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USAF PLANS AND OPERATIONS
IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA
1965
(U)

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FOREWORD

This study highlights USAF plans, policies, and operations in Southeast Asia during 1965, especially as they were significantly changed by the President's key decisions to bomb North Vietnam and transform the U.S. advisory role in South Vietnam to one of active military support. The author focuses on USAF participation in the development of policy for prosecuting the war, the build-up of U.S. military strength in the theater, and the gradually intensified air operations against enemy forces in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and Laos.

USAF Plans and Operations in Southeast Asia, 1965 follows two other recent studies by the USAF Historical Division Liaison Office dealing specifically with the war: USAF Plans and Policies in South Vietnam and Laos, 1964 and USAF Plans and Policies in South Vietnam, 1961-1963. In addition, the USAF Historical Division Liaison Office is currently preparing a companion study of Air Force plans and policies dealing with personnel, logistics, construction, and other activities during 1965 in support of the operational forces in Southeast Asia.

Max Rosenberg

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Chief
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I. THE ALLIES STRIKE NORTH

~~SECRET~~ At the beginning of 1965 the Republic of South Vietnam was in a state of military and political decline. Its regular, regional, and popular forces, numbering about 510,650, had been seriously weakened during previous months by defeat and desertions. A most severe setback had occurred from 26 December 1964 to 2 January 1965 at Binh Gia where the Viet Cong virtually destroyed two Vietnamese Marine battalions.* 1

(U) Augmented by combat forces infiltrating from North Vietnam, the Viet Cong was becoming stronger. January estimates placed Viet Cong strength at 29,000 to 35,000 "hard core" guerrillas and 60,000 to 80,000 irregular forces. The Communists generally avoided large engagements and directed their "hit and run" attacks and terrorism against Vietnamese irregular forces, the police, and the civilian population. These tactics were increasingly successful.²

~~SECRET~~ Political instability exacerbated military difficulties. Demonstrations and strikes by Buddhists and other groups in the larger cities against the civilian-led government of Premier Tran Van Huong, who had been installed in office on 4 November 1964, occurred with greater frequency. Huong's rule came to an abrupt end on 27 January 1965 when the Vietnamese Armed Forces Council ousted him leaving only a facade of civilian government. Meanwhile, the power struggle impeded military operations since elements of the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF), for example, had to be on constant "coup

*For a special account of this battle, see Project CHECO Interim Rprt No 3, 27 Dec 65, subj: The Battle of Binh Gia (S), in AFCHO.

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alert." Top U.S. officials were deeply concerned by this internal conflict. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, USAF Chief of Staff, expressed fear that the disorders could infect and destroy the Vietnamese armed forces, the only cohesive group in the country.³

U.S. Restraint and Limited Pressure

The interminable military and political crises had forced the United States to send increasing amounts of military and economic aid in an effort to avert a collapse. At the beginning of 1965, 23,292 U.S. military personnel were serving in South Vietnam. The Air Force had about 6,604 men and 222 aircraft assigned to 2d Air Division headed by Lt. Gen. Joseph H. Moore, Jr.* The Air Force contingent included two air commando squadrons (the 1st and 602d) with about 48 non-jet A-1E's for "combat advisory" support of Vietnamese ground forces.⁺ An additional 4,283 American military personnel--including 1,027 Air Force--in Thailand backstopped U.S. activities in South Vietnam, flew limited air missions over North Vietnam and Laos, and aided Thai and Lao forces. The USAF units in Thailand, also assigned to the 2d Air Division, possessed 83 USAF aircraft.[‡] The use of these aircraft for "out of country" missions was restricted, however, because the Thai government feared becoming too deeply involved in the conflict in Southeast Asia.⁴

(S) In accordance with decisions made late in 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, stronger U.S. military action with its attendant risks

*General Moore was promoted to lieutenant general on 25 June 1965.

+In addition there were in South Vietnam 72 C-123B's, 10 B-57's, 3 RB-57's, 30 F-100's, 6 F-102's, 12 RF-101's, 22 O-1F's, and auxiliary aircraft.

‡Aircraft in Thailand consisted largely of 18 F-105's, 15 F-100's, 4 F-102's, 10 T-28's, 10 RT-28's, and 8 search-and-rescue helicopters.

was withheld pending emergence of a more stable Saigon regime. As a consequence the 2d Air Division continued patiently to train, support, and work with a Vietnamese Air Force that, partly oriented toward political affairs, was distracted from the war effort. USAF combat advisory missions remained encumbered with numerous "rules of engagement," including a prohibition against the use of jet aircraft for air strikes and against A-1E sorties without the presence of a Vietnamese "observer" or "student pilot" on board. The latter injunction, a long-standing handicap, became an increasing hindrance because of a shortage of "trainees." ⁵

~~SECRET~~ Air base security was precarious. The Johnson administration was reluctant to dispatch combat troops to guard air bases as requested by the Air Force, and lesser security measures were adopted. After the costly Viet Cong attack on Bien Hoa AB on 1 November 1964, the 2d Air Division initiated "crash" measures to improve the defenses of the three major bases of Bien Hoa, Da Nang, and Tan Son Nhut. Much remained to be done in 1965, such as completing revetment construction for safer aircraft dispersal, making more thorough air base patrols, adding more Vietnamese security forces and counter-mortar and ground-surveillance radar, obtaining better intelligence and improving population control. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) had recommended deployment of a Marine Hawk battalion from Okinawa to Da Nang, but this still awaited final approval. ⁶

~~SECRET~~ In January 1965 Adm. U.S. Grant Sharp, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), warned that the air bases remained vulnerable. Considering the limited resources at hand, the Air Staff thought he had taken all "practical steps" possible. Gen. John P. McConnell, who became USAF Chief

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of Staff on 1 February, asked the Joint Staff to monitor base security actions and to keep the JCS fully apprised of them.⁷

(b) 1) The U.S. restraint in South Vietnam was matched by limited action against North Vietnam and its infiltration of men and supplies through Laos. A draft National Security Council (NSC) memo, dated 29 November and revised on 1 December 1964, had outlined a two-phase program beginning on 14 December that called for very selective use of military power against the North.

(b) 2) In Phase I, begun on schedule and lasting about 30 days, more high-level reconnaissance missions were flown over the North and maritime operations, with VNAF cover, were stepped up south of the 18th parallel in accordance with the special covert operation plan 34A.* No air strikes against the North were permitted. In Laos there was a measured increase of Royal Laotian Air Force strikes against Communist Pathet Lao-North Vietnam forces, USAF-Navy "Barrel Roll" armed reconnaissance in Northern Laos against infiltrating personnel and supplies supporting these Communist units, and USAF-Navy "Yankee Team" reconnaissance in the panhandle against specified infiltration routes.⁺ The main objective was to "signal" Hanoi that the United States was determined not to permit a Communist take-over of South Vietnam.

(b) 3) Beyond Phase I the draft NSC memo provided for either a continuation of these actions without change or a transition to other very limited measures. The latter would include withdrawal of U.S. dependents from South Vietnam, more air deployments, low-level reconnaissance over the

*See J. Van Staaveren, USAF Plans and Policies in South Vietnam and Laos, 1964, (AFCHO, 1965), p 8 (TS).

⁺Yankee Team strikes were allowed only under special circumstances. See Project CHECO Continuing Rprpt, Yankee Team, 8 Mar 66 (TS), in AFCHO.

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North, and then air strikes on infiltration routes near the border. The NSC desired to give an impression of steady, deliberate action. U.S.-South Vietnamese forces would begin Phase II with more air strikes and other military activities against the North. Both Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MAC/V), and Maxwell D. Taylor, U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, agreed that there was little chance of finding a successful solution to the war without advancing to Phase II.⁸

~~SECRET~~ When Phase I ended in mid-January the administration was still reluctant to apply increased pressure on Hanoi. The JCS urged more frequent and extensive armed reconnaissance in Laos, less restraint in selecting targets, and less Thai government restrictions on flying USAF strike missions from Thai bases. On the 29th the JCS recommended reprisal air strikes on northern targets within 24 hours after the next Communist act of terrorism in the South. The Joint Chiefs observed that Ambassador Taylor now agreed this might deter further acts of this type.⁹

~~SECRET~~ Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara did not act immediately on these recommendations. Vietnamese military reverses continued, however, and the U.S. government moved to provide more assistance including seeking allied aid. In accordance with Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) guidelines, the JCS since late 1964 had been planning an international force for South Vietnam composed of as many as 22 nations that would require U.S. logistic support.* On 27 January, after conferring with McNamara, the JCS chairman, Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, asked the JCS to consider the dispatch of 80,000 to 100,000 more U.S. ground troops to the embattled country.^{+ 10}

*It soon became apparent that not many nations would participate in such a force.

+See p 15.

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[REDACTED] Other events presaged the use of more air power. At Binh Gia at year's end, Vietnamese Marines had suffered heavy losses, despite assistance provided mostly by armed Army helicopters. After a MAC/V investigation, Westmoreland issued new directives requiring more use of fixed-wing aircraft for close air support. Since the Viet Cong might step up its activities during the annual Vietnamese lunar holiday or "Tet" from 2 through 6 February, he also requested and the President on 27 January approved the use of USAF jet combat aircraft in an emergency.¹¹

Attack Across the 17th Parallel

[REDACTED] The Viet Cong precipitated the next major U.S. decision. During the annual Vietnamese celebrations early in February, virtually all large-scale military activity ceased. However, in the early hours of the 7th, as Tet ended, an insurgent unit, using recoilless rifles, rifle grenades, and 81-mm mortars struck the air base at the Vietnamese II Corps headquarters at Pleiku and an air strip at Camp Holloway, about six kilometers distant. The 10-minute attack at Pleiku destroyed 5 helicopters and damaged 11 others and 6 fixed-wing aircraft. American losses at both sites were 7 dead and 109 wounded.¹²

[REDACTED] President Johnson immediately authorized a reprisal air strike against the North, ordered the withdrawal of U.S. dependents, and directed the deployment of a Hawk air defense battalion from Okinawa to Da Nang AB. Indicating other measures might soon follow, he declared the United States had no choice but to "clear the decks" to show America's determination to help South Vietnam fight to maintain its independence.¹³

(S) [REDACTED] The reprisal strike, also carried out on 7 February, opened a new phase of the war. Under the code name Flaming Dart I, 49 aircraft of the Seventh Fleet bombed and strafed barracks and staging areas used for infiltration near Dong Hoi, slightly north of the demilitarized zone. One A-4 aircraft and its pilot were lost and seven A-4's and one F-8 damaged by anti-aircraft fire. The presence in Hanoi at the time of Soviet Premier Alexei S. Kosygin led the administration to assure the Russians that the air attack was not related in any way to the Premier's visit. Other planned missions, canceled because of poor weather, were carried out on the 8th. Led by Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, 24 VNAF A-1H's attacked Vinh Linh, another transportation and military installation above the demilitarized zone. They were supported by 6 USAF A-1E's, 20 F-100's, and 3 RF-101's. The USAF aircraft were used for flak suppression, as patrols for rescue and to counter enemy aircraft, and as escort for bomb damage assessment. The Navy separately hit the Dong Hoi area again.¹⁴

(S) [REDACTED] Meeting with the JCS on the 8th, McNamara asked for and the Joint Chiefs sent him recommendations for an eight-week program of air attacks on the North as a reply to any further "provocations." * On the 10th, preparing for more action, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) moved an F-100 and an F-105 squadron to Da Nang AB and two similar squadrons to Thailand.^{+ 15}

(S) [REDACTED] The next day Viet Cong terrorists blasted a U.S. enlisted man's barracks at Qui Nhon, killing 21 and wounding 22 Americans and killing 14 Vietnamese. This act, coupled with Viet Cong ambushes, capture of a

*See p 8.

+For a discussion of USAF activities in Thailand see Project CHECO Rprt, USAF Operations From Thailand, 1964-1965 (TS), in AFCHO.

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district town, attacks on the railway system, and assassinations of Vietnamese civil and military officials during a 72-hour period, triggered the largest retaliatory strike of the war thus far. Named Flaming Dart II, 28 VNAF A-1H's and 20 USAF F-100's, 3 RF-101's, and one F-100 weather reconnaissance aircraft hit Chap Le. Simultaneously, 111 Navy aircraft struck Chahn Hoa not far from Dong Hoi.¹⁶

~~SECRET~~ The administration again announced that the bombings were in response to Hanoi's provocations. Subsequently, McNamara stated that the attacks on North Vietnam had three main purposes: to raise South Vietnamese morale, to reduce the flow of infiltrating men and material and increase its cost, and to force Hanoi at some point toward negotiations. Meanwhile, looking to possible future operations, the administration approved the dispatch, from 11 to 13 February, of 30 B-52's to Guam and 30 KC-135's to Okinawa. Designated Arc Light, these bombers and tankers of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) initially were earmarked for high-altitude, all-weather bombing of important targets in the North.¹⁷

Proposed Eight-Week Air Program

~~SECRET~~ The Joint Chiefs sent their eight-week air assault program to McNamara on 11 February. It called for two to four U.S.-VNAF strikes per week, contained a list of Viet Cong actions requiring reprisal, recommended U.S. military deployments, and suggested measures to improve base security and steps to guard against intervention by Hanoi and Peking.

~~SECRET~~ The JCS recommended initial attacks against North Vietnam targets along "Route 7" south of the 19th parallel and near the Laos border. The JCS proposed sparing enemy airfields unless Communist aircraft

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intervened. There would be closer coordination of all air action in North and South Vietnam and Laos. Supplementary actions against the North would consist of Vietnamese sea harassment, more U.S. bombardment of targets, resumption of special Navy patrols offshore and continuation of plan 34A activities. In Laos there would be limited air-ground attacks on selected infiltration points. To carry out this program, the JCS wished to deploy about 325 more aircraft to the Western Pacific to deter or cope with any escalation that might result. This would include, besides the dispatch of 30 B-52's to Guam, deployment of 9 more USAF tactical fighter squadrons and a fourth aircraft carrier. Some Marine and Army units would go to Thailand, and other units would be alerted.

~~(S)~~ As for the risks, the JCS believed that only Hanoi might intervene directly. The Chinese and the Soviet Union would react primarily with propaganda attacks and diplomatic efforts, although the Chinese Communists might send "volunteers" into North Vietnam or Northern Laos as a threat to escalate the war and as a challenge to the Soviet Union. The United States could resist intervention by Hanoi and Peking by putting into effect either CINCPAC's Operation Plan 32-64 (for the defense of mainland Southeast Asia), or Operation Plan 39-65 (an offensive air and naval plan for Southeast Asia and mainland China).^{*} Only in the latter stages of plan 32-64 and to an undetermined extent in 39-65 would there be significant logistic, transportation, and personnel problems. These views were reaffirmed on 4 March.¹⁸

~~(S)~~ The service chiefs agreed on the foregoing measures but, for different reasons, considered them inadequate. General McConnell thought the

^{*}See pp 16-17.

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JCS recommendations of late 1964 spelling out heavier air strikes on the North remained valid. General Wheeler backed deployment of more USAF and other air units but pressed for an integrated air program against the North's transportation system, especially railroads. He also believed, along with Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, that three U.S. ground divisions might have to be sent to Southeast Asia. The JCS chairman directed the Joint Staff to examine the possibility of placing one or two of these divisions in northeast Thailand and a third, augmented by allied personnel south of the demilitarized zone in South Vietnam.¹⁹

(~~Co 3~~) All of the eight-week air program was not approved immediately but some recommendations, such as the deployment of B-52's to Guam, were quickly accepted.* Meanwhile, the Viet Cong shifted their main effort from terrorist acts to the I and II corps area in the central highlands of the South where battalion-sized units inflicted heavier casualties on the Vietnamese forces and threatened to split the country at the corps boundary line.²⁰

~~SECRET~~ To thwart such a plan, the Vietnamese and the Americans moved more ground and air units to that region. VNAF A-1H's and USAF combat advisory A-1E's and AC-47's struck hard at the insurgents, causing substantial casualties. AC-47's equipped with Gatling guns had been used successfully for the first time on 15 December 1964. In accordance with the President's authorization of 27 January 1965, the JCS approved Westmoreland's request to employ jet combat aircraft in an emergency. The first jet combat strike of the war was flown on 19 February when 24 B-57's hit a target area in Phuoc

*See p 8.

