related tasks, as compared to RVNAF? What are the trade-offs? A major US force commitment to pacification also basically changes the nature of our presence in Vietnam and might force us to stay indefinitely in strength. Whether or not the added US forces would become heavily involved in pacification, however, another major US force increase raises so many other issues that we must carefully examine whether this trip is necessary." 49/

To this Komer added a package of alternative measures designed to get the GVN moving -- militarily, politically, economically -- all of which he felt might reduce or obviate the need for a major U.S. force increase. This program included:

"1. First is an all-out effort to get more for our money out of RVNAF. We have trained and equipped over 650,000 (and for so little cost that it is a good investment in any case). But can't we greatly increase the return?

(a) Insist on jacking up RVNAF leadership at all levels. All observers agree that this is RVNAF's most critical weakness. A massive attack on it could pay real short-run dividends. Insist on dismissal of incompetent commanders. Find US means for rewarding competent ones, such as withholding MAP from ineffective units.

(b) Insist on a Joint Command. Putting at least ARVN under Westy and his corps commanders might be the best short-run way to get more response out of ARVN. If it would ease the GVN problem, the contingents of the other five contributors could be added. Whatever the problems entailed, they seem small to me compared to sending another 200,000 men.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

(c) Greatly Expand the US Advisory Structure, Especially with RF/PF. Here's another quick way to get more for our money. In some cases the troop to advisor ratio in RF/PF is 1,000 to 1. Only 1,200 advisors (the strength of one USMC maneuver battalion) might have many times the payoff.

(d) Expand RVNAF as a substitute for more US forces. Westy wants 50,000 more RF/PF in FY 1968. Let's consider 100,000 in a two-phase expansion.

(e) Increase RVNAF pay, housing, ration, and other incentives. Bull through a better promotion policy. The savings from cutting back on non-productive units and expenditures might finance much of the increase.

(f) Enrich RVNAF equipment. I'm told the rifles and carbines are poor, that more radios for RF/PF would help greatly, that new equipment would build up morale and effectiveness.

A crash program along the above lines would be cheap at the price, in fact so cheap that we probably ought to do most of it anyway. Piaster and manpower constraints are manageable in my view.

2. Expand civilian pacification programs along similar lines:

(a) We're turning out RD teams about as fast as feasible. So supplement them with "instant RD teams" on model of civil/military team in Binh Dinh.

(b) Even 44 more US advisors for RD teams would make a big supervisory difference. Ditto for 50 more US advisors for the police.

(c) Give RD teams and police all the equipment they need--from military stocks.

(d) Integrate the US advisory effort on pacification to provide a new forward thrust.

(e) Press harder for removal of incompetent or corrupt province and district officials.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

3. Revamp and put new steam behind a coordinated US/GVN intelligence collation and action effort targeted on the VC infrastructure at the critical provincial, district, and village levels. We are just not getting enough payoff yet from the massive intelligence we are increasingly collecting. Police/military coordination is sadly lacking both in collection and in swift reaction.

4. Press much harder on radical land reform initiatives designed to consolidate rural support behind the GVN.

5. Step up refugee programs deliberately aimed at depriving the VC of a recruiting base." 50/

His argument and one which he was about to have the opportunity to prove in Vietnam was simply that such a package of measures might offer just as much prospect of accelerating the favorable trends in SVN over the next 12-18 months as new U.S. military commitments. He closed by pointing out that the "Komer package" could be combined with other U.S. unilateral measures such as a minor force increase to the 500,000 level, accelerated emphasis on the barrier, and some increased bombing, but he cautioned that all of this was vitally dependent upon his underlying premise that we were already doing well enough in SVN "to see light at the end of the tunnel." But, despite his optimistic assumptions he believed that his package at least offered sufficient promise to deserve urgent review by the President. 51/

On 25 April, General Westmoreland returned to the U.S. ostensibly to address the Associated Press Annual Convention in New York, but actually to both undertake an intensive review of his strategy and force requirements for Vietnam in 1967 and to marshal public support for the war effort. John McNaughton, then ASD(ISA) reported portions of the conversation which occurred between the President, General Westmoreland, and General Wheeler on 27 April 1967. Westmoreland was quoted as saying that without the 2-1/3 additional divisions which he had requested "we will not be in danger of being defeated but it will be nip and tuck to oppose the reinforcements the enemy is capable of providing. In the final analysis we are fighting a war of attrition in Southeast Asia." 52/

Westmoreland predicted that the next step if we were to pursue our present strategy to fruition would probably be the second addition of 2-1/3 divisions or approximately another 100,000 men. Throughout the conversations he repeated his assessment that the war would not be lost but that progress would certainly be slowed down. To him this was "not an encouraging outlook but a realistic one." When asked about the influence of increased infiltration upon his operations the general replied that as he saw it "this war is action and counteraction. Anytime we take an action we expect a reaction." The President replied: "When we add divisions can't the enemy add divisions? If so, where does it all end?"

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Westmoreland answered: "The VC and DRV strength in SVN now totals 285,000 men. It appears that last month we reached the crossover point in areas excluding the two northern provinces." (Emphasis added.)

"Attritions will be greater than additions to the force....The enemy has 8 divisions in South Vietnam. He has the capability of deploying 12 divisions although he would have difficulty supporting all of these. He would be hard pressed to support more than 12 divisions. If we add 2-1/2 divisions, it is likely the enemy will react by adding troops." The President then asked "At what point does the enemy ask for volunteers?" Westmoreland's only reply was, "That is a good question." 53/

COMUSMACV briefly analyzed the strategy under the present program of 470,000 men for the President. He explained his concept of a "meat-grinder" where we would kill large numbers of the enemy but in the end do little better than hold our own, with the shortage of troops still restricting MACV to a fire brigade technique -- chasing after enemy main force units when and where it could find them. He then predicted that "unless the will of the enemy is broken or unless there was an unraveling of the VC infrastructure the war could go on for 5 years. If our forces were increased that period could be reduced although not necessarily in proportion to increases in strength, since factors other than increase in strength had to be considered. For instance, a non-professional force, such as that which would result from fulfilling the requirement for 100,000 additional men by calling reserves, would cause some degradation of normal leadership and effectiveness. Westmoreland concluded by estimating that with a force level of 565,000 men, the war could well go on for three years. With a second increment of 2-1/3 divisions leading to a total of 665,000 men, it could go on for two years." 54/

General Wheeler, who was present during the discussions, then interjected his concern about the possibility that U.S. may face military threats in other parts of the world simultaneous with an increase in strength in Vietnam. He commented that the JCS was then reviewing possible responses to threats in South Korea, Soviet pressure on Berlin, the appearance of "volunteers" sent to Vietnam from Soviet Union, North Korea and Red China and even overt intervention by Red China. Additionally, he listed three matters more closely related to Vietnam which were bothering the JCS. These were:

- (a) DRV troop activity in Cambodia. US troops may be forced to move against these units in Cambodia.
- (b) DRV troop activity in Laos. US troops may be forced to move against these units.
- (c) Possible invasion of North Vietnam. We may wish to take offensive action against the DRV with ground troops. 55/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The bombing which had always attracted considerable JCS attention was in Wheeler's estimation about to reach the point of target saturation -- when all worthwhile fixed targets except the ports had been struck. Once this saturation level was reached the decision-makers would be impelled to address the requirement to deny to the North Vietnamese use of the ports. He summarized the JCS position saying that the JCS firmly believed that the President must review the contingencies which they faced, the troops required to meet them and additional punitive action against DRV. Westmoreland parenthetically added that he was "frankly dismayed at even the thought of stopping the bombing program."

There followed a short exchange devoted to Cambodia and Laos in which Westmoreland described his impression of the role of Cambodia in the DRV's grand design, one which incorporated the use of Cambodia as a supply base, first for rice and later for ammunition. The American commander in Vietnam also believed we should confront the DRV with South Vietnamese forces in Laos. He reviewed his operational plan for Laos, entitled HIGH PORT, which envisioned an elite South Vietnamese division conducting ground operations in Laos against DRV bases and routes under cover of US artillery and air support. He saw the eventual development of Laos as a major battlefield, a development which would take some of the military pressure off the south. He also thought it would be wise to think in the same terms as HIGH PORT for Cambodia; he revealed that he also possessed contingency plans to move into Cambodia in the Chu Pong area, again using South Vietnamese forces but this time accompanied by US advisors.

The President closed the meeting by asking: "What if we do not add the 2-1/3 divisions?" General Wheeler replied first, observing that the momentum would die; in some areas the enemy would recapture the initiative, an important but hardly disastrous development, meaning that we wouldn't lose the war but it would be a longer one. He added that...

"Of the 2-1/3 divisions, I would add one division on the DMZ to relieve the Marines to work with ARVN on pacification; and I would put one division east of Saigon to relieve the 9th Division to deploy to the Delta to increase the effectiveness of the three good ARVN divisions now there; the brigade I would send to Quang Ngai to make there the progress in the next year that we have made in Binh Dinh in the past year." 56/

The President reacted by saying:

"We should make certain we are getting value received from the South Vietnamese troops. Check the discharges to determine whether we could make use of them by forming additional units, by mating them with US troops, as is done in Korea, or in other ways." 57/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

There is no record of General Westmoreland's reply, if any.

Little if anything new was revealed in the discussion but it serves to indicate the President's concern with the opportunity costs associated with the large force increase. The discussion also reveals the kind of estimates about the duration of the war which were reaching the President.

Two other memoranda outlining alternatives to the Westmoreland March request for additional troops were written by Mr. Richard Steadman of ISA and Mr. William Bundy of State for Undersecretary Katzenbach. 58/ The Steadman memo was nothing more than a brief review of the original MACV request and as such did not outline strategic alternatives. It was to provide a basis for portions of the analysis in the DPM prepared by McNaughton later in May. The Bundy memo, on the other hand, did analyze possible changes in our military strategy. He analyzed several factors which he believed seriously affected the direction of our military actions. Among these were:

"Force Increases. In terms of contribution to our strategy over the next nine months, I believe any increase directly related to meeting the threat in the northern part of SVN, and at the same time, not reducing our effort in II and III Corps unacceptably, must be considered essential. (I have just lunched with Paul Nitze, who gives an off-the-cuff estimate that we may need a total increase of 50,000 to meet this specification.)

"To the extent that any increase is related to needs in the Delta, I would be most skeptical of the total advantage of such action at least this year. The Delta does not lend itself to the most effective application of our forces, and the Viet Cong in the Delta are in key areas so deeply dug in that in the end they will be routed out only by a major change in the over-all situation, and particularly in the prestige and effectiveness of the GVN. (For example, this is already Colonel Wilson's conclusion with respect to key areas in Long An.)

"In sum, we should leave IV Corps basically to the GVN, trying to deny it as a source of food and men, but leaving it to be truly pacified more slowly and later.

"Apart from the military merits, any force increase that reaches the 'Plimsoll Line' -- calling up the Reserves -- involves a truly major debate in Congress. Under present circumstances, I believe such a debate could only encourage Hanoi, and might also lead to pressures to go beyond what is wise in the North, specifically mining Haiphong. Unless

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

there are over-riding military reasons -- which I do not myself see -- we should not get into such a debate this summer.

"Ground Action Against North Vietnam. I understand this to be only a contingency thought in any event. I would be totally against it, for the simple reason that I believe the chances are 75-25 that it would bring the Chinese truly into the war and, almost equally important, stabilize the internal Chinese situation at least temporarily.

"Laos. Last Friday we went through General Starbird's plans for more effective action against the Corridor in Laos. I think these make sense, although they cannot be expected to do more than make use of the Corridor somewhat more difficult. (We should at once get away from linking these with the true "Obstacle" planned in the eastern area of SVN next to the DMZ. The two are entirely different, and the words "obstacle" or "barrier" as related to Laos have very unfortunate political implications in both Laos and Thailand.) The small ground force teams Starbird needs in Laos can be handled, in Sullivan's judgment.

"Beyond this point, Sullivan and I would both be strongly opposed to any such idea as sending a GVN division into Laos. It would almost certainly be ineffective, and the cry would at once go up to send more. Sullivan believes, and I agree, that Souvanna would object violently and feel that his whole position had been seriously compromised." 59/

Bundy believed that Cambodia was becoming increasingly important to the North Vietnamese war effort. Nevertheless, he doubted, at that stage, if any significant change in our actions in Cambodia could really affect the supply routes or be worth the broad political damage of appearing to attack Cambodia.

Turning to the bombing in the north he commented:

"E. Additional Action in the North. Of the major targets still not hit, I would agree to the Hanoi power station, but then let it go at that, subject only to occasional re-strikes where absolutely required. In particular, on the airfields, I think we have gone far enough to hurt and not far enough to drive the aircraft to Chinese fields, which I think could be very dangerous.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

"I would strongly oppose the mining of Haiphong at any time in the next nine months, unless the Soviets categorically use it to send in combat weapons. (It may well be that we should warn them quietly but firmly that we are watching their traffic into Haiphong very closely, and particularly from this standpoint.) Mining of Haiphong, at any time, is bound to risk a confrontation with the Soviets and to throw Hanoi into greater dependence on Communist China. These in themselves would be very dangerous and adverse to the whole nation of getting Hanoi to change its attitude. Moreover, I think they would somehow manage to get the stuff in through China no matter what we did to Haiphong." 60/

His concluding overall assessment of the situation was that Hanoi was waiting us out believing that the 1968 elections would cause us to change our position or even lose heart completely. He believed that our "herky-jerky" and impatient actions had greatly strengthened this belief in Hanoi. He felt that our major thrust must be now to persuade them that we were prepared to stick it out if necessary. 61/ He continued by turning to the political factors which he felt were really important:

"B. The Real Key Factors in the Situation. I believe we are making steady progress in the South, and that there are things we can do -- notably effort with ARVN -- to improve the present slow pace of pacification. Over-all progress in the South remains the key factor that could bring Hanoi to the right attitude and actions.

The really important element in the South over the next few months is political. There could be a tremendous gain if the elections are honest and widely participated in, and if the result is a balanced civilian/military government that commands real support in the South. Such a gain would do more than any marginal action, except for the essential job of countering the Communist thrust in I Corps.

At the same time, if the election process is thwarted by a military coup or if it is turned into a military steam-roller, the results could be sharply negative. We might even be forced to re-assess our basic policy. This is simply a measure of the vital importance of the political front for this year.

In addition, we must consider at all times the effect of the Chinese internal situation. We cannot affect whether convulsion resumes, but we should certainly avoid actions that might tend to reduce the possibility of convulsion. (This is argued strenuously by Edward Rice in Hong Kong 7581, received today.)

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Argued in another way, I would now reckon that the odds are considerably better than 50-50 that there will be a renewal of convulsion in China in the next few months. In December and January, I think this was the added factor that caused Hanoi to give off a "tremor" and at least to make a significant tactical change in its position. If convulsion now occurs again, it will offset whatever encouragement Hanoi may have received from the apparent recent promise of additional Soviet aid and the easing of whatever transit tensions may have existed between Moscow and Peking. In fact, renewed convulsion in China could at some point become a really major factor to Hanoi. This is a dubious effect on which we cannot and should not rely. But it serves to put into focus the relative importance of any additional military actions, particularly in the North. And it is a very strong argument indeed against any additional step-up in our bombing of the North, or mining Haiphong.

"C. Over-All Estimate. If we go on as we are doing, if the political process in the South comes off well, and if the Chinese do not settle down, I myself would reckon that by the end of 1967 there is at least a 50-50 chance that a favorable tide will be running really strongly in the South, and that Hanoi will be very discouraged. Whether they will move to negotiate is of course a slightly different question, but we could be visibly and strongly on the way.

If China should go into a real convulsion, I would raise these odds slightly, and think it clearly more likely that Hanoi would choose a negotiating path to the conclusion." 62/

Just as many others were doing, Bundy revealed an increasing sensitivity for the urgent development of a coherent negotiating strategy. On this he wrote:

"While we need a thorough review of our whole objectives and negotiating position, I doubt very much if we shall find any points on which we now wish to change our public position or to take any new initiative viz-a-viz Hanoi.

"Basically, in line with the idea of conveying an impression of steady firmness to Hanoi, I think we should avoid new initiatives except as we have to respond to some significant third party such as U Thant or the Canadians. I would certainly not go into the UN or the World Court.

"Behind this strategy lies the judgment that Hanoi is

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

in all probability dug in at least until after the Vietnamese elections. After that, we could take another look, but I still doubt that any serious change will be indicated. If it is, some approach like the Ne Win one seems to me by far the most promising.

"A key question is of course how we handle the Soviets. My own hunch is that Kosygin burned his fingers somewhat in February, but that they have built their position in Hanoi at least back to its former level. In the process, they will have almost certainly undertaken some additional aid. Knowing as they do all our peace moves, they may have a strong feeling that we are in a hurry and perhaps susceptible to change. This would argue against pressing them hard in the near future, as we did in early April in any event.

"On the other hand, we certainly could impress upon them our belief that their own interest lies in getting the situation resolved, and that they should be exerting real influence to this end. But this should be coupled with a calm firmness in our own determination to go ahead and not to be thrown off by anything additional they may be doing or threaten to do. In the last analysis, they can judge whether they really have any leverage and how to exert it.

"At any rate, the next major contacts with the Soviets -- Dobrynin's return and Brown's visit to Moscow in late May -- should in my judgment be played in this measured but essentially low key unless they come up with something. Brown is not himself inclined to try something new at the moment, and we should do nothing to encourage him. (He has a full plate anyway of other issues.) 63/

Bundy's basically optimistic estimate (50-50 was in the context of the time optimistic) was partially supported by the reports of ground action coming out of South Vietnam, although the increasing enemy threat in I CTZ remained an ominous and somewhat puzzling development.

5. Developments in the Ground War: Strategy Takes Shape

Ground operations in the period February into early May followed essentially the pattern predicted by COMUSMACV in his earlier assessments and statements of strategy. The PRAIRIE series of operations conducted by the Marines to counter infiltration through the DMZ had received permission during the month to employ artillery fire against military targets

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

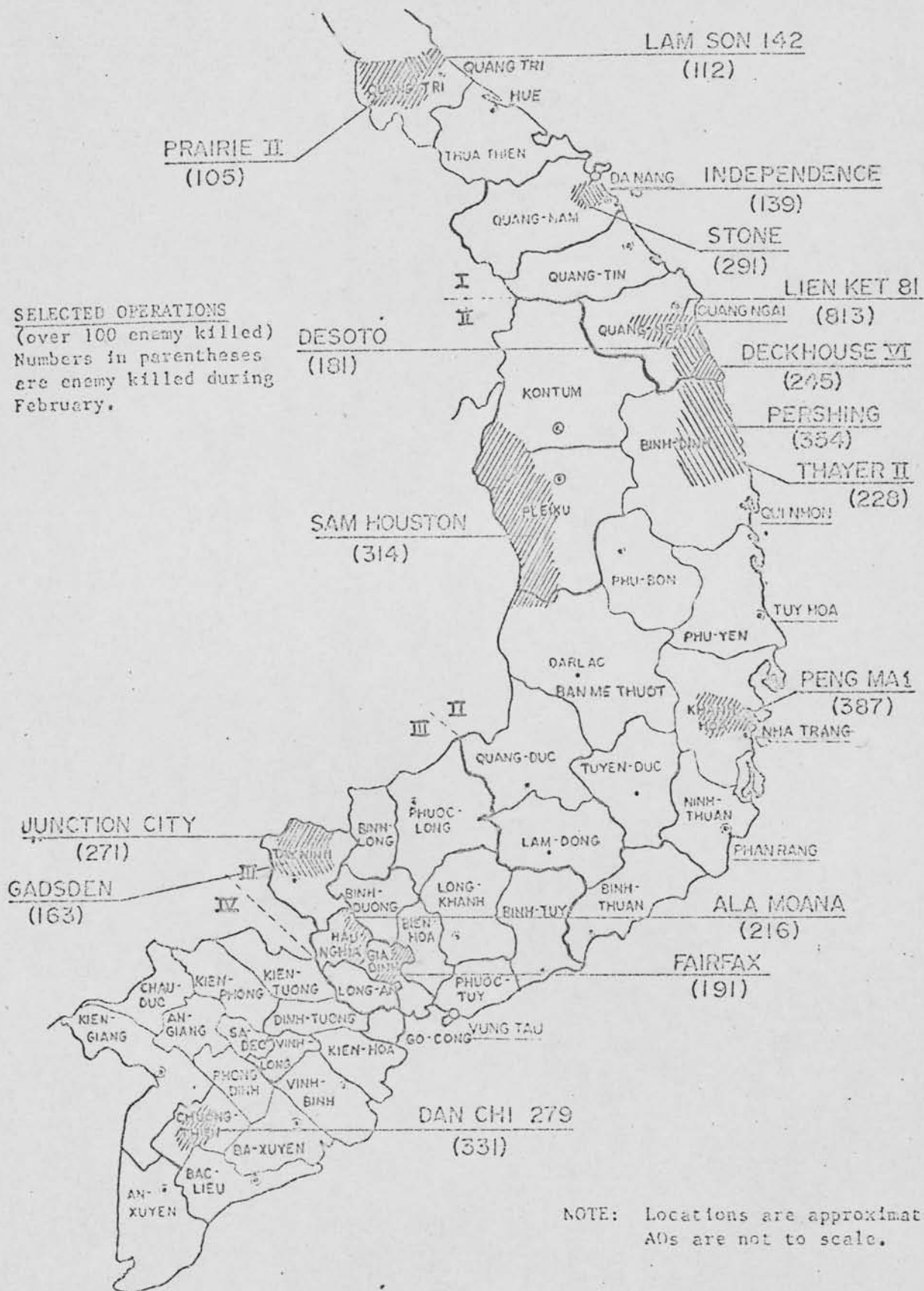
north of the DMZ and the enemy had responded with heavy mortar attacks on friendly positions throughout the PRAIRIE operations area. Operation DE SOTO designed to clear and secure the Sa Huyen salt flats prior to the April harvest had been termed "successful." Operation PERSHING in northern Binh Dinh continued as part of an extensive allied effort to break the enemy hold in the area.

The 1st Cavalry Division participated in OPERATION THAYER II, southwest of Bong Son in II Corps area. This clearing operation netted 228 enemy killed before it was terminated in mid-February. Across the Corps Tactical Zone in Pleiku Province, OPERATION SAM HOUSTON operating on the border between Pleiku and Kontum Provinces was countering increasing enemy forces at the egress of their Highland border sanctuaries. In III Corps the most significant operation was JUNCTION CITY, the largest operation of the war, initiated in 22 February with an airborne assault into the long time enemy sanctuaries in northern Tay Ninh Province. Another major offensive into War Zone C, OPERATION GADSTON began on 2 February but achieved relatively insignificant results. FAIRFAX, on the outskirts of Saigon, continued to screen that city and secondarily to conduct US-ARVN buddy system operations concentrating on civic action during the day and conducting extensive patrols and ambushes during the night. (See Figure 2, Monthly Evaluation (February 1967) map.)

In March the tempo of the war increased partially in reaction to the burgeoning infiltration in I Corps Tactical Zone. South of the DMZ, Marines continued to conduct counter infiltration operations with PRAIRIE II and PRAIRIE III, operations characterized by bloody assaults designed to retain control of key terrain features dominating infiltration corridors leading down from the North. In the western highlands of II Corps, U.S. forces in OPERATION SAM HOUSTON were experiencing frequent heavy ground clashes with enemy units which sortied out of their sanctuaries and attempted to operate in Pleiku and Southern Kontum Provinces. JUNCTION CITY continuing in III Corps experienced heavier contact in War Zone C, while FAIRFAX and other screening operations were regarded as successful on the strength of a steady decline in enemy initiated incidents on the outskirts of the city. ARVN divisions continued to operate in IV Corps but there are no large operations reported. (See Figure 3, Monthly Evaluation (March 1967) map.)

The first major operational dislocation of U.S. forces to the north occurred in early April when TASK FORCE OREGON (a provisional division) was created and moved north into Quang Ngai Province thereby releasing Marine units for operations further north in the vicinity of the DMZ. Some of the bitterest fighting of the war occurred in late April near Khe Sanh in western Quang Tri Province, coming as a direct result of the USMC strategy of fighting for control and holding of key terrain commanding infiltration routes. The Marines were engaged in a series of sharp and

TOP SECRET - Sensitive



NOTE: Locations are approximate
 AOs are not to scale.

FIGURE 2

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

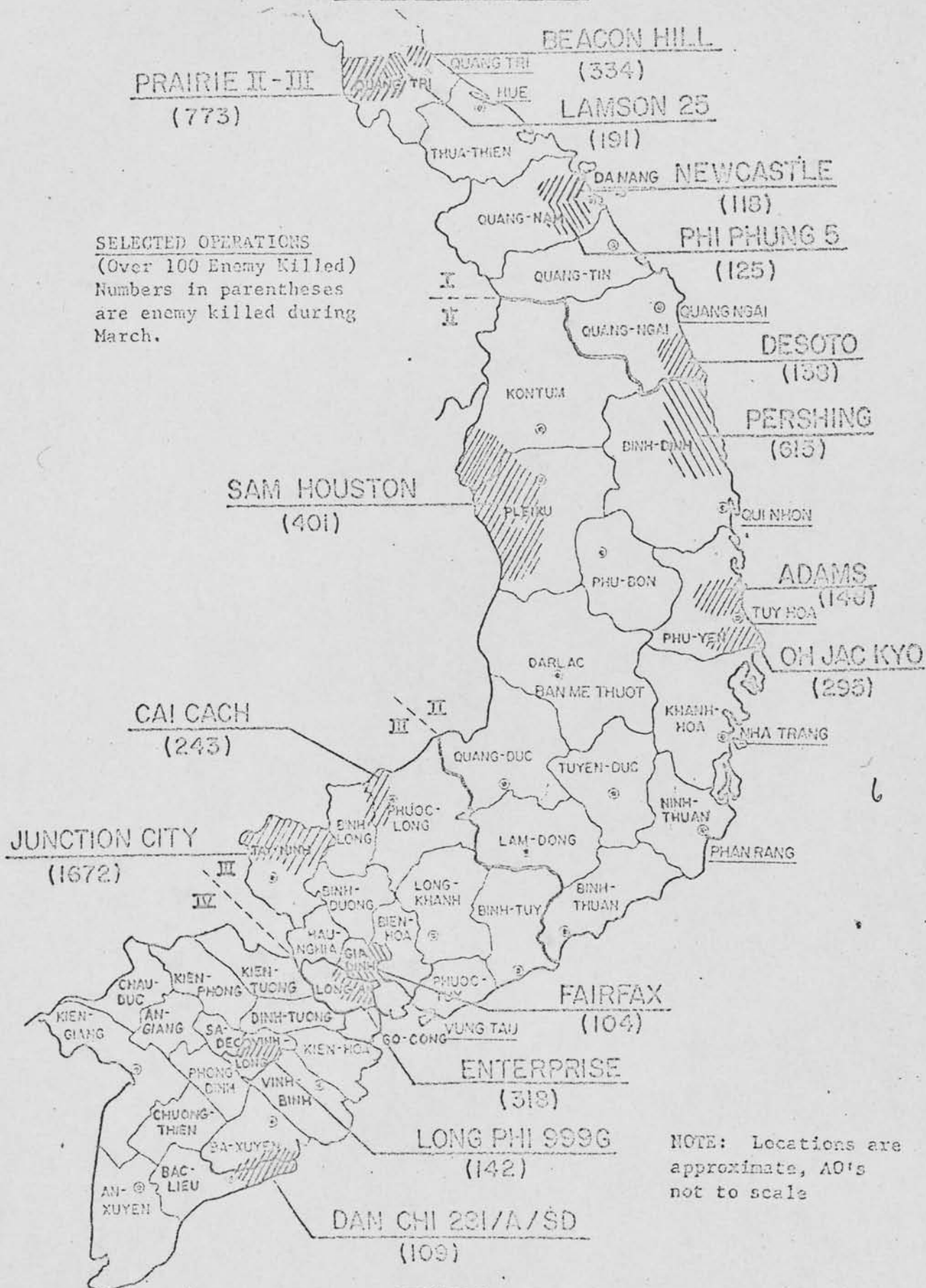


FIGURE 3

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

bloody hill battles reminiscent of those fought in the late stages of the Korean War. The mounting pressure of the enemy forces in and adjacent to the DMZ not only prompted creation of Task Force OREGON but hastened additions of artillery and air support units in the area. In the Western Highlands of II Corps, OPERATION SAM HOUSTON terminated to be followed immediately by OPERATION FRANCES MARION. This new operation retained the original mission of its predecessor border surveillance and protection of installations in the Pleiku-Kontum area. JUNCTION CITY continued in III Corps tactical zone, but there was a notable decline in activity in that area, possibly partially attributable to the thinning out of U.S. units to provide for the dispositions to I Corps Tactical Zone. Some 53 ARVN infantry battalions, one Ranger battalion, and one regional force battalion were reported performing missions in direct support of Revolutionary Development. Country-wide VC incidents directed at disruption of the RD effort increased as the VC attempted to influence the hamlet elections conducted during April. (See Figure 4, Monthly Evaluation (April 1967) map.)

In May attention focused on I Corps where heavy fighting continued. Operation PRAIRIE IV conducted by the Marines in conjunction with smaller operations BEAU CHARGER, HICKORY and IAM SON was directed toward blocking the major enemy infiltration into northern Quang Tri. Indications were that the enemy was building up in preparation for a probable coordinated offensive and allied military activity was directed toward disrupting his plans. Altogether 24 operations in I Corps tactical zone achieved "significant results," 14 of those operations resulting in over 100 enemy killed. U.S. Marines and ARVN forces also entered the DMZ for the first time and reported over 800 enemy killed. In Southeastern Quang Ngai Province, OPERATION MALHEUR conducted by Task Force OREGON reported 369 enemy killed by the month's end. In II Corps FRANCES MARION continued to experience heavy fighting in the border regions as border infiltration attempts by large NVA/VC units continued on the upswing. (See Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 for Corps Monthly Operational Maps, May 1967.)

6. The Domestic Debate Continues: Polarization at Home

Domestic views about the war were beginning to polarize in early February. Edmund Reischauer, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expressed his dismay with the administration's persistent adherence to the domino theory and its variations, one which he said was now "dropped in the trash can of history wrapped in a Chinese rug." Student leaders in their Washington Convention had denounced the draft system and urged the abolition of selective service. In early February, 1,900 women marched upon the Pentagon protesting the war policies and 5,000 American scientists, 17 of them Nobel Prize winners, pleaded with the White House for a review of U.S. policy on chemical and biological warfare in Vietnam. General Gavin was urging before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee an immediate and unconditional halt of American bombing asking for what he termed "a strategy of sanity." In early March, Robert Kennedy had delivered a strong speech in the Senate calling for a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam, a proposal

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

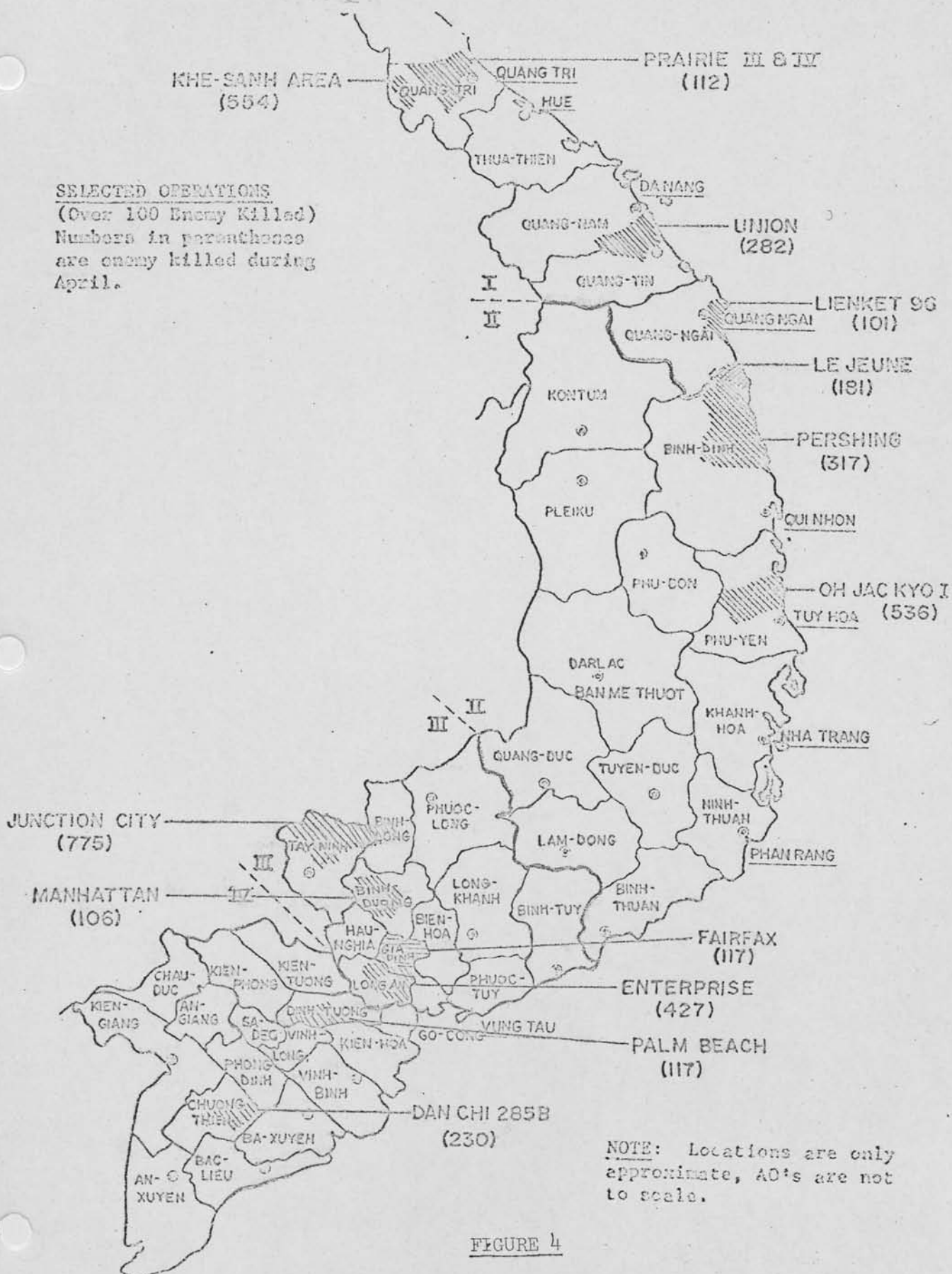
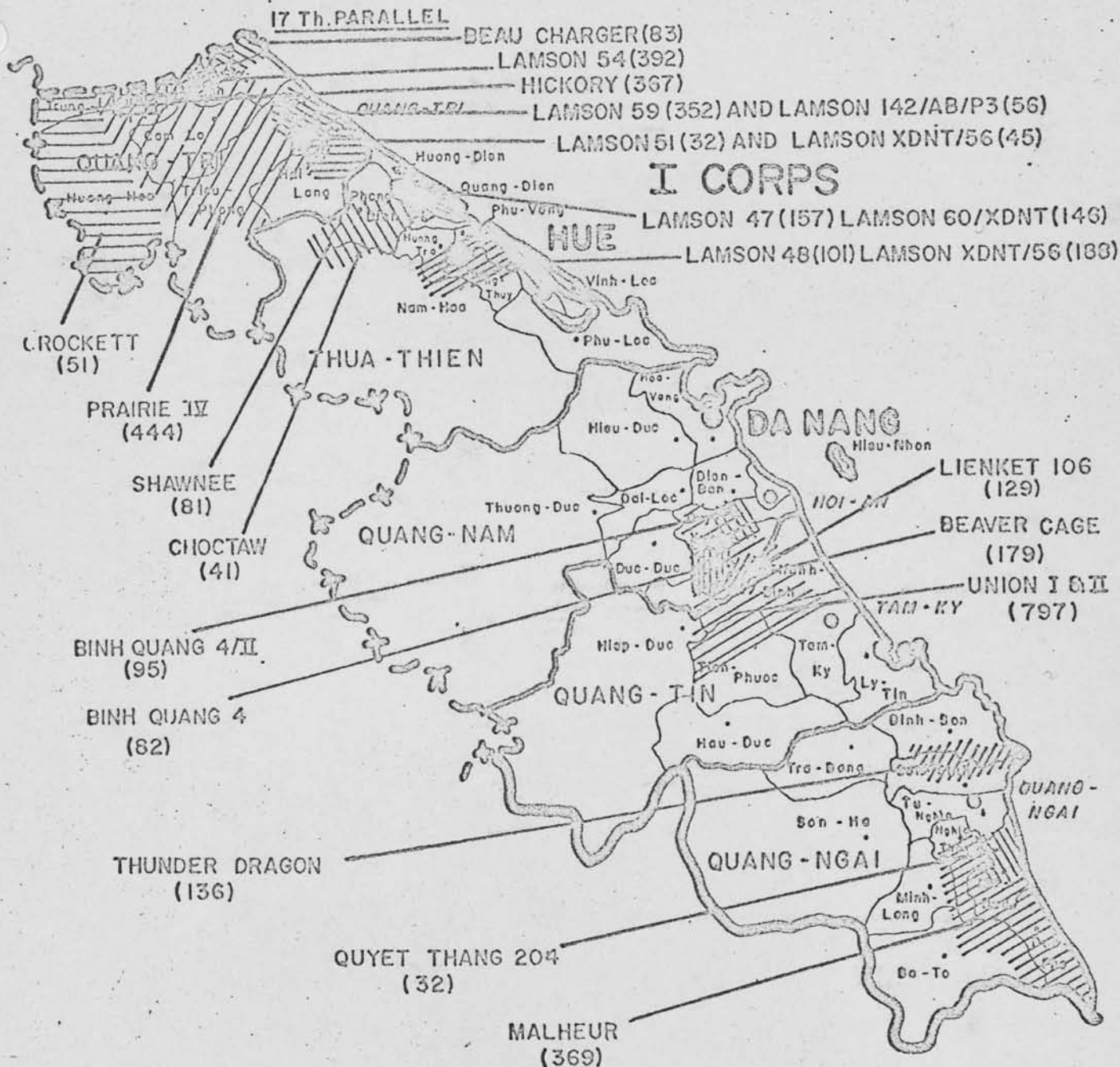


