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PROJECT
Contemporary
Historical
Evaluation of
Combat
Operations
REPORT

THE
WAR IN VIETNAM
1965

25 Jan 67

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HQ PACAF

Directorate, Tactical Evaluation
CHECO Division

Prepared by: Mr. Wesley R. C. Melyan

S.E. Asia Team

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1. REPORT DATE JAN 1967		2. REPORT TYPE N/A		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The War In Vietnam 1965				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) HQ PACAF Directorate, Tactical Evaluation CHECO Division				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release, distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT SAR	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 414	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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C	1 Cy	(77)	IG	1 Cy	(84)
DOP	1 Cy	(78)	DOIH	1 Cy	(85)
DP	1 Cy	(79)	5AF (DOP)	1 Cy	(86)
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FOREWORD

This publication continues the CHECO subject formerly entitled "Escalation of the War." Under this title, the period June - December, 1964 was covered. Future covers will be identified as "The War in Vietnam."

The change of title was adopted to more appropriately reflect the documentation of the multi-faceted conflict in Vietnam, rather than to infer that the subject concerned itself solely with "escalation."

The documentation contained in the following pages will cover the U.S. Air Force accomplishments, problems and status for the year 1965 in its continuing role in the Vietnam conflict. Future publications will cover semi-annual periods with the next succeeding report bearing the title: "The War in Vietnam; January - June, 1966."

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CHAPTER I

TRANSITION OF INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

The year 1965 witnessed the entry and buildup of the USAF in SEA tactical forces to counter communist advances in the area. The year started with initial frustrations on the battlefield. General Giap's strategy and initiative were winning the war for the communists, with likely Viet Cong control of South Vietnam. In early 1965, the Government of Vietnam and its forces were demoralized, the pacification program was at its lowest ebb and defeat seemed imminent. The growing threat of communist domination in South Vietnam (SVN) presented problems to the United States posture and position in SVN. There was strong evidence pointing to the need for a studied review of the U.S. force structure and the rules governing the employment of U.S. forces in South Vietnam. ^{1/}

To counter this situation, the United States took gradual, positive steps to regain the initiative for South Vietnam and halt the insurgency in Laos and SVN. The posture of U.S. forces and, in particular, that of the USAF changed from a passive, advisory role to one of active participation in the war.

Air power and personnel were brought into South Vietnam in growing strength throughout the year. This resulted in a phenomenal increase in firepower available to meet the VC/NVA threat. At the end of the year, total USAF aircraft in SVN was 365 as compared to 222 in January.

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The USAF, in December 1965, had 11 fighter squadrons, 8 air commando squadrons, 2 tactical reconnaissance squadrons, 1 fighter-interceptor squadron and 8 combat support squadrons on eight bases in SVN. At the end of 1965, USAF personnel strength had risen to 20,620, from 6,901 in January, of whom 18,394 were PCS in-country. ^{2/}

As a result of these increases, the USAF gained larger strike and support capabilities in SEA. The pattern of USAF activity in the conflict changed in emphasis, direction and input. By the end of the year, the United States effort was divided into three distinct and separate campaigns; the war against the insurgency in SVN, the war against infiltration of troops and logistics into SVN from Laos and NVN, and the war against strategic bases and entries into SVN. Direct attacks were made on the enemy in various locations in SVN, his LOC's in North Vietnam and Laos were interdicted, direct and full-scale combat air support was given to SVN/US ground forces against the Viet Cong and attacks were made on selected NVN military targets. Reprisal strikes were made against North Vietnam in February and, in March, these were programmed into planned air assaults against specific objectives in NVN under rules of limited engagement and other restrictions. On the ground, the Viet Cong were forced to take cognizance of the new power entering the war. Their plans for early victory were abandoned and they had to adopt new strategies to meet the new, formidable threat.

Although U.S. activity in South Vietnam began to take on the aspect of full-scale war, the posture toward Hanoi remained one of

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restraint. Brigade General J. J. Kruzal, Director of Operations, Headquarters PACAF, in November 1965 outlined the official objectives of the air effort against NVN: ^{3/}

"Make it as expensive and difficult as possible for the DRV to direct and support the VC.

"Make clear to the DRV (NVN) leaders that our staying power is greater than theirs.

"Convince the DRV of their eventual defeat in South Vietnam.

"Encourage feelings of pessimism and helplessness among both DRV military and civilians.

"Turn the DRV's attention inward instead of outward.

"Reduce the DRV's capability for overt intervention in South Vietnam."

General Kruzal noted that the overall prime objective in NVN was not military. Had it been, it would have called for the destruction of the enemy and his unconditional surrender. The U.S. goal, he said, was to apply a ~~measured~~ amount of air power to persuade the North Vietnamese leaders to cease their aggressive actions and join us in negotiating toward meaningful agreement. He stated: "There is no doubt in our minds that we could destroy the NVN, virtually overnight. But the fact is, such action is simply not considered in accord with the presently declared policies and objectives of our country."

Air strikes over North Vietnam were massive and destructive but the program was restricted to only sufficient damage (as defined by

the changing rules of engagement) to persuade Hanoi to cease supporting the insurgency in South Vietnam and Laos. By the end of the year, the program had failed to achieve this studied goal. Hanoi remained intact to direct and support the insurgency in the South.

As the year closed, the enemy in Vietnam remained a powerful force and victory was still a goal to be achieved under conditions of limited war. The USAF interdiction program and air-supported ground battles did considerable damage to the enemy; however, based on conservative intelligence estimates, the enemy was a greater and more powerful force in South Vietnam than at the start of U.S. operations. Enemy forces increased in strength and his logistic capability could support 80 more battalions than the 110 he had at the end of the year. ^{4/}

The most significant aspect of the U.S. support program in SEA was that it prevented the Viet Cong from winning the war in 1965. The following points are also of significance, in terms of strategic planning and evaluation of the U.S. military and political posture in SEA:

1. SAM Sites

Considerable experience and knowledge of SA-2 capabilities, patterns of SAM site locations, and NVN tactical use and strategic employment was obtained during the USAF strikes over North Vietnam. ^{5/} In addition, highly significant defensive techniques against the SA-2 were being successfully developed and employed and missile defenses

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VC BASE AREAS

DO XA
BASE AREA

WAR ZONE D

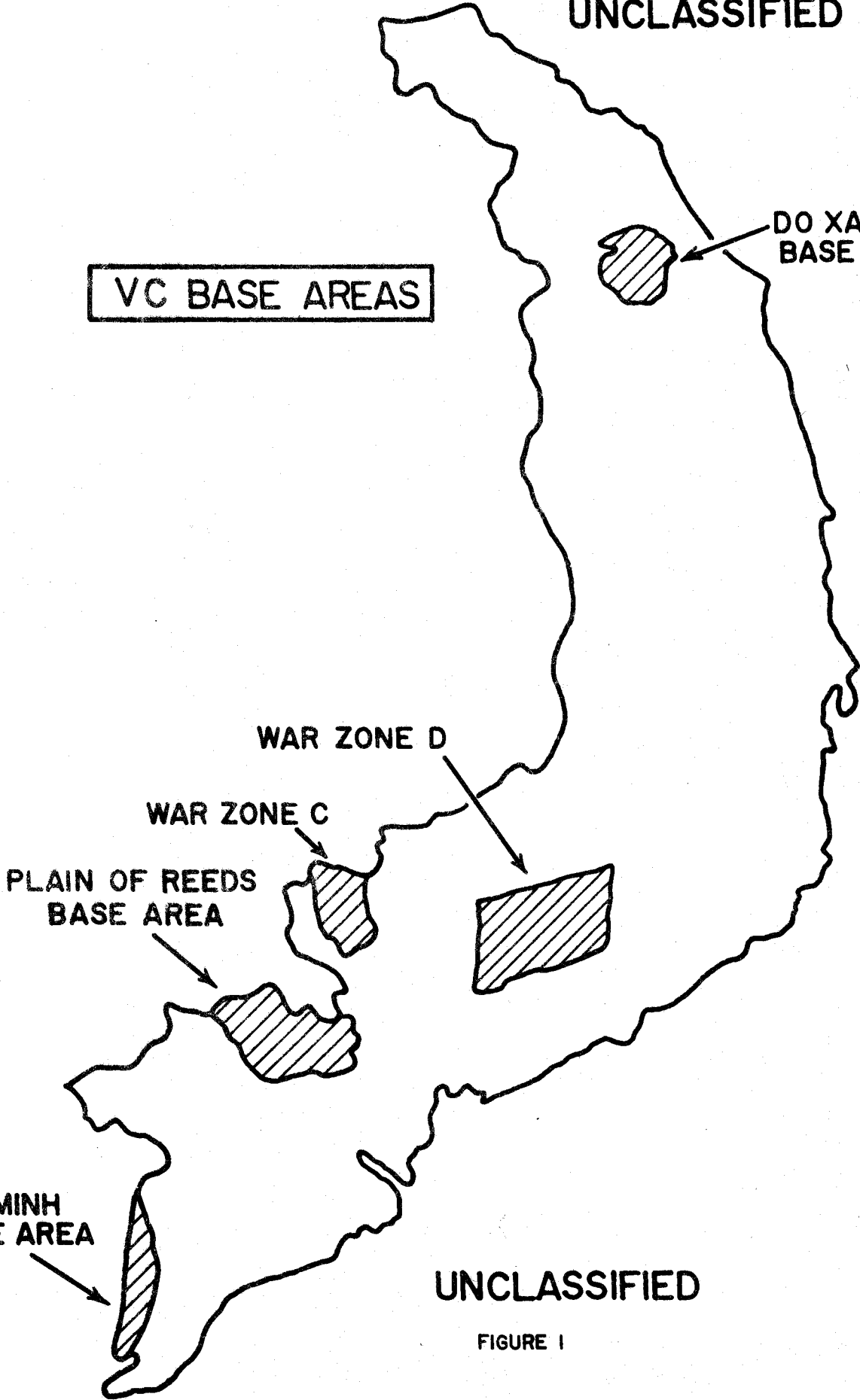
WAR ZONE C

PLAIN OF REEDS
BASE AREA

U MINH
BASE AREA

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FIGURE 1



[Faint, illegible text covering the majority of the page]



were being destroyed. ^{6/} Of extreme importance to the formulation of future U.S. political policy and planning of military operations was the significant fact that U.S. air operations strategically proved, for the first time in history, that the hitherto untested missile defense system of the Communist Bloc nations was not beyond penetration, evasion, or destruction. The image of impregnable, missile-defended strategic complexes had been shattered, bringing added emphasis to the fact that the Bloc peripheries of control and strategically sensitive areas remained vulnerable to attack. The failure of the missiles to provide adequate defense in North Vietnam against the power of the USAF will have a profound influence in the United States and the Soviet Union on prevailing concepts of missile employment and defense.

2. Response to U.S. Strikes

At the beginning of 1965, the United States could only speculate as to the actions and policies the Communist nations might follow in response to USAF strikes over Communist territories. By the end of the year, the Communist political attitudes were seen by PACAF as "...a program of caution in action while bellicose words are uttered by Peiping ... and Moscow chooses the road of deliberate restraint in apparent policy, coupled with considerable aid to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." ^{7/}

3. Combat Experience, USAF

As a result of air operations during 1965, the USAF gained

considerable combat experience through operations in SEA and over enemy territory. Improved tactics in COIN operations had been developed and used during the year with considerable success. Techniques of close air support to ground operations, covering scattered areas of activity, were studied and advanced. Electronic countermeasures for missiles were studied and the capabilities of various aircraft and ordnance were evaluated for future operations. ^{8/} Operational experience and tactical training in armed reconnaissance and aerial battlefield surveillance were accomplished. Advanced techniques of aerial photography, infra-red detection, radio direction finder, side-seeking radar, and continuous visual observation were exploited in SEA operations and proved their effectiveness. ^{9/}

4. Concepts, Tactics and Equipment

a. New Concepts: At the end of 1965, the U.S. Air Force in SEA was continuing the longest aerial combat operation in United States history, during which time new plans, policies and programs for employment of air power were developed. The concept of USAF operations in SEA changed greatly since November 1961 when some 200 U.S. Air Force "commandos," with a dozen B-26 and T-28 aircraft, landed on the VNAF Bien Hoa Air Base to fight counterinsurgency with air support and advisory assistance. U.S. air capability, employed from late November 1961 to the latter part of 1964, was limited and the effort expended was concentrated mainly in the direction of preparation of landing zones for heliborne ground forces. ^{10/} By the end of 1964, it was clearly

evident, from the highly critical and fluid situation existing in South Vietnam, that the concept of helicopter war could not, in itself, achieve the goal of stopping insurgency. The U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) effort in South Vietnam was not achieving its objectives since, by then, the Viet Cong had increased in strength and combat capability and had succeeded in extending their control of the countryside. ^{11/} The United States found itself confronted with a stubborn, resourceful enemy who was succeeding in increasing his combat forces and sophistication of weapons ^{12/} due largely to successful infiltration from NVN into the RVN. ^{13/} To check this state of deterioration and to stem the tide of Viet Cong victories, new techniques and concepts of operations had to be developed and initiated. In January 1965, PACAF recognized that an increased employment of air power was necessary in SEA to improve the situation. ^{14/} The 2d Air Division had expressed its feeling that VNAF, FARMGATE, and U.S. air strikes against enemy lines of infiltration, in both the Laotian Panhandle and in NVN, were in order. ^{15/} CINCPAC, toward the end of 1964, wanted the rules of engagement changed so that cross-border operations could be conducted to slow NVN support of the insurgency by application of graduated military pressure through air strikes, on a planned basis leading up to the "94 targets" approved by the JCS. ^{16/} The decision in February 1965 to conduct retaliatory air raids against North Vietnam and the decisions made during the year to escalate air operations in SEA brought significant changes to contingency planning and programming, command structure and relationships, and development of air assets and manpower. ^{17/}

b. Testing: Escalation of air action during 1965 gave the USAF an excellent opportunity to develop, study and evaluate new air tactics and techniques under actual battle conditions which were, in many instances, unique in the history of air power in counterinsurgency operations. The year also provided U.S. air commands with an active laboratory in which a wide range of new aircraft and weapons could be tested and tactical operational effectiveness analyzed under actual combat conditions. ^{18/}

The fluidity of the combat situation and the fleeting nature of targets required development of tactical flexibility. ^{19/} Subsequently, various studies were conducted and important conclusions drawn on the functional capabilities and operational effectiveness of aircraft tactical employment.

5. Base Development

During the year, the U.S. was able to plan and initiate action toward the establishment of bases and to commence an expanding plan of base development in SVN, which was considered a strategic pivotal area of the Communist Bloc. ^{20/}

6. Combat Experience, USSR/CHICOM

Since both the USSR and Communist China limited their military involvement in Vietnam to advice and logistic support, they have been denied current combat experience for their forces. In contrast, U.S. participation has resulted in a significantly important growth of a

pool of combat-tested military personnel and command experience. As a result of the campaigns in SEA, our military leadership has attained tactical knowledge, concepts of jungle operations, infiltration control and area pacification.

7. Analysis of Technical/Tactical Data

Analysis and computations are being made of all facets and factors impinging on the success of air operations and strategy in SEA by such organizations as the Tactical Evaluation Center, Air Force Test Unit - Vietnam, and others. From the results obtained in 1965, the USAF has amassed significant data to analyze attrition vs. supply generations, tactical patterns of behavior, weapons effectiveness vs. costs, optimum ordnance usage vs. delivery, cost effectiveness, etc.

8. Assessment of U.S. Military Posture

The U.S. has been able to review and study the political, economic and strategic factors at play in the SEA conflict and the role of U.S. military strength in maintaining friendly alliance and communist caution in the area. Important inputs for planning, in terms of techniques and tactics and enemy response, have been derived which are of timely value in assessing the U.S. military posture in SEA.

9. Enemy Vulnerabilities

Enemy vulnerabilities studies had been made during the year; weaknesses have been found and tactics developed for current use

against studied weaknesses and for potential exploitation of Bloc vulnerabilities.

10. Communist Political Response

The U.S. had gained new knowledge in the area of Communist strategy and political response to calculated U.S. military actions and political pressures.

11. World Opinion and Support

The alignment of world opinion was carefully studied with relation to U.S. air actions in SVN and NVN. In this manner, a better understanding was obtained as to the working arrangements the various nations will have with the U.S. in the suppression of insurgency through political or military assistance.

These considerations have given the United States valuable factors required in the planning for any future contingency in an area of expanded operations against the Communist Bloc. Because of the knowledge gained during the year on these factors, the U.S. political and military posture has grown. In the same context, the Communist Bloc nations, outside of the VC/NVN forces, have gained only limited experience and knowledge since their participation was mainly limited to advisory and logistical support activity. Their combat experience remained primarily static and confined to side-line viewing of insurgency activities.

In conclusion, the conduct of air operations in Southeast

Asia during the year was effective toward achieving certain U.S. objectives. In contrast to the grim picture presented to the Secretary of Defense by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in August 1964, where neither side had the capability of defeating the other, ^{21/} the end of 1965 gave evidence to the VC that the victory, toward which they appeared to be approaching at the beginning of 1965, was now denied them. This picture remained, notwithstanding the fact that the year 1965 closed with an uneasy suspension of air attacks in North Vietnam. This closely-controlled use of air power clearly demonstrated to the world the sincere efforts of the United States to allow the enemy to maneuver away from his position of rigidity. This withdrawal of action consciously symbolized the U.S. principle of choice over coercion and a policy of cautious but resolute restraint. President Johnson said that the exercise of power in this century "has meant for the United States not arrogance, but agony," stating that "we have used our power not willingly and recklessly, but reluctantly and with restraint," where "the aims for which we struggle are aims which, in the course of affairs, ... men of the intellectual world would applaud and serve: The principle of choice over coercion, the defense of the weak against the strong and the aggressive..." "Our great power is tempered by great restraint" in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. He added: "A great power influences the world just as surely when it withdraws its strength as when it exercises it." And "...the application of military force when it becomes necessary, must be for limited purposes and tightly controlled..." ^{32/}

12. Summary

With the end of 1965, the U.S. was still unwilling, in many respects, to accept the risks associated with the prosecution of a decisive war to eradicate the threat of North Vietnam to the RVN and to the U.S. military posture in that area. US/RVN strategy at the end of the year remained one of severe restriction of military action. The sustaining force directing and supplying Viet Cong motivation and military action remained external to the RVN. The vital military complexes of Hanoi and Haiphong, and the China border LOC's remained areas prohibited from attack and destruction for political considerations. Our position remained that of intensifying interdiction efforts while maintaining restraint toward the escalation of conflict required to obtain total defeat of North Vietnam, the sustaining source of VC actions in the RVN. The attainment of certain military objectives, considered important to complete victory, were constrained by political dictates, which continued to hinder destruction of the enemy in vital base areas and at his sources of command and logistic support.

Notwithstanding the fact that our military efforts were restricted to less than the strike requirements necessary to achieve total defeat of North Vietnam, the year saw the entry of U.S. air intervention for the purpose of decreasing Viet Cong insurgency and persuading the enemy that cessation of hostilities was to be preferred to total destruction and defeat.

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VC KILLED IN-COUNTRY BY AIR

THOUSANDS

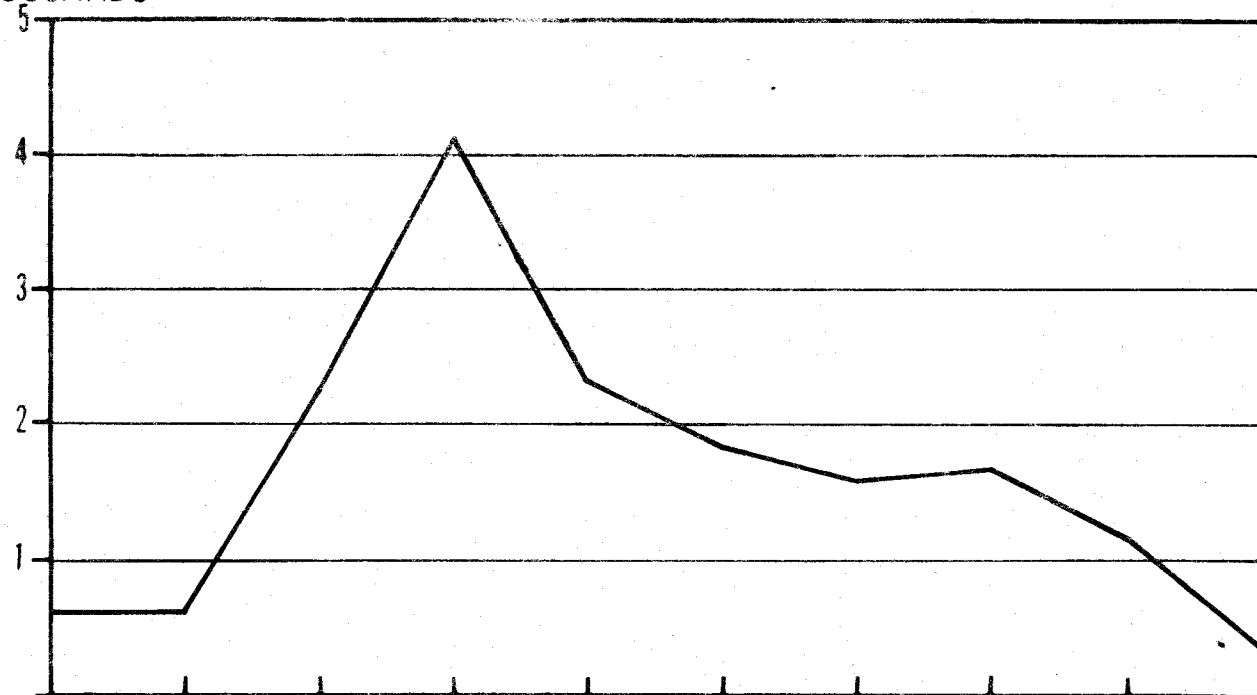
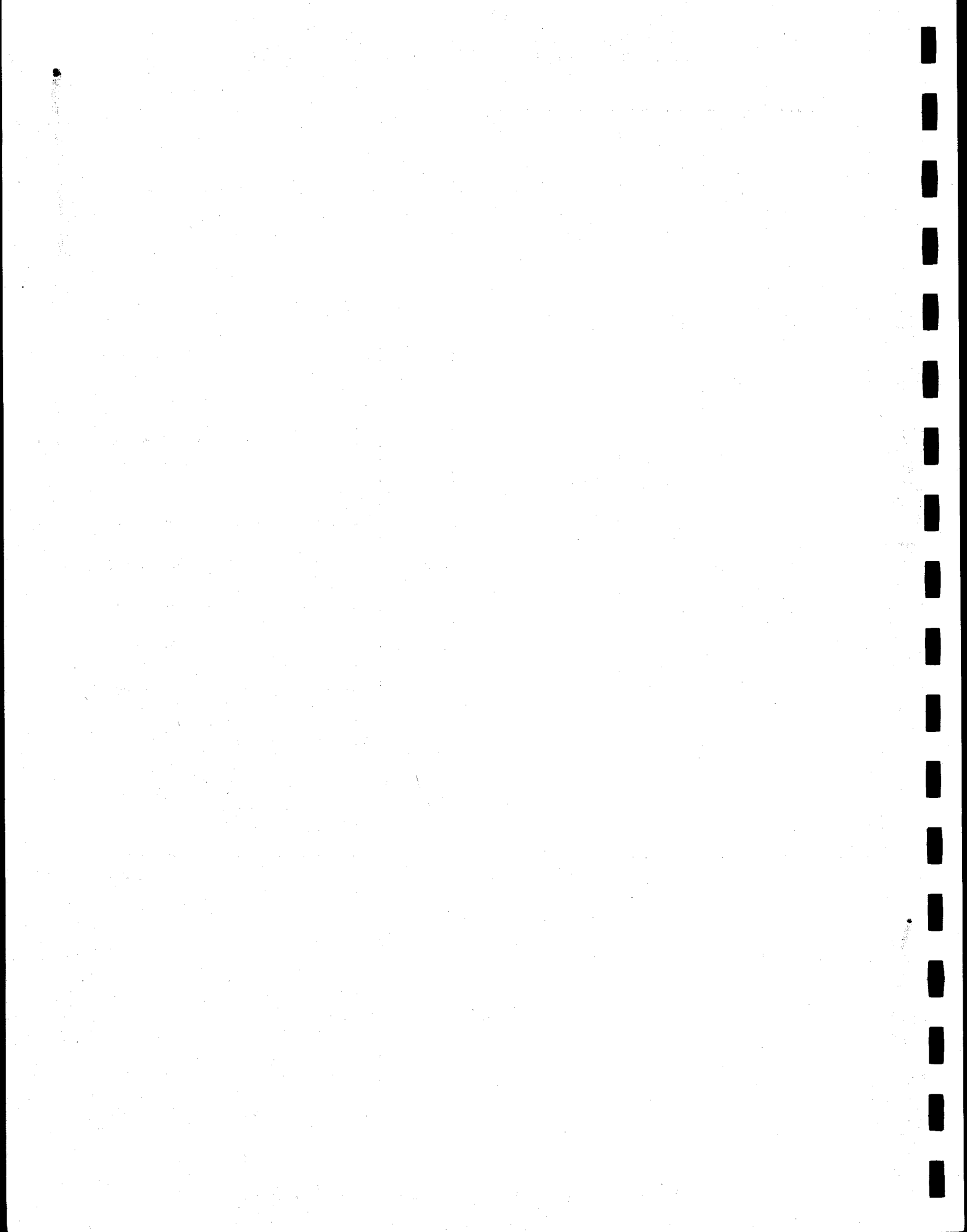


Fig. 2

3Q 4Q MONTHLY AVERAGE FY 65 JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN CONFIRMATION RULE FY 66

VC KIA (ALL SVCS)	1801	2591	3054	3616	3865	3502	5707	3844	3890
VC KBA (ALL SVCS)	1214	3223	12205	4921	2459	2368	2397	1804	945
CONFIRMED	662	2201	4098	2302	1869	1571	1664	1127	358
POSS ADDL	552	1022	8107	2619	590	797	733	677	587
PCT 3 TO 1	36.8	84.9	--	63.9	48.4	44.9	29.2	29.3	9.2
CUMUL KBA	INCOMPLETE YEAR		12.2	17.1	19.6	22.0	24.4	26.1	27.0
CONFIRMED			4.1	6.4	8.3	9.9	11.6	12.6	12.9
POSS ADDL			8.1	10.7	11.3	12.1	12.8	13.5	14.1

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The introduction of jet aircraft for assault over North Vietnam profiled a changing concept of operations from that envisioned by Secretary McNamara in December 1961, at which time his opinion was that the war in RVN should be considered a ground war pointing out that "although naval and air support operations are desirable, they won't be too effective." By the end of 1965, air power was being used decisively to destroy the enemy logistic buildup in SVN, his lines of communication into the areas of ground attack and operations, and his strategic bases in SVN.

By the end of the year, there had been a marked improvement in night-and-all-weather capability in the RVN. Availability of munitions such as Snake Eye, CBU and Napalm "B" enhanced the ability to conduct operations under marginal weather conditions associated with low ceilings in Vietnam. Night employment of the AC-47, in support of outposts under attack, proved very effective. Improved flare capability in early 1966 became a major deterrent to Viet Cong night activities. ^{23/}

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION DURING 1965

On both the military and political fronts, the situation at the start of the year was one of serious deterioration.

In March, COMUSMACV said that the security situation in I Corps and the bulk of II Corps had been steadily deteriorating since mid-1964. Developments in Binh Dinh, he said, suggested the situation was approaching a point which seemed critical. ^{1/}

In general, throughout the RVN, the VC were holding the initiative. They were having continuing success in their efforts to consolidate political gains in rural areas and were increasing their military strength by a combination of infiltration and levies on available manpower. They had improved their organization, weaponry, and logistic capability through the use of military action, intimidation, and propaganda with the theme of invincibility and inevitable Viet Cong success. ^{2/}

In the I Corp area, the VC had continued to extend their influence through the piedmont and into the lowlands despite some successful, though limited, ARVN operations and serious VC losses. In effect, they had isolated the centers of RVN strength from the rest of the population and succeeded in erasing the pacification gains made by the RVN prior to mid-1964. ^{3/}

In II Corps, RVN forces were on the defensive and pacification

efforts had stopped. More enemy forces were expected to be committed to the northern province of II Corps to further depress RVN morale, or, hopefully, force a psychological collapse. Some RVN personnel in II Corps were in a pessimistic frame of mind and reluctant to engage in offensive operations. The Montagnard situation remained a potentially explosive one. Five battalions of the general reserve were being committed to II Corps to bolster morale and prevent further deterioration. ^{4/}

In III Corps, an apparent force equilibrium had been reached and the Hop Tac program could not progress without substantial reinforcement. However, the general reserve, on which Hop Tac depended for spoiling operations and reaction forces was committed to other geographic areas. If the VC wanted to upset the equilibrium, they could do so by committing part or all of their reserves in the critical provinces surrounding Saigon. ^{5/}

In IV Corps, while the VC incident rate remained comparatively high, the intensity was low. Only in the contiguous provinces of Ding Tuong and Go Cong had any measurable pacification progress been realized by the RVN. The VC were apparently regrouping main force elements into regimental formations which could raise the intensity of military action at any time, even though the RVN had inflicted sharp losses on them. ^{6/}

In a forecast of the next six months, General Westmoreland said that the VC, holding the initiative, would increase the tempo and in-

tensity of their activities throughout the RVN, mainly in the northern and central areas. They would also strengthen existing units, form new units and regroup main forces into large formations, equipping them with standardized armament. At the same time, they would make maximum efforts to consolidate and strengthen political control over areas they held, extend population control into congested areas, and penetrate RVN-held areas. ^{7/}

General Westmoreland felt that the bulk of the VC military effort would be directed toward driving RVN forces into isolated strongholds by denying lines of communication, encroaching on coastal areas, and attacking ARVN units of limited strength. Through multi-battalion forays they would attempt to draw ARVN reserves into a given area and then heavily attack another area, thus whipsawing the reserves for both political and military purposes. They would also intensify propaganda and subversive efforts to arouse religious, ethnic, and political groups to a massive "popular" peace movement. ^{8/}

If this trend continued, the configuration of the RVNAF would be a series of islands of strength, clustered around district and provincial capitals, clogged with large numbers of refugees. ^{9/}

This early situation, plus the fact that the Viet Cong had attacked U.S. installations at Pleiku and Qui Nhon early in February enabled the 2d Air Division to expand and acquire new types of aircraft to help alter the situation. As a result, the situation gradually changed during

the year toward favoring the SVN effort to turn the tide of battle. The tempo of air operations in SEA between April and June 1965 increased by 60 percent, reaching a total of some 10,000 strike sorties flown by PACOM and VNAF fixed-wing aircraft in June. ^{10/} With this introduction of U.S. air power, combat air support for operations in SVN was noticeably effective. On 19 February, 24 B-57's from the 8th and 13th Bomb Squadron at Bien Hoa dropped 750-pound, 500-pound and 260-pound frag bombs on a designated target area in Phuoc Tuy Province. On 21 February, 20 B-57's again struck the area. On 24 February, 12 B-57's from Bien Hoa were employed on interdiction strikes against Viet Cong targets in Phuoc Tuy Province and four other B-57's struck an interdiction target in a free-strike area in Tay Ninh Province. ^{11/}

On 24 February, the VC had set a trap for a Vietnamese Ranger Company and a CIDG Company on Highway 19, near the An Khe Pass in Binh Dinh Province. When these two companies, coming from different directions, joined up the VC surrounded them. With U.S. assistance, the decision was made to extricate the trapped units by air, with USAF jets providing cover as Army helicopters picked up the men. ^{12/} This support had a salutary effect on both military and civilian morale and it was felt that it would result in greater Vietnamese effort and could, hopefully, reverse the downward trend. ^{13/}

March saw firm evidence of the escalation of the war when the greatest armada of aircraft (456) ever assembled over SVN participated in the bombing of a section of War Zone C in Tay Ninh Province. The monsoon offensive

was approaching and this operation had as one of its objectives the application of pressure on Viet Cong bases engaged in preparation for action in the highlands and coastal plains of the central area of Vietnam. ^{14/}
^{15/} During this operation, USAF effort was supported by Naval aircraft from U.S. 7th Fleet carriers and USMC aircraft from the 9th MEB, which had shortly before arrived at Da Nang. ^{16/} As a result of air operations, the month of March saw a rise in cautious optimism. The Government appeared to be taking control of the situation and it was felt that, if popular morale could be sustained and strengthened, the RVN, with continued U.S. support, would be able to counter future Viet Cong offensives successfully. ^{17/}

Certain events tended to support this view. On 8 March, with the support of B-57's, the Viet Cong were defeated at the Kannack Special Forces Camp near Mang Yang Pass. ^{18/} The continuation of air strikes both in SVN and in North Vietnam had a heartening effect on the morale of the South Vietnamese and helped produce a renewed RVNAF effort to seek out and destroy the VC. Battalion and larger unit operations reversed the downward trend of the three previous months. The ratio of victories to defeats increased markedly in favor of RVN forces. Of the 11 significant RVNAF actions initiated during the month, all were considered RVNAF victories. The VC initiated seven significant actions which resulted in two RVNAF victories and five defeats. ^{19/}

With the summer monsoon approaching and with the probable Viet Cong preparations for a major summer offensive, air power in April was

was taking on added significance as a means of checking enemy plans. ^{20/}
Viet Cong bases could best be attacked by air and, during April, considerable effort was expended towards reducing base area capabilities. On 15 April, a maximum effort operation was directed against the Viet Cong concentration in the Black Virgin Forest in Tay Ninh Province. ^{21/} This operation utilized 443 sorties to drop approximately 900 tons of ordnance, in slightly more than three hours, in an area approximately three by six kilometers. Pre-strike intelligence had indicated the target area to be the main VC military headquarters. Post-strike ground reconnaissance confirmed the existence of the target complex.

A special air operation was flown on 18 April 1965 against targets in Chau Doc Province developed by G-2, 9th Division, IV Corps. This target was a VC secret base area located in the "Seven Mountain" region, less than 10 kilometers from the Cambodian border. This area contained weapon work shops, clothing, fuel and munitions storage, and VC training and rest centers under control of two companies, 512th VC Main Force Battalion. Thirty-eight aircraft expended 24/100 GP, 128/750 incendiary, 24/750 GP, 52/500 GP, 128/120 FC, 60/100 PWP, and 10,700/20mm. Forward Air Controllers reported 201 structures destroyed, 78 structures damaged, and one secondary explosion. Information on VC casualties was not received as there was no follow-on ground operations. ^{24/}

A special air operation was flown on 25 April against a target complex in a mangrove swamp area at the eastern end of Vinh Binh Province based on information developed by G-2, 9th Division, IV Corps. The

target was a VC base area consisting of provincial and district administrative facilities, training facilities, and storage depots. Numerous fox holes, trenches, and anti-aircraft emplacements were located throughout the area. Thirty-one aircraft expended 16/750 incendiary, 40/50 incendiary, 16/750 GP, 126/250 GP, and 8,000/20mm. Forward air controllers confirmed 113 structures and four sampans (one over 60 feet long) destroyed, 17 structures and two sampans damaged, two supply areas destroyed, and one secondary explosion observed. Information on VC casualties was not received as there was no follow-on ground operation. ^{25/}

COMUSMACV felt that such attacks against enemy concentrations were to be given top priority, even over ROLLING THUNDER missions. These increased air activities were putting a strain on existing air resources and there was a general agreement that more fixed-wing air power was necessary. ^{26/} Sizable deployments, therefore, were made to SEA during this month. By the end of the month, the combined US-VNAF air strength available for strikes against the VC was more than triple that at the beginning of the war. ^{27/} This sharply increased the USAF and VNAF strike force and strike actions helped change the situation. On 11 May, a VC attack on the Phuoc Long provincial capital of Song Be, apparently planned as a spectacular victory, was repulsed with strong air support. This was considered the first major VC monsoon attack. There was no question that the B-57's and A-1E's had been responsible for stopping the enemy. Song Be was only one of the VC-initiated attacks at the outset of the rains, but it was a sizeable attack and was successfully halted by U.S. ^{28/} air.

The major Viet Cong effort after Song Be was shifted to the Quang Ngai area. On 29 May, the Viet Cong struck Ba Gia. Evidence pointed to a possible effort by the enemy to move into the key coastal city of Quang Ngai, which would be a dramatic victory. The VC poured mortar and small arms fire into the Government positions and closed in. A VNAF O-1F pilot saw the fire fight and two VNAF Skyraiders on another mission were diverted to provide close air support. Meanwhile, the ASOC at Da Nang, recognizing the precarious situation, sent two A-1H's, 22 F-100 jets, two B-57's, and 10 USMC F-4B's to help. These aircraft provided continuous close support for the trapped troops. Despite this air support, the 1st Battalion was reported as missing in action by night-fall. The battle continued and reinforcements and additional air support were sent in.

By 4 June, even though Government losses were heavy, air power proved the decisive element in blunting the VC initiative and offensive plans at the start of the summer monsoon season. ^{29/}

The fighting at Quang Ngai sharply pointed out the need for FAC's and O-1 type aircraft. Although FAC's flew day and night during the battle, the original force had to be supplemented by four FAC's and three O-1's from other areas. The USAF had only 50 FAC/ALO's on hand at this time and air strikes had increased some 300 percent since February. The Quang Ngai-Ba Gia action also pointed out the shortage of transport aircraft. ^{30/} The C-123's were worked to capacity for this operation.