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Tuy Province. The "emergency" stricture remained until 10 March when the JCS permitted the MAC/V and 2d Air Division commanders to use South Vietnamese-based U.S. jet or non-jet aircraft for missions in or out of the country when the Vietnamese Air Force could not perform them. The JCS also rescinded requirements for carrying VNAF observers or student pilots and for placing VNAF markings on USAF's two A-1E squadrons. Some high U.S. Embassy officials expressed concern that these decisions might result in the killing of friendly civilians and create more enemies.²¹

~~While~~ While the tempo of military operations rose in February, new political upheavals occurred in Saigon. On the 16th Phan Huy Quat emerged as the new Premier. On the 19th another coup attempt was smashed, largely by the intervention of the VNAF led by Marshal Ky and by the negotiations conducted by Brig. Gen. Robert E. Rowland, Chief of the Air Force Advisory Group in Headquarters MAC/V.* Then on the 22d the Vietnamese Armed Forces Council deposed its Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Khahn, replacing him with Maj. Gen. Tran Van Minh. Again U.S. officials in Washington and Saigon were dismayed by political turbulence that diverted attention and efforts against the Viet Cong.²²

Troop Deployments for Base Security

~~The~~ The bold Communist strikes in February posed a new crisis in air base security. Within the JCS, McConnell and Gen. Wallace M. Greene, Jr., the Marine Corps commandant, stressed the urgent need for more U.S. forces to guard the bases regardless of cost. They noted that MAC/V expected more

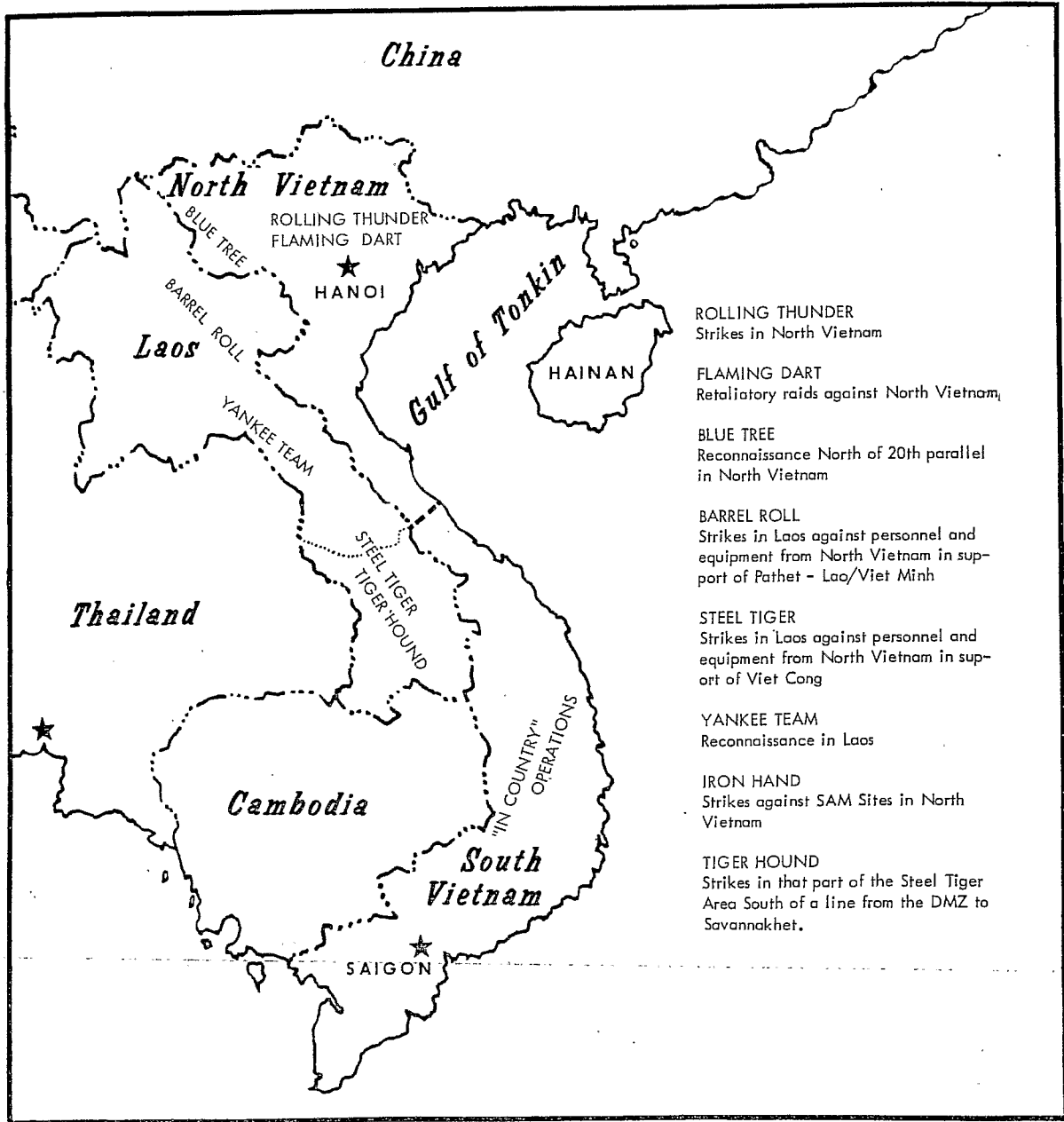
*For an account of General Rowland's role, see Project CHECO SEA Interim Rpt No 1, Nguyen Cao Ky (S), in AFCHO.

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U.S. STRIKE AND RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1965



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Source: USAF Mgt Summary, 21 Jan 66.

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attacks on these sites and that a security analysis indicated the need for the equivalent of one U.S. division plus additional engineers. On 20 February, the Joint Chiefs warned McNamara that the security problem was compounded by the questionable integrity of some Vietnamese troops who had recently demonstrated against their government and the United States. They doubted that the Vietnamese alone could repel an all-out Viet Cong attack on Da Nang AB, the "number one" Communist target since it was the springboard for reprisal strikes on North Vietnam, air operations in Laos, and certain plan 34A operations. Other insecure places were the Saigon-Bien Hoa-Vung Tau area, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh Bay. As a first step, the JCS recommended the dispatch of the 8,500-man 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade to Da Nang and Marine reinforcements to the Western Pacific. Simultaneously it reaffirmed the need for the eight-week air assault program against the Hanoi regime.²³

~~SECRET~~ Ambassador Taylor opposed the placement of large numbers of U.S. Marine forces around Da Nang AB and on 24 February the JCS reduced their requirements. However, as new MAC/V and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports on the 25th underlined the gravity of the military and political situation in South Vietnam,* U.S. officials announced that day that more American troops would be sent. The first elements of a 3,500-man Marine unit arrived at Da Nang on 8 March and the entire unit, including its own air arm, was shortly in place. Secretary of State Dean Rusk said that the Marines would provide "close in security" and would not engage in "pacification operations," although they would "shoot back" if attacked.²⁴

*See pp 16-17.

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Rolling Thunder Strikes Begin

(b) (1) Meanwhile, extensive planning of new air strikes against the North neared completion. Several were scheduled for late February but were postponed because of poor weather and the political turmoil which affected the Vietnamese Air Force. But on 2 March "Rolling Thunder" began when 104 USAF aircraft (B-57's, F-100's, F-105's, and refueling KC-135's) plus 19 VNAF A-1H's hit Quang Khe and Xom Bang. B-52's on Guam were alerted but not used. This was the first strike on the North in which USAF aircraft played the dominant role. It was also the first time that the U.S. government abandoned its policy of purely retaliatory response for official spokesmen asserted that the strike was part of a continuing effort to resist aggression.²⁵

(b) (1) Although the attack was considered "very successful," the loss of four USAF aircraft, three to anti-aircraft fire, caused concern. Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus R. Vance convened a meeting attended by Secretary of the Air Force Eugene M. Zuckert and other USAF officials to consider using the high-flying B-52's for pattern bombing in either North or South Vietnam to avoid Communist ground fire. The Air Staff and SAC recommended reserving B-52's for use against major targets in the North. The idea of B-52 pattern bombing was not seriously considered again until April.*²⁶

(b) (1) On 14 March 24 VNAF A-1H's supported by U.S. jets, in the second Rolling Thunder operation, struck weapon installations, depots, and barracks on Tiger Island, 20 miles off the North Vietnamese coast. The next day in the third Rolling Thunder strike more than 100 U.S. aircraft (two-thirds Navy, one-third USAF) hit an ammunition depot near Phu Qui, only 100

*See p 39.

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miles southwest of Hanoi. The earlier hesitancy about bombing the North had disappeared. In addition to Yankee Team and Barrel Roll activities in Laos and the open U.S. air participation in South Vietnam after 10 March, Rolling Thunder was a third separate air campaign aimed at bringing the Communists to the negotiating table. The attacks, tightly controlled by top U.S. officials in Washington, were carefully planned by the JCS without formal service participation.²⁷

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II. DEBATE OVER STRATEGY

~~SECRET~~ The United States had met the growing Viet Cong challenge by unleashing more air power in the South, dispatching Marine combat troops to secure Da Nang AB, and beginning air strikes against the North. The administration now engaged in an intense debate over future strategy that would determine the type and extent of further U.S. aid. JCS participation in these discussions revealed major differences of opinion as to what should be done.

USAF Opposition to Deploying Large Ground Forces

~~SECRET~~ Early in the year, a JCS plan to dispatch a large international force to South Vietnam had fallen through because of a lack of allied support. The Air Staff had opposed this plan, declaring it contradicted prior JCS views on the proper U.S. course of action. If such an international force were possible, the Air Staff thought it should be limited to air, naval, and marine units under the aegis of the ANZUS or SEATO alliances.* 1

~~SECRET~~ In fact, the Air Staff opposed placing any sizeable U.S. ground forces in South Vietnam for combat. It questioned the wisdom of sending 80,000 to 100,000 U.S. troops to that country, as proposed by Wheeler on 27 January. It believed this would require partial U.S. mobilization, create

*The ANZUS treaty (signed by Australia, New Zealand, and the United States) came into force on 29 April 1952. The SEATO treaty (signed by Great Britain, France, Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States) came into force on 19 February 1955.

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tremendous logistic requirements, take months to accomplish, prove very costly, invite rather than deter Chinese intervention, and adversely affect America's world-wide military posture. The Air Staff favored invoking, if necessary, CINCPAC's air and naval 39-65 plan to deter, or failing that, to defeat the Chinese.²

~~(S)~~ The Army disagreed. It argued that the United States should be prepared for Chinese Communist intervention after either limited or massive air and naval attacks on North Vietnam and Laos. Destruction of the North, the Army claimed, would certainly lead Hanoi to ask for and Peking to provide large-scale assistance. Adequate U.S. ground forces would be needed to secure essential U.S. bases and facilities and deter such intervention because otherwise, according to CINCPAC's estimates, Chinese and North Vietnamese forces could seize Saigon in D plus 60 days and Bangkok in D plus 66 days.³

~~(S)~~ The deep cleavage between USAF and Army strategic thinking was further demonstrated during JCS discussions over the relevancy of CINCPAC's 32-64 and 39-65 plans.* The Air Force disliked the first plan, which called for limited operations in Southeast Asia, selected air strikes, extensive logistic support, and the use of Reserve and National Guard units. General McConnell strongly argued for adoption of the second plan which would permit employment of superior U.S. air and naval strength against Asian manpower. He said it would require fewer reserve forces, promised to deter the Chinese more effectively, and, if they entered the war, would bring them to terms.⁴

*See p 9.

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~~(S)~~ Concerned over this interservice debate and confusion about respective requirements, Secretary Zuckert wrote to Deputy Secretary of Defense Vance and expressed the view that the basic issue should be whether the plans were feasible logistically, politically acceptable, and credible to the Communists. Vance, in turn, asked the JCS to review all of CINCPAC's contingency plans and U.S. ability to reinforce NATO and meet its other military commitments.⁵

~~(S)~~ On 11 March Wheeler informed the JCS that neither Plan 32-64 nor Plan 39-65 was feasible. The first could not be carried out within a stipulated time and had been overtaken by events (the dispatch of Marine forces to Da Nang). The second was impractical because it was unlikely that the United States would make a quick political decision to use it. He directed the Joint Staff to prepare new recommendations for air, ground, and naval deployments to the Pacific to insure holding Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and Korea and to permit, if necessary, air and naval operations against China.⁶

~~(S)~~ McConnell did not oppose further study of U.S. strategic requirements, but he disagreed with the concept inherent in Wheeler's request to the Joint Staff. In view of U.S. world-wide commitments, he warned of excessive logistic requirements and possible imbalance of the military force structure. He reaffirmed his confidence that the air and naval 39-65 plan could check intervention by Hanoi and Peking.⁷

New Assessments and the Army's 21-Point Program

~~(S)~~ Meanwhile, reports from South Vietnam pointed to a larger U.S. involvement. On 25 February a MAC/V analysis of the military situation

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in all four Vietnamese corps areas agreed with a grave CIA appraisal issued the same day. Observing that the pacification effort had virtually halted, Westmoreland foresaw in six months a Saigon government holding only islands of strength around provincial and district capitals that were clogged with refugees and beset with "end the war" groups asking for a negotiated settlement. The current trend presaged a Viet Cong take-over in 12 months, although major towns and bases, with U.S. help, could hold out for years. To "buy time," permit pressure on North Vietnam to take effect, and reverse the decline, he proposed adding three Army helicopter companies, flying more close support and reconnaissance missions, opening a "land line" from Pleiku in the highlands to the coast, and changing U.S. policy on the use of combat troops.⁸

~~SECRET~~ Sharp generally concurred with these recommendations but advised the JCS that the full use of air power in North and South Vietnam was the most important measure that could be taken to improve the military situation quickly. He also advocated obtaining better intelligence and naval bombardment of the North's coastal installations. And he warned that a coup by Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, the Vietnamese I Corps commander was possible, and this would be an "undesirable" change.⁹ There was now fear at the highest administration level that the entire Vietnamese military effort might collapse. This led to another visit to South Vietnam from 5 to 12 March of a high-ranking military and civilian mission headed by General Johnson, the Army's Chief of Staff.¹⁰

~~SECRET~~ In Saigon, the mission was briefed by Ambassador Taylor who stressed the historical, racial, and religious factors that prevented establishment of a unified country. He said these were the chief causes of the

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U.S. failure thus far, and he saw no quick results regardless of massive American aid. On 14 March General Johnson sent the JCS and McNamara a 21-point program. It included but went beyond Westmoreland's prescription.

(~~SECRET~~) For South Vietnam, Johnson proposed more U.S. and, if possible, allied troops, more helicopters and O-1 aircraft, possibly more USAF fighter-bombers (after further MAC/V evaluation), better targeting, accelerated airfield expansion, more special operations, and additional logistic, construction, advisory, civic action, and financial measures. He proposed that the additional troops secure the bases of Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, and Pleiku or defend Kontum, Pleiku, and Darlac provinces in the II Corps area of the highlands. Either deployment would free many Vietnamese battalions for combat. Johnson preferred the second alternative but recognized, as did Westmoreland, that this would require a "clarification" if not a "change" in U.S. combat policy.

(~~SECRET~~) To step up pressure on North Vietnam, Johnson asked for the recission of many restraints on air strikes. For Laos he favored reorienting Barrel Roll operations to allow air strikes on infiltration routes separate from those directed against the Communist-led Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese units.¹¹

(~~SECRET~~) Carl Rowan, Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) also accompanied the Johnson mission. He prepared a 16-point program which included recommendations for an increase in psychological warfare operations including leaflet-dropping and broadcasting. To carry out these activities he asked for 20 more U-10 aircraft or helicopters.¹²

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President Johnson's 15 March Decisions

() After reviewing these recommendations, President Johnson on 15 March authorized new military measures to reverse the trend in South Vietnam, increase Viet Cong casualties, and "make them leave their neighbors alone." Approving most of General Johnson's program, he directed: (1) deployment of three more helicopter companies within 30 days and three more Army O-1 companies and three more USAF O-1 squadrons totaling 186 aircraft within 120 days; (2) establishment of a joint U.S.-Vietnamese target and analysis center; (3) use of the Seventh Fleet for more air and surface patrol and air strikes; and (4) accelerated construction of airfields, including emergency work at Da Nang and Chu Lai. He also directed that additional advisory support be provided Vietnamese regional and popular forces and that agreements be sought with Australia and New Zealand to provide more assistance.