FIGURE 4

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

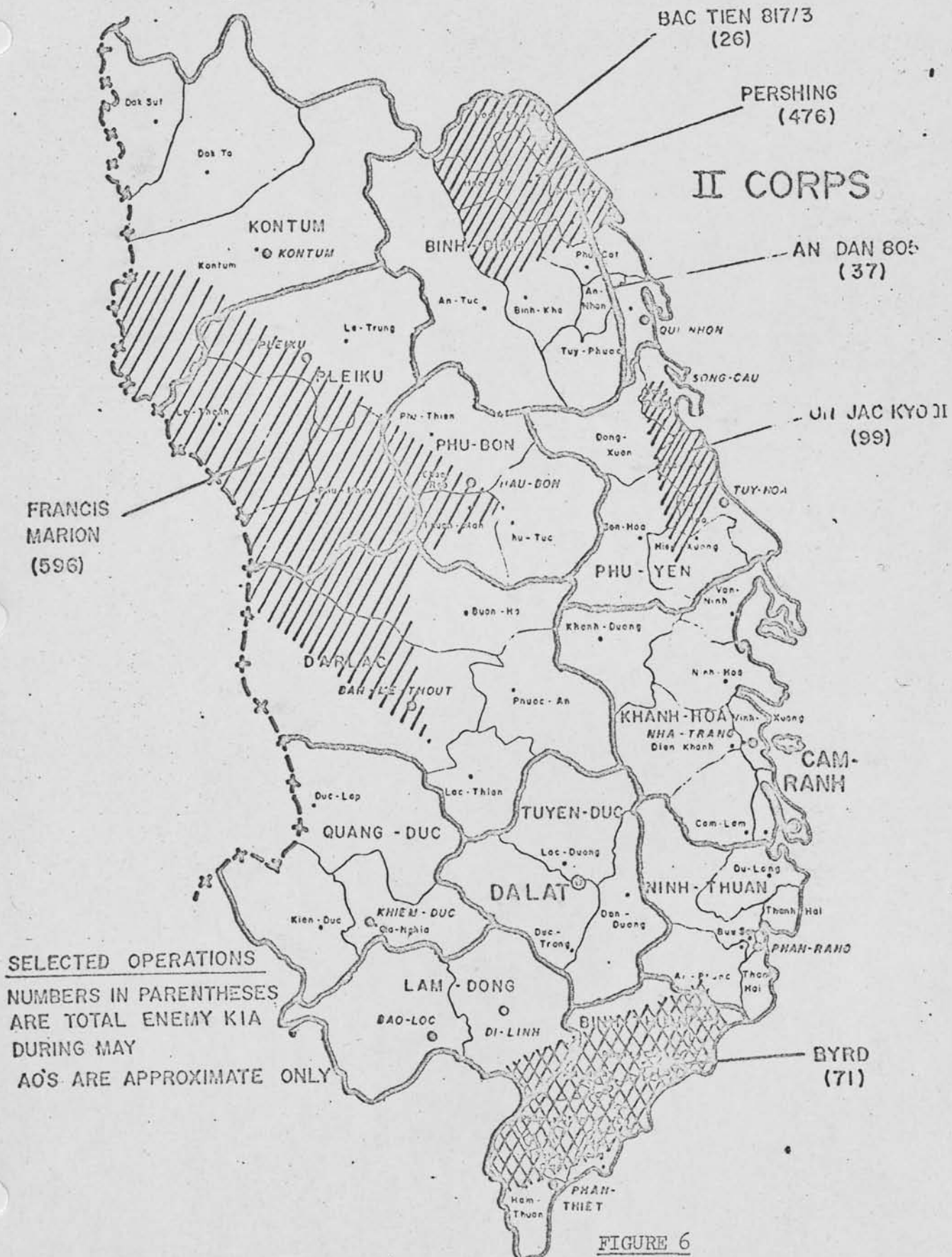


SELECTED OPERATIONS

NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES ARE
TOTAL ENEMY KIA DURING MAY
AD'S ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY

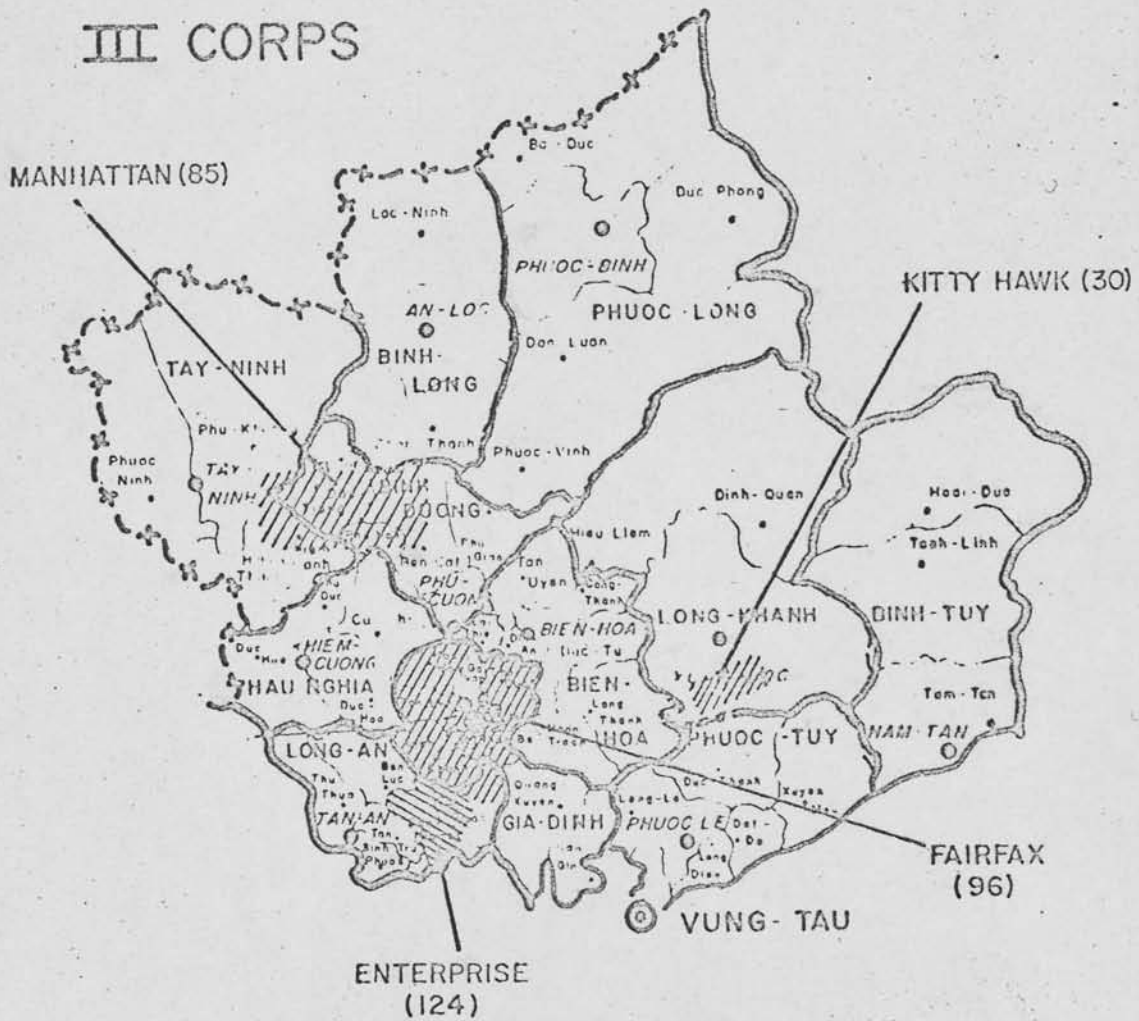
FIGURE 5

TOP SECRET - Sensitive



TOP SECRET - Sensitive

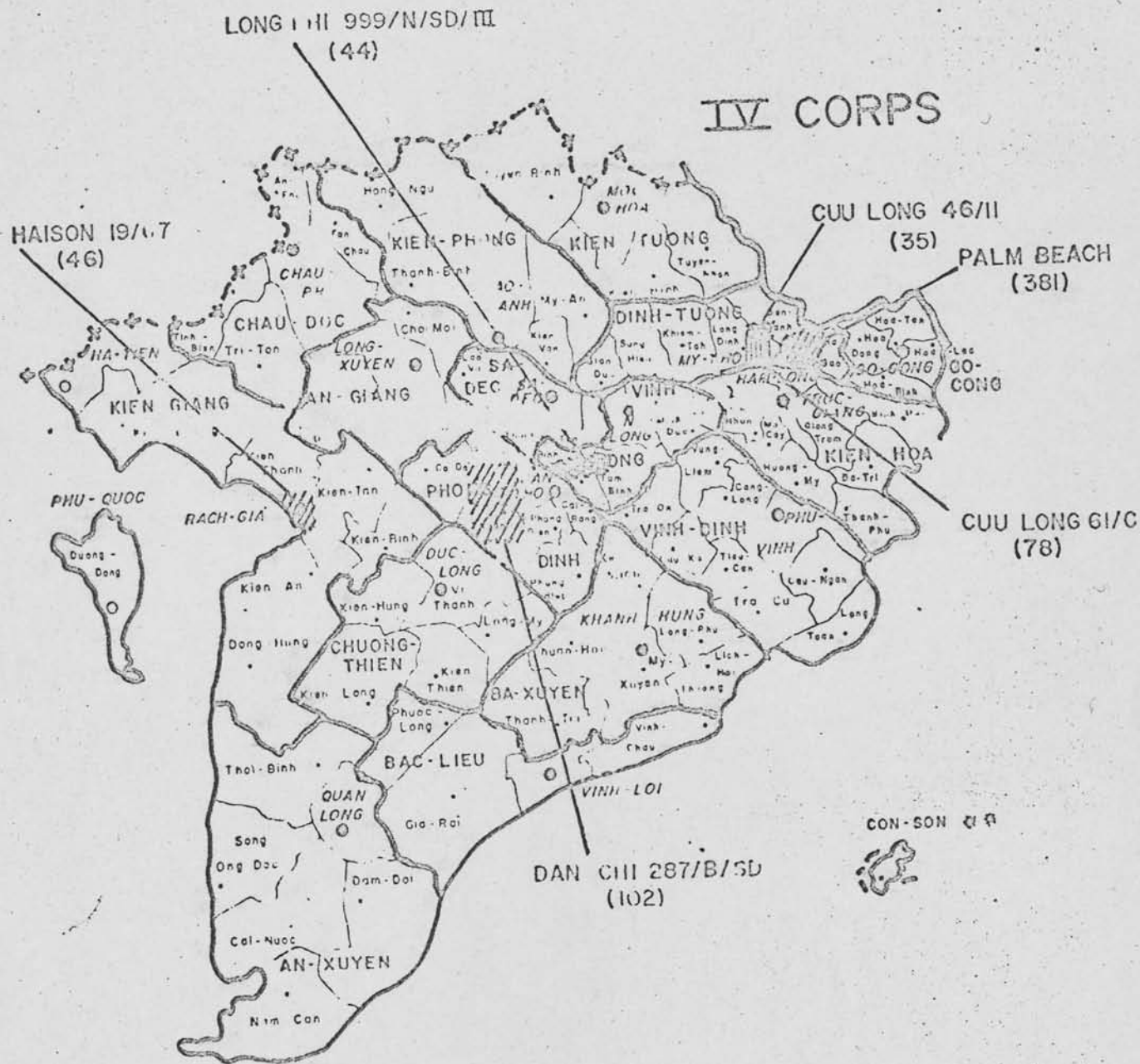
III CORPS



SELECTED OPERATIONS
NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES ARE
TOTAL ENEMY KIA DURING MAY
AO'S ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY

FIGURE 7

TOP SECRET - Sensitive



SELECTED OPERATIONS

NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES ARE
TOTAL ENEMY KIA DURING MAY
AO'S ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY

FIGURE 8

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

which Secretary Rusk publicly buoyed by the preceding day's announcement of the Mansfield Resolution supporting the administration's policy in Vietnam.

Resistance to the war and its costs were beginning to be reflected in administration actions. In early February President Johnson asked for \$6.2 billion in foreign aid for two years, the smallest appropriation in the 20-year history of the program noting that the opposition to a larger program stemmed from "a view of needs at home and the costs of the struggle in Vietnam." In early March the President announced that we were beginning to mine the rivers in the north, authorizing long-range artillery shelling across the DMZ and commencing naval bombardment of military targets in the DMZ in North Vietnam border areas. When questioned, he defended the new activities stating that he would "not describe them as a step up in the war" but only as boosts "desirable and essential in the face of immediate infiltration and build-up." 64/ There was increasing public emphasis from the White House on peace feelers to Hanoi and detent with the Soviet Government. The first exchange of letters between Kosygin and Johnson confirming the willingness of the Soviet Government to discuss means of limiting the arms race was publicly announced on 3 March. On 22 March the Johnson-Ho letters were released, an event which in the view of most commentators placed Johnson in a somewhat more tenable position vis-a-vis Vietnam war policy than he had previously enjoyed.

Despite intensive efforts to alleviate the problem of credibility, events continued to reveal that the administration was being less than frank with reporters. In early February the Pentagon acknowledged that it had lost 1800 aircraft in Vietnam as opposed to the 622 "combat planes" which it had quoted earlier. R. W. Appel wrote in the New York Times questioning COMUSMACV infiltration figures. A week later, in another article which received wide circulation, Appel reported that the pacification effort was greatly hindered by South Vietnamese Government foot-dragging, a conclusion which found considerable sympathy among the group already dissatisfied with South Vietnamese Government pacification performance.

The public and the press alike were becoming increasingly wary of the statistics coming out of Washington. Even the Chicago Tribune in early March surmised that either the figures coming out of MACV were wrong or those coming out of the Pentagon were misleading. The paper cited a recent joint press conference held by McNamara and Rusk in which they announced that communist military forces in Vietnam had suffered tremendous casualties in the past four months, quantitatively an increase of 40-50%, thus reducing their effectiveness significantly, but in the next sentence announcing that serious communist military activity in Vietnam had "increased substantially."

By mid-March editorial commentary was focusing on the theme that generally there would be more and wider war. American casualties announced on 10 March were higher than those for any other week of the war: 232 KIA, 1381 WIA, 4 MIA for a total of 1617. Four days later the U.S. conducted

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

the heaviest attacks of the 1967 air war on North Vietnam (128 missions flown by approximately 450 aircraft). Not only was there a feeling that the war would be longer and more intense, but the public was becoming increasingly aware of its costs. In mid-March the House Appropriations Committee approved a \$12 billion supplemental appropriations bill and a week later the Senate overwhelmingly approved a \$20.8 billion military procurement program. The ease with which the appropriations bills were being passed was not truly indicative of the mood of Congress which was becoming increasingly divided about the war. The Stennis Subcommittee (Preparedness) was carrying the military's fight for more troops. In late March Stennis charged that "American commanders in Vietnam are not getting all the troops they want and the bombing of the north is overly restricted." 65/ The Pentagon reply to this was that "there had been no reduction in any program of troop deployments previously approved by the Department of Defense." 66/ Senator Symington was publicly urging wider air raids of North Vietnam to include attack of the MIG airfields. By late March, Stennis' charges were coming in drum-fire fashion focusing on charges that future troop deployments to Vietnam would fall below approved levels; that urgent military appeals for the bombing of more meaningful targets in North Vietnam were being arbitrarily denied and that the Pentagon was responsible for a gross shortage of ships in Vietnam. Prior to General Westmoreland's return to the U.S. in late April, General Abrams had been named as his Deputy Commander and it appears that indeed, despite Westmoreland's promises of victory, it would be a long war. For early that week the infiltration/casualty figures for the first quarter of 1967 were released, and they indicated that despite huge Red losses of nearly 25,000 men in the first 12 weeks of that year, nearly 4,000 more than that amount had infiltrated during the same period and were now active in enemy units in the South. 67/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

FOOTNOTES

1. State message 153550 to the American Embassy, Saigon from Rusk, dated March 12, 1967.
2. State message 158083 to AmEmb Saigon, Subject: "Guam Agenda," dated 17 March 1967.
3. See Task Force Paper IV.C.9., Evolution of the War - US-GVN Relations, 1963-1967, Part II. This shift of personnel represented the largest shake-up in US leadership in SVN since August 1965. Ambassador Bunker replaced Lodge; Locke took Porter's place; and Robert Komer took charge of Revolutionary Development under COMUSMACV.
4. Joint Communique, Guam Meetings, March 21, 1967.
5. Memorandum, Subject: Main Talking Points for the President in Trip Briefs for Conference on Guam, McNaughton III, 20-21 March 1967. This record of Westmoreland's comments, dated 20 March, was taken from a hand-written attachment to the cited memo, presumably written by McNaughton.
6. COMUSMACV 08435 to CINCPAC, Subject: Military Plans and Progress in SVN, dated 12 March 1967.
7. OSD/SA, Subject: "ARVN Effectiveness on Search and Destroy Type Operations," 16 March 1967.
8. Ibid.
9. OASD/SA, "ARVN Performance," Op. Cit.
10. OASD/SA, "Optimum U.S. Force Level in SVN," March 16, 1967 (Guam Briefing Book).
11. Ibid.
12. As early as the summer of 1966 detailed post-hostilities planning was begun in DOD, and the last item in the list just quoted reflects some of that thinking. See: OASD(ISA) "Post Hostilities Planning," dated 17 March 1967.
13. MACV Briefing Book, Guam Conference.
14. McNaughton Memorandum, 20 March 1967, op. cit.
15. New York Times, 23 March 1967.
16. New York Times, 20-26 March 1967.
17. COMUSMACV 09101 to CINCPAC, Subject: Force Requirements, dated 18 March 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

18. Ibid.
19. COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, "Assessment of the Military Situation and Concept of Operations," 1 March 1967.
20. COMUSMACV 09101, op. cit.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Vance Memo to COMUSMACV, late March 1967. Interview with LTC Vesser, then assigned to J32, MACV Headquarters, Saigon.
24. JCS msg 59881 to CINCPAC, Subject: PACOM Force Requirements, dated 24 March 1967.
25. Ibid. To meet this deadline CINCPAC followed its standard practice of convening a conference or, what in this case it labelled a "Force Requirements Task Group." This group met from 27 March to 3 April analyzing and synthesizing the MACV replies and preparing the final reply which was forwarded to the JCS between 26 and 28 March. See: CINCPAC 252120A Mar 67, Subject: Force Requirements.
26. COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, Subject: Force Requirements, 260650Z Mar 67.
27. COMUSMACV letter MACJ3, 28 Mar 67, and COMUSMACV 10248 to CINCPAC, Subject: Program 4 Force Requirements, 28 Mar 67.
28. CINCPAC message to JCS 280145Z Mar 67.
29. COMUSMACV 10311 to JCS, Subject: MACV FY 68 Force Requirements, dated 28 March 1967.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. COMUSMACV Msg 115,570, to CINCPAC, 7 Apr 67, Subject: Force Requirements.
35. Ibid.
36. JCSM 208-67, Subj: Marine Corps Reinforcement of I Corps Tactical Zone, dated April 14, 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

37. SecDef Control No. X1935 and COMUSMACV 09101 attached, dated 23 Mar 67.
38. JCSM 218-67, Subject: Force Requirements - Southeast Asia, FY 1968, dated 20 April 1967, Encl A to JCS 2339/255-3.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Memorandum from Acting SecState Nicholas deB. Katzenbach to the Honorable John McNaughton, Subject: Vietnam, dated 24 April 1967.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid. The other agencies assigned studies in this memo were the White House (primarily directed to study of pacification), State Department (primarily directed to study settlement), and the CIA (predicting the trends in the military pacification, political and economic situations).
47. Memo for the President from R. W. Komer, Subject: Thoughts on Future Strategy in Vietnam, dated 24 April 1967.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Unsigned, Notes on Discussions with the President, 27 April 1967 (McNaughton Papers).
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid. Emphasis added.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

57. Ibid.
58. Memo from Mr. Richard Steadman for Asst SecDef (ISA) McNaughton, Subj: Additional Deployments to SVN, dated 2 May 67; Memo from Mr. Wm. Bundy for Undersecretary Katzenbach, Subj: Thoughts on Strategy in Vietnam dated 1 May 1967.
59. Ibid. Ambassador Sullivan's opposition to expanding operations in Laos was clearly laid out in a 1 May memorandum addressed to Katzenbach. In this memo he strongly opposed Westmoreland's HIGH PORT proposal as well as any expansion of the northern barrier which would either cut into Lao territory or if it operated as a hermetical seal to the north would force the North Vietnamese to make an end run through the Laotian corridor to the west of the barrier. He based his objections primarily on the serious political consequences which he believed might involve the withdrawal of Souvanna's collaboration on many other matters of importance to the U.S. He believed that for the limited operational advantages on the Ho Chi Minh Trail (none of which he believed would succeed anyway) that the U.S. would probably lose the entire Mekong Valley. Quoting President Kennedy, he described this as trading "an apple for an orchard." See: Memo from Ambassador Sullivan for Mr. William Bundy, Subject: Limitations on Military Action in Laos, dated 1 May 1967.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. The New York Times
65. The New York Times
66. Ibid.
67. The New York Times

D. RESISTANCE TO GROUND
FORCE INCREASES CRYSTALLIZES

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

D. RESISTANCE TO THE GROUND FORCE INCREASES CRYSTALLIZES

1. Systems Analysis -- Vanguard of the Reaction

The search for alternatives to the major force increases proposed by the JCS was, as we have observed, intensive and widespread but the most cogent critique of MACV's strategy developed in the Systems Analysis Office headed by Assistant Secretary of Defense Alain Enthoven. Here a concentrated attack was launched on the two most vulnerable aspects of COMUSMACV's operations: the feasibility of the "war of attrition" strategy pursued in the face of the uncertainty about NVN infiltration, and "search and destroy tactics to support it." The reaction in Systems Analysis to the 18 March troop request submitted by COMUSMACV was one of surprise and incredulity. Everyone who had worked in the problem area of ground force deployments believed that COMUSMACV had received the message during the Program 4 discussions, that any troops were going to be difficult to come by and those that were forthcoming had to be completely and convincingly justified. 1/

Immediately upon receipt of the MACV requirements request Alain Enthoven ordered that a detailed analysis of the request be made. The initial cuts at the request made by his staff were simply in the form of tables comparing the approved Program #4 and the new force levels required. 2/ These were completed and to the Secretary of Defense within a week after the initial MACV request reached the Pentagon.

The more detailed follow-up analysis prepared in Systems Analysis initially concentrated upon the "unfortunate lack of analysis" in the MACV/JCS request, one which failed to explain how the extra forces were needed to avoid defeat. 3/ Despite this orientation toward the analytic lacunae the germ of the basic, vital critique which was to emerge was there. The preface of the draft lamented the lack of analysis and evidence, seemingly proof in itself that the request should be denied, but more fundamentally it continued:

Despite considerable progress in the Vietnam conflict during the past year, an end to the conflict is not in sight and major unresolved problems remain. North Vietnam still believes it can win in the long run, in the name of nationalism if not communism. It has been fighting for over 25 years against the Japanese, French, and Americans and appears prepared to fight indefinitely. The reaction of COMUSMACV to this unsatisfactory situation is to request more U.S. forces, rather than to improve the effectiveness of the RVNAF, and U.S. and other Free World forces.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Hanoi is willing to wait. We have hurt them some, and we can even hurt them some more, but not so badly as to destroy their society or their hope for regaining in the future the material things they sacrifice today. Their policy will be to wait until dissent in the US (coupled with world opinion) forces us to retire. Our only hope is to establish an equally strong and patient nationalism in South Vietnam.

We, too, must be willing to wait. We cannot establish a strong Southern nationalism in a few months or a year. If we leave before that is one [sic], we will have lost, regardless of the military havoc we have caused in SEA.

Additional forces, added burdens on the US economy, and calling of the reserves will only serve to increase DRV's belief that the US will not remain in SVN for the long pull. Additional forces make it appear that we are trying for the "quick kill." Hanoi knows that we cannot achieve it and that the American public will be bitter and divided unless we do. We should be looking for ways to ease the burden for the years ahead, rather than making the war more costly. 4/

The diversion of resources from other national goals also had costs which demanded accounting:

If we are to stay, we must have the backing of the US electorate. As we divert resources from other national goals, as US lives are lost, and as the electorate sees nothing but endless escalation for the future, an increasing fraction will become discouraged. If this keeps on in the future as it has in the past, we will have to leave SEA before stability is achieved, losing all that we have invested up to that point, and foregoing the general stability of the world which was established as a result of the Korean War. If we are not to lose everything, the trends will have to be changed: the increase in unfavorable public opinion will have to be slowed; the development of SVN society will have to be speeded. 5/

The memorandum recommended that only enough forces be provided to meet minimum military goals:

Thus we must provide only enough US forces to meet minimum military goals. These goals are: (1) to deter a Chinese Communist invasion; (2) to prevent military defeat in South Vietnam, and (3) to prevent excessive terrorism. We have at least sufficient forces presently

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

deployed to meet these goals.

Additional forces will add additional cost, further degrading public opinion and preventing expansion of critical domestic programs. They would present the prospect of unending escalation, splitting the American public even more openly and seriously. 6/

These goals, of course, differed greatly from those outlined by the Joint Chiefs in JCSM 702-66 in November and JCSM 218-67 in April. The military aims in the Systems Analysis memo were passive in nature, and obviously based upon new assumptions about the likelihood of success, and therefore were directed toward much different terminal goals than those the JCS proposed.

The recommendations made by Systems Analysis were based upon two fundamental arguments: (1) That the additional forces were unlikely to increase VC/NVA losses beyond any level intolerable to the enemy; and (2) that the additional forces would not help the pacification task measurably. 7/ It argued:

Additional forces are very unlikely to increase VC/NVA losses beyond any level intolerable to the enemy. Assuming that the enemy has no control over his losses, the table below shows projected enemy losses. Only when the projection is based on recent peak losses does the rate of enemy losses exceed the rate at which MACV and USIB agree the enemy can go on replacing them indefinitely, and then only by 139 per week for the MACV "minimum essential" force, and 431 for the "optimum" force. Even at a decrease in enemy forces of 431 per week, over 10 years would be needed to eliminate the enemy.

ESTIMATED WEEKLY ENEMY LOSSES FOR DIFFERENT FORCE LEVELS

	<u>Program IV force</u>	<u>MACV "minimum essential" force</u>	<u>MACV "optimal" force</u>
Peak losses <u>a/</u>	3188	3404	3696
Avg. losses <u>b/</u>	2121	2265	22460

DIA USIB estimate of enemy capability to sustain losses indefinitely = 3265.

a/ Based on January-March 1967 enemy losses to all causes.

b/ Based on CY 66.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

However, just as we can control our aircraft losses, there is clear evidence that the enemy has considerable control over his ground force losses. He is hurt most often when he chooses to assault U.S. forces (e.g., Junction City). On large operations, stealth is impossible. Consequently over 90% of the large firefights that develop in such operations are initiated by the enemy, and in over 80% of the cases there is a clear indication of a planned enemy attack. The enemy can probably hold his losses (all causes) to about 2000 per week regardless of our force levels or operations. Additional forces cannot defeat him so long as he has the will, some popular support and we lack timely intelligence.

Additional forces will not help the pacification task measurably. This cannot be accomplished with 480,000 or 560,000 U.S. military forces and probably not at all without (1) a far more effective Revolutionary Development (RD) program supported by Vietnamese forces and (2) a more stable and progressive GVN, both of which will require patience and emphasis on political-economic objectives rather than military ones. It is clear from the USMC experience in I CTZ that U.S. forces can deny VC control but cannot secure the population. There were fewer people in the "secured" category in I CTZ at the end of CY 66 than at the beginning.

Our experience in Operation FAIRFAX just west and south of Saigon further supports the conclusion that in spite of good intentions and good actions, the U.S. military cannot undertake pacification and expect to withdraw after a short period, leaving the area secure. In FAIRFAX, still being conducted, 3 U.S. battalions were "temporarily" deployed with 3 ARVN battalions to secure the area near Saigon. The U.S. battalions are still engaged $2\frac{1}{2}$ months longer than planned and will be for the foreseeable future. Fewer than 1 VC per U.S. battalion-equivalent per day has been killed, most of the VC infrastructure has temporarily moved out of the area but has not been captured, the U.S. has made many friends (but of unknown longevity), the ARVN made few friends and actually look worse than before, after comparison with the Americans, and the populace in general are reserving judgment until they know the VC have left permanently. Part of the reason for ARVN ineffectiveness is lack of supplies and support-items (e.g., barbed wire) which the U.S. troops had in ample supply. We would be much better off to provide the GVN with such supplies rather than deploy additional U.S. forces.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

In brief, the additional forces are likely neither to reduce the enemy force nor contribute significantly to pacification. These goals can only be met by improving the efficiency of the forces already deployed and, particularly, that of ARVN. But additional U.S. forces decrease the incentive to MACV and the GVN to make the Vietnamese shoulder a larger portion of the burden. The RVNAF appear to have done well by all statistical measures in IV CTZ, where they have been provided only logistical and combat support by the U.S., and very badly in the other areas where the U.S. has taken over the war while denying them significant support. 8/

Finally, it returned to the "old" piaster issue which had proven such a potent instrument of control earlier during the Program 4 deliberations:

Additional forces will also damage the SVN economy, as we saw when Program 4 was approved. Inflation in January-March 1967 was 20%. Even apart from the rice situation, prices were up 7%, or 28% on an annual basis. The inflation still hits hardest GVN civilian and military personnel, on whom we must rely to eventually pacify the country.

MACV, of course, appears to be doing a good job of holding down piaster spending. Program 4 forces now appear to cost P41.0 billion in CY 67, after correcting for an apparent reporting errors and MACV might be able to hold to about P44 billion in CY 68 even with increased forces. Nevertheless, the SVN economy is still far from sound, and more forces compound the problem. 9/

It closed by carefully listing the following recommendations:

1. That additional forces for SEA not be approved and the currently approved Program #4 ceiling be firmly maintained.

2. MACV be directed to submit a plan by Aug 1, 1967 to enhance the effectiveness of the RVNAF forces. In the long term the RVNAF must assume a greater role for maintaining the security of SVN. The longer the task is delayed, the more difficult it becomes. We have made the Koreans into an effective fighting force, and we must do the same for the RVNAF. They can do the job far better and cheaper than we can, and they will remain after we leave.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

3. MACV be directed to submit a plan by the same date, to increase the effectiveness of approved US and FWMAF forces. This should include consideration of changes in tactical employment (e.g., greater use of long-range patrols, fewer battalions in static defense, and more efficient use of available helicopter resources).

4. Consideration be given by MACV, CINCPAC, and the JCS and OSD of possible steps to reduce the cost of our efforts in SEA. The conflict is almost certainly going to be a long one. If we expect the American public to support such an effort for an extended period of time we must hold the costs to an acceptable level. 10/

The draft included two tables, one a summary of deployments to Southeast Asia and the other a breakout of the additional MACV requirements request. These are shown in the tables on pages 111 and 112.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

SUMMARY DEPLOYMENTS TO SEA

	Program #4			FY 1968 ^{b/}	
	1967		1968	MACV Requirement	
	June	Dec	June	Minimum Essential	Optimum
Personnel SVN (000)	441.0	473.2	482.6	558.9	676.4
US Maneuver Bns	82	90	90	108	130
Artillery Bns	56 $\frac{2}{3}$	59 $\frac{2}{3}$	61 $\frac{2}{3}$	75 $\frac{2}{3}$	89 $\frac{2}{3}$
Engineer Bns	53	54	53	67	79
Fighter-Attack A/c (US)	999	1042	1002	1146	1182
InCountry Naval Vessels	381	424	430	589	589
Plaster Expenditures (6 months ending) ^{a/}	20.3	20.3	20.0	23.2	29.0

^{a/} OASD(SA) Estimate

^{b/} Level off cost for 6-month period. Includes CINCPAC estimated contract construction.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Additional MACV Requirements

	<u>Minimum Essential</u> ^{a/}	<u>Optimum</u> ^{b/}
Strength (000)	84.1 ^{c/}	201.6
Maneuver Bns	21	43 ^{c/}
Divisions	(2)	(3)
Brigades	(1)	(5)
Artillery Bns	15	28
Engineer Bns	14	26
Tactical Fighter	8	13
APB (Barracks Ships)	3	3
ARL (Repair Ship)	2	2
RAS (River Assault Sqds)	2	2
LST	9	10
PBR (River Patrol Boats)	50	50

- ^{a/} Required by 30 June 1968. Includes Practice Nine Forces (7822 personnel) approved on 8 Apr 67.
- ^{b/} Includes "Minimum Essential;" required ASAP, assumed to be 31 December 1968.
- ^{c/} JCS recommend 1 USMC and 1 USAR division if reserves are called, adding 12,300 personnel.

NOTE: Includes organic as well as non-organic units.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Enthoven was given the final draft just discussed on the 28th. He was not completely satisfied with the basic thrust of the paper -- to him it did not adequately emphasize the deeper political and psychological issues bound up in seemingly endless troop increases with little or no promise of ultimate success. The Assistant Secretary sat down and drafted an outline for a final memorandum he intended to take to Mr. McNamara. In it he cogently laid out his opposition to further increases and the reasons why. He believed that "adding 200,000 Americans" would not do anything significant, considering that:

...(a) VC/NVA losses don't go up in proportion to our forces; they haven't in past 18 mos.

(b) even if they did, additional 200,000 U.S. forces wouldn't put VC/NVA losses above their ability to sustain or their willingness to accept.

(c) Our studies indicate VC/NVA control their losses, within wide limits. They start most fights. Their losses go up when they're attacking. 11/

The final point as to whether the VC/NVA could control their ground force losses within wide limits was based upon a Systems Analysis study of small unit engagements during 1966. 12/ In the study, SA concluded that: 13/

5 MAY 67 00 25

TOP SECRET - Sensitive



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

4 MAY 1967

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Force levels and enemy attrition (U)

Although MACV has admitted to you that the VC/NVA forces can refuse to fight when they want to, this fact has played no role in MACV's analysis of strategy and force requirements. (For example, in his October 1965 briefing, General DePuy said, "The more often we succeed at (search and destroy operations) the less often will the VC stand and fight.") Because enemy attrition plays such a central role in MACV's thinking, and because the enemy's degree of control over the pace of the action determines how well he can control his attrition, we have taken a hard look at the facts on the enemy's tactical initiative. From reliable, detailed accounts of 56 platoon-sized and larger fire-fights in 1966 we have classified these fights according to how they developed. The first four categories in the table all represent cases in which the enemy willingly and knowingly stood and fought in a pitched battle; these categories include 47 (84%) of the 56 battles. The first three categories, enemy ambushes and assaults on our forces, have 66% of the cases; these three plus category 4a, comprising the cases where the enemy has the advantage of surprise, have 78% of the cases.