The biggest battle of the war fought by mid-year was at Dong Xoai

and began at 1210 hours on 10 June. USAF aircraft were called in at 0430 hours the next morning. That day the VC appeared to withdraw and Government forces occupied Dong Xoai. On 12 June, heavy fighting resumed with heavy casualties suffered by both sides. Following the battle COMUSMACV wrote General Moore that, had it not been for air power, the Viet Cong would have achieved their objective at Dong Xoai. As enemy activity intensified to create the bloodiest fighting of the war, air power in Vietnam also increased during June. ^{31/}

CINCPACAF analysis of the fighting, up to this time, considered the primary objective of the VC during the offensive to be removal of Government presence from the countryside. It also appeared to CINCPACAF that the Viet Cong had started their summer offensive with a further intensification of the war. ^{32/}

The communists appeared to be emphasizing operations in the highlands and on the edges of the Hop Tac area, which centered on Saigon. Viet Cong-initiated incidents, during the week ending 5 June, climbed over the 600-mark for the first time since the mid-February offensive. Armed attacks and ambushes numbered 26, the highest weekly total since early March. The marked increase in the number of attacks and ambushes demonstrated again the high degree of tactical control and flexibility which characterized enemy combat operations. Acts of sabotage had increased five-fold, since about 1 May, and were directed primarily against the nation's highways and railroads. The communists' activities again accented the stress they were then placing on the northern provinces.

Their ambushes of Government convoys in the northern and central highlands increased sharply, with most of the friendly casualties occurring in the 1st and 2d Corps. Attacks and road interdiction operations around Saigon were at a relatively high level. ^{33/}

Viet Cong attempts to interdict road and rail networks indicated a major effort to confine friendly forces to base areas and towns and to restrict vehicular reinforcement capability in rural areas. The pattern of the attacks in early June, along with sabotage of major transportation routes, also suggested that the communists were trying to tie down large numbers of friendly forces around Saigon and in the coastal region, possibly to isolate the interior highlands and the capital. ^{34/}

On 10 June, it was reported that there was an acute shortage of rice in the highland provinces of II CTZ, with Kontum and Phu Bon the most affected. The shortage was the result of recent interdictions of major routes by the VC. MACV stated that plans were being made to re-supply these provinces by air until control of the highways could be reasserted. ^{35/}

The VC summer offensive gathered momentum during the week ending 19 June 1965 as the level of enemy-initiated incidents and their intensity again increased over the weekly average. ^{36/}

The VC seemed to be pursuing two main objectives, according to COMUSMACV. The first was the cutting of land routes of communication,

especially around Saigon. The second was the destruction of Vietnamese forces, particularly those located in the isolated and vulnerable population centers throughout the countryside. This latter tactic was being combined successfully with the ambush of large reaction forces. 37/

The VC apparently renewed their campaign to deny Route 19 to both civilian and military traffic with the ambush of a Special Forces convoy 10 kilometers west of An Khe, on 9 June, and the announcement that they would no longer accept "tax" to allow POL tanker trucks to use Route 19, east of Qui Nhon. Destruction of roads and bridges appeared to be the VC tactic to force the RVN to rely solely on aircraft for transportation and supply. 38/

The VC demonstrated a formidable accretion of firepower from improved weapons with a resultant increase of pressure during this month. 39/

At the end of June, the VC had the capability of closing any ground LOC at will, except in the face of a strong RVN force. Isolation of the highlands was virtually a fact. The incomplete but damaging VC seige of Saigon was causing serious economic and military consequences. 40/

To help offset this situation, B-52's of the 3rd Air Division on Guam on 18 June, made their first interdiction strike in Vietnam against a VC concentration in the Ban Cat Special Zone area, about

40 miles northeast of Saigon. This was the first target considered worthy of a massive B-52 effort. The entry of B-52 bombers into the South Vietnam fighting was a further indication of the effectiveness of the targeting arrangement developed early in 1965. ^{41/}

The VC were particularly active in the Pleiku area where some 1,300 U.S. personnel were stationed. There was some uneasiness, late in June, particularly with the supply route on Highway 19 cut off. VC were reported to be all around the base and with the worsening weather, there was concern about the possible lack of air support in case of attack. ^{42/}

The loss of the highlands area around Pleiku to the Viet Cong would have considerable impact on USAF/VNAF operations in Vietnam. It would mean the relocation of the 21st TASS, with its two O-1E's, two FC-47's, and two U-10's based at Pleiku, plus the 18 O-1E's deployed to other highland bases. This would mean congestion at whatever bases the planes were assigned and would reduce the flexibility of the O-1E visual recce program. It would also mean the relocation of the II Corps ASOC, probably to Qui Nhon, which had a limited capability to support it. Relocation of the VNAF operation at Pleiku would involve ten O-1E's, ten H-34's, and six A-1H's, all but the A-1H's staying with the ARVN units they supported and the A-1H's going to Nha Trang, where distance would degrade their response capability in the highland areas. Also, the VNAF CRP would have to be relocated or lost, seriously degrading the air defense

capability and leaving the entire center-section of the country devoid of low and medium altitude radar coverage. ^{43/}

The loss would also affect all communications west of Nha Trang and the USAF would be cut off from Thailand bases, except for an inefficient SSB capability. ^{44/}

To relieve this situation, a road-clearing operation was started in July and, by 22 July, the largest and most complex operation of the RVN war had developed.

Operation Thong Phong (Freeway) in II Corps was a road clearing, securing, and supply movement operation, conducted in Binh Dinh and Pleiku Provinces. Twelve ARVN battalions organized around the nucleus of the airborne brigade, plus supporting engineer, artillery, and air units were given the mission of reopening and securing National Highway 19 for the movement of essential military and civilian cargo from Qui Nhon to Pleiku, a distance of 92 miles. ^{45/}

USAF, USMC, and VNAF supported the operation with B-52, B-57, F-100, F-4C, A-1E, and A-1H aircraft. Unique was the employment of B-52 SAC bombers, from Guam, on 17 July, in a close air support role to assist the Vietnamese Marines clear the area around Mang Yang Pass. A major air logistics effort was devoted to the support of the operation. USAF C-123 and C-130 aircraft supported troop and cargo airlift requirements by movement of 1200 tons of material and 3,900 personnel into the operational area between 13 - 17 July. ^{46/}

The first convoy of vehicles from Qui Nhon arrived at Pleiku on 18 July, one day ahead of schedule. Throughout the week, convoys carried military and civilian supplies without interference or harassment. Although intelligence indicated Viet Cong units were north and south of Highway 19, no movements which would indicate an attack or ambush were detected. Constant air cover and artillery served as a deterrent to Viet Cong actions. USAF A-1E aircraft flew continuous air cover during daylight hours. In addition, B-57's and F-100's provided air strikes against suspected areas of Viet Cong concentrations. Night air support consisted of flareships, night air reconnaissance, and F-100's on ground alert. Armed helicopters escorted each convoy the entire length of the route. ^{47/}

The detailed and extensive planning required to execute a maneuver of this complexity was accomplished ^{48/} by a completely integrated combined U.S. and Vietnamese staff, representing ground and air forces, which resulted in a coordinated, smooth execution. ^{49/}

In July, the VC were able to successfully infiltrate the Da Nang airfield. During this assault five aircraft were destroyed and four damaged. ^{50/}

Overall air activity increased sharply during July. VNAF provided over 450 sorties in support of major ground operations. USAF sorties increased by more than 2,200. Missions controlled by FAC's doubled those flown in June. SAC supported the ground

effort during July with four B-52 strikes in II and III CTZ's. U.S. Army aviation activities continued at the same high level as June; air mobile operations increased during July to 48, as compared with 29 during June. Air activity rose to a new high in July, with nearly 11,000 combat sorties flown and more than 12,000 tons of bombs dropped on enemy positions throughout SVN. On 10 July, F-100's carrying 750-pound bombs attacked a base 60 miles north of Bien Hoa where some 1,000 VC were observed. About 350 VC were killed in what the Commander, 2AD, called "the most successful USAF mission yet flown in Vietnam."^{51/}

Largely due to the effectiveness of US/VNAF tactical air power, the VC offensive was again blunted in July when VC casualties reached new highs and losses were heavy, despite careful planning and local superiority. These heavy losses undoubtedly necessitated some degree of reorganization and reevaluation of their efforts and position.^{52/}

While results of larger-scale actions in July tended to favor friendly forces, there was a general loss of areas under RVN control in both II and III Corps, and the number of refugees in RVN areas increased considerably.^{53/}

Notwithstanding some territorial gains, the Viet Cong were unable to achieve either their individual or cumulative objectives during their summer offensive. What success they had could not be sustained when the ARVN altered their normal reaction pattern with the ever-present air support. Attack preparations by the Viet Cong, in several

instances, were spoiled by the mounting of heavily air-supported, fast-draw operations. Tactical air power played havoc with Hanoi's July decision to reestablish a favorable force ratio, through increasing VC forces in RVN, as losses suffered from U.S. air effort were heavy and continuous. While assessment of the military effect of the B-52 strikes had been difficult, as only a small percentage had been followed by ground operations and the dense foliage degraded the effectiveness of photo reconnaissance, information from captives, defectors and agents indicated that these strikes, coupled with tactical air operations, had forced the VC to change their tactical planning/rehearsal/execution cycle, as well as their strategic time phasing. ^{54/}

Air power played a substantial role in frustrating the VC's efforts in practically every major engagement thereafter to the end of the year. ^{55/}

Cumulative reporting toward mid-August began to substantiate a decline, in both the scale and intensity, of the Viet Cong summer offensive. ^{56/} Order of battle holdings of Viet Cong main force strength, however, increased during the month. ^{57/} Viet Cong sabotage of land lines of communications continued at a vigorous pace throughout South Vietnam. ^{58/}

August was a bad month for the VC. Their recorded losses included 3,306 killed and captured, and 825 weapons lost. ^{59/}

Viet Cong capabilities for interdiction, sabotage, terrorism, propaganda, harassment, small attacks, and infiltration had not been impaired by these losses; however, the general decline of activity at the end of August may have indicated at least a temporary drop in VC motivation. ^{60/}

It was apparent, in early August, that a substantial number of North Vietnamese had been sent into South Vietnam to bolster VC forces and North Vietnam was openly talking of coming to the aid of the VC. ^{61/}

August brought some spectacular results in air support operations. ^{62/} Intensity of air action also continued, with air cover and close support missions increasing by 27 percent. The number of air mobile operations almost doubled, reaching a total of 51. The friendly base structure grew in capability and area. In contrast, the VC bases were increasingly threatened with ground action by U.S. and RVN forces. VC casualties soared under the severe pounding of friendly air. ^{63/} Air operations in the RVN reached in all time high in August with a total of 11,498 strike sorties. Ground forces initiated 286 immediate requests for air strike support and all were supported. FAC controlled strike aircraft, flareships, and U.S. Army SLAR aircraft were being used to detect and destroy VC night river traffic. Implementation of the Visual Reconnaissance program (VR) in 49 of the VC areas was completed by 31 August.

A substantial amount of damage was inflicted in a 5 August attack by Viet Cong commandos against the ESSO POL storage facility in Quang Nam Province. Loss of jet fuel was estimated at 4,200,990 liters. ^{65/} Flaeship and strike support was requested and received during this attack.

On 23 August, the VC mounted a successful mortar attack on Bien Hoa Airfield which resulted in 11 U.S. A-1E's damaged. ^{66/}

Air power played a significant role in two major operations during September. These were Operation GIBRALTAR and Operation QUET THANG 165. During Operation GIBRALTAR, which was initiated on 18 September, continuous air cover and close air support was provided enabling ground forces to secure their objectives and preventing a successful operation from deteriorating into a disaster. ^{67/} During Operation QUET THANG 165, initiated on 23 September, massive air support and VNAF forces defeated bold and aggressive VC operations, resulting in 2,050 VC killed. ^{68/}

In early September, changes were noted in VC tactics in IV CTZ. Viet Cong instructions had been issued not to fire on low-flying aircraft unless the VC had been detected. Field fortifications had been improved and the depth of overhead cover had been increased. The Viet Cong were beginning to maintain close contact with the ARVN as a protective measure against air attack. In one instance the VC

allowed an ARVN battalion to advance to within 50 meters and then pinned the unit down with automatic fire. This made air attack against the VC emplacement virtually impossible. ^{69/}

Air operations exacted an increased toll of enemy KIA (estimated 3,865). In contrast, the friendly KIA total of 609 reflected a 40 percent decrease in comparison to August experience. ^{70/}

In late September, the VC shifted the weight of their action from the highlands to the central coastal provinces, particularly Binh Dinh, where several multi-battalion attacks were initiated against large RVN units. ^{71/} It became increasingly evident that the extent of enemy unit infiltration had been substantially higher than previously estimated. ^{72/}

Despite being subjected to repeated air strikes, the VC, in late September, reacted to the U.S. and ARVN offensives by changing tactics and attacking during daylight and by maintaining contact, using tactics more similar to the conventional type employed by NVA units than their usual hit-and-run tactics. ^{73/}

The VC also demonstrated their ability to absorb heavy combat losses and yet remain capable of conducting large scale operations through accelerated NVN infiltration of men and supplies. ^{74/}

As a result, during October the Viet Cong-initiated actions increased to the highest level of the war ^{75/} with significant engagements

in all corps areas. ^{76/} The Cong also accelerated their buildup of forces throughout the country despite the substantial losses suffered as a result of large scale engagements. Air strikes continued to account for a large percentage of VC casualties after ground operations located, identified and fixed VC positions. ^{77/} The number of significant operations doubled in October as the Allied Forces interdicted Viet Cong base areas and routes of supply. ^{78/}

During the month, the heaviest VC contact was received in II Corps. ^{79/} The most significant engagement coming on 19 October when two VC regiments ^{80/} attacked the Plei Me CIDG camp in what proved to be a 10-day attempt to overrun the camp and ambush the relief force. ^{81/} The camp survived with the aid of continuous close air support and massive aerial resupply. ^{82/}

Regarding Plei Me, COMUSMACV stated: "The campaign initiated by the enemy upon the attack of the Plei Me Camp on 19 October and continued until now is unprecedented in this conflict. It is unprecedented in intensity of action, magnitude of troops involved and degree of success by friendly forces. More enemy had been killed and captured in this campaign than any thus far. Also, there have been more individual and crew-served weapons received than in any combat action before. The performance of the American and Vietnamese troops has been significant. At no time during the campaign have American troops been forced to withdraw or move back from their positions except

for purposes of tactical maneuver. When the dust of the battlefield settled, the American troops were present to clear the battlefield of killed and wounded, both friendly and enemy. The enemy had fled the scene. American casualties were heavier than in any previous engagement but small in comparison with those of the enemy."^{83/}

At the end of October, it was apparent that the growing enemy force and increasing allied aggressiveness would lead to heavy engagement at an early date.^{84/}

Military events in November reflected a continuing, aggressive effort on the part of RVN and Free World Military Assistance Forces to search out and destroy the enemy, his materiel and stongholds. During this period, the tempo of friendly air activity increased as the total strike sorties for November set a new monthly record.^{85/}

Early in November, JCS informed the Secretary of Defense that air operations against North Vietnam should be immediately and dramatically accelerated so as to leave no doubt the U.S. intended to win and to achieve a level of destruction which NVN would find unacceptable. He also proposed that a follow-up air program of increasing pressure was necessary at a significantly higher level than the existing ROLLING THUNDER program.^{86/}

On 9 November, U.S. forces initiated Operation SILVER BAYONET, resulting in the greatest allied success of the war. Initial contact was light and, until 14 November, no significant contact occurred. On

14 November, a PAVN attack on a U.S. company in a landing zone triggered the action. For the following week, some of the fiercest and most determined fighting of the war raged through the northern edge of the Chu Phong mountains in Pleiku Province. From the onset, air strikes were provided on a continuous basis. Close air support sorties during this operation totaled over 350. B-52's flew 10 strikes. Leaflet drops emphasizing the invincibility of American bomber strength were carried out after strike mission. Flare aircraft provided illumination during periods of darkness. By the end of the operation, PAVN casualties had reached approximately 1,500 killed and 20 captured, with 855 weapons seized. ^{87/}

COMUSMACV submitted a grid of 65 targets, each 2 km x 3 km for use in support of Operation SILVER BAYONET. Seventeen of these targets involved Cambodian territory. CINCPAC disapproved, in accordance with policy which prohibited striking targets in Cambodia or any portion of a target within two kilometers of the border. ^{88/} Within two days, however, this restriction was tempered to allow bombing up to the RVN/Cambodian border. ^{89/}

CINCPAC informed JCS of the vastly changed situation, with U.S. ground forces being heavily engaged with the PAVN in the right of self-defense. He pointed out that this right should not be limited geographically; that the right of self-defense required immediate pursuit of the enemy, even when the enemy is on the run, in order to carry out the destruction of the enemy's capacity and will to fight. CINCPAC felt that

any actual military operations into and over Cambodia, conducted pursuant to this authority, should be proceeded by appropriate public and official statement as prescribed by him. This would provide advance justification and deny Sihanouk the advantage of making the first charges. 90/

On 30 November, CINCPAC informed COMUSMACV of the need for conclusive information regarding PAVN bases in Cambodia, for the purpose of diplomatic protests or for obtaining authority to make B-52 strikes on those bases. 91/

During this period the VC took advantage of low cloud ceiling and heavy rain to attack a series of RF/PF posts. 92/

On 14 November, in the Ia Drang Valley, Pleiku Province, repeated attempts were made by the VC to overrun the U.S. positions. Human wave tactics were used. These were thwarted by the employment of air, artillery and armed helicopter support. This engagement was evidently a carefully planned experiment, designed to test behavior and reaction of the U.S. Forces. 93/

The maintenance of close contact by the VC in an attempt to discourage use of air strikes and artillery against them was effective in November. However, this tactic increased the VC vulnerability to friendly small arms fire and grenade attacks. 94/

On 18 November, a VC force attacked and overran an airstrip at Tan Hiep, in Dinh Tuong Province. Four O-1 aircraft were destroyed, 46

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friendly killed and 55 wounded. VC losses were 43 killed. ARVN reaction units, pursuing the VC and supported by 91 close air support and interdiction sorties, killed another 156 VC and captured five. ^{95/}

In I CTZ (Corps Tactical Zone), VC forces attacked Hiep Duc District Headquarters in Quang Tin Province. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the defenders. The headquarters was overrun and the post completely destroyed. Friendly forces reoccupied the headquarters on 18 November. Friendly losses during the reaction operation were 35 killed and 74 wounded. VC losses were 363 killed, the majority as a result of air strikes. ^{96/}

VC-initiated actions rose to an all-time high during November. Their most significant attacks included the overrunning of Tan Hiep Airfield in IV Corps and Hiep Duc District Town in I Corp, and inflicting heavy casualties on the 7th ARVN Regiment at the Michelin Plantation in III Corps. ^{97/}

The month marked improved US/RVN/FWMAF capability to maintain and, ^{98/} to a limited degree, increase the scope and intensity of operations. The B-52's were used for the first time in direct support of ground operations. ^{99/}

The largest enemy operations in December were, for the most part, in reaction to friendly incursions into VC territory. In December, the VC made more pronounced attempts to shake the confidence of the people in the cities and to lower their will to resist. Terrorist activity,

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designed to unsettle the populace and to harass U.S. Forces, and VC-inspired agitation within the populace, increased. VC propaganda, both within the RVN and worldwide, stressed the theme of the U.S. as the primary enemy of the Vietnamese people. 100/

Towards the end of the year, PACAF felt that U.S. attacks against targets in North Vietnam, from Operation PIERCE ARROW to ROLLING THUNDER, had progressively tightened the air power rope of interdiction and armed reconnaissance around the centers of power in Hanoi and Haiphong. He pointed out that the U.S. had hurt transportation facilities, lines of communication, and other important military targets. He felt that the random and restrained attacks had not completely cut off infiltration to the south, although they had made movement of large quantities of supplies from the NVN industrial-economic base, needed to support a large scale attack, infeasible. 101/

The economic effects in NVN of U.S. attacks had grown, according to PACAF. In May, the economy appeared strained in isolated areas, but remained basically functional. As U.S. air attacks continued, it became evident that provinces south of 20 degrees were becoming isolated from Hanoi. By July economic life in areas under attack had been disrupted and the people were worried, but the will to persevere remained strong, particularly in Hanoi and Haiphong. By August, the areas under attack were suffering severely. The labor force was affected and Hanoi was becoming more isolated from the countryside. Food rationing was tighter

by September and complaints of hardship became more numerous. Increased food prices, importation of food and other signs of economic hardship were more apparent toward the end of the year. ^{102/}

On 29 December, COMUSMACV made the point that, unless the U.S. escalated the war to the point where all weapons available to the U.S. were used against the enemy, he foresaw an extended war of attrition. This, he thought, we could win, since our troops would always be fresh because of the one year tour and, with our fire power and mobility, he did not believe that the VC and North Vietnamese could afford to sustain the heavy losses that would probably be theirs. However, he made the point that this was going to create some political difficulties, because it was inevitable that the American people would clamor for a quick victory which would be difficult to achieve without major escalation. ^{103/}

At the close of 1965, Cmdr 2AD announced that USAF tactical pilots had flown 48,510 strike sorties in support of the RVN during 1965. USAF pilots, flying jet fighter-bombers, logged about 10,570 tactical strike sorties over NVN. In addition to USAF efforts, VNAF pilots flew over 23,700 tactical strike sorties. Most of the VNAF efforts were in SVN. SAC B-52 bomb crews logged more than 1,000 sorties. During 1965, an average of 6,100 strike sorties per month were flown by USAF and VNAF. This effort was 5.5 times greater than in 1964. ^{104/}

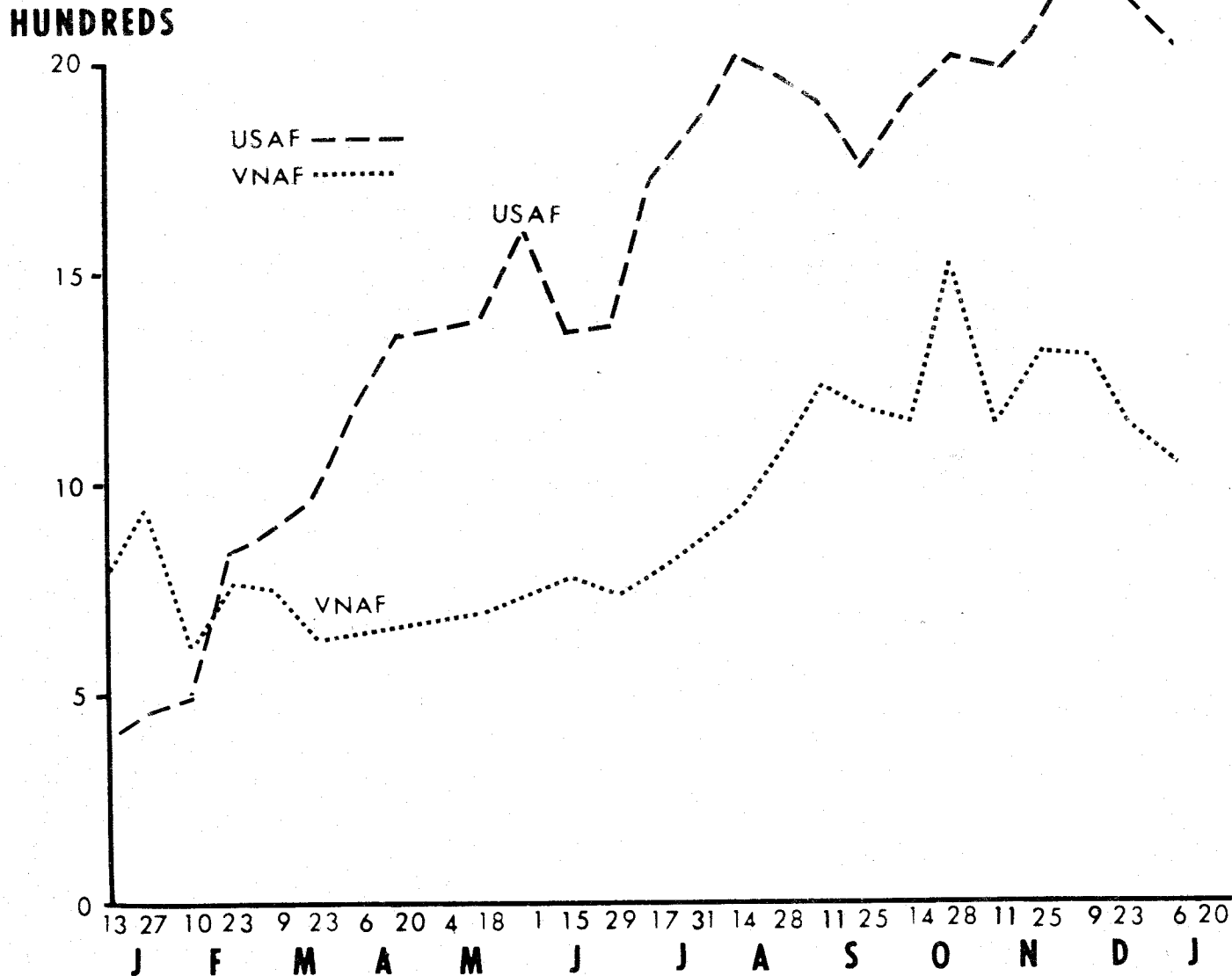
Tactical fighter pilots of the USAF dropped over 80,280 tons of bombs. Of these, 56,670 were dropped on VC targets in SVN while 23,610 tons

were dropped over NVN. VNAF fighter pilots added 26,600 tons of bombs. ^{105/}

The increase in tempo of USAF operations in SVN during 1965 was the direct result of VC/NVN escalation of the war and U.S. reaction to that escalation. The year, 1965, represented the largest employment of U.S. air power since the Korean conflict. US/VNAF airpower was responsible for killing more than 15,000 enemy personnel during the year. In addition to destroying VC sanctuaries, USAF/VNAF air power and USN and USMC aircraft struck VC/NVA LOC's day and night, leveled tens of thousand of enemy structures, stopped several major VC/NVN assaults and ^{106/} made enemy existence increasingly hazardous, both in and out of the RVN.

FIGURE 3

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USAF/VNAF IN COUNTRY STRIKE SORTIES

Does not include ARC Light Sorties

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SOURCE: JOPREP-5



~~SECRET NOFORN~~ 2nd AD IN-COUNTRY TACTICAL STRIKE SORTIES * USAF vs VNAF

THOUSANDS

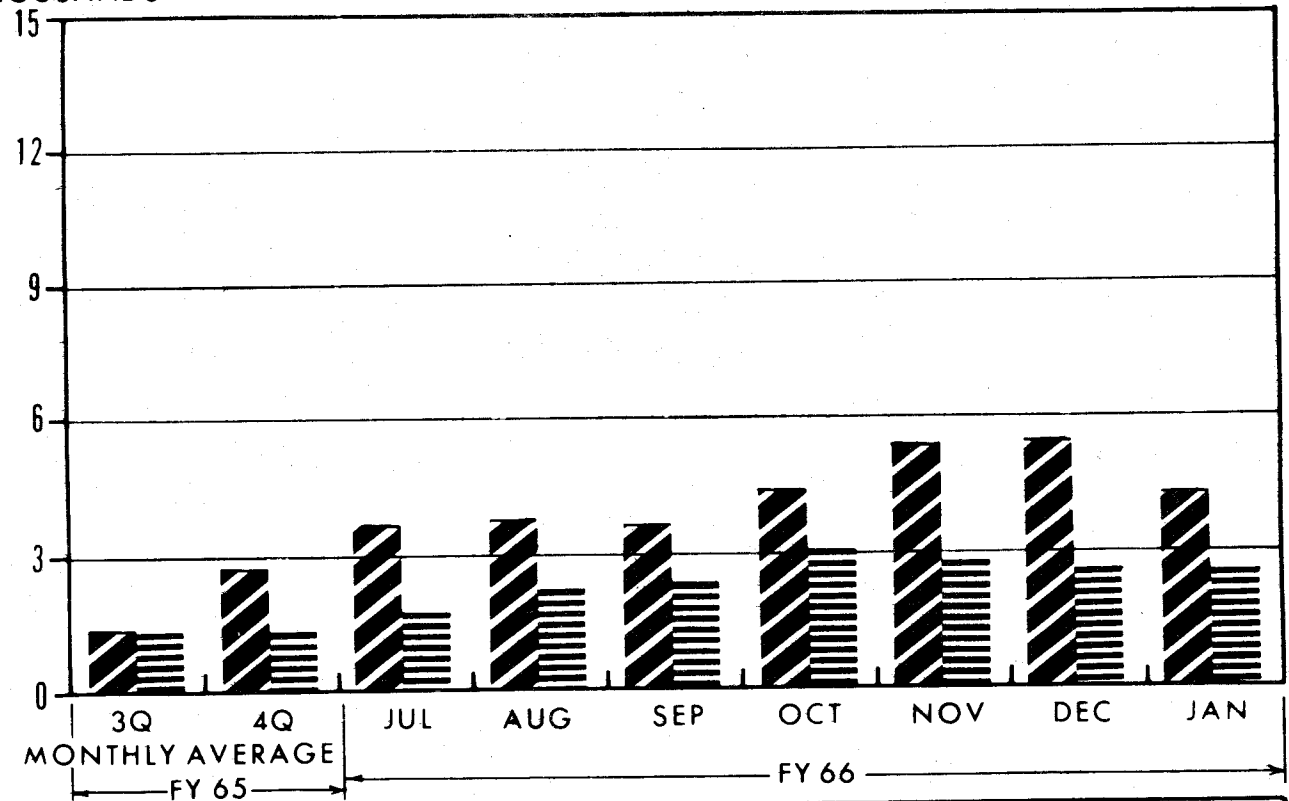
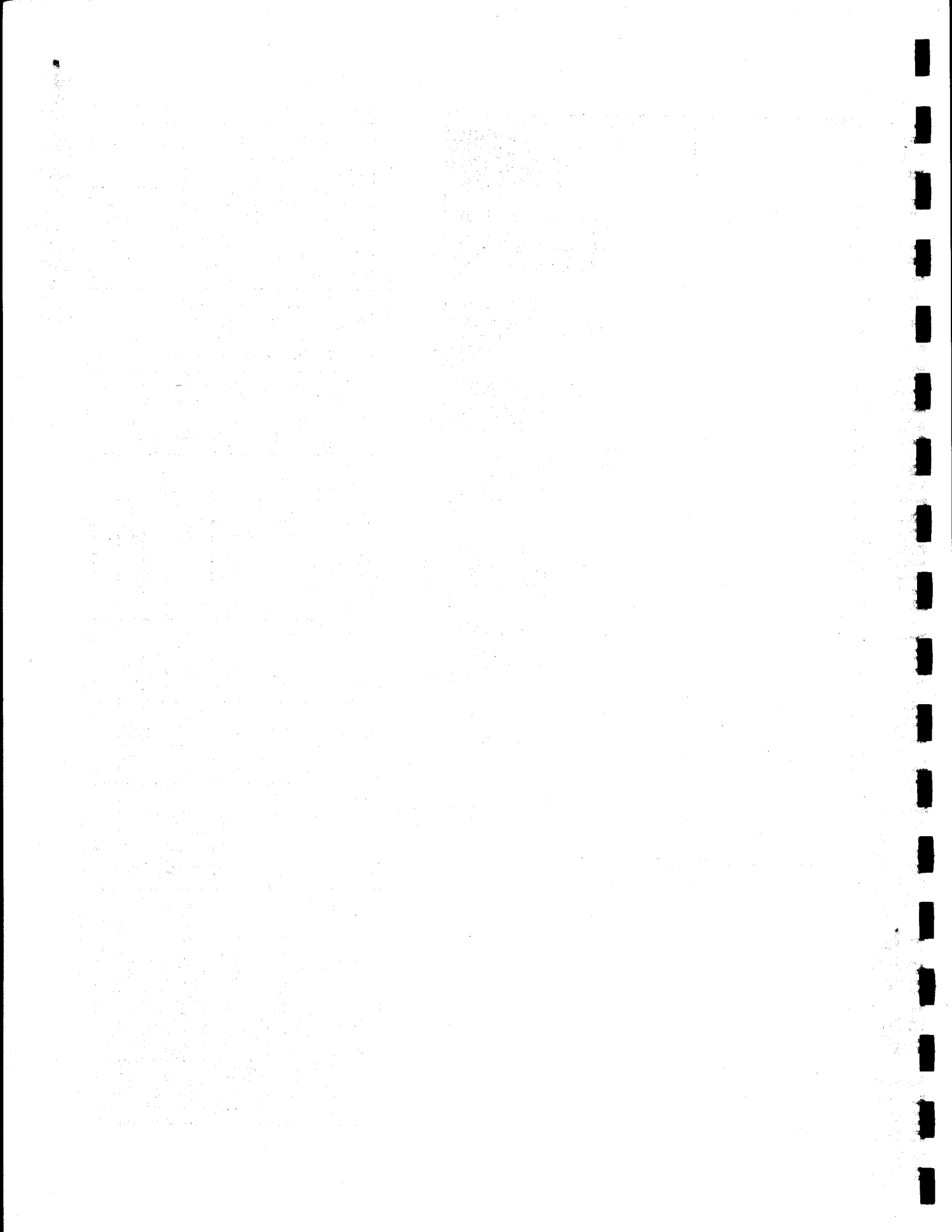


Fig. 4

	3Q	4Q	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
TOTAL FLOWN	2653	4013	5344	5833	5984	7318	7947	7975	6777
USAF TOTAL	1364	2716	3652	3677	3631	4297	5234	5380	4257
CLOSE AIR SUPPORT						322	368	856	1021
DIRECT AIR SUPPORT						3878	4835	4486	3168
ESCORT						50	13	18	20
INTERDICTION						47	18	20	48
VNAF TOTAL	1289	1297	1692	2156	2353	3021	2713	2595	2520
CLOSE AIR SUPPORT						146	309	223	219
DIRECT AIR SUPPORT						2833	2356	2319	2254
ESCORT						42	48	34	47
INTERDICTION						0	0	19	0



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2ND AD IN-COUNTRY HELICOPTER SORTIES * USAF VS VNAF

THOUSANDS

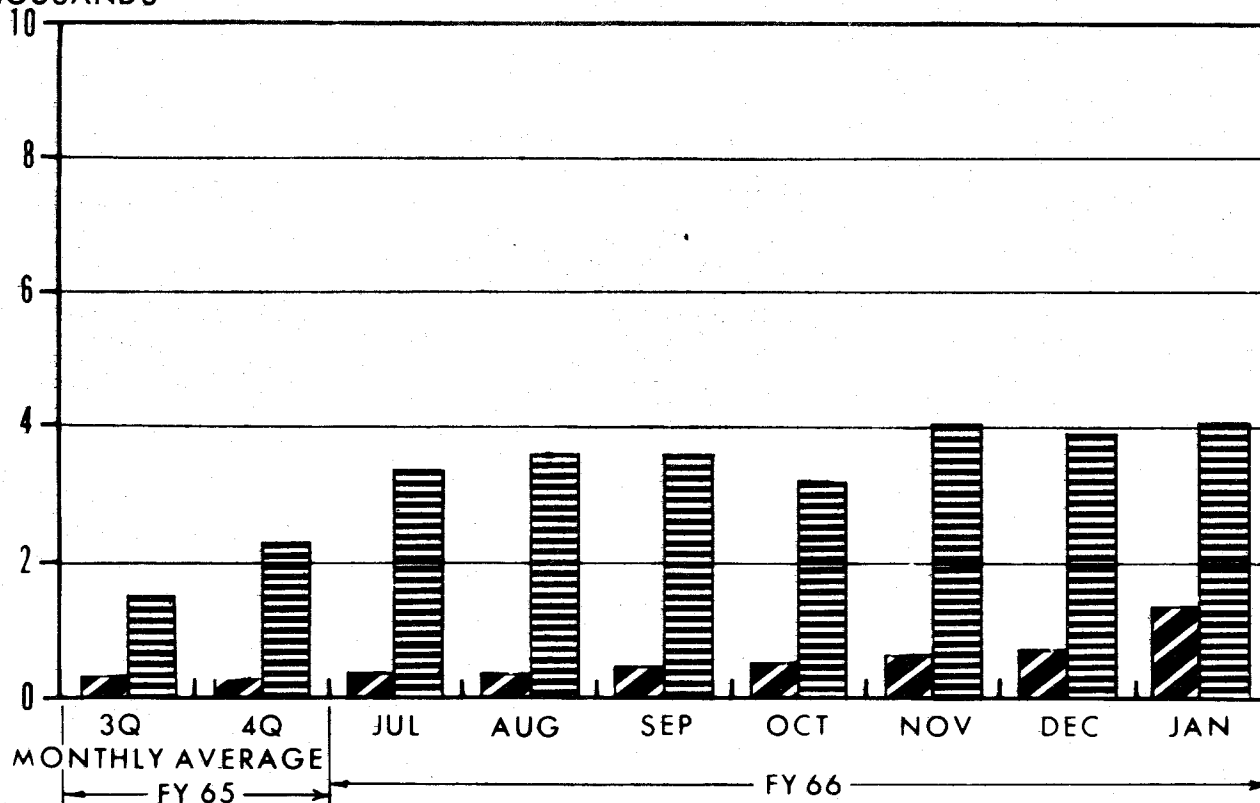


Fig. 5

	3Q	4Q	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
USAF TOTAL	242	281	348	380	447	496	611	730	1357
ALL TC / CARGO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	254	833
SEARCH & RESCUE	242	281	348	380	447	485	501	433	502
PSY WAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CASUALTY EVAC	0	0	0	0	0	11	110	43	22
OTHER									
VNAF TOTAL	1564	2304	2423	3656	3634	3267	4040	3929	4063
ALL TC / CARGO	189	980	1599	2005	2202	2320	2500	2421	2430
SEARCH & RESCUE	149	106	8	24	147	17	9	4	49
PSY WAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CASUALTY EVAC	1226	1218	816	1627	1285	930	1531	1504	1584
OTHER									

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Date	Description	Amount
1945-01-01
1945-01-15
1945-02-01
1945-02-15
1945-03-01
1945-03-15
1945-04-01
1945-04-15
1945-05-01
1945-05-15
1945-06-01
1945-06-15
1945-07-01
1945-07-15
1945-08-01
1945-08-15
1945-09-01
1945-09-15
1945-10-01
1945-10-15
1945-11-01
1945-11-15
1945-12-01
1945-12-15
1945-12-31



CHAPTER III

THE COMMUNIST BUILDUP AND THREAT

1. Introduction

The end of the year saw improvement, in some respect, in the defense posture of North Vietnam. The country, which is primarily an agrarian society, had undertaken full wartime mobilization. With active support and aid from Moscow, as well as Peiping, North Vietnam had more aircraft, flak and SAM's than previously. The jet-capable airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong sanctuary had been improved with longer runways, aircraft revetments, POL storage, and other facilities. PACAF noted this would suggest that more and probably later-model jet aircraft would be programmed for North Vietnam in the coming months. In addition, there had been a 200 percent increase in radar, including at least two GCI sites. An even more dramatic increase was seen in AAA defenses. PACAF estimated that, since the first of the year, there had been an increase, in all categories of AAA weapons, of approximately 350 percent. Light caliber (37/57mm) had risen some 500 percent, while medium (85/100mm) had increased 125 percent. PACAF pointed out that their effectiveness was attested to by the fact that approximately 95 percent of friendly combat losses during November had been to AAA and AW fire. ^{1/}

The SAM deployment in North Vietnam, according to PACAF, loomed larger each month. Since April, the Russians had steadily expanded the SAM complex until, by November, there were nearly 50 sites, ten of which

were installations. There were 31 more possible installations in the process of being validated. He noted that the location of these sites and installations "...add to the defense of the Hanoi-Haiphong area, portions of the vital rail lines running northeast and northwest out of Hanoi, and to areas south of Hanoi as far down as Thanh Hoa and to Vinh." He concluded there were, in November, probably 15 active SA-2 battalions in NVN at that time and that the North Vietnamese were bound to try to add to the number in the coming months, possibly with more modern equipment. He concluded: "They make hard hunting."^{2/}

2. VC/PAVN Buildup

The overall strategic plan of the NVN Lao Dong Party is the political and military conquest of the RVN. The first part of the plan, in essence, called for the establishment of a firm political and military base. Having established a secure base of operations, thus forcing the RVN into a defensive posture, the Communists would then be in a position to move into the final phase, the annihilation of the enemy.^{3/}

By mid-1965, the VC were well on their way to accomplishing these goals. Infiltration routes from NVN into the RVN, via Laos and Cambodia, had been improved. SEA infiltration was also in full swing with the Cong logistical system and base areas well established.^{4/}

3. Enemy Logistics Situation

As of the end of the year, the VC had extensive supplies stockpiled

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in many major base storage areas which were brought in through various infiltration routes. The enemy had several years in which to stockpile and prepare the battlefield in accordance with accepted communist theory.