() (1) To increase the pressure on North Vietnam, the President rescinded orders that the Air Force fly air strikes only with the VNAF and hit only primary prescheduled targets. He gave field commanders more flexibility in timing air strikes because of weather or other delays, allowed low-level reconnaissance south of the 20th parallel and authorized air and naval harassing operations against coastal staging areas, including the use of special "De Soto" sea patrols and Plan 34A operations.* He deferred action on several of General Johnson's recommendations, including dispatch of more U.S. combat troops, until he received more data from the State Department, USIA, and other agencies.¹³

*See Van Staaveren, pp 21 and 30 (TS).

Planning Allied Troop Deployments

~~(S)~~ Until 1 April when President Johnson made additional decisions, the dominant issue was the proposed large-scale deployment and possible combat use of more American and allied troops. The JCS, CINCPAC, MAC/V, and the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, examined at least 10 separate proposals. Four principal recommendations emerged. They called for deploying: (1) one U.S. Army division in the central highlands around either Pleiku or Saigon to prevent infiltration and to permit the release of Vietnamese security units for combat; (2) a U.S. or multinational (SEATO) force south of the 17th parallel; (3) one South Korean division in the Saigon area; and (4) undetermined forces in enclaves along the coast.¹⁴

~~(S)~~ The Army, in accordance with General Johnson's views, favored stationing one division initially in the II Corps area near Pleiku. The Marine Corps initially favored the "enclave" concept with units stationed at strategic locations along the coast from the demilitarized zone to the Mekong plus others in Thailand to secure bases in that country and act as a deterrent. It also advocated "direct military involvement by U.S. troops" because of the political instability of South Vietnam and the unreliability and opportunism of its military leaders.¹⁵

~~(S)~~ Reconciled to the deployment of ground troops, McConnell supported the "enclave" concept and thought that two divisions in South Vietnam and one in Thailand would suffice. But feeling that the Army and Marine Corps proposals were oriented too much on South Vietnam, he presented another option--a 28-day air program against North Vietnam to destroy all targets on the 94-target list. He proposed beginning the air strikes in the

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southern part of North Vietnam and continuing at two- to six-day intervals until Hanoi itself was attacked. "While I support appropriate deployment of ground forces in South Vietnam," McConnell wrote, "it must be done in concert with an overall plan to eliminate the source of the insurgency." Simultaneously, other forces would support Vietnamese operations. McConnell believed that this proposal was consistent with previous JCS views on action against the North and would be a strong deterrent against open Chinese intervention.¹⁶

(~~SECRET~~) Later, after the JCS adopted a 12-week air strike schedule against the North that was acceptable to the Air Force, McConnell withdrew the 28-day program. Meanwhile, on 20 March, he joined the other service chiefs in warning McNamara that direct U.S. military action was imperative and recommending that the Marines at Da Nang AB conduct counterinsurgency operations. The Joint Chiefs also urged the following deployments: (1) the remainder of the Marine brigade to Da Nang; (2) a U.S. combat division and supporting forces to the Pleiku area "as soon as logistic support was assured"; (3) a Korean Army division, if available, for counterinsurgency and base security; and (4) four of the nine USAF squadrons recommended on 11 February and 4 March.¹⁷

(~~SECRET~~) McConnell informed the JCS that the Air Force could resupply an Army division at Pleiku by flying 16 C-130's from Saigon to four nearby small airports where 10 USAF CH-3C helicopters would complete delivery of items to units not served directly by the C-130's. Admiral Sharp advised the Joint Chiefs that the proposed forces would require 18,000 to 20,000 more U.S. logistic personnel, including 4,500 previously requested for a logistic command in the theater.¹⁸

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(~~15~~ 2) On 25 March the JCS submitted another proposal on Marine deployments. Then on the 29th, the Army in a surprise move informed the other services that it planned to send the 1st Cavalry Division (air mobile) to the Pleiku area to assist the Vietnamese in its defense and to secure the communication lines from Pleiku to Qui Nhon on the coast.¹⁹

(~~15~~) The Air Staff believed, however, there was no need for a division-size force near Pleiku and endorsed the enclave concept being supported in varying degrees by Ambassador Taylor, Westmoreland, Sharp, and others. Taylor also was opposed to deploying too many ground troops to South Vietnam. Furthermore, the JCS had not decided on the requirement, organization, or mission of an air mobile division. The Air Staff argued that resupply of the division would be risky and that the concept was strategically questionable. Defense of the highlands could best be achieved from coastal enclaves after logistic support was assured.²⁰

(~~15~~) The JCS recognized the seriousness of the military situation. As March ended, it asked for immediate increases in funds, a separate military assistance program for Southeast Asia, improved communication systems, faster response to Admiral Sharp's requests, exemption of Southeast Asia from the balance of payments goals, authority to extend military terms of service and to consult with Congress on the use of reserve forces, relaxation of military and civilian manpower ceilings, and a substantial increase in military air transport in and out of South Vietnam.²¹ McNamara did not reply formally until 14 May when he observed that many of these recommendations would not be carried out unless one of Admiral Sharp's major contingency plans was put into effect.²²

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The Stepped-up Air War

(~~SECRET~~) While administration officials weighed the cost and risk of a larger U.S. commitment, the pace of the war quickened.²³ To blunt Viet Cong attacks on South Vietnamese forces, both the Air Force and the VNAF had increased the number of their combat sorties. A high Communist casualty rate was expected from the first authorized employment of USAF combat jet aircraft on 19 February and the rescission on 10 March of the major restrictions on all air operations in the South.* The arrival in March of 45 more O-1's for VNAF visual reconnaissance and forward air control duties further enhanced the air effort.²⁴

(~~SECRET~~) On 31 March in a major attack on a Viet Cong stronghold, USAF aircraft set fire to Boi Loi woods in Binh Duong Province. Called Operation Sherwood Forest, C-123's first defoliated the area and then dropped fuel drums which were ignited by attached flares. A-1E's and B-57's fed the flames with napalm, but a rain storm extinguished the blaze. This attack, coupled with previous bombings and a psychological warfare leaflet-loudspeaker effort, induced several thousand civilians to leave the area.²⁵

(~~SECRET~~) Against North Vietnam, the initial Rolling Thunder strikes on 2, 14, and 15 March were followed by more frequent USAF, VNAF, and Navy attacks. Beginning on 21 March, they struck targets four days in a row. On the 30th, another USAF F-105 squadron arrived at Korat AB, Thailand, from Okinawa to bolster USAF fighter-bomber strength. Ambassador Taylor affirmed that the air program had produced a "very clear lift in morale" in South Vietnam.²⁶

*See pp 10-11.

(~~SECRET~~) Although Communist aircraft did not interfere with the Rolling Thunder attacks, enemy aircraft trails were sighted on 15 March about 60 miles from a target area. The presence of 34 MIG-15's and -17's on Phuc Yen Airfield near Hanoi and additional MIG's and IL-28 bombers on the nearby Chinese Communist island of Hainan also disturbed the Air Force. On 17 March McConnell proposed and the JCS three days later recommended the immediate dispatch from the United States to Thailand of a USAF F-4C squadron, one of the nine proposed by the JCS for Asia on 11 February and 4 March. The multipurpose F-4C could be used for air defense, "cover" for reconnaissance, and strikes in North Vietnam and Laos. The State Department quickly obtained the concurrence of the Thai government.²⁷

(~~SECRET~~) As noted earlier, McConnell withdrew from JCS consideration his proposed 28-day air strike program against the North in light of a new 12-week program, drawn up by the JCS in accordance with guidelines from McNamara. The Joint Chiefs informed the Defense Secretary, however, that Rolling Thunder strikes could be made more effective by: (1) relaxing the rules of engagement; (2) giving field commanders more discretion to conduct medium and low altitude reconnaissance flights and to determine tactics, escort, areas of operation, and exceptions to the rules of engagement; and (3) listing targets south of the 20th parallel to be hit in the ensuing weeks.²⁸

(~~SECRET~~) The objectives of the USAF-Navy air program in Laos did not change during March. Yankee Team reconnaissance aircraft were moderately successful in surveillance of known targets, intelligence-gathering on Communist Pathet Lao movements, and assessment of bomb damage of targets

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struck by the Laotian Air Force. The number of Barrel Roll sorties increased from 67 in February to 211 in March. However, these efforts were hampered by the continuing restraints placed on operations by the Thai and Lao governments and Washington. McConnell and the other service chiefs could do little about the policies of Bangkok and Vientiane, but they agreed that the air activities in Laos would be more effective if Admiral Sharp was given freedom of action and they urged that Washington relax its control.²⁹

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III. THE EXPANDING U.S. ROLE

(~~PS 001~~) At the end of March 1965 about 31,000 U.S. military personnel, 7,500 of them Air Force, were in South Vietnam. At least 15 key JCS recommendations aimed at arresting the military decline in that beleaguered country still awaited action. The United States was now openly participating with air strikes in the South and had begun air attacks against the North and stepped up air activity in Laos. As administration leaders considered new, major decisions, the services were poised to send more forces. Four USAF fighter squadrons were on alert in the United States for immediate deployment with five more prepared to move shortly afterward.¹

President Johnson's April Decisions

(~~PS 001~~) On 1 and 2 April the President again made several major decisions. He approved the dispatch of two more Marine battalions, one F-4B Marine air squadron, and support elements. Most important, he authorized their "more active use" in South Vietnam under conditions to be established and approved by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of State. The President further approved sending 18,000 to 20,000 additional U.S. troops for logistic duties and to fill out existing units. He reaffirmed support of General Johnson's 21-point program and the effort to obtain "significant" combat elements from Australia, New Zealand, and Korea. He also stressed the need for faster movement of aircraft and helicopter units to Southeast Asia.

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(S) For North Vietnam, the President directed a slowly rising tempo of Rolling Thunder operations, more leaflet missions, and more measures to counter the threat of enemy MIG's. He said that aerial mining and blockade proposals against the North required more study, and that 12 CIA suggestions for additional covert and other activities should be explored quickly. For Laos he asked for stepped up air attacks on infiltration routes in the panhandle. The President also approved a 41-point nonmilitary program prepared by Ambassador Taylor and directed him to seek the concurrence of the Saigon government for these moves.²

(S) In a restrained public statement, the administration announced that it would send several thousand more advisors and security forces to South Vietnam to protect installations, provide more economic aid, possibly increase the intensity of the war against the North, and help the Saigon government increase its regular military, paramilitary, and police forces by 160,000 men. Taylor described the decisions as neither "a fundamental change in strategy," nor "sensational."³ Meanwhile, the President prepared for and on 7 April launched a major peace offensive. He asserted that the United States was willing to engage in "unconditional" discussions with the Communists. He also proposed a billion-dollar development program for Southeast Asia.⁴

(S) Immediately after the President's military decisions, McNamara ordered more Marine and Army units to the Da Nang-Hue-Phu Bai areas along the coast. Army engineering and fuel units were to move to Thailand when that government consented. USAF units, some long on alert, also proceeded to Asian bases. During the first six days of April McNamara directed the deployment of one F-4C squadron to Ubon and Udorn AB's and one F-105

squadron to Takhli AB in Thailand, one RB-66 squadron to Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam, two fighter squadrons and one C-130 squadron to Okinawa, one fighter squadron to Taiwan, and two C-130 squadrons to the Philippines.⁵

~~SECRET~~) To comply with the President's injunction of 15 March to increase Viet Cong casualties, each service submitted suggestions. McConnell proposed continuous O-1 aerial surveillance, a better air and ground alert in each corps area, an airborne command post to facilitate communication between forward air controllers (FAC's) and strike aircraft, and simpler procedures for requesting air strikes to eliminate delays.⁶

~~SECRET~~ On 9 April the President also approved the USIA's 16-point program for stepped-up psychological warfare.⁷ On the 13th he authorized the dispatch of more Marine forces and the Army's 173d Airborne Brigade. The Marines began arriving the next day, bringing to 8,000 the number of Leathernecks guarding the Da Nang AB and nearby facilities. Advance units of the 173d did not arrive until 3 May.⁸

The Honolulu Meetings

~~SECRET~~ Other major ground deployments were under consideration. On 5 April McNamara asked the JCS for the plan proposed by Wheeler in February to send two or three more divisions to Southeast Asia.* After a meeting at Honolulu from the 8th to the 10th and a JCS meeting on the 12th, McNamara and the JCS agreed to adopt the enclave concept proposed earlier by the Marine Corps⁺ to introduce and support more U.S. and allied forces.

*See p 15.

+See p 21.

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The plan called for the United States to secure installations and enclaves along the coast, conduct operations from them, secure inland bases, and then conduct operations with Vietnamese units from these bases. The plan went to McNamara on 17 April.⁹

(~~SECRET~~) On 20 April key U.S. officials from Washington and Saigon again convened at Honolulu to continue deliberations on the U.S. build-up. As they met, Vietnamese units were still plagued by defeats and desertions; the increased U.S. application of air power had scarcely begun to rectify the situation. The conferees did not expect the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces to capitulate immediately and thought a favorable settlement of the war possible only in six months to two years. It might come as much from Viet Cong failure in the South as from the punishment inflicted by air attacks on the North. The Communists had to be denied victory before a political solution could be reached.¹⁰

(~~SECRET~~) On the air war, McNamara advised MAC/V to concentrate on South rather than North Vietnam and to "slip" Rolling Thunder operations if necessary. He said that close air support strikes should have priority over other types of air action. The Marine Corps would provide its own close air support. He thought better air organization was needed in using A-1's, B-57's, F-100's, F-4's, and A-4's. Navy aircraft, he said, would not be required in the South except for large saturation strikes similar to the "Black Virgin" operation of 15 April.* Admiral Sharp observed, however, that if USAF aircraft in Thailand continued to be unavailable for use in South Vietnam, Navy aircraft would be needed.¹¹

*See p 37.

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(~~Top 1~~) Concerning the operations against the North, the Defense Secretary said that a "doughnut" area around Hanoi-Haiphong complex and Phuc Yen Airfield would continue to be exempt from attack. He favored at least one VNAF Rolling Thunder mission per week with USAF support but no combined VNAF-Navy missions. No decision was reached on JCS requests to attack SA-2 missile sites. Concerning Laos, McNamara asserted that USAF-Navy Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger operations there had been wasteful since many sorties had produced few results.¹²

(~~Top 1~~) Following these meetings McNamara outlined for the President a three-step program to bolster the 33,000 U.S. and 2,000 Korean military personnel now in South Vietnam.* The first and only step he recommended for immediate action was the dispatch of 48,000 more U.S. and 5,250 Australian and Korean troops, plus three Marine air squadrons. This force, which he proposed to deploy from May through August, would establish more enclaves, provide 20,000 men for logistic support, and conduct operations with Vietnamese units. A second step, to be considered later, called for deploying 56,000 more men, including an Army air mobile division, additional Marines, and Korean troops. The third step was not spelled out.

(~~Top 1~~) According to Secretary McNamara, the tempo of air strikes against North Vietnam was "about right" and had psychological as well as physical effects, although, he said, air attacks "cannot do the job alone." He concurred with Ambassador Taylor and others that the Hanoi-Haiphong area should not be hit since "we should not kill the hostage." All conferees agreed that air strikes should continue during any negotiation talks.

*The Korean force, engaged largely in engineering tasks, began arriving in February 1965.

~~(S)~~ McNamara asked the President to consult again with the Australian and Korean governments about their proposed troop commitments. He recommended that the Chief Executive inform U.S. congressional leaders of the decisions to establish an international security force, deploy more troops, and change the mission of U.S. forces.¹³

~~(S)~~ As a result of the Honolulu and Washington decisions, the JCS updated their 17 April deployment plan and sent it to McNamara at the end of the month. The Air Staff felt that the Army concept for deploying an air mobile division to the central highlands in South Vietnam had been overtaken by events.¹⁴

Speeding Unit Deployments

~~(S)~~ As the President weighed these recommendations, the JCS sent McNamara another air, ground, and naval plan for holding Southeast Asia. In addition to the 36,000 U.S. military men in South Vietnam on 30 April, the Joint Chiefs proposed adding 117,000 U.S. and 19,750 Korean, Australian, and New Zealand troops in subsequent weeks and months. They identified 12 USAF fighter-bomber, reconnaissance, and airlift squadrons and 4,813 USAF personnel to be deployed to South Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Japan, and Okinawa. The proposal was not a unanimous one as General McConnell questioned the basic strategy it reflected. According to the USAF Chief of Staff:

The deployments and logistic actions imply a judgment that [the] United States should prepare to engage the Chinese Communists in a land battle in Asia under gravely disadvantaged conditions Any planned commitment of U.S. manpower on [the] Asia land mass should continue to be [the] subject of deliberate and measured analysis of the near and long term objectives, capabilities, risks, and costs.