The results are independently confirmed from two sources. First, the ARCOV study, which analyzed a different set of battles in late 1965 and early 1966, found that 46% of the fights begin as enemy ambushes and that the enemy starts the fight in 88% of the cases; moreover, it found that 63% of the infantry targets encountered were personnel in trenches or bunkers. Second, we have analyzed the After-Action Reports submitted to MACV by the line commanders in the field; although generally vague and incomplete in their descriptions of what happened, they broadly confirm the drift of the above numbers.

These results imply that the size of the force we deploy has little effect on the rate of attrition of enemy forces. This conclusion should scarcely surprise you in view of the trend of enemy losses in 1966 and in view of the obvious sensitivity of month-to-month enemy losses to his known strategic initiatives. What is surprising to me is that MACV has ignored this type of information in discussing force levels. I recommend that you inject this factor into the discussion.

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year interval
Declassified after 12 years
DOD Dir. 5200.10

20 JUN 1967
Alain Enthoven

Alain Enthoven
Assistant Secretary of Defense

Enclosure

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The table entitled: "Types of Enemy Engagements Described in Combat Narratives," (below) presents the study data in tabular form:

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENTS DESCRIBED IN COMBAT NARRATIVES

<u>Category Description</u>	<u>Nr. of Engagements</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Percent Subtotals</u>
1. Hot Landing Zone. Enemy attacks U.S. troops as they deploy onto the battlefield.	7	12.5	
2. Organized enemy attack against a U.S. static defense perimeter.	17	30.4	
3. VC/NVA ambush or encircle and surprise a moving U.S. unit, using what is evidently a preconceived battle plan.	13	<u>23.3</u>	66.2
4. A moving U.S. unit engages the enemy in a dug-in or fortified position:			
a. The main engagement comes as a virtual surprise to the American tactical commander because the enemy is well concealed and has been alerted either by observations of our unit or by our engaging apparent stragglers nearby.	7	<u>12.5</u>	78.7
b. The U.S. tactical commander has reasonably accurate knowledge of enemy positions and strength before committing his forces.	3	<u>5.4</u>	84.1
5. U.S. unit ambushes a moving enemy unit.	5	8.9	
6. Chance engagement, both sides surprised.	<u>4</u>	<u>7.1</u>	
TOTAL	56	100.1	

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The United States could not adequately "pacify" either, in Enthoven's estimation, but it could provide an "umbrella" against VC/NVA main forces. He assumed our forces were adequate for that based on:

(a) experience of past year (VC/NVA haven't won a battle; they've taken heavy losses trying)

(b) look at force ratios, corps by corps and consider our firepower/mobility advantage on top of that. 14/

The finished memorandum as it emerged provided a powerful set of reasons for holding the ground force line: 15/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Draft #1
RMurray/hap
May 1, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Increase of SEA Forces

MACV has asked for a "minimum essential force" which would add 2-1/3 divisions, 8 tactical fighter squadrons, and 85,000 personnel to Program 4. His "optimum force" would add 4-2/3 divisions, 13 tactical fighter squadrons, and 200,000 personnel, for a total of about 670,000 in SVN.

MACV/JCS offer no analysis to show that these extra forces are needed to avoid defeat, or even that they are likely to achieve any specific goal. But I am concerned far less about this unfortunate lack of analysis than I am by the whole strategy which such a massive increase in combat forces must imply.

Though the North Vietnamese are indeed communists, we have come up against something more than just Marxism. We are facing the strongest political current in the world today: nationalism. That is the force which welds the North Vietnamese together, just as it does so many other peoples today.

Having seen both the Japanese and the French come and go, the North Vietnamese are now fighting the United States. For their little country to triumph finally over the greatest nation the world has ever known would surely serve as the ultimate vindication of nationalism as a policy. Enticed by this goal, and hardened by 25 years of more-or-less continuous fighting, the North Vietnamese will, I fear, continue

EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC
RECLASSIFICATION PER 5010.10
DOCS NOT APPLY

REPRODUCTION OF THIS DOCUMENT
IN WHOLE OR IN PART IS PROHIBITED
EXCEPT WHEN AUTHORIZED BY THE
ISSUING OFFICE

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

2

to endure great hardship. We have hurt them with our bombing, and we can hurt them more. But we can't hurt them so badly as to destroy their society or, more to the point, their hope, not only for regaining the material things they sacrifice today, but the whole of South Vietnam.

But how can they hope to beat this great nation? As MACV himself said before the Congress, the enemy "believes our Achilles heel is our resolve." They believe that public opinion in the United States will eventually force our retirement. And they could be right.

As for our own goals, I see only one way of establishing stability in Vietnam. We must match the nationalism we see in the North with an equally strong and patient one in the South. No matter what military success we may achieve, if we leave before that is done, there can be no stability, and we will have lost everything we have invested in South Vietnam. Indeed, we will jeopardize much of the general stability in the world which we bought at the price of the Korean War.

Therefore, I see this war as a race between, on the one hand, the development of a viable South Vietnam and, on the other, a gradual loss in public support, or even tolerance, for the war. Hanoi is betting that we'll lose public support in the United States before we can build a nation in South Vietnam. We must do what we can to make sure that doesn't happen. We must work on both problems together: slow the loss in public support; and speed the development of South Vietnam. Our horse must cross the finish first.

With regard to public support, some people feel we simply have no business being in this war, while others are just against all wars. We can't do much about that. But there are other factors influencing

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

3

public support that we can control. Casualties are one. Diversion of the national wealth from badly needed domestic programs is another. But the biggest of all may well be escalation.

Since 1961, and particularly since 1965, the public has seen an apparently unending escalation of this war. This must have a strong psychological effect. There must be many who are more concerned about the unbroken upward movement of spending and casualty rates than they are about the current levels. Our escalation is designed to put pressure on the North Vietnamese. But they may be more resolved to withstand it than the United States electorate is. I believe that's the basis of Hanoi's strategy.

If MACV's additional forces are approved, our casualty rate may not rise, but our expenditure rate certainly will, and the ominous history of unending escalation will be maintained. That combination will reduce public support, and we will have even less time to develop a strong nation in the South.

With regard to developing that nation, more United States forces aren't going to solve the pacification problem. In spite of the Marines' ability to deny the Viet Cong control of an area, there were fewer people in the "Secured" category in I Corps at the end of 1966 than at the beginning. In Operation Fairfax, southwest of Saigon, the 3 U.S. battalions which were "temporarily" deployed with 3 ARVN battalions to secure the area were supposed to leave 2½ months ago. But they are still there, and will be for the foreseeable future. The kill rate per U.S. battalion-equivalent has been less than one V.C. per day, and most of the V.C. infrastructure has evaded capture by

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

4

moving out. Though the U.S. forces have made many friends (of unknown loyalty), the ARVN has made few and, in comparison with the Americans, the ARVN has lost prestige in the eyes of the populace, who are still worried that the V.C. may return.

Part of the reason for the ineffectiveness of the ARVN is a lack of supplies and support items, such as barbed wire, which the U.S. forces have in abundance. While more U.S. forces would bring more barbed wire, that's doing it the hard way. The pacification program depends, instead, on better support for Vietnamese forces and a more energetic national Government. This program requires not only time and patience, but political and economic progress rather than military victories.

As we saw when Program 4 was approved, additional forces are a burden on the South Vietnamese economy. Inflation in the first 3 months of 1967 alone amounted to 20%. Even apart from the rice situation, prices rose 7%, or 28% on an annual basis. MACV is doing a good job in holding down piaster spending. It looks like the Program 4 forces will cost P41 billion in 1967, and MACV might be able to hold to P44 billion in 1968, even with increased forces. Nevertheless, the SVN economy is still far from sound, additional forces would mean slower progress, and the inflation would still hit hardest on the very civilian and military personnel on whom we must rely if pacification is ever to succeed.

Furthermore, if we continue to add forces and to Americanize the war, we will only erode whatever incentives the South Vietnamese people

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

5

may now have to help themselves in this fight. Similarly, it would be a further sign to the South Vietnamese leaders that we will carry any load, regardless of their actions. That will not help us build a strong nation.

If you agree that more U.S. forces would speed the "horse" that is carrying public opinion toward rejection of the war, while slowing the "horse" carrying the development of a strong nation in the South, the only justification left would be to achieve other military objectives, of which I can imagine four:

1) To deter a Communist Chinese invasion. I see no sign of a change in Communist Chinese intentions. Were they to invade, they would face a formidable force already in place, and more available if needed, particularly with mobilization. Furthermore, I feel that the very nationalism which drives the North Vietnamese also inhibits them from calling in the same Chinese who have subjugated them in the past.

2) To prevent a military defeat in South Vietnam. I do not think there is danger of any significant military defeat, given the forces we have in place now. I have attached an appendix to this memorandum which shows that we already enjoy favorable force ratios.

3) To prevent terrorism. Though there is terrorism in South Vietnam now, I doubt that additional U.S. combat forces would significantly reduce it. This is a job for police-type forces, not maneuver battalions.

4) To raise VC/NVA losses to a level they cannot sustain. Presumably, this would be something above the weekly loss rate of 3,265 which the DIA/USIB estimate they can swallow indefinitely.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

6

On the most optimistic basis, 200,000 more Americans would raise their weekly losses to about 3,700, or about 400 a week more than they could stand. In theory, we'd then wipe them out in 10 years. But to bank on that, you have to assume that (1) enemy losses are just proportional to friendly strength, and (2) that the unusually favorable kill ratio of the first quarter of 1967 will continue. However, if the kill ratio should be no better than the 1966 average, their losses would be about 2,100 -- less than 2/3 of their sustaining capability.

But even that figure is misleading. Losses just aren't directly related to the size of our force. Between the first and fourth quarters of 1966, our forces increased 23%, but their losses increased only 13% -- little more than half as much.

Finally, the most important factor of all is that the enemy can control his losses within wide limits. The VC/NVA started the shooting in over 90% of the company-sized fire fights; over 80% began with a well-organized enemy attack. Since their losses rise (as in the first quarter of 1967) and fall (as they have done since) with their choice of whether or not to fight, they can probably hold their losses to about 2,000 a week regardless of our force levels. If, as I believe, their strategy is to wait us out, they will control their losses to a level low enough to be sustained indefinitely, but high enough to tempt us to increase our forces to the point of U.S. public rejection of the war.

In summary, I feel that adding more U.S. combat forces would be a step in the wrong direction. They are not needed for military security,

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

7

and they could not force higher losses on the North Vietnamese. But they might play right into the hands of Hanoi by burdening the United States and increasing internal opposition to the war, while delaying the birth of the strong nation in the South which is our only hope of real stability.

Therefore, I recommend the following:

- 1) Maintain the Program 4 ceiling.
- 2) Tell the electorate that, barring the unexpected, we'll stick with the present forces which are all we need, not only to stop the VC/NVA militarily, but also to exact a high price from Hanoi. Tell them that our "escalation" will now turn toward the building of a nation which will be strong enough to bring a natural stability to Vietnam so that we can leave for good.
- 3) Tell MACV to start making good analyses of his operations and feeding them back into his planning so that we can get more out of not only the U.S. and allied forces, but the ARVN as well.
- 4) Find ways to reduce costs for the long haul ahead. For example, cut back on the costly but ineffective bombing north of Route Package 4.

I know it's much easier to write down these recommendations than it is to get agreement on carrying them out. But I think we're up against an enemy who just may have found a dangerously clever strategy for licking the United States. Unless we recognize and counter it now, that strategy may become all too popular in the future.

A.E.

Enclosure

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Attached as an Appendix to the basic memorandum was also a detailed, corps by corps, analysis of COMUSMACV's minimum force requirement. Not only did this analysis question the calculations that had furnished the basis of the requirements but it criticized the unselective and unquantified goals: infiltration to be impeded, invasion deterred or defeated, TAORs expanded and joined, enemy driven to the hinterlands, base areas destroyed, LOC's secured, RD programs expanded, and GVN control extended.

The thrust of its conclusions was that emphasis should be placed not upon more forces, but upon employing the ones we already had in SVN more effectively.

In detail, it explicated the Systems Analysis view of how COMUSMACV's employment of forces by Corps could be improved: 16/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

COMUSMACV's Minimum Force
Requirement - An Analysis

Ground Forces

MACV indicated on 18 March, and in Appendix B to JCSM 218-67, that his minimum essential needs are 2-1/3 divisions for I CTZ. He now proposes that 1-1/3 divisions go to I CTZ to supplement 2 brigades moved from III CTZ, (a total of 2 divisions instead of 2-1/3) and 1 division goes to III CTZ. The III CTZ thus gains one brigade on balance.

The 1-1/3 more divisions in I CTZ appears excessive for the mission. The total threat to I CTZ is only 95,000 VC/NVA personnel, including irregulars and political infrastructure. There are already more than 200,000 friendly forces there, not counting the 2 SLF battalions earmarked for I CTZ support. Any invasion by the NVA divisions now near the DMZ could easily be held with the forces now deployed and available to MACV. Calculations indicate that the 2 Army brigades already sent to I CTZ plus one more brigade (already in Program 4 for PRACTICE NINE) should be adequate to hold the DMZ and to extend the Marine tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) throughout the coastal plains area of I CTZ. Uncertainties and other calculations may well produce different results, but informal USMC staff review indicated our calculations were reasonable. In any event, these calculations are reproducible.

The MACV requirement is based on no known calculations. It is based on unselective and unquantified goals: infiltration to be impeded, invasion deterred or defeated, TAORs expanded and joined, enemy driven to hinterlands, base areas destroyed, LOCs secured, RD programs expanded, and GVN control extended.

The division for III CTZ is justified by MACV to replace the 9th division, always designated for IV CTZ, not III CTZ. Nonetheless he could have argued that at least 2/3rd of the division is required to replace the 2 brigades sent to I CTZ. There is no evidence that the programmed III CTZ forces, without the 2 brigades but with the additional brigade equivalent now programmed (1 more Australian bn, an airborne bn, and an armored cavalry squadron) is inadequate; or that added forces could accomplish more. The force ratio would still be about 345,000 friendly to 74,000 enemy (4.7 to 1). In addition there is a mechanized battalion programmed for IV CTZ that might well be used more effectively in II CTZ. Moreover, the way III CTZ forces are employed, in multi-divisional operations of the Junction City/Manhattan variety, should be analyzed with great care before additional forces are even considered. Our analysis has shown that present forces could be employed more effectively (and at less cost) if greater emphasis were given small unit operations.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Furthermore, it is not clear that the entire 9th Division should be afloat, one brigade at the Dong Tam Base and one brigade at a base in III Corps (in addition to the separate mechanized battalion). These forces, working with the ARVN, should be adequate to counter the VC main force units and provide needed security for the RD effort. The threat in IV Corps is primarily from small units and guerrillas and should be encountered on that level, not with multi-brigade operations.

A greater return can probably be realized by giving the ARVN better support rather than increasing the size of the U.S. forces. The 2 ARVN divisions in IV Corps have less than half the artillery support of U.S. forces; five 105/155mm tubes and no heavy artillery tubes per ARVN battalion (in U.S. Army battalion equivalents) compared to ten 105/155mm tubes plus two and one half 175mm and 8" tubes per battalion for the U.S. Army forces. In addition, the amount of tactical air and armed helicopter support provided the ARVN forces country-wide is meager compared to that provided U.S. forces. During the 4th quarter of 1966 each U.S. battalion received about 500 hours per month of UH-1 support versus only 120 hours per battalion-equivalent for ARVN. In IV Corps the ARVN received 280 hours per battalion per month; in the other corps areas only 60 hours. There is no indication MACV has the same sense of urgency about increasing ARVN effectiveness as it has about increasing the number of U.S. forces.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

This same document provided an alternative approach to calculating the minimum essential force. It is quoted in its entirety below, for it argues that given new objectives (those of preventing military disaster and providing time for ARVN first to improve and then do its job) the minimum essential force was 28 battalions smaller than that already programmed in Program 4: 17 (Again, assuming that the present enemy threat remained constant.) The approach read:

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO CALCULATING THE MINIMUM ESSENTIAL FORCE

U.S. objectives in SVN require U.S. and FWMAF forces sufficient to prevent military disaster and to provide time for the ARVN first to improve and then to do its job. This force is 28 battalions smaller than the Program 4 force for the present enemy threat.

Before U.S. intervention, the VC decimated and demoralized the ARVN reaction and reserve force by successful ambushes and attacks. The 17 US/FW battalions deployed by July 1965 ended the deteriorating trend. In both I CTZ and II CTZ, VC control over the population peaked by July 1965, and it declined even earlier in III and IV CTZ.

Since then, the enemy increased from 99 to 151 infantry-type battalions at the end of December 1966. As of 31 December 1966 we had 98 infantry-type battalions, more than enough to counter the enemy force considering the intelligence available. Of the 98 battalions 34 were engaged in TAOR patrol; 46 were engaged in operations that were initiated by hard intelligence; and the 18 others were predictably unproductive. The 46 battalions were obviously sufficient to counter the 151 VC/NVA infantry-type battalions, witness the total lack of enemy success. This suggests that we need 1 battalion for each 3 enemy infantry-type battalions, in addition to those needed for static defense. The 18 battalions ineffectively employed plus the 10 additional infantry-type battalions in Program 4 that close after January 1, 1967 are enough to counter 84 additional enemy bns. Thus we need deploy no more forces until the enemy goes above 235 battalions, which does not seem to be his present intent. (The enemy peak was 155 infantry-type bns in July 1966, and was 147 at 31 March 1967).

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

US/FW Force Requirement

<u>Enemy Force</u>	<u>Required Mobile US/FW Force</u>	<u>US/FW Force for TAOR Patrols</u>	<u>Total Required U.S. Force</u>
151	46	34	80
235	74	34	108

The 3 to 1 ratio is supported by results in battle. Our forces routinely defeat enemy forces outnumbering them two or three to one. In no instance has a dug-in U.S. company been overrun, regardless of the size of the attacking enemy force, and nothing larger than a company has come close to annihilation when caught moving. Seven battalions of Marines defeated two NVA divisions in HASTINGS, and single battalions of 1st Air Cavalry defeated regimental-sized forces in pitched battles in the Ia Drang Valley in the Fall of 1965.

These factors need confirmation, in actual practice, by how well the forces are doing in the field and by progress in RD. VC/NVA military victories and large areas succumbing to VC require a reaction regardless of calculated force requirements. But there is no sign of anything like that in the foreseeable future. Moreover, a sharp improvement in our effectiveness should result from improvements in the flow of intelligence and in the tactical employment of our forces. Achieving such improvements should be the main objective at this time. 18/

So armed, on May Day Enthoven carried the finished memorandum to McNamara's office and proceeded to discuss its contents. However, probably not to his surprise, he found that McNamara was thinking along the same lines -- in fact, he had already set John McNaughton to preparing a Draft Presidential Memorandum setting forth the same basic political arguments that Systems Analysis was making. The "hard" data in the Enthoven memorandum was the kind of back-up McNamara understood and appreciated and it buttressed most of the beliefs he already held. He asked Enthoven for some detailed follow-up related to VC/NVA control of engagements and casualties. There is no record that the Assistant Secretary left the signed memorandum with the Secretary of Defense, but there seemed little requirement for that. The ideas and position in it had been escalated to the DPM level where such ideas would receive the highest level attention and consideration. 19/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

2. A New Look At the "Plimsoll Line": Alternatives to Increases Restudied

Shortly after the first hard signs of resistance began to surface in May an SNIE analyzing Soviet attitudes and intentions toward the Vietnam war was published. It was an SNIE which in effect reinforced the fears which many held about increasing the intensity of the Vietnamese conflict. The SNIE concluded that at some point the USSR would create an atmosphere of heightened tension with the United States if, in fact, U.S. force increases and intensified bombing continued. In the words of the estimate:

The Soviets might take certain actions designed to bolster North Vietnam and possibly to warn the United States such as the provision of limited numbers of volunteers or crews for defense equipment or possibly aircraft. They might also break off negotiations with the United States on various subjects and suspend certain agreements now in effect. The mining or the blockade of the North Vietnamese coast would be most likely to provoke these responses, since this would constitute a direct challenge to the Soviets and there would be little they could do on the scene. 20/

This document, coming as it did at such a crucial juncture in the deliberations over ground force strategy and deployments in Vietnam, had a significant impact upon the thinking of those charged with making the decision of "go" or "no go," and the document itself was quoted throughout some of the explicit development of alternatives which followed its publication in both Systems Analysis and in ISA.

As McNaughton worked on a series of drafts preparing the 19 May DPM which was to follow, a number of leads were being pursued throughout the government, all related in some way to relieving the pressures for more United States troops in Vietnam. One of these was a directed effort to obtain more allied troops especially from the nations on the periphery of South Vietnam or near Southeast Asia. On 4 May McNaughton asked that an analysis of South Vietnamese troop deployments in relation to population of the participating countries be prepared. This analysis, based upon population of the countries involved, concluded that for an increase of 100,000 U.S. troops the "allocable" share for various countries would range from 14.5 thousand for Korea to 53.4 thousand for Indonesia. For the details of this particular study see the following table: 21/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

ATTACHMENT V
 (5/4/67)

SVN TROOP DEPLOYMENTS IN RELATION TO POPULATION
 (Population in Millions; Troops in Thousands)

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Current or Approved Strength in SVN Per Million of Population</u>	<u>Increase Required To Meet US Ratio</u>	<u>"Allocable" Share Per 100,000 US Troops b/</u>	
US	200	470 <u>a/</u>	2.35	--	100.0
Korea	29.1	45.8	1.57	22.6	14.5
Australia	11.7	6.1	0.52	21.4	5.8
New Zealand	2.7	0.5	0.18	5.8	1.3
Philippines	33.5	2.1	0.06	76.6	16.7
Thailand	33.4	0.3	0.01	78.2	16.7
Indonesia	106.9	--	--	251.2	53.4
Rep of China	13.2	--	--	31.0	6.6
Malaysia	<u>9.8</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>23.0</u>	<u>4.9</u>
	440.3	524.8		509.7	219.9

a/ Excludes naval forces in South China Sea and US forces in Thailand.

b/ 100,000 troops represents 500 per 1,000,000 of US population. "Allocable" shares for other nations are calculated on this basis.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Somewhat along the same line, on 11 May, Walt W. Rostow prepared a paper devoted to what he termed a "troop community chest operation for Vietnam." Rostow had seen the ISA Annex which we just mentioned, and commented that he felt that a project that Bill Leonhart had been working on which related to Vietnamese force deployments to the level of each contributor's armed forces might be more meaningful and realistic plus having the very desirable characteristic of being more negotiable because it would require no country to increase its total armed forces in order to send troops to Vietnam. The table that he attached to the paper showed that if each country dispatched the same percentage of its total armed forces to Vietnam as the United States had done, about 14%, that there would now be an additional 70,000 troops in that country. Furthermore, if you asked each country to contribute an increment to match an additional United States increase of 100,000, and if those increments represented the same percentage of each country's total armed forces, then the result would read something like this: Korea - 18,700; Australia - 2,000; New Zealand - 400; Thailand - 4,000; and the Philippines - 1,300; for a total of 126,400 troops added. This approach is interesting because later in July President Johnson was to begin "arm twisting" a number of national Heads of State, and the force totals developed here by Leonhart provided the base line from which he negotiated. 22/

The other events of note, both directed at increasing the effectiveness of American forces already in Vietnam, occurred during early May. The first was the issuance of NSAM 362, entitled "Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification," in which Mr. R. W. Komer was appointed the Deputy for Pacification (Revolutionary Development) with the personal rank of Ambassador to operate under COMUSMACV. This, as we noted earlier, was partially the outcome of President Johnson's desire to get the pacification program back on the track. Komer as well as most of the officials concerned with the decision, had known that this development was coming since the time of the Guam Conference. In the NSAM the President noted:

Our purpose of unifying responsibility for Pacification (RD) under COMUSMACV is to permit logistic and administrative economies through consolidation and cross-servicing. I expect sensible steps to be taken in this direction. Any inter-agency jurisdictional or other issues which may arise in country will be referred to the U.S. Ambassador....

This new organizational arrangement represents an unprecedented melding of civil and military responsibilities to meet the overriding requirements of Viet Nam.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Therefore, I count on all concerned -- in Washington and in Viet Nam -- to pull together in the national interest to make this arrangement work. 23/

This NSAM, of course, represented the fruition of what had been a long-standing recommendation to consolidate Revolutionary Development under the individual who possessed primary responsibility and controlled the resources, COMUSMACV. However, in the estimation of many, especially those who evaluated its later effectiveness and tried to determine whether or not any real good had been accomplished by the reorganization, it represented yet one more instance of the American penchant for organizational tinkering, one which usually relieved the people making the organizational changes from really getting down and rooting out the basic causes of the problem. 24/ The other interesting evaluation concerned the question of what level of combat service support staffing there should be in South Vietnam. In April, a number of studies were made, all designed to try to determine whether the level of combat service support was too high, about correct, or needed some revision in the upward direction. 25/

Mr. Victor K. Heyman, Director of the SEA Programs Division in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Systems Analysis), toured the Vietnam area in early May and visited the First Logistical Command. He was concerned generally whether manning levels were adequate to the task assigned by COMUSMACV, and, specifically, whether or not the new peak level of 70,000 men to be reached during Program 4 was excessive. In his trip report, he observed that the Army Program 4 strength of 322,000 included only 66,000 men in maneuver battalions. Furthermore, if combat support, aviation companies, advisors, special forces, division and brigade staffs, and construction battalions were added, these increases would bring the "combat" total to only 165,000 men or 51% of the total Army force. He felt that the balance of 157,000 in other units appeared excessive and recommended to Secretary McNamara that the JCS be asked to analyze it.

In particular, United States Army Vietnam, First Logistical Command was scheduled to total, as we noted, approximately 70,000 men at the peak of Program 4. This was the equivalent of nearly 5 Army divisions or 70 infantry battalions. Furthermore, the First Log Command did not include aviation supplies/maintenance units or construction battalions and the substantial combat service support staffing which was organic to divisions and separate brigades. To these increments must be added the 40,000 man equivalent furnished by contractors, local national employment and support from the off-shore bases. Although comparing the services could be misleading because of different doctrines and organizations, a rough comparison revealed that the Army ratio was about one man in First Log Command to support 3.6 men in other USARV

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

units compared to a Navy-Marine Support ratio in 1st Corps Tactical Zone of 1:5.6 men. In view of the different tactical situations (the I CTZ one was more intensive combat) Heyman was led to conclude that a detailed review of Army support should be made -- since simply comparing the ratios suggested that 45,000 men might be adequate for the 1st Log Command or that the Command need not be increased until USARV strength exceeded 462,000 men. In view of this analysis, Heyman recommended that Program 4 should be cut to its essentials to "improve the tooth to tail rate" and that until the review which he had recommended had been completed the Secretary of Defense should defer approval for deployment of any First Log Command units through August 1967. 26/

The Secretary of Defense approved this recommendation to defer further incremental increases to First Log Command and asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a detailed study justifying added increases and analyzing in depth the Combat Service Support Staffing levels in South Vietnam. 27/

3. The Quest for Capabilities: The Search for Limits

Great emphasis in May focused upon capabilities, with particular attention being paid to just what capabilities the services had to provide troops and units (or equivalents) below the point where they would be reduced to calling upon reserves or drawing down units already in Europe. On May 5, Systems Analysis forwarded a brief study to the Secretary of Defense which analyzed the additional MACV requirements and compared them to the estimated capability of the services to provide matching units. The study, which concluded that the services had only the capability to provide 66,000 of the 186,000 troops requested under the MACV "Optimum Plan" and only 19 maneuver battalions of the 42 included in that larger plan is presented in the table on the following pages. 28/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Additional MACV Requirements
 and Estimated Capabilities
 December 31, 1968

	<u>MACV Optimum</u>	<u>Estimated Capability</u>
<u>Land Forces</u>		
Strength (000)	186	66
Divisions	3	$\frac{2}{3}$ b/
Brigades	5	$\frac{4}{3}$ a/
Maneuver Bns	(42)	(19) a/
Artillery Bns	28	28
Engineer Bns	20	0 c/
Aviation Cos.	22	0 c/
Signal Bns	5	3 d/
<u>Naval Forces</u>		
Strength - In-country only (000)	8.5	8.3
Riverine Assault Forces		
APB (Barracks Ships)	3	3
ARL (Repair Ship)	2	2
AN (Net Tender)	1	1
RAS (River Assault Sq)	2	2 e/
River Patrol Forces		
PBR (River Patrol Boats)	50	50
Landing Ships		
IST (Tank Landing Ship)	10	0 f/
Gunfire Ships		
CA (Cruiser--8")	1	1 g/
DD (Destroyer--5")	5	5 h/
Construction Battalions		
NMCB	5	5
<u>Tactical Air Forces</u>		
Strength (000)	6.5	6.5
Tactical Fighter	13	13 i/
Construction Squadron	1	1
<u>Total Personnel (000)</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>81</u>

OASD(SA)
 5 May 1967

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

- a/ Includes one Armored Cavalry Regiment of 3 squadrons., and 9th MAB from Okin.
- b/ 6 bns of 101st Abn plus 1 airborne tank bn
- c/ Trained personnel not available under current rotation policy
- d/ Further analysis may show more available
- e/ Using 70 LCM-6s from war reserve.
- f/ Five LSTs now scheduled for transfer to MSTs (Korean manning) can be retained and added to SEVENTH Fleet. No real increase in SEA lift would result.
- g/ To meet this requirement indefinitely two ships must be activated. Four 8"-gun cruisers now in fleet can meet requirement through Oct '68. Activation of BB as recommended by SecNav would provide needed ship through April 1969. Second ship must be activated for operations after 1969.
- h/ Destroyer requirement can be met in various ways: 1) increase the number of LANTFLT destroyers rotated to PACFLT. This can be done without affecting SIXTH Fleet deployments but would require a further increase in LANTFLT operations tempo; 2) Reactivate mothballed DDs; or 3) Use Naval Reserve Training Fleet (Cat. A) DDs and replace them with reactivated Mothballed DDs.
- i/ Includes 11 Air Force and 2 Marine squadrons. The 11 Air Force TFS can be provided two ways: 1) Deploy 5 CONUS F-4, 1 F-111, 1 F-100 and 3 A-1 squadrons. The A-1 squadrons would be formed using surplus Navy aircraft; 2) 3 F-4 squadrons from WESTPAC could be deployed in lieu of the A-1 squadrons but this would necessitate 2 or 3 of the remaining 4 WESTPAC squadrons being returned to CONUS to augment the training base.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

This document reflected the Secretary of Defense's immediate concern with trying to find maneuver battalions and troops within existing service capabilities and trying to avoid approaching the personnel "sound barrier" and that of having to call up reserves or to partially mobilize units. As a check on this analysis, on 8 May Secretary McNamara distributed the estimate to the services and asked their comments. On 12 May, General Johnson of the Army replied that the Army could probably exceed the estimated capability by about 6 maneuver battalions. He based this new estimate upon the assumption that procurement of critical items of equipment could be accelerated by mid-year 1967, that some withdrawal of equipment from the Reserve Components and non-deploying STRAF units would be authorized and that some new methods would be developed to accelerate the Army's ability to sustain forces in short tour areas. He did not elaborate upon this final assumption, one which was to prove one of the Army's primary personnel problems, that of either extending the length of short tours or changing basic policies about consecutive tours to these areas.

The upshot of all of this concern about capabilities was a May 18 memorandum prepared for the Secretary of Defense by Alain Enthoven, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis. In it, he analyzed and synthesized the information presented on the additional deployment capability of the services. Crucially it noted that the Army had the capability of providing 84,000 more troops, some 24,000 greater than the original estimate which had been given to McNamara earlier in the month. It included 21 maneuver battalions instead of 16. But, again, this estimate was based upon the assumptions that the deployment of the 5th Mechanized Division, then NATO-committed, and the rest of the 101st Airborne Division would be approved for deployment to SEA; that an as yet unidentified improved solution to the rotation base problem could be found and that there would be more and faster procurement of equipment, especially helicopters. End strength increases for the Army at the end of FY 69 were estimated to be 177,000 compared with the 110 to 120,000 which had been previously calculated. The increase by December 1967 was to be 77,000 and by June 1968, 118,000. The latter figure was about 70% of the strength required by December of 1968. 30/

The significance of the 18 May memorandum seems to be that it said: within rather narrow limits the figure of 60 - 65,000 is the Army's capability to provide troops in the form of maneuver battalions properly equipped, ready for deployment within the time frame - all below the requirement to mobilize the reserves. It also indicated that the Air Force, although strained and possibly drawing down units in Europe and other STRAF directed missions could meet the deployment schedules within both the "optimum" and the "minimum essential" range, although it would be preferable in the view of Harold Brown to meet only the minimum essential requirement and to leave the TFS's which

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

were already assigned to NATO on that station. The 60,000 figure which we just mentioned was to reappear later, much later in fact, when Secretary McNamara travelled to Saigon in late July to "negotiate" the new force levels for Program 5.