At this time, it was estimated that the PAVN had the capacity to increase considerably their current logistical support in the RVN. From a year-end LOC study of the Laotian Panhandle, it was concluded that, with a major truck effort, NVN had the capability of moving 300 tons per day from NVN through Laos, into the RVN during the dry weather. (This capability fell to 30 tons per day during the normal five-month rainy season.)^{5/} The average, year-around capacity, was 195 tons per day.

NVN logistical capability was estimated to be very substantial. As of the end of the year, determination of the amount being infiltrated or smuggled into the RVN could not be made. However, it was considered that 25 tons per day was minimal. Best information at that time on sea infiltrations was about 14 tons per day. Altogether, PAVN's capability to support their forces in the RVN totaled an estimated 234 tons per day.^{6/}

With the introduction of additional PAVN troops and improved logistical support, it was estimated that the level of combat would increase and that enemy logistical requirements would follow. At the end of the year, it was estimated that required supply weights, per man per day, would soon reach a level of 8.2 pounds for PAVN troops and 3.6 pounds for Viet Cong troops.^{7/}

At the end of the year, it was estimated that, under light combat

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conditions, the enemy forces then in South Vietnam would require about 84 tons per day from outside the RVN or from stockpiles.^{8/}

Consequently, it was estimated that, with a maximum NVN effort, lines of communications existing at the end of the year could support the then current 110 PAVN/VC battalions, plus 80 additional, for a total of 190 battalions.^{9/} This meant the VC ended the year with a logistic capability greater than their overall requirements.^{10/}

At the end of November 1965, trained military forces located in NVN included: 265,000 Regular Army, 27,000 Armed Security Force, 200,000 Class I Militia and a potential of 1.8 million Militia. Within this force structure, there were a total of 38 infantry regiments. The Class I Militia provided a trained pool of personnel for the regular army, and PAVN was capable of mobilizing 475,000 men by M-day plus 180. NVN would maintain an infiltration rate of three regiments per month at least through 1966.^{11/}

Current with the U.S. buildup of forces in South Vietnam, the VC/North Vietnam Army forces were achieving steady increase by recruitment from the North and South, infiltration of units from North Vietnam and reorganization of VC units in South Vietnam. Expressed in battalions the VC/North Vietnam Army buildup was as follows:

<u>Force in SVN</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>July 1965</u>	<u>November 1965</u>
VC	46	71	83
North Vietnam Army	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>27</u>
Total	46	80	110

MACV estimated VC strength in November 1965 to be 75 to 80,000 regular troops, 110 to 120,000 irregulars, and about 40,000 political cadre. From July through October, total Viet Cong strength registered a net gain of about 40,000.^{13/} In South Vietnam the Vietnamese controlled, in late November 1965, a manpower pool of 526,000 physically fit males between the ages of 16-45. They also had a well-established guerrilla base and training system. It was estimated, at that time, that the VC would form two new battalions each month and could train at least 2,500 replacements monthly.^{14/}

At the end of the year, it was estimated that the PAVN could train and infiltrate the equivalent of nine battalions per month and the VC seven, for a total of 16. Since losses were expected to increase steadily throughout the year to a point (reached at the end of 1966) where losses would equal input, the project force strength would only be 45 battalions more than the 110 current in late November 1965.^{15/}

4. Countering U.S. Buildup

In July 1964, order of battle intelligence carried a total of 46 VC battalions; in November 1965, the picture changed to that of 83 VC battalions, plus the 27 infiltrated PAVN battalions, for a total of 110 (103 confirmed, four probable and three possible) battalions.^{16/}

The populous Delta, rich in rice, appeared to be the VC's prime objective; however, they saw the highlands as the major battleground, since the tough terrain and poor lines of communications could mini-

mize air and ground superiority of the opposing forces. ^{17/}

Accelerated expansion of VC forces was necessary to mount an offensive on the scale required to reach their objectives. A number of new Main-Force battalions were created in the southern Delta, some of which were later transferred to the area north of Saigon. Hanoi infiltrated regular units of the North Vietnamese Army - all three regiments of the PAVN 325th Division. ^{18/}

The Viet Cong tactical doctrine in 1965 also emphasized offensive action and, in general, followed the same guerrilla warfare tactics developed by the Viet Minh during the French-Viet Minh War. Planning probably played the largest role in every VC operation. Observation of outposts for attacks, sand-table exercises, walk-throughs, routes of movement, withdrawal routes, and all other preparatory aspects received minute attention, until each participant knew exactly what to do in a given situation. ^{19/}

5. Enemy Strategy

To achieve their aim of a unified Vietnam under Hanoi, enemy strategy was based upon the conduct of a long war, during which they would exact maximum attrition on allied and, especially, U.S. forces. They would avoid combat unless they expected victory. They would attempt to retain a force ratio of maneuver battalions in their favor by holding attacks against our bases. Diversionary attacks to disperse our forces and simultaneous attacks at widespread locations would be made.

They would threaten and attack our base areas to immobilize the maximum number of security forces and to destroy aircraft, equipment, and supplies. They would mount attacks designed to bring about the commitment of our general reserves. They would attack isolated forces in order to inflict heavy losses. They would continue actions to isolate and dominate the highlands to secure their base area at the terminus of their Laos infiltration roads and railroads, terrorize areas of government control and wear down our will to resist. They would defend their major bases because their protracted conflict depended upon the stockpiling they had been doing for years. ^{21/}

6. VC Tactics and Techniques

A major consideration in the Communist plan was the attainment of "strategic mobility." Strategic mobility was their answer to U.S. tactical mobility. Their objective was to amass sufficient numbers of maneuver battalions to be capable of posing a sufficient threat in widely separated areas to not only tie down large numbers of allied forces in static defensive roles, but to also allow them to destroy selected targets at a time and place of their choosing. In order to attain the force structure necessary to maintain "strategic mobility," Hanoi apparently decided to introduce regular PAVN troops into the RVN. Indications of this existed as early as April 1964, when the 325th PAVN Infantry Division began an accelerated training program in the vicinity of Dong Hoi in NVN. ^{22/}

The VC made careful studies to effectively counter air attacks.

They tried to avoid detection (or becoming a worthwhile target) by transporting supplies on their backs over tree-canopied trails. They selected situations for attack when air power was least effective and dispersed and took advantage of natural cover to a degree unmatched in previous wars. They merged with civilian groups and moved in physical proximity to friendly elements, whenever possible, to render the feasibility of air strikes questionable. They dispatched trained suicide squads to attack U.S. aircraft on their bases and developed techniques in the use of small arms and automatic weapons for anti-aircraft defense purposes. 23/

The VC tried to counter the airmobile operations of the US/RVNAF forces by using surprise and superior manpower and preparing all probable landing zones within 10 kilometers of the objective as helicopter ambush sites. The VC also used anti-aircraft weapons, which were centrally-controlled and coordinated, to deny use of certain landing zones, thereby channelling the airmobile force into using landing zones covered by the VC in defensive positions. 24/

Command and control communications employed by VC forces countering an airmobile operation consisted primarily of radio and land-line communications. The communication capabilities of the VC included voice and continuous wave, field telephone, visual signaling devices (light and smoke), and a potential for direction finding. 25/

On 24 August, the VC carried out an harassing attack on Bien Hoa

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Air base, in III CTZ, in which they employed a 75mm howitzer. They ^{26/} demonstrated improved capabilities in fire power and mobility.

VC tactical doctrine also required that, in close combat, the VC must stay within 10 meters of RVN and U.S. troops. According to an RVN report from Bien Hoa Province, this tactic helped prevent friendly air strikes and artillery from firing on the VC for fear of hitting friendly troops. In performing this type of operation, the VC had to be prepared to fight with bayonets and grenades at close quarters. Another tactic was for the VC to attack RVN or U.S. troops in many different locations on the same day to create confusion, to demoralize, and to prevent successful attacks on the VC. A VC general was reported to have stated that the 3,000 VC/PAVN killed in the central highlands by U.S. forces was a cheap price to pay for the experience gained in fighting U.S. troops in central RVN. ^{27/}

The year saw significant increases in the military strength of NVN. The army was probably able to bring existing units up to full strength, the AAA increase and air defense measures were accelerated. In addition, by the end of the year, key areas had obtained surface-to-air missiles, modern jets were in service and good radar was in operation, which all added up to a significant air defense capability. ^{28/}

Carrying out U.S. objectives in NVN and Laos had cost the U.S. a price. The enemy was clever and strenuous efforts had to be exerted to counter his capabilities. The enemy's surface-to-air missile threat

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presented both a direct threat and what had become a costly by-product, i.e. forcing our aircraft into the automatic weapons/small arms environment. 29/

A very high state of military and air defense readiness was being maintained in NVN. Throughout the country continuing measures for defense of the civil population and for the protection of important industrial facilities were being carried out. 30/

In Hanoi, civil defense preparations had proceeded at a rapid pace. Blast walls, trenches, and shelters were being constructed. An alert system was in operation, and the citizenry were said to be taking air raid precautions seriously. Anti-aircraft weapons had been sighted on the tops of industrial and office buildings. Other indications of a general effort to put the country on a war-time footing were found in reports of the establishment of war camps in air strike target areas (to keep personnel on hand to effect repairs as rapidly as possible) and in the drafting of all men between the ages of 17 and 35 in at least one area in southern NVN, where air strikes had been heavy. 31/

Increases in AAAOB, Radar Order-of-Battle (ROB), and Surface-to-Air Missile Order of Battle (SAMOB) for North Vietnam reflected the progressive strengthening of the country's air defense. 32/

In considering the NVN air capability, it was noted that the FAGOT/FRESCO (MIG-15/17) force was in place and trained before the beginning of air strikes. There were good indications this NVN air capability was

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planned before the Gulf of Tonkin incident; however, that event was a definite factor in causing this jet fighter force to be developed before the time actually planned for it. Air strikes up to that time had caused very little positive reaction by the NVN jet fighters. Except for the 3 April attacks by the NVN jet fighters, there had been a reluctance to use their jet fighter capability in other than defensive patrols of the Hanoi area. Also, the number of NVN jet fighters had increased by 15 aircraft, in addition to the 36 aircraft first deployed up to that time, and NVN apparently had not seen the need to substantially increase their FAGOT/FRESCO force because of U.S. air strikes. It was possible they had requested more jet fighters, from either the ChiComs or Soviets, but, because of the differences between these two governments on military aid to NVN, this requirement had not been met. Both the ChiComs and the Soviets were probably willing to supply the aircraft. In the case of the ChiComs, they most likely felt they could not afford to lend any more jet fighters to the North Vietnamese. They would, however, be more than willing to supply jet fighters with ChiCom pilots. The Soviets, on the other hand, apparently did not yet see a definite need for more jet fighters in NVN. There were some indications that the Soviets would like to station jet fighters (with Soviet pilots) on South/Southwest China airfields but the ChiComs strongly protested this action. ^{33/}

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (NVN) military air capability improved in May 1965. This improvement was highlighted by: (1) The completion of one surface-to-air missile (SAM) site near Hanoi, (2) The

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continued construction of two other SAM sites in the same area, and
(3) The confirmation of BEAGLE (IL-28) jet light bombers at Phuc Yen,
plus the buildup of MIG fighters at the same airfield. ^{34/}

The increase in the NVN air order-of-battle and the near completion of the Hanoi SA-2 sites in May was firm evidence that Sino-Soviet military aid was increasing. This activity was an indication that the ChiComs were permitting the USSR to transport supplies across the Chinese mainland to North Vietnam. ^{36/}

The introduction of BEAGLES into the North Vietnamese Air Force gave the NVN a limited offensive capability. There were 63 FAGOT/FRESCO (MIG-15/17) aircraft at Phuc Yen in May. Six of these aircraft were reported to be in various stages of maintenance assembly. ^{37/}

The airfield improvement program in North Vietnam was progressing. One additional airfield - Kep Ha - had been undergoing renovation and a rail spur had been built to the field. This brought the number of fields at which improvements have been noted to seven. At Phuc Yen, two additional revetments were under construction in the new revetment dispersal area located north of the airfield. Phuc Yen continued to be the principal tactical base. It was likely that Haiphong/Cat Bai would be a permanent jet fighter base whereas the other fields were probably being improved for use as dispersal and recovery bases. ^{38/}

In early June, it was estimated that six to eight jet fighter regiments would be the maximum jet fighter strength (190-240 aircraft) and 250-300 jet light bombers the maximum bomber strength that could be deployed to NVN. Deployments of these numbers would be in the nature of emergency, short-term operations which could not be sustained for any length of time and would require Soviet or ChiCom support. Also, the NVN GCI capability would be saturated by the influx of a large number of aircraft and its air defense system degraded accordingly. ^{39/}

Phuc Yen would be most heavily used for both jet light bombers and fighters, with Gia Lam and Cat Bi used for lesser deployments of jet fighters. Vinh could serve as a staging base for a small contingent of aircraft and Kep Airfield, possibly, as a dispersal base. ^{40/}

North Vietnam's defensive capability continued to increase. The addition of seven confirmed and four probable MIG-21/FISHBED fighters to their aircraft inventory was noted at the end of the year. The basing of this mach 2.0 aircraft at Phuc Yen airfield presented a new threat to U.S. air operations in NVN. ^{41/}

North Vietnam's surface-to-air (SAM) missile capabilities continued to increase, with more missile sites and the movement of missiles from one position to another, making it difficult to determine which sites were operational at any given time. ^{42/}

7. VC Vulnerabilities

Although the enemy had great capabilities, he also had signifi-

cant vulnerabilities. He had to defend logistic base areas, and his long logistical LOC's were susceptible to interdiction. He was particularly vulnerable to air and artillery attack, sustained combat operations and aggressive pursuit. Additionally, he was dependent upon the support of the local population. ^{43/}

8. Enemy Reaction and Attitude

In June, both Peiping and Hanoi responded to the B-52 air strike with standard propaganda blasts aimed at the U.S., asserting that the bombing had failed and that the Vietnamese would continue fighting. ^{44/}

Up to the end of the year, the North Vietnamese leaders had shown no indication of giving up. On the contrary, they appeared determined to "hold on." ^{45/}

North Vietnamese Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap declared that U.S. attempts by air attacks, to "curb the determination" of the Vietnamese Communists to continue the war was "a crazy illusion." According to Giap's analysis, the defeat of U.S. air attacks on North Vietnam was "of paramount importance" but "the last and decisive factor in the outcome of the war will be the struggle in South Vietnam." ^{46/}

His emphasis, late in 1965, on the necessity of NVN preparations for a much larger role in the war contrasted sharply with his analysis of the situation, published in July 1964, when he stressed the need for self-reliance on the part of the "Liberation Forces" in the south to

win victory. ^{47/}

The obvious contradiction of attaching "paramount importance" to a "crazy illusion" possibly reflected an unwilling acceptance of a growing concern over air attacks. Giap's final emphasis on the war in the south, however, continued to indicate the determination of Hanoi to absorb the air attacks while keeping their goal of victory in South Vietnam clearly in sight. ^{48/}

9. Threat Assessment

CINCPACAF, toward the end of the year, felt that there was no doubt that the main threat the U.S. faced was Communist China. ^{49/} According to CINCPAC, the Chinese Communist Air Force during the year continued to increase its aircraft inventory and ground forces showed improvement in divisional type weapons. There were intelligence indications that SAM's were being deployed in southern China. Air Defense capability in that region showed significant improvement during the year, particularly in the immediate region of the North Vietnamese border. In May, the ChiComs detonated their second nuclear device and missile development programs continued at a regular pace, with the ChiCom goal of producing, by the end of the year, a 250 nautical mile range submarine missile. ^{50/}

CINCPAC pointed out that improved ChiCom Air capabilities on the south and southwest border of China had increased the threat in SEA, particularly to Thailand. He noted their sizeable jet fighter inventory

and the ChiCom capability to attack with combined ground and air forces, supported by anti-shiping and mining operations. He considered the possibility that obsolete fighters might be replaced by more modern ChiCom-produced or Soviet-supplied aircraft. Deployment of submarines on anti-shiping patrols, and mining operations in the South China Sea and in the Gulf of Siam, had aided in intensifying this threat capability. ^{51/}

10. The Future

The Director of PACAF Intelligence noted in November that, from May through September 1965, Hanoi voiced a hard political line on negotiation. He indicated that NVN wanted "resounding victories" before they sat down at the negotiation table. As late as early September they held to the rigid line of "no negotiation," with the first sign appearing in November that this policy might be changing. It then appeared that NVN did not rule out the participation of Saigon, did not require withdrawal of U.S. forces as a precondition to negotiation and did not rule out the possibility of private mediation by UN members. He stated that while the U.S. did not know Hanoi's exact bargaining price, it appeared that continued application of air power would cause negotiation sooner rather than later. ^{52/}

The 2d Air Division Commander also felt that continued bombing strikes would force Hanoi to consider some form of disengagement from the war. Speaking on the bombing campaign against North Vietnam, General Moore said: ^{53/}

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"...Although these pressures may not by themselves be decisive, added to the setbacks elsewhere and lack of forthright external military support from the communist world, in my opinion, continued selective bombing of militarily significant targets in North Vietnam should convince the Hanoi government to consider some form of disengagement..."

He felt that the bombing of military targets was beginning to have a telling effect.

PACAF indicated, toward the end of the year, that it was not known what the Chinese would do if North Vietnam decided to seek a negotiated settlement. However, from their harsh, militant and uncompromising tone, Peiping apparently would rather fight than switch to the Soviet "peaceful coexistence" policy. He stated that "the Chinese are aware that the U.S. could destroy with air power all that they have labored so hard over the last 15 years to build - their nuclear facilities, missile research facilities and heavy industry. They are trying very hard to decide what the U.S. would do if the Chinese moved forces into Southeast Asia. If they believe they could get away with it, without endangering their homeland, they might take the step. If, however, they are convinced the war would be expanded into China, the odds are they would refrain from overt intervention."^{54/}

He felt that the Soviet support effort in North Vietnam would probably continue. He thought they would deliver more aid and equipment, with little fanfare, to make USAF air operations as expensive as possible and to get as much equipment into the country as possible

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before a negotiated settlement. It was unlikely the Russians would take any greater risk than that being taken in Vietnam. He saw the Russians as being concerned about Chinese ambitions in Southeast Asia and concluded that, should the Chinese overtly intervene with large scale forces, the Soviets would possibly try to disengage. ^{55/}

PACAF noted, however, that while the Soviets were pursuing their program of restrained participation in Southeast Asia they were maintaining, within their own boundaries, a formidable threat against the PACOM area and that this, in conjunction with the immense CHICOM military force, required us to be mindful of the total threat extant throughout the PACAF theater. ^{56/}

As a result of U.S. expansion of air efforts over North Vietnam, several significant developments occurred during the year indicating a continued expansion of the communist threat in Southeast Asia. To counter U.S. air efforts, a major percentage of the Chinese Communist high performance fighter inventory moved into South China. Additionally, five new airfields were being added which would give them a dozen good airfields, close to Vietnam, to be used for future deployments and to increase their flexibility. Radar and AAA also increased as a result of air operations against North Vietnam. ^{57/}

The Ambassador in Saigon thought the enemy would continue his course of action, at least through the first few months of 1966. He believed the VC were forming new main-force units within the RVN and

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would infiltrate additional units, perhaps the equivalent of one or two divisions from the north. By doing so, the communists apparently hoped to restore a strategic balance of forces, in order to regain the initiative, through a combination of large-scale attacks and widespread guerrilla action. The communists' purpose would probably be to expand their base areas and inflict maximum attrition on Vietnamese morale with a view toward creating a condition conducive to collapsing the RVN. He did not expect Hanoi to direct the reversion to purely guerrilla warfare or to seek a negotiated settlement until they were convinced their current course would not succeed. He felt that, if the VC/NVA forces were allowed to regain the initiative and momentum on the battlefield, which they had enjoyed earlier in 1965, it might result in increasing RVN instability --- a condition which could prove decisive in the war. 58/

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CHAPTER IV

AUGMENTATION OF AIR EFFORT IN 1965

1. Introduction

Despite massive U.S. military assistance to the RVNAF, in both advisory and direct support roles, assessment of progress toward the attainment of a secure and viable South Vietnam was extremely discouraging at the beginning of 1965. ^{1/} The Viet Cong were gaining at an increasing rate, whereas government influence appeared to be ineffectual and in comparable decline. Despite the introduction of more modern weapons and techniques into the VNAF and the Vietnamese army, efforts to recapture the initiative by the Vietnamese forces had been unsuccessful. Aggressive leadership and timely initiative were lacking as senior military officers were diverting their attention from the task of winning the war to that of fighting the battle of politics in Saigon. The troops and junior officers were bewildered and frustrated and the people were distracted from supporting the war by socio-economic turmoil and religious squabbings - thus compounding military apathy and the feeling of hopelessness.

This juncture of sad events, marring the hopes of a quick victory, clearly pointed to the need for U.S. initiative to save the country through unilateral participation in the war. The result was that the use of air power was drastically augmented and the air war in Vietnam, in 1965, was dramatically expanded to include overt U.S. and VNAF attacks on North

Vietnam targets, stepped up interdiction of the Laotian infiltration network and the employment of hundreds of jet aircraft, including B-52's and carrier-based planes, against Viet Cong targets in South Vietnam. By the end of the year, the complexity, tempo, and scope of the war expanded tremendously and U.S. air power was challenging the enemy to action in areas where ground forces could not be employed or could not penetrate. U.S. forces were also bolstered by 160,937 to a total of 184,314 in Vietnam and by 8,859 to a total of 13,142 in Thailand. Seven nations became involved in token combat support and 23 other countries provided assistance of varying degrees. ^{2/} The Viet Cong were losing population control; their areas of rest and sanctuary were being reduced and Viet Cong morale was being lowered as a result of increasing casualties due to the intensified U.S. air strikes. The year ended with the trend favoring U.S. tactics and strategy. CINCPACAF highlighted this trend: ^{3/}

"By way of history,we have had a lot of changes in the Pacific Air Forces.... We have gone through rather dynamic change in Southeast Asia; ...the 2d Air Division has grown rapidly into one of the largest divisions in the United States Air Force, comparable in size and in responsibility to a numbered Air Force... We have had a release for jet operations in Southeast Asia. The go ahead after the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August of 1964 failed to materialize until about... February. The results of these early strikes north and in-country brought new dimension to our commitment. By June, the decision was made to introduce major Army and Marine elements, as well as additional Air Force combat units. ...We are beginning to see tangible results in the U.S. Air Force operations in Southeast Asia. The full impact is yet to be measured..."

By the beginning of 1966, it appeared the desired military stale-

mate had been achieved and that the U.S. was now ready to enter into a new phase of the war.

2. Need for Increased Air Action

January 1965 saw the security situation in South Vietnam worsening and the VC confident of victory. Successful attacks against U.S. personnel and equipment were made by the Viet Cong and ARVN control, in all but the IV Corps Zones, had seriously deteriorated. ^{4/} The pacification program faltered and the VC were able to maintain safe havens in which they could equip or reequip their forces with such weapons as 75mm pack howitzers.

A major portion of the RVN ground forces were engaged in defense of pacified areas and important installations. This left insufficient forces to counter the main VC elements or attack his base areas. The scale of RVN ground efforts were insufficient to sustain around-the-clock, small unit, offensive operations and patrolling, which were considered essential to harass the insurgents, disrupt their movements and foil their attacks.

Large-scale ground offensive operations, up to that time, had proven ineffective, since they provided the VC with considerable advance warning, lasted only a short time, and failed to establish permanent control over the operational areas. One overriding consideration and concern was that the VC had little interference in his night operations. In all, they felt they were winning the war.

A study of the status of the RVNAF and the tasks attendant upon US/VNAF air strike against the RVN was completed early in January. ^{5/}
The study envisioned a three-phase operation involving preparatory deployments, the conduct of massive air strikes against military and industrial targets in NVN and, if required, the introduction of additional U.S. ground forces to assist in the defense of the RVN.

The conclusions of the study, approved by COMUSMACV on 9 January, were that the RVNAF, alone, would be incapable of successfully opposing a large-scale NVN or NVN/Chicom ground attack and that any relocation of RVNAF units for defense against overt aggression would detract from the pacification effort. ^{6/}

On 13 January 1965, COMUSMACV expressed a particular interest in the question of whether or not increased air effort could be profitably used in Vietnam and directed preparation of a study in its determination. This study was to discuss the ability to locate and describe suitable targets, the impact of an increase in the air effort upon the war in RVN, and general problems bearing on this subject. ^{7/}

The month, therefore, concerned itself with how and where air resources could be profitably or decisively employed. Considerable thought was given to concentrated bombing against VC bases in stopping the expansion of the VC. Another focal point of interest was the need to increase the capability of air assets through acquiring qualitative capabilities. The basic areas of interest were: Faster response, in-

creased ordnance load, and ability to carry newer ordnance. It was felt that high speeds inherent in modern jet aircraft could provide the requisite response. It could also carry increases in ordnance and, finally, it could accommodate newer weapons, such as the CBU-2, which were needed against many of the targets requiring attack by air. Another item of considerable interest was the need to improve and provide additional air facilities to accommodate jet aircraft (i.e. longer runways). In this connection, base security was discussed. PACAF recognized it as a major question but considered it only one part of the overall problem in the RVN involving all key U.S. and RVN installations and facilities. This problem, it was believed, could be met by better security measures, possibly involving U.S. personnel acting in a defense capacity. Removal of Army aircraft from key Air Force installations would allow for better passive defense measures, such as dispersal and revetting.

Another item of discussion was who could do the better job (i.e. the carrier or land-based craft) of striking targets in the RVN. MACV recommended that U.S. Navy carrier-based aircraft be brought in. The 2d Air Division felt that it had F-100 and B-57 jets capable of doing the job and that it could draw on other USAF resources in PACOM, if required, for additional craft.

One disadvantage of naval carrier operations was considered - that these ships might not be sustained in positions near the areas of greatest need, due to vulnerability and the tactical situation in the South China Sea, plus frequent replenishing requirements. Also, and more im-

portant from the Air Force standpoint, was the proven effective Tactical Air Control System which the 2d Air Division had developed and shaped to a highly workable mechanism. This system allowed the best use of air resources, under controlled conditions, assuring a discriminate application of air power. The personnel operating this system were intimately familiar with the geographical peculiarities of the RVN and the entire spectrum of air/ground operations. In an area where friend and enemy were intermingled throughout, this expertise was essential. Heavy penalties could result from independents, uncoordinated and uncontrolled employment of air. The employment of B-52's for strikes against VC targets was also discussed. PACAF felt that a high-priority requirement was to expedite securing of additional jet-capable airfields in the RVN to allow for an increased basing of USAF air power in the theater. ^{8/}

3. Proposals for Improving the Situation

It was the contention of the Commander, 2d Air Division, that the military actions in South Vietnam were insufficient to improve the situation and that military operations conducted outside of RVN would have a most important bearing upon winning the war in South Vietnam. Strikes by air in Laos and NVN were intermittent and their frequency of occurrence was undoubtedly predictable by PL/NVN. He recommended that U.S. air should conduct a continuous, unrelenting campaign against targets in Laos/NVN, on fixed targets as well as routes and supply points used to resupply VC forces in RVN. He felt this campaign should be conducted daily (24 hours) and with small force increments (four to eight aircraft

per target). The small force packages could hit hard, fast, and run, which would minimize USAF losses, while providing a psychological effect by reinforcing the belief, on the part of PL/NVN, that there was no safe haven or time for resupplying the VC in the RVN. To accomplish this improvement in the situation, he recommended the following: ^{9/}

"Blanket authority for use of Thailand bases for Laos, NVN and SVN strikes to allow maximum effective employment of forces.

"Authority for the Commander 2d Air Division, to determine size and composition of employment force required for a given target. This would be dependent upon broad guidance provided by the JCS as to the degree of destruction desired.

"Removal of weapons restrictions to permit use of most effective munitions for a given target, i.e. napalm.

"Conduct with the frequency required, armed reconnaissance of Laotian supply routes. Flexibility must be provided to exploit to the maximum, results of previous air strikes (i.e., choke points, etc.) without imposing the time restrictions presently in existence. Latitude should be provided to permit aircraft exerting reconnaissance, to strike moving convoys as they are detected.

"The composition of forces employed on night Barrel Roll missions should be vested with the Commander, 2d Air Division, in order to maximize tactical effectiveness. For example, it might be more advantageous to provide two flareships, at distance intervals, each operating in conjunction with two fighters, rather than to dictate a strike force of four fighters operating with a single flareship.

"Greater flexibility in the employment of reconnaissance aircraft in North Vietnam is essential, not only to provide the necessary photographic coverage, but also to give cause for alarm and concern on the part of military forces in DRV.

"With the increased frequency of strike and reconnaissance operations proposed in the DRV, action must be taken to neutralize the counter air capability existing in the Tonkin Delta area. Targets to be struck requiring a high priority, therefore, should include the ground environment in the form of controlling radar, as well as air bases at which MIG fighters are known to be employed, or from which they could be employed."

He felt these actions were required to place maximum pressure against NVN support of VC forces in South Vietnam so as to aid in winning the war in South Vietnam. Further, the in-country and out-country operations should be considered as a single package; it was essential to the winning of the war that the US consider this area in its entirety in the prosecution of the war. To improve the situation it was deemed necessary to interdict the LOC's within North Vietnam and to systematically destroy the supply depots feeding the insurgency.

The 2d Air Division had the resources to affect initiation of such action. A powerful potential existed within the 2d Air Division in the form of in-country based jets which had not been committed in combat against the VC. Other aircraft were available in the PACOM area which could be brought into Vietnam. One such, was the B-52, with a capacity of 50 750-pound bombs, whose strikes could severely harass the VC in his more secure areas. Zone C and D were pointed out, specifically, as areas where such employment would be effective. ^{10/} The United States Air Force had the means at its disposal to project such attacks and provide close air support, quickly and simultaneously, to all parts of the

country, to effect continuous harassment and surveillance. At the same time, it had the required forces to engage the enemy in his vital areas out-of-country.

The decision was made, therefore, that immediate augmentation of U.S. air resources and their overt employment in the RVN and NVN was urgently required to gain military superiority and to deter the VC shifting into Phase III (sustained combat) operations, which they appeared able to do as a result of growing military strength, increased fire power and a substantial increase in anti-aircraft capability. The VNAF alone could not be employed decisively against VC bases and critical areas since it was limited both in experience and resources.

It was within this framework that the dimension of air operations expanded and which resulted in preventing the VC from winning the war in 1965.

4. Air Power Expansion (February)

Although a "policy" framework was emerging at the end of January, which called for a new look at the deterrence potential and the strike capabilities of expanded air resources to stop the insurgency, the actual effects of air power remained limited by unrealistic restrictions and by a lack of appreciation, in MACV and the ARVN echelons, of the tremendous potential of air power when efficiently employed. ^{11/} Consultations were still in progress as to who would do what in the way of supplying air power. The types of aircraft best suited to satisfy this

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new requirement were still under review and the manner, areas of attack and optimum weaponry required to do this new job were the subject of considerable inter-service discussion. Jets, up to this time, had not been employed for in-country strikes by the U.S. Out-of-country air activity was limited and strikes were being carried out under conditions of political constraint and strike limitations. The Commander, 2AD, succinctly crystallized the air posture at this time: ^{12/}

"2d Air Division.... Out-of-country operations consisted principally of reconnaissance missions in Laos and escort Elint mission in the Gulf of Tonkin. These operations were... quite simple, and in the case of the reconnaissance missions in Laos subject to tight control allowing for little operational flexibility.

"The spectrum of out-of-country tactical operations now includes armed day and night road reconnaissance in Laos, the possible provision of air strikes in support of Laotian ground forces, and coordinated strikes of sizeable forces against fixed installations in North Vietnam.

"Strikes against targets in North Vietnam are emerging in a pattern with the Navy, the Air Force and VNAF simultaneously, or the Navy and VNAF striking at the same time with USAF providing flak suppression and MIGCAP for the VNAF.

"The availability of timely intelligence is becoming increasingly critical to strike operations in both Laos and North Vietnam, and probably more so in Laos because of the fleeting nature of targets and the enemy's practice of constantly moving and shifting its AAA.

"...The operational complexity of these strikes, plus the short life span of pertinent intelligence makes it mandatory that the tactical commander be given maximum responsibility and

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authority for the conduct of strikes....

"...Generally, the major restrictions imposed on the use of this force are: (1) Political restraints (Geneva Accords) prohibits the full use of jets for combat strikes in the Republic of Vietnam. (2) The Thailand Government will not permit use of Thailand based aircraft for strikes in Laos or South Vietnam. However, it will permit use of such aircraft for strikes against North Vietnam.

"In summarizing the air capability in Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese Air Force has an in-being capable air force, but cannot meet all demands of the in-country war. Strikes into North Vietnam, such as those conducted on the 8th and 11th of February, further detracts from the combat sorties needed to meet the demands of the counter-insurgency effort. The Air Commando Squadrons with their A-1E's contribute approximately one-third of present combat sorties flown in-country; however, adding these to the VNAF strike capability still fails to meet the total demands. Present jet forces in-country, if unleashed and augmented with sufficient forward air control aircraft, would meet present strike requirements and those within the foreseeable future... We have obtained authority to use USAF jets in South Vietnam under emergency conditions; however, the control, at this time, is extremely tight."

5. Fixed-Wing Aircraft and Ground Support

The need for change was clearly illustrated by the Battle of Binh Gia, a fight ending in defeat to the friendly forces. This was partially due to failure to adequately employ fixed-wing air resources. ^{13/} The failure emphasized the need for increased and uninhibited employment of fixed-wing air power for both close support and area target attack to deter the enemy's advances and change the tide of battle. The fact that

fixed-wing aircraft were not called for, even when rotary craft were proving ineffective at the critical juncture of the battle, had a tremendous impact on the future employment of both types of aircraft in close support. As a result of this battle, appreciation of both type craft toward ground support activity became a matter of record. The Commander, 2d Air Division, saw the need for the right type of aircraft, in the right place, to accomplish the day-by-day phase of the COIN warfare: ^{14/}

"The old battle over the dominance of fixed-wing over rotary-wing combat aircraft and vice versa has almost died out. This is predominantly due to the fact each type of aircraft has found its place in the operations and one could not do the job of the other in the overall war effort. Without the helicopter, the ARVN in many cases, could not move in the type of terrain and under the type of combat conditions that exist. Although the armed helicopter is being employed offensively in the war, any helicopter pilot will admit that when the going gets rough he wants all the fixed wing support with the heavy ordnance loads that can be made available. One thing that must not be overlooked, the Viet Cong is growing bigger and more potent and, at times, has temporarily cast aside its guerrilla tactics and fought like a conventional force. Under these conditions the Viet Cong become a lucrative air target and he has suffered several significant defeats and losses in the past two months under the attack of the fighter aircraft."