He urged more study of the impact of such deployments on NATO commitments, possible contingencies elsewhere, long term policy for Southeast Asia, and the imbalance and overcommitment of U.S. military forces.¹⁵

~~SECRET~~ Meanwhile there were more setbacks in South Vietnam. The Viet Cong began a "monsoon" offensive with new weapons and appeared capable of launching large-size attacks anywhere in the country. In Saigon, following another coup attempt and demonstrations by Catholics who feared that the Quat government might make a neutralist settlement, that regime fell on 17 June. The military again took control, appointing the VNAF Commander, Marshal Ky, as Premier.*

~~SECRET~~ During this period Westmoreland and Sharp asked for the immediate deployment of more U.S. troops, which triggered another intense debate in the JCS.¹⁶ The Air Staff was deeply troubled by the U.S. drift toward an Asian land war and McConnell requested a special intelligence assessment of the need for still more ground deployments. He asserted that Army plans to dispatch an air mobile division which would be supported logistically by the Air Force had not been adequately examined. He declared that the increasing assistance by North Vietnam to the Viet Cong had added "a new dimension" to the war which required heavier air attacks on the North.¹⁷

~~SECRET~~ The intelligence community backed MAC/V's assessments and recommendations (USAF intelligence neither agreed nor disagreed). Ambassador Taylor dissented. He conceded the necessity for more U.S. troops but thought perhaps one third of the number requested would be enough for the duration of the monsoon season. He said that South Vietnam's problems were aggravated chiefly by factionalism, politics, and poor military leadership

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(especially in the I Corps area) rather than by the annual Viet Cong offensive.¹⁸

~~SECRET~~ The Westmoreland-Sharp views prevailed and the JCS on 11 June recommended deployment of 45,000 more U.S. military personnel (23 battalions, the Army's air mobile division, and four USAF fighter squadrons) and nine Korean battalions. The Joint Chiefs recognized that more air base facilities were needed before the additional USAF squadrons could deploy. They urged heavier air strikes on "important" targets and more armed reconnaissance in the North to demonstrate America's determination. Increases in Vietnamese Army strength would be postponed until November while hard-hit units were reconstituted.¹⁹ Ambassador Taylor, meanwhile, in answer to newsmen's queries, stated on 11 June that there was no immediate need for more U.S. troops and no prospect of a U.S. build-up to 300,000 men.²⁰

~~SECRET~~ On 15 June McNamara approved the deployment of an air mobile division to South Vietnam* and two days later, after important modifications, the rest of the JCS recommendations. Although he was against the decision on the air mobile division, McConnell met shortly with the Army chief to discuss USAF logistic support for it, estimated at about 800 short tons per day.²¹

~~SECRET~~ At this time, the administration planned to approve fewer additional U.S. units than recommended by the JCS. On 16 June McNamara announced that 21,000 more troops would shortly go to South Vietnam, raising the U.S. force there from about 54,000 to between 70,000 to 75,000 of which 21,000 would be combat troops. More would be sent if needed. He said that the Viet Cong

*The air mobile division was to arrive in South Vietnam by 1 September.

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U.S. MILITARY MONTH-END STRENGTHS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1965

MONTH	ARMY	NAVY *	MARINES	AIR FORCE	TOTAL
JAN	14,752	1,103	891	7,112	23,858
FEB	15,201	1,131	1,447	7,158	24,937
MAR	15,592	1,271	4,721	7,527	29,111
APR	16,192	1,561	8,944	9,324	36,021
MAY	22,588	2,912	16,265	9,963	51,728
JUN	27,350	3,756	18,112	10,703	59,921
JUL	39,650	4,646	25,533	11,593	81,422
AUG	48,077	5,324	34,227	18,719	100,347
SEP	76,179	6,039	36,442	13,637	132,297
OCT	92,755	8,529	36,788	15,207	153,279
NOV	104,508	8,869	37,897	18,297	169,571
DEC	116,755	8,749	38,190	20,620	184,314

*Includes US Coast Guard

Source: Hq MAC/V

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had 65,000 combat and combat support troops, 80,000 to 100,000 part-time guerrillas, and 30,000 political and propaganda workers. The South Vietnamese, with 574,000 regular and paramilitary forces, had less than a 4 to 1 advantage. Since a higher ratio was needed to cope with the threat, more U.S. strength was required.^{* 22}

(S) Westmoreland and Sharp quickly insisted that the approved level--less than half recommended by the JCS on 11 June--was insufficient to meet the critical situation in South Vietnam. During the debate which followed, both commanders, at White House request, sent additional assessments.²³ Westmoreland said that without nuclear weapons a quick victory was impossible. He warned of a long war of attrition and raised his demands. He asked for 44 U.S. battalions in 1965 and more in 1966 to relieve the war-weary Vietnamese forces. He also asked for more USAF aircraft and for 30 more Army and Marine helicopter units exclusive of the 27 authorized and those for the air mobile division. Sharp stated that more coastal enclaves were needed from Hue to Qui Nhon from which U.S. troops could expand. He expressed confidence that by working with Vietnamese units and by convincing rural Vietnamese of American support, the United States would succeed where France had failed.²⁴

(S) McConnell now supported the deployment of more ground units, but only in accordance with the enclave concept. He continued to stress the need for more air pressure on Hanoi, saying he was

*Publicly, the primary mission of U.S. troops was to secure and patrol important military installations. They could be used for combat with Vietnamese troops only in an emergency.

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more convinced than ever that these [air] operations cannot be divorced from and are the essential key to the eventual defeat of the Viet Cong. In November 1964 . . . [the] JCS unanimously agreed that direct, decisive, action against the DRV* was needed immediately. This course of action was not adopted and intelligence reports indicate that the current air strike program, while inconveniencing the DRV had done little to curtail or destroy their will and capability to support the insurgency, largely due to the restraints on the air strike program. In fact, the restraints have provided the DRV with the incentive and opportunity to strengthen both their offensive and defensive capabilities.

So [the] C/S USAF considers an intensified application of air power against key industrial and military targets in North Vietnam essential to the result desired. During the period of time required to introduce more forces, any build-up of and support for the Viet Cong offensive should be denied. . . . Failing this, more serious difficulties and casualties for U.S. and allied troops can be expected.

He again urged that the Air Force be allowed to strike targets in the 94-target list as well as others.²⁵

(~~SECRET~~) The JCS, except for agreeing to some intensification of the air war against the North, did not adopt McConnell's views. On 2 July the USAF Chief of Staff went along with a JCS recommendation to send more U.S. Army and Marine ground and support units to provide 34 "maneuver" battalions. The Joint Chiefs also asked for six to nine additional USAF squadrons (after the completion of more airfields). The new U.S. goal would be 175,000 military personnel for South Vietnam. Immediate and heavier air strikes on the North, they added, would constitute an "indispensable" part of the overall program. But even as this recommendation reached the Defense Secretary, a further South Vietnamese military decline presaged still higher U.S. manpower needs.²⁶

*Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

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(The Air War in South Vietnam (April-June))

(~~TS-1~~) With the approval by increments of larger American forces for South Vietnam, the United States increased its direct participation in the war. In the spring of 1965, however, air power still played the dominant role. U.S. Marine and Army ground units were committed primarily to the security of Da Nang AB and other installations in coastal areas. They engaged in small-scale actions until late June when the Army's 173d Airborne Brigade began its first large search and destroy operation in Zone "D" near Saigon.²⁷

(~~TS-1~~) From April through June, the use of air power in Southeast Asia rose about 63 percent above the first three months of the year. In accordance with McNamara's orders, Westmoreland gave top priority to air strikes in South Vietnam. In April, after a fourth Navy carrier joined the Seventh Fleet, Navy and Marine aircraft began to supplement USAF-VNAF operations. In the largest single air effort of the war, nicknamed "Black Virgin," U.S. and VNAF aircraft flew 443 sorties on the 15th, dropping 900 tons of bombs during an attack against Viet Cong concentrations in a forest in Tay Ninh Province. USAF planes flew 49 percent of these sorties.²⁸

(~~TS-1~~) In May, augmented by North Vietnamese units, the Viet Cong began their "monsoon" offensive and in subsequent weeks repeatedly engaged South Vietnamese forces. Some of the largest battles of the war were fought at Song Be (site of the first "monsoon" attack on 11 May), Ba Gia, Dong Xoai, and Cheo Reo. USAF and VNAF aircraft, despite bad weather, often staved off Vietnamese defeat by inflicting heavy casualties on the Communists and causing enemy defections. MAC/V reports acknowledged the significant

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contribution of USAF strikes. Notwithstanding their losses, the Communists often destroyed or seriously battered Vietnamese units whose strength was already undermined by desertions.²⁹

(S-C-2) The rising air activity taxed the resources of the 2d Air Division, with overcrowded bases and shortages of certain types of munitions being special problems. McNamara asked the Air Force if it had the resources to expand airfield facilities quickly. Although Secretary Zuckert advocated continued reliance on Army construction units, a study was initiated to determine whether USAF units could do this work in operational areas. Also in short supply were aircraft for forward air control operations. However, in late May and early June the first of three additional O-1 USAF squadrons (approved by the President on 15 March)* began to arrive. By the end of July all three USAF squadrons, flying aircraft obtained from the Army, and three Army O-1 companies were in place. But a new problem arose when it was found that the radio equipment in some of the O-1's was incompatible with that of USAF fighter aircraft.³⁰

(S-C-2) On 16 May there was a serious USAF-VNAF setback when an accidental explosion at Bien Hoa AB destroyed 14 aircraft (10 USAF B-57's and 1 A-1E, 1 Navy F-8U, and 2 VNAF A-1H's) and damaged 31 (1 USAF H-43 and 30 VNAF A-1H's). Twenty-seven USAF officers and men were killed and 77 wounded. Ten vehicles, buildings, a fuel dump, and other facilities also were lost. An investigating team led by Lt. Gen. William K. Martin, the Inspector General, Headquarters USAF, concluded that the explosion was caused by a malfunctioning fuze on a bomb in a B-57.³¹

*See pp 20.

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(~~)~~ To make up for these losses, a Navy aircraft carrier on 16 May began "Dixie Station" duty for South Vietnamese operations. On 11 June, after a decision to maintain a fifth aircraft carrier with the Seventh Fleet, the Dixie Station duty became permanent.³²

(~~)~~ In a major administration decision--and despite misgivings by the Air Staff and the SAC commander--B-52 bombers originally scheduled for use only over North Vietnam were assigned saturation bombing missions in the South. This decision came after the "Black Virgin" forest attack of 15 April.* The Air Force had considered the strike relatively successful but Westmoreland thought the results showed that the tactical aircraft could not conduct pattern bombing over a large area in a short period of time. In the first B-52 attack (Arc Light I) on 18 June, 27 aircraft hit the "Zone D" area near Saigon, a Viet Cong stronghold. Although 30 bombers took off, two collided during refueling maneuvers and were lost as were eight of 12 crewmen. A third bomber aborted. On 4 and 7 July the B-52's hit the same area.³³

(~~)~~ An analysis of the first three strikes suggested that they provided valuable training in conventional bombing but did not prove B-52's could destroy Viet Cong capabilities. Intelligence for spotting targets was poor and without follow-up ground attacks, the bombings appeared wasteful. Some members of the Congress and the press also questioned the effectiveness of the bombings. But as additional strikes demonstrated their value, their frequency was increased. General McConnell later described the B-52 effort as "strategic persuasion" to encourage the Communists to cease their aggression. He also noted that a few of the bombers could saturate

*See p 37.

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very accurately a large enemy area in a few minutes and their use freed many tactical aircraft for other tasks. McNamara, Westmoreland, and Sharp also strongly backed the use of B-52's. A high level committee with representatives from the White House, the State and Defense Departments, and the JCS exercised careful control of the bombings.³⁴

(~~SECRET~~) By mid-1965 the U.S. air effort in the South was reaching formidable proportions. In January USAF combat advisory sorties totaled 2,392; in June combat sorties totaled 7,382. Westmoreland desired still more air power and asked to use USAF aircraft in Thailand for attacks in the South. Sharp doubted that such attacks would be effective. More USAF strikes from Thailand on North Vietnam and Laos would also be needed, and he did not wish to jeopardize this effort by asking the Thailand government to approve such USAF attacks on South Vietnam.³⁵

The Air War in North Vietnam and Laos (April-June)

(~~SECRET~~) The number of USAF-VNAF-Navy strikes against North Vietnam also rose steadily. On 10 April the JCS authorized the use of 10 KC-135 Arc Light tankers each day for fighter-bomber and reconnaissance sorties. Combined U.S.-VNAF combat sorties totaled about 3,600 in April, 4,000 in May, and 4,800 in June. USAF aircraft flew less than half the missions. But an analysis by JCS Chairman Wheeler on 4 April and another by the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) early in July showed that the strikes had not reduced appreciably North Vietnam's ability to defend its homeland, train its forces, and infiltrate men and supplies into South Vietnam and Laos.³⁶ In fact, there was evidence that Hanoi would try harder to defend itself since more MIG's and IL-28 bombers had arrived on its airfields, and

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SA-2 anti-aircraft sites had been built to protect the small industrial resources in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. The Air Staff, while accepting the analysis, noted it had failed to take into consideration the political restraints which had hampered U.S. operations.³⁷

On 3 April, in the first enemy air attack of the war, MIG's intercepted a Navy F-8E near Hainan Island, and Navy pilots claimed a "possible" first kill. In another surprise attack on the 4th, four MIG-15's and -17's shot down two USAF F-105's on a bombing mission over the North, the first U.S. losses to enemy aircraft. To improve air defense warning against the MIG's, the Air Force sent seven EC-121's to Tainan AB, Taiwan, and then to South Vietnam bases for operations over the North as necessary. The Air Staff also pressed for the deployment of another F-104 squadron to the Western Pacific.

On 12 May air assaults on the North halted as the United States explored the possibility of negotiations with Hanoi. When there was no satisfactory response, the bombings resumed on the 18th.³⁸

Meanwhile, on 14 April, the JCS urged McNamara to approve air attacks on SA-2 sites as they became operational.³⁹ On General McConnell's initiative, the JCS resubmitted a recommendation on 7 June to "eliminate" the IL-28 bomber "threat." On 3 July it also recommended strikes against the SA-2 sites. On the 7th McConnell said that reconnaissance showed that three SA-2 sites would soon have a limited capability.⁴⁰

Neither the Secretaries of Defense or State, the U.S. intelligence community, nor Westmoreland shared the JCS view on the gravity of the situation. They doubted that the IL-28's would hit the South and

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concluded that the SA-2 sites had not yet interfered with Rolling Thunder operations. Meanwhile, the MIG problem appeared well in hand. Navy Phantoms downed two MIG's on 17 June, and a Navy Skyraider another on the 20th. On 10 July USAF F-4C's destroyed two MIG's with Sidewinder missiles. Five enemy aircraft were now destroyed and a sixth possibly so.⁴¹

(~~)~~ The Joint Chiefs continued studies, begun earlier in the year, on aerial mining of key North Vietnam ports and a naval blockade. They withheld recommending such action since the administration did not wish to increase the danger of hostilities between the United States and third nation suppliers of Hanoi, especially the Soviet Union and China. The JCS did propose reprisal air strikes for the assassination or kidnapping of key U.S. officials and, at McNamara's request, Sharp sent a list of suitable targets to be attacked within 18 hours after Washington's approval.⁴²

(~~)~~ In April air activity increased in Laos, and about 2,000 USAF-Navy combat sorties were flown (about half by the Air Force), but in subsequent months the number fell below this figure. MAC/V was the coordinating authority but McConnell thought that MAC/V did not have enough qualified air experts and Sharp should exercise control through his component commanders of the Pacific Air Forces and the Seventh Fleet. McConnell, however, was unable to persuade the JCS to alter the command arrangements.⁴³

(~~)~~ In accordance with General Johnson's recommendations of 14 March,* the JCS on 3 April ordered the inauguration of "Steel Tiger" armed reconnaissance over Laos to insure heavier strikes against enemy personnel and equipment on infiltration routes south of the 17th parallel.⁴⁴

*See p 19.