4. Bombing in the North: Its Contribution to the Ground War Reexamined

In early May attention also focused on how the bombing campaign in the North could better contribute to successful military outcomes in the South. Three important memos appeared during the first week in May, all devoted to this problem. On 5 May, in a draft memorandum for the President, John McNaughton proposed that all of the sorties allocated to the ROLLING THUNDER program be concentrated on the lines of communication, or what he called the "funnel" through which men and supplies to the south must flow between 17-20°, while reserving the options and the intention to strike in the area north of this (or in the 20-23° area) as necessary to keep the enemy's investment in defense and in repair crews high throughout the country. In arguing for this course of action, he noted that General Wheeler, when General Westmoreland was in Washington in April, had said that the bombing campaign was reaching the point where all of the worthwhile fixed targets, except the ports had been struck. McNaughton did not believe that the ports should be struck nor closed by mining, primarily because of the confrontation which he saw this might cause with the Soviet Union. Examining the bombing alternatives, he observed that we could continue to conduct attacks north of the 20° parallel, that is continue striking minor fixed targets while conducting armed reconnaissance against movement on roads, railroads and waterways. This course, though, was costly in American lives and in his estimation involved serious dangers of escalation, either with the Chinese or the Russians. The loss rate in Hanoi/Haiphong Route Package 6 for example was more than six times the loss rate in the southernmost route packages 1 and 2, and actions in the Hanoi/Haiphong area involved serious risks of generating confrontations with the Soviet Union and China, both because they involved destruction of MIGs on the ground and counters with MIGs in the air and because they might be construed as U.S. intention to crush the Hanoi regime. The military gain of the expanded bombing appeared to be slight; in fact, McNaughton could locate no evidence at the time to establish some convincing connection between operations in the north against targets north of the 20° parallel and enemy actions in the South. Furthermore, if the United States believed that air attacks in the area would change Hanoi's will, they might have been worthwhile, he added, and consequently reduce the loss of American life in the south and the risk of the expansion of the war in the North. However, McNaughton noted there was no evidence that this would be the case, for there was considerable evidence that such

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

bombing would strengthen Hanoi's will. He quoted Consul General Rice of Hong Kong when he said that there was very little chance that by bombing we could reach the critical level of pain in North Vietnam and that "below that level pain only increases the will to fight." 31/ Robert Thompson had also been quoted as saying, when he was here in late April, that our bombing, particularly in the Red River Basin area was "unifying North Vietnam." The old argument that bombing in the northern area was necessary to maintain the morale of the South Vietnamese or American fighting men was discounted. Although General Westmoreland had fully supported attacks against targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong areas and had said during his visit here in late April that he was "frankly dismayed at even the thought of stopping the bombing program," his basic requirements had continued to be requests for attacks on what he called the extended battle zone near the DMZ. 32/

McNaughton's closing paragraphs in this memorandum indicate that he was not only interested in trying to develop a better fit between bombing operations in the North and ground operations in the South, but that he was also clearing the way for getting Hanoi to change its position on negotiations. He noted that to optimize the chances of a favorable Hanoi reaction to an American restriction of the bombing the scenario should be:

...to inform the Soviets quietly (on May 15) that within a few (5) days the policy would be implemented, stating no time limits and making no promise not to return to the Red River basin to attack targets which later acquired military importance, and then...to make an unhuckstered shift as predicted on May 20. We would expect Moscow to pass the May 15 information on to Hanoi, perhaps (but probably not) urging Hanoi to seize the opportunity to de-escalate the war by talks or otherwise. Hanoi, not having been asked a question by us and having no ultimatum-like time limit, might be in a better posture to react favorably than has been the case in the past. Nevertheless, no favorable response from Hanoi should be expected, and the change in policy is not based on any such expectation. 33/

This policy, he recommended, should then publicly be handled by explaining (1) that, as always, we had said the war must be won in the south; (2) that we had never believed that the bombing of the war would produce a settlement by breaking Hanoi's will or by shutting off the flow of supplies; (3) that the north must pay the price for its infiltration; and (4) that since the major military targets in the north had been destroyed we were now concentrating on the narrow neck through which supplies must flow, sincerely believing that concentrated effort there as compared with dispersed effort throughout NVN would increase

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

the efficiency of our interdiction effort; and that (5) we retained the option to return further north and restrike those targets if military considerations so required. 34/

A White House memorandum, prepared by Walt Rostow, on the same subject, essentially repeated what McNaughton had said. To Rostow the policy issues and contention were first revolving around choices involving the North and these, in turn, broke out to either: (a) closing the top of the funnel - under this strategy he meant that we could mine the major harbors and perhaps bomb port facilities and even consider a blockade; in addition, attacks would be made systematically against the rail lines between Hanoi and mainland China. He exhibited little confidence that this would have a very important effect upon the North Vietnamese war effort especially in light of the tremendous costs which he anticipated, especially the political costs vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. He concluded for this expanded course of action that tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and Communist China would surely increase but that if we were very determined we could impose additional burdens on Hanoi and its allies, that we might cut their capacity below requirements, but that the outcome was uncertain; (b) attacking what was inside the funnel. This was essentially what the Air Force and Navy had been trying in the Hanoi/Haiphong area for some weeks. Rostow disagreed with the contention that the attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong area had no bearing on the war in the south, a significant difference from what McNaughton believed. In Rostow's estimation the North Vietnamese had diverted massive amounts of resources, energies and attention throughout the civil and military establishment of North Vietnam. This gross dislocation, in turn, imposed general economic, political and psychological difficulties on the north during a period already complicated by a bad harvest and some food shortages. He did not accept the CIA assessment that the bombings in the North in fact hardened the will of the people, and in his judgment, up to that point our bombing had been a painful additional cost that they had been willing to bear to pursue their efforts in the south. Although he acknowledged that there were uncertainties about the eventual political costs of expanded or continued bombing in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, he played down what was becoming an increasingly attractive line of argument -- that the continuation of attacks at about the level that we had been conducting in Hanoi-Haiphong area would lead to increased Soviet pressure on Berlin or even some kind of general war with the Soviet Union. In fact, in Rostow's words, "What the Soviets have been trying to signal is - keep away from our ships, we may counter escalate to some degree; but we do not want a nuclear confrontation over Vietnam." 35/

The next alternative (c) that Rostow discussed was the one which McNaughton had recommended -- that of concentrating our bombing efforts in Route Packages 1 and 2. The advantages of these he saw would plainly

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

cut our loss rate in pilots and planes, that we might somewhat improve our harassment of infiltration into South Vietnam, and that we would diminish the risk of counter-escalatory action by the Soviet Union and Communist China, as compared with the first two courses he had listed. He did not recommend that we pursue Course A since the returns "did not on present evidence seem high enough to justify the risk of Soviet-Chinese countermeasures and heightened world tensions." 36/ In this, he felt that he was supported by the conclusions of the majority of the intelligence community. With respect to the second option which he had outlined, he felt:

...I believe we have achieved greater results in increasing the pressure on Hanoi and raising the cost of their continuing to conduct the aggression in the South than some of my most respected colleagues would agree. I do not believe we should lightly abandon what we have accomplished; and specifically, I believe we should mount the most economical and careful attack on the Hanoi power station our air tacticians can devise. Moreover, I believe we should keep open the option of coming back to the Hanoi-Haiphong area, depending upon what we learn of their repair operations; and what Moscow's and Peiping's reactions are; and especially when we understand better what effects we have and have not achieved thus far.

I believe the Soviet Union may well have taken certain counter-steps addressed to the more effective protection of the Hanoi-Haiphong area and may have decided -- or could shortly decide -- to introduce into North Viet Nam some surface-to-surface missiles. 37/

Rostow favored the third option ((c) - bombing below the 20°) because, in his words, he felt that we were "wasting a good many pilots in the Hanoi-Haiphong area without commensurate results and that the major objectives of maintaining the B option, or the restrikes back into the Hanoi-Haiphong could be achieved at a lower cost." 38/

He, too, addressed the problem of presenting this to the American public, noting that "we shall have to devise a way of presenting our total policy in Vietnam in a manner which is consistent with diminished attacks in the Hanoi-Haiphong area; which is honest; and which is acceptable to our own people. Surfacing the concept of the barrier may be critical to that turnaround as will be other measures to righten infiltration and improve RVNAF pacification and that provision of additional allied forces to permit Westy to get on with our limited but real role in pacification, notably with the defense of I Corps in the North and the hounding of provincial main force units." 39/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

These three memos reflect the basic trend of thought reference the bombing campaigns in the north as they developed in early May. Later in May, as we shall see, the Joint Chiefs of Staff came in with their proposals to "shoulder out" foreign shipping and mining in the harbors in the north and for more intensive interdiction both north of and below the 20th parallel against North Vietnam. This basic dispute led to the preparation of a draft Presidential memorandum at the end of May devoted to an analysis of the bombing and which provided policy recommendations on it for the President. 40/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with Mr. Philip Odeen, SEA Programs, OASD(SA), on 27-28 August 1968.
2. Draft, "Additional MACV Force Requirements," dtd 23 March 1967, with attached note for Secretary McNamara.
3. Draft memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "SEA Force Requirements," VK Heyman, dtd 28 April 1967.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Draft memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "SEA Force Requirements," Alain Enthoven, 28 April 1967.
12. Memorandum from Alain Enthoven, ASD(SA) for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "Force Levels and Enemy Attrition" dtd 4 May 1967.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. OASD(SA) Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, "Increase of Southeast Asia Forces," dtd 1 May 1967.
16. "COMUSMACV's Minimum Force Requirement -- An Analysis," undated, but attached to 1 May 1967 Memorandum to SecDef.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. This account was provided by Mr. Philip Odeen of Systems Analysis in an interview on 20 July 1968.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

20. SNIE 11-11-67, Subject: Soviet Attitudes and Intentions Toward the Vietnam War, dated 4 May 1967.
21. "South Vietnamese Troop Deployments in Relation to Population," Attachment 5, dated 4 May 1967. This attachment was prepared to be included in the 19 May DPM. However, it was removed from the paper and never forwarded along with the finished DPM.
22. Ibid.; See Memorandum for the President from W. W. Rostow, Subject: "Vietnam Force Level Sharing," dated 10 May 1967. One of the problems which periodically reappeared and was discussed reference asking for greatly increased contributions of allied troops was what the command relationship should be in Vietnam. One of the proposals consistently forwarded was that of developing a "NATO-style" combined U.S. Republic of Vietnamese armed forces Free World Military Armed Forces Command under General Westmoreland. The judgment of all senior people in Saigon had been that the possible military advantages of such action would be outweighed by its adverse psychological impact; that it would cut across the picture of the Vietnamese winning their own war, and lay the United States open to hostile propaganda both within South Vietnam and around the world. This idea of a unified command although surfacing periodically as we have noted was never given serious consideration until much later when the United States at least floated the idea in an attempt to develop entrées to the eventual disengagement. (Memorandum, Subject: Position on U.S./Other Than Vietnamese Armed Forces Free World Military Armed Force Command Relationships, dated 19 May 1967 (in McNaughton papers).
23. NSAM 362, May 9, 1967, Subject: "Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development).
24. Richard C. Holbrooke, Task Force Paper IV.C.11, "Reemphasis on Pacification," see pages 130-137.
25. Memorandum for the SecDef, Subject: Combat Service Support Staffing in South Vietnam, dated 23 May 1967.
26. Memo for SecDef, Subject: Combat Service Support Staffing in South Vietnam, dated 23 May 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

27. Memorandum for the Chairman, JCS, Subject: Combat Service Support Staffing in SVN, dated 23 May 1967, H-87175. An interesting and revealing incident occurred when Mr. Heyman visited the 1st Log Command. During the standard briefing, the Commanding General noted that he had "just about the right number of men to do the job now in South Vietnam." This prompted Heyman when he walked down the hallway to the Personnel Section of the 1st Log Command to inquire how many troops they actually had assigned. He was told 58,000. Upon his return he analyzed Program 4 to see that 70,000 had been approved for the program. This convinced him to recommend to McNamara that a hard look be taken at the 1st Log Command since it appeared in the view of the Commanding General that they were doing just fine with some 12,000 troops less than they had asked and had approved in Program 4. (Memorandum, Subject: SEA Trip Report, Victor K. Heyman, Director, SEA Programs Division, dated 11 May 1967.)
28. "Additional MACV Requirements and Estimated Capabilities," December 31, 1968, Prepared by OASD(SA), dated 5 May 1967.
29. Memorandum for the SecDef, from the Secretary of the Army, Subject: Army Capability to Deploy Additional Forces to Vietnam without Mobilization, dated 12 May 1967.
30. Memorandum for SecDef, Subject: Additional Requirement Capability, Alain Enthoven, 18 May 1967. Also see: Memo for the SecDef, from SA, Stanley R. Resor, Subject: Army Capability to Deploy Additional Forces to Vietnam without Mobilization, dated 12 May 1967; and Memo for the SecDef, Subject: MACV/CINCPAC FY 1968.
31. Ibid.
32. Draft Presidential Memorandum, John McNaughton, Subject: Proposed Bombing Program Against North Vietnam dated 5 May 1967.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Memorandum for Vance, et. al., from W. W. Rostow, Subject: U.S. Strategy in Vietnam, dated 6 May 1967.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

39. Ibid. As the third leg of this intensive inter-agency review of our bombing strategy, Wm. Bundy of State prepared an analysis very similar to that presented by Rostow. He too believed that our options were essentially those of concentrating on the supply routes in Route Packages 1 and 2, restrikes north of the 20th parallel, possible selective additional strikes on sensitive targets in the North, and finally, a major expansion to extremely sensitive targets north of the 20th parallel. His examination of the options concluded that the final option, that is, of not hitting additional sensitive targets, increasing our reaction in our effort in Route Packages 1 and 2 were both preferable to the political consequences of an expansion of the bombing north of the 20th parallel. In this, he was generally in agreement with McNaughton. He believed that basically overall progress in the south was the key element in changing Hanoi's attitude and that any bombing program below the major expansion option or any cessation of bombing without certain reciprocity would be totally negative in its effect on Hanoi. He relegated the bombing program itself to basically a supplementary role in affecting Hanoi's attitude. See memorandum from W. P. Bundy, Subject: Bombing Strategy Options for the Rest of 1967, dated 8 May 1967 (McNaughton papers).
40. See JCSM 286-67, Subject: Operations Against North Vietnam, dated 20 May 1967; and JCSM 312-67, Subject: Air Operations Against North Vietnam dated 2 June 1967.

E. DECISION

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

E. DECISION

1. The McNaughton Draft Presidential Memorandum

On 19 May, the memorandum on which McNaughton had been working was floated. It was a comprehensive document drawing upon the arguments developed in the Office of Systems Analysis as well as recent CIA studies and views both from the State Department and the White House on the bombing. The preamble to the basic document noted that it was written at a time when there appeared to be no attractive course of action. McNaughton stated that he believed that Hanoi had decided not to negotiate until the American electorate had been heard from in November of 1968. His appraisal of the current situation dwelled on the unpopular nature of the Vietnam war in the country. In his eyes it was becoming:

....increasingly unpopular as it escalates -- causing more American casualties, more fear of its growing into a wider war, more privation of the domestic sector, and more distress at the amount of suffering being visited on the non-combatants in Vietnam, South and North. Most Americans do not know how we got where we are, and most, without knowing why, but taking advantage of hindsight, are convinced that somehow we should not have gotten this deeply in. All want the war ended and expect their President to end it. Successfully, or else.

This state of mind in the US generates impatience in the political structure of the United States. It unfortunately also generates patience in Hanoi. (It is commonly supposed that Hanoi will not give anything away pending the trial of the US elections in November 1968.) 1/

There is sufficient evidence that McNaughton's feelings about the war, and especially the increasing opposition to force increases in South Vietnam, ran much deeper than even the cogent arguments he had been making in the draft memorandum. In a memo for the Secretary of Defense written on 6 May after McNaughton had examined an earlier 5 May "Rough Draft," he described his apprehensions about the ground force strategy which he described as a "trap which had ensnared us," and which if unchecked might lead us to almost an irreversible ground force escalation for the next undetermined number of years. He wrote:

I am afraid there is the fatal flaw in the strategy in the draft. It is that the strategy falls into the trap

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

that has ensnared us for the past three years. It actually gives the troops while only praying for their proper use and for constructive diplomatic action. Limiting the present decision to an 80,000 add-on does the very important business of postponing the issue of a Reserve call-up (and all of its horrible baggage), but postpone it is all that it does -- probably to a worse time, 1968. Providing the 80,000 troops is tantamount to acceding to the whole Westmoreland-Sharp request. This being the case, they will "accept" the 80,000. But six months from now, in will come messages like the "470,000-570,000" messages, saying that the requirement remains at 201,000 (or more). Since no pressure will have been put on anyone, the military war will have gone on as before and no diplomatic progress will have been made. It follows that the "philosophy" of the war should be fought out now so everyone will not be proceeding on their own major premises, and getting us in deeper and deeper; at the very least, the President should give General Westmoreland his limit (as President Truman did to General MacArthur). That is, if General Westmoreland is to get 550,000 men, he should be told "that will be all, and we mean it."

McNaughton was also very deeply concerned about the breadth and the intensity of public unrest and dissatisfaction with the war. To him the draft paper underplayed a bit the unpopularity of the conflict especially with young people, the underprivileged, the intelligentsia, and the women. He examined those lining up on both sides of an increasingly polarized public and he did not especially like what he saw:

A feeling is widely and strongly held that "the Establishment" is out of its mind. The feeling is that we are trying to impose some US image on distant peoples we cannot understand (anymore than we can the younger generation here at home), and that we are carrying the thing to absurd lengths. Related to this feeling is the increased polarization that is taking place in the United States with seeds of the worst split in our people in more than a century. The King, Galbraith, etc., positions illustrate one near-pole; the Hebert and Rivers statements on May 5 about the need to disregard the First Amendment illustrates the other. In this connection, I fear that "natural selection" in this environment will lead the Administration itself to become more and more homogenized -- Mac Bundy, George Ball, Bill Moyers are gone.. Who next?

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Finally, he quarrelled with the way in which the paper had dealt with the definition of "success." He felt that this definition was the major problem, that the draft had not properly grappled with the redefinition, since "winning" was what the strategy pursued by COMUSMACV tried to do. He suggested that as a matter of tactics maybe the President should figure it out himself, a point which tied in closely with an earlier one of his about getting the "philosophy of the war" straightened out and thereby avoiding another diplomatic default and military misuse of forces. 4/

McNaughton's review of the situation in South and North Vietnam stressed that the big war in the south between the United States and the North Vietnamese units seemed to be going well but that regrettably the "other war" against the VC was not going so well. In his words:

The "big war" in the South between the US and the North Vietnamese military units (NVA) is going well. We staved off military defeat in 1965; we gained the military initiative in 1966; and since then we have been hurting the enemy badly, spoiling some of his ability to strike. "In the final analysis," General Westmoreland said, "we are fighting a war of attrition." In that connection, the enemy has been losing between 1500 and 2000 killed-in-action a week, while we and the South Vietnamese have been losing 175 and 250 respectively. The VC/NVA 287,000-man order of battle is leveling off, and General Westmoreland believes that, as of March, we "reached the cross-over point" -- we began attriting more men than Hanoi can recruit or infiltrate each month. The concentration of NVA forces across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the enemy use of long-range artillery are matters of concern. There are now four NVA divisions in the DMZ area. The men infiltrate directly across the western part of the DMZ to nibble at our forces, seeking to inflict heavy casualties, perhaps to stage a "spectacular" (perhaps against Quang Tri City or Hue), and/or to try a major thrust into the Western Highlands. They are forcing us to transfer some forces from elsewhere in Vietnam to the I Corps area.

Throughout South Vietnam, supplies continue to flow in ample quantities, with Cambodia becoming more and more important as a supply base -- now of food and medicines, perhaps ammunition later. The enemy retains the ability to initiate both large- and small-scale attacks. Small-scale attacks in the first quarter of 1967 are running at double the 1966 average; larger-scale attacks are again on the increase after falling off substantially in 1966. Acts of terrorism and harassment have continued at about the same rate.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The over-all troop strengths of friendly and VC/NVA forces by Corps Area are shown in Attachments I and II.

All things considered, there is consensus that we are no longer in danger of losing this war militarily.

Regrettably, the "other war" against the VC is still not going well. Corruption is widespread. Real government control is confined to enclaves. There is rot in the fabric. Our efforts to enliven the moribund political infrastructure have been matched by VC efforts -- more now through coercion than was formerly the case. So the VC are hurting badly too. In the Delta, because of the redeployment of some VC/NVA troops to the area north of Saigon, the VC have lost their momentum and appear to be conducting essentially a holding operation. On the government side there, the tempo of operations has been correspondingly low. The population remains apathetic, and many local government officials seem to have working arrangements with the VC which they are reluctant to disturb.

The National Liberation Front (NLF) continues to control large parts of South Vietnam, and there is little evidence that the revolutionary development program is gaining any momentum. The Army of South Vietnam (ARVN) is tired, passive and accommodation-prone, and is moving too slowly if at all into pacification work.

The enemy no doubt continues to believe that we will not be able to translate our military success in the "big war" into the desired "end products" -- namely, broken enemy morale and political achievements by the Government of Vietnam (GVN). At the same time, the VC must be concerned about decline in morale among their ranks. Defections, which averaged 400 per week last year, have, until a slump near the end of April, been running at more than 1000 a week; very few defectors, however, are important people.

The transition to a government in Saigon responsive to the South Vietnamese people is moving as well as can be expected. A Constituent Assembly was elected last fall. A constitution has been adopted. Local elections, involving more than 50 per cent of the rural population and a 77-80 per cent turnout, have taken place despite the shadow cast by VC assassinations and kidnappings. The Buddhists have launched a new "peace" campaign with an immolation, but

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

their political power is less than it was before their defeat in 1966. National elections are scheduled for September 1. No one, unfortunately, has shown any charismatic appeal. Ky and Thieu have promised not to split over the presidency, but there is obviously a serious struggle going on between them (Ky has announced his candidacy, and Thieu, the weaker of the two, has hinted that he may throw his weight behind a civilian). So there is hope that there will be an orderly transition to stable constitutional rule.

Little has been done to remedy the economic and social ills of the corruption from which VC popular support stems. Partly because of this inaction -- where reform action would destroy the working consensus -- the political situation at the top remains relatively stable.

The port is operating much better. Inflation appears to be under control. But the flow of rice into Saigon from the Delta, as good an indicator as any of the state of affairs, continues to decrease: The flow is 75 per cent of the 1966, and half of the 1965, rates; national exports of rice ceased in 1964, and imports continue to climb.

C. North Vietnam

Hanoi's attitude towards negotiations has never been soft nor open-minded. Any concession on their part would involve an enormous loss of face. Whether or not the Polish and Burchett-Kosygin initiatives had much substance to them, it is clear that Hanoi's attitude currently is hard and rigid. They seem uninterested in a political settlement and determined to match US military expansion of the conflict. This change probably reflects these factors: (1) increased assurances of help from the Soviets received during Pham Van Dong's April trip to Moscow; (2) arrangements providing for the unhindered passage of materiel from the Soviet Union through China; and (3) a decision to wait for the results of the US elections in 1968. Hanoi appears to have concluded that she cannot secure her objectives at the conference table and has reaffirmed her strategy of seeking to erode our ability to remain in the South. The Hanoi leadership has apparently decided that it has no choice but to submit to the increased bombing. There continues to be no sign that the bombing has reduced Hanoi's will to resist or her ability to ship the necessary supplies south. Hanoi shows no signs of ending the large war and advising the VC to melt into the

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

jungles. The North Vietnamese believe they are right; they consider the Ky regime to be puppets; they believe the world is with them and that the American public will not have staying power against them. Thus, although they may have factions in the regime favoring different approaches, they believe that, in the long run, they are stronger than we are for the purpose. They probably do not want to make significant concessions, and could not do so without serious loss of face. 5/

He then analyzed two alternative military courses of action which he labeled "A" and "B". In Course A the full troop requirement request from COMUSMACV was to be honored, and subsequent military actions intensified not only in the south, but especially in the north. This program consisted of an addition of the minimum of 200,000 men; 100,000 in the 2-1/3 division "minimum essential" force in FY 68 and another 100,000 in FY 69, with possibly more later to fulfill the JCS ultimate requirement for Vietnam and associated worldwide contingencies. Course B proposed limiting the force increases to no more than 30,000 thereby stabilizing the ground conflict within the borders of South Vietnam and concomitantly concentrating the bombing on the infiltration routes south of the 20th parallel. He analyzed the two courses of action in the following terms.

COURSE A would be chosen with a view to bringing additional military pressure to bear on the enemy in the South while continuing to carry out our present missions not directly related to combating enemy main-force units. It would involve accepting the risk -- the virtual certainty -- that the action especially the Reserve call-up, would stimulate irresistible pressures in the United States for further escalation against North Vietnam, and for ground actions against "sanctuaries" in Cambodia and Laos.

Rationale

Proponents of the added deployments in the South believe that such deployments will hasten the end of the war. None of them believes that the added forces are needed to avoid defeat; few of them believe that the added forces are required to do the military job in due course; all of the proponents believe that they are needed if that job is to be done faster. The argument is that we avoided military defeat in 1965; that we gained the military initiative in 1966, since then hurting the enemy badly, spoiling much of his ability to strike, and thus diminishing the power he could project over the population; and that even more-vigorous military initiative against his main forces and base areas will hurt him more, spoil his

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

efforts more, and diminish his projected power more than would be the case under presently approved force-deployment levels. This, the argument goes, will more readily create an environment in South Vietnam in which our pacification efforts can take root and thrive; at the same time -- because of our progress in the South and because of the large enemy losses -- it will more rapidly produce a state of mind in Hanoi conducive to ending the war on reasonable terms.

Estimates by the proponents vary as to how long the job will take without, and with, the additional forces. General Westmoreland has said that without the additions the war could go on five years. He has said that with 100,000 more men, the war could go on for three years and that with 200,000 more men it could go on for two. These estimates are after taking account of his view that the introduction of a non-professional force, such as that which would result from fulfilling the requirement by calling Reserves, would cause some degradation of morale, leadership and effectiveness.

Questions to be Answered

Addressing the force additions alone: We should expect no serious objections based on internal South Vietnamese reasons (the 44-billion piastre inflationary impact can probably be handled, and anti-Americanism is not likely to increase significantly); nor are dangerous reactions likely to come from the USSR, East Europe, or from the non-Communist nations of the world. The questions that must be answered are:

--(1) Will the move to call up 200,000 Reserves, to extend enlistments, and to enlarge the uniformed strength by 500,000 (300,000 beyond the Reserves), combined with the increased US larger initiative, polarize opinion to the extent that the "doves" in the US will get out of hand -- massive refusals to serve, or to fight, or to cooperate, or worse?

--(2) Can we achieve the same military effect by making more efficient use of presently approved US manpower (e.g., by removing them from the Delta, by stopping their being used for pacification work in I Corps, by transferring some combat and logistics jobs to Vietnamese or additional third-country personnel)?

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

--(3) Assuming no specific enemy counter-deployments, are the added US forces likely to make a meaningful military difference? (On the one hand, if we are now "past the cross-over point," cannot the military job be done without the added forces? On the other, if the enemy can conduct his terror "from the bushes," can the military job be done even with them?)

--(4) Will the effect of any US additions be neutralized, or stalemated, by specific enemy counter-deployments involving more forces from North Vietnam (and perhaps introduction of more Chinese in North Vietnam and Chinese and other "volunteers" into South Vietnam)?

--(5) Will the factors mentioned in (1) above generate such impatience in the United States that "hawk" pressures will be irresistible to expand the land war into Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam and to take stronger air and naval actions against North Vietnam, with consequent risks of a much larger war involving China and Russia and of even more dove-hawk polarization at home and abroad?

The answer to Question 1 (regarding "dove" reaction), we believe, is a qualified no. Barring escalation of the "external" war discussed under Question 5, we believe that increased forces will not lead to massive civil disobedience. However, a request for Congressional authority to call Reserves would lead to divisive debate.

Question 2 (relating to more efficient use of US forces) is an important one, but its answer, even if most favorable, is not likely to free-up enough personnel to satisfy a 200,000-man request. It is true that one of the additional divisions could be eliminated if the US Army eschewed the Delta, and certain of the other ground-force requirements could be eliminated if the US Marines ceased grass-roots pacification activities. Additional fractions might be trimmed if the ARVN (whose uninspired performance is exasperating) were jacked up, if the Koreans provided more combat or usable logistics personnel, or if other third-country forces were forthcoming. Efforts along this line should be made, but the items that prove out will not go nearly as far as the 200,000 request.

Questions 3 and 4 (relating to the value of additional US forces and possible enemy action to offset them) are very difficult ones and can be treated together. In December 1965,

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

when the US had 175,000 men in Vietnam, I reported that "the odds are even that, even with the recommended deployments, we will be faced in early 1967 with a military standoff at a much higher level..." In October 1966, when our deployments had reached 325,000, I pointed out that that was substantially the case and that "I see no reasonable way to bring the war to an end soon." That remains true today. With respect to Question 3, this is because the enemy has us "stalemated" and has the capability to tailor his actions to his supplies and manpower and, by hit-and-run terror, to make government and pacification very difficult in large parts of the country almost without regard to the size of US forces there; and, with respect to Question 4, because the enemy can and almost certainly will maintain the military "stalemate" by matching our added deployments as necessary. (General Westmoreland has made the point that "this war is action and counteraction; any time we take an action, we can expect a reaction." He added, "It is likely the enemy will react by adding troops.") In any event, there is no suggestion that the added deployments will end the war in less than two years and no assurance that they will end it in three, or five, years.

Question 5 (regarding irresistible pressures to expand the war) is the toughest one.

The addition of the 200,000 men, involving as it does a call-up of Reserves and an addition of 500,000 to the military strength, would, as mentioned above, almost certainly set off bitter Congressional debate and irresistible domestic pressures for stronger action outside South Vietnam. Cries would go up -- much louder than they already have -- to "take the wraps off the men in the field." The actions would include more intense bombing -- not only around-the-clock bombing of targets already authorized, but also bombing of strategic targets such as locks and dikes, and mining of the harbors against Soviet and other ships. Associated actions impelled by the situation would be major ground actions in Laos, Cambodia, and probably in North Vietnam -- first as a pincer operation north of the DMZ and then at a point such as Vinh. The use of tactical nuclear and area-denial radiological-bacteriological-chemical weapons would probably be suggested at some point if the Chinese entered the war in Vietnam or Korea or if US losses were running high while conventional efforts were not producing desired results.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Bombing Purposes and Payoffs

Our bombing of North Vietnam was designed to serve three purposes:

- (1) To retaliate and to lift the morale of the people in the South who were being attacked by agents of the North.
- (2) To add to the pressure on Hanoi to end the war.
- (3) To reduce the flow and/or to increase the cost of infiltrating men and materiel from North to South.

We cannot ignore that a limitation on bombing will cause serious psychological problems among the men, officers and commanders, who will not be able to understand why we should withhold punishment from the enemy. General Westmoreland said that he is "frankly dismayed at even the thought of stopping the bombing program." But this reason for attacking North Vietnam must be scrutinized carefully. We should not bomb for punitive reasons if it serves no other purpose -- especially if analysis shows that the actions may be counterproductive. It costs American lives; it creates a backfire of revulsion and opposition by killing civilians; it creates serious risks; it may harden the enemy.

With respect to added pressure on the North, it is becoming apparent that Hanoi may already have "written off" all assets and lives that might be destroyed by US military actions short of occupation or annihilation. They can and will hold out at least so long as a prospect of winning the "war of attrition" in the South exists. And our best judgment is that a Hanoi prerequisite to negotiations is significant retrenchment (if not complete stoppage) of US military actions against them -- at the least, a cessation of bombing. In this connection, Consul-General Rice (Hong Kong 7581, 5/1/67) said that, in his opinion, we cannot by bombing reach the critical level of pain in North Vietnam and that, "below that level, pain only increases the will to fight." Sir Robert Thompson said to Mr. Vance on April 28 that our bombing, particularly in the Red River Delta, "is unifying North Vietnam."

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

With respect to interdiction of men and materiel, it now appears that no combination of actions against the North short of destruction of the regime or occupation of North Vietnamese territory will physically reduce the flow of men and materiel below the relatively small amount needed by enemy forces to continue the war in the South. Our effort can and does have severe disruptive effects, which Hanoi can and does compensate for by the reallocation of manpower and other resources; and our effort can and does have sporadic retarding effects, which Hanoi can and does plan on and pre-stock against. Our efforts physically to cut the flow meaningfully by actions in North Vietnam therefore largely fail and, in failing, transmute attempted interdiction into pain, or pressure on the North (the factor discussed in the paragraph next above). The lowest "ceiling on infiltration can probably be achieved by concentration on the North Vietnamese "funnel" south of 20° and on the Trail in Laos.

But what if the above analyses are wrong? Why not escalate the bombing and mine the harbors (and perhaps occupy southern North Vietnam) -- on the gamble that it would constrict the flow, meaningfully limiting enemy action in the South, and that it would bend Hanoi? The answer is that the costs and risks of the actions must be considered.

The primary costs of course are US lives: The air campaign against heavily defended areas costs us one pilot in every 40 sorties. In addition, an important but hard-to-measure cost is domestic and world opinion: There may be a limit beyond which many Americans and much of the world will not permit the United States to go. The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or seriously injuring 1000 non-combatants a week, while trying to pound a tiny backward nation into submission on an issue whose merits are hotly disputed, is not a pretty one. It could conceivably produce a costly distortion in the American national consciousness and in the world image of the United States -- especially if the damage to North Vietnam is complete enough to be "successful."

The most important risk, however, is the likely Soviet, Chinese and North Vietnamese reaction to intensified US air attacks, harbor-mining, and ground actions against North Vietnam.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Likely Communist Reactions

At the present time, no actions -- except air strikes and artillery fire necessary to quiet hostile batteries across the border -- are allowed against Cambodian territory. In Laos, we average 5000 attack sorties a month against the infiltration routes and base areas, we fire artillery from South Vietnam against targets in Laos, and we will be providing 3-man leaders for each of 20 12-man US-Vietnamese Special Forces teams that operate to a depth of 20 kilometers into Laos. Against North Vietnam, we average 8,000 or more attack sorties a month against all worthwhile fixed and LOC targets; we use artillery against ground targets across the DMZ; we fire from naval vessels at targets ashore and afloat up to 19°, and we mine their inland waterways, estuaries and coastal waters up to 20°.

Intensified air attacks against the same types of targets, we would anticipate, would lead to no great change in the policies and reactions of the Communist powers beyond the furnishing of some new equipment and manpower.* China, for example, has not reacted to our striking MIG fields in North Vietnam, and we do not expect them to, although there are some signs of greater Chinese participation in North Vietnamese air defense.

Mining the harbors would be much more serious. It would place Moscow in a particularly galling dilemma as to how to preserve the Soviet position and prestige in such a

*The U.S. Intelligence Board on May 5 said that Hanoi may press Moscow for additional equipment and that there is a "good chance that under pressure the Soviets would provide such weapons as cruise missiles and tactical rockets" in addition to a limited number of volunteers or crews for aircraft or sophisticated equipment. Moscow, with respect to equipment, might provide better surface-to-air missiles, better anti-aircraft guns, the YAK-28 aircraft, anti-tank missiles and artillery, heavier artillery and mortars, coastal defense missiles with 25-50 mile ranges and 2200-pound warheads, KOMAR guided-missile coastal patrol boats with 20-mile surface-to-surface missiles, and some chemical munitions. She might consider sending medium jet bombers and fighter bombers to pose a threat to all of South Vietnam.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

disadvantageous place. The Soviets might, but probably would not, force a confrontation in Southeast Asia -- where even with minesweepers they would be at as great a military disadvantage as we were when they blocked the corridor to Berlin in 1961, but where their vital interest, unlike ours in Berlin (and in Cuba), is not so clearly at stake. Moscow in this case should be expected to send volunteers, including pilots, to North Vietnam; to provide some new and better weapons and equipment; to consider some action in Korea, Turkey, Iran, the Middle East or, most likely, Berlin, where the Soviets can control the degree of crisis better; and to show across-the-board hostility toward the US (interrupting any on-going conversations on ABMs, non-proliferation, etc). China could be expected to seize upon the harbor-mining as the opportunity to reduce Soviet political influence in Hanoi and to discredit the USSR if the Soviets took no military action to open the ports. Peking might read the harbor-mining as indicating that the US was going to apply military pressure until North Vietnam capitulated, and that this meant an eventual invasion. If so, China might decide to intervene in the war with combat troops and air power, to which we would eventually have to respond by bombing Chinese airfields and perhaps other targets as well. Hanoi would tighten belts, refuse to talk, and persevere -- as it could without too much difficulty. North Vietnam would of course be fully dependent for supplies on China's will, and Soviet influence in Hanoi would therefore be reduced. (Ambassador Sullivan feels very strongly that it would be a serious mistake, by our actions against the port, to tip Hanoi away from Moscow and toward Peking.)

To US ground actions in North Vietnam, we would expect China to respond by entering the war with both ground and air forces. The Soviet Union could be expected in these circumstances to take all actions listed above under the lesser provocations and to generate a serious confrontation with the United States at one or more places of her own choosing.

Ground actions in Laos are similarly unwise. LeDuan, Hanoi's third- or fourth-ranking leader, has stated the truth when he said "the occupation of the Western Highlands is a tough job but the attack on central and lower Laos is a still tougher one. If a small force is used, the problem remains insoluble. The US may face a series of difficulties

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

in the military, political and logistic fields if a larger force goes into operation. In effect, an attack on central and lower Laos would mean the opening of another front nearer to North Vietnam, and then the US troops would have to clash with the North Vietnamese main force." In essence, a brigade will beget a division and a division a corps, each calling down matching forces from North Vietnam into territory to their liking and suggesting to Hanoi that they take action in Northern Laos to suck us further in. We would simply have a wider war, with Souvanna back in Paris, world opinion against us, and no solution either to the wider war or to the one we already have in Vietnam.

Those are the likely costs and risks of COURSE A. They are, we believe, both unacceptable and unnecessary. Ground action in North Vietnam, because of its escalatory potential, is clearly unwise despite the open invitation and temptation posed by enemy troops operating freely back and forth across the DMZ. Yet we believe that, short of threatening and perhaps toppling the Hanoi regime itself, pressure against the North will, if anything, harden Hanoi's unwillingness to talk and her settlement terms if she does. China, we believe, will oppose settlement throughout. We believe that there is a chance that the Soviets, at the brink, will exert efforts to bring about peace; but we believe also that intensified bombing and harbor-mining, even if coupled with political pressure from Moscow, will neither bring Hanoi to negotiate nor affect North Vietnam's terms.

B. Analysis of Course B

As of March 18, 1967, the approved US Force Structure (Program 4) for Southeast Asia provided for 87 maneuver battalions, 42 air squadrons, and a total strength of 468,000 men. Based on current forecasts of enemy strength, under COURSE B it should not be necessary to approve now for deployment more than 9 of the 24 available maneuver battalions and none of the air squadrons -- a total of approximately 30,000 men including appropriate land and sea support forces (see Attachment III).

This approach would be based, first, on General Westmoreland's statement that "without his requested

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

forces, we will not be in danger of being defeated,... but progress will be slowed down," and General Wheeler's support of that view. General Wheeler added, "We won't lose the war, but it will be a longer one." It would be based, second, on the fact that no one argues that the added forces will probably cause the war to end in less than two years. COURSE B implies a conviction that neither military defeat nor military victory is in the cards, with or without the large added deployments, and that the price of the large added deployments and the strategy of COURSE A will be to expand the war dangerously. COURSE B is designed to improve the negotiating environment within a limited deployment of US forces by combining continuous attacks against VC/NVA main force units with slow improvements in pacification (which may follow the new constitution, the national reconciliation proclamation, our added efforts and the Vietnamese elections this fall) and a restrained program of actions against the North.