COMUSMACV, after the battle was over, called for a study of the lessons learned during Binh Gia and from this study came firm recommendations for greater use of fixed-wing air power in the future. ^{15/}

6. Flaming Dart

The Viet Cong attack on two military compounds, near Pleiku on

7 February, provided the genesis for overt participation of U.S. air power in the war. On that day, the pretext of a purely Vietnamese operation was dropped when U.S. aircraft overtly entered North Vietnam on retaliatory reprisal strikes against the Dong Hoi Barracks. Action that day started at 2 a.m. when the Viet Cong attacked with mortars, recoilless rifles and rifle grenades. Their attack on the Pleiku airstrip was successful; five aircraft were destroyed and 15 others damaged. These attacks lasted 15 minutes, during which time eight Americans were killed and 109 wounded.

The attacks gave impetus to FLAMING DART I, a code name for the reprisal strikes conducted on the 7th and 8th of February against targets in North Vietnam.

Several significant recommendations and changes were made in air operations as a result of this mission. Approval was received by the 2d Air Division to change the Air Commando A-1E markings to U.S. insignia, thus shedding the cover of air advisors. ^{16/} It also led to the authorization for U.S. aircraft to participate, overtly and on a continuing basis, with the VNAF against Viet Cong targets in SVN. ^{17/} It permitted the VNAF to gain an enormous psychological victory through the conduct of its first air strike in North Vietnam. ^{18/} It paved the way for consideration of removal of certain restrictions, primarily in the area of target designation and air-ground coordination. It brought about the feeling and firm premise that the application of increased U.S. air effort should

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be through pure U.S. procedures, independent of the vagaries of the VNAF system and inherent personal experience limitations and personality traits. It opened up the question of how additional air power should be applied and where it would come from since carrier-based aircraft, 2d Air Division resources, and VNAF A-1H's were brought into action during this mission. It also opened the door for serious and immediate consideration of the problem of air base security and the availability of base support for jet deployment. It was becoming clearly evident that a tremendous build-up of forces and an expansion of 2d Air Division resources would be required, with concurrent development of combat support functions and facilities, to continue the extension of the air war into North Vietnam and to give greater air support to beleaguered ground forces. It brought up the urgent need for a study regarding relaxation of the rules of engagement which would accommodate the new phase of the war entered into by the FLAMING DART mission. This had to be balanced with the evident need for increased tactical air support of the counter-insurgency operations in South Vietnam to check the apparently increased course of aggression of Hanoi, as witnessed by the success and boldness of the attacks at Pleiku. The FLAMING DART strikes led to the proposal for fighter escorted photographic reconnaissance missions in the southern portion of North Vietnam. ^{19/} It also led to CINCPAC's suggestion to include direct support of friendly air and ground operations in the tasking of U.S. air operations in Laos. One of the main considerations emanating from this mission was that maximum USAF control of air power

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was essential to the augmentation and was in consonance with established rules. ^{20/}

FLAMING DART II was flown on 11 February, prompted not only by the need to retaliate for the Viet Cong bombings of the Qui Nhon BEQ, but also to improve the serious situation developing along the I and II Corps border with the Viet Cong threat of splitting SVN in half. This required increased force readiness and a series of actions designed to improve the U.S. military position in Vietnam. ^{21/} These actions paved the way for the ROLLING THUNDER program, which began in the following months. ^{22/}

Shortly after FLAMING DART II, the Commander, 2d Air Division, informed PACAF that he felt it was only a matter of time before the NVN would probably attempt to attack FLAMING DART, YANKEE TEAM, or BARREL ROLL aircraft. ^{23/} He pointed out that it was of the utmost importance to be prepared, in that event, to retaliate immediately with an overwhelming blow at MIG bases. CINCPACAF supported 2d Air Division's thinking and presented the situation as one in which facilities and forces in South Vietnam were subject to serious attacks and provocations. In such a case, the U.S. might decide to retaliate by undertaking punitive and crippling air strikes against preselected targets in North Vietnam. He informed PACAF that, as directed, he would conduct air strikes in coordination with other forces against selected NVN targets for the purpose of retaliation. ^{24/} The real objective of these attacks would be to achieve maximum feasible damage levels to impress Hanoi

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and Mao Tse Tung that such provocations would bring a prompt and powerful destructive response by U.S. air power.

The American Ambassador to Vietnam, and the JCS, approved the use of jets in-country on 13 February. These would be used only when U.S. lives were at stake, or in spoiling attacks by masses of Viet Cong, as was the case at Binh Dinh. ^{25/}

The planned use of jets immediately raised the question of getting enough O-1F aircraft to direct the fighters into attacks. There were not enough available from the resources of the 19th TASS at Bien Hoa. Accordingly, the 2d Air Division agreed to use Army HU-1B helicopters to carry the observers. At Da Nang the F-100 pilots were teamed with the O-1F and Huey pilots to test their support of jet operations and were satisfied they could do so.

The sudden pressure on the 2d Air Division, brought on by the commitment to retaliatory strikes against North Vietnam and the need to shift forces to cope with an increased Viet Cong offensive in the northern area, placed a heavy strain on resources.

With the major switch of emphases to air, which was taking place at top-levels in Saigon in mid-February, there was the danger which General Moore pointed out of placing too much reliance on air strikes. He said that air was not a substitute for ground action and that the two had to work in harmony.

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On 16 February, MACV got JCS approval to conduct a jet strike against an enemy target in Phuoc Tuy Province, where the Viet Cong had at least a regiment and where they had launched the end of the year attack against Binh Gia, with heavy government losses. This was a one-time approval for a single strike. The target was considered a good one, with about 15 individual targets located within the general area authorized for the strike. The 2d Air Division was pushing for ground exploitation of the strike and the U.S. Ambassador also wanted a ground follow-up to this first jet effort. The strike was to be carried out by B-57's (stationed at Bien Hoa) under stringent conditions. Ordnance could be expended only on designated targets and, if this could not be done, the aircraft could either land with ordnance aboard or jettison in safe areas at sea. The ordnance could not be jettisoned in a free bomb zone in the RVN. Maximum exploitation by ground troops would be pushed by MACV, and the USAF would have adequate representation on the ground force team going in to evaluate the strikes. ^{27/}

The B-57's were first released for strikes on 19 February, when 24 B-57's of the 8th and 13th Bomb Squadrons at Bien Hoa dropped 750-, 500- and 260 pound fragmentation bombs on the designated target area in Phuoc Tuy Province. Results were obscured by the dense jungle and no evaluation of the strikes was made.

On another strike, on 21 February, 12 B-57's struck the same area with the same type ordnance. This time the only result which could be determined was the destruction of an enemy machine-gun position.

However, the Army Advisor at Xuyen Moc reported the entire area north-east of the city appeared saturated and, he added, if the strike accomplished nothing else, it raised the morale of ARVN troops tremendously. ^{28/}

On 22 - 23 February, 20 B-57's continued strikes on the same target area in Phuoc Tuy Province, but again no results were ascertained since the area was heavily forested and no ground effort followed the strikes. ^{29/}

On the morning of 24 February, 20 B-57's from Bien Hoa were employed in interdiction against the Viet Cong in Phuoc Tuy Province. These strikes produced two secondary explosions and the target area was reported, by the FAC, to be saturated. Four other B-57's made a strike against an interdiction target in a free strike area in Tay Ninh Province, with results undetermined. This was the first strike by jets in Zone "D".

During the early hours of 20 February, what appeared to be a newly-infiltrated Viet Cong battalion launched a series of ambushes and attacks which successively interdicted Route 19 and stopped an ARVN Ranger Battalion effort to open this route. These attacks occurred in the Mang Yang Pass area, guarding the western entrance to the An Khe Valley. The Viet Cong were slowly chopping up friendly units in piecemeal fashion as they had done in the same area, some 10 years earlier, against the French. There were an estimated five enemy battalions in Binh Dinh Province.

On the morning of 24 February, a Viet Cong battalion had set a

trap for a Ranger company and a CIDG company, which had come from different directions and had joined-up on Highway 19 at 1030 hours. The enemy attacked and quickly surrounded the Government troops. At II Corps Headquarters in Pleiku, the Corps Commander, Brig. Gen. Co, decided to send a ground force to their relief, but this was extremely risky and would probably play into enemy hands. With U.S. assistance, the decision was made to extricate the trapped units by air, with USAF jets providing the cover, while Army helicopters picked up the men.

The jets took off at 1445 hours and, within half an hour, were in action. The F-100's struck north of the road and covered an area one kilometer north and 10 kilometers east and west of the trapped units. The B-57's flew a race-track pattern in a similar area south of the road. The Jets blasted the area with 500-pound bombs and 20mm cannon fire, while 22 HU-1D's and 14 armed Hueys extracted the 221 trapped personnel, all without casualties or loss of a single helicopter. In an hour from the beginning of the operation, the men were safe. Some weeks later, a U.S. Army FAC reported the B-57's had made direct hits on some ^{30/} 100 two-man foxholes, killing an estimated 150 Viet Cong.

On 25 February, there were 40 jet combat sorties flown, the one-day operation equalling approximately half the total sortie rate at the beginning of the year. ^{31/} This was an indication of the upcoming escalation of U.S. air activity in SEA.

7. Effectiveness of Air Operations and Control

It was only natural that the question of effectiveness and losses would arise as a result of FLAMING DART and other programs which followed. Keen interest was evidenced (since 1965 was a year in which new techniques, craft, ordnance and tactics were battle-tested for the first time) in what could or could not be accomplished in the furtherance of U.S. objectives in SEA. The expanded program had immediate response in the area of effectiveness analysis. ^{32/} This study of effectiveness also presented problems. Proposed targets, such as Phuoc Tuy, were not considered by the Air Force to be particularly choice. The criteria for target selection and strike effectiveness were, in some instances, not correlated.

It was expected that losses would be generated by the expansion of U.S. air activity. Any loss was of concern and the subject of analysis by the USAF in order to improve operational efficiency and enhance success of future missions. Studies were conducted in minute detail to determine the reasons for any loss or ineffectiveness of strike or mission. It was of paramount importance to know the answers as the Air Force was entering this phase with an array of new and highly sophisticated ordnance and equipment. The relative survivability of new aircraft, such as the F-105, under actual combat conditions was an unknown which could be resolved only after study of actual engagement. Some analytical factors were man-made and it was found that certain rules of engagement were, in part, responsible for some losses. For example, one rule precluded attacks against the enemy until the aircraft had been fired upon. Con-

straints on the conduct of low-level reconnaissance gave rise to other losses, since many missions flown did not have the advantage of immediate intelligence of enemy defenses. ^{33/} In certain other cases, traffic density degraded effectiveness; in other cases munitions did not approach the damage criteria desired. ^{34/} Low-level penetrations were vulnerable to attack by automatic weapons and considerable losses were sustained in attacking AA positions. ^{35/} Since AA weapons could easily be removed and hidden it was felt that the idea of hitting AA positions solely for the sake of knocking out such positions should be examined.

Intelligence was, in some instances, too qualitatively and quantitatively deficient to justify such attacks. There was a need for low-level reconnaissance missions, particularly if NVN and Laos requirements were to continue into the year. ^{36/} While PACAF believed (in mid-March) that low-altitude reconnaissance flights were best for getting detailed coverage necessary to increase effectiveness and reduce losses, it did not press for carte blanche authority. It believed that overall authority would be obtained when "higher authority" was convinced of the clear-cut advantages of such flights. ^{37/} It was found that losses increased when pilots made more than one pass at a target. Study of the factors involved were difficult to evaluate since comparisons were not completely valid in all cases, due to circumstances regarding types of targets attacked, enemy defenses, weather, visibility, and the limitations placed on the striking force. The following analysis of the FLAMING DART program, early in the year, gives some indication of the effectiveness

and problems engendered by the expansion of the air war:

"There was a lack of sufficient or timely information concerning the results of the strikes. This stems from obscuration of target areas by smoke, dust, weather, low ceiling and darkness, all of which hampered immediate post-strike BDA photography. More important, 24 to 48 hour post-strike reconnaissance was not authorized.

"A number of limitations were imposed on the commander in the conduct of these strikes. These included the number of aircraft to be used, day-to-day changes in targets to be struck, urgency in getting a strike off (which may have forced commanders to use what was available and uploaded) and denial of the latitude to tailor available forces and ordnance (including incendiary) to achieve maximum damage.

"No low-level tactical reconnaissance program existed for North Vietnam prior to FLAMING DART. Photography available for targeting had been acquired by the U-2 and other strategic reconnaissance programs and, therefore, was not suitable for detailed operational planning which would result in optimum tactics and weapon delivery effectiveness. It is estimated that FLAMING DART reprisal air strikes had a slight effect on the overall DRV military capability. This assessment is based on an evaluation of the significance of the targets and the low-level of damage results; personnel losses are undetermined but are considered negligible ... the damage/destruction results ... were minimal for a relatively large expenditure of effort ... In future operations of this nature, commanders should be given more operational flexibility and latitude in the selection of ordnance and the composition of air strike forces."

The Air Force wanted to analyze its experience to determine factors contributing to enhancement of future planning for employment of air power in any broadened sphere of engagement. It also wished to determine, through the lessons learned, the effectiveness of tactical air

power in the unique environment of Southeast Asia. ^{39/}

Considerable attention was given to the effectiveness of tactical air power during the early period of the year. In March, 2d Air Division commented on tactical effectiveness and the need to improve operating conditions, so as to increase effectiveness. ^{40/} They pointed out that, in general, a tactical commander could not exercise required flexibility of decision and carry out actions essential to successful execution of the assigned mission. YANKEE TEAM, BARREL ROLL and ROLLING THUNDER were missions in which both planning and execution were specifically tightly controlled by higher echelon, with compliance being the concern of the tactical commander, especially as these tight controls impinged on effectiveness and losses. Fluidity of combat situations, fleeting nature of targets and fast-breaking intelligence provided in SEA supported the need for tactical flexibility, within compressed time spans, to gain effectiveness and reduce losses. To increase effectiveness, 2d Air Division believed that broad guidance should be provided for country mission objectives of air power, plus specific prohibitions on targets and target areas. The 2d Air Division felt that, with these factors, JCS target studies, and with his knowledge of weaponeering and an understanding of the peculiarities of each area, augmented with last-minute intelligence, he could plan the strike force level, support (Flak/Cap) rescap and SAR with detail not available to higher headquarters. A point was made on the need for the tactical commander to review the choice of equipment to do the job most effectively. He commented that weapons delivered on target are arbitrarily limited by the total number

of airframes over the target, whereas considering airframes only, the tactical commander, in thinking of the F-100 as compared to the F-105 for bomb delivery, would normally favor the F-105, with a similar CEP. Another example was when the B-57, with its load-carrying capability, entered the tactical commander's thinking. There were certain times when he might eliminate the B-57 because effective tactics and defenses would indicate the necessity for the higher speeds of the F-100 or F-105 in delivering on the target. Considerable losses were sustained through re-attack of targets by the same craft. The Commander, 2AD, commented on this and pointed out that tactical pilots might have been going too far in pressing their attacks in the past. He added he could not generalize, but it was probable that, in some cases, this could be traced to lack of combat experience, which would influence the pilot's unwise decision to return to the target. Second Air Division noted that, as pilots gain experience, they will be more able to determine the desirability of multiple passes. He noted this practice had been discouraged and that, for a normally defended target, a one-pass-and-go procedure was expected. In conclusion, 2d Air Division presented the following ^{41/} considerations to improve effectiveness and reduce losses:

"1. Tactical missions have been conducted in consonance with established concepts of tactical air power except as modified by restraints or by flight commander's decision to make another pass or to use tactics dictated by terrain or by his judgment. Removal of artificial restraints and gaining of combat experience should obviate these doctrinal violations.

"2. Operational restrictions which have affected 2d Air

Division are noted in the premise and are generally related to the establishment at high level of fixed numbers of airframes to perform the mission apparently without considering results desired or, possibly, tactical survivability. Examples of these are the original restraints on Mu Gia choke-point strike planning which held the 2d Air Division to eight strike aircraft with no flak suppression in the face of heavy flak defenses. Mu Gia Pass restrictions were removed after considerable objection from 2AD and statement of rationale used on basis of immediate intelligence then available to 2nd Air Division. Had the strike been ordered prior to removal of the restriction, force survival would have been doubtful.

"3. Second Air Division will continue to forward out rationale when it disagrees with weapon planning.

"4. Second Air Division follows classic tactical air command tactics and has found them to be valid with few exceptions. Modes of attack are decided upon only after careful target study. Second Air Division believes that losses are the product of anti-aircraft defenses vs the number of passes, i.e., the heavier the defense the less prudent multiple passes become. This can be determined in large part prior to attack but in final analysis, the flight commander on the spot must make the judgement that will prevail. In most heavily defended areas, multiple passes are avoided at all costs. In lightly defended areas or areas of no defense to the target, destruction can be guaranteed as on Barrel Roll 19 when there were no anti-aircraft defenses and the experienced flight leader felt it justified to continue strafing. He made a total of five passes and the target was entirely destroyed. From this it can be seen that experience is quite important and that the problem of frequent rotations of responsible combat leaders should be carefully studied.

"5. Second Air Division does not believe that special strikes should be made against anti-aircraft positions as primary targets because of known Pathet Lao and Viet Minh pattern of manning and abandoning anti-aircraft positions on an unpredictable, random basis. Balance of flak suppression strike sorties

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1965 MONTHLY AIRCRAFT LOSSES TO COMBAT

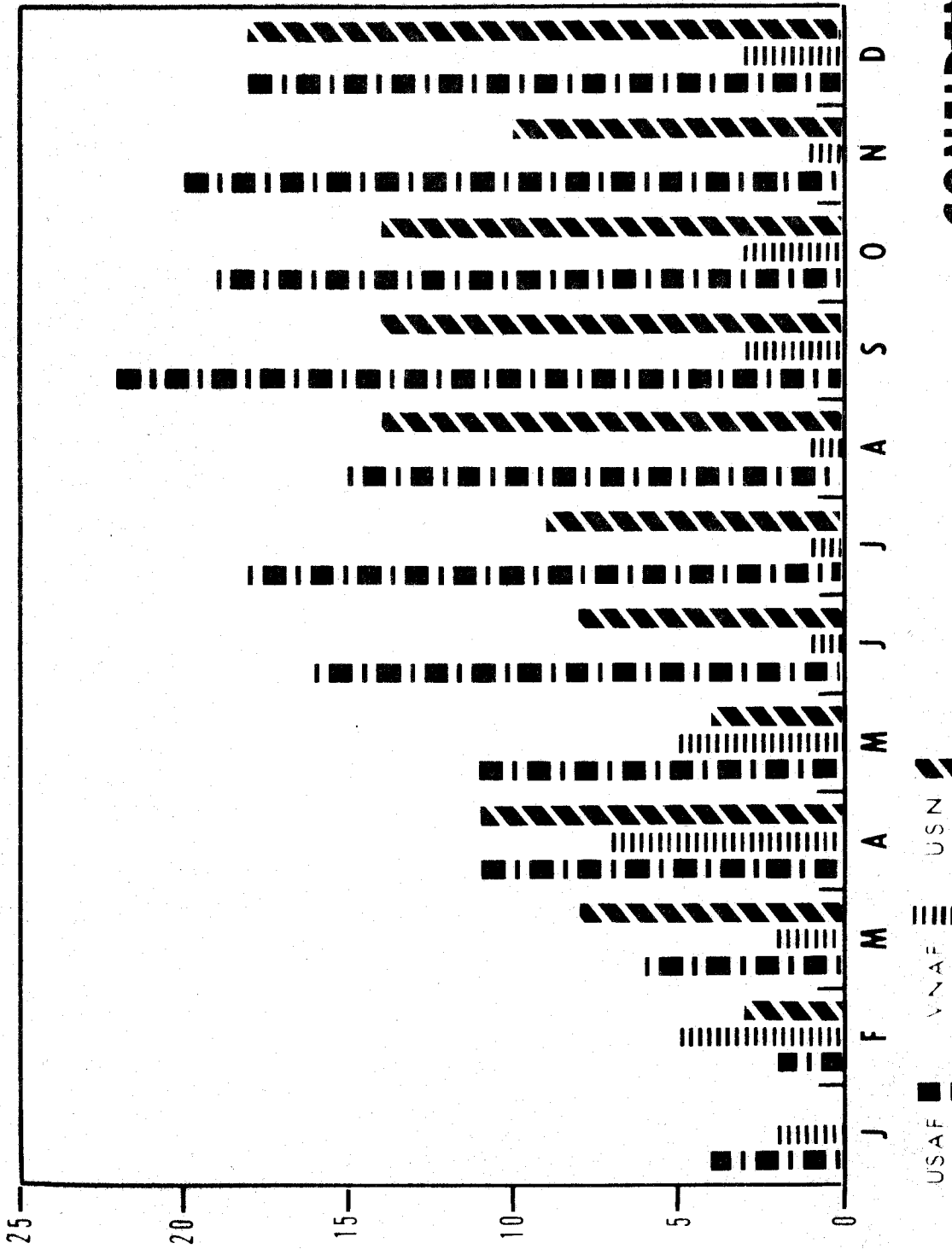


FIGURE 6

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is determined by most recent intelligence which is rarely over two or three days old, and some is more recent. Second Air Division is not permitted reconnaissance sorties on a random basis so that it can be provided with the most up to date possible tactical photography with which to reinforce Second Air Division intelligence.

"6. Pre-strike reconnaissance is highly desirable and has been employed on occasion in Laos but each mission comes under Yankee Team rules, and required approval at high level with subsequent delays. This photography was found to run on a random basis so that a pattern of reconnaissance versus strike could not be predicted. This would be an ideal supplement to Road Watch, Fresh Breeze and other reliable intelligence available.

"7. Empirical evaluation of all non-tactical weapon effects against enemy targets were not possible as of early March 1965. BDA photography gives reasonably accurate assessment of bombs and rockets on fixed military installations but effects of CBU in Laos and DRV were not known with assurance.

"8. Napalm is highly effective against selected targets and would be most desirable for both anti-aircraft suppression and targets destruction where target analysis would indicate the desirability of its use.

"9. Second Air Division as of March does not have machine run data or sufficiently detailed documentation to provide an analysis in desired depth. Capability in this regard is expected in the near future."

CINCPACAF supported the requirement for increased effectiveness and noted, on 25 March, that a shift to a more effective footing for the prosecution of the war in South Vietnam was necessary. He felt there was still much room for improved operational effectiveness and that U.S. political authorities in SEA should be taken out of the de jure

42/
military chain of command. To obtain the best results, the air commander in SEA should be provided with broad military objectives and relative priorities but was being inhibited through the dictation of specific targets, timing force composition and selection of weapons. Such hindrances tended to develop unnatural military boundaries and sanctuaries. For optimum results, the commander needed to have the authority and information at his disposal to determine the degree of destruction desired for each target, using the entire spectrum of availability from harassment to total destruction. He should be authorized to employ the most effective weapons associated with the nature and degree of destruction desired. 43/

In this connection, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that the development of good operational data on the effects of US jets in-country would require more experience than had been accumulated. He felt that information provided by pilots and FAC's was not sufficiently extensive to provide the data required, since the information given by them was, primarily, nothing more than observation of bombing results. 44/

With reference to the control of reconnaissance operations, CINCPAC felt this should include the selection of reconnaissance objectives, determination of the types of coverage required such as oblique, vertical, low altitude, etc, and the scheduling of route and time of flight. As to strategic reconnaissance objectives, he felt the time period for coverage and the reporting instructions should be established at PACOM or major component level. He pointed out that overall effectiveness

had been reduced and that intelligence support of operations had been curtailed through higher echelon control. The theater commander should establish priorities in accordance with his immediate needs and, for this reason, restrictions imposed by DIA priorities should be relaxed. He also felt that increased man-hours could be devoted to problems at hand if the details involved in operations reporting could be decreased and the workload generated by extensive and comprehensive DIA surveys reduced. ^{45/}

8. Accelerating of Air Operations (March)

The alarming situation in March accelerated the developing US policy of direct support and involvement in the war in SEA. It was evident that the resiliency of the SVN forces had all but disappeared; the RVN was in retrogression; and there was lack of focus on a rallying point. Political turbulence and irresponsibility continued to concern the U.S. The picture pointed to SVN battalion-sized defeats, a series of which the U.S. could not afford. The answer was that the U.S. would have to support SVN through the commitment of major forces to action against the insurgency and, if that could not stem the tide, unilateral U.S. action might be the next step to prevent the loss of SVN to the VC. To reverse the adverse trend was the thinking in March.

The increased tempo of air operations, generated by the early March decisions to improve the situation, was best described by the Commander, ^{46/} 2d Air Division, as a "whirlwind of change."

On 10 March, operation of U.S. aircraft under COMUSMACV operational control was authorized by CINCPAC for operational use in the conflict against the insurgency. The authorization contained a proviso that no Thai-based strike aircraft would be permitted to engage in these operations in South Vietnam. CINCPAC also provided that USAF craft would not be permitted to execute a mission in any instance where the VNAF could do the job on a timely basis. ^{47/}

On 17 March, the 2d Air Division recommended that the JCS requirement for a VNAF pilot/observer aboard the A-1E Farmgate aircraft be revoked. He stated this removal would permit overt use of USAF in-country strike aircraft against targets in SVN. CINCPAC, subsequently, authorized the U.S. Air Commando Squadron (Farmgate aircraft) to have permanent USAF insignia markings and allowed these craft to operate in RVN or elsewhere without VNAF observers aboard. This approval allowed for greater operational flexibility for the 2d Air Division during the months to come.

CINCPAC approvals, therefore, paved the way for full-scale jet operations both in and out country. Intelligence, at that time, indicated the Viet Cong were building up forces in preparation for a monsoon offensive. ^{48/} This meant that plans for deployments would have to take cognizance of existing, immediate requirements and future contingencies as well. Preparations for deployments also had to consider available bases and support facilities, the existing logistical system, and the requirements for base security and air defense. These are dis-

cussed separately.

The FLAMING DART mission and the 19 February authorization to use U.S. jet aircraft for strike operations in South Vietnam was followed by significant changes which resulted in the U.S. building of military forces in SEA during the remainder of the year. On 5 - 12 March, the Chairman of the JCS, General Wheeler, visited Vietnam to discuss operational effectiveness and requirements. ^{49/} By 15 March, his recommendations were finalized and were being reviewed at the highest levels in Washington. A recommendation that three additional Army helicopter companies be deployed to Vietnam was approved, and the units were scheduled to Vietnam within 30 days. Also recommended was the deployment of additional O-1 aircraft to provide a saturation surveillance capability for improving intelligence, a requirement determined by the analysis of effectiveness of operations and combat losses. A total of 186 aircraft were authorized, including three O-1F squadrons, of 30 aircraft each, for the USAF. Scheduled for delivery in 120 days, with the first 35 arriving in 60 days, these aircraft were in addition to 68 O-1's enroute to Vietnam from resources of the 8th Army and CONUS for delivery under the MAP program. ^{50/}

In the targeting area, it was recommended that a joint US/RVNAF Target Research and Analysis Center (TRAC) be established to use the increasing volume of intelligence more effectively. This was approved and recommended for immediate implementation. Any decision to employ additional US fighter-bombers in South Vietnam should be deferred, it

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was recommended, until the TRAC capability and COMUSMACV's authority for unrestricted employment of US fighter bombers could be assessed. The JCS wanted to be kept informed of the employment of US land and carrier-based aircraft and advised if additional air assets were required. ^{51/}

Another recommendation of the JCS Chairman was to increase the scope and tempo of US air strikes against NVN. While this could tend to broaden and escalate the war, it might accomplish the US objective of causing North Vietnam to halt its support and direction of VC aggression. Until mid-March, the tempo of punitive air strikes had been inadequate in conveying a clear sense of US purpose to Hanoi, General Wheeler said. He added that self-imposed restrictions on the conduct of these air strikes should be lifted. These required that a US strike be conducted concurrently with a VNAF strike, that US aircraft strike the primary target only, that classified munitions not be used, that target selection be confined to narrow geographical limitations, and that specific approval be obtained from Washington before striking alternate targets when required by adverse weather conditions or other local conditions. ^{52/}

The JCS said the scope and tempo of air strikes was being increased in current plans, with depots, LOC's, and air defense ground environment facilities planned for strikes in the near future. The requirement for concurrent VNAF-US strikes was removed. Only prime targets would be designated as primary or alternates for US aircraft and greater timing

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flexibility would be allowed for weather and other delays. Tactical reconnaissance was authorized at medium-level for targets south of the 20th parallel to support the expanded program. The restrictions on geographical selection of targets and the need for Washington approval for striking alternates, in case of weather, were lifted. Specific recommendations on the use of classified munitions were requested. ^{53/}

A recommendation to increase air and naval reconnaissance and harassing operations, against Vietnam associated with infiltration, was approved. The JCS welcomed recommendations to increase the military effectiveness of Barrel Roll missions, including measures to increase its responsiveness to the tactical situation. It supported continuous and comprehensive interdiction programs of air strikes against the Pathet Lao/Viet Minh and VC lines of communications and associated installations, plus attack of military targets beyond the capability of the RLA. ^{54/}

Also approved was a proposal to commit elements of the 7th Fleet to air and surface patrol of coastal areas and to augment in-country air reconnaissance and strike resources. A program of cash awards for the capture of enemy junks was also accepted. CINCPAC was to initiate this in the overall program, which included the capture of Viet Cong military and political leaders. The JCS endorsed proposals to give MACV quick-release authority for construction materials and equipment within three to four sailing days of Vietnam. ^{55/}

Another significant action proposed was the establishment of an integrated US/RVN psychological operations organization, at the national level, with a permanent staff and the capability to plan, direct, and support a psywar program down to province level. This was pursued by the Director of the USIA, in consultation with the Department of State. ^{56/}

General Wheeler suggested the initiation of dredging projects at Da Nang, Qui Nhon, and Nha Trang to permit berthing of ocean-going ships. This would re-orient the supply flow from a north-south to a shorter east-west axis, which would increase the reliability of the supply system, and reduce vulnerability resulting from dependence on the single port of Saigon. This was approved as was a related proposal to provide four LST's and six LCU's for logistic support missions along the east-west axis of supply. ^{57/}

Of special significance to the Air Force was the recommendation to accelerate the program for additional, jet-capable, airfields and runways programmed by COMUSMACV. The JCS said that the airfield projects at Da Nang and Chu Lai were approved by the Secretary of Defense for emergency construction. ^{58/}

CINCPAC, at about the same time, also felt that one of the ingredients necessary to success in Southeast Asia would be the buildup of the U.S. military air posture in the area, of sufficient strength to constitute an unmistakably clear indication of U.S. ability and

determination. ^{59/} He noted that, in spite of the steady buildup of communist air strength in Southeast China and destructive attacks against the U.S. (e.g. the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon), the US air deployments to the SEA had been relatively modest. He recommended that four more squadrons be deployed to the SEA to counter communist air deployment to the south. He felt that such a move could be construed as retaliation for the Viet Cong attack on the U.S. Embassy of 30 March. He felt, however, that additional action was indicated in the light of previous U.S. reprisal action, or absence of such actions, during the series of direct communist attacks starting at the time of the Tonkin Gulf Incident. ^{60/}

CINCPAC gave examples of lucrative and logical targets for U.S. attack, such as a jet-capable airfield. He was in favor of a rapid buildup, feeling there should be a departure from the slow, step-by-step series of attacks moving northward. His analysis showed that such attacks provided advance notice and allowed enemy defensive preparations to meet the U.S. threat with anti-aircraft weapons, dispersal revetments and camouflage. In his studied judgement, the longer these slow actions were continued the more the U.S. mission effectiveness and strike forces would be jeopardized. ^{61/}

CINCPAC noted that, while such an acceleration might not be politically feasible at the time, it remained strategically advantageous to assume the optimum posture in the direction of accelerated attacks. He supported such a buildup as an additional advantage to the U.S. posture

in SEA in that it would demonstrate the U.S. resolve to support the RVN in her time of critical need. ^{62/}

The Commander, 2d Air Division, concurred with the JCS thinking for an accelerated air strike program for NVN, pointing out that such a program was highly desirable to insure optimum use of air power to attrite, harass, and interdict NVN south of 20 degrees. Pre-strike reconnaissance, however, was an essential prerequisite. Such reconnaissance should be accomplished wherever the component commander deemed it necessary in order to assess the defensive order of battle and target coverage prior to strike. General Moore pointed out that, once the component commander has determined that he possesses sufficient intelligence to enable him to effectively strike the target, then he should be permitted to direct the date and time of strike. In this connection he recommended: ^{63/}

1. The area for armed reconnaissance should be established.
2. Each area should contain a similar number of fixed targets to insure maximum and optimum use of delivery vehicles.
3. The armed reconnaissance should not normally exceed them.
4. Armed reconnaissance forces should be allowed to expend ordnance against any of the specified fixed targets within their reconnaissance area.
5. Option to expend on fixed targets before reconnaissance or vice versa should be delegated to insure maximum flexibility of tactics. This would allow components to take advantage of late in-

telligence reports and lucrative targets of a transient nature.

6. The Yankee Team type request system should be discarded for Rolling Thunder type because of the need for late changes and number of resulting last minute flash message.

7. The OP-00 and OP-01 be eliminated. The warning frag order directing strikes were considered sufficient for plan and intent.

8. In order to lessen flash messages COMUSMACV should continue to report take-off and landing time of aggregate missions plus wrap up report.

The Commander, 2d Air Division recommended that the basic order to conduct such missions should contain the following ground rules in order to ease USAF/USN coordination: ^{64/}

1. Standard reconnaissance areas, Barrel Roll, Yankee Team and Steel Tiger requirements should be allocated to USAF/USN daily in ratio to forces available.

2. Coordinating components should be allowed to select the time over the target to insure maximum force flexibility. Pertinent items were: WX, late intelligence reports, and aircraft turnaround time.

3. Allocation of routes should be such as to allow simultaneous missions to have a separation of at least 20 miles. Coordination to be effected through 2AD and Fleet Representatives if strikes closer than 20 nm are necessary.

The Commander, 2d Air Division, also recommended two reconnaissance

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flights per day for each assigned route. The execution order to each component command to contain the armed reconnaissance area, inclusive dates and the damage objectives. This would give flexibility to components in delivering the required tonnage on target and would thus insure maximum use of available delivery vehicles. He considered that a normal armed reconnaissance for USAF, with a hard fixed target, would be four F-105's with a total of 32 x 750-pound GP bombs or, as an alternate, four B-57's with 52 x 500's. For normal armed reconnaissance for USAF, with soft fixed targets, four F-105's with a total of 16 napalm/rocket pods. Alternate would be eight F-100's with 16 napalm/^{65/}rockets.

The Commander, 2d Air Division, estimated that the impact on NVN from such a program would be as follows: ^{66/}

1. Great decrease of military supply flow to PL/VC.
2. Roads would be flooded with refugees.
3. A critical shortage would result in food, housing, and transport north of 20 degrees.

The impact on Communist China was estimated by him to be:

1. Political broadcasts and warning notes would be increased.
2. The ChiComs would send emergency medical and food teams to DRV.
3. The Communist Chinese would threaten armed support unless the strikes ceased and negotiations started.

While discussions and recommendations were being made on the

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optimum program for strikes in NVN, the need for air support in SVN was also discussed. MACV informed 2nd Air Division in March that the use of jet aircraft had provided a much needed increase in air power response and that he had, therefore, requested authority to use jet aircraft routinely. He noted requirements for additional air effort would be generated in the SVN as increased intelligence efforts uncovered Viet Cong base areas. He recommended vigorous prosecution of air attacks against identified targets in SVN in spite of the lack of ground exploitation by the ARVN forces, due either to inadequate troop strength or to a lack of willingness on the part of ARVN Commanders. ^{67/} COMUSMACV further expressed to CINCPAC that the war had moved out of the purely guerrilla phase and into a more formalized military conflict and that the situation, therefore, urgently required the support of air power. ^{68/}

Ambassador Taylor agreed that keeping air cover over the Viet Cong at all times was a highly important objective. ^{69/}

9. Establishment of Air Priorities

As a result of the March deliberations and discussions on optimum use of air power in the SEA, CINCPAC, on 28 April, decided to establish priorities for the use of air assets. ^{70/} The RVN in-country effort was established as the first priority task with ROLLING THUNDER strikes against North Vietnam having second priority. To increase the in-country effort, the Commander of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT) was directed to support MACV with carrier aircraft, if the situation required.

BARREL ROLL and STEEL TIGER strikes against Laos had next priority with YANKEE TEAM and BLUE TREE reconnaissance flights against Laos and NVN, ^{71/} respectively, having the lowest priority.

Top priority for in-country air went to support of troops engaged with the enemy. Next came air cover and pre-strike for units on major ground operations. Air cover for trains and convoys and other movements was next in priority, with other ground targets following. ^{72/} In all cases, U.S. troops had top priority call on U.S. aircraft.