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Meanwhile, Barrel Roll operations began concentrating solely on providing combat support for Lao ground forces against Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese units. On the 29th some restrictions on Barrel Roll missions were relaxed, and on 9 May USAF F-4C's in Thailand were placed on daily "Bango" alert to hit targets of opportunity. Later, USAF F-105's were placed on "Whiplash" alert for the same purpose.⁴⁵

~~SECRET~~ The Lao government insisted on stringent rules to govern U.S. activities, and this created a tortuous and time-consuming target-approval procedure. The chain ran from CINCPAC to MAC/V to Ubon AB, Thailand, to Vientiane, Laos, and reverse. Washington authorities and the U.S. Ambassadors in Laos and Thailand were all deeply involved. Consequently, days and sometimes weeks passed before pilots were permitted to hit certain targets. After an alleged U.S. air strike on friendly Lao personnel on 22 May, U.S. officials suspended Steel Tiger operations until 7 June, and the Lao government imposed more rules for an area where Communist infiltration into South Vietnam was believed to be heaviest. Brig. Gen. Phai Ma, the Lao Air Force commander, did not accept the U.S. estimate of the infiltration problem.⁴⁶ By the end of June some rules had been relaxed and control from Washington reduced, but Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger operations remained less effective than U.S. military officials desired.⁴⁷

New Command Arrangements

~~SECRET~~ The period also witnessed important command realignments. On 25 June General Moore, the 2d Air Division commander, was given the additional responsibility as MAC/V's deputy commander for air operations and raised to the rank of lieutenant general. Long discussed by the JCS

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and backed by the Army,* the change was approved by McNamara although General McConnell and the Marine Corps chief believed that the "two hat" arrangement was inappropriate and organizationally unsound as it would divide Moore's efforts between two locations.⁴⁸

~~SECRET~~ Meanwhile, there were plans to separate U.S. military activities in Thailand from Headquarters MAC/V. This had been advocated by the U.S. Ambassador in Bangkok, Graham A. Martin, to allay the concern of the Thai government about becoming too closely identified with the war in South Vietnam. The JCS also split over this issue: the Army opposed but the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps favored separation, since it would permit MAC/V to concentrate on defeating the Viet Cong. In addition, the three services apparently were concerned lest there be established eventually a larger Army-dominated Southeast Asia command. The majority believed that a three-star USAF general should head the new command in Thailand.⁴⁹

~~SECRET~~ On 30 April McNamara approved the separation but accepted the recommendation of the JCS chairman that a two-star Army general be commander and a one-star Air Force general be deputy commander of the new command. Called U.S. Military Assistance Command, Thailand (USMAC/THAI) with headquarters in Bangkok, it was established on 10 July 1965 almost simultaneously with another organizational change. This was the reassignment two days earlier of the 2d Air Division from Headquarters 13th Air Force, Clark AB, the Philippines, to Headquarters PACAF in order to streamline and make more effective command and control procedures for the expanding tactical air operations. Air Force units and six bases in Thailand remained assigned to the 13th Air Force but operational control was exercised by the 2d Air Division through the Deputy Commander in Thailand.⁵⁰

*See Van Staaveren, pp 65-68 (TS).

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IV. PLANNING NEW DEPLOYMENTS

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In July the Vietnamese political situation under Premier Ky appeared more hopeful as the mounting U.S. air strikes and the start of large-scale American ground sweeps helped restore momentarily the morale of friendly forces. Unfortunately, this favorable change was offset by the loss of additional Vietnamese territory in the II and III Corps areas, which produced an increasing number of refugees.¹

A Larger Force for Southeast Asia

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From 16 to 20 July McNamara, Wheeler, and other officials met in Saigon to assess the war effort and examine in detail Westmoreland's June proposals for sending more U.S. manpower to South Vietnam. Ambassador Taylor* described the most recent Vietnamese setbacks and the current military situation. He said the monsoons had made close air support unpredictable and reduced logistic support up to 30 percent. Air transport was the only reliable and, in several instances, the only means of reaching some provinces. He thought that Viet Cong willingness to come to terms would be dependent on the Rolling Thunder operations, the Saigon government's stability and capacity to administer a cleared area, U.S. determination, and the attitude of Hanoi and Peking.

*On 8 July the White House announced that Henry Cabot Lodge would replace Taylor as Ambassador. Taylor left Saigon on 30 July. Officially, Lodge became Ambassador on 25 August.

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(S) Westmoreland and his aides outlined a proposed U.S. build-up in two phases. Phase I would require, by the end of 1965, 44 U.S. and allied battalions, 30 helicopter units, 20 USAF squadrons, and 6 Marine Corps squadrons for a total of 176,162 men. The ground forces would number 154,662, the Air Force 17,500, and the Navy 4,000. Twenty USAF squadrons would have the following aircraft:

<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>No of Squadrons</u>
B-57	1
F-100	4
F-102	1
F-104	1
Fighters (unspecified)	6
A-1E	2
AC-47	1
C-130	4
Total	<u>20</u>

During Phase I USAF combat capability would rise to about 16,750 sorties per month by the end of the year. Phase II deployments in calendar year 1966 would add 24 battalions, 18 helicopter units, 7 tactical fighter squadrons, and 2 transport squadrons. The 94,810 men would consist of 91,810 ground troops, 2,400 airmen, and 600 Navy personnel. At the end of Phase II, U.S. forces would total about 270,972.

(S) At this meeting, McNamara reaffirmed MAC/V's first claim to air resources, promising, if needed, additional aircraft carriers. He directed the Air Force to plan for a rate of 1.2 sorties per aircraft per day. He favored but made no firm decision on boosting the B-52 effort to 800 sorties per month as proposed by Westmoreland and Sharp in late June. He also supported modifying additional B-52's to obtain the 82 needed to achieve this sortie rate. He promised more engineering battalions to insure

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timely expansion of airfields and facilities. AM-2 airfield matting, he said, was being produced at a rate of one and one-half airfields per month or sufficient for 10 airfields by January 1966 (with about three million square feet per average airfield).*

(S-C-1) The Defense Secretary was concerned about the Air Force-Army split in controlling aircraft in South Vietnam but did not dwell on the subject. General Moore, 2d Air Division Commander, assured McNamara that all valid close air support requests for U.S. troops were being met. Moore emphasized the need for careful targeting of B-52 strikes to avoid wasting their expensive ordnance loads.²

(S-C-1) Some of the proposals and decisions were not fully in consonance with the views of the Air Staff. It believed that no ground forces should be sent in 1966 until air and naval power had hurt North Vietnam more severely, and that a maximum of 50 rather than 82 B-52's should be employed to provide 600 rather than 800 sorties per month. Although no decision was made on control of air resources, the Air Staff adhered to the belief that this problem could be resolved only by centralizing all air operations in South Vietnam under the 2d Air Division. But there was little prospect of JCS agreement on these issues.³

(S-C-1) Meanwhile, on 19 July the JCS agreed on the construction or expansion of eight airfields in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. Their location and suggested operational dates were:⁴

*USAF information indicated sufficient production for only one airfield every two months.

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<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Operating Date</u>
Da Nang, South Vietnam	1	1 Sep 65
Qui Nhon, South Vietnam	1	1 Nov 65
Phan Rang, South Vietnam	1	1 Jan 66
Sattahip, Thailand	1	1 Feb 66
Unspecified, Thailand	1	1 Mar 66
Unspecified, Western Pacific	3	Not given

~~SECRET~~) The JCS also reviewed a "shopping list" of additional military requirements that Westmoreland gave to McNamara. The 1965 Phase I requirements were raised by about 20,000 men and an updated program was sent to the Defense Secretary on 30 July. Phase I now called for a U.S. force of 195,800 personnel with 34 maneuver battalions, 23 fighter squadrons, and 53 helicopter companies, and 22,250 allied personnel with 10 battalions. Official JCS approval of Phase I was delayed until August as estimated needs continued to increase.* McConnell supported the build-up but insisted that before confirming Phase II needs, the JCS should approve an overall strategy for the Western Pacific.⁵

~~SECRET~~ Almost simultaneously President Johnson approved the dispatch of more Phase I-marked units. He announced on 28 July that U.S. strength in South Vietnam would rise almost immediately from 75,000 to 125,000 men, the maximum allowed until 1 September. It would provide 28 combat battalions and include the Army's air mobile division and appropriate air and logistic units. More troops would be sent later. The President pledged again America's determination to prevent the Communist domination of Vietnam and Asia. Other officials said there would be no major change in the U.S. combat role. Vietnamese troops would bear the brunt of the fighting while U.S. units would guard U.S. bases and be available for emergency assistance.⁶

*See p 50.

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Impact on the Air Force

~~SECRET~~ The spiraling U.S. military requirements for Southeast Asia, with costs expected to reach an estimated \$10 to \$12 billion per year, had a significant impact on force structures. On 23 July Wheeler directed the JCS to review America's world-wide military posture, and by early August the Air Staff was deeply involved in the evaluation, especially commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Cuban contingency plans. On the 5th, McNamara announced that because of Vietnam and other possible requirements, U.S. military strength would rise by 340,000 men to 2,992,000. The Air Force would increase from 809,000 to 849,000, largely to support stepped-up B-52, tactical, airlift, and logistic activities in Southeast Asia.⁷

~~SECRET~~ To resolve urgent problems associated with USAF participation in the war, McConnell on 2 August designated the Air Staff Board as the principal coordinating agency in the Headquarters. In August, top USAF officials headed by Secretary Zuckert met in Honolulu to examine deployment, personnel, equipment, construction, and other matters incident to the approved and projected build-up of forces. With respect to the Phase I build-up, they decided to convert all Air Force units already in place from temporary duty (TDY) to permanent change of station (PCS) and to assure that additional units moving from the United States to Southeast Asia would be in PCS status. In the same month, USAF personnel were assigned to an OSD logistic task force created by McNamara on 31 July to expedite supplies to South Vietnam.⁸

~~SECRET~~ The hike in the U.S. force goal in July prompted McConnell to press the JCS to appraise the military situation, state U.S. objectives,

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and prescribe a course of action for attaining them. Largely on his insistence the Joint Chiefs on 27 August prepared a concept for Vietnam that singled out three basic military tasks, all of equal priority: (1) to force Hanoi to end its support of the Viet Cong; (2) to defeat the Viet Cong and extend control of the Saigon government over all of South Vietnam; and (3) to deter the Chinese Communists and, if they intervened, to defeat them. The broad military strategy prescribed in the document which supported an intensified air and naval effort against North Vietnam contained many Air Force views. After studying the concept, McNamara sent the document to the State Department and the White House for use in further deliberations and informed the JCS that their recommendations on future operations in Southeast Asia would be considered on an individual basis.⁹

Meanwhile, the demand for more ground troops continued to increase. The last Phase I estimate had called for 195,800 U.S. military men for South Vietnam, but after July new assessments by the JCS and field commanders pushed the figure to 210,000, of which 34,500 were Air Force. The increase reflected requirements for more airlift, strike aircraft, air defense, airfield construction, artillery, support, and personnel for advisory, intelligence, communication, and security duties. On 23 August the JCS recommended approval of the new Phase I figure, and in September the Defense Secretary sent the request with his indorsement to the President.¹⁰

(~~Sec 2~~) McConnell was increasingly troubled by the impact of the projected deployments. He informed Gen. Hunter Harris, Jr., PACAF commander, that upon completion of Phase I, 67 percent of the Air Force's tactical fighter, 87 percent of its tactical reconnaissance, and 62 percent of its

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tactical airlift squadrons would be overseas. The Air Force could change unit missions or transfer units, but this would not provide either adequate rotational training in the United States or a sufficient number of units for deployment to meet NATO and other commitments. The Army too, he observed, was finding it more difficult to fulfill its needs.

(S) ~~SECRET~~ McConnell reiterated his belief that only proper use of air power could simultaneously deter the Chinese Communists and minimize the growing imbalance in the U.S. military posture. "If air power is not used to greatest advantage," he advised Harris, "and our military and civilian leaders are not convinced of this advantage, I foresee a virtually endless requirement for more and more ground forces in Southeast Asia reacting to whatever strategy the Viet Cong, DRV, and CHICOMS wish to impose." ¹¹

~~SECRET~~ The effect of the U.S. commitment on Air Force resources was becoming increasingly manifest. On 4 October, in a major decision, the Air Staff converted 13 USAF fighter squadrons (3 F-100, 4 F-105, and 6 F-4C) in the United States from tactical missions to replacement training to meet anticipated combat aircrew requirements. ¹²

New Agreements at Honolulu (27 September-7 October)

(S) ~~SECRET~~ From 27 September to 7 October military planners again met in Honolulu, primarily to determine the military units and movement schedules for the 1966 Phase II forces. McConnell instructed Harris, the chief USAF representative, to impress upon the conferees the impact of the increased Phase I forces on the U.S. military posture and the importance of evaluating this impact before recommending more deployments under Phase II and not set arbitrary dates for unit arrivals. ¹³

~~(S)~~ At the conference Admiral Sharp asked for 19,954 more Phase I personnel above those requested in August. For Phase II, the conferees agreed on the need for three more USAF tactical fighter squadrons above the seven believed necessary previously. The additional Air Force, Army, and Navy units and personnel selected were approved for planning purposes only. While the conferees agreed that the logistic structure would not fully support either Phase I or II deployments, the serious military situation dictated deploying as many combat units as possible even if support were marginal and combat capability reduced. Sharp's report of the conference emphasized the need for the United States to maintain military "momentum" as there was now a "clear and unmistakable" surge of Vietnamese hope and confidence stemming from the presence and performance of U.S. forces.¹⁴

~~(S)~~ Reviewing Sharp's revised manpower request for Phase I, the Air Staff considered the figure too high because it included a demand for units not yet in existence or which could not be deployed for 18 months. On 14 October the JCS recommended to McNamara 12,000 more Phase I personnel, 934 of whom would be Air Force.¹⁵

~~(S)~~ Refining strategic and deployment plans after the Honolulu conference, the JCS on 10 November updated the concept for integrating U.S., allied, and Vietnamese forces to destroy the Viet Cong and pacify South Vietnam. This included, again, an expanded Rolling Thunder program against the North that would achieve a level of destruction that the Hanoi regime could not accept.

~~(S)~~ The JCS paper on deployments showed that the completion of Phase I would place 219,000 U.S. personnel in South Vietnam. Completion of

Phase II would bring the total to 359,000. Since current resources could not meet this and other U.S. military obligations, the Joint Chiefs asked the Secretary of Defense for immediate approval to establish a broader base for service manpower training and rotation and authority to call up selected reserve personnel and units, activate new units, and extend tours of duty. To rebuild its military strength after Phase I was completed, the Air Force said it would require four more tactical fighter and three more tactical reconnaissance squadrons (150 aircraft). After Phase II, it would need four more tactical fighter squadrons (96 aircraft). The other services also described their larger force structure needs.¹⁶

The Air War in South Vietnam (July-November)

~~SECRET~~ The need for more U.S. forces in South Vietnam was apparent from reports from the field of battle. The fighting grew in intensity even as larger numbers of American military personnel were arriving after mid-1965. U.S. forces, largely Marine and Army ground troops, totaled 59,921 at the end of June and 153,279 at the end of October. Because airfield space in South Vietnam was limited the Air Force had to rely increasingly on facilities in Thailand, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan. As a result, USAF personnel increases in South Vietnam were modest, rising from 10,703 to 15,207. Although USAF and VNAF units shared air activity with the U.S. Marines, Navy, and Army, the Air Force performed a majority of air strikes.¹⁷

~~SECRET~~ While restraints on the use of air power were fewer and the rate of enemy "killed" rose, concern about the fate of Vietnamese noncombatants increased. On 7 July Westmoreland instructed all commanders to minimize civilian casualties. McConnell indorsed the letter but continued

to feel that too many rules interfered with effective operations. He favored permitting unified commanders maximum latitude, in accordance with national policy, in planning and executing the air effort.¹⁸

~~_____~~ September witnessed the beginning of larger-scale ground and air action. U.S. and South Vietnamese Marines launched Operation Piranha while Army units of the two countries in Operation Gibraltar attacked Viet Cong-North Vietnamese forces now estimated to exceed 200,000, including political cadres. From October through the end of the year multi-battalion forces were engaged in the central highlands in the heaviest fighting of the war. In a major air-ground battle at Plei Mei from 19 to 29 October, USAF B-57's, A-1E's, and F-100's played a key role in breaking up the Communist attacks.* From 9 to 28 November a second major battle, Operation Silver Bayonet, was fought in nearby Idrang Valley.⁺ It was highlighted by the first use and USAF support of the Army's air mobile 1st Cavalry Division which had arrived in September-October. On 16 November this operation saw the first B-52 close support strike of the war.¹⁹

~~_____~~ these and other U.S.-Vietnamese campaigns, Communist forces were thrown back with heavy casualties. The operations demonstrated the effectiveness of close air support. U.S. Army and Marine commanders and the U.S. Embassy in Saigon on frequent occasions testified that airmen had given indispensable assistance to ground troops and praised highly the exploits of USAF strike and FAC pilots.²⁰

*For a description of the USAF role, see Project CHECO SEA Special Rprt, The Siege at Plei Mei, 24 Feb 66 (C), in AFCHO.