This alternative would give General Westmoreland 96 maneuver battalions -- an 85 per cent increase in combat force over the 52 battalions that he had in Vietnam in June of last year, and 22 per cent more than the 79 we had there at the beginning of this year. According to this report, we have already passed the "cross-over point," where the enemy's losses exceed his additions; we will soon have in Vietnam 200,000 more US troops than there are in enemy main force units. We should therefore, without added deployments, be able to maintain the military initiative, especially if US troops in less-essential missions (such as in the Delta and in pacification

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

duty)* are considered strategic reserves.

The strategy of proponents of COURSE B is based on their belief that we are in a military situation that cannot be changed materially by expanding our military effort, that the politico-pacification situation in South Vietnam will improve but not fast, and that (in view of all this) Hanoi will not capitulate soon. An aspect of the strategy is a "cool" drive to settle the war -- a deliberate process on three fronts: Large unit, politico-pacification, and diplomatic. Its approach on the large-unit front is to maintain the

*General Wheeler has explained where the first 2-1/3 divisions would go: "One on the DMZ to relieve the Marines to work with ARVN on pacification; one east of Saigon to relieve the 9th Division to deploy to the Delta to increase the effectiveness of the three good ARVN divisions now there; the brigade to Quang Ngai to make there the progress in pacification in the next year that we have made in Binh Dinh in the past year." Thus the bulk of the first 100,000 men are for pacification and for the Delta. General Westmoreland said regarding the Delta, "in the Fourth Corps, there is no threat of strategic VC victories and there are three good ARVN divisions there." The question arises whether US combat troops should be devoted to pacification or to the Delta. Are these not matters for the Vietnamese? The Delta may be a test case of the proposed strategy. It is normally stated that "in order to win in Vietnam we must win in the Delta where the people are." This obviously implies that Saigon's writ must run throughout the Delta. But two facts appear: (1) The Delta is a fairly active VC area, in which a moderately high level of Stage II guerrilla warfare tactics are pursued; and (2) the VC effort is primarily indigenous (that is, the North Vietnamese Main Force units play almost no role). If our "success" objective is solely to check or offset North Vietnam's forceful intervention in the South, we are in that position already in the Delta! Must we go further and do the job for the South Vietnamese? What kind of a deal could the contending forces cut in the Delta?

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

initiative that "Program 4-plus" forces will permit, to move on with pacification efforts and with the national election in September, and to lay the groundwork by periodic peace probes, perhaps suggesting secret talks associated with limitation of bombing and with a view to finding a compromise involving, inter alia, a role in the South for members of the VC.

This alternative would not involve US or Vietnamese forces in any numbers in Laos or Cambodia, and definitely not in North Vietnam. Since the US Reserves would still be untapped, they would still be available for use later in Asia, or elsewhere, if it became necessary.

Bombing Program

The bombing program that would be a part of this strategy is, basically, a program of concentration of effort on the infiltration routes near the south of North Vietnam. The major infiltration-related targets in the Red River basin having been destroyed, such interdiction is now best served by concentration of all effort in the southern neck of North Vietnam. All of the sorties would be flown in the area between 17° and 20°. This shift, despite possible increases in anti-aircraft capability in the area, should reduce the pilot and aircraft loss rates by more than 50 per cent. The shift will, if anything, be of positive military value to General Westmoreland while taking some steam out of the popular effort in the North.

The above shift of bombing strategy, now that almost all major targets have been struck in the Red River basin, can to military advantage be made at any time. It should not be done for the sole purpose of getting Hanoi to negotiate, although that might be a bonus effect. To maximize the chances of getting that bonus effect, the optimum scenario would probably be (1) to inform the Soviets quietly that within a few days the shift would take place, setting no time limits but making no promises not to return to the Red River basin to attack targets which later acquire military importance (any deal with Hanoi is likely to be midwived by Moscow); (2) to make the shift as predicted, without fanfare; and (3) to explain publicly, when the shift had become obvious,

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

that the northern targets had been destroyed, that that had been militarily important, and that there would be no need to return to the northern areas unless military necessity dictated it. The shift should not be huckstered. Moscow would almost certainly pass its information on to Hanoi, and might urge Hanoi to seize the opportunity to de-escalate the war by talks or otherwise. Hanoi, not having been asked a question by us and having no ultimatum-like time limit, would be in a better posture to answer favorably than has been the case in the past. The military side of the shift is sound, however, whether or not the diplomatic spill-over is successful. 6/

McNaughton concluded his case against force level increases by proposing a time-phased "suggested strategy":

(1) Now: Not to panic because of a belief that Hanoi must be made to capitulate before the 1968 elections. No one's proposal achieves that end.

(2) Now: Press on energetically with the military, pacification and political programs in the South, including groundwork for successful elections in September. Drive hard to increase the productivity of Vietnamese military forces.

(3) Now: Issue a NSAM nailing down US policy as described herein. Thereafter, publicly, (a) emphasize consistently that the sole US objective in Vietnam has been and is to permit the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future, and (b) declare that we have already either denied or offset the North Vietnamese intervention and that after the September elections in Vietnam we will have achieved success. The necessary steps having been taken to deny the North the ability to take over South Vietnam and an elected government sitting in Saigon, the South will be in position, albeit imperfect, to start the business of producing a full-spectrum government in South Vietnam.

(4) June: Concentrate the bombing of North Vietnam on physical interdiction of men and materiel. This would mean terminating, except where the interdiction objective clearly dictates otherwise, all bombing north of 20° and improving interdiction as much as possible in the infiltration "funnel" south of 20° by concentration of sorties

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

and by an all-out effort to improve detection devices, denial weapons, and interdiction tactics.

(5) July: Avoid the explosive Congressional debate and US Reserve call-up implicit in the Westmoreland troop request. Decide that, unless the military situation worsens dramatically, US deployments will be limited to Program 4-plus (which, according to General Westmoreland, will not put us in danger of being defeated, but will mean slow progress in the South). Associated with this decision are decisions not to use large numbers of US troops in the Delta and not to use large numbers of them in grass-roots pacification work.

(6) September: Move the newly elected Saigon government well beyond its National Reconciliation program to seek a political settlement with the non-Communist members of the NLF -- to explore a ceasefire and to reach an accommodation with the non-Communist South Vietnamese who are under the VC banner; to accept them as members of an opposition political party, and, if necessary, to accept their individual participation in the national government -- in sum, a settlement to transform the members of the VC from military opponents to political opponents.

(7) October: Explain the situation to the Canadians, Indians, British, UN and others, as well as nations now contributing forces, requesting them to contribute border forces to help make the inside-South Vietnam accommodation possible, and -- consistent with our desire neither to occupy nor to have bases in Vietnam -- offering to remove later an equivalent number of US forces. (This initiative is worth taking despite its slim chance of success.)*

His closing paragraph repeated his belief that it had to be made clear to political and military leaders alike that the troop limit as imposed by Course B which he recommended was firm and short of an imminent military defeat would not be breached. Westmoreland and the JCS had to be persuaded that the objective was not to attain "victory" but to make progress, albeit slow, without the risks attendant to Course A. He acknowledged that it would not be easy for the President to stick at 550,000 troops in South Vietnam or to limit the bombing program to targets south of the 20th parallel, but that it would be possible, and that in his estimation the benefits of such a course of action far outweighed the political risks which Course A included. 7/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

From the standpoint of ground force strategy, what McNaughton was really, it appears, saying was that we should make a decision to basically set our objectives within a time frame geared to South Vietnamese Army and South Vietnamese government progress, and that in doing so our own troops in approximately the current strengths could be devoted to providing the shield while the government of South Vietnam provided the shelter and performed the vital pacification function. As he noted, associated in the decision was the very conscious determination not to use large numbers of U.S. troops in the delta and not to use large numbers of them in what he called "grass roots pacification work," the two justifications most frequently used to support requests for additional troops. The appraisal, as well as the alternative military courses of action and their analyses contained in this document provided the catalyst for the subsequent and final decisions on Program 5.

2. JCSM 286-67, Persistent Pressure Up the Ladder--"Shouldering Out" the Parts

On 20 May the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted JCSM 286-67, entitled "Operations Against North Vietnam," a paper primarily concerned with the air campaign. It stated that the JCS were seriously concerned at the prospective introduction by the USSR into NVN of new weapons including improved antiaircraft and surface to air missiles, guided missile patrol boats, surface to surface missiles and a variety of artillery and direct fire weapons. They felt that such weapons would further improve the NVN air and coastal defense systems and provide offensive capabilities which would pose additional threats to our forces and installations in SEA. Since the Hanoi-Haiphong areas constituted the principal North Vietnam logistical base through which these arms passed the JCS recommended that this complex be neutralized. This was feasible by direct attack on the areas but such direct attack would entail increased danger of high civilian casualties. Preferable to direct attack the Chiefs recommended that the area be interdicted by cutting the land and sea lines of communications leading into it. However, for such an interdiction campaign to be effective, all the elements of the import system of North Vietnam had to be attacked concurrently on a sustained basis, or, in the Chiefs' estimation, the weight of the attack would be insufficient to reduce imports to a level which would seriously impair the overall North Vietnamese war supporting capability. Accordingly, they recommended first an attack of Haiphong, conducted first by surgically "shouldering out" foreign shipping and then mining the harbor and approaches. This concept of "shouldering out" which was to reappear many times in subsequent JCS communications was to be executed by a series of air attacks commencing on the periphery of the port area and gradually moving to the center of the complex. These attacks were designed to reduce the functional efficiency of the port and could be expected to force the foreign shipping out of the nearby estuaries for off-loading by lighterage. Once the foreign vessels cleared port, according to the JCS calculation the remaining elements of the port could be taken under attack and the harbor mined. While the Haiphong port was being attacked

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

an intensive interdiction campaign would commence against the roads and railroads from China. Concurrently, another series of attacks would be mounted against the eight major operational airfields. ^{8/} These recommendations met with predictably cool response and on ²⁶ July 1967 the Deputy Secretary of Defense, in a memorandum to the Chairman of the JCS, stated that "a final decision on the proposals contained in the memorandum will be rendered in connection with the determination of overall future courses of action in Vietnam which should be completed in the near future." ^{9/}

On the same date, 20 May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted their World-wide Posture Paper. The most significant recommendation in it was a proposal that a selective call-up for the Reserves be made so that the U.S. could more effectively fulfill world-wide commitments. In it the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that the nation must be able to (1) send large U.S. forces to any of the several trouble spots, such as Korea and Berlin; they also noted that we could not respond fast enough with sufficient forces to meet most of these contingencies. They also wrote that we must meet CINCPAC's FY 68 force requests, and to do so would require an addition of 2-1/3 division forces or the now familiar "minimum essential requirements" stated by General Westmoreland in his original 18 March request. The Chiefs also believed that we had to "regain the Southeast Asia initiative and exploit our military advantage." They stated that they believed present air restrictions crippled our war effort and that limitations should be reduced on targets as well as the rules of engagement, and that more forces, primarily air, evidently, should be sent. Moreover, they believed that we should reinforce as fast as possible, to prevent the enemy from adjusting to the increases in pressure, as he had been able to do thus far.

Of seven alternate U.S. force postures they reviewed, the JCS considered only two to be "adequate." The alternative they endorsed provided the following increases to the approved forces: 4-1/3 active army divisions; one navy attack carrier; two carrier air-wings; two battleships; two gun cruisers; as well as 570 UE Air Force tactical fighters, 72 UE Reconnaissance Aircraft and 80 UE C130's. They did not propose any new permanent additions to the United States Marine Corps. In their estimation the proposed force structure would be adequate to meet the FY 68 CINCPAC "minimum essential force requirements" for SEA without changing current rotation policies. It would also provide forces to reinforce NATO as well as respond to other major contingencies including MACV's tentative FY 1969 add-on requirement for 2-1/3 divisions and 90 tactical fighters. (This was, of course, the "optimum" force which the 18 March COMUSMACV request had contained.) The JCS proposed to extend terms of service, and to call up Reserves to provide this capability quicker. The Reserves they proposed to call would be two

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Army and one Marine division forces, plus 15 Naval Reserve destroyers and two Naval construction battalions. In addition, an unspecified number of individual Reservists would be needed along with certain types of Reserve equipment and aircraft. The Reserves would be replaced by permanent units during FY 69-70. The Marine Reserve Division would be deployed to SVN to be replaced after a year by an Army Division, while the Marine Reserve Division would then revert to Reserve status. In the JCS estimate they stated that we could meet the FY 68 CINCPAC requirement by March 1968 if we called Reserves or by September 1969 if we did not. The Chiefs were particularly exercised at the prospect of very slow U.S. build-up over time which would continue to permit the VC/NVA to react. They commented that:

The rate at which US power has been applied has permitted North Vietnamese and Viet Cong reinforcements and force posture improvements to keep pace with the graduated increases in US military actions. It is fundamental to the successful conduct of warfare that every reasonable measure be taken to widen the differential between the capabilities of the opposing forces. Target system limitations, rules of engagement, and force curtailments have combined to militate against widening the gap between the total Free World force capability, including South Vietnam, and the capability of the enemy to generate, deploy, and sustain his forces while improving the defense of his homeland.

a. Successful prosecution of the war in Southeast Asia requires the maintenance of simultaneous pressure against all echelons of the enemy forces. In South Vietnam, this involves extensive ground, air, and naval operations against Viet Cong/North Vietnamese main forces and major base areas, while continuing revolutionary development and aggressive operations against Viet Cong provincial forces and guerrillas. In North Vietnam, the effectiveness of LOC interdiction cannot be greatly improved without significant reduction of the present restrictions on bombing and mining operations. Deep-water ports then can be closed or neutralized, and it will be worthwhile to intensify the interdiction effort against other LOCs in North Vietnam. Concomitantly, remaining high-value, war-supporting resources should be quickly, but methodically, destroyed. Attacks against population centers, per se, would continue to be avoided. (See Appendix B for requested changes in operating authorities and proposed expansion in air and naval operations against North Vietnam.) Limited ground action in North Vietnam might also become necessary to destroy forces threatening the northern provinces. 10/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

As they continued, however, they fed a fear which was becoming predominant in the administration, that increases in forces might tempt COMUSMACV and our SEA commanders to expand operations into Cambodia and Laos, thereby complicating an already sensitive political situation:

b. It may ultimately become necessary to conduct military operations into Cambodia to deny the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces the psychological, military, and logistical advantages of this sanctuary. Should the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese forces increase their use of the Laos Panhandle, it might become necessary to deploy additional forces to Thailand and expand operations further to protect South Vietnam. To counter large-scale CHICOM overt intervention in northern Laos, it would be necessary to establish a strategic defense. Invocation of the SEATO Treaty would be indicated. In the event the CHICOMs attack Thailand, use of nuclear weapons against LOCs and supply bases in southern China might be required. Similarly, should the CHICOMs intervene overtly with major combat forces in Vietnam, it might be necessary to establish a strategic defense in South Vietnam and use tactical nuclear weapons against bases and LOCs in South China. 11/

3. The Vance Options--Re-examination of Increases

On 24 May the JCS submitted to the Secretary of Defense their study entitled, "Alternative Courses of Action for Southeast Asia." This study was in response to a request made on 26 April by Deputy Secretary Vance asking the Joint Chiefs to study in detail the two alternative courses of action, outlined in the State paper prepared earlier by Acting Secretary of State Katzenbach. 12/ Strangely enough, between the time of the 26 April memorandum from Deputy Secretary Vance to the Director of the Joint Staff, Course A was altered, changing in the JCS paper from 200,000 personnel to approximately 250,000, "roughly 125,000 in FY 68 and another 125,000 in FY 69. In the JCS study this was described as the "optimum force outlined in JCSM 218-67 and includes a 4-2/3 division force." Course B as it was outlined in the original Katzenbach memo confined troop increases to "those than can be generated without calling up reserves -- perhaps 9 battalions (10,000) men in the next year." 13/ This figure was altered in the JCS study so that Course B read: "add only forces that can be generated without calling up Reserves. This will amount to approximately 70,000 in FY 68 to include 1-1/3 Army division force equivalents with a limited capability in FY 69." 14/

Course A which would necessitate a Reserve call-up and a 12-month involuntary extension in terms of service effective 1 Jun 67 was estimated to cost \$12.1 billion through FY 69, as compared to \$7.7 billion

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

for Course B. The end strength increases for Course A and B were 602,900 and 276,000 men, respectively. Within South Vietnam the additional combat force in terms of battalion months available to COMUSMACV for operations was markedly greater for A than under Course B. The JCS calculated that Course A would add 111 battalion/months in FY 68 and 373 battalion/months in FY 69 for a total of 484. Course B, on the other hand, could add but 39 in FY 68 and 144 in FY 69 for a grand total of 183. This added combat power in Course A which was recommended for deployment in JCSM 218-67 would, in the JCS estimation, improve chances for "progress in the war to a greater extent than the Course B forces. The primary advantage offered is that of flexibility. COMUSMACV would have forces available with which to maintain his present momentum as well as to expand combat and RD operations throughout the country." 15/

If Course A forces were deployed as they desired the JCS noted they could be used to conduct operations in the DMZ, and into Laos or Cambodia if such operations were desired. Otherwise they could be properly employed in South Vietnam such as in the IV CTZ (the Delta). Course A would, they predicted, contribute to a hastening of the war's conclusion. The smaller Course B force would require the continued in-country deployment of additional forces to I Corps Tactical Zone to meet the "formidable enemy threat in that area." According to the Chiefs, this drawdown of forces from other areas would inhibit the reaction capability of U.S. forces in SVN that even with the increase proposed by Course B the US/FW/RVNAF would not be able to sustain the momentum of present offensive operations. The picture the memo painted of what would happen under the smaller Course B force was bleak:

(1) If the enemy maintains his current strength and force structure trends we cannot expect to attain objectives much beyond present goals, particularly the objective of expanding the areas under GVN control, unless forces are diverted from offensive operations. Thus we are confronted with an undesirable choice of a reduction of continued large-scale offensive operations in order to secure additional areas for expansion of RD activities or slowing the tempo of offensive operations in order to maintain security of areas cleared of the enemy.

(2) Should the enemy successfully exploit a vulnerable point in our military posture we run the risk of having even a modest enemy success publicized as a regression. The present situation, with all forces in South Vietnam fully committed in their respective areas, would not be greatly improved. As a result COMUSMACV cannot influence effectively the course of one operation without disengaging from another. 16/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

On the other hand, if Course A was pursued:

e. The greatly intensified pressures against NVN that could be applied by conducting the air and naval operations described in Annex D are not dependent on Course A or Course B force levels. These military actions can be initiated at any time with existing forces. By increasing pressure on the enemy's warmaking capability, the cumulative effect would complement the effects of added deployments in the south. On the other hand, continued restraint, further restrictions or cessation of the air campaign would provide the enemy with an incentive and allow him the means to sustain and increase his support of aggression in SVN relatively unmolested. 17/

On the bombing, the high military chiefs persisted in their recommendations contained in JCSM 218-67 asking for a more effective air/ naval campaign against North Vietnam, to include striking (closing) principal North Vietnamese ports. The complete recommendations of the study included:

It is concluded that:

a. The force levels of Course A for FY 68 should be deployed as recommended in JCSM-218-67. They are required in FY 68 to meet the threat posed in I CTZ, to continue the pressures on the VC/NVA in SVN, and to sustain the progress of RD. Course B force levels would not fulfill this requirement.

b. Course A force levels would provide the capability to deploy additional forces in FY 69 should such action be indicated.

c. Course A provides more flexibility in providing the forces in the stipulated time frame for the immediate need, a greater capability to accomplish the mission, and a better posture for possible contingencies than does Course B.

d. As recommended in JCSM-218-67, a more effective air/ naval campaign against NVN to include the principal NVN ports should be undertaken now with existing forces.

e. Further restrictions or cessation of air action against NVN would tend to prolong the war and could be costly to friendly forces.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

f. Significant measures to improve the RVNAF are being taken but only limited improvement can be expected within a reasonable time frame.

g. Efforts to obtain additional allied forces should continue; however, US requirements or capability should not be reduced until the commitments are firm.

h. Communist reactions to Courses A and B, and to the increased air and naval campaign would most likely fall short of forcing a confrontation with the Soviets or Chinese Communists but would involve attempted increased material assistance to NVN and increased propaganda against the United States. Free World support for the United States in each case would not differ materially from the present except where the attacks involved Cambodia.

i. US public reaction to Course A probably would be more favorable than to Course B over the long term.

j. A settlement of the conflict in shorter time at less cost should result from initiating Course A, together with a more effective air campaign.

k. Post-settlement conditions in SEAsia are likely to be better under Course A because of the greater level of US forces on the scene. 18/

A lay-out of the analysis of opposing courses of action as included in this document are presented in the following table: 19/

Part II

ANALYSIS OF OPPOSING COURSES OF ACTION

ASSUMPTIONS: For purposes of this portion of the analysis, the following level of military actions outside SVN are assumed: a. Expansion of the use of ARVN LIGHT forces in Laos and Southern NVN; b. Closing principal NVN ports c. Early destruction of remaining high value targets and intensified interdictions of supply movement into NVN by land/sea/air and from NVN to SVN.

FACTOR	COURSE A	COURSE B																				
1. Impact on progress of war.	Provides forces, in FY 68, to control the enemy threat in the vicinity of the DMZ and simultaneously to maintain initiative and momentum in disrupting enemy main force unit operations, defeating enemy provincial forces and guerrilla forces at the margin of Revolutionary Development, and supporting an expanding area of RD effort. Provides in FY 69, forces for continuing momentum in further expanded area of RD, particularly in II and III CTZ, and a two DFE exploitation force to give COMUSMACV flexibility in destroying enemy main force units and major base areas and responding to contingency situations.	Requires in-country re-deployment to meet threat to I CTZ thus inhibiting reaction capability in other areas. With only Course B forces, COMUSMACV may not be able to maintain momentum of present offensive operations and to attain objective of expanding areas under GVN control. Course B will confront COMUSMACV with a choice between continued large scale offensive operations at expense of securing additional areas for expansion of RD or slowing tempo of offensive operations to maintain security of areas cleared of enemy. Runs risk of temporary enemy success against vulnerable point in US/GVN posture or in slowing of progress of war. Present situation wherein all forces in SVN are fully committed to their respective geographic areas denies COMUSMACV the means to influence the course of one operation without disengaging from another.																				
2. Effect on settlement.	While this course of action carries no guarantee of early settlement, psychologically, the nature of the actions taken should convince the enemy of US determination to pursue the war to a successful settlement, and militarily should result in rapid reduction of enemy controlled and organized effort in SVN. Net effect should force enemy to conference table or lead-in to final phase of war in which enemy will be defeated.	This incremental increase in effort in SVN, in conjunction with the increased pressures against NVN, under favorable circumstances, may permit progress towards settlement. It is more likely, however, that the enemy determination will not be undermined and that, by renewed effort, the enemy in the South will continue to be controlled and sustained at a sufficient level to unduly prolong the war.																				
3. Major policy decisions required.	(1) National decision for callup of Reserves and involuntary extension of terms of service. (2) Authorization for access to equipment from: COMUS depot assets and progressed production deliveries; operational project, contingency, and Reserve component stocks; pre-positioned equipment in Europe; and non-deploying units. (3) Authorization for reopening of COMUS inactive installations and expansion of facilities. (4) Timely provision of funds and authorization of end strength increases.	Except for decision in regard to callup of Reserves and extension of terms of service, decisions remain essentially the same but vary in magnitude. However, Course B entails a deliberate decision to pursue the conflict in SEAsia at a level less than that needed to progress steadily toward attainment of US objectives.																				
4. Probable reaction.																						
a. Domestic.	In near term, expected to increase opposition and intensify polarization. In long term, expected to coalesce public opinion behind administrations apparent new determination and resolve to terminate war on acceptable terms, particularly if diplomatic efforts for negotiated settlement continue.	Course B provides little cause for a near term change to domestic reaction to the war in SVN but lack of marked results over the long term could result in further disenchantment with the war in SEAsia and increased pressures for the US to withdraw under less than acceptable terms.																				
b. NVA/Viet Cong.	NVN would defend the targets and seek additional aid. VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam would probably be directed to increase their harassment of the waterways in the South.	Same as Course A.																				
c. USSR/CHICOM.	Increased force levels should cause no significant direct Soviet or CHICOM military reaction. Propaganda, and increased material and technical support to NVN expected. Mining of ports and increased air actions expected provoke Soviet diplomatic reaction and deterioration in US Soviet relations. Introduce new/improved Soviet weapons.	Same as Course A.																				
d. International.	Some adverse reaction generated by callup of reserves and deployment of added forces, tempered in certain quarters by realization US would be in better position to meet worldwide commitments. No major disruption of international attitudes so long as forces used as discussed Annex B. Increased cries of escalation and some loss of support due increased air/naval actions. Cambodian attack would generate worldwide pressures against US actions.	No appreciable reaction in international arena as result increased ground forces. Same as for Course A for increased air/naval actions and attacks on Cambodia.																				
5. Probable effects on SVN attitudes.	Favorable. Awareness of growing force on their side would be expected whet GVN leaders appetite for "total victory" and might make them reluctant to cooperate with US efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement short of defeating VC/NVA.	Same as Course A, with less impact on "total victory" appetite of GVN leaders.																				
6. Estimated costs (through FY 69) in addition to approved FY 68 DOD Budget. ^{1/}	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Army</td> <td>\$ 8,650 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Navy</td> <td>1,400 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Air Force</td> <td>160 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marine Corps</td> <td>1,190 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>\$12,400 million</td> </tr> </table>	Army	\$ 8,650 million	Navy	1,400 million	Air Force	160 million	Marine Corps	1,190 million	Total	\$12,400 million	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Army</td> <td>5,820</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Navy</td> <td>\$ 1,145</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Air Force</td> <td>690</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marine Corps</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>7,655</td> </tr> </table>	Army	5,820	Navy	\$ 1,145	Air Force	690	Marine Corps	0	Total	7,655
Army	\$ 8,650 million																					
Navy	1,400 million																					
Air Force	160 million																					
Marine Corps	1,190 million																					
Total	\$12,400 million																					
Army	5,820																					
Navy	\$ 1,145																					
Air Force	690																					
Marine Corps	0																					
Total	7,655																					
7. Approximate end strength increases above present force levels (Through FY 69).	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Army</td> <td>465,000 (Includes 150,000 Reserves mobilized)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Navy</td> <td>35,000 (all Reserves)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Air Force</td> <td>40,400 (Includes 7,700 ANG mobilized)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marine Corps</td> <td>54,500 (All Reserves)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>602,900</td> </tr> </table>	Army	465,000 (Includes 150,000 Reserves mobilized)	Navy	35,000 (all Reserves)	Air Force	40,400 (Includes 7,700 ANG mobilized)	Marine Corps	54,500 (All Reserves)	Total	602,900	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Army</td> <td>204,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Navy</td> <td>47,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Air Force</td> <td>25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marine Corps</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>276,000</td> </tr> </table>	Army	204,000	Navy	47,000	Air Force	25,000	Marine Corps	0	Total	276,000
Army	465,000 (Includes 150,000 Reserves mobilized)																					
Navy	35,000 (all Reserves)																					
Air Force	40,400 (Includes 7,700 ANG mobilized)																					
Marine Corps	54,500 (All Reserves)																					
Total	602,900																					
Army	204,000																					
Navy	47,000																					
Air Force	25,000																					
Marine Corps	0																					
Total	276,000																					

^{1/} These gross estimates of costs include one time costs; such as equipping a division, reactivation BB, etc, and annual recurring costs such as pay, O&M, etc. For details see Annex A.

172

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Declassified per Executive Order 13526, Section 3.3
NND Project Number: NND 63316. By: NWD Date: 2011

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Part of the mystery as to why the numbers in the JCS analysis which we have just discussed differ from those stipulated by Secretary Vance in his request for an analysis of Courses A and B is explained by a 29 May 1967 memorandum for the Secretary of Defense from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In it, General Wheeler identified certain factual corrections and annotations noted by the Joint Chiefs which should be entered so as to provide a "common basis of factual material." The corrections, General Wheeler noted, were factual only and did not address matters of policy, strategy, judgment, or opinion, as expressed in the Draft Presidential Memo of 19 May. He went on to comment that as the draft memorandum for the President indicated, COMUSMACV message 09101, 18 March 1967, included a "minimum essential force" for FY 68 and looking beyond, a probable requirement for an "optimum force" through FY 69. These forces totaled 4-2/3 division or force equivalents and 10 TFS -- 2-1/3 of these division force equivalents and 5 of the TFS to be deployed in FY 68 and the remainder thereafter. COMUSMACV estimated these forces at about 200,000. 20/ However, the Chairman continued, "the changed situation in South Vietnam including the formation and deployment of Task Force OREGON, the addition by CINCPAC of other PACOM requirements, and revised service estimates had caused variation in the total numbers for FY 68 and beyond. While exact numbers of the larger forces could not then be determined unless detailed troop lists are developed the following appeared at this time to reflect more accurately the probable personnel strengths, end strength increases and costs required to provide COMUSMACV a 4-2/3 DFE/PFS optimum force and the additional requirements through FY 69 that have been stated by CINCPAC.

Additional Forces for SEA -----	250,000
Additional Service End Strengths -----	600,000
Estimated Additional Costs thru FY 69 over Approved FY 68-----	12,000,000 " <u>21/</u>

General Wheeler concluded that although the Joint Chiefs of Staff had not recommended the deployment of COMUSMACV's optimum force or even adoption of Course A as used in the Draft Presidential Memorandum, that the corrected figures which he quoted were more nearly representative of Course A than those of the DPM.

On 20 May, Secretary McNamara sent a short memorandum to the President replying to his request for comments on Senator Brooke's letter of 19 May, which proposed integration of the National Liberation Front into some kind of viable political role in South Vietnam's government or in its political life. Although these views coincided very closely

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

to those submitted in the Draft Presidential Memorandum of the day earlier, McNamara commented that despite the fact that Brooke's proposals were almost identical to those which he had suggested he had not discussed any part of the paper or any of the ideas with Brooke.

On the last day of May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff replied to the 19 May Draft Presidential Memorandum prepared by McNaughton. It was a sharply worded and strong reply, expressing strong objections to the basic orientation of the paper as well as its specific recommendations and objectives. The Chiefs resented the implication of the DPM that Course A generally reflected their recommendations. They insisted that Course A as outlined in the DPM was an extrapolation of a number of proposals which were recommended separately but not in concert or ever interpreted as a single course of action as they were in the DPM. The JCS categorically denied that the combination force levels, deployments, and military actions of Course A accurately reflected the positions or recommendations of COMUSMACV, CINCPAC or the Joint Chiefs. They stated that the positions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff which would provide a better basis against which to compare other alternatives were already set forth in JCSM 218-67, JCSM 286-67 and JCSM 288-67.

There were five major areas of concern detailed in the JCSM: objectives, military strategy in operations, military strategy for air and naval war, the domestic attitude and predicted reactions in the international attitude and reaction. Reference objectives, the preferred course of action in the Draft Presidential Memorandum, Course B, was not considered by the military heads to be "consistent with NSAM 288 or with the explicit public statements of U.S. policy and objectives." In the eyes of the Joint Staff:

The DPM would, in effect, limit US objectives to merely guaranteeing the South Vietnamese the right to determine their own future on the one hand and offsetting the effect of North Vietnam's application of force in South Vietnam on the other. The United States would remain committed to these two objectives only so long as the South Vietnamese continue to help themselves. It is also noted that the DPM contains no statement of military objectives to be achieved and that current US national, military, and political objectives are far more comprehensive and far-reaching. Thus:

- a. The DPM fails to appreciate the full implications for the Free World of failure to achieve a successful resolution of the conflict in Southeast Asia.
- b. Modification of present US objectives, as called for in the DPM, would undermine and no longer

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

provide a complete rationale for our presence in South Vietnam or much of our effort over the past two years.

c. The positions of the more than 35 nations supporting the Government of Vietnam might be rendered untenable by such drastic changes in US policy. 22/

The strategy proposed in the Draft Presidential memorandum which the Chiefs characterized as "making do" was not acceptable either:

Military Strategy and Operations (Other than Air/Naval Operations in the North). The DPM favors Course B with inadequate analysis of its implications for conduct of the war in Vietnam. The strategy embodied in this alternative - largely designed to "make do" with military resources currently approved for Southeast Asia - would not permit early termination of hostilities on terms acceptable to the United States, supporting Free World nations, and the Government of Vietnam. The force structure envisaged provides little capability for initiative action and insufficient resources to maintain momentum required for expeditious prosecution of the war. Further, this approach would result in a significant downgrading of the Revolutionary Development Program considered so essential to the realization of our goals in Vietnam. It would also result in the abandonment of the important delta region on the basis of its being primarily a problem for the Republic of Vietnam to solve without additional external assistance. 23/

There was little more agreement expressed about the bombing, about the domestic attitude or the international attitude:

Military Strategy for Air/Naval War in the North.

The DPM stresses a policy which would concentrate air operations in the North Vietnamese "funnel" south of 20°. The concept of a "funnel" is misleading, since in fact the communists are supplying their forces in South Vietnam from all sides, through the demilitarized zone, Laos, the coast, Cambodia, and the rivers in the Delta. According to the DPM, limiting the bombing to south of 20° might result in increased negotiation opportunities with Hanoi. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that such a new self-imposed restraint resulting from this major change in strategy would most likely have the opposite effect. The relative immunity granted to the LOCs and distribution system outside the Panhandle would permit: (a) a rapid

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

recovery from the damage sustained to date; (b) an increase in movement capability; (c) a reduced requirement for total supplies in the pipeline; (d) a concentration of air defenses into the Panhandle; and (e) a release of personnel and equipment for increased efforts in infiltration of South Vietnam. Also, it would relieve the Hanoi leadership from experiencing at first hand the pressures of recent air operations which foreign observers have reported. Any possible political advantages gained by confining our interdiction campaign to the Panhandle would be offset decisively by allowing North Vietnam to continue an unobstructed importation of war materiel. Further, it is believed that such a drastic reduction in the scale of air operations against North Vietnam could only result in the strengthening of the enemy's resolve to continue the war. We doubt the reduction in scope of air operations would also be considered by many as a weakening of US determination and a North Vietnamese victory in the air war over northern North Vietnam. The combination of reduced military pressures against North Vietnam with stringent limitations of our operations in South Vietnam, as suggested in Course B, appears even more questionable conceptually. It would most likely strengthen the enemy's ultimate hope of victory and lead to a redoubling of his efforts. (See Part III, Appendix A, for additional comments.)

Domestic Attitude and Predicted Reactions. The DPM presents an assessment of US public attitude and assumed reactions to several occurrences. Its orientation is toward the risks involved in Course A. The difficulty of making accurate judgments in the area of public response is acknowledged, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff concede that their appraisal is subject to the same degree of uncertainty that is inherent in the DPM. Nevertheless, they are unable to find due cause for the degree of pessimism expressed in the DPM. The Joint Chiefs of Staff firmly believe that the American people, when well informed about the issues at stake, expect their Government to uphold its commitments. History illustrates that they will, in turn, support their Government in its necessary actions. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that there is no significant sentiment for peace at any price. They believe also that despite some predictable debate a Reserve callup would be willingly accepted, and there would

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

be no "irresistible" drive from any quarter for unnecessary escalation of the conflict. (See Part IV, Appendix A, for additional comments.)

