

~~TOP SECRET~~

ITEMS SPECIFIED IN THE SPECIAL APPENDIX
FILED ON JUNE 21, 1971 WITH THE
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

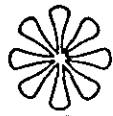
I. Portions of Exhibits 7 and 7A the disclosure of which would present increased risks to the safety of U.S. forces

I.

1. Vol. IV. C. 7(a), Vol. I, Para. 1 B, pages 9-10;
Vol. I, Para. II, C. 2, page 100

VOL IV. C. 7(a), VOL I, para 1 B, pages 9-10;
VOL I, para II C. 2, page 100 - Specific details on JCS recommendations for an intensified bombing program against NVN. These specifics reveal sensitive details about current contingency plans, such as mining the major ports, cutting bridges on the LOCs from China to Hanoi, and the number of sorties required.

Section I, Item 1



UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

1945 - 1967

IV. C. 7.(a)

Volume I

THE AIR WAR IN NORTH VIETNAM

Ball was, of course, alone among the Vietnam principals in arguing for de-escalation and political "compromise." At the same time that he and Rusk wrote these papers, Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy and Secretary of Defense McNamara also went on record with recommendations for the conduct of the war. Bundy's paper, "A 'Middle Way' Course of Action in South Vietnam," argued for a delay in further U.S. troop commitments and in escalation of the bombing campaign against North Vietnam, but a delay only in order to allow the American public time to digest the fact that the United States was engaged in a land war on the Asian mainland, and for U.S. commanders to make certain that their men were, in fact, capable of fighting effectively in conditions of counter-insurgency warfare without either arousing the hostility of the local population or causing the Vietnamese government and army simply to ease up and allow the Americans to "take over" their war. 7/

For McNamara, however, the military situation in South Vietnam was too serious to allow the luxury of delay. (In a memorandum to the President drafted on 1 July and then revised on 20 July, immediately following his return from a week-long visit to Vietnam, he recommended an immediate decision to increase the U.S.-Third Country presence from the current 16 maneuver battalions (15 U.S., one Australian) to 44 (34 U.S., nine Korean, one Australian), and a change in the mission of these forces from one of providing support and reinforcement for the ARVN to one which soon became known as "search and destroy" -- as McNamara put it, they were "by aggressive exploitation of superior military forces...to gain and hold the initiative...pressing the fight against VC/DRV main force units in South Vietnam to run them to ground and destroy them." 8/

At the same time, McNamara argued for a substantial intensification of the air war. (The 1 July version of his memorandum recommended a total quarantine of the movement of war supplies into North Vietnam, by sea, rail, and road, through the mining of Haiphong and all other harbors and the destruction of rail and road bridges leading from China to Hanoi; the Secretary also urged the destruction of fighter airfields and SAM sites "as necessary" to accomplish these objectives. 9/

On 2 July the JCS, supporting the views in the DPM, reiterated a recommendation for immediate implementation of an intensified bombing program against NVN, to accompany the additional deployments which were under consideration. 10/ The recommendation was for a sharp escalation of the bombing, with the emphasis on interdiction of supplies into as well as out of NVN. Like the DPM, it called for interdicting the movement of "war supplies" into NVN by mining the major ports and cutting the rail and highway bridges on the LOCs from China to Hanoi; mounting intensive armed reconnaissance against all LOCs and LOC facilities

within NVN; destroying the "war-making" supplies and facilities of NVN, especially POL; and destroying airfields and SAM sites as necessary to accomplish the other tasks. The JCS estimated that an increase from the then 2000 to about 5000 attack sorties per month would be required to carry out the program.