+For USAF's role in this campaign, see Project CHECO Special Rprt, Silver Bayonet, 28 Feb 66 (C), in AFCHO.

~~SECRET~~) Of major USAF interest was its support of the Army's air mobile 1st Cavalry Division. Although the division destroyed many Viet Cong soldiers, its operations created severe supply problems and strained the entire U.S. logistic system in South Vietnam. McConnell believed that initial reports justified his earlier warning against employing a division near Pleiku in the central highlands without first securing properly ground and air lines of communications. He thought that more heliborne units, if deployed, would demand greater tactical, B-52, and airlift support than had been envisaged by either CINCPAC or MAC/V. "I still believe," he informed Harris, "that a combination of regular Army division and tactical air can provide the most potent forces as demonstrated in the recent Goldfire exercises" * But unless OSD could be convinced of this, he expected more Army air mobile divisions to become part of the U.S. military structure. He instructed Harris to document thoroughly the recent USAF experience with the 1st Cavalry Division. General Harris' report, forwarded on 1 December, confirmed the need for very extensive Air Force close air and logistic support for the division.²¹

~~SECRET~~ The increase in U.S. ground operations coincided with a build-up of USAF strength from October through the end of the year. Phase I units poured into South Vietnamese and other Asian bases. Four F-100 squadrons went to Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut AB's, four F-4C squadrons deployed to Cam Ranh Bay AB which opened in November, and one RF-4C and RF-101 squadron each deployed to Tan Son Nhut. Special air units also reached South Vietnam. In October an F-5 "Skoshi Tiger" squadron with 12 aircraft arrived for combat

* These exercises, held in 1964, tested Air Force tactical support of ground forces.

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evaluation, and in November an AC-47 "Puff, the Magic Dragon" squadron, the first of its kind, was deployed with 20 aircraft. The aircraft had previously undergone successful combat evaluation. Also deployed was a psychological warfare squadron with 4 C-47's and 16 U-10's for stepping up leaflet and loudspeaker missions approved in April,* and three spray-equipped C-123 "Ranch Hand" defoliation aircraft. Other Phase I squadrons with F-105, F-100, F-4C, RB-66, and C-130 aircraft deployed to bases in Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Okinawa, and Japan.²²

(~~SECRET~~) The stringent Washington controls over B-52 operations moved the JCS, in August, to ask McNamara to authorize five "free bomb" zones. According to the Joint Chiefs, this would insure attacks on the Communists in all types of weather, make more aircraft available for other tactical missions, and provide more stable air crew, maintenance, and logistic support for the bombers. When McNamara approved the recommendation on 29 September he stressed the importance of avoiding casualties among Vietnamese civilians.²³ In September B-52 tactics were changed from "maximum effort" missions to a combination of more frequent strikes using fewer aircraft. More than 300 sorties were flown that month and that level was maintained through the end of the year.²⁴

(~~SECRET~~) When doubts about the value of B-52 bombings continued to be expressed, General Westmoreland, in an August press conference, strongly defended their effectiveness. However, the lack of adequate "exploitation" by ground forces of areas bombed troubled the Air Force. By 3 October only 10 of the 37 missions flown had been followed up on the ground and in only

*See pp 19 and 29.

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two instances was there evidence of significant damage to the Communists. Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown, shortly after assuming this post,* asked the Air Staff for a study of the bombings. Its reply showed that the B-52's prevented concentration of enemy forces, often forced their withdrawal, instilled great fear, effectively destroyed major targets, and boosted lagging South Vietnamese morale. The study also pointed to the need for better targeting. Brown considered the study sufficiently important to send copies to McNamara, who, in turn, sent them to the State Department and the White House.²⁵

(S-C) Some thoughts were given to deploying the B-52's closer to the combat theater, say in the Ryukus, but this raised serious political questions. Thus, in July when B-52's launched a mission from Okinawa (where they had flown because of a storm in the Guam area), both the governments of Japan and the Ryukyu Islands protested vigorously, alleging such missions endangered Japan's neutrality. The U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, also objected, warning that further flights from the islands could endanger U.S.-Japanese negotiations beginning in 1967 on the renewal of base rights in 1970. On 31 July 1965 Under Secretary of State George W. Ball asked McNamara for a ruling on the need for Okinawa for B-52 operations.²⁶

(S-C) The JCS quickly counseled more restraint in publicly confirming the operations, believing that this would decrease left-wing pressure in Japan against them. Backed by Gen. John D. Ryan, the SAC commander, and Admiral Sharp, the JCS stressed the importance of the island for U.S. contingency planning and asked for "unswerving" U.S. support for its use without hindrance. But Okinawa was not used again by the B-52's during the rest of

*Brown succeeded Zuckert as Secretary of the Air Force on 1 October 1965.

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the year. Meanwhile, new proposals were studied for basing the big aircraft in Thailand, the Philippines, or Taiwan. ²⁷

Airfield Expansion and Security

(S-Gp 5) Airfield construction moved at a feverish pace in South Vietnam. Work began in May on a new airfield at Chu Lai and in June on another at Cam Ranh Bay. In July construction was approved for a new airfield at Phan Rang and for additional work at Qui Nhon and Da Nang. In late August the JCS forecast a slippage in the schedule for the last three sites of from three to eight weeks. An Air Staff study identified the major problems as inadequate engineering units, poor construction methods, and lagging production of AM-2 airfield matting. ²⁸

(S-Gp 5) To spur airfield expansion, Brown informed McNamara in October that while the Air Force would continue to rely largely on Army engineers for air base work, it would use its own resources to activate two heavy repair units that would be mobile, flexible, and located so that they could respond rapidly when needed. ²⁹

(S-Gp 5) At the end of 1965 construction was under way on three new airfields at Chu Lai, Cam Ranh Bay, and Phan Rang in South Vietnam, and eight others were being expanded. In Thailand, Sattahip AB also was undergoing major expansion. ³⁰

(S-Gp 5) Air base security remained a problem since the Viet Cong made the bases prime targets and attacked them frequently, often with great success. On 1 July a 14-man Viet Cong sabotage team unleashed a mortar and rifle attack on Da Nang, killing 1 airman, destroying 3 aircraft, virtually destroying 3 others, and damaging 4. The total monetary loss was estimated

at \$5 million. On 24 August a mortar and 105-mm howitzer strike at Bien Hoa wounded 9 Americans and at least 20 Vietnamese and damaged 22 USAF aircraft and 8 Army helicopters. On 27 October the Viet Cong attacked Marine Corps installations at Da Nang and Chu Lai, destroying 22 helicopters and 2 A-4's and damaging 18 helicopters and 5 A-4's. American personnel losses were 3 killed and 83 wounded.³¹

~~(b)~~ Air base vulnerability was attributed largely to lack of cooperation between Vietnamese Army and VNAF commanders and their refusal to accept U.S. advice. A Headquarters USAF inspection team, after visiting Da Nang, Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut, and Nha Trang in early September, believed that 1,381 more air police plus additional vehicles and radar equipment would strengthen internal air base defense. Its major recommendation was that U.S. Air Force assume from the Vietnamese responsibility for perimeter defense (except at Da Nang where U.S. Marines guarded the base), and that the JCS approve 33,600 more military spaces for this purpose. Unless this were done, the team predicted more Viet Cong attacks and USAF losses of personnel, aircraft, equipment, and facilities.³²

~~(b)~~ In a JCS review of the subject, McConnell observed that not all U.S. and allied troops had been used to secure U.S. bases as the JCS initially intended. The Army and Navy chiefs opposed any action, however, that appeared to criticize CINCPAC and COMUSMAC/V. In October, while visiting South Vietnam, McConnell reviewed the matter with Westmoreland, who indicated he did not plan to ask for a sizeable increment of troops solely for base security. As a consequence, McConnell made no further effort within the JCS to obtain combat forces for the poorly protected air bases. To help reduce

their vulnerability to attack, he directed that all USAF aircraft in Southeast Asia be parked in revetments as soon as possible.³³

The Air War in North Vietnam and Laos (July-November)

(~~SECRET~~) In the Rolling Thunder attacks on North Vietnamese targets in the latter half of 1965, enemy anti-aircraft fire took an increasingly heavy toll. The threat from SA-2 missile sites was of particular concern. After an SA-2 missile on 24 July downed a USAF F-4C, the first such U.S. loss, the administration allowed USAF-Navy aircraft to attack the missile site. The mission was carried out on 26-27 July, but was unsuccessful. On 9 August, 12 USAF aircraft hit another site, but it was later found to have been unoccupied. In the same month the JCS enlarged somewhat the boundary for permissible U.S. air operations against the sites. It also inaugurated two programs for locating and destroying the sites: "Iron Hand" and "Left Hook," with the latter employing electronic intelligence (ELINT) aircraft, reconnaissance drones, and other measures.³⁴

(~~SECRET~~) In August the Air Staff convened a study group to examine the SA-2 problem. One result of the group's work was McNamara's approval in October of the transfer of five USAF B-66B's from Europe to Southeast Asia to augment PACAF's electronic countermeasures capability. In the same month he approved an "Iron Hand" strike on another SA-2 site, and five Navy aircraft destroyed it on the 17th. There were also successful strikes on 31 October and 7 November.³⁵

(~~SECRET~~) The JCS continued to chafe under the remaining restraints against hitting SA-2 and other more important targets, especially those in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. In August it proposed aerial mining and a blockade

of major northern ports, a course of action long under study. In September the Joint Chiefs again recommended as a matter of "military urgency" air attacks on Phuc Yen Airfield to destroy the IL-28 bombers there and other attacks on the SA-2 sites which were increasing in number. They also urged hitting other anti-aircraft emplacements, four power plants, fuel storage facilities at Haiphong, and rail, highway, and waterway traffic between the Hanoi-Haiphong area and Southern China.³⁶

(S. C. 5) In reply, McNamara expressed doubt that the gains from more bombings would outweigh the risks. Intelligence estimates, he observed, indicated that heavier air strikes, especially in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, would not persuade Hanoi that the "price" for aiding the Viet Cong was too high. They might, in fact, induce North Vietnam to step up its assistance. Increased pressure could also trigger an enemy air strike on Da Nang or result in a confrontation between the United States and China. Like McNamara, the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, William P. Bundy, did not think that bombing the Hanoi-Haiphong area would force the North to accept a negotiated solution to the war.³⁷

At Brown's request, the Air Staff in October made a special study of the effectiveness of USAF armed reconnaissance in North Vietnam. Its report, issued on the 29th, substantiated previous observations that traffic on main transportation routes and traffic support had been disrupted and that the transit time for supplies had increased. But the study concluded that the North's ability to resupply Communist forces in the south had not yet been seriously impaired.³⁸

(2) On 10 November the JCS again recommended an enlarged air attack program on North Vietnam and Laos that would try to destroy 13 sites

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in the North which contained about 97 percent of that country's fuel storage capacity. The Air Staff especially considered it necessary to destroy these sites. The Joint Chiefs said that 446 aircraft, including 336 for the strikes and 80 for flak suppression, would be needed. They doubted that Hanoi would retaliate in any way. Although this request was not approved, the service chiefs were authorized for the first time to hit certain transportation targets connecting the major North Vietnamese industrial areas.³⁹

~~SECRET~~ In Laos, USAF-Navy combat sorties from July through November ranged from about 1,000 to 1,500 per month. Westmoreland continued to search for more effective means to apply air power. In July, in addition to a request for more sorties, he asked permission to launch small, air-supported, ground operations from South Vietnam into Laos to hit infiltration targets. Such operations had been supported by the JCS in 1964 but administration approval was withheld until September for these small "Shining Brass" attacks.* The ground forces penetrated up to 20 kilometers into two southern Laos provinces. Thai-based USAF aircraft supported the operations and several initial air strikes were successful.⁴⁰

~~SECRET~~ In the same month Westmoreland asked authority to use more South Vietnamese-based aircraft to supplement USAF-Navy efforts in Laos. USAF activities had been limited by the insufficient number of KC-135 tankers for in-flight refueling of the F-105's from Thailand and the F-100's from South Vietnam, and by Thai government reluctance to allow more USAF aircraft to engage in operations outside the country. Admiral Sharp approved this request in October subject to final concurrence by the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane.⁴¹

*See J. Van Staaveren, USAF Plans and Policies in South Vietnam and Laos, 1964, pp 20 and 33-34 (TS), in AFCHO.

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([REDACTED]) In mid-November Gen. Phai Ma, Chief of the Lao Air Force, relaxed some of the severe restrictions previously imposed on Steel Tiger operations in southern Laos, scene of some of the heaviest Communist infiltration. Also in November, the U.S. Ambassador to Laos, William H. Sullivan, agreed to Westmoreland's request to use B-52's for strikes along the Lao-South Vietnamese border.⁴²

([REDACTED]) To improve the coordination of USAF operations flown over North Vietnam and Laos from Thailand, PACAF on 23 November established the post of deputy commander, 2d Air Division and 13th Air Force. Brig. Gen. Charles S. Bond, Jr., was named to fill the post beginning 7 January 1966, succeeding Brig. Gen. John R. Murphy who had served only as deputy commander for the 2d Air Division. General Bond was to transfer his headquarters from Udorn to Korat, Thailand, as soon as possible.⁴³

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V. COMMUNIST GAINS AND U.S. RESPONSE

() By the end of October more than 153,000 U.S. military personnel were in South Vietnam, 15,207 of them Air Force. Large-scale U.S.-Vietnamese air and ground operations since July had averted a Viet Cong take-over of the country. The Communists had suffered 3,000 to 4,000 killed each month, and in November their losses were even heavier. For the first time since 1963 U.S. officials began to feel "optimistic" and Sharp publicly asserted that "we have stopped losing the war." ¹

() But victory was not yet on the horizon. North Vietnam countered the U.S. build-up by further escalating its strength in the South. On 21 November Westmoreland alerted Sharp and the JCS to the fact that Communist infiltration was at more than twice the rate previously estimated. Relative "force ratios," previously expected to rise to 3.3 to 1 by the end of 1965 in favor of the Vietnamese were down to 2.8 to 1 and threatened to fall to 2.2 to 1 by the end of 1966 even if all U.S. Phase II forces arrived as scheduled. ²

The Saigon Conference in November

() During another high-level conference in Saigon in late November attended by McNamara and Wheeler, Westmoreland and his aides told top officials that the problems arising from the North's growing involvement were compounded by deepening Vietnamese weaknesses. The armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam were unable to cope with the Communist threat and had lost the initiative. The people, in turn, had lost confidence in the Saigon government's ability to prevent Viet Cong attacks and hold rural areas and

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lines of communication. Only more U.S. and allied forces could arrest the trend. If these were not forthcoming, the government would become weaker while the odds against success would become even greater.

MAC/V intelligence said the Communist had more than 220,000 men, including 113 combat battalions (86 Viet Cong, 27 North Vietnamese) and political cadres. They could assemble 155 battalions by the end of 1966 by drawing upon about 526,000 males in the South and 1,800,000 males in the North. Logistically, they needed 234 tons a day in the South, and they brought in about 190 through Laos,* 25 through Cambodia, and 14 by sea.