International Attitude and Predicted Reaction. There are several inconsistencies between the DPM and the published intelligence estimates. For example, from these intelligence estimates, there is no evidence that Hanoi is prepared to shun negotiation, regardless of the pressure brought to bear, until after the US elections. Also, it is estimated that US prestige will not decline appreciably if prompt military action is taken to bring the conflict to an early close. In the long term, US prestige would probably rise. The effect of signs of US irresolution on allies in Southeast Asia and other friendly countries threatened by communist insurgency could be most damaging to the credibility of US commitments. The DPM contains the view that there is strong likelihood of a confrontation between the United States and the CHICOMs or the USSR, as a result of intensification of air and naval operations against North Vietnam and/or a major increase in US forces in South Vietnam. Intelligence estimates do not support this contention. (See Part V, Appendix A, for additional comments.) 24/

Summarizing, the Chiefs explained that the divergencies between the DPM and the stated policies, objectives and concepts were individually important and in their eyes, reasons for concern. However, as they viewed them collectively, an "alarming pattern" emerged which suggested a major realignment of U.S. objectives and intentions in Southeast Asia. The Joint Chiefs stated that they were not aware of any decision to retract the policies and objectives which had been affirmed by responsible officials many times in recent years (apparently stemming back to NSAM 288). In their view the DPM lacked adequate foundation for further consideration. Their conclusions were strong, namely that the DPM "did not support current U.S. national policy objectives in Vietnam and should not be considered further" and "there is no basis for change in their views in the major issues in the DPM," and that "these views were adequately stated in recent memorandums and reinforced herein." Implementation of Course B in the estimation of the joint body would serve to prolong the conflict, reinforce Hanoi's belief in ultimate victory, and probably add greatly to the ultimate cost in US lives and treasure.

The Joint Chiefs recommended that:

- a. The DPM NOT be forwarded to the President.
- b. The US national objective as expressed in NSAM 288 be maintained, and the national policy and objectives

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

for Vietnam as publicly stated by US officials be reaffirmed.

c. The military objective, concept, and strategy for the conduct of the war in Vietnam as stated in JCSM-218-67 be approved by the Secretary of Defense. 25/

4. The Last Interagency Round of Alternatives

Certainly the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been correct in detecting the basic policy realignment and the crystallization of opposition to expansive increases in the war in South Vietnam or in the air war over North Vietnam. If they had misread or underestimated anything it was in the magnitude and the strength of this opposition as it began to crystallize throughout different agencies of the government. As the replies to the 19 May DPM from other agencies began to filter in there was little doubt remaining that, in fact, the validity of the assumptions in the DPM were not those being called into question, but the ones of JCSM 218-67 were under attack.

Before the other agency views on the DPM were received, however, the JCS reported in again with their discussion of air operations against North Vietnam. This was in response to a SecDef memo of 20 May 1967 in which McNamara requested the JCS to examine two alternative bombing campaigns -- one concentrating the bombing of North Vietnam on the lines of communication in the Panhandle Area of Route Packages 1, 2 and 3, with the concomitant termination of bombing in the remainder of North Vietnam; and the other, to terminate the bombing of fixed targets not directly associated with LOC's in Route Sectors 6A and 6B and simultaneously expand the armed reconnaissance operations in those sectors by authorizing strikes on all LOC's. Furthermore, the second program was to be examined under two alternative assumptions, one in which strikes against ports and port facilities were precluded, and the other, in which every effort was made to deny importation from the sea. (This final option was essentially that recommended in JCSM 288-67 dated 20 May.) To all of this, the JCS concluded that their original recommendation on 20 May represented the most effective way to successfully prosecute the air and naval campaign against North Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs' position was vigorously stated in their conclusion:

The analysis provided in the Appendix supports the conclusion that the recommendations submitted to you on 20 May 1967 represent the most effective way to prosecute successfully the air and naval campaign against North Vietnam. Such a campaign would exert appropriate military pressures on North Vietnamese internal resources while substantially reducing the importation of the external resources that support their war effort and could be accomplished at risks and costs no greater than those

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

associated with the most desirable of the suggested alternatives, Alternative II (Ports Closed). Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize and appreciate the necessity for continuing review, they believe that the campaign selected and recommended to you, together with expanded efforts to increase the destruction and enemy consumption of war materials in South Vietnam would have a far-reaching detrimental effect on the North Vietnamese capability to support and direct the aggression against South Vietnam. 26/

Secretary McNaughton asked Mr. Martin Bailey to look this JCSM over to determine if there were any areas of agreement between what the JCS proposed on the bombing and what ISA at the time was proposing. Particularly important was the key point on the unlikelihood of meaningful interdiction. Although the Chiefs did not specifically address this, they did state that increased bombing as they had recommended in the earlier JCSM on 20 May would bring about "a deterioration in the enemy's total environment," leading to curtailment of his overall efforts and increased difficulty in his support of the war in the South. The Chiefs had objected to the first alternative that concentrated the bombing on the southern three route packages because they felt that it would not appreciably reduce the flow of men and material to the south; that it would permit the enemy increased freedom of action in the north by allowing him to increase the density of his air defenses in the panhandle or Route Packages 1, 2 and 3, and finally, because they felt that in the long term such a course of action would not appreciably reduce U.S. losses. An undesirable side-effect, furthermore, was that such cutting back might indicate to the DRV a weakening of the United States resolve to the detriment of our basic goals and objectives in Vietnam. Alternative 2 (ports open) was not felt desirable for all of the reasons cited in the earlier JCSMs and, in addition, because it would not effectively degrade the enemy's war-making capability in any way. The "ports closed" alternative was desirable, but, in a listing of priorities, the JCS listed it behind the JCS course of action previously submitted in JCSM 288-67, 20 May 1967, which proposed a wider, concerted attack against all logistics facilities -- "the shouldering out" proposal. 27/

The issues then, as they were distilled and presented by the JCS, involved first the notion that total pressure was what was required to bring about some degradation of the North Vietnamese ability to support the war in the south; that pilot losses would not be appreciably decreased, and, finally, that shifting the bombing to the southern Route Packages would be indicative of U.S. failure in North Vietnam. This JCSM was carefully examined by McNaughton and his staff and the major arguments as they were presented by the Joint Chiefs were incorporated in the revised June 12th Draft Presidential Memorandum on the subject of bombing options. 28/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The first detailed feedback from the circulation of the 19 May McNaughton Draft Presidential Memorandum came from William P. Bundy on 2 June when he wrote an incisive and highly perceptive memorandum which argued that the "gut" point in Vietnam was not necessarily the military effect of our bombing or the major force increases and all the rest, but the effect that they had on the South Vietnamese. He wrote:

If we can get a reasonably solid GVN political structure and GVN performance at all levels, favorable trends could become really marked over the next 18 months, the war will be won for practical purposes at some point, and the resulting peace will be secured. On the other hand, if we do not get these results from the GVN and the South Vietnamese people, no amount of US effort will achieve our basic objective in South Viet-Nam--a return to the essential provisions of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and a reasonably stable peace for many years based on these Accords....

It follows that perhaps the most critical of all factors in assessing our whole strategy--bombing, major force increases, and all the rest--lies in the effect they have on the South Vietnamese. On the one hand, it is obvious that there must be a strong enough US role to maintain and increase GVN and popular confidence and physical security; although the point is not covered in the CIA papers, it surely is the fact that in early 1965 virtually all South Vietnamese believed they were headed for defeat, whereas the general assumption today is strongly in the opposite direction, that with massive US help the country has a present chance to learn to run itself and a future expulsion of the North Vietnamese will take place although not perhaps for a long time. We have got to maintain and fortify this underlying confidence and sense that it is worthwhile to get ahead and run the country properly.

On the other hand, many observers are already reporting, and South Vietnamese performance appears to confirm, that the massive US intervention has in fact had a significant adverse effect in that South Vietnamese tend to think that Uncle Sam will do their job for them. This point was not included in the levy on CIA, and it may be that we need a judgment from the Agency, recognizing that it will be "broad brush" at best. The tentative judgment stated above need not be considered a shocking one; in our calculations of two years ago, we anticipated the possibility.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

But today, in facing decisions whether to make a further major increase in the US performance and whether to maintain at a high level that portion of the war that is really wholly US--bombing--we must at least ask ourselves whether we are not at or beyond another kind of "cross-over point", where we are putting in an undue proportion of US effort in relation to the essential fact that in the last analysis the South Vietnamese have got to do the job themselves. By "do the job themselves" we mean concretely a much more effective South Vietnamese role in security, pacification, and solid government while the war is going on. But we mean also the progressive development of a South Viet-Nam that can stand on its own feet whenever North Viet-Nam calls it off, and can nail down at that point what could otherwise be a temporary and illusory "victory" which, if it unraveled, would make our whole effort look ridiculous, undermine the gains in confidence that have been achieved in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, and have the most disastrous effects on our own American resolve to bear burdens in Asia and indeed throughout the world. 29/

Turning to the specific question of the 200,000 man force increase Bundy argued that the gains from such a major force increase were increasingly marginal while the effect on the South Vietnamese, a very much more important factor and one which went to the heart of the conflict itself and our ability to achieve a lasting peace, may not be so marginal:

Obviously, the assessment of the effect of our actions on the South Vietnamese is an extremely difficult one. It may be that the "cross-over point" was reached in late 1965, when it became clear that we were conducting a massive intervention; perhaps any further change from additional forces, on any scale, is at most one of slight degree. Certainly we have all felt that our force increases up to their present strength were absolutely required in order to bring about a condition even more essential than maintaining South Vietnamese performance--the blunting and reversing of the North Vietnamese effort that, in 1965, was about to take over the country. But the question now presents itself in a new form, when 200,000 more men do not make the difference between victory and defeat, but at most the difference between victory in three years and victory in 5, on what is necessarily a calculation assuming both South Vietnamese and North Vietnamese performance and morale as relative constants. And, on the other side of the coin, we have reached a point where the South Vietnamese have managed in part to pull themselves together and must learn to do so more. Hence, the gains from

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

major force increases are now more marginal, while the effect on the South Vietnamese must be rated a very much more important factor and one which goes to the heart of the conflict itself and of our ability to achieve a lasting peace. 30/

On the basic objectives, Bundy disagreed with the Chiefs and expressed general agreement with what the McNaughton draft had stated. He believed that the minimum statement which we could make reference our objective in Vietnam was certainly "to see that the people of South Vietnam are permitted to determine their own future." But he felt it much too pat to say that "this commitment ceases if the country ceases to help itself," or even to observe that there are not further elements in our commitment. He believed additional commitments related not only to getting North Vietnamese forces off the backs of the South Vietnamese but to making sure that the political board, as he called it, in South Vietnam was not tilted to the advantage of the NLF. 31/

In his summary, he addressed this question of our commitment again, and then expanded upon what he called the hard core question, that is, what to do if "the country Vietnam ceases to help itself." Using the teeter-totter analogy, he commented that our commitment must be to see that the people of South Vietnam were permitted to determine their own future and to see that the "political board" was level and not tilted in favor of elements that believed in force. He also believed that we should at least hold open the possibility that a future South Vietnamese government would need continuing military and security assistance and should be entitled to get it. He agreed with the Joint Chiefs analysis of the DOD draft and their contention that it displayed a negative turn to our strategy and to our commitment in Vietnam:

In terms of our course of action, the major implication-- as compared with the DOD draft--is that we will not take our forces out until the political board is level. The implication of the DOD draft is that we could afford to go home the moment the North Vietnamese regulars went home. This is not what we said at Manila, and the argument here is that we should not in any way modify the Manila position. Nor should we be any more hospitable than the South Vietnamese to coalitions with the NLF, and we should stoutly resist the imposition of such coalitions. 32/

On the second question, of what would happen if the Vietnamese could not help themselves or refused to help themselves Bundy argued for more time to take a closer look at the Vietnamese situation, especially the elections, before getting into a negative frame of mind about our Vietnamese military/political/economic commitment. In arguing this position he broadened the perspective embraced by the question and addressed the entire range of U.S. interests in Asia:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

This is a tough question. What do we do if there is a military coup this summer and the elections are aborted? There would then be tremendous pressure at home and in Europe to the effect that this negated what we were fighting for, and that we should pull out.

But against such pressure we must reckon that the stakes in Asia will remain. After all, the military rule, even in peacetime, in Thailand, Indonesia, and Burma. Are we to walk away from the South Vietnamese, as least as a matter of principle, simply because they failed in what was always conceded to be a courageous and extremely difficult effort to become a true democracy during a guerrilla war.

We should not decide this lightly if the case arises, and above all we should not get into a negative frame of mind suggested by the DOD draft until we see what the situation actually looks like. As in Latin American cases, a great deal would depend on how the military ruled, and whether they made some pledge of returning to the Constitution and holding elections in the not-distant future. And a great deal would depend on whether the military coup appeared in any sense justified by extremist civilian actions from any quarter. At any rate, let us not look at this contingency--or any like it--in quite the negative way that the DOD draft suggests. For the effects in Asia may not be significantly reduced if we walk away from Viet-Nam even under what we ourselves and many others saw as a gross failure by the South Vietnamese to use the opportunity that we had given them. 33/

If the ISA group proposing a stabilized ground strategy took heart with the Bundy memorandum, it was positively elated when the reply came from Under Secretary of State Nicholas deB Katzenbach. 34/

Katzenbach quote skillfully outlined the outstanding disagreements included in the draft Presidential memorandum. First, Westmoreland and McNamara disagreed on whether Course A, the infusion of 200,000 troops would end the war sooner. Under Secretary Vance and the CIA disagreed on the ability of North Vietnam to meet the force increases in the South although, as Katzenbach later noted in his paper, the CIA figures were somewhat outdated and the analysis was not "good." He listed a Wheeler-Vance disagreement on the military effectiveness of cutting back bombing to below the 20th parallel and on whether it would save U.S. casualties. (The Wheeler label on this disagreement is not completely accurate since JCSM 288-67 and the later JCSM 312-67, the bases for this disagreement,

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

were less the product of Wheeler, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, than of the corporate body itself. As Chairman's Memoranda indicate, Wheeler had a much "softer" line on the military effectiveness of the bombing.) The CIA and Vance were seen as at odds because the CIA believed that the Chinese might not intervene if an invasion of North Vietnam did not seem to threaten Hanoi, while Vance stated that an invasion (of any kind) would cause Chinese intervention. Vance believed that the Chinese would decide to intervene if the ports were mined. CIA reports at the time did not mention this possibility. There was basic disagreement, as to whether or not we had achieved the "cross-over point" and more broadly how well the "big war" was going. One optimistic CIA analysis which Bundy quoted contradicted a later CIA statement expressing the view that the enemy's strategic position had improved over the past year. State's INR also disagreed with CIA on Hanoi's basic objectives, with CIA arguing that Hanoi was determined to wear us down or in the vernacular of the time "wait us out," while INR felt that Hanoi was really determined to seek more positive victories in the South. The INR also believed that the bombing was having a greater effect than did the CIA. CIA and Vance, of course, had been saying for some time that all of the worthwhile targets in North Vietnam except the ports had been struck, while as we have seen, the JCS disagreed with this assessment. There was some allusion to the dispute over whether or not inflationary pressures would be aggravated by the increase in U.S. forces under Course A. DOD said that these pressures were under control and could be handled if Course A were adopted, while the CIA felt otherwise. (Comment: This leads to the suspicion that the piaster limitation might not have been as critical as was originally believed and possibly was just an instrument of a sophisticated rationalization for limiting force increases in the earlier programs.) Katzenbach also cited a basic disagreement about just what message an increase of U.S. forces or a massive call-up of Reserves would communicate to Hanoi.

The general goals which the Undersecretary predicated in Vietnam and upon which he based the analysis which followed were: first, to withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam; we would only do so with the high degree of confidence that three things were accomplished -- (1) that we would be behind a stable democratic government (democratic by Asian standards); (2) that we would confront the prospect of a reasonably stable peace in Southeast Asia for several years; and (3) that we will have demonstrated that we met our commitments to the government of Vietnam. To do these, we had to persuade the North Vietnamese to give up their aggression and we had to neutralize the internal Viet Cong threat while in the process being careful not to create an American satellite nor to generate widespread anti-American sentiment nor destroy the social fabric of South Vietnam, nor incur disproportionate losses in our relations with other countries or bring in so called "enemy" countries.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

His overall prognosis for the war was not optimistic. He believed that during the course of the next 18 months, the probability of achieving our goals was quite low. In two or three years, it was possibly higher depending again on what we did during the intervening period. He entered a caveat, however, stating that because of our uncertain knowledge of the motivation and intentions of both the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the VC in the South, that we may be closer to achieving our goals than we thought. Moreover, the Soviet Union and Communist China would influence the course of events in ways not easily predictable over the next three years.

He assessed the battle in South Vietnam as "the key" and reviewed the "big war" of attrition as one in which a flood of contradictory indicators made it much more difficult to appraise. Enemy losses were up 70% in the first quarter of 1967, but so were U.S. losses up 90%. North Vietnamese/VC intentions were also doubtful but they appeared to be set on an intensive grinding position-warfare campaign in the northern provinces coordinated with offensive thrusts in the central coastal provinces and the Western Highlands. All of these then possibly combined with major actions against cities, provincial capitals in the III Corps area. The overall object of such a strategy evidently being to inflict maximum losses on the US/GVN in an effort to break our will. (Here he noted that INR believed that the VC/NVA had a more positive approach and were looking for real victories.

Pacification efforts came in for little praise. There was little real progress reported and the short term prospects were not bright. However, the long term prospects appeared better if ARVN could be more effectively involved. However, it appeared that GVN and ARVN were going to continue moving slowly, corruption was becoming more widespread and the population was increasingly apathetic. Katzenbach said he could not determine whether this was due to growing anti-Americanism or war-weariness or what. He concluded that if we were winning the war, we were not winning it very quickly -- it had become a question of the will to persist on either side rather than the attainment of an overwhelming military victory.

With this assessment as background he then analyzed the two courses of action. In his estimation, Course A, which added a 200,000 U.S. troop increment and necessitated a call-up of Reserves possessed the following advantages: It could hasten the end of the war by hurting the enemy more. It could dispel Hanoi's notions about weakening U.S. resolve. It could provide more U.S. troops to be used for main force sweeps and might release U.S. units to help provide security for pacification. It might persuade the Russians to counsel Hanoi to accept some kind of negotiations rather than risk a much expanded war, possibly in North Vietnam. Katzenbach listed a score of disadvantages for this course of action:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

b. Disadvantages:

1. Introduction of these forces could lead to counter-moves by Hanoi, with result we have simply expanded the present war. (Need paper with better analysis of whether Hanoi could add troops.) Our position is one of meeting infiltration, not stimulating it. Even its proponents do not argue it could end the war in less than two years.
2. It might well be viewed by Hanoi as another sign of US impatience and unwillingness to persist. Hanoi might also see a call-up of reserves as a sign that we are running out of manpower.
3. Congressional and public debate on the reserve call-up would be divisive and give comfort to Hanoi.
4. It could mean a total eventual addition of 500,000 men; some limitation on our ability to act elsewhere in the world; and a cost of approximately \$10 billion in FY '68.
5. It could lead to irresistible pressures for ground actions against sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos, and increased actions against NVN. Problems involved in such moves -- NVN and even Chinese reactions. International disapproval. Problems with Souvanna.
6. Effect on US flexibility and, inevitably, US goals in Viet-Nam.
7. It could produce, to some extent, a growth in the South Vietnamese attitude of "let the US do it."
8. More troops probably mean growth of anti-Americanism. (Although we don't really know how strong it is now.)
9. Inflationary effects in South Viet-Nam.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

10. Adverse international reaction to escalation and to what would appear to be significant US move towards a friendly occupation of the country. 35/

Compared to this course the option of maintaining current force levels possessed the twin advantages of avoiding all of those which we just listed, plus it could improve the negotiating environment if some progress were made without an expansion of forces. The disadvantages of this course were also twofold: Hanoi could be encouraged by forces levelling off and the possible bad effect on morale of U.S. and allied forces.

To these original two options Katzenbach added what he called two middle strategies. Each one of these would incur some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two which we just listed above, but to obvious lesser greater degrees. The first "middle" strategy was to add 30,000 troops. This would not necessitate a Reserve call-up. The second was to add enough U.S. forces to "operate effectively against provincial main force units and to reinforce I Corps and the DMZ area." 36/ This he estimated would include a Reserve call-up.

The overall recommendation he made in this regard was, first, in the South, to emphasize the war of attrition and to do this by adding 30,000 troops. The complete set of recommendations which followed read:

- a. Add 30,000 more troops, in small increments, over the next 18 months. This would show Hanoi and our own forces that we are not levelling off, and yet we would not appear impatient or run into the risks and dangers which attend force increases. Continue to try to get as many more third country forces as possible.
- b. Make a major effort to get the South Vietnamese more fully involved and effective. A crucial question. (Separate paper with recommendations -- advisers, joint command, threats, etc.) Tell the GVN early in 1968 that we plan to start withdrawing troops at the end of 1968, or earlier if possible, in view of progress in the "big war". Pacification will be up to them.
- c. Use the great bulk of US forces for search and destroy rather than pacification--thus playing for a break in morale. Emphasize combat units rather than engineers. Leave all but the upper Delta to the Vietnamese.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

- d. Use a small number of US troops with South Vietnamese forces in pacification, targeted primarily on enemy provincial main force units. Recognize that pacification is not the ultimate answer--we have neither the time nor the manpower. In any event, only the Vietnamese can make meaningful pacification progress. The GVN should therefore hold what it has and expand where possible. Any progress will (1) discourage the enemy and (2) deprive him of manpower.
 - e. We should stimulate a greater refugee flow through psychological inducements to further decrease the enemy's manpower base. Improve our ability to handle the flow and win the refugees' loyalty.
 - f. Devote more attention to attacking the enemy infrastructure. Consider giving MACV primary responsibility for US efforts in this regard.
 - g. Use all the political pressure we have to keep the GVN clean in its running of the elections. Press for some form of international observation. Play down the elections until they are held, then exploit them and their winner (probably Ky) in the international and domestic press.
 - h. After the elections, but prior to the Christmas-Tet period, press hard for the GVN to open negotiations with the NLF and for a meaningful National Reconciliation program.
2. In the North--the object is to cut the North off from the South as much as possible, and to shake Hanoi from its obdurate position. Concentrate on shaking enemy morale in both the South and North by limiting Hanoi's ability to support the forces in South Viet-Nam.
- a. A barrier, if it will work.... or
 - b. Concentrate bombing on lines of communication throughout NVN, thus specifically concentrating on infiltration but not running into the problems we have had and will have with bombing oriented towards "strategic" targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong area. By continuing to bomb throughout NVN in this manner we would indicate neither a lessening of will nor undue impatience. 37/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

This recommendation, essentially in line with that of McNaughton and his staff in ISA, was to provide powerful ammunition for the group pressing for a halt to the force increases and some stabilization of the bombing in North Vietnam.

On 8 June, McNaughton dealt once again with the dispute between the JCS and ISA over whether or not Course A as written into the DPM did or did not, in fact, reflect the recommendations of the JCS. Colonel Amos Wright of the Joint Staff had been queried by ISA as to why the JCS had objected to the wording in the DPM which asserted that Course A (or the addition of the 200,000 men) reflected JCS recommendations. The basis of the JCS objection, according to Colonel Wright, was first that the JCS had not yet actually recommended that COMUSMACV and CINCPAC be given the additional 100,000 men they requested for FY 69 and that the DPM discussed, in connection with Course A, various "extreme actions" especially ground actions that the JCS had not actually recommended.

ISA concluded, after this, that although the courses of action included under Course A had not actually been recommended as a complete package by the JCS. The DPM did not, or need not, say this. The Chiefs had discussed these courses of action as ones that "might be required" and had done so in close conjunction with increased force levels and escalated attacks on North Vietnam that they had recommended. Under these circumstances ISA felt justified to argue in the DPM that Course A should be rejected because it could quite probably lead to the "extreme" course of action flagged by the JCS even though the Chiefs had not actually recommended them. 38/

On 12 June, McNaughton submitted a draft memorandum for the President entitled "Alternative Military Actions Against North Vietnam" in which he incorporated the views of State, CIA and the JCS. He analyzed three major alternatives: Alternative A - the JCS proposal to expand the present program to include mining of the ports and attacks on roads and bridges closer to Hanoi and Haiphong; Alternative B - which would continue the present level of attacks but generally restricted to the neck of North Vietnam south of 20 degrees; and Alternative C - a refinement of the then currently approved program. In the memorandum, McNaughton (and later Vance) opposed the JCS program (Alternative A) on grounds that it would neither substantially reduce the flow of men and supplies to the South nor pressure Hanoi toward settlement; that it would be costly in American lives and in domestic and world opinion, and that it would run serious risks of enlarging the war into one with the Soviet Union or China, leaving the United States a few months from now more frustrated and with almost no choice but even further escalation. Refinement of the present program (Alternative C) was also opposed on grounds that it would involve most of the costs and some of the risks of Alternative A with less chance than Alternative A of interdicting supplies or moving Hanoi toward settlement. Finally, McNaughton recommended concentration of the bulk of the bombing efforts on infiltration routes south of the 20th parallel (Alternative B) because this course would, in his

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

words "interdict supplies as effectively as the other alternatives, would cost the least in pilot's lives and would be consistent with effort to move toward negotiations." 39/

Implicit in the recommendations submitted by Vance and McNaughton on 12 June was the conviction that nothing short of toppling the Hanoi regime would pressure North Vietnam to settle so long as they believed they had a chance to win the "war of attrition" in the South. They judged that actions great enough to topple the Hanoi regime would put the United States into a war with the Soviet Union and/or China. Furthermore a shift to Alternative B could probably be timed and handled in such a way as to gain politically while not endangering the morale of our fighting men. In their recommendations, Vance and McNaughton were in agreement with Mr. Nitze, Mr. Brown and Mr. Helms in that none recommended Alternative A. Mr. Nitze, Secretary of the Navy at the time, joined with Vance and McNaughton in recommending B; Dr. Brown, Secretary of the Air Force preferred C; while the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Mr. Helms did not make a specific recommendation but stated that the CIA believed that none of the alternatives was capable of decreasing Hanoi's determination to persist in the war or of reducing the flow of goods sufficiently to effect the war in the South. 40/

The 12 June Draft Presidential Memorandum only momentarily diverted attention from the question of the ground force increases which it so skillfully skirted. However, it achieved one important purpose. It had crystallized opinion and also marshalled an impressive array of opposition against any significant expansion of the bombing for the time being, and reflected a surprising turn toward objectives much different than those originally stated in NSAM 288, anachronisms pursued in virtual isolation by the Chiefs.

Another argument against significant increases of forces in Southeast Asia came from the financial side of the Department of Defense. Balance of payment expenditures associated with the then current level of Southeast Asia hostilities was running about \$1.35 billion per year above calendar year 1964 levels. If the effect of increased deployments were proportional, then a 25% increase in deployment would mean approximately \$350 million dollars annual increase. However, as a later memorandum pointed out, the actual effect was not necessarily proportional. On the one hand there were two forces that would cause the increase to be greater than proportional, such as the increased demand leading to an increase in the prices of foreign products and, as demonstrated earlier in 1966, increased DOD expenditures had an effect on the domestic economy that tended to hurt the trade balance in that it caused inflation. On the other hand, and partially offsetting these two forces in the upward direction, there was some fraction of DOD gross IBP expenditures returned to the U.S. via increased exports to the benefitting nations. But this feedback was conservatively estimated at not more than 25%. Whatever the

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

effect might be, more or less than \$350 million, it was agreed that it would certainly be substantial and that this should be a major consideration before recommending large force increases or larger programs in Southeast Asia. 41/

Meanwhile, in the Department of Defense there was increasing emphasis upon exploration of the increased use of South Vietnamese civilians for U.S. troop support. This was partially in follow-up to the directive from the SecDef to the JCS on 23 May of 1967 which asked them to review their combat service support and headquarters staffing to determine whether all units were required in light of the sharply improved logistics posture and support provided from other sources. As part of the overall program of improving the U.S. "tooth to tail" ratio, the JCS were asked to determine which of the resulting "hard core logistical requirements" could be met by increased use of South Vietnamese civilians for U.S. troop support. A preliminary review by Systems Analysis had indicated a potential for saving approximately 20-25,000 troop spaces. 42/ These, in turn, could be reallocated to increase combat force requirements recommended by the JCS or alternatively used to reduce the U.S. burden in Vietnam. The deadline given the JCS for submitting their study was 1 August but as the press for decisions on increased forces became greater McNamara went back to the JCS and asked for both studies before his planned trip to South Vietnam at the end of July. 43/ In detailed conversations over force increases with both COMUSMACV and CINCPAC McNamara asked:

Can we not make wider use of Vietnamese to reduce the number of U.S. military personnel performing support functions in SVN? This action would free U.S. men for combat duties and train Vietnamese in skills they will need to help build their nation. I believe it would be wise to expand the analysis I requested on May 23, 1967 (Combat Service Support Staffing in SVN) to include an analysis of each essential combat service support function to determine the extent it can be performed by SVN civilian personnel. The unit-by-unit, function-by-function review of support should be performed first; then, the essential requirements should be evaluated to see which can be met by appropriately trained and supervised SVN civilians. The studies forwarded to me should separately show the line items and number of support personnel no longer required and the number for whom Vietnamese can be substituted.

While organic U.S. military combat service support capability is obviously required in an active combat theater, the requirements in the permanent logistic enclaves, such as Saigon or DaNang, should be less than at forward locations, such as An Khe or Dong Ha. Further, some U.S.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

military personnel are needed for such contingencies as strikes, but the requirements should vary with the degree of criticality of the functions involved. For example, I understand that MACV's policy is to maintain at least 50% U.S. manning at each deep draft port. Why 50% and not 40% or 60%? Must this rule be followed for all types of port personnel? USARV's use of Pacific Architects and Engineers contract civilians for most of the repair and utility work at 67 SVN locations suggests that neither forward operations nor contingencies are adequate reasons for using as many military personnel for support as we are now.

I also doubt we have adequately explored the use of "Type B" units which are a mix of military cadres and civilian workers. A preliminary review indicates that there are over 72,000 U.S. Army personnel in units which have alternative "Type B" TO&E's. Converting these units to "Type B" would cut military personnel in support roles by over 25,000 men: this might provide another combat division. 44/

5. The McNamara Visit to Saigon

As the Pentagon feverishly prepared the background briefings for Secretary McNamara's forthcoming trip to Vietnam an article discussing the problem of mobilization and force levels in Vietnam broke in the Washington Daily News. It touched a nerve around the Pentagon generating a flurry of correspondence and studies. The article by Jim Lucas, entitled "Partial Mobilization?" with dateline Saigon, observed that the manpower squeeze was on in Vietnam. The United States had 472,000 men in Vietnam according to General William C. Westmoreland, who Lucas quoted as having asked Washington for 200-250,000 more, bringing the total to about 700,000. Lucas concluded on the basis of this remarkably accurate estimate that such a total could not be achieved without some sort of mobilization -- at least a partial Reserve call. He wrote that it was equally obvious that the White House did not want any sort of mobilization if it could be avoided before the elections upcoming next year. Most Americans in Saigon, he noted, realized this, but they weren't happy about it. He quoted a helicopter pilot as saying, "A lot of us are going to die before then." The military officers that he had interviewed were especially loathe to discuss manpower with anything approaching candor. "I'll be damned if I'm going to tell Charlie how much he has hurt us," one exploded. Lucas also questioned the credibility of military reports and estimates emanating from the White House. He saw clear indications that some records were being camouflaged if not falsified to hide the facts. Many commanders, among them a Marine air group commander, said their reports on personnel and materiel were being consistently upgraded in DaNang and Honolulu before going to Washington. The article wound up on an equally sour note pointing out the various personnel deficiencies by rank and by skills which existed

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

within both the Army and the Marine Corps in Vietnam. It noted that the Army was short of buck sergeants everywhere, rifle companies were extremely short of non-commissioned officers, Marine Corps squads and platoons were operating below acceptable manpower levels, and hundreds of Marine enlisted men with infantry training were being jerked out of other jobs and sent to combat units to replace men in battle. 45/

Lucas had come remarkably close to the truth and as a consequence the replies which were requested from the various service secretaries tended to focus upon the more detailed criticisms of manpower levels in different units in Vietnam, on military occupation specialty shortages, etc. None of the internally generated replies really grappled with the basic issue of whether or not the mobilization level was in fact dictating force levels and requirements in Vietnam.

The 3 July edition of the New York Times featured another article this time by Neil Sheehan, entitled "The Joint Chiefs Back Troop Rise Asked by Westmoreland" in which he noted that 70,000 additional men were needed to retain the U.S. initiative in the ground war. In this article, again very perceptive and accurate, a large amount of detailed information, supposedly classified, surfaced. The writer quoted the Joint Chiefs of Staff as having warned the Johnson Administration that if General William C. Westmoreland's minimum request for 70,000 more troops was not met the United States would run "a high risk of losing the initiative in the ground war in South Vietnam." 47/ Sheehan noted that the recommendation was submitted to Mr. McNamara on April 20 according to his sources and the administration had taken no action on it. This was, of course, JCSM 218-67. Sheehan believed the inaction on the COMUSMACV request was because the administration could not grant the increase without a partial mobilization of Reserves and significant rise in war costs--an estimate that was remarkably close to the truth. In the article Sheehan also revealed discussions about two alternatives, or what he called two levels of requirements, both of which he correctly identified as the "optimum" and the "minimum essential." He was a bit short of the level of the optimum quoting it as only 5 divisions or about 150,000 men. According to Sheehan's sources, Westmoreland had not supported his request for the "optimum" with the detailed arguments, apparently believing that he had little hope of obtaining it. But, the general had argued strongly for his minimum requirement of two more divisions with supporting units, about 70,000 men, warning that he needed these troops to retain the initiative in South Vietnam. On the 4th of July, Secretary McNamara sent a note to Mr. Phil Goulding, Public Affairs, asking him to follow up with Secretary of the Army Resor for replies to the charges made in the Sheehan article. On 5 July, Secretary Resor replied that in view of the low fill levels for officers in the Seventh Army, which reflected upon the overall Army readiness and which tended to substantiate some of the charges Sheehan had made about the problem

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

of drawing down Army forces all over the world to supply Vietnam, he believed DOD should not attempt to answer Sheehan in the public press, and the matter rested there. 48/

To prepare the SecDef for his trip and to help him get at what were considered to be the "gut" questions to be asked on his field trips, especially reference pacification, Assistant Secretary of Defense Enthoven sent him a study entitled "Holbrooke/Burnham Study on Vietnam." Enthoven cited this study as a perfect example of why the U.S. involvement in Vietnam was so costly. In the Binh Chan district of Gia Dinh Province there were 6,000 U.S. and GVN troops that were tied down by the VC who really had more than a company stationed there. According to Enthoven and to the Holbrooke/Burnham Study, there was no prospect now that things would change or that anything resembling permanent pacification would take place. Holbrooke and Burnham attempted to tell why. According to them there had been a total failure in rooting out the VC infrastructure; that is, the VC officials and organizers, and unless such infrastructure was destroyed, US-GVN military and pacification forces soon degenerated into nothing more than an occupation Army. Holbrooke cited Operation FAIRFAX which began as a sweep of Binh Chan but bogged down rapidly into a static defense. He concluded that if U.S. forces were withdrawn after FAIRFAX, the VC would be in control of the area almost immediately. Enthoven was pleading for the Secretary of Defense to reorient his questioning as he toured the pacification and rural areas. He wanted the SecDef to specifically focus on the infrastructure questions. He recounted what he had seen as the typical briefing on pacification, the one which first covered the demoralization of the VC in area, the reduced number of incidents, but then skipped over the infrastructure question and went on to the pig program, the number of wells dug, hog cholera inoculations and so forth. Accordingly, he suggested that Mr. McNamara might pursue the following questions when talking to briefing officers on the field trip:

1. Is there an intelligence collection center in this district? Is there a U.S. adviser responsible for the center?
2. Who in this district has specific responsibility for rooting out the infrastructure? on the U.S. side? on the GVN side? What unit of command exists in intelligence gathering? in anti-infrastructure operations?
3. In this district what are the assets available for rooting out the infrastructure? Which are available full-time and which are available part-time? Are these assets sufficient given the population of the district, its area, etc?

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

4. In a step-by-step manner how do these assets function in rooting out the infrastructure?
5. What guidelines have you developed to measure success in rooting out the infrastructure? How can you tell how well you are doing?

Despite the prospect that these questions might prove very embarrassing to those giving the briefing, Enthoven felt that they were extremely important and they must be answered or pacification might not ever succeed. Of course, he did not include the crucial question, this being whether or not U.S. forces should be or even could be profitably engaged in pacification. The answer to that question, whatever it may be, could have a significant impact upon how U.S. decision-makers viewed any future increases in U.S. forces justified by the pacification requirement.