The new priorities would pose some immediate problems, according to MACV. With all offensive air programs under way in SEA directly competing for available assets it was possible, said MACV, that in-country requests would require augmentation of all air resources, including those of the USN. For this reason, MACV urged its commands to exercise extreme care in the selection, request, and review of in-country targets. MACV added it was imperative that Corps Senior Advisors, their staffs and associated ASOC personnel, make every effort to insure that target requests were valid and assigned the proper ^{73/} priority. A daily target allocation conference would determine the relative merit of in-country targets as compared with competing out-of-country missions. A COMUSMACV representative would assist in adjusting allocation of missions between Corps, at a daily allocation meeting, and give concurrence for cancellation of any in-country strikes ^{74/} in favor of out-of-country missions.

MACV retained authority to stand down ROLLING THUNDER missions assigned to PACAF forces. MACV could also request CINCPAC to use USN carrier-based aircraft for strikes within the RVN. Thai-bases forces ^{75/} could not be used for RVN strikes unless staged from RVN bases.

COMUSMACV said the assignment of top priority to in-country air operations was evidence of the importance placed on these operations. This high priority, MACV added, carried with it an equally great responsibility for insuring that air sorties and ordnance were employed wisely and with reasonable assurance of commensurate damage to the Viet Cong effort. ^{76/}

In addition to establishing target priorities, it was felt that a phasing of operations should be developed. JCS, therefore, in April, presented the Secretary of Defense with a phased plan of operations for the deployment of combat forces to arrest the deteriorating situation in SVN and to insure the readiness of the United States for contingency operations against NVN and ChiCom reaction, should such occur.

Deployed forces, according to JCS thinking, would initially be provided for base security. Under his plan, phasing would be made, as soon as feasible, into combat counterinsurgency operations which would be projected from secure, logistically supportable bases and would be conducted in coordination with NVN forces. JCS visualized ^{77/} four phases:

- I. Bases would be established in enclaves on the

coast of SVN and improvement of the coastal enclaves would be made.

- II. Operations would be conducted from these enclaves.
- III. Inland bases and areas would be secured by the U.S.
- IV. Inland bases would be occupied and improved and operations would be conducted from these bases.

This thinking paved the way for development of a formalized plan of operations for U.S. forces in South Vietnam and, by 30 August, the plan was published. The planning required coordination on priorities for base development, logistical support and "how and when" deployments would arrive and where they would go. The problems were manifest since there were shortages of aircraft parking and servicing space, port facilities were limited and congested, and there was a severe shortage of trained and experienced personnel. ^{78/} The Commander, 2d Air Division, commented on the changing environment of U.S. operations and participation in the war, stating: "The air war is definitely on the ascendency, not only from the standpoint of improving VNAF capabilities, but active Air Commando and USAF participation as entities." ^{79/} (Detailed portrayal of this ascendency of the air war is given in separate Project CHECO SEA studies.)

10. Development of "Focus and Thrust"

The changing pattern of the war was seen during the second half of the year. In the first half, the Viet Cong were holding the initiative in a situation that had steadily deteriorated after mid-1964. This

This resulted in U.S. strategic decisions for operational requirements and deployments necessary to stem the Viet Cong advance. ^{80/}

By June, considerable deployment had been made and, as a result, sharply increased USAF and VNAF strikes helped avert certain defeat for the outnumbered RVN forces, in many instances. As an example, the 11 May Viet Cong attack on the province capital of Song Be was repulsed with strong air support and the spectacular victory the Viet Cong had planned was denied them. ^{81/}

By June the conflict in SEA had moved to a higher level. PAVN forces had entered SVN and more were on the way. More jet fighters and some jet bombers were deployed to the RVN, ^{82/} and the Viet Cong demonstrated formidable accretion of fire power through improved weapons and by increased pressure. ^{83/} The Viet Cong, further, had the capability of closing any ground LOC, almost at will. Isolation of the highlands was virtually a fact and the incomplete, but damaging, Viet Cong seige of Saigon was causing serious political and military repercussions. ^{84/} Elements of the 304th PAVN Division were suspected in the Laotian Panhandle and capable of following the 325th into SVN. Heavy actions in May and June, in Phuoc Long and Quang Ngai, and Viet Cong initiatives in Pleiku, Kontum, Phu Bon, and Thua Thien, were signs of Viet Cong strength and aggressiveness. ^{85/} There were indications of improved Viet Cong training and discipline, heavier firepower from a new family of weapons and a willingness to accept heavy losses to achieve objectives. The enemy was capable of launching regimental-

sized attacks in virtually all provinces. Actions were expected in the Binh Duong-Phuoc Long area, north of Saigon, in the Quang Ngai-Quang Tin area of central Vietnam, and in Kontum, Pleiku, Phu Bon, and Binh Dinh Provinces. The Viet Cong had shown they could strike in strength, with little or no warning, and with the NVN "foot in the door" through the 325th Division, the Viet Cong capability was re-
86/
inforced.

At the same time, ARVN forces were finding it more and more difficult to cope with the increased Cong capability. Desertion rates were inordinately high and battle losses were higher than expected. Four ARVN battalions were rendered ineffective by Viet Cong action in I and II Corps. The effective fighting strength of many infantry and ranger battalions was unacceptably low. Further, ARVN troops were beginning to show signs of reluctance to assume the offensive and, in some cases, their steadiness under fire was becoming doubtful. To bring existing battalions up to strength, a temporary moratorium on
87/
activating new battalions was imposed.

It became obvious that the buildup of U.S. forces, programmed at the April conference, would not be adequate to cope with the deteriorating situation. COMUSMACV said that the NVN/VC force ratios, on which previous estimates were based, took an adverse trend. General Westmoreland had recommended deployment of a U.S. division to II Corps to cover the period of the RVNAF buildup and to weight the force ratios in that key area, assuming that the ARVN battalions would be brought up to

full strength by June and that the force buildup could continue on schedule. These assumptions did not materialize. ^{88/}

The low battlefield ARVN strength called for personnel training in 11 new battalions as fillers for old battalions, meaning these 11 battalions would have to be deferred. During the period mid-July to early November, no new ARVN battalions would be available and the gap would be deeper and wider. ^{89/} The ARVN could not stand up to the pressure of the Viet Cong and the NVN without reinforcements, General Westmoreland said. The enemy had the capability regardless of what his intentions were. He could also conceivably engage in air action, leading to a significant escalation and a broadening of the area of conflict, a contingency that had to be faced. ^{90/}

General Westmoreland recommended reinforcement of the ARVN with more U.S. and third country forces as rapidly as possible during the critical weeks of June and July. He required additional ground troops and, to support a general increase in tempo of combat operations, additional tactical fighter squadrons were needed. Late in the month, ^{91/} COMUSMACV presented the new requirements for fighter squadrons.

Plans had to be developed for even greater deployments of U.S. forces. Forces deployed to selected areas along the coast and inland would be used both offensively and defensively. Although U.S. forces had not yet engaged the enemy in strength, they were gaining experience and performing well. General Westmoreland was convinced that U.S.

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troops, with their energy, mobility, and firepower, could successfully take the fight to the Viet Cong. Additional deployments would provide a substantial and hard-hitting offensive capability on the ground to convince the Viet Cong they could not win. ^{92/}

General Westmoreland recommended immediate deployment to I Corps of the remaining units of the 3rd Marine Division, with supporting division and air elements, making a total of about 8,000 personnel. Second, he wanted the deployment of the balance of Army logistic and support units, totalling some 8,000 personnel. Third, he asked for the deployment of the U.S. Army Air Mobile Division through Qui Nhon to An Khe, Pleiku and Kontum, somewhere around 1 August. The Division had about 21,000 personnel. Concurrent with the Air Mobile Division, he asked for deployment of IV Corps headquarters; about 1,500 personnel. The Republic of Korea Marine Regimental Combat Team (RCT) (3,000 personnel) was expected to move to Cam Ranh Bay as soon after 1 July as possible, with the balance of the ROK division force, numbering about 14,500 personnel, to go into the general area of Qui Nhon around 15 September with the fourth increment of the U.S. Logistic Command of 1,500 personnel. For air support, General Westmoreland recommended deployment of additional tactical fighter squadrons to Cam Ranh Bay as soon as the expeditionary landing field at that base was completed. A U.S. Navy carrier, on full-time support to RVN air commitments, was also requested. The 173rd Airborne Brigade should remain in country until the Air Mobile Division was deployed and ready for operations, General Westmoreland said. Finally, he wanted continued attacks against

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NVN by air.

Additional deployment on which planning should begin were recommended. Three U.S. Army Hawk battalions should be moved to Tan Son Nhut/Bien Hoa, Qui Nhon, and Cam Ranh Bay, in that priority. The remainder of the 1st Infantry Division, or the 101st Airborne Division, should move into RVN beginning 1 October. An additional MAB was requested to reinforce the III Marine Expeditionary Force. More tactical air units were needed to support the increased force, possibly requiring additional airfields in the RVN and Thailand. Finally, combat and logistic support forces, including helicopter forces, should be deployed as required to support the overall buildup. 94/

Whereas earlier in June JCS had recommended increase of one USMC and four USAF squadrons, COMUSMACV felt, a little later, that a squadron, in addition to those recommended by JCS, was essential to provide adequate support of additional U.S. ground forces. To this, CINCPAC added the need to revitalize RVNAF, step-up B-52 and other in-country sorties, maintain restrictions on bombing north and northwest of Hanoi. 95/

COMUSMACV and CINCPAC both supported an increase in B-52 sortie rate to 800 per month, although not all of these missions could be exploited by ground follow-up. 96/

JCS also saw the need for a further buildup of U.S. and allied forces in South Vietnam at a rapid rate and also recommended intensified air actions against North Vietnam. 97/

CINCPAC's concept in June pointed to focusing strategy toward control of the coastal areas of Central and Northern Vietnam and the Mekong Delta as he considered these areas militarily, politically and economically important.

With reference to the Viet Cong, CINCPAC felt the U.S. strategic aim should be directed toward reduction of his offensive capability, his morale and his mobility. He brought out the desirability of operations from "cleared" zones and for connecting these cleared zones through the strategy of progressively increasing the size of the Tactical Areas of Responsibility (TAOR), thereby forcing the Cong to the defensive in or near the friendly-held areas. ^{98/} Force buildup, therefore, began to appear as a massive air effort in SEA, particularly in South Vietnam. ^{99/}

On 17 July, COMUSMACV informed the Secretary of Defense, then in Saigon, that the rate of NVA infiltration into RVN had been increasing. This brought about a revision of USAF requirements in support of ground forces deployed to check infiltration through the Southern Laotian Panhandle and the DMZ. The new requirement called for the deployment of a total of 18 fighter/attack squadrons with a total of 4,716 personnel. At that time, five fighter/attack squadrons, and their reconnaissance task force located in Thailand, were to be moved to RVN upon availability ^{100/} of bases.

Although the conflict remained largely limited to ground action, CONUS Air Commands, other than USAF's Tactical Air Command (TAC), had

become involved. SAC used B-52's in attacks on enemy bases and concentrations. The Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) gave SEA requirements top priority. The development of the new F-5C tactical fighter was expedited by AFSC for operational tests, under combat conditions, in RVN. The AFSC established special teams to study means of finding and destroying the enemy forces and protecting friendly elements. Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC), charged with maintaining an 8,000 mile "pipeline", was keeping practically all SEA-based aircraft at an operational ready rate of well over 80 percent. 101/

With the impending massive buildup, it became necessary to formulate an overall plan which would clarify the missions and deployments of the various forces. As a result, the basic strategy for defeating the enemy was developed and published, on 30 August 1965, as USMACV "Concept of Operations in Vietnam." 102/

On 17 Sep, MACV issued Directive 525-4 which covered, among other things, the tactics and techniques for employment of U.S. Air Forces in the Republic of Vietnam. 103/ The Directive outlined operations to be conducted by U.S. Forces in the RVN and delineated their purpose. MACV felt these operations presented an unique challenge, as U.S. Forces had never previously engaged in military/political activities of the type confronted in South Vietnam. He informed that tactics and techniques, required to cope with this unique challenge, were under development and would change with time as we gained additional experience. 104/

MACV, through this directive, defined the broad objectives and the general approach towards attainment, leaving the execution of military operations to the commanders in the field, whose judgement and professional skill were relied upon to insure fulfillment of the command mission. 105/

The priority of objectives in defeating the Viet Cong and facilitating RVN control over the country was given by the Directive in three steps:

First : To halt the Viet Cong offensive--to stem the tide.

Second: To resume the offensive--to destroy the Viet Cong and pacify selected high priority areas.

Third : To restore progressively the entire country to the control of the GVN.

Air operations were to be concerned, primarily, with the first two objectives. 107/

On the subject of operations, the Directive stated that Air would provide combat and logistics air support in connection with all of the tasks entailed in these operations, and that limited operations against Viet Cong bases would be effective in keeping the enemy off balance, denying him free utilization of safe areas, and forcing him to move frequently or to withhold forces for the defense of base complexes. It continued that fighter/bombers and strategic bombers, in addition to other forces, would hamper enemy operations, reduce his forces, destroy

his morale and materially detract from his ability to prosecute the war effectively. 108/

The Directive noted that, from time to time, reliable intelligence became available to the U.S. Forces regarding the size and location of Viet Cong forces. It instructed that, when such occasion arose, an aggressive operation should be mounted, using clearly superior forces, fire power and mobility. It added that, whenever possible, the Viet Cong should be attacked by combination of mobile and blocking forces while strategic or reconnaissance elements should cover all routes of escape or withdrawal. Emphasizing that such opportunities were rare, the Directive stressed they must be exploited immediately and aggressively, in coordination with appropriate Vietnamese Commanders. Tactical air and, where feasible, amphibious forces and naval gun fire support, should be utilized to maximum advantage. For offensive operations, in which there is no detailed prior intelligence, the Directive stated that advanced techniques of aerial photography, infrared detection, side-looking radar, and continuous visual observation should be exploited to the maximum. MACV noted, in this connection, these technical means were available in Vietnam and had proven their effectiveness. 109/

In reference to combat reconnaissance for U.S. ground forces, the Directive noted that walk-in or helicopter-delivered units were prime sources of information and that platoon-sized airborne reconnaissance elements could and should reconnoiter all populated areas and likely

Viet Cong concentration points, with a wide radius around U.S. operating units. He expected that desired results could be produced through rapid reaction with airborne reinforcements, artillery and air strikes upon contact with the Viet Cong. 110/

The Directive noted that, with reference to combat and logistical air support, the U.S. air combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam would be carried out by units stationed in-country (USAF and USMC), in adjacent waters (USN) and at other bases within CINCPAC's area of responsibility, such as SAC. 111/ He noted these forces were postured to expeditiously effect the following desired accomplishments: 112/

To provide close air support for friendly ground/amphibious sea operations, with quality and quantity to insure adequate protection for units involved and for successful exploitation of the targets generated by these units. MACV anticipated that close air support would increase as more U.S. units were injected into combat in Vietnam.

To provide air cover for trains, convoys, defoliation and crop destruction missions and other service activities. MACV noted that demands for these missions would increase as operations were undertaken to open and keep open ground lines of communications (LOC). He noted that even the short time required to launch ground alert aircraft was excessive when compared to the rapidity of Viet Cong ambush actions.

To provide air strikes for harassing and destroying Viet Cong bases conducted on a continuing but staggered schedule, ranging from massive B-52 strikes down to a small number of tactical fighter aircraft attacks as the situation dictated. The objectives of the harassment and Viet Cong base destruction mission were listed as:

To disrupt the pattern of Viet Cong activity. Destroy Viet Cong accumulated supplies, communications or well-developed base areas. Wear down the morale of the Viet Cong by continued attrition, mandatory movement and frustration of well-prepared plans.

To provide tactical air reconnaissance and aerial battlefield surveillance together with a rapid dissemination of intelligence information obtained through such efforts. MACV stressed the necessity of obtaining maximum effectiveness from the broad capability of sensory systems, mainly reconnaissance, radar, infrared search, night photography and particularly from the vast aerial visual reconnaissance capabilities that should be exploited to the maximum.

The Directive pointed out that air logistic resources would be absorbed mainly by the transport of military units and supplies until such time as land LOC's were established on a more or less permanent basis. He noted, also, air transport would be required to relieve civilian communities which may have been cut off from friendly areas by Viet Cong activity. Due to the heavy demands placed on airlifts and airfield capability, he underlined the fact that every conceivable effort must be made at all echelons to restrict air logistics support to absolutely essential surprise and quick movement. He directed that, in the meanwhile, maximum effort must be made by all commanders to open and use land LOC's. ^{113/}

Early in October, CINCPAC advised COMUSMACV that, in consideration of Phase II planning for combat aircraft requirements, CINCPAC was proposing to cut the U.S. jet squadrons originally planned in Phase II from 30 to 24 squadrons due to significant increase in the employment

of ARC LIGHT B-52 forces, the increasing armed helicopter population in SVN, and the probable Viet Cong trend towards large scale engagements on the order of frequencies experienced in the past. 114/

CINCPAC advised that an earlier basic planning factor used was based on six sorties per day per in-country battalion, but it now appeared that a readjustment, based on four or five sorties per day per battalion, should be considered. Citing a detailed rationale based on the latter factor, CINCPAC stated that the net requirement of 15,400 sorties to be flown by U.S. jet aircraft in support of 72 battalions would require 24 squadrons compared to the original estimate of 30 115/ squadrons.

COMUSMACV indicated that planning factors used appeared realistic, particularly when viewed in terms of the additional capabilities afforded by increased B-52 strikes, armed helicopters and separate artillery. He conditionally concurred in the proposed reduction pending further study by his headquarters. 116/

In November, PACAF informed that, in addition to the operational upsurge during Phase I, there were many support activities required as parallel efforts. He pointed particularly to the vital area of search and rescue in which along with the quantitative force expansion, other support activities such as initial testing of air-to-air refueling between the HHC-3C helicopter and the HC-130 were included. 117/

A newly identified VC/PAVN buildup established the basis for

determining force requirements supplementary to the Phase I and II program. In October, MACV presented the following analysis: ^{118/}

The objective of Phase I was to stop losing, while the objective of Phase II was to start winning by taking the initiative from the enemy and beginning the expansion of RVN control. The US/FWMAF units necessary for the accomplishment of these objectives had been identified as Phase I and Phase II forces and their deployment to RVN had been requested. Since air support in-country was a vital and sizeable task in connection with this concept of ground operations, the following information was thought by MACV to bear significantly upon air requirements as planned for implementation during FY66: US/FWMAF maneuver battalions planned (for the accomplishment of the Phase II objectives) totalled 72 with the ARVN building up to 162 battalions in FY66. There were 68 confirmed enemy battalions and an anticipated increase to 88 battalions by the end of June 1966. The enemy buildup, however, had proceeded at more than twice the expected rate. The analysis of the enemy's buildup, during the period May - October 1965, led to the development of a new intelligence estimate which concluded that NVN could train and infiltrate nine battalions a month through the end of 1966, while the Viet Cong could train an additional seven battalion equivalents for a total of 16 new battalion equivalents per month. Attrition during infiltration and losses resulting from an intensified level of combat, including air support, could reduce the total so that, by the end of 1966, a net gain of 45 battalion equivalents would be realized. Thus, it was concluded that the enemy had the capability of increasing to 155

battalions by end CY66. As of mid-November, the PAVN buildup was primarily in II CTZ, in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces, though new forces were being reported in Phu Yen Province to the east and in Quang Doc and Darlac in the south. Viet Cong forces were also being concentrated in the Tay Ninh-Binh Duong-Long Khanh areas, in a semi-circle above Saigon.

It was probable that the new PAVN units were being introduced into the RVN in an effort to gain strategic mobility. For example, a portion of the force had put pressure on critical installations and had pinned large government units to base security missions, leaving the remainder of the enemy force to move unhampered through the hinterlands and to mass forces against isolated targets. The Viet Cong strategic mobility concept was designed to counter ARVN/FWMAF tactical mobility and superior firepower.

If the enemy buildup proceeded as expected, the initiative would pass to the enemy and the ability of RVNAF forces to perform their Phase II task would be degraded as follows:

The capability to defend major bases would not diminish because whatever force was necessary would be devoted to this task; however, forces would have to be withdrawn from other tasks and as additional bases were developed the number of units required would have to be increased accordingly, therefore, reducing the force available for other tasks.

The defense of government centers would be more difficult, especially in the case of district towns.

Offensive operations would be conducted as a matter of high priority because of their favorable influence on all other tasks but the destruction of the enemy's bases would be retarded because of the diversion of forces to other tasks, particularly reaction to his initiatives.

The expansion of governmental control in areas cleared and secured would be retarded by the diversion of friendly forces to defensive and reaction roles.

The inability to expand the secured areas would reduce the portion of roads and railroads which would be permanently opened.

Accomplishment of other lower priority tasks also would fall short of expectations. For example, diversion of tactical air support to assist in the defense of government centers would reduce the interdiction effort and the failure to open ground LOC's would reduce logistic support capability to some extent.

MACV summarized that, unless more forces were made available, both air and ground operations would suffer.

CINCPACAF, in December, noted the increased PAVN buildup capability.^{119/} He concurred in the need for five additional fighter squadrons, stating, however, that this requirement was not directly associated with additional ground forces considered for Phase II-A. Airpower had and was still proving to be the primary military means of inflicting heavy losses and damage to Viet Cong and PAVN forces, he said. Ground commanders, including the U.S., repeatedly had stated their dependence upon tactical air, not only to support their offensive operations but to defend their units and forces at home bases.

Secretary McNamara met with the assistant secretaries of defense,

JCS and certain other staff members to discuss actions to improve U.S. posture in South Vietnam. He led off by reviewing the current situation and by giving in summary form his conclusion as to required U.S. actions. 120/ The 2d Air Division Commander made the following comments to PACAF on this meeting: 121/

MACV estimate of VC/PAVN forces now available for operations in South Vietnam was reasonable. They had the capability to buildup as described by MACV. MACV's logistic base was not adequate to sustain the tempo of combat operations by forces then in-country.

VC/PAVN forces continued to display an offensive spirit; and operations towards the end of the year led to the conclusion that they were trying desperately to recapture the initiative.

COMUSMACV late in the year, had expressed his urgent need for another division soonest to provide him a reserve with which to deal with VC/PAVN initiatives. He stated that he would deal with contingencies only by withdrawing forces from important operations.

Secretary McNamara, in December, therefore, allocated to the several services, assistant secretaries of defense, and the JCS some 122/ 28 needed actions including the following:

Establish in-country dates by quarters for each of the Phase I, Phase II and IIA support units.

Add to the Phase II troop deployment schedule the Phase II add-ons recommended by MACV.

Provide additional LSTS and/or substitutes ASAP.

Take action to fund a construction program to include MACV Headquarters, one airfield in South Vietnam in addition to Tuy Hoa, and one more airfield in Thailand.

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Modify construction approval procedures so as to expedite action.

Take action to obtain dredges required.

Plan Steel Tiger level at 100 sorties per day; Barrel Roll at 50 sorties a day, and B-52 strikes at 800 sorties per month commencing six months from the present. Schedule immediate shipment of aircraft required for Tiger Hound.

Set up a Red Ball Express directly responsive to COMUSMACV.

Add one F-5 squadron from SVN to FY-67 MAP.

Establish two-thousand-bed convalescent hospital at Dalat.

Obtain ten H-34's for Laos.

In addition to the above, Assistant Secretary Ignatius proposed, and Secretary McNamara concurred, that the JCS should examine the feasibility and desirability of establishing a position for a senior officer who would oversee and control all construction in SVN. This requirement stemmed from the realization that construction projects cut across all services and were financed, controlled, and executed by several agencies, including a civilian contractor. ^{123/}

Secretary McNamara also assigned to the JCS and other interested parties the requirement to coordinate a date for a Honolulu Conference, to resolve details of force requirements and develop schedules for Phase II and IIA, as well as construction programs, and to establish required logistic facilities. ^{124/}

CINCPACAF, in November, gave the Chief of Staff's opinion that the

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tide of battle had turned, but that it would be dangerous to take the short term view of a war which could be prolonged. He pointed out that Phase I could not be insulated completely from the preceding and the following efforts in SEA. He continued that there were various Phase I problems to which solutions would not be forthcoming until Phase II. He prefaced his discussion on the major problems by stating that, through the energy, skill, professionalism, and foresight of U.S. efforts, previous problems were found to be by no means insurmountable and were brought within manageable bounds to a point where the U.S. situation had improved and, to his thinking, would continue to improve as deployment of resources backing up the operational effort continued at an accelerated rate. He gave, as the chief problem, the operational restrictions imposed by higher authority. This, he felt, was a factor which had, from the beginning, plagued U.S. efforts to do a military job with maximum effectiveness and minimum loss. He referred to the geographical limitations which barred the USAF from striking some of the most lucrative targets in North Vietnam and to the denial of certain targets which PACAF recommended. He noted this as part of the "changing concepts of governmental roles and function" which had "not received the unanimous and unqualified indorsement of ^{125/} all who made up the military community". He continued by saying:

"Be that as it may, the changes are here, and they're here to stay. They were born of many things, perhaps the chief two being the advent and proliferation of nuclear weapons and the rapid technological gains in the

field of communications. Viewed from a purely military standpoint, these restrictions do not appear to make much sense."

He went on to point out that, from time to time, he questioned certain of these restrictions, at least so as to insure that the military facts and arguments operating against their imposition were brought out and considered. He felt, however, that once these facts and arguments were brought out with force and clarity to the decision-making authorities, final decisions would be implemented to the limit of U.S. ability. He said: "To do otherwise would be a breach of trust and a reflection on our professionalism." He concluded that, despite the restrictions imposed, U.S. air strikes had produced significant degradation of NVN targets and major disruptions to the enemy in North as well as South Vietnam. He stated that, additionally, CINCPAC had cited the fact that USAF pilots--through their individual example and leadership--had brought about major improvements in the VNAF battle performance and effectiveness. ^{126/}

Force buildup effort through 1965 had changed the USAF role from a limited counterinsurgency action, with emphasis on training, to a full-scale theater air effort employing the latest aircraft, weapons, and equipment, ^{127/} which by the end of the year had stopped the advance of the Viet Cong.

11. MIG Reprisal Strikes

On 22 November 1965, CINCPAC requested authority to strike Kep

airfield in NVN in the event a U.S. aircraft was lost to enemy air
action. 128/

On 30 November, JCS cited his thesis of 12 July 1965, which reflect-
ed the SecDef's decision regarding certain targets for reprisal-type
actions, that no decision on specific targets for such U.S. military
courses of action would be taken in advance, other than appropriate
planning to strike on short notice any single target or combination
of targets as were contained in that message. 129/

JCS agreed, in late November, that current tactics of MIG's sug-
gested they were seeking a favorable chance to hit our aircraft from
within their safe sanctuary, and that sanctuary should be ended for
them at an early time, not later than the time of a MIG shoot-down of
one of our aircraft. He requested PACOM forces add Kep Airfield (JCS
Target No. 9.1, BE No. 616-8438) to the list of targets specified in
JCS message of 12 July 1965. 130/

On 1 December 1965, ADMINO CINCPAC requested CINCPACFLT to add
Kep Airfield to the JCS list of reprisal targets and asked they be
prepared to execute retaliatory strikes, if directed by CINCPACAF. 131/

On 28 December, CINCPACAF requested current analysis of 2d Air
Division capabilities to execute a full reprisal package in view of all
force changes. Specific questions were:

How many strike aircraft can be launched on first and

and second wave?

What is the turn around time required?

What is the tanker support capabilities and planning factors?

What is the capability to support flak suppression for SAC?

He noted that operational environment, political concerns, constraints, target validity, and combat forces might have changed to some degree, since the initial reprisal plan concept. 132/

On 30 December, CINCPACAF informed 2d Air Division of the possibility that JCS might direct a strike on Kep Airfield as signal reprisal target in the event any U.S. aircraft were lost to enemy air action. Should this occur, he considered it essential to strike the airfield as soon as possible to minimize enemy preparation against U.S. reprisal action. He requested that 2d Air Division inform CINCPACAF of the maximum time required to execute from normal operations posture to a maximum effort strike on Kep Airfield. 133/

12. Plans to Destroy NVN Transports

On 3 December 1965, CINCPACAF informed 2d Air Division that a proposal to employ Convairs in a NVN transport attack role had been studied. Information available indicated there were no T-29/C-131 aircraft with gun configuration available in the USAF inventory. He further informed that Convair aircraft, used to develop the FC-47 system, had been returned to original configuration; however, the time required

to modify aircraft and provide radio jamming capability might prove unacceptable. He felt a meeting between representatives from PACAF, 2nd Air Division, Udorn ASOC and USAIRA Vientiane, might be in order to bring all concerned together to discuss problems and develop a workable solution, and suggested that this meeting be held at Udorn to facilitate on-scene discussions and availability of information. He stated the objective of the meeting should be production of a fully-coordinated plan or concept of operations, which could be returned to CINCPACAF for approval and submission to CINCPAC and JCS. He further requested 2nd Air Division's concurrence, recommendations for improving value of meeting, suggested date with alternate and MACV/MACHTHAI Theater clearance approval. 134/

PACAF later forwarded a study plan on the destruction of NVN transport aircraft to 2nd Air Division. The concept of using Thai-based fighter aircraft was rejected, but 2nd Air Division proposed the use of armed turbo-prop transport aircraft as an alternate proposal. PACAF's reply suggested a meeting at Udorn to draft a firm plan/concept. 135/

2nd Air Division, therefore, requested Dep Comdr 2/13 AF Thai Udorn to alert representatives for a possible meeting at Udorn with 2nd Air Division and PACAF personnel to discuss the concept of elimination of NVN transport aircraft flying aerial resupply missions in Laos. Tentative dates of 15 - 16 December, with alternate dates of 20 - 21 December 1965, were established. 136/

PACAF requested that overlays of all NVN transport sightings, for the four months preceding December 1965, and the location of reporting sources be made available to the meeting. ^{137/}

13. Christmas "Truce"

On December 17, the Viet Cong "Liberation Front" broadcast a communique extending an offer of a Christmas Truce, from 1900 hours December 24 to 0700 hours December 25, so that Catholic soldiers in RVN, U.S. and other FWMAF armed forces could attend mass and celebrate Christmas Eve. Conditions of the offer included the requirement that soldiers not carry weapons as a "means of spying". ^{138/}

JCS, on 17 December, informed that the U.S. Mission Council had approved the following policy with regard to a response to the Viet Cong offer and announcement of U.S. policy: ^{139/}

No overt response will be made to the Viet Cong offer, nor will any announcement be made which would indicate that U.S. and Free World Military assistance forces plan change in assigned missions during the Christmas period.

Public information media, on the other hand should announce that Christian members of U.S. and other free world military assistance forces will celebrate Christmas, to the extent possible, in light of assigned missions.

The U.S. Mission Council had further approved, as a basis for discussion with RVN, the following recommended policy concerning air operations against North Vietnam and Laos during the period 1100 hours

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December 24 to 1800 hours December 25:

Air operations against Laos and infiltration corridors should continue.

Bombing operations against targets assigned in North Vietnam should continue.

The U.S. Mission Council approved the following policy for military operations by U.S. and other Free World military assistance forces in South Vietnam during the period 1800 hours December 24 to 1800 hours December 25:

Assume a posture of extreme alertness; continue normal security precautions, and be prepared with ready reaction forces, to respond promptly to any Viet Cong initiatives.

Forces in contact with Viet Cong forces will not break contact.

No ground offensive operations will be planned; however, all forces will be prepared to react promptly and will be prepared to destroy Viet Cong main force or other units if Viet Cong initiatives present such an opportunity.

Normal air offensive operations will continue to be planned and conducted against Viet Cong base areas. Such operations, however, will avoid strikes in hamlets or villages.

The American Ambassador to Saigon commented that this obviously did not in any way deal with the psychological gains the Communists scored by such things as their Christmas offer, adding: "It is merely a plan for operations during the period. It is not effective public relations for us to limit ourselves to pointing out that a temporary cease-fire, without verified and inspected withdrawal, is not an honest proposition. An honest cease-fire is something which should be the end

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of negotiations and should not be undertaken before negotiations have begun. It is also dishonest to talk about a cease-fire until there is a verified system of international inspection, which should always be the first item of any agenda. An honest cease-fire would be one, for example, whereby we would offer to suspend the bombing of the North in exchange for: Their withdrawing of North Vietnam units through international check points; their not impeding access of the RVN to any part of its territory; their significantly reducing incidents; their cessation of infiltration of men and material; and their agreeing to put enforcement measures first on the agenda. This would be a real cease-fire which would win for us considerable propaganda gains. Our psychological effort should be affirmative and imaginative and not of the kind where we sit back and say "No" to the communists all the time." Ambassador Lodge added that the above comment was mentioned as an illustration and that he was not making it as a proposal. ^{142/}

On 19 December, the Secretary of State informed the American Ambassador, Saigon, that he concurred in the proposal that RVN initiative concerning Tet be our real response to the Viet Cong cease-fire proposal for Christmas. He added, at the same time, he was concerned about appeals from some quarters, or even from responsible governments, to make further responses to the Viet Cong Christmas truce offer than that stated by the Ambassador, Saigon, on 17 December. He added that he could see compelling military arguments against any public disclosure of details concerning military operations, as stated by Lodge on 17 December, however, he could see considerable public ad-

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vantage in public response, perhaps jointly with RVN indicating that we would watch closely what the Viet Cong actually did on December 24 - 25 and were prepared to respond appropriately, while naturally taking all actions necessary to maintain security of U.S. and RVN forces. He felt this expanded public information treatment would still not deal fully with whatever psychological gains the Viet Cong realized with their Christmas offer. Therefore, he believed the RVN and the U.S. should consider some acceptable and attractive Tet action for announcement which could put the U.S. in a position to say that we and the RVN had made a more forthright response and one related to the Vietnamese Holiday.

As to air operations, he believed our public relations posture would be much improved, without significant military disadvantage, if we were to suspend bombing operations against North Vietnam (but not Laos) for Christmas Day itself (i.e. 1800 hours December 24 to 1800 hours December 25). He added that, because of possible misinterpretation of this as a serious pause, he did not propose to announce this in advance but would let it appear during operational briefing as a matter of routine. ^{143/}

With respect to air operations in SVN, he wondered if these could be limited strictly to those essential in support of forces actually in contact with Viet Cong or reactions carried out pursuant to Ambassador Lodge's concept given to him on 17 December. He concluded that, contrary to Lodge's proposal, suspension of air operations against Viet Cong base

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areas would be undertaken only for Christmas Day and that this would be done without prior announcement unless there were cogent military reasons for other actions. He felt this thinking would give the U.S. the position that we had, in fact, stood down all operations but not as strictly necessary for the security of our forces. This would put the U.S. in the strongest attainable public posture without the clear disadvantages cited by Lodge of accepting any bogus cease-fire, as 144/ such.

The Secretary of State, therefore, instructed Saigon not to take any action on the cease-fire, pending further instructions.

Shortly thereafter, the Secretary of State proposed a 14-hour cessation of bombing against NVN and the limiting of air operations in South Vietnam to ground support of forces in contact with the Viet Cong. 145/

CINCPAC concurred with the proposed action and informed JCS, on 20 December, that PACOM forces could suspend bombing operations against NVN and ground and air offensive operations in RVN for Christmas without significant military disadvantages. He felt it would be appropriate for the announcement of the pause to come out in Saigon's operational briefing, adding that all defensive actions would continue as necessary to maintain security of U.S. and RVN forces. 146/

On 22 December, COMUSMACV referred to MACV's message, 147/ MACV 44701, and informed 2nd Air Division, (by COMUSMACV 44747, 221605Z), that, in keeping with agreements reached by the U.S. Mission Council,

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Saigon, it was planned to stand down strike operations over North Vietnam from 241000Z to 251600Z December 1965; however, air operations over Laos during the period would be conducted as planned and scheduled. 148/

On the same day, CINCPAC informed COMUSMACV there had been a profusion of messages regarding actions during the Christmas Holiday and he was sure that COMUSMACV had some from Amemb Saigon that were not addressed to CINCPAC. He added he had been awaiting a directive from Washington, either a State/Defense message or a JCS message. He further stated he realized COMUSMACV had to get a directive to the in-country forces early enough for them to be instructed and that only one day remained, adding that some changes in COMUSMACV's instruction would probably be required. It was his understanding that air operations in Laos would stand down under the same directive as air operations in North and South Vietnam.

He referred to COMUSMACV 44747, 221605Z and quoted it as saying: "It is planned to stand down strike operations over North Vietnam from 241000Z to 251600Z" and remarked "I don't understand how this message could have been originated. Rolling Thunder operations will stand down on my directive. I have not delegated this authority. Please instruct your COC officers to prevent a recurrence of this type of message." He further informed that he would forward a message on operations during the Christmas period as soon as he received instructions from the JCS, which was then only a matter of hours. 149/

Also on the same day, Secretary Rusk sent a message to the Amemb

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Saigon and JCS directing that General Westmoreland or a MACV spokesman should make an announcement at the earliest possible time, preferably 0900 - 1000 hours the next morning, Saigon time, to the effect that U.S. Commanders had given instructions that U.S. Forces in Vietnam would not fire except in self-defense between 1800L hours 24 December and 0000L hours 26 December. He instructed that the statement might be framed in accordance with level of issuance, but that substance would be strictly followed. He informed that the objective was to have the statement come from U.S. Commanders in the field and be issued in time ^{150/} for late evening newscasts and the morning press.

He stated that the need for an immediate U.S. statement was an overriding consideration, although every effort should be made to inform and seek coordination with the RVN. If the RVN should be prepared with its statement at Chief of Staff level, which could be issued by the desired time, then and only then should our statement be withheld. Such RVN statement should be followed by prompt U.S. confirmation. He repeated that early morning release, clearly establishing U.S. position, was essential.