Allowing for a possible increase of 30,000 Vietnamese regular forces and augmentation of paramilitary and allied units, MAC/V concluded that additional U.S. personnel would be needed beyond the last estimate for Phase II. Total U.S. personnel in South Vietnam would rise to 389,544. USAF requirements would include possibly five more fighter squadrons, a C-130 squadron, and a new airfield. In view of Communist manpower increases, Westmoreland urged quick approval and accelerated deployment of all the Phase II forces previously approved for planning purposes only, and certain "add-on" logistic units. The manpower goals were as follows:³

	<u>Phase I</u>	<u>Phase II</u>	<u>Phase II Add-ons</u> ⁺	<u>Total</u>
Army	133,916	82,106	52,000	268,022
Navy	9,905	1,961	200	12,066
Marines	40,770	24,417	--	65,187
Air Force	<u>35,428</u>	<u>4,341</u>	<u>4,500</u>	<u>44,269</u>
Total	220,019	112,825	56,700	389,544

*About 300 tons a day could enter in the seven-month dry season and 50 tons a day in the five-month wet season.

+Phase II add-ons were also designated IIA.

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(b) Westmoreland praised highly the B-52 operations, saying they demoralized the enemy, boosted allied morale, and encouraged Vietnamese forces to enter the bombed areas. There were more targets than B-52's could bomb. He asked for simpler approval procedures to assure faster response in striking targets. He also favored using B-52's to hit targets in Laos.⁴

(b) In Laos, Westmoreland said that under the USAF-Navy Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger programs there had been about 2,700 sorties per month and he required 4,500. Barrel Roll attacks had succeeded in containing some of the infiltration of men and supplies, but the Steel Tiger effort in the southeastern part of the panhandle was less effective primarily because of rigid and time-consuming restrictions imposed by the Lao government. Bad weather and some diversion of the effort to the Rolling Thunder strikes against North Vietnam also had affected the program adversely.⁵

(b) The MAC/V commander proposed an operational concept patterned after earlier U.S. experience in South Vietnam to assure more rapid approval for hitting fixed and other targets. U.S. FAC's flying O-1's and familiar with the area would be accompanied by Lao observers with authority to approve strikes. A better communication net would cut the time used by the Lao and U.S. governments for coordinating air activities. With the approval of the Lao government and the U.S. Ambassador, William H. Sullivan in Vientiane, some acceleration of air attacks had already begun. To assure support for these strikes, nicknamed "Tiger Hound," Westmoreland asked for the immediate reallocation from use in South Vietnam to use in Laos of 20 Army O-1's, direction-finding, infrared, and other aircraft, and their replacement as soon as possible.⁶

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After the conference ended, McNamara announced that while the allied forces had stopped "losing the war" and denied the Viet Cong a victory, Hanoi had made a "clear decision" to both "escalate the level of infiltration and . . . the level of conflict." Recent infiltration into the South, estimated at 1,500 men per month, would probably rise to 4,500 in the dry season. More U.S.-allied forces would be needed to oppose this build-up and he forecast "a long war."⁷

The Defense Secretary said he was "immensely impressed" with the effectiveness of the Army's 1st Cavalry Division around Plei Mei in South Vietnam. The concept of increased mobility and firepower had "proven out," and he planned to add another air cavalry division to the U.S. Army [thus foreclosing, it appeared, the USAF hope of limiting further Army heliborne expansion].* On the air war on the North, he reaffirmed U.S. policy of hitting infiltration routes rather than such strategic targets as Haiphong, since it was not the U.S. objective to destroy the Hanoi government.⁸

The Follow-up

In reviewing Phase IIA USAF requirements with Brown in early December, McNamara said that the Air Force's supplemental appropriation request for fiscal year 1966 should provide for about 4,500 more men to support five additional fighter squadrons and one transport squadron, and for the building of two more airfields, one in South Vietnam and the other in Thailand. More O-1 and OV-1 reconnaissance aircraft probably were needed. The Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger programs in Laos should be stepped up to 50 and 100 sorties per day, respectively. The B-52 sortie rate should reach 800 sorties per month in about six months. To support this rate, McNamara approved enlargement

*See p 55.

of Andersen AFB, Guam, directed that Sattahip AB, in Thailand, be improved to accommodate the B-52's, and asked for further study of the need for basing the heavy bombers in Taiwan. He indicated that the SAC airborne alert might be reduced to help attain the higher sortie rate.* 9

() The Defense Secretary said that Phase IIA would also require more U.S., Korean, and Australian ground units. The administration did not contemplate calling up U.S. reserves, and he said that the services should review their contingency capabilities without them. He asked for a "Red Ball" air express system, as Westmoreland had requested, to speed the flow of spare parts for helicopters, tanks, bulldozers, and other equipment. The remaining deployment details would be worked out at another conference in Honolulu scheduled for January 1966.¹⁰

() Acting quickly, McConnell proposed on 6 December that the JCS agree to the new B-52 sortie rate. He said that about 70 bombers would be needed. He suggested that the JCS recommend basing some of the bombers on Kung Kuang AB, Taiwan. On the same day he directed the Military Air Transport Service to establish a "Red Ball" express and the first flights began on the 7th.¹¹

() After meeting with the President and other officials, McNamara on 11 December approved a speed-up in the deployment of the specific units requested by Westmoreland. Some additional Army units arrived by the end of the month. Except for some logistic units and four USAF tactical fighter squadrons, virtually all Phase I elements scheduled for 1965 had reached their Southeast Asia and Western Pacific destinations.¹²

*On 29 November McNamara directed the discontinuance of the SAC airborne alert on 1 July 1966.

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3) Before December ended, however, there were prospects that still higher manpower goals might be set than had been contemplated by Westmoreland. On the 16th Sharp sent the JCS a plan for a further increase in Phase IIA goals for South Vietnam. His proposal called for the following manpower totals:

	<u>South Vietnam</u>			
	<u>Phase I</u>	<u>Phase II</u>	<u>Phase IIA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Army	133,400	82,500	77,100	293,000
Navy	11,300	3,400	7,800	22,500
Marines	40,700	22,000	8,300	71,000
Air Force	35,400	4,500	15,500	55,400
Allied	<u>21,100</u>	<u>---</u>	<u>23,500</u>	<u>46,600</u>
Total	241,900	112,400	132,200	486,500

He also asked for 169,000 other U.S. military personnel to provide direct and indirect support of the war in other areas of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. This would raise the total number of combat and support personnel to about 655,500 by the end of 1966.

USAF Phase IIA requirements would rise from one troop carrier and 5 tactical fighter squadrons to 13 tactical fighter and 2 troop carrier squadrons. There would be 66 reconnaissance aircraft. Sharp also asked for the quick deployment of the remaining USAF Phase I squadrons and some Phase II and IIA squadrons in the first quarter of calendar year 1966. If directed, the Air Staff thought it could fulfill the higher USAF goals by drawing on its world-wide manpower resources and by transferring aircraft from Europe. However, it continued to believe that, if the wraps were taken off air and

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naval power, the deployment of such large ground forces would be unnecessary.¹³

The Air War in December

~~(S)~~ The number of U.S. combat sorties in South Vietnam in the last month of 1965 remained high. The ground war featured U.S. Marine Corps-Vietnamese operation "Harvest Moon" from 8 to 18 December in Quang Tin Province. Combined air and ground action killed an estimated 400 Communists and wounded 100. The Air Force believed, however, that planning for close air support in this operation was inadequate. Because a USAF liaison officer was not included in the initial planning, air-ground coordination was poor during the operation. USAF FAC's, who were familiar with the area, were not asked to support Vietnamese Army or U.S. Marine units until an emergency arose. Nor were they given sufficient credit in U.S. Army and Marine after-action reports. The operation highlighted the difficulties of fighting with two distinct systems of air control, and the 2d Air Division again recommended adoption of a single, unified, tactical air control system.*¹⁴

~~(S)~~ B-52's flew 307 sorties in December, including three close air support missions on the 12th, 13th, and 14th for the Harvest Moon operation. By year's end, 1,572 sorties had been flown. Although controversial when first employed on 18 June, the military value of super-bomber strikes was now highly praised by the Air Staff as well as by McNamara and Army and Marine Corps field commanders.¹⁵

~~(S)~~ Meanwhile, in connection with proposals to increase B-52 capability by moving the aircraft to either Thailand, the Philippines, or

*For a discussion of USAF participation in this battle see Project CHECO SEA Special Rprt, Operation Harvest Moon, 3 Mar 66 (S), in AFCHO.

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Taiwan, the State Department on 15 December emphasized the serious obstacles. In Thailand, bases were overcrowded and it was considered best not to raise the issue until the expansion of Sattahip AB was completed in 12 to 15 months. In the Philippines, the government was new and many Filipino congressmen were opposed to a plan to send troops to Vietnam. It appeared desirable not to broach the subject until the government had dispatched its "task force," possibly in March or April 1966. In Taiwan, the presence of B-52's would create the "serious risk of . . . Chinese Communist reaction against the island." 16

(S) Rolling Thunder strikes against North Vietnam were maintained at a high rate until 24 December when a bombing truce began. On 1 December, about seven million leaflets were dropped over the North in the largest single leaflet operation of the war. On the 9th, 150 U.S. aircraft, 115 of them USAF, hit numerous targets in the largest single strike operation to that date. By the 24th, USAF aircraft had flown 26,154 sorties, of which 10,750 were strike and armed reconnaissance. Navy aircraft compiled a slightly higher total. 17

(S) Air operations remained under many important restraints. Exempt from attack were the Hanoi-Haiphong area, airfields, and most SA-2 sites. Specifically, no strikes were allowed within 30 nautical miles of Hanoi, 10 of Haiphong, 25 of the Chinese border from the coast to 106 degrees East, and 30 of the Chinese border from 106 degrees East to the Laos border. Targeting was planned in advance for a two-week period and operations were under tight Washington control. 18

(S) Most of the 84 USAF aircraft lost in combat during 1965 were downed by antiaircraft fire. At least 56 SA-2 sites, 8 installations, and

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1 support facility had been found in the North, the "threat" had diminished somewhat by year's end. Although 125 SA-2 missiles were observed in flight (presumably, many others were not observed), they had downed only 5 USAF (2 F-4C's and 3 F-105's) and 5 Navy aircraft. Much of the effectiveness of these Soviet-built missiles had been nullified by their relatively poor guidance system, U.S. electronic countermeasures, and the evasive tactics of U.S. pilots. On the other hand, they forced pilots to fly in lower to hit targets, making them more vulnerable to ground fire and thus indirectly increasing U.S. losses.¹⁹

(~~SECRET~~) A year-end CIA-DIA analysis of the air attacks on the North since they began on 7 February 1965 indicated that they had inflicted about \$28.5 million worth of damage. Despite strikes on a few key targets such as six electric power plants constituting 27 percent of total national capacity, the North's economy showed no sign of disintegrating. Economic life was disrupted but not crippled, and Hanoi's ability to supply Communist forces in South Vietnam and Laos had not been reduced. In fact, the transportation system appeared to have carried as much tonnage in 1965 as in 1964, and there was less evidence of shortages than earlier in the year. The North Vietnamese had proved very resourceful. They had also received greater quantities of aid from the Soviet Union, Hungary, East Germany, Roumania, and China. December witnessed a new high in imports. The bombing pause, beginning on 24 December and extending into January 1966, did not change the pattern of infiltration, training, and repair of communication lines. It enabled the North Vietnamese to move their supplies in daytime as well as at night.²⁰

(~~SECRET~~) In Laos, AC-47's were used for the first time on 8 December, and on the 10th B-52's conducted their first Laotian strike. On the same day,

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Westmoreland, to help step up attacks in that country, delegated to General Moore, 2d Air Division commander, complete responsibility for planning, coordinating, and executing all USAF-Navy air operations.

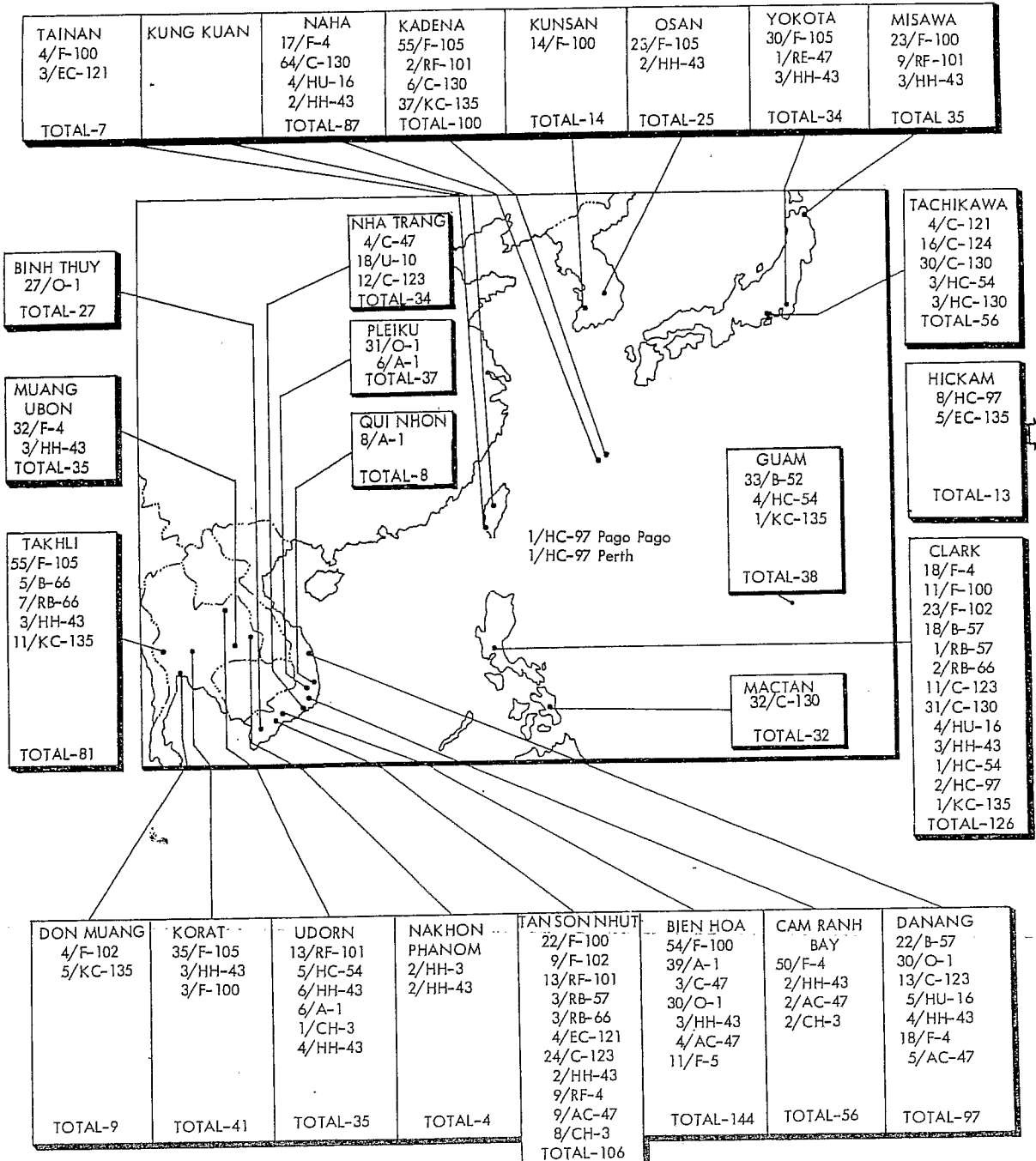
(S-C-1) In December a new program, Tiger Hound, was added to the three (Yankee Team, Barrel Roll, and Steel Tiger) already being conducted in Laos. Tiger Hound missions, which began on a limited basis on the 5th, featured the use of U.S.-piloted O-1's for visual reconnaissance and forward air control and for airborne command posts. The rules permitted unlimited armed reconnaissance along motor roads in a specified area in the panhandle, but allowed air strikes on targets of opportunity only within 200 yards of all other roads. Beyond this distance and outside the specified area, fliers could attack only targets approved previously or marked by Lao FAC's--as soon as they began these duties. Infiltration trails or way stations could not be attacked and napalm could not be used. When additional air resources became available, this program would receive the most emphasis.²¹

