

believing it would be disadvantageous to the United States. It would permit the North Vietnamese to control the level and intensity of the war, possibly lessen allied air and ground activity, and negate the administration's objective of attaining peace in the shortest practicable time. The Air Staff also observed that tacit deescalation was but one of several alternatives open to Hanoi to reduce the tempo of the war. Since the Navy and Marine Corps endorsed the Air Force position, the Joint Staff decided to consider all of the alternatives that appeared open to North Vietnam in reducing military operations. No final action was taken on this subject by the end of 1967.<sup>10</sup>

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

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 Because an Air Staff analysis showed it included outdated intelligence, contained statements inconsistent with previous JCS judgments, and needed further review, General McConnell proposed, and the other service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

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

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

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

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\*See pp 14-18