Secretary Rusk further instructed that he be informed by Flash or telephone when the statement was released with contents for further dissemination and handling in the U.S. Press handling on date of his message would be on a vigorous "No comment" basis. In response to queries, confirmation should be that statement, applied equally to North and South Vietnam, and that questions about other areas should be met

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with a "no comment" answer. Further, if the U.S. statement was made before the RVN announcement, and if there were questions, it may be stated that close consultation on this matter had been made with 151/ RVN.

COMUSMACV, on the same day, informed CINCPAC the Vietnamese JGS would issue an order of the day to all RVNAF forces calling for a cessation of offensive operations in accordance with the exchange of messages which had already taken place. 152/ On the same day, MACV informed all MACV elements the 153/ following policy would apply to U.S. and Free World Forces operations from 1800 hours, 24 December, to 2400 hours, 25 December 1965:

Assume a posture of extreme alertness. Continue normal security precautions, and be prepared with reaction forces, to respond promptly to any Viet Cong initiatives.

Units in contact with Viet Cong forces will not break contact.

No ground offensive operations will be conducted, however, all forces will be prepared to react promptly and will be prepared to destroy Viet Cong or PAVN forces if they initiate operations which present such an opportunity.

Air operations will be conducted only in support of U.S. RVNAF forces in contact. However, 2nd Air Division will maintain ground and air alert aircraft as requested and as required and unexpended ordnance will be jettisoned in unpopulated areas of previously specified strike areas.

Operations involving route security need not be discontinued and air or ground alert aircraft will be provided for such operations as required. This specifically applied to Highway 19.

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Vietnamese Joint General Staff will issue an order of the day setting forth these same ground rules. No statement will be made to the press. All queries will be referred to MACV Office of Information.

In a separate message to 2nd Air Division he provided that air operations in Laos would continue. He added he did not hold any messages indicating CINCPAC's intentions, other than CINCPAC's message DTG 201933Z December, Top Secret, (in which CINCPAC concurred with the proposed actions during the Christmas and Tet periods), and concluded that he assumed ROLLING THUNDER strike operations would stand-
154/
down during the same period.

The next day, 23 December 1965, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that he interpreted earlier messages to permit reconnaissance flights over Laos, while he interpreted CINCPAC's message of that day to call for the suspension of all air operations, both in North Vietnam and in Laos. He added he would, of course, comply but wanted to be sure he had interpreted the last message correctly--that it was CINCPAC's intention there be no reconnaissance flights over Laos. He stated he wanted to be sure of the correct interpretation since he attached the highest importance to the continuation and even the expansion of the reconnaissance program.
155/

On the same day, 2d Air Division sent a message to COMUSMACV and others in which he quoted, in part, CINCPAC's message DTG 230410Z December 1965, for information and planning:
156/

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"North Vietnam and Laos: Suspend all air operations from 241800 to 252400 local Saigon time.

"Maintain alert posture to provide quick reaction should this be required. Conduct SAR missions as required. No publicity will be given to stand-down in Laos. If queried, state no comment.

"Press release will be made by COMUSMACV and Washington only."

On 23 December, Amemb Vientiane recommended necessary air operations be continued in Laos during the Christmas stand-down. ^{157/} CINCPAC, on 23 December 1965, recommended to JCS that Thailand-based and carrier-based aircraft be used to the extent necessary if security of friendly forces in Laos became critical. ^{158/} JCS authorized continuation of Bango operations during the stand-down period to the extent necessary to meet RLG needs. ^{159/} COMUSMACV instructed 2d Air Division that SVN based aircraft were not to be utilized in view of the intense public interest in the stand-down, and instructed 2d Air Division to maintain necessary aircraft on alert to respond to Bango strike requests, and to take all feasible precautions to avoid press detection of Bango flights during this period. ^{160/}

USAIRA Vientiane, on 24 December, cited JCS message of 23 December, modifying the stand-down with Bango operations in Laos to continue to the extent necessary. He instructed CTF 77 and others that SVN aircraft were not to be used and that they were to take all feasible precautions to avoid press detection of such flights. He gave his be-

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lief that, in view of the stand-down, the time was opportune to utilize naval sorties which had been previously cancelled because of higher priority missions. 161/

On 24 December, the American Ambassador cited 2d Air Division's message (231022Z) of same day and informed 2AD that permission was granted to use Thai-based U.S. aircraft for BARREL ROLL/STEEL TIGER special CAS strikes on 26 December, as described by 2d Air Division. 162/

COMUSMACV, on 24 December, expressed concern that the Viet Cong might provoke U.S. forces into breaking the Christmas cease-fire and then exploit it for propaganda purposes. He, therefore, directed 2d Air Division and others that commanders at all echelons would be informed they would not respond to minor provocations or harassment as long as those provocations or harassment did not pose a threat to the security of their command. 163/

He further directed 2AD to review all requests for tactical air support, against the above criteria, and before launching strike aircraft, to verify with commanders on the ground that designated targets did, in fact, pose a threat to the security of the ground elements. 164/

At 241800 hours on 24 December, the U.S. FWMAF and RVN forces began a 30-hour Christmas cease-fire. 165/

On 25 December 1965, State and Defense in a joint message to CINCPAC and others stated that, insofar as practicable, they did not want the end of the Christmas cease-fire to be signalled before the world by U.S.

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acts of force, but rather by evident renewal of Viet Cong violence. They added it was of great importance to keep basic responsibility for aggression where it belonged. They instructed that, accordingly, the following conditions would be observed until confirmed evidence was obtained and could be made public of significant renewed Viet Cong violence. 166/

Present restrictions on operations in DRV will be continued.

In Laos, Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger, as well as Bango, may be carried out, but not from SVN bases. There will be no Arc Light operations.

They continued that, consistent with the safety of all elements of his forces, MACV would conduct all other operations in SVN so that responsibility for renewed hostilities fell on the Viet Cong. This was not to restrict normal patrol operations or action required for self-defense. These operations should be so conducted as to be consistent with the public position that, regardless of small incidents, the U.S. would not be first to resume hostilities. They stated they did not expect that the Viet Cong would permit the cease-fire to continue for more than a day or so and, in any event, they would not accept a prolonged cease-fire which denied the RVN right to exercise authority throughout SVN. 167/

State and Defense requested MACV to report fully and currently on renewed Viet Cong acts of violence, adding they would stand ready to order immediate renewal of ROLLING THUNDER and ARC LIGHT at any time,

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based on MACV's reports and recommendations. Based on previous Viet Cong performance, they added they expected these restrictions to last only hours, or a day or so at most. 168/

Embassy Saigon and MACV were requested to report these instructions privately to the RVN, insuring that the RVN not bomb NVN. The U.S. State/Defense Departments expressed the hope that Embassy Saigon and MACV would be able to persuade ARVN forces in South Vietnam to follow a course parallel to that of MACV. 169/

They instructed there should be no public comment on the above instructions and no discussion of "extension" of the truce, since they fully expected these restraints to be very short-lived and, therefore, did not wish them to be advertised or leaked. 170/

They concluded: 171/ "We recognize the possibility that the above may lead to some question by the RVN as to our motives. It should be made clear that the massive commitment of U.S. power to SVN requires the overwhelming support of the American people and broad understanding internationally. The simple, if regrettable, truth is that there is a double standard for measuring actions of aggressors and the attitude of a great peace-loving power such as the U.S. Despite the fact that aggressors have not come one inch toward peace, it is necessary for the U.S. to demonstrate that we have gone the last mile to sustain the necessary effort to repel aggression. This larger requirement is one which we hope will be understood locally in Saigon. It does not modify

or dilute the total commitment of the U.S. to the safety of South Vietnam or to the success of our joint effort there."

The Secretary of State closed his message by saying: ^{172/} "We recognize the heavy responsibility this instruction places on all concerned and we want you to know that you are free to make your own decisions within the spirit of these instructions and that those decisions will have our full support."

The CJCS, on Christmas Day, strongly opposed extension of the cease-fire in air operations over NVN, after Christmas, based on the complete freedom of action it gave the enemy. ^{173/}

On 25 December, COMUSMACV informed 2d Air Division and others that it was desirable that the resumption of hostilities, after the Christmas cease-fire, be clearly the responsibility of the VC/PAVN and that, therefore, MACV's messages of 22 and 24 December would remain in effect until further notice from him. ^{174/}

He added that in order to establish conclusively that Viet Cong aggression had been renewed and the cease-fire terminated by the Viet Cong/PAVN, all commanders, while taking the necessary military action to safeguard either U.S. or Vietnamese forces which might come under attack, would report by Flash message in detail the circumstances of the resumption of hostilities, giving time, place, the nature of the renewed hostilities, the size of Viet Cong forces involved, any casualties which might result, and the actions of U.S. and Vietnamese

forces. He anticipated that circumstances surrounding the resumption of hostilities might be a matter of international interest and, therefore, subject to the closest scrutiny by the press, who might wish to visit the site and make detailed inquiries. He instructed that commanders, therefore, must verify the facts of the case and that photographs should be taken as evidence, if possible. ^{175/} He informed that no ARC LIGHT strikes would be flown until further notice. He expected parallel instructions would be issued by the RVN within a matter of hours. He further instructed that, upon telephonic authorization from his headquarters, commanders would communicate the substance of this directive to their counterparts. ^{176/}

He directed there should be no public comment on these instructions nor discussions of any kind regarding the extension of the cease-fire, and that in conversations with Vietnamese counterparts it was to be made clear the United States had no intention of diminishing its full commitment to the security of Vietnam. He emphasized that, on the other hand, in connection with world-wide support of the RVN/Free World effort, it was essential the onus of responsibility for breaking the Christmas ^{177/} cease-fire rest squarely on the shoulders of VC/PAVN forces.

He desired that intelligence operations be stepped up across the board and that patrols and other measures associated with the security of U.S. forces be intensified immediately. He also requested that intelligence patrols and visual, IR and photographic aerial reconnaissance/^{178/} surveillance operations be increased immediately.

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On 25 December 1965, CINCPAC informed MMCC that he concurred with COMUSMACV that all restrictions be lifted immediately, 179/ and considered this action imperative for the safety of U.S. and ARVN forces. He further recommended that ROLLING THUNDER operations be resumed. 180/

CINCPAC, on 25 December, informed COMUSMACV and CINCPACFLT to modify his earlier message that day so that operations in Laos would resume, with no stand-down restrictions, except that aircraft based in SVN and on CVA's would not be used, adding that authority for overflight in both NVN and SVN had been withheld with regard to CVA flights in support of BARREL ROLL, STEEL TIGER, and YANKEE TEAM. 181/

CINCPAC informed COMUSMACV, Amemb Saigon, 2d Air Division and others on 25 December that, in view of resumption of air operations in SVN, the following applied: 182/

CBA support of RVN operations authorized as required.

SVN based aircraft cleared to support BR/SL/YT operations.

CVA aircraft cleared to overfly SVN in support of BR/ST/YT operations.

He informed that the following restrictions remained: 183/

No operations authorized in or over NVN.

No Arc Light operations authorized without JCS approval.

On 26 December 1965, CINCPAC granted COMUSMACV authority to resume

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offensive air operations in the RVN with unrestricted ground operations, and provided guidance for resumption of air operation in SVN and CVA aircraft support of BR/ST/YT operations. COMUSMACV was authorized to conduct offensive air operations in South Vietnam and air operations in Laos, however, no operations were authorized in or over NVN. 184/

On 26 December, COMUSMACV informed MACV that the Christmas stand-down or cease-fire had ended. He cautioned that absence of major action against or by MACV forces during this period undoubtedly had installed a false sense of security in some members of the command and had contributed to a drop in alertness on the part of others. With this in mind he directed commanders at all echelons to institute vigorous measures to restore optimum standards of security, alertness and readiness to meet any contingency. 185/

CINCPAC, on 26 December, expressed the following thinking on the cease-fire: 186/

A commander faced difficulties in the presence of the enemy when a cease-fire was extended on short notice.

The advantage of the cease-fire accrued to the enemy.

Lesson learned was that any future cease-fire should be planned in detail well in advance.

Aerial observation of key enemy installations in NVN should continue even during a cease-fire.

COMUSMACV stated, on 26 December, that just through living through

the Christmas cease-fire there were a number of observations he would like to make, adding that from a strictly military standpoint there were no advantages whatsoever in a cease-fire, and that there were formidable disadvantages which he listed as follows: 187/

The VC are free to move without hinderance and they demonstrated their ability to take full advantage of that opportunity.

By stopping all air and artillery interdiction and harassment, the many isolated posts, district towns, patrols and small units are increasingly vulnerable to Viet Cong attack. This is particularly true of mortar attacks as evidenced by the extensive mortaring of isolated points, district towns and artillery positions.

A psychological let down and a reduction in alertness among friendly troops is the inevitable consequence of a cease-fire. ARVN units in particular relax completely during such periods and although their patrolling and outposting is weak, at best, these activities come to a complete stand still during a cease-fire.

When hostilities are resumed at the initiative of the Viet Cong a number of casualties are inflicted which can be and often are attributed to the restrictions imposed on friendly forces.

COMUSMACV then stated that, from a political standpoint, only a few local advantages were seen. The participation of the Government in a cease-fire during Christmas and Tet may be viewed locally by some as a gesture of good will. On the other hand, it was the nature of the Vietnamese to reduce their military activities at the time of Tet. This would happen automatically, regardless of any announced ground rules or orders issued. There also were some serious political disadvantages

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on the local scene. COMUSMACV then made a sub-list of these, which were as follows: 188/

The Christmas cease-fire was clearly a U.S. initiative which the Vietnamese accepted with uncommon good grace notwithstanding the fact that it had not been coordinated with them and that they were confronted late in the day during the holiday period with a U.S. request which they could not easily turn down. Having accepted the cease-fire at the 11th hour they were then confronted late on Christmas Day in their homes and at their holiday retreats with another last minute request to extend the cease-fire to which they again acceded but with skepticism and a lack of enthusiasm.

Having agreed to an extension of a cease-fire so late in the day their message probably did not reach many of their regional and popular force posts or even some ARVN Battalions. They were then confronted just a few hours later with the necessity of terminating the extension. They agreed at 0300 hours in the morning to return to normal operations.

The entire series of events and last minute importuning of the Vietnamese could not help but make them wonder whether the Government of Vietnam or the Government of the United States is now at the helm. These actions provide ammunition to those Vietnamese elements who are not enthusiastic about the display of our heavy hand.

Militarily, COMUSMACV would prefer not to have a Christmas style cease-fire at Tet but rather a stand down of major offensive operations. However, he said that we must leave to those who can evaluate the worldwide impact and weigh the advantages of a Tet cease-fire against the military disadvantages on the local scene. He said we should favor the Mission Council Tet program, set forth in the American Embassy

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message 2167 dated 17 December 1965. In any event we should be permitted to resume full-scale military operations immediately upon the termination of any announced cease-fire, to include artillery harassment and interdiction and the launching of air strikes against Viet Cong forces, identified through intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance efforts, which should be intensified during the Tet period. 189/

He said that, to be specific, we should not announce exact dates and times but refer generally to Tet. After the Viet Cong times are announced, ours should be co-extensive, but not necessarily announced. Additionally, any large-scale Viet Cong movement detected should be attacked without hesitation whenever or wherever it occurs. He added he was certain the Viet Cong would resume hostilities at the end of any announced Viet Cong Tet cease-fire and that he believed we could have it both ways; i.e., we could resume military action for the protection and safety for Vietnamese, American and Free World Forces and at the same time produce evidence, in plenty, regarding Viet Cong resumption of hostilities. 190/

The pattern of resumed hostilities after Tet he felt would undoubtedly follow the pattern of Christmas Day and the early morning hours of 26 December. It was highly unlikely there would be any spectacular episode to which one could refer as a single reason for resuming operations. Rather, it was highly likely, he felt, there would be a number of scattered actions throughout the country, most of which would cause relatively few, but nonetheless regrettable, casualties.

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They concluded: "This is the long standing nature of war." 191/

192/
In summary COMUSMACV recommended:

That there be no cease-fire at New Year.

That the program for Tet set forth in Embassy Telegram 2167, dated 17 December, be followed in full with prior coordination and planning with the Government of Vietnam along lines already initiated. This program gives U.S. and the GVN the necessary flexibility and the advantages of the PsyOps and Chieu Hoi program. It also gives us military flexibility.

That immediately upon the termination of a Viet Cong period of cease-fire, U.S. and VN forces resume military operations including air strikes and artillery fire.

That the U.S. collect, as was collected on 25 and 26 December, a full record of Viet Cong actions and make them available to the press.

Finally, COMUSMACV felt that public announcement guidance should be broadened so that it might be handled in Saigon by the Embassy, the Government of Vietnam, MACV and the JCS in accordance with the situation as it developed. 193/

On 26 December, CINCPAC informed JCS that he concurred completely with COMUSMACV's comments on the cease-fire, given in his message that day, and in particular with his statement that, from a military standpoint, there were no advantages whatever in a cease-fire. He added that it was very dangerous to extend a cease-fire in RVN as the U.S. attempted to do this time. A local commander on the ground, he continued, was placed in a most difficult position. He had to decide how far he was

to allow the Viet Cong to go before using the forces available to him. The problems of passing instructions to lower echelons on short notice were great. He strongly recommended against any attempt to repeat a cease-fire extension in the RVN again. The advantages, he added, lie with the enemy, and, especially, with the unprincipled one we are facing. He felt the enemy would expect us to repeat our performance during Tet and would be better prepared to exploit the situation next time. ^{194/}

CINCPAC felt that, with regard to the Christmas Holiday stand-down, confusion existed as to the exact degree of cessation intended. With the initiating directive arriving close to the actual execution, a flurry of messages were required to get things moving on track. He pointed out that, if future stand-downs are directed, the planning should be completed well in advance, insofar as possible. The extension of the stand-down had caused more confusion. It appeared that the probability of an extension could have been anticipated, and provisions made, therefore, as a contingency in the overall plan. ^{195/}

To his mind, the implications of allowing airfields, such as Vinh, to go unobserved for over 48 hours were obvious, and the situation was fraught with danger. He recommended that reconnaissance of such key points should continue through any future stand-down. He noted during the Christmas Holidays the enemy was afforded an unimpeded opportunity to move men and material and to repair bridges, roads and facilities without harassment. ^{196/}

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A stand-down on ROLLING THUNDER, he commented, was not as immediately dangerous to our forces as was the general stand-down throughout the RVN. It did, of course, give the enemy the great advantages of operating from a sanctuary and relieved him of the constant threat of damage to his vital installations. The U.S. thus lost a great deterrent to his widening the war. He felt that the enemy's logistics buildup would be greatly facilitated unless we resumed ROLLING THUNDER immediately. Concluding his thinking above, he recommended that resumption of ROLLING THUNDER operations should be made at once. 197/

CINCPAC added, on 26 December, that the mention of a stand-down at New Year's was already being heard and stated: "I am opposed to any stand-down, for it can only provide more unhampered time to the enemy to prepare his offensive action. It further strengthens his belief that the American people are lukewarm about the war." He pointed out that although many disadvantages noted above would also be apparent during any Tet stand-down, it was difficult to see how we could avoid one after the Viet Cong generally went along with our initial 30-hour stand-down. If the U.S. ignored Tet, the enemy would be provided with a propaganda advantage difficult to refute. 198/

COMUSMACV, in a flash message to CINCPAC on 27 December 1965, stated that although he was not aware of all the considerations leading to the continuation of the stand-down in ROLLING THUNDER air operations over NVN, he considered immediate resumption essential, stating that, strictly from the standpoint of the war in South Vietnam, it was difficult

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to understand why the pressure had been taken off the nexus of direction, supply and manpower located in NVN. He continued that air attack against lines of communication was extremely difficult, in this part of the world, stating it was clear that air interdiction at any one point can be circumvented by the VC/PAVN forces and all local obstacles can be overcome by ingenuity and hard work, both of which the VC/PAVN had displayed in ample quantities. He felt, therefore, the U.S.'s only hope of a major impact on the ability of NVN to support the war in Vietnam was continuous air attack over the entire length of the enemy LOC's, from the Chinese border to South Vietnam, and within South Vietnam, adding that "although at any one point the impact may not be great, the cumulative effect of armed reconnaissance, bridge busting, rail cutting, barge sinking and forcing them to operate almost exclusively at night must be great." He pointed out that, notwithstanding the heavy pressure on the enemy's transportation system over the past nine months, they had demonstrated an ability to deploy forces into South Vietnam at a greater rate than the rate of deployment of U.S. Forces. ^{199/}

He noticed, since the 3rd of September, there was a steady decrease in ordnance-delivering sorties over North Vietnam. He stated: "During the period 3 to 16 September, 982 such sorties were flown. By 15 to 28 October, this had been reduced to 700, and in the period 10 to 23 December, it had further diminished to 662. I recognize that part of this can be explained by increased activity in Laos, but this does not change the basic fact that our pressure against North Vietnam is

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decreasing." ^{200/}

He added that considering the course of the war in South Vietnam and the capability which had been built up there by the PAVN/VC forces--the full impact of which we had not yet felt--the curtailment of operations in North Vietnam was unsound from a military standpoint stating that: "Indeed, we should now step up our effort to higher levels." ^{201/}

He informed that by separate message he was requesting the resumption of ARC LIGHT strikes in South Vietnam as a matter of military necessity. ^{202/}

On 27 December 1965, CINCPAC recommended to JCS that ROLLING THUNDER operations commence immediately. He stated that on 26 December, he had indicated some of the disadvantages in a continued stand-down of ROLLING THUNDER and had recommended immediate resumption, adding that on 27 December, COMUSMACV made a plea for this resumption and noted the decrease in ROLLING THUNDER strike sorties in the last three months and that he requested the pressure on NVN be increased. He further informed that, on both 12 and 27 December, he had recommended programs for ROLLING THUNDER designed to steadily increase the pressure on NVN, adding that these programs would drastically reduce the flow of military supplies reaching SVN and hence the Viet Cong. He concluded that: "The armed forces of the United States should not be required to fight this war with one arm tied behind their backs. I urgently recommend that ROLLING THUNDER commence immediately and that the target

programs presented by me on 12 and 27 December 1965 be approved." ^{203/}

On 29 December, COMUSMACV pointed out to the Ambassador in Saigon that, unless the U.S. escalated the war to the point where all weapons available were used against the enemy, he foresaw an extended war of attrition. This, he thought, we could win since our troops should be fresh because of the one year tour and, without fire power and mobility, he did not believe the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese could afford to sustain the heavy losses that would probably be theirs. However, he made the point that this would create some political difficulties because it was inevitable the American people would clamor for a quick victory which would be difficult to achieve without major escalation.

As of the end of the year, operations against North Vietnam had not been resumed and there was doubt as to when, if at all, these air strikes over NVN territory might be ordered. ^{204/} Taking advantage of this pause Hanoi expedited the infiltration of men, supplies and equipment into South Vietnam in order to strengthen the Viet Cong. ^{205/} The pause also allowed the U.S. to evaluate the effectiveness of air strikes and air programs as of the end of the year. ^{206/}

USAF jet pilots logged 10,750 strike sorties and dropped 23,610 tons of bombs over NVN in 1965. The operations covered most of the country outside of the Hanoi-Haiphong area. Several hundred bridges had been destroyed or damaged, thousands of military-type buildings smashed, roads and railways interdicted, runways of several airfields

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USAF SORTIE GENERATION RATES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>COMBAT SORTIES</u>	<u>AV NR ACFT POSS</u>	<u>SORTIE GENERATION RATE</u>	
				<u>PER MONTH/ POSS ACFT</u>	<u>PER DAY/ POSS ACFT</u>
F-100	June 65	1207	50.9	23.75	.792
	July	1769	54.5	32.46	1.082
	August	1747	56.5	30.92	1.031
	September	1860	61.4	30.29	1.010
	October	2050	60.1	34.11	1.137
	November	2191	76.8	28.53	.951
	December	2134	79.1	26.98	.870
F-105	June 65	1423	78.2	18.23	.608
	July	1851	76.7	24.15	.805
	August	1736	75.2	23.1	.77
	September	1802	76.5	23.9	.796
	October	1441	76.4	18.86	.629
	November	1703	77.3	22.03	.734
	December	1983	96.5	20.55	.663
F-4C	June 65	203	17.7	11.47	.382
	July	391	17.9	21.85	.728
	August	433	18.0	24.1	.803
	September	1260	52.9	23.82	.794
	October	1158	54.5	21.25	.708
	November	1537	75.9	20.30	.675
	December	1768	98.7	17.91	.577
B-57	June 65	424	25.1	16.9	.563
	July	630	25.8	24.42	.814
	August	591	22.1	26.75	.891
	September	533	21.3	25.02	.835
	October	515	20.4	25.25	.842
	November	537	20.1	26.72	.891
	December	542	20.2	26.83	.865
A-1E	June 65	873	46.5	18.75	.625
	July	691	49.0	14.13	.471
	August	908	49.8	18.22	.607
	September	1064	54.3	19.59	.653
	October	1360	53.2	25.56	.852
	November	1290	52.9	24.39	.813
	December	1568	58.9	26.62	.858
F-5A	October 65	155	12.0	12.91	1.615
	November	719	12.0	59.92	2.000
	December	643	11.5	55.91	1.803

Fig. 7

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2nd AD OUT OF COUNTRY SORTIES - COMBAT and SUPPORT

THOUSANDS

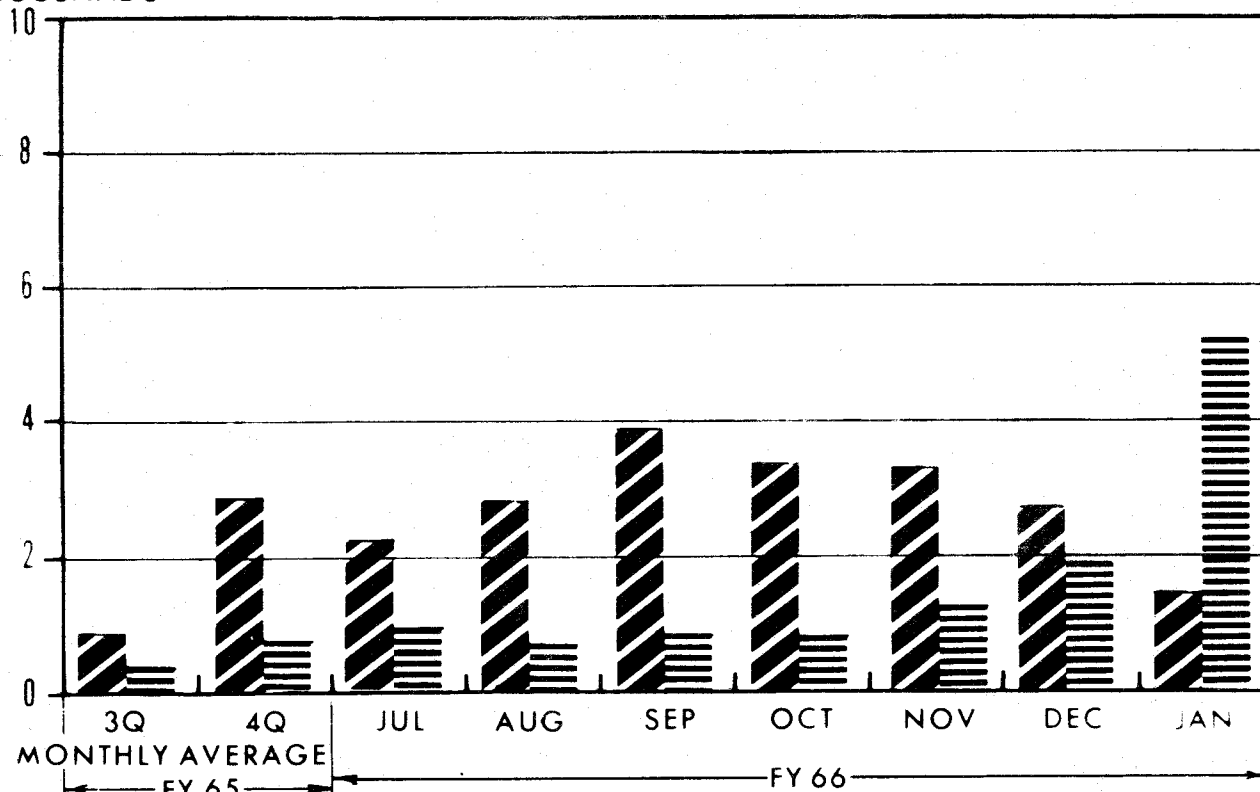


Fig. 8

	3Q	4Q	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
TOTAL FLOWN	1276	3673	3173	3538	4797	4235	4513	4654	6743
NORTH VIETNAM	926	2932	2216	2874	3926	3428	3231	2728	1469
USAF	761	2564	2127	2833	3904	3418	3220	2692	1469
COMBAT	619	1969	1641	1876	2831	2326	2217	899	578
COMBAT SUPPORT	142	595	486	957	1073	1092	1013	1926	891
VNAF	165	368	89	41	22	10	11	36	0
COMBAT	165	356	76	35	22	10	11	32	0
COMBAT SUPPORT	0	12	13	6	0	0	0	4	0
LAOS	350	741	957	664	871	807	1282	1926	5274
COMBAT	228	478	737	475	660	541	999	1508	4411
COMBAT SUPPORT	122	263	220	189	211	266	283	418	863

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2nd AD TOTAL SORTIES FLOWN * IN-COUNTRY vs OUT OF COUNTRY

THOUSANDS

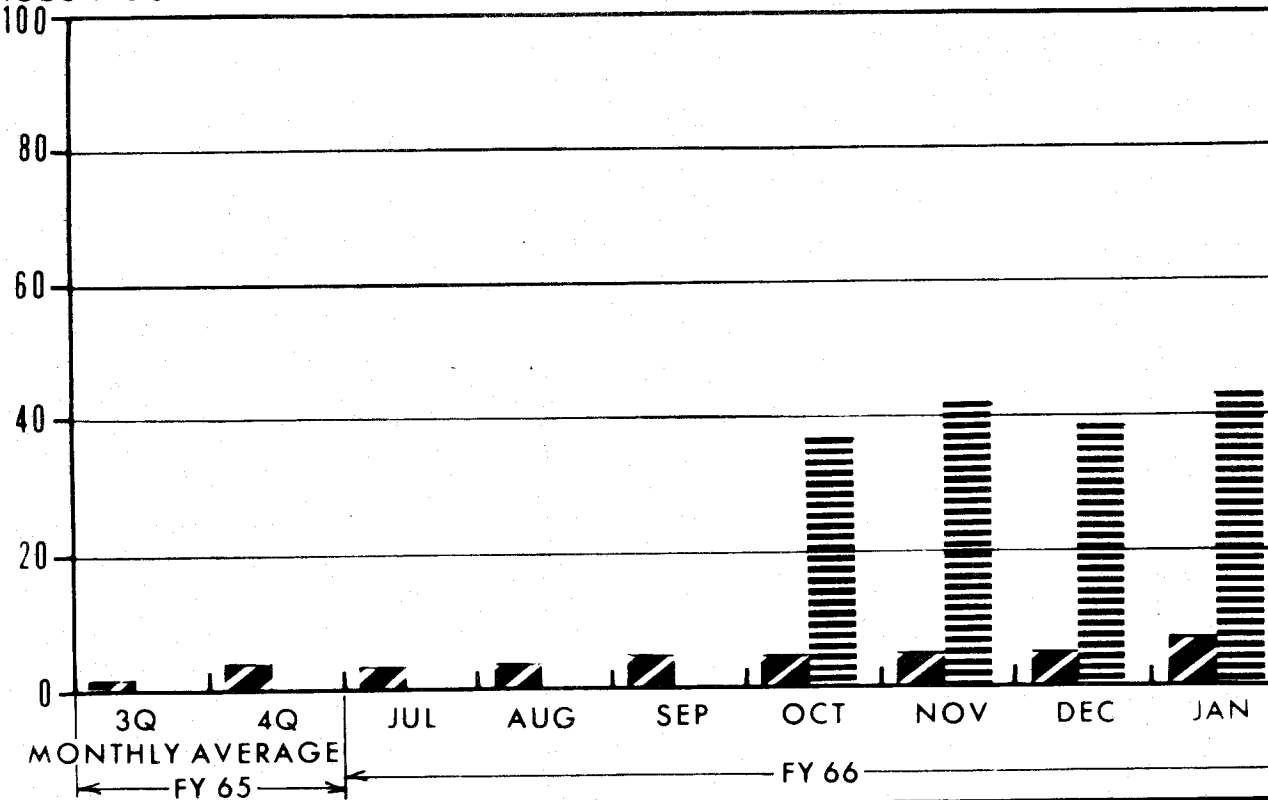
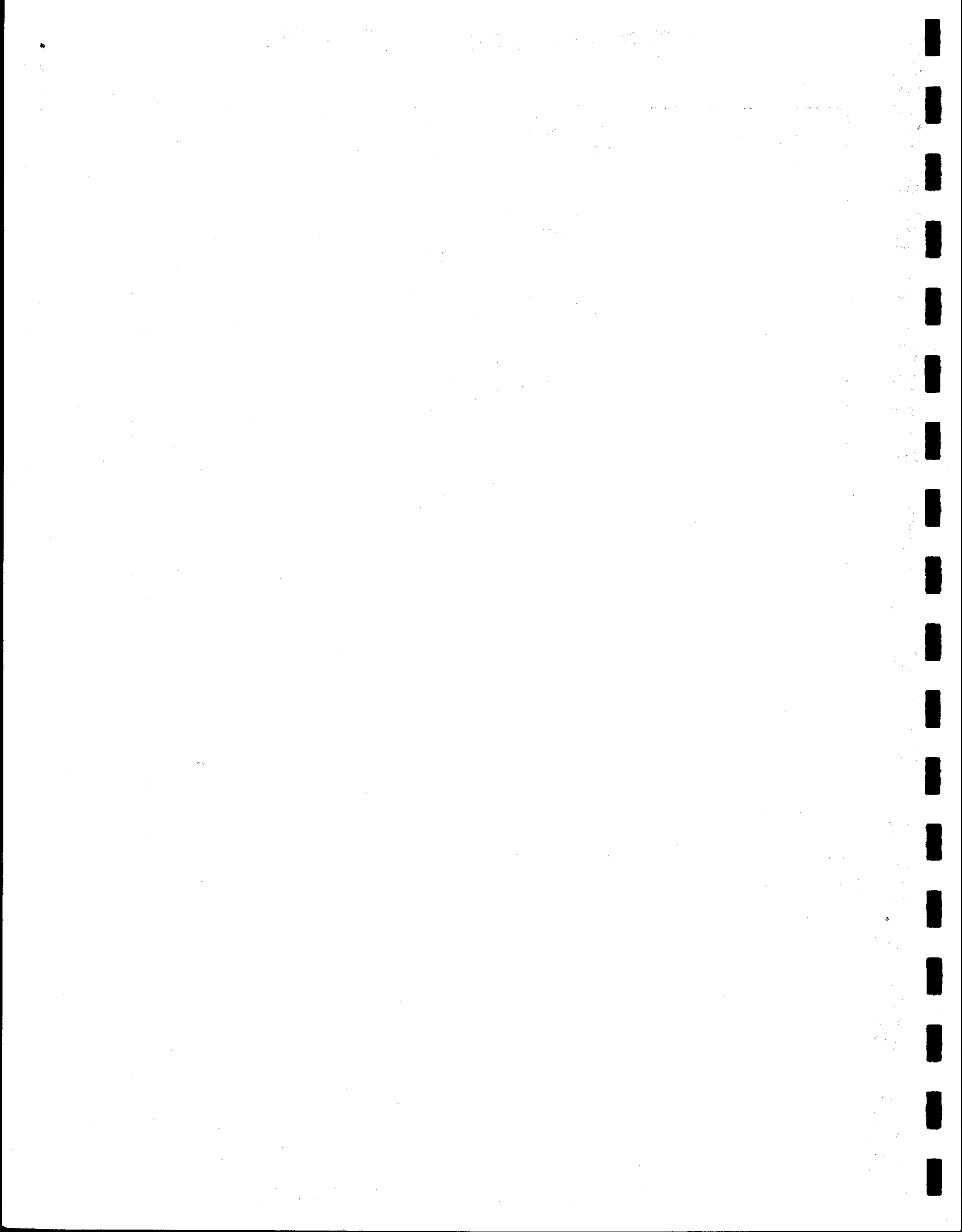


Fig. 9

	3Q	4Q	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
TOTAL FLOWN						41623	45951	43278	49443
OUT OF COUNTRY	1111	3305	3084	3497	4775	4225	4512	4618	6743
COMBAT	847	2447	2378	2351	3491	2867	3216	3301	4989
COMBAT SUPPORT	264	858	706	1146	1284	1358	1296	1317	1754
IN-COUNTRY						37398	41439	38660	42700
USAF						22430	23511	23415	28061
TACTICAL STRIKE	1364	2716	3652	3677	3631	4297	5234	5380	4257
NONSTRIKE	---	---	NO REPORT	---	---	18133	18277	18035	23804
VNAF						14968	17928	15245	14639
TACTICAL STRIKE	1289	1297	1692	2156	2353	3021	2713	2595	2520
NONSTRIKE	---	---	NO REPORT	---	---	11947	15215	12650	12119

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cratered and numerous anti-aircraft and SAM sites and radar installations attacked. During the last few months of 1965, an estimated 300 vehicles ^{207/} were destroyed in NVN.