At the End of the Year: the Air Force View

(S-C-1) As 1965 neared its end, U.S.-Vietnamese officials were preparing to deal with the anticipated "ceasefire offensive" of the Communists during Christmas and the Tet lunar holiday in January. An agreement was reached for a short truce on Christmas. A Tet policy was more difficult. The U.S. Mission Council in Saigon favored stopping only the ground war, not the air attacks in South and North Vietnam and Laos. The State Department in Washington, however, called for a suspension of all air and ground activity in South and North Vietnam. The Air Staff strongly supported the position

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Source: Status of Forces Report (1-AF-V21), 26 Dec 65

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adopted by the JCS on 27 December which opposed a "standdown" of the war for Tet similar to one adopted for Christmas.²²

~~(S)~~ Events overtook the recommendation. During Christmas there was a 30-hour truce in the fighting in South Vietnam (marked by many Viet Cong violations) and a suspension of bombing in the North. At the end of this period, fighting resumed in the South but the bombing pause in the North continued because President Johnson had undertaken a major peace offensive that was still continuing as the new year began. As part of the peace offensive, U.S. forces began applying more military pressure on the Communists in both South Vietnam and Laos.²³

~~(S)~~ At the close of 1965, the United States had 184,314 military personnel in South Vietnam, 20,620 of them in the Air Force. An additional 14,117 military personnel were in Thailand, including 9,117 Air Force. There were 719 USAF aircraft in the two countries, including 15 tactical fighter squadrons (F-4C's, F-100's, F-105's), 8 air commando squadrons (A-1E's, AC-47's, U-10's, C-47's, C-123's), and 57 reconnaissance aircraft (RF-4C's, RB-66's, RB-57E's, RF-101's). Many backup units were in the Philippines, Okinawa, Taiwan, and Japan. There was also a formidable array of Army, Navy, and Marine Corps strength.²⁴

~~(S)~~ The progressive build-up of U.S. power reflected the continuing military crisis in South Vietnam. With the friendly Vietnamese effort diminishing and the Viet Cong-North Vietnamese forces growing in size and aggressiveness, only a basic change in U.S. assistance during the year from a largely advisory and support mission to open combat operations had saved the Saigon government from certain defeat. The rising tempo of the war was reflected in

the combat statistics. South Vietnamese forces lost 11,333 killed, the Communists 36,925. U.S. operational and advisory losses for the year were 1,389 killed in action, of which 43 were Air Force. U.S. wounded in action totaled 5,984, of which 155 were Air Force.²⁵

Although victory was not yet in sight, the services agreed that U.S. and allied forces had prevented a Communist take-over of the country. However, they disagreed on the merits of the strategy followed in 1965 and planned for 1966. McConnell and the Air Staff, gravely concerned about the trend of the war, believed the failures of the past stemmed largely from a desire of the United States to achieve its objectives with small risks and minimum commitment. With the country now faced with the problem of spiralling military requirements, the Air Force foresaw the need for national mobilization to support a ground-oriented war of attrition in the South, while in the air campaign in the North the United States would suffer the loss of expensive aircraft engaged in striking mostly insignificant targets.

~~()~~ The implications of the conflict were serious: the American people, faced with fighting a long war that would cost more than the Korean conflict, might despair of victory, and the war itself could end in a stalemate. Meanwhile, the United States was reducing the amount of military power that it might need to apply in Europe and other areas where contingencies might arise. Insurgencies might occur elsewhere than Southeast Asia as the Communists became convinced they could wage "wars of liberation" without undue risk. There was also the possibility that Communist China might intervene directly in the Southeast Asia conflict.

The Air Force believed its position on the war had been consistent. Instead of a piecemeal build-up and a gradual application of

military power that probably could neither gain national objectives in South Vietnam nor deter the Chinese, the United States should focus on North Vietnam, the source of the insurgency. It should employ quickly substantial air and naval forces against primary targets such as fuel sites and facilities, power plants, and war industries, and conduct heavier interdiction strikes of roads, railroads, and canals. Although other service chiefs in varying degree and at different times had supported these views, McConnell was the only JCS member who believed that the United States should not deploy considerably more ground forces in South Vietnam until the North was isolated by air and naval power. This also placed him in disagreement with Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland.

The Army consistently argued for more ground troops and near the end of 1965 Westmoreland proposed a total U.S. commitment of 389,544 men in South Vietnam. As 1966 began, the Marine Corps maintained that at least 500,000 troops would be needed in the South for at least five years, an estimate initially made 18 months earlier. The Navy believed that at least 600,000 men were needed and that delay in building up to this total would only increase U.S. casualties. But McConnell doubted whether even this number could drive all the Communists out of South Vietnam and keep them out. ²⁶

The administration clearly was committed to using more ground troops, however, and to restricted bombing of North Vietnam. Testifying before a House committee early in 1966, McNamara asserted that it was his "strong personal opinion" that the United States could not end the war solely by bombing the North, even to the point of obliterating for all practical purposes

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the entire country. Most of the arms and ammunition used by the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese, he observed, came from other Communist nations. Wheeler supported him, saying that both the current concept for the war and Westmoreland's latest proposals for waging it were "correct." Thus the Air Force stood largely alone in its view of how best the war in Southeast Asia should be brought to a conclusion.²⁷

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NOTES

Chapter I

1. Hist of 2d AD, Jan-Jun 65, Vol II, p 4 (S); JCS 2343/634, 21 Jul 65 (TS).
2. Statement by SOD Robert S. McNamara before Subcmte on Appropriations and the Cmte on Armed Services, 89th Cong, 1st Sess, DOD Appropriations, 1966, Pt 1, p 17; N.Y. Times, 27 Jan 65.
3. Hist of 2d AD, Jan-Jun 65, Vol II, pp 7-8 (S); Jacob Van Staaveren, USAF Plans and Policies in South Vietnam and Laos, 1964, (hereinafter referred to as Van Staaveren), pp 43 and 47 (TS), in AFCHO; N.Y. Times, 20-31 Dec 64, 9-13 Jan, and 27-31 Jan 65.
4. Hist of 2d AD, Jan-Jun 65, Vol II, pp 1-2 and 6-9 (S); Hq MAC/V Comd Hist, 1965, pp 46 and 269 (S); CINCPAC Comd Hist, 1965, An B, p 22 (S); Van Staaveren, p 95 (TS).
5. Msgs 1465 and 1466, CINCPACAF to C/S USAF, 10 Jan 65 (S); Hist of 2d AD, Jan-Jun 65, Vol II, pp 1, 6-9 (S).
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APPENDIX 1

U.S. Military Personnel in Vietnam and Thailand

	31 Dec 65		
	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>Thailand</u>	<u>Total</u>
Air Force	20,620	9,117	29,737
Army	116,755	4,765	121,520
Navy	8,446	185	8,631
Marine Corps	38,190	40	38,230
Coast Guard	<u>303</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>303</u>
TOTAL	184,314	14,107	198,421

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, SEA, 25 Mar 66, p 81 (S).

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APPENDIX 2

U.S. Casualties

1 Jan '61 to 3 Jan 66

Deaths Due to Hostile Action

	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>Thailand</u>	<u>Total</u>
Air Force	121	8	-	129
Army	1,096	5	-	2,001
Navy	77	1	-	78
Marine Corps	<u>349</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>349</u>
TOTAL	2,643	14	0	2,557

Deaths Due to Non-Hostile Action

Air Force	81	1	27	109
Army	232	-	-	232
Navy	30	-	-	30
Marine Corps	<u>124</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>124</u>
TOTAL	467	1	27	495

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, SEA, 7 Jan 66, pp 8-9 (S).

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APPENDIX 3

U.S. Aircraft Inventory

As of 3 Jan 66

	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>Thailand</u>	<u>On Carriers</u>	<u>Total</u>
Air Force	514	205		719
Army	1,614*			1,614
Navy-Marine	<u>332</u>	<u> </u>	<u>223</u>	<u>555</u>
	2,460	205	223	2,888

*Composed of 369 fixed wing and 1,245 rotary.

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, 7 Jan 66, p 19 (S).

APPENDIX 4

USAF Combat and Combat Support Sorties in South Vietnam

1965

<u>Month</u>	<u>Sorties</u> *
Jan	8,523
Feb	8,714
Mar	10,840
Apr	10,911
May	12,970
Jun	12,690
Jul	14,259
Aug	15,634
Sep	17,943
Oct	18,041
Nov	21,127
Dec	<u>22,004</u>
TOTAL	173,656

*Includes 30 B-52 sorties first flown on 18 Jun 65 and subsequent sorties.

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summaries, 30 Jul 65, p 16, and 21 Jan 66, p 25 (S).

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APPENDIX 6

Total USAF Sorties in North Vietnam

1965

<u>Month</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
Jan	0
Feb	52*
Mar	390
Apr	1,468
May	2,819
Jun	2,358
Jul	2,342
Aug	3,136
Sep	4,141
Oct	3,486
Nov	3,330
Dec	<u>2,632</u>
TOTAL	26,154

*First Navy strike made on 7 Feb 65; first USAF strike on 8 Feb 65.

SOURCE: Data Control Br, Sys Div, Dir of Ops, DCS/P&O. (S)

APPENDIX 7

Total USAF Sorties in Laos

1965

<u>Month</u>	<u>Sorties in Northern Laos</u>	<u>Sorties in Southern Laos</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan	56	-	56
Feb	310	-	310
Mar	426	-	426
Apr	1,042	-	1,042
May	739	-	739
Jun	560	-	560
Jul	957	-	957
Aug	664	-	664
Sep	871	-	871
Oct	509	291*	800
Nov	527	774	1,301
Dec	<u>694</u>	<u>1,392</u>	<u>2,086</u>
TOTAL	7,355	2,457	9,812

*First breakdown between sorties in northern and southern Laos.

SOURCE: Data Control Br, Sys Div, Dir of Ops, DCS/P&O. (S)

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APPENDIX 8

USAF Combat and Operational Losses in Southeast Asia

1965

Combat Losses

<u>Month</u>	<u>South Vietnam</u>	<u>North Vietnam</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>Thailand</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan	2	0	2	0	4
Feb	1	0	1	0	2
Mar	2	7	0	0	9
Apr	2	7	2	0	11
May	1	5	2	0	8
Jun	7	6	1	0	14
Jul	11*	9	1	0	21
Aug	4	9	0	0	13
Sep	6	15	1	0	22
Oct	9	10	0	0	19
Nov	11 ⁺	9	0	0	20
Dec	10	7	1	0	18
TOTAL	66	84	11	0	161

*Three C-130's and three F-102's destroyed on ground by Viet Cong mortar attack.

⁺Five O-1E's destroyed on ground by Viet Cong mortar attack.

Operational Losses

Jan	1	0	0	1	2
Feb	1	0	0	0	1
Mar	3	0	0	0	3
Apr	1	0	0	1	2
May	13*	0	0	2	15
Jun	7 ⁺	1	0	0	8
Jul	4	0	1	0	5
Aug	5	0	0	1	6
Sep	5	0	0	2	7
Oct	5	0	0	0	5
Nov	3	0	0	1	4
Dec	4	0	0	2	6
TOTAL	52	1	1	10	64

*Ten B-57's destroyed on ground by accidental bomb explosion.

⁺Two B-52's destroyed in accidental mid-air collision on first mission.

SOURCE: Data Control Br, Sys Div, Dir of Ops, DCS/P&O. (S)

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APPENDIX 9

USAF Aircraft Losses in Southeast Asia

1 Jan 62 - 3 Jan 66

<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>Hostile Losses</u>	<u>Other Operational Losses</u>	<u>Total</u>
A-1E	21	13	34
B-26	9	1	10
B-52	0	2	2
B-57	14	13	27
C-47	1	2	3
C-123	4	12	16
C-130	4	4	8
CH-3C	1	0	1
F-4C	12	1	13
F-5	1	0	1
F-100	23	5	28
F-102	4	1	5
F-104	2	3	5
F-105	61	8	69
HU-16	0	1	1
H-43	3	0	3
KB-50	0	1	1
O-1E/F	23	13	36
RB-57	1	0	1
RB-66	1	0	1
RF-101	10	0	10
T-28	13	3	16
U-10	1	1	2
AC-47	2	0	2
	<u>211*</u>	<u>84⁺</u>	<u>295</u>

*Includes 17 destroyed on the ground.

⁺ Includes 10 destroyed on the ground.

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, SEA, 7 Jan 66, p 19. (S)

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APPENDIX 10

U.S. Aircraft Losses in Southeast Asia

Jan 66*

	<u>Due to Hostile Action</u>	<u>Other Operational Losses</u>	<u>Total</u>
Air Force	211 ^a	84 ^d	295
Army	73 ^b	--	73
Navy-Marine	<u>139^c</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>218</u>
TOTAL	423	163	586

^aIncludes 17 destroyed on the ground.

^bConsisted of 8 fixed wing and 65 rotary. In addition, Army claimed 220 fixed wing and 769 rotary damaged.

^cIncludes 22 destroyed on the ground.

^dIncludes 10 destroyed on the ground.

*Air Force data as of 3 Jan 66, Navy and Marine data as of 5 Jan 66, Army data as of 31 Dec 65.

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, 7 Jan 66, p 19 and 2 Mar 66, p 20 (S).

APPENDIX 11

Total Vietnamese Air Force Aircraft

31 Dec 65

<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>Squadrons</u>	<u>Number Possessed</u>
A-1E	6	134
C-47	1	33
O-1A/U-17	4	107*
O-6	(Flt)	9
CH/UH-34	4	60
TOTAL		343

*Does not include 16 U-17's assigned to the 12th School Squadron.

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, 7 Jan 66, p 87 (S).

APPENDIX 12

Vietnamese Air Force Combat Sorties

1965

<u>Month</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
Jan	7,291
Feb	6,312
Mar	7,899
Apr	8,405
May	9,940
Jun	8,037
Jul	7,805
Aug	10,184
Sep	10,179
Oct	8,110
Nov	8,616
Dec	9,727
TOTAL	102,505

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summaries, 23 Jul 65, p 33, and 7 Jan 66, p 64 (S).

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APPENDIX 13

Vietnamese Air Force Combat Losses

1962-1965

	<u>Hostile Action</u>	<u>Accident</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total Aircraft	49	64	113

SOURCE: USAF Mgt Summary, 11 Feb 66, p 65 (S).

APPENDIX 14

South Vietnam and Viet Cong Strengths and Losses

31 Dec 65

	<u>South Vietnam</u>	<u>Viet Cong</u> [*]
Strength	651,885 ⁺	229,757
Killed	11,333 [‡]	36,925 [‡]
Desertions	113,462 [‡]	11,000

*Includes North Vietnamese units.

+Includes all regular, paramilitary and special forces, and police.

‡During 1965.

SOURCE: Hq MAC/V Comd Hist, 1965, pp 268, 270, 272, and 283 (S); N.Y. Times, 24 Feb 66.

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G L O S S A R Y

AB	Air Base
AD	Air Division
AFCHO	USAF Historical Division Liaison Office
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States
APP	Appendix
B/R	Barrel Roll
C/A	Course of Action
CHECO	Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Counterinsurgency
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINCPAC	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
CINCPACAF	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Air Forces
Const	Construction
CM	Chairman's Memo
CMCM	Commandant Marine Corps Memo
COMUSMAC/V	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CSAFM	Chief of Staff Air Force Memo
C/S USAF	Chief of Staff, USAF
DCS/P&O	Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations
DCS/P&R	Deputy Chief of Staff, Programs and Requirements
DCS/S&L	Deputy Chief of Staff, Systems and Logistics
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DJSM	Director, Joint Staff Memo
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
D/Ops	Directorate of Operations
D/Plans	Directorate of Plans
Eff	Effectiveness
FAC	Forward Air Control
GP	Group
JCSM	Joint Chief of Staff Memo
MAC/V	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
Mgt	Management
NSAM	National Security Action Memo
NSC	National Security Council
NVN	North Vietnam

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Ofc	Office
PACAF	Pacific Air Force
PACOM	Pacific Command
POL	Petroleum, oil and lubricants
R/T	Rolling Thunder
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
SAF	Secretary of the Air Force
SAM	Surface-to-air missile
SAW	Special Air Warfare
Scty	Security
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SVN	South Vietnam
SOD	Secretary of Defense
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USIA	United States Information Agency
VN	Vietnam
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force
WESTPAC	Western Pacific

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