The elements of greater risk in the JCS proposals were obvious. The recommendation to mine ports and to strike airfields and SAM sites had already been rejected as having special Soviet or Chinese escalatory implications and even air strikes against LOCs from China were considered dangerous. U.S. intelligence agencies believed that if such strikes occurred the Chinese might deliberately engage U.S. aircraft over NVN from bases in China. CIA thought the chances were "about even" that this would occur; DIA and the Service intelligence agencies thought the chances of this would increase but considered it still unlikely; and State thought the chances "better than even." 11/

Apart from this element of greater risk, however, intelligence agencies held out some hope that an intensified bombing program like that proposed by the JCS (less mining the ports, which they were not asked to consider) would badly hurt the NVN economy, damage NVN's ability to support the effort in SVN, and even lead Hanoi to consider negotiations. An SMIE of 23 July estimated that the extension of air attacks only to military targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong area was not likely to "significantly injure the Viet Cong ability to persevere" or to "persuade the Hanoi government that the price of persisting was unacceptably high." Sustained interdiction of the LOCs from China, in addition, would make the delivery of Soviet and Chinese aid more difficult and costly and would have a serious impact on the NVN economy, but it would still not have a "critical impact" on "the Communist determination to persevere" and would not seriously impair Viet Cong capabilities in SVN, "at least for the short term." However:

If, in addition, POL targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area were destroyed by air attacks, the DRV's capability to provide transportation for the general economy would be severely reduced. It would also complicate their military logistics. If additional PAVN forces were employed in South Vietnam on a scale sufficient to counter increased US troop strength [which the SMIE said was "almost certain" to happen] this would substantially increase the amount of supplies needed in the South. The Viet Cong also depend on supplies from the North to maintain their present level of large-scale operations. The accumulated strains of a prolonged curtailment of supplies received from North Vietnam would obviously have an impact on the Communist effort in the South. They would certainly inhibit and

Danang-Hue which, for the time being, should be merely contained and isolated. 101/

These recommendations, however, had been overtaken by events. The GVN had already found a formula for restoring order and appeasing the Buddhists. In a three day "National Political Congress" in Saigon from April 12-14, the GVN adopted a program promising to move rapidly toward constitutional government which placated the main Buddhist demands. 102/ For a few weeks the demonstrations ceased and South Vietnam returned to relative political quiet. While not unusual as policy problems go, this political crisis in South Vietnam intervened temporarily to divert official attention from the broader issues of the war and indirectly contributed to the deferral of any decision to authorize attacks on the POL in North Vietnam. Other issues and problems would continue to defer the POL decision, both directly and indirectly, for another two months.

With some semblance of calm restored momentarily to South Vietnamese politics, the second-level Washington policy officials could turn their attention once again to the broader issues of U.S. policy direction. On April 14, Walt Rostow sent McNaughton a memo entitled "Headings for Decision and Action: Vietnam, April 14, 1966," (implying topics for discussion at a meeting later that day?). Item one on Rostow's agenda was a proposed high-level U.S. statement endorsing the recent evolution of events in South Vietnam and stipulating that continued U.S. assistance and support would be contingent on South Vietnamese demonstration of unity, movement toward constitutional government, effective prosecution of the war, and maintenance of order. His second topic was the bombing of the North, and subheading "b" re-opened the POL debate with the simple question, "Is this the time for oil?" 103/ Other issues which he listed for consideration included: accelerating the campaign against main force units, economic stabilization, revolutionary construction, Vietnamese politics (including constitution-making), and negotiations between the GVN and the VC (if only for political warfare purposes).

On the same day, the JCS forwarded to the Secretary the previously mentioned "ROLLING THUNDER Study Group Report: Air Operations Against NVN" with a cover memo noting that its recommendations for a stepped up bombing campaign were "in consonance with the general concept recommended in JCSM-41-66...." 104/ The voluminous study itself recommended a general expansion of the bombing with provision for three special attack options, one against the Haiphong POL center; the second for the aerial mining of the sea approaches to Haiphong, Hon Gai, and Cam Pha; and the third for strikes at the major airfields of Hanoi, Haiphong, and Phuc Yen. 105/ In offering these options, the report stated that, "Military considerations would require that two of the special attack options, POL and mining, be conducted now. However, appreciation of the sensitivity of such attacks is recognized and the precise time of execution must take into account political factors." 106/ Somewhat optimistically, the report