14. Infiltration Interdiction

The staging and training of PAVN units for infiltration into South Vietnam continued during the year and Hanoi appeared to have made unprecedented efforts to infiltrate men and materials into SVN, to successfully support and supply Viet Cong military operations via Laos and Cambodia. ^{208/} A significant feature of the introduction of regular PAVN units into the RVN was the increasing rate of infiltration. In contrast to the early rate of three battalion equivalents per month during the latter half of 1964, by the end of the year (November 1965) there was growing evidence that NVN has sent as many as 12 battalions ^{209/} per month.

This accelerated infiltration rate was probably due to several factors, the primary one being the NVN revision of their estimate of forces needed to maintain "strategic mobility" in view of the buildup of U.S. and other Free World Forces. The apparent need of Hanoi and the Viet Cong for a military and psychological victory to illustrate that the Communists retained the initiative and to boost home front morale could have been among the several factors.

During the time PAVN regiments were infiltrating, North Vietnamese cadre personnel destined for political, economic, and military units

and organizations also continued to infiltrate. 210/

At the same time, new Viet Cong units were being formed in South Vietnam. 211/

Southward movements of supplies and Communist troops, on foot and by other means, into the Laotian Panhandle and into SVN was heavy by mid-year. On 1 June, alone, about 1,500 troops, mostly North Vietnamese, had been observed moving southward just below the Mu Gia Pass, and over 2,200 Pathet Lao and PAVN had been reported moving farther south on Route 92 in Southern Laos and its connecting roads eastward into South Vietnam. 212/ In addition, foot trails, rivers and canals were being used effectively to support the Viet Cong insurgency. This increasing PAVN infiltration was of major concern.

To limit the infiltration of war materials and enemy personnel into SVN by land, an air bombing program in the Laos Panhandle and in the northern Laos area was launched in 1965. The overall objective was destruction of VC Pathet Lao/Viet Minh bases and restricting over-land infiltration of material and men. The air effort was designed to block passes, interdict road segments, destroy convoys (moving both day and night), destroy bridges, supplies, ammunition and POL depots. It was to force the communists to move more at night. Bombing operations in the northern area of Laos were given the code name "BARREL ROLL" and the bombing operations in the Laos Panhandle was called "STEEL TIGER." 213/

At the request of COMUSMACV, the 2d Air Division in February

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provided a concept for close air support and interdiction in Laos. The Air Attache in Laos would request that close air support and interdiction be provided by the 2d Air Division Deputy Commander at Udorn. The Laotian ground commander would designate targets for all close support missions. Requests would be forwarded by the Air Attache to the Udorn ASOC by the fastest means available. The 2d Air Division Deputy Commander would operate a TACS, using the Udorn ASOC to control USAF aircraft. 214/

Forces available for these strikes, if authorized, would be the F-105 squadron at Korat and F-100 squadron at Takhli plus a squadron of F-100's at Da Nang. USAF T-28's based in Thailand would be used as FAC control aircraft. 215/

In March, JCS requested CINCPAC to plan and submit a program to inhibit the infiltration of PL/VM troops in the Laotian Panhandle, that area of Laos south of the Nape Pass. This program was to begin 3 April. JCS wanted the major infiltration routes, weather and other factors permitting, covered at least once daily and once nightly. CINCPAC was requested to consider the possibility of a few extended time-over-target armed recce for the purpose of testing capabilities and analyzing results of this type mission. JCS made it clear they wanted a full program, to include a plan for choke point reseeding, special air strikes against lucrative fixed targets such as supply points, rest and refueling areas and other military installations supporting infiltration. 216/

At that time, the following future actions were being considered to

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217/
improve the program:

Increased intelligence effort against VC/PL supply installations in the Panhandle.

Program of single small strikes to crater selected stretches of road, including minor bridges and defiles to augment effort of choke points. Consideration was given for possible use of armed reconnaissance of secondary targets (for day reconnaissance.)

That further expansion be made of extended period armed reconnaissance of major routes if warranted by initial flights.

That greater usage be made of harassment weapons, initially in choke points to discourage portage and repair. Butterfly bombs and gravel explosives were among weapons considered.

Traffic of messages presented a problem and relaxation of reporting on approval requirements would reduce the volume and thus lend aid to more effective operations.

It was important that removal of all restrictions be made as to frequency of Barrel Roll operations. Exceptions would be made only for those restrictions imposed by the Ambassador Vientiane, by the availability of resources and by other previous commitments.

In July 1965, COMUSMACV believed air strikes, followed possibly by hit-and-run ground raids with air support were the most feasible actions to reduce the infiltration. A major ground action would require the commitment of excessive forces. Since only meager reliable intelligence data on NVN activities in the southern Panhandle of Laos was available, COMUSMACV stated that an expanded effort, to include cross-border operations of small intelligence gathering units, was

necessary. Among his recommendations to SecDef were proposals to establish: ^{218/}

Ground/airmobile observer teams in Laos.

A tactical air control system that could bring all of COMUSMACV's varied assets to bear on the targets.

"Free strike" zones suspected of containing bivouacs, resting stops and supply areas.

Armed reconnaissance missions to cover rivers known or suspected to support infiltration.

In early September, in an effort to improve the detection and interdiction of infiltration through the Laotian Panhandle, COMUSMACV tasked his staff to explore the possibility of using III MAF's Air Wing for armed reconnaissance missions south of the 17th parallel. Second Air Division had found this mission difficult to accomplish because long endurance sorties of Thailand-based F-105 and in-country F-100 aircraft required refueling for which a shortage of tankers existed. ^{219/}

On 25 September, COMUSMACV requested CINCPAC's approval of an expanded air interdiction program. ^{220/} CINCPAC agreed that COMUSMACV could use more SVN-based aircraft for additional interdiction in Laos, but advised him not to use Thailand-based aircraft because of the sensitivity of U.S. air operations based in Thailand. CINCPAC concurred in USMACV plans; execution of the program was contingent on coordination and approval of U.S. Embassy, Vientiane. ^{221/}

In October, COMUSMACV in a message to CINCPAC stated that infil-

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tration of NVA forces had been greater than expected. Viet Cong action in the SVN highlands appeared designed to protect infiltration routes and to augment PAVN general reserve forces. COMUSMACV requested that the U.S. Ambassador, Vientiane, fully support a strike program against infiltration routes. ^{222/} COMUSMACV reviewed, with CINCPAC the difficulties in satisfying the targeting requirements of U.S. Embassy, Vientiane. As a result, arrangements were made for interested agencies to meet periodically with U.S. Embassy, Vientiane to develop suitable targets. ^{223/}

On 9 November, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that the border area of Cambodia contained motorable infiltration routes, command centers, base training and supply areas similar to those in Laos. Not until late 1965 had the full range of the enemy's effort in infiltration become apparent and, even then, COMUSMACV could not produce any "legal" evidence. ^{224/}

COMUSMACV requested he be authorized to conduct the following actions whenever U.S. troops operated in areas adjacent to the Cambodian border: Use of artillery and air strikes against enemy weapons firing against U.S. troops from positions up to 10 kilometers within the Cambodian side of the border; maneuver of U.S. ground troops up to two kilometers into Cambodia if necessary for the preservation of the force or the attainment of the objective within SVN; use of observation aircraft and airborne FAC's in support of U.S. operations; and the flying of reconnaissance and surveillance missions within a 10 kilometer strip on the Cambodian side of the border. ^{225/}

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*BY NOVEMBER?
FOR THE SAYS NOV.*

CINCPAC, on 20 September 1965, had presented his interim recommendations on actions to counter infiltration. In addition he gave his concept for NVN/Laos campaign support Phase II, and his ROLLING THUNDER plans as follows: 226/

Efforts against the source, distribution points and LOCS of VC/NVN logistics have been restricted in Northeast NVN and particularly in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. Until this restriction could be lifted, the air effort would harass infiltration but would not totally deter it. Interdiction would be enhanced by attacks against water LOC's, and against the port facilities at Haiphong, Hon Cok and Port Wallut. Mining of major port facilities would discourage shipping to NVN ports. Air interdiction of LOC's should be continued, but cannot be completely effective because of infiltration under cover of jungle foliage, by excart, bicycle and human convoy. The VC/PAVN regular force build-up and employment of larger forces in the highland provinces indicated increased NVN infiltrations would be required to support these operations. Courses of action could include: 227/

Destruction of Hanoi/Haiphong POL, warehouses, transshipment areas and port facilities.

Destruction of Hon Kay Port facilities.

Aerial mining of major ports.

Decreasing foreign shipping to NVN by warning international community of inherent danger at NVN ports in view U.S. air interdiction/mining operations.

Operations against infiltration LOC's in NVN, Laos and RVN.

Strike on a selected basis of LOC's in northwest NVN. Follow-up with restrike and armed recce.

Strike railroad and waterway LOC's in vicinity

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Hanoi, Haiphong and Port Wallut.

Strike NVN inter-coastal shipping as reliance is placed on this LOC consequent to destruction of land LOC.

Conduct naval shore bombardment of coastal and island logistic support areas and LOC's

Toward the end of the year, large scale NVN offensive operations in Pleiku Province indicated major elements of a PAVN Division size unit in that area. It was possible future operations of this type would be launched from secure bases in Laos or via Laotian LOC. 228/

CINCPAC noted that operations in Laos had been gratifying. However, large-scale VC/NVN offensive operations and their requirement for quantities of weapons and ammunition, coupled with the improving road systems in Laos, all dictated a need for more intensive cross-border operations in order to locate, harass and destroy VC/PAVN bases and LOC. 229/ To correct this situation, CINCPAC recommended the following courses of action: 230/

More extensive cross border operations (Shining Brass) by US Special Forces.

Follow-up attacks on VC bases and LOC's by air and regular US/RVN troops as appropriate.

Defoliate areas in SVN along possible infiltration LOC's from Laos to RVN. He added that approval for defoliation in Laos should be obtained. This would facilitate surveillance of these areas by Shining Brass and air recce.

He felt that whether VC/PAVN used Cambodian territory due to

active RKG cooperation, or the inability or failure of the RKG to control or patrol its frontiers, did not alter the fact a sanctuary existed which facilitated VC/PAVN establishment of support areas and infiltration LOC. He thought that, phased to the progress of planning for Shining Brass operations in Laos, timely action should be taken to develop plans for special operations and unconventional warfare in Cambodia. Such operations in concert with Shining Brass and Golden Eagle (if approved), would provide a means to locate, harass and destroy VC/PAVN, their bases and LOC. ^{231/} He suggested the courses of ^{232/} action could include:

Special operations and unconventional warfare in Cambodia.

Cross border operations into Cambodia.

CINCPAC felt that political and psychological ground work should proceed execution of such plans to gain international support for such measures. International opinion had been partially prepared for such U.S. action by press reports on Viet Cong use of Cambodia as a sanctuary. Indications were that the Cambodian sanctuary would probably become more important to VC/PAVN as the war progressed, more infiltration occurred and larger forces were involved. ^{223/} To counter this development CINCPAC recommended the following actions: ^{234/}

Conduct educational programs emphasizing VC/PAVN use of Cambodian sanctuary.

Issue formal protest warning to RKG addressing failure to prohibit VC/PAVN operations in Cambodia.

During his November trip to Saigon, the Secretary of Defense was

informed that the STEEL TIGER operation had not been fully effective in containing the infiltration of men and material. The Communists had been infiltrating major NVN forces into SVN through the Laotian Pan-handle in increasing numbers; the enemy had devoted major engineering efforts building road by-passing choke points, camouflaging route segments, repairing portage areas on major roads previously damaged by repeated air strikes; and the enemy was probably infiltrating up to 300 tons of supplies daily into SVN. The southeastern portion of the Pan-handle contained the best potential targets, but U.S. aircraft were not permitted to operate, in any substantial degree, in the southern Pan-handle area until November when RLG granted limited approval for U.S. operations in the area. ^{235/} In late November, the TIGER HOUND program was established to help counter this infiltration. A joint organization was established under the Commander, 2d Air Division. Air Force and Army aircraft would acquire targets using SLAR, IR, and VR techniques ^{236/} which would then be struck by Air Force, Marine, and Navy aircraft.

Consideration towards the end of the year was given to developing B-52 targets in southeastern Laos through such means as photo reconnaissance, OV-1 aircraft and CAS/Shining Brass. The importance of destroying enemy rest camps, truck parks, supply routes, infiltration routes and marshalling areas used by VC/NVA infiltration into SVN demanded ^{237/} the use of all available forces.

The U.S. Ambassador, Vientiane, concurred with COMUSMACV's request to the JCS for B-52 strikes against Viet Cong concentrations along the

Laos/SVN border. He cautioned, however, that any public statement regarding the strikes should describe it as "just another mission in 238/ SVN."

On 25 November, U.S. Embassy, Vientiane, approved the use of defoliants on infiltration routes in the Panhandle of Laos. In anticipation of communist propaganda, which might capitalize on this, he suggested the U.S. comment that air reconnaissance had been conducted over Laos, at RLG request, since May 1964. 239/

COMUSMACV, on 1 December 1965, noted that large-scale infiltration of the RVN by PAVN personnel with supply support was not accepted as a fact. As an initial step to reduce infiltration thru Laos, an intensive air campaign had been initiated along the RVN/Laos border within a limited area approved by Amemb, Vientiane, and the RLG. Additionally, permission to perform armed recce of foot trails, bridges and known infiltration routes had been requested for an area along the NVN/Laos border from the DMZ northward approximately 25 miles. 240/

COMUSMACV stated it essential that increased interdiction and surveillance effort be applied against these same infiltration corridors within southern NVN. He, therefore, requested CINCPAC to direct, as part of the current and subsequent ROLLING THUNDER operations, a minimum of 24 armed recce sorties daily in the area extending 50 kilometers north of the DMZ, with special emphasis on the mountainous portions adjacent to the NVN/Laos border. 241/

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He informed 2d Air Division that continued infiltration of enemy personnel and supplies in the vicinity of the DMZ demanded additional and aggressive effort. He desired emphasis be placed on interdiction of infiltration routes and way stations from the DMZ northward to a minimum of 25 nautical miles. He directed procedures be established whereby 2d Air Division aircraft might be launched and diverted against targets of opportunity in this area on an immediate basis. He instructed this subject be made a special topic of 2d Air Division wrap-up briefing at the end of each ROLLING THUNDER period. 242/

U.S. Air Operations in Laos complemented the RLAF effort and provided for greater interdiction coverage of communist lines of communications. It also allowed the RLAF to concentrate on close air support for FAR and Neutralist forces and thereby allowed them to be more responsive to the requirements of the FAR and Neutralist zone commanders. 243/

Strikes against fixed targets and armed reconnaissance of LOC's in Laos did much to harass, restrict, and disrupt movements of personnel and material destined for Pathet Lao and Viet Minh forces, or for further infiltration into South Vietnam. 244/

The political and military situation in Laos, though volatile, saw continued steady improvement. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, by then, had strengthened his political position and had increasingly opted against the communists. 245/

Laotian armed force capabilities had improved. The FAR, augmented

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and supported by the RLAF and U.S. air, had launched offensives and had recovered significant areas previously communist occupied. ^{246/} Air Force operations continued to play a decisive role in the outcome of ground actions. ^{247/}

15. Security of Operations in Laos

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma continued cooperation to the end of the year with U.S. efforts to cope with infiltration of NVN troops and supplies through Laos, but desired no publicity admitting conduct of U.S. operations in Laos. This was also U.S. government policy. Moreover, since this was recognized as a crucial aspect of U.S. relations with the Laotian Prime Minister, COMUSMACV agreed completely with Embassy, Vientiane, on this policy and reflected that it was of utmost importance all concerned maintain absolute security on information of what the U.S. was doing or planning to do in Laos. ^{248/}

At the end of the year, news articles in the U.S. were considered particularly damaging to U.S. relations with Laos and the latter's international position, especially with respect to the 1962 Geneva Accord. ^{249/}

The U.S. had acknowledged U.S. air reconnaissance over Laos only along the following lines: ^{250/}

In response RLG appeal for assistance as result PL/NVN attacks which forced General Kong Le's neutralist forces of RLF off the Plaines des Jarres in May 1964, the U.S. initiated reconnaissance flights over Laos.

The U.S. also acknowledged when necessary, that

armed escorts were authorized to fire if they were fired upon.

There had been no official acknowledgement of other AIR activities over Laos despite considerable press speculations and Communist charges.

COMUSMACV desired all concerned to be enjoined immediately to exercise greatest care and restraint in discussions to insure security of information, in accordance with the above-stated policy. He stated there should be no comment on U.S. operational matters concerning Laos and any speculation regarding possible U.S. actions should be strictly avoided. 251/

16. Psywar-Aerial Broadcast

CINCPAC desired to enhance the capability to exploit the psychological potential associated with air strikes through the introduction of an airborne loudspeaker system. He, therefore, requested COMUSMACV's views, on 2 April 1965, on the deployment of 16 loudspeaker aircraft into South Vietnam. 252/

JCS reviewed CINCPAC's recommendations and, on 19 July, approved the deployment of 16 U-10's and four C-47's with airborne loudspeakers. 253/

The C-47's arrived in August and the U-10's in November. They were dispersed to each of the four Corps areas. 254/

The program, by the end of the year, had brought back to RVN control and allegiance thousands of former VC's and people under their influence. 255/

17. Psywar-Operation Fact Sheet

To exploit air strikes against North Vietnam by propaganda leaflets, a program called "Fact Sheet" was established effective 2 April 1965. The leaflets were designed to convince NVN leaders of US/RVN willingness and determination to continue and, if necessary, increase attacks against NVN until it stopped its support of the insurgencies in Laos and RVN. PACAF would conduct the leaflet dropping operations, using leaflets prepared by COMUSMACV, in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy. ^{256/}

Following JCS approval on the program for conducting leaflet raids on North Vietnam, CINCPAC instructed PACAF to go ahead with these on a regular but random basis, using both USAF and VNAF aircraft. MACV would coordinate with the U.S. Embassy in developing the leaflets. ^{257/}

The concept for the mission was that, prior to an airstrike, the United States would warn the populace by leaflets or radio, that certain categories of targets were considered military objectives, and that the people should evacuate all targets of the type described. The first Fact Sheet mission was conducted on 14 April. ^{258/}

Operation Fact Sheet received increased emphasis during the month of June. By Joint State-Defense-USIA message, on 3 June 1965, the psyops objectives of the leaflet operations in North Vietnam were concurred in and the American Embassy, Saigon, was tasked to build up to a level of two drops, of about two million leaflets each week, as soon as feasible. To meet this goal, CINCPAC issued an Operations Order

to PACOM forces to increase the leaflet campaign to the desired volume, to conduct such operations in the same general areas prescribed for ROLLING THUNDER strikes, to inform the North Vietnamese of the air strikes and provide the what, where, why, and "how to survive" information. Leaflet operations north of the authorized ROLLING THUNDER target areas were to be submitted for approval on a case-by-case basis. CINCPACAF was designated as coordinating authority for air operations 259/ involving CINCPAC forces.

Intensified psychological operations were directed and, on 16 July, CINCPAC recommended Fact Sheet operations be conducted over the major North Vietnamese population centers, to include Hanoi and Haiphong. This was approved by the JCS, with the proviso that leaflet aircraft could 260/ not penetrate a 40 nautical mile circle around either Hanoi or Haiphong.

After JCS approval, CINCPAC's basic operation order of 17 December reflected the following restrictions: 25 nautical mile radius from Hanoi; 10 nautical mile radius from Haiphong; and a distance varying from 25 to 261/ 30 nautical miles from the Chinese border.

Fact Sheet was suspended during the latter part of December, due to the Christmas stand-down.

Until the early part of September, all Fact Sheet missions were executed by F-105 aircraft, using M129E1 leaflet bombs or MK-12 Mod 0 Smoke Tanks. On 10 September, a C-130 was used for the first time in the leaflet program. On this, the first night mission of the program,

nine thousand packets containing toys were dropped over North Vietnam in connection with Children's Day.

Through use of the high altitude wind drift dispersion method, target areas within Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) defended areas were reached without unduly endangering the aircraft or flight crews involved in the operations. Unusually favorable wind conditions permitted leaflet dissemination into the two lucrative target areas, Hanoi and Hai-phong, through use of this dispersion method. Other major targets leafleted were located in the heavily populated Red River Delta area of North Vietnam. 262/

A total of 77 million leaflets and 15 thousand gift kits were distributed under the Fact Sheet program during 1965. There were indications that the material was reaching the populace, that in some instances the morale of the people was being lowered, and that the North Vietnamese authorities were forced to take counter-propaganda actions. 263/ On this basis the leaflet operation was termed successful.

18. Herbicide Operation

The Herbicide Operation was a program carried out by specially equipped FARM GATE aircraft resources. The program aimed at accomplishing the following objectives: 264/

Defoliation.

Crop destruction.

Psychological effects of herbicide.

Since initiation of the herbicide program in RVN, defoliation had been extensively used while crop destruction had been conducted on a lesser scale. One problem with the herbicide program was that it was extremely slow in becoming operational. The studied causes of this problem were as follows: 265/

The U.S. was extremely cautious and took extraordinary steps in psychological operations and civil affairs to insure that the use of chemicals would not degenerate into adverse world-wide public opinion similar to the opinions that developed during the Korea conflict in which charges were made by the Communists to effect that indiscriminate use of chemical and biological agents was being made with result that the U.S. was placed continually on the defensive in this respect.

The U.S. and RVNAF procedures for initiation and approval of herbicide operations were lengthy and did not allow the flexibility necessary to gain required effectiveness from a tactical weapon. Great improvement in this respect came about when the approval authority was delegated to the American Ambassador/COMUSMACV and when better standard operating procedures were established in which guidance for implementing the SOP's was given.

By the end of the year, it was noted that improvement in the planning and execution of the herbicide operations was continuing; however, it was thought the desired impact on Viet Cong expansion might not be realized until herbicide operations, particularly crop destruction, could be tied to ground operations, as well as pacification plans. A start in this direction was noted. One of the problems remaining was that of reaction time, that is a shorter reaction time from initial discovery

of a Viet Cong crop or safe haven area to extension of herbicide operations. Time span desired was seven days at most, with one day preferred. ^{266/} It was noted that progress was being made in this direction.

Another problem in this program was the denial of freedom to commanders in the selection of weapons to strike and destroy vulnerable food resources and safe havens. ^{267/}

Defoliation began in the RVN, in 1961, on a limited basis. COMUSMACV and the Ambassador were given authority in November 1962 to approve defoliation requests from RVNAF. Approximately 349 kilometers of routes of communications were defoliated during 1963. The program was expanded to 882 kilometers defoliated in 1964, to include Viet Cong safe havens. At the end of 1965, requests were in support of both U.S. and ARVN combat forces to include defoliation of MSR's and around airfield, bivouac areas and supply dumps to increase security. Crop destruction operations continued to be effective in denying food resources to the Viet Cong. ^{268/}

It was recommended that herbicide operations continue with increased emphasis on defoliation in conjunctions with tactical operations. ^{269/}

19. Coin Operation in Thailand

A joint U.S. Thailand plan for the defense of Thailand, including military operations to hold the Mekong River Valley with its principal cities and military installations was suggested by CINCPAC in July 1964. The plan would be based on the defense of Thailand from a communist threat

in Laos. It was to consider aggression beyond subversion, but below overt aggression by NVN or Red China. If necessary, plans could call for the move of friendly forces into Laos, hopefully with the consent of the Lao Government. It was felt the plan might require both countries make available adequate force levels, with the U.S. prepared to employ under national command additional air, ground, and naval units. 270/

As a result, a Force Plan (CINCUSTAF 1/65, draft) was dated 26 October 1964 and signed by Commander in Chief U.S./Thai Forces (CINCUSTAF) Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn, RTA. In his role as Prime Minister, Thanom later gave RTG approval to the plan. 271/

After considering comments of the component commander, CINCPAC recommended to the JCS, on 6 February 1965, U.S. approval of the draft plan with changes. 272/ The general idea of the plan was to defend Thailand, secure the general line of the east and north banks of the Mekong River and deter communist incursions in Laos and Thailand. 273/

On 14 May 1965, the JCS approved the plan subject to changes recommended earlier by CINCPAC, and directed the Field Force plan be developed as soon as possible. After RTG approval of the plan, as changed, it was re-published as CINCUSTAF OPLAN 1/65 on 24 August 1965. The JCS also approved designation of COMUSMACTHAI as Commander, US/Thai Field Forces. 274/

COMUSMACTHAI's Field Force Plan (COMSTAFF OPLAN 1/65) was received at CINCPAC in late December. The plan was under review at the end of the year, and CINCPAC had asked component commanders to provide their comments

not later than February. ^{275/}

CINCPAC, in March 1965, proposed to the JCS that COMUSMACTHAI be established as an Air Force Lieutenant General, separate from MACV, and that a joint staff be built in Thailand in preparation for transition to COMUSSEASIA, if required. At the time, the Chief of Staff of the Army also submitted proposals concerning the organization of MACV, which were under consideration. These called for redesignation of the U.S. Army Support Command, Vietnam, as the U.S. Army, Vietnam, making it the Army Component Command, under MACV, with the Army LtGen serving as DEPCOMUSMACV acting in the Army Component Commander role. They also called for an Air Force LtGen in a Deputy COMUSMACV role and an increase in Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps representation on the MACV J2 and J3 staffs. Further, they asked for transfer of advisory detachments from MACV to U.S. Army, Vietnam (USAVN), removal of as many non-tactical and non-combat functions from MACV as possible, and retention of SOG and JRATA under MACV. CINCPAC was asked by the JCS for his comments on these proposals. ^{276/}

The most important action related to the force buildup in Thailand was the establishment of a Deputy Commander concept in Udorn. An organization for Deputy Commander 2/13 Thailand was established in November 1965. This position was created as a single Air Force focal point for all Air Force activity in Thailand. ^{277/}

During 1965, communist operations in Thailand included ambushes, sabotage, a planned attack against an isolated police post and murder.

The communists had a modest capability to conduct insurgency, however, attacks against large and well-defended installations did not occur during the year.

CINCPAC noted toward the end of the year, in reference to U.S. position in Thailand, that: 279/

"...things are beginning to tighten up. We need to adjust our thinking on how we can base our forces in Thailand and what facilities we have there. The activity in Thailand has become more and more important. Initially...we considered Thailand just a holding ground for tactical air, but in the long range and strategic view we have a large stake in Thailand. I feel confident that we are going to go ahead with establishing a major logistics base in Thailand to include a pipeline to assure the proper flow of fuel and a very substantial base at Korat...

...As we increase our activities in Thailand, we must appreciate the fact that we are operating at the express invitation of the Thais...and...at the same time...appreciate what a tremendous help it has been to our combat offensive in Vietnam to have the use of Thai bases..."

A comprehensive presentation of developments in Thailand and U.S. response is given in CHECO SEA Study "USAF Operations from Thailand" 1964-1965.

20. Carrier-Based Operations

On 19 April, the RVN granted clearance for U.S. Navy participation in naval air and gunfire missions in support of RVNAF/MACV operations. 280/

Carrier-based aircraft of the 7th Fleet were requested for use against Viet Cong targets in the RVN by COMUSMACV, on 5 May, after it was

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learned that RVN-based aircraft were insufficient for the execution of in-country tasks. There was a deficit of 50 sorties in II and IV Corps, COMUSMACV reported. CINCPACFLT was authorized to provide support for in-country strikes. 281/

According to CINCPAC, an increased effort by carrier-based aircraft in May, as the result of the ROLLING THUNDER stand-down 10-17 May and the Bien Hoa explosion incident, was possible only by retaining two CVA's in daily combat operations in excess of three weeks. A need for repairs, crew rest, and upkeep would require a reduction in this abnormally high tempo. The carriers were required because of an increase in the order of 2000 fixed-wing sorties in May, over the month of April, which had been expended mainly against interdiction targets. 282/

On 26 May, CINCPAC approved a MACV request for a CVA to support in-country operations for eight to 12 days a month, beginning after the first of June. The carrier would be expected to provide about 700 to 900 sorties a month. 283/

The loss of USAF aircraft at Bien Hoa during the explosion incident on 16 May caused CINCPAC to commit one carrier to MACV on a continuous basis, until September, for in-country support. 284/

On 10 June, MACV submitted an emergency request to CINCPAC for in-country air support due to the major air action at Dong Xoai, which was consuming all available in-country air assets. These assets were reduced by minor battle damage (19 USAF aircraft). The commitment to Dong Xoai

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left no capability for other major operations which might develop. ^{285/}

CINCPAC directed PACFLT to maintain five carriers in West Pac, until otherwise directed, due to the needs of SVN, until bases and facilities were completed to accomodate more ground-based aircraft. This was expected to take at least four months. While he regretted the delay in the departure of the Coral Sea to the U.S., CINCPAC said that four CVA's just were not enough without another carrier as backup. ^{286/}

Two Navy carriers were based near Point Yankee in the South China Sea to support operations in Laos and North Vietnam. Since ROLLING THUNDER required 24 hour operations and continuous deck handling of aircraft, the two carriers normally split the day into 12 hour increments, amounting, in fact, to a 15-to 18-hour day for each ship. The carriers were on station 30 - 60 days. These two carriers, plus the carrier off Nha Trang used for in-country support, required a minimum of five carriers in the South China Sea area in order to keep the average at-sea operating time for each carrier below 80%. ^{287/}

CINCPAC wanted to reduce the number of CVA's in SEA. Keeping five in the area was detrimental in the long haul, he said, due to compression of training, maintenance, and overhaul schedules. With four carriers, one could be available for in-country support 8-12 days a month. CINCPAC wanted COMUSMACV to reevaluate his needs to see if this capability would be enough. The F4B squadron at Da Nang, the F-100s at Tan Son Nhut, and the B-52 capability could handle the extra load, he said. ^{288/}

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COMUSMACV did not feel it prudent to reduce carrier support for in-country strikes and CINCPAC, on 27 June, agreed. One carrier would 289/ continue to provide for this support.

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CHAPTER V

DEFENSE AND SUPPORT

1. Base Security

On 5 January 1965, COMUSMACV provided detailed requirements for strengthening the defense of air bases. He outlined certain precautions against enemy mortar fire and the need for security zones around critical installations. ^{1/}

During the February (1965) Commander's Conference, the 2d Air Division Commander discussed base security and attendant actions taken to reduce vulnerability of major bases in South Vietnam against attack by the Viet Cong. ^{2/} The Viet Cong mortar attack on Bien Hoa, on 1 November 1964, had focused attention on the serious question of U.S. base defense in the Republic of Vietnam. ^{3/} Study of the battle revealed that, with the enemy extending his control to encompass most of the South Vietnam country side, it was becoming more important to think in terms of defense of U.S. installations with U.S. resources, if necessary. Bien Hoa was a clear case in point. ^{4/} General Moore commented on this battle, with reference to base security, and found the problem to be two-fold: Internal security of the base itself; and area security beyond the perimeter of the base. ^{5/}

The two principal threats to U.S. bases in South Vietnam were infiltration and attack by mortar and similar weapons. Mortar attacks were considered by the Commander to be a very serious problem, since such

attacks achieved a high degree of surprise. They could be accomplished with inherent speed, and with a high probability of success, prior to initiation of signifi-defensive reactions. ^{6/}

As a result of the Viet Cong successes in base attacks, USAF guards were placed on selected sensitive key installations and aircraft although, as General Moore pointed out, internal security was the responsibility of the VNAF. ^{7/} Also, the number of such guards were automatically increased during times of intensified alert as when 2d Air Division went into DEFCON-2 in February. During such times, the number of key facilities to be secured are increased. External security, he added, was the responsibility of the ARVN. ^{8/} To improve the base security posture ^{9/} General Moore stated that the following specific actions had been taken:

"Preparation and exercise of detailed plans providing for internal security. These plans were developed under the supervision and with the assistance of U.S. Army specialists. They include siting of heavy caliber machine guns, construction of sand bag personnel revetments, zeroing of the counter mortars to selected key points within a radius of 4,000 yards outside the perimeter of each base.

"Aircraft dispersal, although limited, has been maximized and includes mingling tactical aircraft with non-tactical and one type of aircraft lost should a mortar attack or act of sabotage occur within a particular area.

"Counter mortars are now in place at all four bases, plus counter mortar radars at Da Nang and Bien Hoa.

"Ground surveillance radar to detect personnel movements in the peripheral zone, is in place at Bien Hoa and is undergoing evaluation.

"With the exception of Nha Trang, all bases have two armed Hueys on five minute alert to ward off or counter night attack.

"Alert flare aircraft are positioned at Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut and Da Nang. Four A-1E Air Commando aircraft are on five minute alert at Bien Hoa during the hours of darkness.

"Plans for the evacuation of aircraft from each of the main bases have been prepared. It is very unlikely that aircraft would be evacuated during an attack; however, aircraft would be evacuated if reliable intelligence of a pending attack is received.

"Critical areas around the perimeter of the bases and within a 4,000 yard radius have been mined to discourage penetration by the Viet Cong should they slip through ARVN patrols.

"At each base the internal and external security operations is being integrated through a single centralized agency - the Joint Operations Center. This Center is manned by VNAF and ARVN, and has U.S. Army and USAF representation."

General Moore added that considerable progress had been made in reducing the vulnerability of U.S. bases to Viet Cong attack but that it was a continuing problem. The problem remaining was compounded by the fact the U.S. had only limited responsibility for base security and limited resources for such defense. ^{10/} He presented the following ^{11/} thoughts:

"ARVN units have been assigned responsibility for patrolling the outer zone around each air base. However, despite strong efforts by U.S. Advisors, the frequency and strength of the patrols are inadequate. Small Viet Cong squads can slip between patrols and rapidly set up a mortar or recoilless rifle, fire a few rounds, and withdraw, with a

high degree of probable success.

"The fact that we are tenants on VNAF bases prohibit us from controlling personnel movements on base, both on the flight line and main base proper. We cannot deny area of the base to the VNAF nor can we always be certain that an individual who appears to be a VNAF is, in fact, a VNAF. There have been occasions when the Viet Cong have been caught in VNAF uniforms. The internal security problems of the bases are compounded by the large number of Vietnamese laborers who are continually working in and around our facilities."

To bolster base security, the Army was planning, in April, for the dispatch of a Hawk battalion. Two batteries would be assigned to the defense of Nha Trang and two for the Qui Nhon area. ^{12/} Later, due to the extreme vulnerability of Udorn and Nakhon Phanom to air attack, resulting from a lack of an air defense alert in the area, the Deputy Commander of the 2d Air Division at Udorn asked for four F-4C's to be based thereat. ^{13/} Also, the Vice Commander of PACAF, during a visit to SEA in June, recommended dispersal at Bien Hoa by using the 100-foot wide taxiway, with aircraft tails off the taxiway, so as to reduce vulnerability. ^{14/}

General Moore's plans, early in the year, for the evacuation of aircraft upon receipt of reliable intelligence on a pending attack on an air base proved to be very effective in reducing aircraft losses to enemy attack on the Nha Trang Air Base, on 28 June 1965. On that day at 0111H, Nha Trang was attacked by Viet Cong mortars. All but one USAF aircraft, a flare ship, had been evacuated earlier (0930H) due to an

intelligence warning that an attack would occur. The attack lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Approximately forty 81mm/60mm mortar and 57mm recoilless rifle rounds landed on the base. Some airmen were slightly wounded, one seriously, all in the POL vehicle area. A VNAF cadet was killed and 16 other Vietnamese wounded. Information obtained from a captured Viet Cong at 1500H, 27 June, substantiated the warning received by intelligence. This was that the Viet Cong Battalion K-71, consisting of 500 men, was approaching Long Van Air Base from east of Dien Khanh, with the intent of attacking the airstrip. A VNAF H-34 was destroyed by a direct hit and two others damaged. The C-123 flareship was damaged by shrapnel. Had the plan devised by 2d Air Division not been used, losses, including aircraft, would have been considerably more. ^{15/}

In order to increase base security, manpower packages for additional air police at Pleiku and Binh Thuy were sent by 2d Air Division to PACAF, in October, with a request that immediate action be taken. Both bases were in high threat areas and the threat was expected to grow as operational VNAF and USAF units moved in. In October, one security officer and 24 airmen were authorized for each base for police duty, a grossly insufficient number. Additional manpower for air police duties at Cam Ranh Bay, Phan Rang, and Tuy Hoa were also projected and the 2d Air Division wanted these considered in terms of the MACV-directed 229 hour work month, rather than the USAF 171 hour month. ^{16/}

On 10 October 1965, CINCPAC informed COMUSMACV that CSAF would examine airfield security. He asked COMUSMACV to prepare a detailed

background briefing with current evaluation and current assignment responsibility for tactical and internal security, control of lighting, camouflage, revetments, restricted areas, sentry dogs, etc. ^{17/}

In response to CINCPAC's request, COMUSMACV, on 11 Nov 1965, concluded that as a result of the MACV/USAF survey of airfield security, the defense being provided air bases in South Vietnam was in balance to the forces available and nature of the threat. ^{18/} At each base, there was serious risk of aircraft and facilities being taken under mortar and/or light artillery fire. Commando-type raids by small groups were to be expected. Risk would exist, even though a significant portion of ground forces were tied to air base defense roles. In COMUSMACV's judgement, the risks were significant but not critical. Any buildup of USAF internal security forces and application of lessons learned should reduce the probability of major damage to air elements by means of enemy ground action. Additional forces, he said, were not required ^{19/} but the problem had significant justification for Phase II forces.