Probably the most important paper which the Secretary of Defense took with him as he departed for Saigon on 5 July was a study prepared by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis, Alain Enthoven, entitled "Current Estimate of Additional Deployment Capability." In it, Systems Analysis had updated their original estimate of what the Army could provide and was now convinced that approximately 3-2/3 division equivalents could be provided to MACV by 31 December, 1968 without changing tour policy, calling Reserves, or deploying NATO STRAF units. Although development of this force would require drawing upon critical skills and equipment from NATO STRAF, thus reducing their readiness, the capability plan still satisfied the key requirement of not sheltering the mobilization "pane" while still furnishing the 2-2/3 nominal division force. The 2-2/3 force consisted of (1) the 198th Brigade, which had already been approved for PRACTICE NINE; (2) the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, partially approved and standing offshore, (3) the ARCOV Rifle Company packets for use in making up the 33 additional rifle companies (an earlier approval from the Secretary of the Army had been denied because of the absence of trade-off slots for the 5,500 odd men in this group); 50/ (4) the 101st Airborne Division minus one unit which had already been deployed; (5) the 11th Infantry Brigade and a new Infantry Division. Systems Analysis evaluated the augmentation of 33 additional companies as being worth one Division to which they would add the 2-2/3 that were named units, thereby making up the 3-2/3 Division equivalents. The Table which accompanied this study is shown below.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Additional MACV Requirements
 and Estimated Capabilities
 December 31, 1968 51/

<u>Land Forces</u>	<u>Program 4 as of 3/18/67</u>	<u>MACV 3/18/67 Proposal</u>	<u>Estimated Capability</u>	
Strength (000)	381	170	92	<u>b/</u>
Divisions	8-1/3 <u>a/</u>	4-2/3	2-2/3+1	<u>c/</u>
Maneuver Bns	(87)	(42)	(24+11)	<u>d/</u>
Artillery Bns	60-2/3	31	13	
Engineer Bns	48	14	14	<u>e/</u>
Helicopter Cos.	62	20	10	<u>f/</u>
Signal Bns	11	6	2	

- a/ Excludes 1 Armored Cav Regt.
- b/ Includes 6000 Army contract personnel.
- c/ 2-2/3 nominal division equivalents plus 1 additional division equivalent representing the significance of ARCOV augmentations.
- d/ 24 maneuver battalions plus the equivalent of 11 additional (approximate) because of ARCOV augmentations.
- e/ Includes 6 battalion equivalents of contractor personnel.
- f/ 17 companies by end Feb. 69.

The total basic units strength under this 3-2/3 division equivalent was 51,249 troops, with a total force strength of 86,213. Although the documents which are available are unclear on this point, it appears that Secretary McNamara was prepared to authorize eventual deployment of all of the 3-2/3 division equivalent force. Although, again, the documentation is incomplete it appears that he had been given the green light by the President to negotiate anywhere below this level but not to exceed it, that is, not to bump up against the crucial mobilization line.

Within the staffs preparing the briefings and the background papers for the SecDef as he departed for Saigon there was a generally held belief that this was the scenario which the Saigon visit would follow: The Secretary would explore in detail the justifications for General Westmoreland's minimum essential force after which he and the General would bargain and negotiate the civilianization differences which could be worked out. This "compromise" would be the ultimate force package -- Program V. There was little or any doubt among those working on the exact force levels and composition of the different packages, that the 86,000 total which had been developed in the Systems Analysis memorandum would not be exceeded and probably that the final force program package added would approximate closer to 50-65,000. 52/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The briefings given the Secretary in Saigon divulged very little different from the considerations and arguments presented ad nauseum in Washington. In fact they were devoted to nothing more than supporting the programs already submitted which were under consideration in Washington. But the discussions are useful to get a feel for what greeted McNamara in SEA and the tenor of thought of those operators on the ground in South Vietnam. Ambassador Bunker's remarks were guarded, attributed partly to the fact, as he noted, that he had been in Vietnam barely more than two months; Secretary McNamara and perhaps many others out from Washington had spent more total time in Vietnam than he had. Bunker proclaimed that there was general agreement as to what U.S. objectives were, but he wanted to recall them. They included:

1. A just durable and honorable peace through negotiations leading to a political settlement acceptable to the United States, the GVN, Hanoi and NLF/VC;
2. A chance for the Vietnamese people to choose freely the form of government under which they wish to live;
3. To help them build their own political institutions and develop a viable economy;
4. To make credible our obligations under the Charter of the UN and SEATO to resist aggression;
5. Eventually to develop regional organizations through which the Southeast Asian countries can carry on joint undertakings in economic development and mutual cooperation. 53/

He appraised our progress in the direction of achieving these objectives and noted that the difficulties that we were to face were still formidable. He disliked the term "the other war." To him, it was all one war having many aspects but all a part of the whole with each of them important and essential in achieving a successful conclusion. He thought the problem of Vietnamese capabilities and performance was partially a function of the fact that there was a relatively thin crust of managerial and organizational talent. This talent had to be located and the personnel possessing it trained as we went along. He counseled patience explaining that we could not expect the same degree of competence, efficiency or speed from the Vietnamese that we demanded of ourselves and that this tardiness on the part of the Vietnamese to react often became frustrating and required the exercising of great patience in the future. He did not sound like a man anticipating a quick solution to the problem -- especially a quick military solution. He felt that realism demanded that a number of programs receive top priority. He listed:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

1. A vigorous, imaginative and flexible prosecution of the war within acceptable limits.
2. Through free and honest elections establishing a broadly based stable, functioning, constitutional government.
3. An expedited pacification program which will win the allegiance of the Vietnamese people including the Viet Cong, and which offers them the opportunity to become part of the social fabric of the country.
4. Reorientation of the mission of the Vietnamese Armed Forces and their revitalization with increased emphasis on improvement and quality.
5. The optimum use of available manpower.
6. Economic stability and development. 54/

He was basically optimistic about the progress of the military war:

In a series of splendidly executed offensive operations undertaken by General Westmoreland since late April in which a total of over 12,000 of the enemy have been killed in action, the enemy has been kept off balance and his time schedule has been disrupted. It seems apparent that the main effort of the enemy to achieve his summer campaign objectives has been postponed from May at least until July. General Westmoreland's strategy of anticipating enemy threats has paid off handsomely and is one which he intends to continue in view of what he foresees as an intensification of enemy attempts to achieve his summer campaign objectives.

An encouraging element of these recent operations has been evidence of increased effectiveness of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. In a number of heavy engagements throughout the country ARVN units have turned in highly creditable performances. They contributed materially to the success of the initial operations in the DMZ, killing 342 enemy with a loss of only 31 of their own forces. In a total of 14 other operations in the I Corps area during the past six weeks, ARVN units accounted for 1,400 enemy killed in action. In the II Corps area they also have given a good account of themselves and recently in the Delta

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

area of IV Corps conducted a highly successful operation. I believe that where the ARVN is weakest, however, is in their pacification role where motivation and performance still leave much to be desired. Here, of course, the Regional and Popular Forces are also important elements and all are getting increased attention. While ARVN morale and performance have been improving there is evidence that that of the VC has been declining. It has had increasing difficulties in recruiting and a growing share of the enemy war effort is being assumed by Hanoi. 55/

But he too saw that the crux of the military problem was how to choke off the North Vietnamese infiltration. To him doing this, which he fully believed feasible, carried at least three primary advantages:

a. It would drastically reduce the dimensions of our problem in South Viet-Nam. Militarily we would be dealing only with the Viet Cong whose problems of recruitment and supplies would be enormously multiplied lacking the assistance and reinforcements of North Viet-Nam. I believe the result would be that the Viet Cong would eventually wither on the vine.

b. When the infiltration is choked off, it should be possible to suspend bombings at least for a period and thereby determine whether there is substance to the statement in many quarters that Hanoi would then come to negotiations; we should at least call their bluff.

c. Tensions now existing between the U.S. and Viet-Nam on the one side and Cambodia on the other should be, over a period of time, relieved and our relations with Cambodia improved, even though initially Sihanouk might continue to allow the NVA/VC to use Cambodia as a haven and a source of certain supplies. 56/

He realized full well that the means employed to achieve such an objective, of course, presented many difficult and delicate problems, both military and political, but he expressed confidence "that with imagination and ingenuity, these can be met...."

What is involved, of course, are operations within Laos but I do not believe this fact should present insuperable obstacles. The North Vietnamese Government is a signatory to the 1962 Geneva Accords but its forces have been in Laos both before and since the signing of the Agreements. It is now using Laos as the main route

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

for infiltration into South Viet-Nam. Is it not logical and reasonable, therefore, that South Vietnamese troops should oppose and combat North Vietnamese offensive action by whatever method can be devised in order to prevent the invasion of their country? Guarantees, of course, would have to be given to the Lao Government by the South Vietnamese, and I believe should be underwritten by us, that Vietnamese troops were on Lao territory for defensive purposes only and would be withdrawn immediately when peace is secured. The operation, especially in its preparatory stages, should be carried out with as much security and secrecy as possible. I have made some recommendations as to methods we might use to achieve these objectives. This is a matter which I believe we should pursue with the utmost concentration. 57/

These views, of course, accorded with those which the military had been pressing for some time. COMUSMACV was fortunate in having such a staunch ally in his battle for expanded operations into the sanctuaries as well as the moral support for a more intensive war effort. Bunker concluded his short introduction by outlining his current assessment and summarized by saying that Hanoi's stance was one of determined inflexibility until the situation developed more clearly in favor of either the United States or the North Vietnamese. Under these conditions, he concluded that Hanoi might consider the next six-ten months a crucial time of testing of wills. The period coincided with the monsoon season, most favorable to the VC militarily and this, combined with electoral pressures in South Vietnam followed by the pre-electoral period in the United States with its mounting pressures for resolution of the Vietnam conflict, seemed to indicate to Hanoi that a crucial period of developments was emerging. Bunker estimated that Ho Chi Minh held to the expectation that the United States could not significantly curb infiltration or destroy the VC's military and political capability in the next six to twelve months, and that by their domestic and international political pressures would dominate the course of events demanding some sort of resolution of the war unfavorable to United States interests.

COMUSMACV, who followed the briefing by Ambassador Bunker, interpreted United States overall strategy as one of applying such pressure on the enemy as would destroy his will to continue the aggression. In COMUSMACV's words,

...we must convince the enemy that he cannot win, that time is not on his side. I believe that this strategy will succeed, provided we step up the pressure by reinforcing our mounted successes. The grueling success of our air and sea offensive is being matched by the less dramatic success of our ground campaign. Although our

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

strategy in the South is necessarily defensive, our tactics are decidedly offensive. 58/

Of particular importance General Westmoreland felt was that the enemy had been refused strategic or significant tactical success:

It has been my objective to frustrate the enemy's plans, therefore I have given overriding attention to maneuvering troops to deny them battlefield successes and psychological opportunities.

During the past year, the enemy has --

a. Been forced by our naval operations to abandon plans to bring in large tonnages by sea.

b. Had to resort to use of the long rugged land supply route through Laos.

c. Been denied recruits in the numbers required from the populated areas along the coast, thereby forcing him to supply manpower from North Vietnam.

d. Been denied rice from the coastal provinces of I and II Corps in the quantities required, thereby forcing him to transport rice from North Vietnam or to buy rice from Cambodia. 59/

In summary, COMUSMACV believed that North Vietnam was paying a tremendous price with nothing to show in return. In his words: "The situation is not a stalemate; we are winning slowly but steadily and this pace can accelerate if we reinforce our successes. Therefore, I believe we should step up our operations in pacification in the south, increase the pressure in the north, and exercise new initiatives in Laos." 60/

The J2 estimate which followed COMUSMACV's overall assessment concluded that:

Overall, the enemy must be having personnel problems. His losses have been heavy, and his in-country recruiting efforts unsatisfactory. He is probably attempting to make good his losses by heavy infiltration, but we cannot conclusively prove this, nor do we know how successful he has been. We hear frequently of

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

the so-called "Cross-over point" --- that is, when we put out of action more enemy per month than we estimate he brought into country and recruited for that month. This is a nebulous figure, composed as you have seen of several tenuous variables. We may have reached the "cross-over point" in March and May of this year, but we will not know for some months; 61/

and that the enemy could be expected to:

(1) present a constant threat in widely separated areas, (2) attrite US, FW and ARVN forces, and (3) gain military victories for propaganda purposes.

If our analysis is correct, his Main Forces have failed to carry out their part of the enemy's campaign plan. He has maintained his Main Force units as a threat-in-being, largely at the sacrifice of the other MF tasks. His immediate problem then, must be to improve his MF capabilities and operations.

From this analysis, what can we expect of the enemy in the future? First, we believe that direct participation and control of the war in the South by NVA will increase. The Northern Front, the DMZ Front, and B-3 Front have emerged as major NVA Control Headquarters. North Vietnamese leadership in III CTZ is increasing with the introduction of NVA units and political cadre. Senior Generals in COSVN are North Vietnamese. The B-3 Front and MR 5 are commanded by NVA generals. We have seen an increase in the number of personnel taken from MR III in NVN whereas most of his personnel previously came from MR IV. This indicates an enemy willingness to draw down on his strategic reserves in the North to restore the situation in the South. Another indication of growing NVA control is the increased professionalism of his operations. His equipment is better, he uses heavier and more modern weapons, and his techniques (infantry - artillery coordination) more polished. It is obvious that the NVA effort has increased and will continue to increase as the VC effort falters.

Second, since we foresee increased NVA participation, we believe that the enemy is now, or will shortly, bring in significant numbers of NVA infiltrators or units. He must attempt to reinforce the units in the coastal areas. He must attempt to regain the initiative around the periphery of SVN. He must attempt to attrite us. To do this he will need more strength than we now see at hand.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

To support this build-up the Laos corridor becomes increasingly important to the enemy....You know of the location of base areas in the Laos Panhandle which serve as logistical, rest, and training bases and permit the orderly movement of both men and material to SVN. There has been heavy truck movement through the Laos Panhandle which began in November and December and continued throughout the dry season. To improve his capability of supporting the war in SVN, he has constructed numerous bypasses at critical points along roads throughout the Panhandle, extended Route 922 east into the Ashau Valley, and improved and extended Route 96 south to Route 110 and Base Area 609....Prior to the onset of the Monsoon Season, Route 110 was a heavily used, main supply route leading from Cambodia, through Laos into SVN.

Use of Cambodia will also be increased....The enemy has established a Military Region 10 in SVN which extends into Cambodia. He has stated that MR 10 is to become the biggest base area of the war. He has formed a replacement and refitting center reported to be 8,000 strong, in the Fishhook Area for units badly mauled in SVN. An agent recently reported a VC arsenal in the Parrot's Beak which produces assorted mines, and repairs weapons. We do know that the Parrot's Beak area is often used by the VC in moving men and supplies between Tay Ninh Province and the Delta. 62/

Such an analysis held little prospect for the fading away which had been predicted for this time of year in 1967. Furthermore, these trends carried with them significant developments in terms of future enemy operations and these operations tended to shape the strategy which COMUSMACV was planning to pursue for the remainder of the year. The J2 summarized by noting, first, the advantages and disadvantages of the so-called enemy "peripheral strategy," an exercise which emphasized that the Laos and Cambodia sanctuaries were becoming increasingly important to the enemy:

What does this mean in terms of future enemy operations? From peripheral base areas in NVN, Laos, and Cambodia, he can launch attacks designed to draw us into the border areas.... These operations can be mounted from terrain which is most difficult for our intelligence effort to penetrate. When forced to withdraw, the enemy will have sanctuaries into which he can move to break contact, rest, refit and train. This arrangement gives him flexibility in choice of operational objectives. For example, he can launch offensive operations through the DMZ, he can attempt to seize the two

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

northern provinces; he can attempt a thrust through the Central Highlands from Base Area 609 toward the coast, he can threaten Pleiku and Darlac; he can launch an offensive from MR 10 toward Phuc Tuy Province. Obviously, he can combine several of these options. When he encroaches from the sanctuaries in force, we must go to meet him. We cannot permit him to win territory, intimidate the people, and move freely about the countryside and thus, gain the psychological victory he wants.

This enemy "peripheral strategy" has disadvantages, too. He will have to move supplies from secure areas in Laos and Cambodia to those units located deep inside SVN, where once he might have supported them with relative ease by sea. Weather conditions impose restrictions upon his land lines of communication, especially during the wet season. POL and wheeled vehicle requirements are increased as is his maintenance needs. Inside SVN, he will be hard pressed to support large scale military operations along the coastal plains because of his long, insecure, LOC's. Thus, he will find it difficult to make his main force presence felt in the heavily populated areas. In turn, this will reduce his access to manpower, taxes, rice and other supplies normally procured from these populated coastal areas.

SUMMARY

In summary, here are the significant elements of the enemy situation as we see them:

1. His strategy of the war of attrition is unchanged, and his determination to carry it out is evident.
2. He has been hurt, particularly in the coastal areas of II Corps and around Saigon.
3. His Main Forces have not carried out their part of the enemy's strategic plan.
4. His Main Force units require additional strength to carry out their role.
5. The war is becoming more and more an NVA war, and Laos and Cambodia are becoming increasingly important to him. 63/

The J3 briefing continually emphasized that a major redistribution of U.S. forces had been required to take full advantage of the opportunities to engage the enemy. This was especially true in I, II and

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

III CTZ's, primarily in the DMZ area, in the Qui Nonh and in the border regions at the juncture of Kontum and Pleiku Provinces. After a brief discussion of the different force packages which had been requested by COMUSMACV/CINCPAC, the J3 went on to outline the major tasks to be accomplished. They were:

- 1) Contain enemy at borders
- 2) Locate and destroy VC/NVA
- 3) Neutralize enemy base areas
- 4) Maximum support to RD
- 5) Open and secure LOC
- 6) Interdict enemy LOC
- 7) Secure key installations
- 8) Emphasize Psy Ops 64/

J3 then presented a comparison of friendly and enemy maneuver battalions projected thru 30 June 1967. Then, he compared maneuver battalions, this time applying a weighted factor of 3 to each U.S. and Free World battalion and a factor of 1 for each RVNAF or VC/NVA battalion. These tables are shown on the following page. 65/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

MANEUVER BATTALIONS

	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>RVNAF</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
31 Dec 66	79	23	153	255
30 Jun 67	85	23	154	262
837 RF Co's and 4028 PF Plt's				
30 Jun 68	111	24	154	289
Prog 4	(8)			
MEF	(18)			

MANEUVER BATTALION COMPARISON

	<u>VC/NVA</u> <u>MNVR BNS</u>	<u>US/FW/GVN</u> <u>MNVR BNS</u>	<u>BN EQUIVALENT</u> <u>RATIOS*</u>
End FY 66	161	220	2.2
End FY 67	162	262	3.1
End FY 68	162 (?)	289	3.5

* 1 US/FW Bn Equivalent to 3 VC/NVA Bn

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Using these figures as a basis for comparison the J3 then detailed what the enemy threats appeared to be especially in light of increased or continued enemy infiltration. To meet these threats he listed three roles in which our forces were deployed. One, containment or anti-invasion forces, countered the threat along the DMZ and were needed for deployment opposite enemy sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia. Two, pacification and security forces required for support of RD and security of base installations in LOC's; and three, offensive forces required to defeat the enemy in the main force war and to invade his in-country base areas. Under Course of Action A (Minimum Essential) - 21 battalions were required for containment; 168 for pacification and security; and 100 for main force offensive, for a total of 289 by the end of FY 67. These were, in the words of J-3 "within the time frame under discussion a fixed overhead or a down payment on winning the war which must be paid." 66/

Under Course of Action B (Optimum), the J3 estimated that containment forces would be increased to 27, this being based on the need to counter the expected increased build-up of enemy forces along the DMZ, in Laos and in Cambodia, all assumed possible because of restraints on air interdiction plus the enemy's continued freedom of action in the trans-border sanctuaries.

Of the 42 U.S. battalions then committed to pacification/security, 16 were in support of RD, 13 were in combined pacification/security roles, and an additional 13 were assigned base and line of communication security missions. Of the 22 free world battalions, 21 were on pacification and security roles and one on a security role only. Of the 80 RVN armed force battalions 53 were assigned RD support roles and an additional 27 were assigned security missions. Of the total number of maneuver battalions available at the end of FY 67, 25 U.S., one Free World and 71 ARVN battalions were considered available for offensive operations. Then, using the battalion equivalents which he had quoted earlier, the J3 analyzed what he had labelled Courses A and B:

For a discussion of offensive capabilities under course of action A and B, let us turn to the second slide (UU). It summarizes the previous one and shows the aggregate number of US, Free World, and GVN battalions by the role to which committed. Note that the 97 battalions available for offensive operations at the end of FY 67 increases to 100 under course of action B. However, these numbers do not give the true picture. By applying the battalion equivalent ratio of 3 for a US or Free World battalion and 1 for an ARVN battalion, the offensive

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

capabilities at present are 149 ARVN bn equivalents. Course of action A represents a 34% increase (200 bn equivalents) over our present offensive capability. Course of action B represents only a 4% increase (155) over our present offensive capability. These offensive forces are what remain after commitment of forces to containment of the enemy threat and pacification and security. (The end FY 67 column was the actual distribution of units as of 30 June 1967. However, during any given week the forces in the containment and offensive roles, and to a lesser degree, those performing pacification/security missions will vary. It would be misleading to say they represent precise estimates, rather the numbers are representative of the basic distribution of our forces to varying roles and illustrative of the type of war we are fighting.) It is possible that additional forces may be required for containment since the 27 battalions represent only an estimate of what will be necessary. If so, we may be required to take units from the pacification and security or offensive roles. Should this be required, course of action A provides a greater operational flexibility for offensive action or reinforcement of our containment forces. Under course of action B, however, response to contingencies must be met at the expense of forces committed to pacification and security or offensive roles.

In summary, the reduced forces under course of action B; the limitation of air operations north of 20° latitude; and the restriction of ground action to South Vietnam could reinforce Hanoi's determination to prolong the conflict. In particular, the restriction of out-of-country air and ground operations would increase the enemy's capability to concentrate his defense, maintain his LOC's and require us to divert additional ground forces to the containment role. Under these circumstances, we present the enemy increased options to prolonging the war. Course of action B does not provide us with reasonable assurance that, given the present objectives, there would be any prospects of an early settlement of the conflict. This is not to imply we might not eventually win the war of attrition but it would be a long drawn out process and would postpone the time when US forces could redeploy from South Vietnam. 67/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The sum total of the briefings did not vary from what McNamara had heard so many times before: that there was an increasing NVA presence in control of the war; that it was increasingly becoming a main force battle; that the sanctuaries were becoming increasingly important to the enemy both for the logistics and tactical advantages they offered. It was clear that MACV's view of the war in these terms, as increasingly a main force battle to be fought by American units, had considerable influence upon the strategies that they pursued, as well as their calculations of resources required to carry them out. By the final day of his visit in Saigon no resolution of the ground force requirements had really been arrived at. However, on the final evening, Secretary McNamara and General Westmoreland, accompanied by General Abrams sat down after dinner and worked out what seemed to be an equitable provision of forces below the mobilization level. In this, they took what was commonly accepted as available, approximately the 3-2/3 divisions outlined by Enthoven, and subtracted those which the COMUSMACV had stated were possibly available for civilianization during the next year, some 14,400. Computed, this came to approximately a 45,000 force increase, since part of the PRACTICE NINE barrier brigade had already been included in the Program 5 total.

The events of the next week, July 8-13, indicated that COMUSMACV was not completely prepared to support the 525,000 level which was agreed upon, a level, incidentally, which coincided with the old program 4 optimum request submitted by COMUSMACV in the fall of the previous year. General Dunn, who was General Westmoreland's force planner, worked his staff throughout the night prior to the Secretary of Defense's departure on the 9th. He prepared a rough troop list under the 525,000 limit which he hand carried back to the Joint Staff for refinement. 68/

6. The Compromise--Slightly More of the Same

At the point of Secretary McNamara's return to Washington, planning on force structures travelled along two parallel tracks for the next week. As General Dunn conferred with the JCS and the Joint Staff and they tried to refine the force within the 525,000 level, Secretary McNamara initiated a study in Systems Analysis to flesh out the 525,000, or as so often was the case, to prepare the OSD position with which to compare and evaluate the JCS recommendation which would come. According to Mr. McNamara's instructions to Secretary Enthoven, the 525,000 package would include 19 battalions in addition to the 87 already included in Program 4 through the previous March. The sources of the 19 battalions were to be as follows: 3 PRACTICE NINE barrier brigade; 3 from the 9th MAB, 6 from the deployment of the 101st Airborne Division; 3 from the 11th Infantry Division (the Brigade in Hawaii), and 4 new battalions formed in lieu of the 24 rifle companies proposed in the ARCOV recommendation. In addition to these 19 battalions, 9 ARCOV rifle company equivalents, equivalent to three more battalions in foxhole strength, would be

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

approved if they could be included in the 525,000 ceiling. (This accounts for the original ARCOV total of 33 battalions dropping out in the subsequent figures and planning for Program 5). The 525,000 also included five TFS, 3 Air Force and two Marine. Of these squadrons, two Air Force would be scheduled to move. The other three would be included in the plan but without a movement schedule, although as a footnote, "their availability when needed" was recognized. Enthoven proceeded by directing that Program 5 should be prepared for publication with a strength of 525,000 minus the strengths of the three air squadrons now scheduled for deployment. 69/

Another subject which occupied much focus of attention in early July when Program 5 approached final approval was how to go about obtaining additional troops from our allies in South Vietnam.

A 13 July 1967 memorandum for Rusk, McNamara, Rostow and Katzenbach, Subject: Messages to Manila Nations and Possibilities for Additional Troop Contributions, prepared by William P. Bundy following a luncheon with the President indicates just how urgently everyone saw the problem and how much they desired to obtain troops from these sources. In accordance with the directives at the luncheon, Bundy had put together a series of letters making the need for additional forces more clear and blunt. Even though the letters were all put in terms of early indication of prospects or exchanges of views rather than a blunt request for additional forces, the message was unmistakable. 70/ Australia and New Zealand were seen as being prepared to come in with "more" but it was expected that their contribution would be modest in relation to the need, perhaps 2,000 or 3,000 from the Australians and a few hundred from the New Zealanders. The Philippines were characterized as a "doubtful starter," at least in the immediate future. Anything over 2,000 from the Philippines by whatever route seemed highly unlikely. In Korea, Park himself seemed to be willing, but he had already fended off the Vice President's general approach completely and it was clear that he intended to get his political situation straightened out before he moved with any additional forces for the United States. At best Korea appeared to be a prospect for action in late fall and with perhaps an additional division coming by the end of the year. Thailand was considered a possibility with the thought that it might come through with an additional 3 - 5,000 over the next six months, but it would, in Bundy's words, "take very careful handling." In fact, earlier on 3 July the President had had a conversation with the King of Thailand on just this very subject. The President had posed the problem raised for the United States by the need to respond to General Westmoreland's request for an additional 200,000 troops. He said that it would be impossible for him, President Johnson, to get support for such additional forces unless the troop-contributing allies also put in more

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

troops on a proportional basis. Thanat pointed out that when the Thai government asked for 2,500 volunteers in Vietnam, 50,000 had come forward, but the King pointed out the problem was not men willing to fight, but training and weapons. The President said that we could help with training and equipment. The problem was to get a distribution of the 200,000 which was fair and equitable. The President then asked Mr. Rostow on the basis of population how might the extra 200,000 be distributed? Rostow had replied that it came out to something like 125,000 and 75,000, with Thailand required to put up about 20,000 as its share. The King then cited three problems: the quality of recruits, to which the President had said we also had to draw on and train men of lower IQ and physical quality than we might wish; the training and equipment of additional troops and the improved equipment of the forces left behind in Thailand. The King elaborated at some length on the psychological and political problems posed by the latter element, saying it was very hard for the military to accept sending troops abroad well equipped when they themselves were lacking in modern equipment. After discussing the specific equipment, the President telephoned Secretary McNamara and informed him of the King's response to which McNamara said that it would not be worth our while to train and equip a few thousand more Thais for Vietnam but if Thailand could furnish 10,000 he could guarantee their training and equipment. 71/

On 20 July, the Joint Chiefs of Staff responded to the request from the Secretary of Defense for the detailed troop list providing the specified forces for COMUSMACV within the ceiling of 525,000. Significantly in this JCSM, the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not concur in the inclusion of the elements of the 9th MAB and the non-deployed tactical fighter squadrons in the Republic of Vietnam ceiling. They argued that the 9th MAB was already included for PACOM under Program 4 and that it had never been included as part of the MACV force structure and was not added in the RVN spaces in MACV's package 5 alternative force structure. They wanted to maintain a string on it since the brigade was ticketed for the PACOM Reserve and subject to employment in other areas depending upon the criticality of the contingency. The Chiefs wanted the 9th MAB when ashore in RVN to be carried as a temporary augmentation as was being done under Program 4. Similarly, they wanted the Tactical Fighter Squadrons to be maintained in a "ready to deploy status" outside of RVN, included in the RVN ceiling only if and when they deployed in-country. They also expressed doubt as to whether MACV could recruit suitable civilian personnel in the competitive market on a civilian direct-hire basis to replace 8,100 military spaces. They believed "that the forces included in the attached troop list will contribute significantly to the prosecution of the war, but are less than those recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in JCSM 218-67, dated 20 April 1967, Subject: Force Requirements -- Southeast Asia, FY 1968. The views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as set forth in JCSM 288-67 which also provided an assessment of U.S. worldwide military posture are still

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

considered valid." 72/ This was, of course, reaffirming a force requirement of 2-1/3 divisions "minimum essential" and the add-on 2-1/3 division for the "optimum" in FYs 68 and 69 respectively.

On 21 July, Systems Analysis prepared a comparison of the JCS recommendations as contained in JCSM 416-67 and those proposed by OSD. The OSD proposal was actually prepared in Systems Analysis per McNamara's earlier 13 July directive. The major differences between OSD & JCS occurred both over the MAB and the TFS battalion which we just outlined and the civilianization issue with the JCS recommendation requiring over 12,000 civilianization slots and the OSD recommendation not quite half that number. A summary table of the two recommendations appears below. 73/

JCS Recommendations

	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>AF</u>	<u>MC</u>	<u>Total</u>
Program #4	323,735 a/	30,039	56,148	74,550	484,472
FY 68 Added Forces	34,398 b/	7,772	3,380	7,523 c/	53,073
Civilianization	d/	d/	d/	d/	-12,545
Program #5	358,133 d/	37,811 d/	59,528 d/	82,073 d/	525,000

OSD Recommendations

Program #4	323,735 a/	30,039	56,148	74,550	484,472
FY 68 Added Forces	33,297 b/	4,234	2,242	7,523 c/	47,296
Civilianization e/	-5,414	- 812	- 542	-	-6,768
Program #5	351,618	33,461	57,848	82,073	525,000

- a/ Includes the 198th Brigade (3 Infantry battalions)
- b/ Includes the 101 Div (-), 11th Brigade and 3 separate battalions (13 infantry battalions)
- c/ Includes 9th MAB, currently authorized in SVN until 1 Sept. (3 infantry battalions)
- d/ Less Service portion of civilianization to be determined.
- e/ OSD estimate of Service breakout of civilianization. Actual breakdown is undetermined.

There were several decisions which Enthoven in his memorandum to McNamara recommended be deferred for the time being. These included an Army intelligence augmentation and a MACV headquarters JTV, a Navy request for two mobile construction battalions, two construction battalion maintenance units and various staffs as well as an Air Force A-1 TFS civil engineer squadron and UC 123 herbicide augmentation. JCSM 218-67 which recommended the original MACV "minimum essential force" included certain out of country forces also, primarily three tactical fighter

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

squadrons in Thailand, five additional destroyers and two battleships and two cruisers for naval gunfire support. Although these forces were not specifically addressed in the latest JCSM 416-67, Enthoven recommended that they be addressed at that time. Accordingly, he recommended that the TFS recommended by the JCS be unfavorably considered since he felt it would not contribute significantly to our effort in Southeast Asia and that one battleship be authorized and that other than that the increments in JCSM 218-67 be disapproved. These recommendations were approved by Secretary McNamara in a memorandum for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, dated 10 August. In it, he wrote:

I tentatively approve for planning the forces as recommended for SVN in the enclosure to JCSM 416-67 dated July 20, 1967 except for those units and augmentations listed in the enclosure, pending submission of adequate justification. The 9th MAB, the rotational APB, and tactical air squadrons ready for deployment will be included in the 525,000 SVN U.S. strength ceiling. Deployment authority for the two VMA/VMFA Marine squadrons will be considered separately.

The table below summarizes the approved force levels.

	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>AF</u>	<u>MC</u>	<u>Total</u>
Program #4	323,735	30,039	56,148	74,550	484,472
FY 68 Added Forces	33,297	4,234 ^{a/}	2,242	7,523	47,296
Civilianization	-5,414	- 812	- 542	-	-6,768
Program #5	351,618	33,461	57,848	82,073	525,000

a/ Includes transfer of 1 APB (199 personnel) from offshore to in-country.

I recognize that the FY 68 troop list has not been refined. In order to provide for timely budget actions, please submit for my detailed review your refined troop list, with detailed justification by September 15, 1967. Your submission should include a monthly schedule of civilianization/tradeoffs, identified by unit and Service, in order to insure that U.S. forces in SVN do not exceed 525,000. For planning purposes, Program #5 will reflect a total civilianization, trade-off schedule as follows:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

	<u>Jan 68</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Total</u>
Army	500	500	1000	1000	1000	1414	5414
Navy	100	100	100	100	200	212	812
AF	-	100	100	100	100	142	542

Any added requirements in your refined troop list including deferred units should be fully justified and accompanied by corresponding civilianization or trade-off spaces.

The additional out-of-country forces proposed in JCSM 218-67 are not approved except for the 5 additional destroyers for gunfire support. These destroyers are approved providing they can be made available from existing active fleet assets. In addition, I am considering the activation and deployment of 1 battleship in a separate action.

This was in the ratification of Program 5 which was to be formally published on 14 August. 74/

The final decision in mid-August came as no surprise to either the public or to the Secretaries or to anyone included in the distribution of the finished program for that matter, for in his tax budget message to Congress on 4 August President Johnson had disclosed plans to dispatch between 45 and 50,000 troops to Vietnam bringing the total to 525,000. A New York Times article noted that it was a "compromise between the 70,000 men sought by Westmoreland and the 15-30,000 men suggested by Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara." That it was. However, the announcement was greeted in both the public press and in the public consciousness with a certain resignation which bordered on apathy. Clark Clifford and General Maxwell Taylor had already been dispatched to the Far East, ostensibly to visit allies and to explain the course of American policy in the war, but there was little secret that they were out scrounging troops and trying to induce commitments from some of the nations which had already contributed or those which were being reluctant to contribute more. Their return on 6 August only increased the public pressure for they reported "wide agreement among allies fighting in South Vietnam to increasing pressure on the enemy." A day later, Johnny Apple's article on "stalemate" broached the subject in the public press. In it, Apple outlined in consummate detail the infiltration figures showing that the United States was failing to "win" the big war because of the ability of the North Vietnamese to reinforce faster than we could kill them; he quoted the infiltration statistics both official and those which he had derived from his time in Vietnam from "unofficial sources," all quite accurate. He cited the constant need for reinforcements as a measure of our failure. The article which received wide circulation both in Vietnam and especially in the decision-making circles of the Pentagon merely confirmed what many had been saying officially and unofficially for some time -- that infiltration was a

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

crucial variable; that there was no indication that the North Vietnamese had lost stomach for the war; nor did the NVA lack the capability to reinforce at a much higher level than we had anticipated.

As Program 5 broke almost as if programmed, General H. K. Johnson announced in his visit to Saigon that there was "a smell of success in every major area of the war." In a Senate Preparedness Subcommittee report given by Senator Stennis he repeated their incessant demand that we have a sharp intensification of the air war over North Vietnam in an attempt to stem the infiltration. General Cao Van Bien, Chief of Staff of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces said he was convinced, however, that bombing of North Vietnam would never adequately control infiltration. That "we have to solve the problem of Laos and Cambodia and the sanctuaries or the war might last 30 years."

The program which emerged and was ratified in this environment, of public debate and concern, was essentially the result of the circular path traced far back to the optimum request of Program 4. Its origins and its limits can be traced to one primary factor -- that of mobilization. When the President and the Secretary of Defense, as well as other Congressional leaders and politically attuned decision makers in the government began to search for the illusive point at which the costs of Vietnam would become inordinate, they always settled upon the mobilization line, the point at which Reserves and large units would have to be called up to support a war which was becoming increasingly distasteful and intolerable to the American public. Domestic resource constraints with all of their political and social repercussions, not strategic or tactical military considerations in Vietnam, were to dictate American war policy from that time on.

7. Follow-Ons

Hardly had the ink dried on approval of Program 5 deployments, when pressures began to build for the acceleration of these deployments to Vietnam. On 6 September 1967, the Acting Chairman informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he had been queried as to what could be done to speed up or accelerate Program 5 deployments. Although ostensibly the reason for accelerated deployments was to meet the threat in the DMZ and I CTZ, the Acting Chairman indicated he had been specifically asked to look at:

- a. What could be done prior to Christmas.
- b. What could be done prior to March 12, the date of the New Hampshire primary election.

The Chiefs were to look into the subject on an urgent basis and to provide their views to the Acting Chairman by 9 September 1967. 75/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

A Director's Memorandum to the Acting Chairman, in response to this inquiry, was forwarded on 9 September. This Memorandum indicated that the refined Program 5 troop list then being developed by the Joint Staff indicated that a total of 62,132 Program 5 forces had not been ordered deployed as of that date. Of these, approximately 9% were scheduled to be deployed in Calendar Year 67, 35% to be deployed 1 January to 1 March 1968, and the remainder scheduled to be deployed after 1 March. Most of the forces scheduled to deploy in FY 1969 were controlled by long lead time equipment and were not subject to acceleration into the January-February 1968 time frame. A hurried analysis, however, indicated that about 1,700 Navy personnel, scheduled to deploy after 1 March, might be accelerated to January-February 1968 deployments. Since neither the Air Force nor the Marines had an appreciable number scheduled to deploy after 1 March 1968, the fruitful area for further exploration quickly turned to the Army capability for accelerating deployment. The bulk of the Army combatant units was scheduled to deploy in February-March 1968. These included the 101st Airborne Division (-), and the 11th Light Infantry Brigade in February 1968, and 4 separate infantry battalions in March 1968.

The Army indicated that 1 brigade task force plus the division headquarters, approximately 4,500 personnel, of the 101st Airborne Division (-), could, in fact, be accelerated to arrive in-country by 15 December 1967, and the remainder of the division (-), approximately 5,500 personnel, could be accelerated to arrive in-country on 31 January 1968, under the following conditions:

- a. Movement by air would be required and would cost \$15M more than movement by surface;
- b. Non-divisional support units which were planned to accompany the division could not be accelerated; therefore the support must be provided by in-country resources.
- c. Additional unit training in-country of approximately four weeks would be required before the units would be fully combat ready.

The 11th Light Infantry Brigade could be accelerated for arrival in-country by 31 January 1968, if it were to be deployed by air.

The Director's memorandum listed several possible actions to be explored with the Services which might speed up Program 5 deployments. Among these were:

1. Delay commencement of civilianization program until after 1 March 1968. Thereafter use personnel released by civilianization for fill of skeleton units or for in-country activation of new units.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

2. Deploy unit without equipment to join like unit in South Vietnam for double shifting on the available equipment. This pertains primarily to service support type units.
3. Withdraw deployable elements from existing combat/mission ready units in CONUS and Europe for deployment to South Vietnam. Replace these units by others presently being readied for South Vietnam.
4. Draw down personnel and equipment from existing units in CONUS (including reserve equipment) and Europe as required to expedite readiness of units for deployment.
5. Substitute ready units located in CONUS and Europe for early deployment to South Vietnam for those units which cannot be readied by 1 March 1968.
6. Deploy units to South Vietnam in substandard readiness condition in personnel, training and/or equipage. Raise the unit to satisfactory state of combat/mission readiness in South Vietnam prior to commitment to combat or combat service support role.
7. Deploy units to bases in PACOM (Hawaii, Guam, Okinawa, Philippines, Japan and Korea) in substandard readiness condition in personnel, training and/or equipage. Raise unit to satisfactory state of combat/mission readiness at these bases and then move them into South Vietnam.
8. Establish training facilities at PACOM bases and in Vietnam or use existing ARVN facilities there to complete training of units deployed under conditions defined in 6 and 7 above.
9. Services expedite funding and equipment and material procurement so units can be equipped ahead of present Program 5 schedule.
10. Surge air and surface transportation means in cases where transportation is pacing factor to early deployments.
11. Provide inducements to reserves with desired skills to volunteer for active service.
12. Accelerate and compress training schedules. 76/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The Acting Chairman (General Johnson) apparently took the Director, Joint Staff Memorandum to the White House on 12 September. The nature of the discussion is not known. However, upon his return from the White House, General Johnson indicated that the President desired the Joint Staff to indicate recommended actions, within present policy limitations, which would increase pressure on North Vietnam. 77/ Nothing was said concerning accelerated deployments, and the Joint Staff did not further consider this subject.

However, on 16 September 1968, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army indicated that the Army had re-analyzed its capability to deploy the 101st Airborne Division (-) to Vietnam and had determined that a brigade task force and a headquarters and control element of the division (approximately 4,500 personnel) could be deployed by air to close in Vietnam before Christmas. The remainder of the division (-) could either deploy by surface to close in Vietnam before February or could deploy by air in mid to late January 1968 to close before TET (31 January 1968). 78/

On 22 September, the Secretary of Defense approved the plan to deploy the brigade task force and headquarters element by air in December 1967, but indicated that a decision on the accelerated deployment of the remainder of the division would be made at a later date. 79/

In the meantime, on 15 September, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved and forwarded to the Secretary of Defense the refined troop list for the "tentatively approved FY 1968 additive forces for South Vietnam and a civilianization schedule to remain within the specific military personnel strength ceiling of 525,000." Civilianization, the 525,000 ceiling, plus Program 4 trade-offs, permitted an additive force structure of 50,978 for FY 1968, which was allocated as follows: Army 39,365; Navy 7,483; Marine Corps 969; and Air Force 3,161.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff pointed out again, however, that even with the high civilianization goal, many requirements still could not be accommodated.

For example, a Marine Corps requirement for 6,124 spaces plus integral Navy personnel to permit III MAF to be manned at full strength is not included in the troop list. This requirement is based on modification of existing T/Os and augmentations caused by the nature of operations being conducted in I CTZ, the introduction of newer and more sophisticated equipment, and the expanding functions and responsibilities being assigned to III MAF. The Marine Corps has indicated that approximately 3,500 of these additional Marines could be provided by December 1967. Also, both the Army and Air Force identified additional priority requirements that could not be incorporated within ceiling; approximately

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

3,000 spaces for the Army and 1,000 for the Air Force. These requirements, and others, now outside the ceiling, will be the subject for future recommendations.

Inclusion of elements of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, which CINCPAC plans to operate ashore in South Vietnam only on a temporary basis, of nondeploying tactical fighter squadrons, and of the 1,164 spaces for the augmented hospital facilities for civilian war casualties, as directed by references, has further reduced the force level recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in JCSM-218-67, dated 20 April 1967, subject: "Force Requirements - Southeast Asia FY 1968 (U)," and prevented inclusion of high priority units and personnel, some of which are now available for deployment. 80/

The major differences in the refined troop list were the addition of 3 light helicopter companies, 2 C-140 jet aircraft for the Ambassador and visiting dignitaries, a Radio Research Aviation Company, and a Marine fixed-wing reconnaissance squadron. Additionally, the helicopter requirements included ambulance detachments and helicopters in the supporting aviation headquarters for the 101st Airborne Division and the Americal Division. Other lower priority units were deleted.

The Secretary of Defense, on 5 October, approved for deployment those forces listed in JCSM 505-67, and indicated that subsequent requests for additional high priority units should be accompanied by appropriate trade-offs to insure forces remained within the total personnel authorization of 525,000. 81/

On 28 September, General Westmoreland forwarded to CINCPAC and the JCS his plan for reorienting in-country forces for the northeast monsoon season. This reassessment of planned operations and force deployments was necessitated, COMUSMACV indicated, in view of the accelerated deployment of the 101st Airborne Division and the heavy enemy pressure in I CTZ. COMUSMACV indicated that his overall fall-winter objectives were to:

- A. Relieve the 1st Cav Div in Binh Dinh and commit it to successive country-wide offensive operations...
- B. Reinforce I CTZ to the extent practicable without unduly retarding other progress.
- C. Move additional elements of the 9th Inf Div to the Delta.
- D. Reinforce III CTZ so that we can attack during favorable weather...and force the enemy into a vulnerable posture away from populated areas. 82/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

The prospective early arrival of the 101st Airborne Division, General Westmoreland indicated,

...will now allow for initiation of planned operations in III CTZ while diverting the 1st Cav Div to I CTZ as required by the intensified enemy situation there. To insure adequate combat ready forces for III CTZ operations, I now plan to delay the movement of additional 9th Div elements to the delta; however, a Vietnamese Marine battalion will deploy to IV CTZ to reinforce our mobile Riverine operations planned for that area.

3. (TS) These moves are carefully planned to preclude any regression in the vital coastal areas of II CTZ; to insure that the ultimate posture of forces required to meet objectives for next year is not changed significantly; to do that is necessary to relieve and reverse the situation near the DMZ; and to conduct large scale operations in selected areas when weather is favorable. By this reoriented effort I desire to preempt the enemy strategy of attempting to tie down forces and denude the pacification shield. 83/

General Westmoreland indicated that higher authority could provide him the following additional assistance to help accomplish his strategy:

A. Accelerate the deployment of the 101st Div to close all major elements of the Div prior to 20 December 1967. This will facilitate early combat readiness of this force and allow its employment in late January...

B. Continue the retention of the elements of 9th MAB now in-country. My evaluation now of the situation in I CTZ indicates a continuing requirement for this force through the spring of 1968.

C. Accelerate deployment of 11th Separate Infantry BDE to arrive in-country during December 1967. Early arrival would permit early release of the 173d ABN Bde which would be employed in II CTZ. A consideration in all accelerated deployments is the possibility of an extended holiday moratorium resulting in an agreement of status quo on force deployments. 84/

In a memorandum for the President on 4 October 1967, the Secretary of Defense indicated the actions taken to date on COMUSMACV's recommendations, to include:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

- (1) Recommendation: Accelerate the deployment of the 101st Division to close all major elements of the Division prior to 20 December 1967.

Action: Deployment of a brigade task force (3 battalions) of the 101st Airborne Division had already been accelerated from February 1968 to December 1967. The Army now believes that deployment of the remaining brigade can be accelerated from February 1968 to January 1968.

- (2) Recommendation: Retain the elements of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade now in-country.

Action: The current deployment plan authorizes this action.

- (3) Recommendation: Accelerate deployment of the 11th Separate Infantry Brigade from February 1968 to December 1967.

Action: The Secretary of the Army believes this date can be met. 85/

The Army, meanwhile, continued to assess the possibility of accelerating deployment of its Program 5 combat units.

On 16 October 1967, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army indicated that the remainder of the 101st AB Division could be deployed by air to close in Vietnam by 20 December 1967. This accelerated deployment would require the completion of four weeks of training in-country prior to commitment to combat. Additional transportation costs to the Army would be \$10 M, and support of the element in South Vietnam over the CONUS cost for the same period would be approximately \$5.3 M. The acceleration, however, would not provide General Westmoreland an operational element earlier than now programmed, but would ensure the Division's early closure in South Vietnam in the event of an extended moratorium on deployment at Christmas. 86/ In response to this memorandum, the Secretary of Defense asked: "Why spend \$15M without an earlier operational capability"? 87/ On 20 October the Secretary of the Army indicated that, contrary to his earlier assertion, the Division would be available for operations in South Vietnam five weeks earlier than the Program 5 availability date.

The Program 5 availability date, using surface transportation and allowing for one month's in-country orientation, is 1 March 1968. Using air movement and conducting the normal one-month orientation concurrent with completion of training will provide an availability date of 22 January 1968. 88/

On 21 October, the Secretary of Defense approved the Army recommendation to deploy by air the remainder of the 101st Airborne Division (-) in December 1967. 89/

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

On 31 October, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army replied to General Westmoreland's request for the deployment of the 11th Infantry Brigade to arrive in Vietnam before Christmas. He stated that the Army Staff had determined that the Brigade could be deployed on or about December 10, by surface transportation from Hawaii to close in South Vietnam by 24 December. It would be necessary for the Brigade to have the same kind of in-country training on arrival in South Vietnam as the 101st Airborne Division (-). The only additional costs involved would be the slightly increased operating costs from having the unit in South Vietnam one month earlier and being combat ready in January rather than in February. 90/

On 6 November, Secretary of Defense approved the Army request for the early deployment of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade by surface transportation to South Vietnam in December 1967, and directed that necessary in-country training should be conducted in a low risk area. 91/

In the meantime, on 17 October 1967, the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded to the President through the Secretary of Defense their reply to the questions raised by the President at the White House luncheon on 12 September concerning what military actions consistent with present policy guidelines would serve to increase pressure on North Vietnam, thereby accelerating the rate of progress toward achievement of the U.S. objective in South Vietnam. 92/

The Chiefs considered that North Vietnam was paying heavily for its aggression and had lost the initiative in the South. They further considered that many factors indicated a military trend favorably to Free World Forces in Vietnam. However, they again concluded that if acceleration in the pace of progress was to be achieved, an appropriate increase in military pressure was required.

The Chiefs then reiterated the policy guidelines established for the conduct of military operations in SEA to achieve U.S. objectives, among which were:

- a. We seek to avoid widening the war into a conflict with Communist China or the USSR.
- b. We have no present intention of invading NVN.
- c. We do not seek the overthrow of the Government of NVN.
- d. We are guided by the principles set forth in the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962. 93/

In a rather resigned tone, the Joint Chiefs indicated that they considered the rate of progress to have been and to continue to be slow largely because U.S. military power has been constrained in a manner

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

which had reduced significantly its impact and effectiveness. Limitations have been imposed on military operations in four ways, they indicated:

- a. The attacks on the enemy military targets have been on such a prolonged, graduated basis that the enemy has adjusted psychologically, economically, and militarily, e.g., inured themselves to the difficulties and hardships accompanying the war, dispersed their logistic support system, and developed alternate transport routes and a significant air defense system.
- b. Areas of sanctuary, containing important military targets, have been afforded the enemy.
- c. Covert operations in Cambodia and Laos have been restricted.
- d. Major importation of supplies into NVN by sea has been permitted.

The Chiefs indicated that they considered that U.S. objectives in SEA could be achieved within this policy framework providing the level of assistance the enemy received from his communist allies was not significantly increased and there was no diminution of U.S. efforts.

However, the Chiefs concluded pessimistically that progress would continue to be slow so long as present limitations on military operations continued in effect and, further, at the present pace, termination of NVN's military effort was not expected to occur in the near future.

The Joint Chiefs then listed a series of actions which could be taken in the near future to increase pressures on NVN and accelerate progress toward the achievement of U.S. objectives (see table, p. 224) and recommended they be authorized to direct these actions.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that expansion of US efforts entails some additional risk. They believe that as a result of this expansion the likelihood of overt introduction of Soviet/Bloc/CPR combat forces into the war would be remote. Failure to take additional action to shorten the Southeast Asia conflict also entails risks as new and more efficient weapons are provided to NVN by the Soviet Union and as USSR/CPR support of the enemy increases. 94/

Information indicates that the President reviewed this paper and stated that it was not what was desired, that it recommended actions which had previously been denied and would not now be approved.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS WITHIN PRESENT GUIDELINES WHICH COULD RESULT IN ADDED PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY

ACTIONS	SPECIFIC ACTIONS	ADVANTAGES	RISKS/IMPACT
1. Remove restrictions on air campaign against all militarily significant targets in NVN (ROLLING THUNDER).	Eliminate Haiphong and Hanoi prohibited areas. Reduce Hanoi and Haiphong restricted areas to the city proper. Reduce CTR Buffer Zone to 10 miles. Conduct unrestricted attacks against IOC, rail lines, roads up to five miles from CTR border. Authorize ODCPAS strike and restrike prerogative for all targets outside of redefined restricted areas. Permit JCS to authorize strikes against targets in the redefined restricted areas on a case-by-case basis (to include Haiphong port).	Greater destruction of NVN war-supporting facilities. Increased destruction of air defenses including airfields. Reduce logistic support of NVN/VC. More efficient use of available forces. Favorable impact on reducing friendly casualties, particularly in critical I Corps/SMEZ area. Permits timely reaction against targets of opportunity.	Charges of escalation. Increased use of CTR airfields for storage or training, but not for combat missions. Increased CTR AAA and Engineer support in NVN.
2. Mine NVN deep water ports.	Establish, replenish as required, mine fields in approaches and harbors at Haiphong, Hon Gai and Cam Pha. Publish warning notice to mariners. Adjust/extend mine fields as necessary to prevent bypassing.	Reduce import of war-supporting materials.	Soviet Union may cancel existing negotiations with the US and initiate propaganda campaign. Possible Soviet actions to increase tensions in other parts of the world but major confrontations would be unlikely. CTR would strengthen defensive posture and may increase military aid to NVN; unlikely to initiate offensive air or surface actions.
3. Mine inland waterways and estuaries in NVN north of 20° N.	Mine mouths of navigable NVN rivers. Mine navigable inland waterways throughout NVN to within 5 NM of CTR border (authority currently limited to those south of 20° N).	Interdict internal waterway LOCs. Destroy waterborne logistic craft and block channels. Require great NVN sweeping effort. Reduce IOL and other cargo distribution.	No specific military reaction from communists. Some increased propaganda against US action.
4. Extend naval surface operations (SEA DRAGON).	Conduct offensive naval surface force operations against NVN military/logistic watercraft and against suitable targets in NVN ashore north of 20° N latitude to the redefined buffer zone (SEA DRAGON operations now limited to south of 20° N).	Interdict coastal water traffic. Reduce use of land LOCs by harassing gunfire.	Possible naval and air reaction by NVN in northern waters. CTR or Soviets might provide additional patrol craft.
5. Use US SAMs (TALOS) from ships against combat aircraft.	Use sea-based SAM missiles against NVN aircraft both over water and in airspace over NVN.	Increase destruction of enemy air forces. Inhibit enemy air operations.	NVN air and surface attack possible. USSR or CTR might provide NVN with coast defense missiles.
6. Increase air interdiction in Laos and along NVN borders.	Selective bombing of Laotian waterways traffic (SEKONG). Establish special saturation bombing interdiction air-strike zones in Laos, e.g., northwest of DMZ, Nape and Mu Gia Passes.	Increased interdiction of LOCs and reduction of supplies to NVA/VC.	No immediate reaction other than propaganda. No Laos reaction.
7. Eliminate operational restrictions on B-52s with regard to Laos.	Overflight of Laos, by day and night, by B-52s en route to or from targets in Vietnam or Laos. Daylight bombing attacks on Laos. Eliminate requirement for cover strikes in SVN when bombing targets in Laos.	Greater operational efficiency and quicker reaction time for B-52s.	Possible political reactions.
8. Expand operations in Laos (PRAIRIE FIRE).	Increase authorized size of exploitation force.	Disrupt sanctuaries. Increased efficiency of interdiction. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC.	Southern would probably not object if he could deny the actions and avoid publicity. Possible increased NVA forces and activities in Laos.
9. Expand operations in Cambodia.	Expand current DANIEL BOONE reconnaissance program by extending the area of operations for the full length of the SWN/Cambodia border; authorize use of helicopters; remove limitations on number of missions. Authorize DANIEL BOONE forces to conduct limited sabotage/destruction activity; authorize calling in tactical airstrikes on enemy targets near the border.	Disrupt sanctuaries. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC. Improve intelligence. Discourage use of Cambodia as sanctuary for NVA/VC forces. Provide self-defense of US forces.	Cambodia would protest expansion of operations to Cambodian soil and might seek to defend its territory. Adverse political reaction.
10. Expand and reorient NVN covert programs (FOOTNOT (C)).	Undertake actions to increase the credibility of a current national resistance movement in NVN. Increase intelligence collection and covert physical destruction missions.	Harass NVN within country. Require NVN to divert resources to internal security.	NVN would accuse the United States of attempting to bring about downfall of Government of NVN.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

However, Administration actions to find a way to accelerate progress in South Vietnam continued. On 7 November 1967, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff indicated, in a memorandum to the Director, Joint Staff, that he had been urged again to take all feasible measures to deploy Program 5 forces at the earliest possible date. He directed that the Joint Staff explore what further foreshortening of the deployment dates could be accomplished. 95/

On 8 November, at the White House luncheon meeting, the Secretary of State recommended that the Department of State and the Department of Defense prepare a joint policy document which would govern political and military operations in Southeast Asia for the next four months. Secretary Rusk's proposal was expressed in broad terms. He considered that parameters should be established for political, military, and economic operations over the upcoming four months' period in order to preclude the need for weekly examinations of many small and short-range operations. This proposal was agreed to by the principals at the meeting, and the Chairman directed the Joint Staff to prepare as a matter of priority the recommendations of the JCS for military operations in SEA over the cited time period. He directed that the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff cover the following as a minimum:

a. Air operations against North Vietnam --

Fixed targets important to our air effort against North Vietnam; authorization for re-strike of important targets; allocation of air effort between North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

b. Ground operations --

Large ground operations in South Vietnam to include operations in the Delta region; ground operations in Laos; ground operations in Cambodia; and possible ground operations against North Vietnam.

c. Bombing Pauses --

In addressing this subject the Joint Staff should take note of American Embassy Saigon to State cable #10563. Ambassador Bunker reported that Vice President Ky believes that bombing pauses of 24 hours each for Christmas and New Years and 48 hours at TET should be announced in the near future by the allied forces. 96/

In reply to the Chairman's request to explore foreshortening of deployment dates, the Director, Joint Staff on 21 November furnished the following resume:

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Army - Based on a comprehensive capability study recently completed, Army concludes it is not in a position to make further accelerations without jeopardizing capability to deploy remaining units in Program 5 in an orderly manner.

Navy - The bulk of the 3000 Navy forces scheduled to deploy after 1 March 1968, are linked to ship/waterborne craft conversion or construction. They are susceptible to little acceleration and cannot be accelerated into the JAN/FEB 68 time frame.

Air Force - Excluding the TFS maintained in CONUS ready for deployment, the Air Force has only 760 personnel scheduled to deploy after 1 March 1968. These include a CE Squadron (scheduled for civilianization had funds been available) and 6 UC-123 herbicide aircraft. The CE Squadron must be activated and equipped and the aircraft must be spray equipped.

Marine Corps - Contingent upon Department of Defense approval (which is expected in the near future) of a PCR for additional end strength increase to deploy and sustain 800 CAC personnel, the Marine Corps will have only 164 Program 5 spaces remaining for deployment after 1 March 1968. The 164 personnel are associated with an observation squadron for which pilots and aircraft are not available. 97/

On 27 November 1967, the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided the Secretary of Defense their views on planned and recommended military operations to be conducted in Southeast Asia over the next four months. They concluded, rather pessimistically again, that:

There are no new programs which can be undertaken under current policy guidelines which would result in a rapid or significantly more visible increase in the rate of progress in the near term. 98/

The Chiefs recommended against a stand-down in military operations for any of the forthcoming holidays, as progress during the next four months would be dependent upon the maintenance of pressure upon the enemy.

Any action which serves to reduce the pressure will be detrimental to the achievement of our objectives. 99/

While progress toward U.S. military objectives was expected to be sustained during the period under consideration, the Joint Chiefs held that additional gains could be realized through the modification and expansion of certain current policies. Thus, they recommended that current policies for the conduct of the war in SEA during the next four months be modified and expanded to permit a fuller utilization of our military resources.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

On 22 December 1967, the ASD/ISA, in a memorandum to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, forwarded the joint comments of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State on the JCS recommendations. Their comments were:

- a. recommend against aerial mining or bombing of North Vietnamese deep water ports. Possible military gains are far outweighed by risk of confrontation with Soviets or Chinese.
- b. recommend that strike authorization for high density population centers of government and domestic commerce continue to be controlled at the highest level of Government which is most closely in touch with the political significance of air attacks in these areas.
- c. every recommendation for authorization of a new target should be considered on its own merits. The military significance of the target is, of course, a dominant factor in the evaluation of a target recommendation, but our policy is to minimize civilization casualties and this consideration must be weighed in every determination. Recommend no change in this policy.
- d. recommend authorization for use of CS in rescues in Laos. Effectiveness of such use can be evaluated against possible adverse public reaction to use of agents combined with firepower if conducted in NVN and given propaganda play by NVN.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

FOOTNOTES

1. Draft Memorandum for the President, Subject: Future Actions in Vietnam, 19 May 1967. A series of drafts revealed that McNaughton had been working on the basic memorandum since late April or early May. The drafts as they took shape began to incorporate not only the views of the CIA which we mentioned, especially those related to the effects of the bombing in the north and the so-called ratchet effect, where actions in the bombing in the north were having little effect on the outcomes in the south, the views of the State Department, such as those incorporated in the Bundy memo on the bombing, and even those of the White House, primarily ones prepared at Walt Rostow's direction. Throughout the period, the same basic six arguments continued to be developed and expanded until they appear in the finished document on 19 May. See Memorandum dated 16 May 1967, Subject: Arguments Opposing Further U.S. Forces for South Vietnam (McNaughton papers -- draft prepared for 19 May DFM); and McNaughton papers - hand written draft, subject: Issues to Add to Paper, dated 5 May 67.
2. Memorandum for the SecDef from ASD(ISA) McNaughton, Subject: "My Comments on the 5 May 'First Rough Draft'," dtd 6 May 67.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Draft Memorandum for the President, Subject: Future Actions in Vietnam, dtd 19 May 67.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. JCSM 286-67, Subject: Operations Against North Vietnam, dated 20 May 67.
9. Memorandum from the Deputy SecDef to Chairman, JCS, Subject: Operations Against North Vietnam, dated 26 July 1967. JCSM 286-67 was forwarded to the President on 20 May with a note from Secretary McNamara stating that he would forward to the President his comments on the document after more extensive analysis of the proposals.
10. JCSM 288-67, Subject: U.S. Worldwide Military Posture, 20 May 67.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

11. Ibid. The appendix to this JCSM indicated changes or additions to ROLLING THUNDER which were also interesting. Among these were to delete the 10 n.m. radius Hanoi as prohibited areas; to reduce the 30 n.m. restricted area around Hanoi to 10; to reduce the 10 n.m. radius of Haiphong restrictive to 4. And also to authorize armed reconnaissance throughout North Vietnam and adjacent coastal waters against North Vietnamese military targets except in populated areas in the ChiCom buffer zone and restricted area.
12. CM-2278-67, Memorandum for the Director, Joint Staff, Subject: Alternative Force Postures, dated 26 April 1967. Also, See: Memorandum from Acting Secretary Nicholas deB Katzenbach to Mr. McNaughton re: Vietnam, 24 Apr 67.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. CM-2377-67, "Alternative Courses of Action," 24 May 67.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. COMUSMACV message 280940Z March 1967 and JCS IN 93855.
21. CM-2381-67, Subject: Future Actions in Vietnam, dtd 29 May 67.
22. JCSM-307-67, 1 Jun 67, Draft Memorandum for the President on Future Actions in Vietnam.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. JCSM-312-67, 2 Jun 67, Air Operations Against NVN.
27. Ibid.
28. Draft Memorandum for the President, Subject: Alternative Military Actions Against North Vietnam, 12 June 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

29. Note, Wm. P. Bundy to Mr. McNaughton, et al, June 2, 1967, Comments on DOD First Rough Draft of 19 May, dtd 30 May 67.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Memorandum for Under Secretary of Defense Vance from Under Secretary of State Katzenbach, title: Preliminary Comments on DOD Draft of 19 May, dated 8 Jun 67.
35. Under Secretary Katzenbach, Memo for Mr. Vance, "Preliminary Comments on DOD Draft of 19 May," dtd June 8, 1967.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Memorandum for Mr. McNaughton from "SRV," Subject: "DPM on Vietnam, and Chairman's Memo 2381-67 of 29 May," dated 8 Jun 67.
39. Draft Memo for the President from ASD(ISA), Subject: Alternative Military Actions Against North Vietnam dtd 12 Jun 67, with summary DPM attached.
40. Ibid. Secretary Brown's recommendation was partially based upon detailed analyses which his staff had been preparing on the subject of anti-infiltration bombing in the North and in all route packages of the Air Force target complex. In a study which he forwarded to the SecDef on June 9th, Mr. Brown commented on the quantitative analyses which had been made of the effectiveness of the bombing:

One can use the same cost and casualty estimates to make the subjective judgment in a different set of units. The above cost figures for troops and for the air campaign out-of-country in dollars can be expressed by saying that the out-of-country air campaign has paid for itself in dollars if it has saved us from having to send 35,800 more ground troops into South Vietnam in order to achieve the same situation in SVN that we have now. Or, it has paid for itself in lives if it has saved us from having to send 19,000 more ground troops.

Alternatively, one can compare air and ground

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

campaign casualty costs by saying that if for every 123 attack sorties in Route Packages IV through VI, or for every 557 sorties in Route Packages I through III, or for every 881 attack sorties in Laos we have reduced allied deaths in the South by one, they are worth their human cost.

In terms of dollar costs, if every 1000 attack sorties per calendar year in out-of-country operations reduce the requirements for US ground troops by about 300, they pay their way. If the proportionality of friendly force increments to enemy force increments is a correct concept, this means that, to pay their way, every 1000 out-of-country sorties per year must account for 37 of the infiltrators who could have come in but didn't.

(Memo for SecDef, June 9, 1967, from Dr. Harold Brown, Secretary of the Air Force re Possible Courses of Action in SEA.)

41. Memo for SecDef from ASD Robert N. Anthony, Subject: Effect of Increased Southeast Asia Deployment on Balance of Payments, dated 9 June 1967. Anthony's office used the round figure of \$50,000 per year, per deployed man in SVN. This was the same figure which the SecDef and the Under SecDef used in their rough calculations of cost increases for recommended deployments. (SecDef Control No. X-4239, 11 Jul 1967.)
42. Memorandum for SecDef from ASD(SA), "Increased Use of Civilians for U.S. Troop Support (C)," 13 June 1967.
43. Memo for CJCS from SecDef, Subject: "Increased Use of Civilians for U.S. Troop Support (C)," 13 Jun 67.
44. Ibid. See also, Memo for SecDef from ASD(SA) Alain Enthoven, Subject: Increased Use of SVN Civilians for U.S. Troop Support (C), dated 10 Jun 67.
45. The Washington Daily News, 23 June 1967, Jim Lucas, "Partial Mobilization."
46. Memo for the Secys of the Army, Navy and Air Force from Deputy Secretary Vance, dated 23 June 1967; Memo for the SecDef from the Secy of the Navy, Subject: Jim Lucas Article, Partial Mobilization, dated 26 June 1967; Memo for the DepSecDef from Secy of the Army, Subject: Lucas Article, dated 28 June 1967; Memo for the DepSecDef from the Secy of the Navy, Subject: Lucas Article, dated 29 June 1967.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

47. Neil Sheehan, "Joint Chiefs Back Troop Rise Asked by Westmoreland," 3 July 1967, The New York Times.
48. Ibid. Memo for SecDef from Stanley R. Resor, SecArmy, 5 July 1967.
49. Memo for SecDef from AsstSecDef Enthoven, Subj: Holbrooke/Burnham Study on Binh Chanh, dtd 4 Jul 67.
50. Discussion concerning adding an additional rifle company to 33 battalions already deployed had persisted since early May when Secretary McNamara questioned the Secretary of the Army about the seventy battalions in Program 4 and discovered that approximately 30 had moved with only three companies. If this was so, he asked should not a fourth be added? (SecDef Control No. X-2637, Memorandum for the Secretary of the Army from the Secretary of Defense, dtd 2 May 67.)

Secretary of the Army, Stanley R. Resor, replied that according to the Army there remained 33 airborne infantry or air-mobile infantry battalions in or approved for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam for which a fourth rifle company had not been approved. He subsequently recommended that a fourth company be added to these 33 battalions. To provide and sustain this increase in capability he projected that an increase of 7,903 spaces in the Army trained military strength would be required. Of this, 5,577 were required for the companies themselves and 3,326 were for the sustaining base. After detailed deliberation, however, McNamara disapproved the request stating that although he was "inclined to approve the deployment of these companies it would not be possible to find space trade-offs for the 5,577 personnel involved." (Memo for SecDef, Subj: Program 4 Strength Increases, dated 20 May 67, ASD(SA) 6-1733; Memo for SA from SecDef, Subj: Rifle Companies for South Vietnam, dated 15 Jun 67.)

51. Encl to Memo for SecDef from ASD(SA) Enthoven, Subj: Current Estimate of Additional Deployment Capability, 5 Jul 67.
52. Ibid. Interview with Mr. Philip Odeen, Southeast Asia Programs Division, OASD(SA), 20 Jul 1968.
53. Saigon Briefing Notes, 7-8 July, Prepared by OASD(SA), 18 Jul 67.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid. (Bunker's source here, of course, was MACV.)
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

58. Ibid.; COMUSMACV's Overall Assessment.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.; "J2 Assessment."
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.; "J3 Briefing."
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Interview with Mr. Philip Odeen, 20 Jul 68, and Memo for Record, Subject: Fallout from SecDef Trip to South Vietnam, dated July 13, 1967, signed by Alain Enthoven.
69. See also Memo for Record, Brehm, Subject: SEA Deployments, dtd July 14, 1967, which outlines the decisions made in Saigon and directs work priorities and assignments for OASD(SA).
70. Memo for SecDef from Mr. Richard C. Steadman, DASD, Subj: Additional Third Country Forces for Vietnam, dtd 13 Jul 67, with memo for Secys Rusk, McNamara and Mr. Walt Rostow and Under Secretary Katzenbach, Subj: Messages to Manila Nations dtd 13 Jul 67 attached.
71. Ibid.
72. JCSM 416-67, Subject: U.S. Force Deployments - Vietnam, dtd 20 Jul 67.
73. OASD/SA/POdeen, Memo for SecDef, 21 Jul 67, Subj: FY 68 Force Requirements for SVN (Program #5).
74. Memo for CJCS from SecDef, Subj: FY 68 Force Requirements for South Vietnam (Program #5) dtd 10 Aug 67; and Memo for Secys of Mil Depts, CJCS, ASD from the ASD(SA), Subject: SEA Deployment Program #5, 14 Aug 67.
75. Note to Control Division, DJS, 6 Sept 1967, Subject: Examination of Speed-up in Program 5 Deployments.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

76. DJSM 1118-67, 9 Sept 1967, Subject: Examination of Speed-up in Program 5 Deployments.
77. CM 2640-67, 12 Sept 1967.
78. Secretary of the Army Memo for Secretary of Defense, 16 Sept 1967, Subject: Deployment Schedule for 101st Airborne Division (-)
79. Secretary of Defense Memo for Secretary of the Army, 22 Sept 1967, Subject: Deployment of 101st Airborne Division (-) (U)
80. JCSM-505-67, 15 September 1967, Subject: US Force Deployments in Vietnam (U).
81. Secretary of Defense Memo for Secretaries of the Military Departments and CJCS, 5 October 1967, Subject: FY 68 US Force Deployments, Vietnam (U)
82. COMUSMACV Msg 31998, 281500Z Sept 67, Subject: Reorientation of In-Country Forces.
83. Ibid., p2
84. Ibid., pp 3-4
85. Secretary of Defense Memorandum for the President, 4 October 1967.
86. Secretary of the Army Memo for Secretary of Defense, 16 Oct 1967, Subject: Deployment of 101st Airborne Division (-).
87. Secretary of Defense Note for Record, 17 October 1967.
88. Secretary of the Army Memo for Secretary of Defense, 20 Oct 1967, Subject: Early Deployment of the 101st Airborne Division (-).
89. Secretary of Defense Memo for Secretary of the Army, 21 October 1967, Subject: Deployment of the 101st Airborne Division (-), (U).
90. Secretary of the Army Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, 31 Oct 1967, Subject: Deployment of the 11th Infantry Brigade.
91. Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Secretary of the Army, 6 November 1967, Subject: Deployment of the 11th Infantry Brigade.
92. JCSM 555-67, 17 October 1967, Subject: Increased Pressure on North Vietnam, (U).
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

95. CM-2743-67, 7 November 1967, Subject: Program 5.
96. CM 2752-67, 10 November 1967, Subject: Policies for the Conduct of Operations in SEA over the next four months.
97. DJSM-1409-67, 21 November 1967, Subject: Program 5 Accelerated Deployments (U).
98. JCSM-663-67, 27 November 1967, Subject: Policies for the Conduct of Operations in Southeast Asia over the Next Four Months (U).
99. Ibid.