Priorities for ground air defense units were modified somewhat by 2d Air Division during December. Priorities were established for HAWK units in the following order: Phan Rang, Tuy Hoa, An Khe, Udorn, Ubon, Korat, Takhli, Don Muang, and Sattahip. This would have the effect of diverting certain Phase II and IIA units to Thailand. Also, in-country priorities were listed in the following order: Da Nang, Chu Lai, Cam Ranh Bay/Nha Trang, Tan Son Nhut/Bien Hoa, and An Khe. ^{20/}

2. Da Nang Defenses (An Example of Base Security)

Prior to 1 June 1965, the U.S. Marines had proposed to assume both the tactical control function and the air defense role from the USAF in the Da Nang area, and had made representation to CINCPAC supporting their position. The Da Nang Air Defense Sub-Sector's Air Defense Battle Commander felt that such a move was not logical because the Air Force had an established Combat Reporting Post (CRP) at Da Nang, with operating communications, and air defense type aircraft (F-102) in place. However, there was no Air Force point of contact with authority to act on matters of air defense, and coordinate problems of aircraft control. The Da Nang Base Commander and the Radar Site Commander made commendable efforts to fill such a role, but it was obvious that a direct representative of 2d Air Division was required. Consequently, the Air Defense Battle Commander, Da Nang Air Defense Sub-Sector was assigned to act in the capacity of coordinator, in addition to his main position of Air Defense Battle Commander. This responsibility became a 24 hour capability and resulted in the Marines agreeing to a subordinate role in air defense, and in the tactical control system for their two radar installations. By 1966, the Office of the Air Defense Battle Commander was the focal point of coordination for all services on matters of aircraft control. ^{21/}

The South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) initially objected to the assignment of USAF personnel specifically to an air defense activity. They felt that air defense was a National responsibility for which they

were responsible. After several months, the Air Force Section of the Advisory Group in Saigon extracted an agreement whereby the USAF supported the VNAF in the air defense effort. This cleared the air and the problem was resolved without further difficulties. 22/

By the end of 1965, air defense reaction time was considerably enhanced upon completion of the revetment hardstand areas and supporting taxiways at the Da Nang Air Base. There were, however, occasional delays in air scrambles due to heavy traffic conditions. Completion of a second runway would alleviate this condition. 23/

Project "Hammock" (information concerning friendly and enemy air movements outside the limits of land-based radar), was initiated. It provided a more comprehensive picture of the air situation and aided in aircraft identification. 24/

The FPS-29 Search Radar at Da Nang was excellent for tactical control purposes, but had two serious shortcomings for air defense: First, there was no ECM capability and jamming rendered the site non-operational. Second, the site capability to obtain a SIF/IFF readout was extremely limited. 25/

Until December 1965, a detachment of six F-102 aircraft were assigned TDY at Da Nang to fulfill the air defense requirements. They flew six to eight sorties per day for training aircrews and controllers. Upon arrival of the replacement F-4C unit, virtually all intercept training ceased because fragged escort and CAP missions absorbed the

entire maintenance capability of the unit. Consequently, aircraft detailed to air defense alert could not be flown except for active air defense scramble. Intercept proficiency of both aircrews and controllers suffered accordingly. ^{26/}

Air Defense in the Da Nang Air Defense Sub-Sector had both USAF and Marine aircraft on air defense alert, at the end of the year. Additionally, the Marines had six light anti-aircraft missile (LAAM) batteries operational, and the Navy provided CAP and carrier aircraft on alert-- primarily for protection of the fleet. There were four radar sites with an intercept control capability, and the Navy had radar coverage over the Gulf of Tonkin. This equipment provided considerable potential, but as a system it had never been tested. A local Da Nang Air Defense Sub-Section Battle Plan defined in precise detail the actions of each element of the system under conditions of enemy air attack. ^{27/}

3. Air Defense

In regard to air defense, PACAF said that the addition of radars at Qui Nhon and Nha Trang would adequately satisfy the air defense requirement. Radar at Tay Ninh and Ca Mau would be needed for the offensive COIN mission. It felt the Marine UPS-1 at Da Nang should be moved to Monkey Mountain to improve target detection and training capability. An additional Hawk element would be required at Chu Lai. ^{28/}

The air defense posture on U.S. installations in RVN by mid-year was designed to meet the primary threat imposed by the introduction of

eight IL-28's to Phuc Yen. The IL-28 had a radius of action of 320 NM with a Lo-Lo-Hi Tactic, which would bring Da Nang, Chu Lai, and Udorn within range. 29/

At Da Nang, radar coverage below 500 feet above the terrain extended only 10 miles inland. Two Hawk battalions, totalling 36 missiles, were on 24 hour alert at Da Nang with a one minute reaction time. Four F-102's were on five minute alert, the remaining five on one hour alert. Base loading comprised 211 U.S. aircraft at Da Nang, 38 at Chu Lai. For air defense, there were nine F-102's, 14 F-104's, and 15 F-4B's at Da Nang. The additional F-4B squadron and Hawk battery scheduled for Da Nang would bolster defense. There were no air defense aircraft at Chu Lai. 30/

Saigon, which was vulnerable to low attack (500 feet above terrain or below) from west clockwise to the south, had radar coverage which would give about four minutes warning time. Activation of the Tay Ninh warning site, 45 miles northwest of Tan Son Nhut, expected in the latter part of June, would increase warning time to Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut to 10 and 13 minutes. 31/

Four F-102's at Tan Son Nhut were on five minute alert, the remaining ten on one hour alert. Base loading consisted of 209 U.S. aircraft at Tan Son Nhut and 163 at Bien Hoa, including 14 F-102's at Tan Son Nhut and none at Bien Hoa. An additional 18 F-100's were scheduled to move to Tan Son Nhut. 32/

The Secretary of Defense in mid-September 1965, requested the JCS to make recommendations with respect to any necessary intensification of air defense and early warning capability required to properly defend South Vietnam and U.S. forces there. ^{33/}

PACAF, in November, discussed some of the problems of protection of U.S. bases in SEA against air attack. Considerable concern was felt at all levels about the adequacy of protection against air attack. The close proximity to enemy territory of some of our key bases was of particular concern, especially when coupled with vulnerability to low-level attack resulting from terrain masking of radar coverage. PACAF felt that our interceptor posture was less than desired but added that this posture did represent a reasonable capability considering radar limitations. One example given was the Army and Marine Hawk missile which relied on radars. Even though fast-reaching, they lost effectiveness when detection ranges were reduced. To meet the need for anti-aircraft automatic weapons for defense against low flying enemy aircraft, the JCS directed the Army to activate defense units for deployment to SEA. Six 40mm M-42 (Duster) battalions and six quad .50 cal M-55 batteries were being formed and it was estimated that the first battalion could be deployed to arrive in SEA by 1 April 1966. ^{34/}

^{35/}
4. Summary of Significant Air Defense Actions

On 8 July 1965, PACAF designated the Mainland Southeast Asia Air Defense Sector as a Region and, at the same time, established the SEA

West Air Defense Sector (SEW) and the SEA East Air Defense Sector (SEE). (SEE was further divided into the Da Nang and the Saigon Sub-Sectors.)

To provide support and management of all the radar sites in the MSEAADR, the 6250th Tactical Air Control Group (prov) and the 6250th Tactical Communications Squadron was formed at Tan Son Nhut AB on 1 August 1965. With the ever increasing air activities in Southeast Asia, the need for additional radar control facilities became evident.

Site surveys were made at Dong Ha, Dalat, Nha Trang, and Qui Nhon in RVN; and Mukdahan, Bang Sung and Takhli in Thailand.

On 1 September 1965, USMC F-4B aircraft assumed air defense alert status at Da Nang AB. On 30 September, PACAF established new boundaries for the Mainland Southeast Asia Air Defense Regions, which included a much greater area seaward. On 25 October the function for advising and training VNAF AC&W personnel was assumed by the 2d Air Division.

On 6 December 1965, a Control and Report Port (CRP) was established at Dong Ha, just south of the DMZ. This action was taken because of the vulnerability of the Da Nang complex, the increasing MIG/IL-28 threat, and the basic concept of air defense which dictated that an attacking force be engaged as far from the target complex as possible.

5. Tactical Air Control System

Because of the large number of U.S. aircraft introduced into the conflict during the 1965 buildup, a plan for the establishment of an

Integrated Tactical Air Control System (ITACS) was initiated. This plan had its genesis in the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, August 1964, at which time it became apparent that the tactical air forces in SEA required systemized control and communications that would integrate command and control elements. This plan provided for developing an integrated system to support U.S. and allied operations in SEA including air defense, tactical strike, and traffic control. The inability of host countries to man, operate, maintain and support such a system would necessitate the U.S. to provide overall support which would include manning, facilities, logistics, funding and communications. 36/

As of November, a new tactical control group, two additional tactical control squadrons and two tactical control maintenance squadrons had been organized to provide logistic and training support for ITACS. PACAF estimated, in November 1965, that full implementation would require approximately 18 months--inputs of the newly authorized 2290 personnel were to be time-phased with the equipment and facility buildup. The objective of this U.S. support was to assure immediate response to U.S. operational requirements, and to train host country forces in attaining self-sufficiency. 37/

In November, PACAF stated that the 2d Air Division Commander would be in charge of ITACS with a primary TACC at 2d Air Division Headquarters. There would be three Tactical Air Control Centers to direct air support sub-systems and 19 AC&S sites. In addition to overall supervision of in-country operations, this primary TACC would exercise centralized

control of all out-of-country USAF operations. Control of USAF operations in RVN would be delegated to the jointly manned VNAF TACC at Tan Son Nhut. PACAF further informed that for in-country operations five Direct Air Support Centers and over 100 Tactical Air Control Parties would support the ground forces. The in-country AC&W sub-system would be increased from eight to 13 radars. ^{38/}

Early in July, a high state of readiness was being maintained in North Vietnam with emphasis on civil defense and increased readiness among air defense units. The defensive circle of SA-2 sites around Hanoi consisted of four completed sites with a fifth, discovered on 4 July, under construction to the northeast of the city. With the completion of a sixth and final site, then thought to be in progress, Hanoi would have an effective ring of missile defenses. As of early July, no SAM equipment had been positively identified at any of the Hanoi sites; however, once construction was completed, the entire system could achieve an operational capability within a few days provided sufficient numbers of trained Soviet or North Vietnamese personnel were available. ^{39/}

The status of the SAM defenses in North Vietnam was clarified on 24 July when a U.S. aircraft was shot down by surface-to-air missiles. The retaliatory attack on 27 July against the two suspected sites resulted in the loss of four aircraft to AAA and automatic weapons fire. There were no indications that missiles were responsible for the loss of any of these planes, or that missiles were fired on this occasion. In view of accumulated ELINT/Photo evidence, the five SAM sites around

Hanoi were all declared to be operational. It was felt that additional SAM sites would appear around other important target areas and that the Soviets would intensify their efforts to provide North Vietnam with an effective air defense capability against U.S. air attacks. Both the USSR and Communist China were supplying AAA weapons to NVN in great quantities. The missiles, it was felt, would be used against high-flying aircraft and AAA and small caliber weapons would be used to throw up a barrage of fire for low flying aircraft. ^{40/}

During early August, the surface to air missile capability increased, with more missile sites and the movement of missiles from one position to another. It was believed that the Soviets were responsible, almost in toto, for the SAM operations in NVN. ^{41/}

It was also believed that the Soviets had developed an operational concept for the SA-2s which called for deployment of (probably) a few systems into areas where attacks against U.S. aircraft could be carried out and then rapidly evacuate the semi-prepared position to avoid retaliatory strike damage. The road transportable SA-2 lent itself to this type of an operation. The Soviets probably expected to accomplish the following with this new operational scheme: ^{42/}

Employ the SAM capability against U.S. aircraft without drawing retaliation in the "sanctuary" areas (Hanoi-Haiphong area and NNE DRV) of North Vietnam.

Limit the freedom of operation of U.S. air strike elements in the DRV.

Attrit U.S. aircraft inventory, while avoiding destruc-

tion of mobile-operated systems, thereby reducing the number of required systems, the amount of permanent construction work, the time to become operational, and the number of Soviet personnel required in the DRV.

Provide the Soviets an invaluable opportunity to test the SAM system in an actual operational environment.

By early August, the Soviet operational concept was apparently effective for the enemy. The air defense capability of North Vietnam was significantly increased, the requirement for Soviet material and personnel export to Asia was minimized, and maximum propaganda credit could be obtained by the Soviets for assistance to their North Vietnamese "comrades." ^{43/}

There was also evidence that the Soviets and North Vietnamese, expecting retaliatory efforts, elicited low-level strikes against SAM sites and subjected the attackers to massive conventional anti-aircraft fire. The attack against SAM sites on 27 July encountered heavy AAA. U.S. reliance on photo-recce may have suggested such tactics to Soviet planners. ^{44/}

It was highly probable in August that the Soviets and North Vietnamese would try to complete a second, outer "ring" of SA-2's around Hanoi. The new mobile concept of operations for the SA-2 systems significantly expanded the overall air defense capability of NVN. ^{45/}

The SA-2 capability was again demonstrated when a USN A-4E was shot down and another received heavy damage on 12 August, while on an armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. The incident occurred

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40 NM from the nearest known SA-2 sites, and it was considered likely that an unidentified field SA-2 site fired two GUIDELINE missiles. The description of the incident and the nature of the damage were consistent with an SA-2 and unlike any other weapon known in North Vietnam. ^{46/}

As of 19 August, there were 10 confirmed sites and 10 suspected SAM areas in NVN. No missiles had been observed at any of the sites with the exception of one site on 8 August. At that site, low-level photography revealed six missiles and launchers with associated equipment. This site was struck on 9 August, however, all missiles and equipment had been evacuated and the site was unoccupied at the time of the ^{47/} strike.

The expanding SA-2 missile capability was reflected in September by near misses against U.S. aircraft and a possible expansion of the system to the south, east and west of Hanoi. ^{48/} A probable missile was launched against a Blue Springs mission on 4 September, as revealed photographically by a contrail originating in the vicinity of Pho Tho, ^{49/} approximately 35 NM northwest of Hanoi.

On 9 September, four F-105 Thunder Chiefs were fired upon by a surface-to-air missile approximately 12 miles from the Laos border and 62 miles southwest of Hanoi. The four aircraft were returning from a strike when a missile was observed passing the flight leader and his wingman. A pilot in the rear of the formation who saw the booster separate and fall past him, described it as black and yellow, about eight to ten feet long, with almost square fins. The description of square fins

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raised the possibility that an SA-3 may have been employed rather than an SA-2 which has swept fins. ^{50/}

Fan Song radar signals were detected originating about seven miles northwest of Vinh on 9 September. The movement of SA-2 equipment into the Vinh area of North Vietnam would represent the southernmost deployment of the system and a considerable logistics achievement since rail and highway lines running north of it had been heavily interdicted. If an SA-2 battalion were at Vinh, it may have moved there by ship. ^{51/}

Radar signals intercepted over North Vietnam suggested possible movement of surface-to-air missile equipment to Haiphong, expanding SAM coverage into the Gulf of Tonkin. Spoon Rest had been intercepted in the general area of Haiphong as well as several intercepts of Fan Song signals. Photography failed to reveal missile site construction activity in the area. ^{52/}

On 10 September, an ELINT aircraft intercepted a series of Fan Song signals originating from an area near Sam Neua, near the junction of Routes 6 and 127, which enter Laos from NVN. This was the only noted instance up to September of possible SAM activity outside NVN in Southeast Asia. ^{53/}

As of 16 September, there were 19 SAM sites and 20 possible SAM installations in NVN. ^{54/}

In September, many of the sites in the Hanoi area were found to be

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very close to one another--some within a mile or two of each other. It appeared, therefore, that the number of fixed, prepared positions were intended to be greater than the amount of SAM equipment available. Such an arrangement would permit the SAM equipment to be moved rapidly from one site to another in an attempt to make a successful strike against an operational site more difficult. ^{55/}

To counter the enemy's surface-to-air missile threat, a requirement existed for radar homing and warning equipment in strike and reconnaissance aircraft. This requirement had been approved by USAF in November 1965 and accelerated testing had been directed to meet requirements, which included automatic jamming. Suitable testing of a wide variety of off-the-shelf equipment had indicated that no one piece of gear was compatible with all tactical aircraft. Two wings of F-4C's deployed during the Phase I program were equipped with the APR-23B, which provided the forward-looking visual and aural warning, plus homing, in the S.C. and X-Band radar emissions. Development efforts were being aimed at extending this forward-looking capability to 360 degrees, and a vector system was to be tested for compatibility in the RF-4C and RF-101. During November, four F-100F's would be deployed to SEA with IR-133 homing and warning equipment - Project "Wild Weasel". This equipment was to provide visual and aural warning, plus azimuth to the signal source. The equipment would be operated from Thailand, and the aircraft would maintain full ordnance capability and would be employed as Hunter-Killers jointly with F-105's and F-4Cs. In addition, a similar project involving an F-105F with im-

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proved homing and warning plus ALQ-51 jamming equipment would follow the F-100F program. Development efforts were being concentrated on adapting the APS-107 equipment to the F-105. This would provide a 360 degree capability for visual and aural warning plus homing. ^{56/}

By the end of the year, it was estimated there were probably 12 to 15 SAM missile battalions operating in three main areas, Hanoi, Haiphong, and Tan Hoa. There were 54 known SAM sites and 38 possible SAM installations, as of the end of the year. ^{57/}

During the year, there was a steady increase in the missile launch rate. The kill ratio of the weapons observed in flight was about one aircraft per 12-13 missile launches. (Between 24 July and 15 November 89 missiles were in flight and seven U.S. aircraft were destroyed by these weapons.) ^{58/} Some lessons learned were:

Evasion techniques were possible. A pilot, observing a missile in flight, found that a violent maneuver, particularly a sharp break down, was most successful.

It appeared that the guidance system for these missiles was not as responsive as previously estimated.

Missile crew proficiency may have been a factor for low effectiveness.

The delicate electronic equipment effectiveness was degraded by movement over the relatively poor lines of communication in North Vietnam.

6. Enemy Defense Radar

On 18 March, USAF, with general agreement from CINCPAC, had asked for DOD approval to conduct simultaneous strikes against as many NVN radars

south of the 20th parallel as weather would permit. This was turned down. Air Force felt that piecemeal implementation of anti-radar activities would result in heavy AA defenses being placed around remaining sites, increasing loss probabilities. It would also result in possible camouflage of sites and movement to more difficult locations. Eliminating the enemy's EW capabilities south of 20 degrees would lessen the chance of MIG interference; it would decrease capabilities for AA defense alerting; prevent dispersal alerting of personnel from potential target areas; and, once destroyed, equipment would be difficult to replace. ^{59/}

Following approval by the JCS, on 30 March, to use against all NVN non-communication targets, CINCPAC submitted an ECM program. PACAF and PACFLT were directed to conduct active ECM operations against radars in NVN in support of strike and/or recce operations and to provide details on effectiveness. ^{60/}

By the end of the year, despite repeated attacks and building damage, the NVN radars/radio communications facilities were relatively intact. The inherent mobility, use of remote antennas, and lack of pinpointing intelligence, had yielded very little gain from strikes against this elusive target system. ^{61/}

7. Enemy AA Threat

Enemy AA activity presented an increasing threat to the U.S. Air Force during the year. Inventories of AA weapons increased during the

year and effectiveness increased. The number of AA weapons in January 1965 stood at 1,100 guns. ^{62/} By the end of September this number had increased to 4,264 guns. ^{63/}

8. Defense Picture at the End of the Year

CINCPAC, at the end of 1965, discussed the introduction of the IL-28, the increase of MIG's in the Hanoi complex, and the vulnerability of Da Nang to surprise air attack. ^{64/}

In view of radar coverage at medium and high altitudes over most of SEA and the number of friendly fighter aircraft available, the probability of an enemy attack using a high altitude attack profile was considered relatively low. On the other hand an attack using a high altitude attack within range of a Lo-Lo-Lo flight profile was most probable, since lucrative targets were within this range, detection was most difficult and warning would be minimum. The second most likely attack could occur against a target within the range of a Lo-Lo-Hi profile. Detection and warning would remain minimum using this mode of attack; however, the necessity for returning to base at high altitude would expose the enemy to high attrition should he penetrate very deeply. Therefore, in determining relative order of priority for ground air defense unit deployments, the significant SVN/Thai targets which were within Lo-Lo-Lo and Lo-Lo-Hi range of the IL-28 generally were given first and second priority respectively. Exceptions were Tan Son Nhut/Bien Hoa and Cam Ranh/Nha Trang. ^{65/}

The threat and priority for ground air defense units were summarized
by CINCPAC as follows: ^{66/}

In the event of DRV/ChiCom air strikes against U.S. land base forces, the major strike effort would most probably be against major airfields in order to maximize damage to U.S. forces by the limited strike force available.

So long as the airfields at Vinh and Dong Hoi remained inoperable, the MIG's posed only a minor strike threat with the possible exception of Udorn. The IL-28's, however, did not need to stage through Vinh/Dong Hoi to strike Da Nang, Chu Lai, Udorn, Ubon, and Korat.

Due to the terrain blocking below 500 feet, gaps were created in the detection capability of U.S. installed and programmed radar installations in SEA, particularly over the Laos Panhandle. IL-28 aircraft, utilizing the Lo-Lo-Hi profile attack concept, could proceed overland from Phuc Yen for attacks on Da Nang, Chu Lau, Udorn and/or Ubon, with very low probability of detection/reaction by U.S. fighter air defense units prior to strike. The probability of a successful low altitude attack (using a Lo-Lo-Lo flight profile) against Da Nang and Chu Lai was considered so high and warning time so short that priority augmentation of the Hawk defenses with close-in automatic AA weapons was required. A similar situation existed at Udorn and Ubon where there were no ground air defense weapons as of the end of the year.

In the event of direct ChiCom support by a surprise air strike from Hainan, the additional U.S. bases at Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Bay, Phan Rang, Bien Hoa/Tan Son Nhut, Tuy Hoa (when completed) An Khe, and Kontum/Pleiku must be included as priority strike targets within the Lo-Lo-Hi combat radius of the IL-28's. However, the probability of early detection of a strike from Hainan by naval units or coastal radar was much greater, thereby providing early warning for air defense units.

By staging through Vinh and/or Dong Hoi the fol-

lowing bases, in addition to those of sub para 3 above, were listed in order of probable air strike priority: An Khe, Takhli, Cam Ranh/Nha Trang, Tuy Hoa (when completed).

In the event of NVN/ChiCom aircraft recovering in Cambodia following a surprise strike in SVN/Thai the entire land area of SVN and Thai falls within the Lo-Lo-Hi combat radius of the IL-28.

The threat of immediate U.S. reprisal strikes however, against major target complexes in Cambodia posed a strong deterrent against such so-called "sanctuary" recoveries.

The following summarizes, as of the end of the year, ground air defense units in or programmed for SEA and additional requirements beyond those programmed: ^{67/}

Current:

South Vietnam:

Da Nang - one USMC LAAM BN.

Chu Lai - one USMC LAAM BN.

Tan Son Nhut/Bien Hoa - one Army HAWK BN.

Cam Ranh/Nha Trang - one Army HAWK BN.

Thailand:

Four Royal Thai Bns of AA, not tactically deployed and of limited capability, when adequately trained and equipped. Proposed location and priority was Korat, Takhli, Don Muang, Sattahip.

Programmed:

One Army Hawk Bn with proposed location at Korat.

Five Army M-42 Bns and five M-55 Bns with proposed location and priority as follows: Da Nang, Chu Lai, Ubon, Udorn, An Khe.

Additional Requirements:

Hawk Bns at each of following locations in order of priority:
Ubon, Udorn, Takhli, Don Muang, Tuy Hoa, and Sattahip.

M-42/M-55 Bns at each of the following locations in order
of priority: Pleiku, Kontum, Phan Rang, Hue-Phu Bai, Qui
Nhon, Cam Ranh Bay, Nha Trang.

In summary, to obtain an optimum air defense posture in SEA, the
following final bed-down of ground air defense units in order of priori-
ty was proposed: ^{68/}

Hawk Bns:

Da Nang (USMC LAAM Bn) - presently in place.

Chu Lai (USMC LAAM Bn) - presently in place.

Tan Son Nhut/Bien Hoa (Army Hawk Bn) - presently in place.

Cam Ranh/Nha Trang (Army Hawk Bn) - presently in place.

Korat (Army Hawk Bn) - schedule for deployment early CY 1966.

Ubon - as available.

Udorn - as available.

Takhli - as available.

Don Muang - as available.

Tuy Hoa - as available.

Sattahip - as available.

U.S. Army M-42 Bns/M-55 Batts:

Da Nang - presently programmed.

Chu Lai - presently programmed.

Ubon - presently programmed.

Udorn - presently programmed.

- An Khe - presently programmed.
- Pleiku/Kontum - when available.
- Phan Rang - when available.
- Hue Phu Bai - when available.
- Qui Nhon - when available.
- Cam Ran Bay - when available.
- Nha Trang - when available.

Implementation of the SEAITACS Plan which included the installation of radar sites at Dong Ha, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Ca Mua, Bang Sung, Mukdahan, and Takhli was considered essential to the overall defense of SEA. Additionally, this plan would provide increased capacity to guard the seaward approaches to Saigon and fill the gap between the present RVN and Thai radar. ^{69/}

As a result of increased U.S. deployments, the military/economic pressure on NVN could increase the possibility of retaliatory air strikes against U.S. facilities in SEA. Although the U.S. ground-air defense requirements, noted above, were somewhat in excess of requirements stated by CINCPAC and Phase II deployments, the increasing U.S.-third country assets planned for SEA dictated the need for an increase in the air defense posture in SEA. ^{70/}

On 24 December 1965, 2d Air Division informed Tan Son Nhut Air Defense Command TOC that intelligence revealed irregular patterns in the transfer of aircraft between NVN and ChiCom territory. MIG aircraft of the Fishpot type had been detected on Hanoi Air Bases. The U.S. course of

action, at this time, must assure that all possible measures would be taken to minimize damage from air to ground attack. Second Air Division directed a review be made of air and base defense measures to assure they were ready to provide maximum protection to personnel and aircraft. Supervisory personnel would meet threat indicators with more than normal precautionary measures. ^{71/}

This, in summary, was the defense posture at the end of the year.

9. Weaponry and Delivery Tactics

After five months of operations of the Special Express ammunition system, the 2d Air Division, in October 1965, noted that it was still not able to build up its stocks of ammunition to the operational levels authorized by PACAF 136-2, nor was there any possibility of reaching these levels in the future. To attain the desired level, vessels should be discharging continuously at two ports. Reserve vessels at Subic had to be immediately available to move to a discharge port in the event of a vessel breakdown or ballast problems. However, in October, the only reserve vessel at Subic was one being held in reserve in event an extra one-time vessel might not arrive at Cam Ranh Bay by 1 November 1965. ^{72/}

With the force buildup, the munitions deficiency problem was expected to be compounded. 2d Air Division experience indicated that 20 vessels were required for the Alfa, Bravo, and Cocoa systems to meet current and future needs. This meant ten vessels in addition to those on hand in October. ^{73/}

2d Air Division Commander directed several actions, in December, with regard to munitions management: 20mm ammo would be expended only as necessary to accomplish the mission; Procedures would be established to allow aircraft to return with unused ordnance with safety the paramount factor. ^{74/}

Throughout Rolling Thunder operations there were no cases where sorties were cancelled because weapons were unavailable. However, local shortages did require substitution of alternate weapons. This often led to a less than planned level of damage or a higher sortie commitment to achieve desired results. ^{75/}

During the February 1965 Commander's Conference, the 2d Air Division Commander, General Moore, indicated that with respect to weapons deployment, napalm certainly was one of the most feared weapons in South Vietnam. It was not being used, he pointed out, as a standard load in defense of hamlets under attack at night because of heavy damages being sustained as the fighters were silhouetted under the flares making them easy targets to hit. According to General Moore, the Viet Cong anti-aircraft capability had shown improvement not only in accuracy but intensity. Elda as an area weapon had some promise, he thought, as a substitute for napalm; however, its effectiveness had yet to be evaluated. He stated: "We need an area type weapon which can be delivered with a high degree of accuracy at an altitude above ground fire." ^{76/}

He pointed out that use of CBU-14 required a low level delivery similar to napalm, subjecting the delivery vehicle to both ground and anti-

aircraft fire. The weapon, he said, could be delivered accurately and in close proximity to friendly forces; however, it had certain limitations. He stated: "It is an impact weapon with a fragment pattern similar to a grenade. Any personnel entrenched would be safe unless the bomblet strikes within the foxhole itself. It is entirely possible for personnel in the open, if prone, to escape the fragment pattern. Elda may have limited application irrespective of its effectiveness because it is an area weapon. The variance in size and shape of its pattern is unpredictable, therefore, this precludes use in close support when forces are relatively close to each other. Recently, we used the weapon against a VC concentration with reported excellent results. The exact results have not been confirmed by ground reconnoitering." ^{77/}

He continued that over 400 "daily cutters" had been dropped and it appeared to function as intended. Another weapon system tested in the coin environment was the gupo (40mm gun pod) which he said had proven mechanically unreliable though the grenade itself showed excellent promise. He pointed out that the 2.75 rocket, previously discontinued because of weapons effects, would become an effective weapon with the new warhead and superquick fuze. ^{78/}

In the Laotian campaign he said, there was a very definite requirement for additional weapons in order to cover the entire spectrum of requirements. He felt there was a very definite role for the CBU-1 weapon as an anti-personnel and flak suppression weapon in supporting strikes against Pathet Lao interdiction targets. It appeared to him that the CBU-2 was subject to the same restrictions that were inherent

with the CBU-14, E.G. surface burst and reduced effectiveness against entrenched forces. 79/

Gen Moore pointed out that the 2d Air Division had no delay fuzes available for the century series fighters, stating that present delay fuzes were compatible only with box fin bombs, which could not be carried by the F-105 or the F-100 and that the only jet aircraft which would carry the box fin bomb was the B-57. He stated a requirement for long delay fuzes in seeding roads and base camps in order to deny their use to the enemy and said that delay action fuzes should be developed for conical finned weapons. 80/

He felt that the AGM-12 (GAM) may not be as versatile as was initially thought in that delivery aircraft had to descend into the effective range of automatic weapons in controlling the weapon onto target. 81/

He concluded that the AC-47, a unique marriage of an old friend with one of the most deadly rapid firing weapons, the mini-gun, had been utilized in defense of hamlets at night, and in a major campaign with very effective results. 82/

During the March 1965 visit of the USAF Analysis Team to SEA, headed by MajGen Gordon Graham, a requirement was made for a combat analysis center, in the field, to conduct evaluations and analyses of tactics, weapons, and overall effectiveness of operations. 83/

The end of the year saw many new techniques developed. Through

perfection of flare operations, Night Owl operations were developed to provide a new dimension to night precision dive bombing and night armed reconnaissance. ^{84/} Another significant type of night aerial armed recce, nicknamed "Snipe Hunt", covered rivers and roads by USA SLAR equipped Mohawk aircraft working with FAC's in O-1 aircraft and C-123 or AC-47 flare ships.

New weapons such as the MK-44 Lazy Dog were tested for effectiveness. ^{85/} As the year progressed improvements were made in ordnance. For instance, it was found that USAF aircraft were initially unsuited for employment of the MK-81; however, by September 1965 the F-4 and F-105 could be used to deliver the 600 pound MK-82. ^{86/}

New munitions were introduced into the SEA operations and other weapons were becoming available. The AGM-12B had been employed with very good results. The XM-75 (40mm) podded grenade launchers, the SUU-11 (7.62mm) podded Gatling gun, and the AC-47/SUU-11 lateral firing gun system had been evaluated in RVN. An improved fragmentation 2.75 rocket warhead with super-quick fuzing had been employed in A-1E's in RVN. ^{87/} Suitability testing of a wide variety of off-the-shelf equipment had indicated that no one piece of gear was compatible with all tactical aircraft. ^{88/}

Tentative conclusions of employment and effect of the CBU were that they did not penetrate the jungle canopy as effectively as iron bombs, but they were more effective against exposed personnel than other

conventional ordnance of comparable weight. ^{89/}

The concept of a heliborne illumination system (HIS) was successfully tested for operational suitability on 1 Nov 1965. Nicknamed "Lightning Bug", the tactic utilized one UH-1 observer helicopter operating at 300 feet without lights. This was used successfully in conjunction with SLAR to locate and engage VC river and road traffic at night. ^{90/}

As a result of a study to assess the capability of the C-47 to deliver effective fire against area targets, from guns mounted in the side door, action was taken by Hq USAF to organize and train an FC-47 squadron, which was deployed to RVN in November 1965. The AC-47 had the ability to carry extra ammunition, its own flares and had a high on-station endurance time. It was nicknamed "Puff the Magic Dragon." ^{91/}

The "Red Chief" beacon system was determined suitable as a close-in, high accuracy navigational device, for use in aerial resupply of isolated units. The system permitted accurate airdrops under adverse weather conditions and at night. It was also used to locate ground units, direct level bombing missions by using offset, locate drop zones for flares and to provide terminal navigation. ^{92/}

On 22 November, 2d Air Division requested the Dragon Tooth anti-personnel mine. This was needed to seed troop and supply infiltration routes. It could also be an effective transportation harassment weapon for delaying movement of mobile SA-2 sites, delay reconstruction of air-

fields/bridges and complicate the development of bridge and road bypass routes. The lack of an effective area denial weapon, General Moore said, was a critical deficiency in USAF operations, particularly in the high priority Steel Tiger area. He wanted a priority on Dragon Tooth. ^{93/}

10. Munitions Problems

Munitions had been a problem for the 1st Air Commando Squadron during 1965. One pilot stated: ^{94/}

"I stood alert at Qui Nhon with only 20mm cannons in July 1965 because we were out of bombs. We had 300 foot ceilings at A Shau but we were short of CBU-14's and napalm. This supply problem is being solved but a great deal of time and money is being wasted on 'exotic weapons' such as Fleshette Rockets and 7.62mm mini-guns. These weapons are only effective against an enemy caught and engaged in the open. That happens very seldom. A limited number of mini-guns would be fine for the alert birds and fort defense, but more should be done towards turning out the more reliable, highly effective, iron bombs, CBU and napalm. Then a portion of these should be allocated to the 4410th CCTW at Hurburt Field, Florida. We are receiving pilots from there who have only dropped one load of live bombs and those were 100 pounders, and some pilots have never dropped live napalm. We have experienced numerous gun malfunctions with the M-3 20mm cannon. These have been due to numerous causes with defective ammunition being one of the greatest problems. An electric primed cannon should be installed in the A-1 or newer ammunition should be procured. The 7.62mm mini-gun does not begin to match to 20mm in stopping power and our targets need that kind of destructive force."

Early in the year, 2d Air Division Commander noted that the routine air target in the COIN war was either fleeting in nature, or, if fixed, was not clearly identifiable to the observer uneducated in guerrilla activities; positive information on such targets ^{95/}

was not easily acquired. To establish a target location and the relative activity of the target required the combined use of several sources of intelligence. Once the target was established it had to be made identifiable to the strike pilot to insure success of an air strike against it. Routine reconnaissance and intelligence resources were not adequate to accomplish the job.

He continued that tactical reconnaissance in RVN was fractionalized to support both in-country and out-of-country efforts to the extent that only a small portion of the tactical reconnaissance requirements in RVN could be met. Tactical recon aircraft were used primarily to provide photography, which, by itself, was not the best means of acquiring information in the COIN environment. The processing of photography was too time consuming, and the average recon pilot could not specialize enough in a specific area of RVN to identify COIN targets and subsequently photograph them. The photo interpreter was not capable of consistently identifying COIN targets, unless their location had been established by other intelligence.

Visual reconnaissance by an area specialist who knew the guerrilla activities in the area and who was sensitive to the minute signs of these activities, was the primary means of intelligence acquisition. This specialist in RVN was primarily a USAF ALO/FAC who flew a liaison aircraft in which he repeatedly covered his area of operation. The VNAF liaison pilots, in some cases, had acquired this skill but most of these pilots were newly rated and were of low experience level. Further, USAF

ALO/FAC were permanently assigned to an operating location, whereas VNAF liaison pilots rotated in and out daily, thus limiting their knowledge of the area.

In most cases the ALO/FAC operated with the lower echelons of ARVN command or at sector level, where much ground intelligence was available on local, friendly, and enemy activities. Using this intelligence as a base, the ALO/FAC could identify areas of Viet Cong activity. Repeated surveillance would show the degree of activity and specific locations of targets.

Experimental efforts by ALO/FACs with hand held cameras had provided photography on fixed targets which was used to brief the fighter pilots sent out to strike these targets. The ALO/FACs personally annotated the photography for optimum benefit.

Operating at the lower ARVN/Sector echelons, the ALO/FAC frequently obtained approval of the ARVN commander in rapidly processing a request for air support.

Gen Moore stated that, on some occasions, targets were fixed and acquired in sufficient numbers to require a targeting system. Some targets were identifiable only by the fact that activity was noticeable---the times that the Viet Cong frequented the target area could not be pinpointed. For other targets, infrared photography had been of considerable assistance in establishing the exact times that they were occupied by the Viet Cong; however, collecting, collating and distributing this in-

formation required concentrated and timely efforts. To meet these requirements a target center had been established under III Corp G-2 for the III Corps area. This target center in the ARVN military structure was successful in distributing target information and target materials for both artillery and tactical air use. The concept was new, however, and had not been widely accepted by ARVN. Since USAF and US Army officers were the prime movers of this information, skepticism was frequently apparent in VNAF and some reluctance had been shown in accepting certain targets.

He stated that a combination of events had to take place to solve this intelligence acquisition problem:

"A greater number of VNAF and USAF liaison aircraft and crews must be permanently deployed. USAF liaison aircraft were deployed to the maximum extent but were limited in number. VNAF was being urged to deploy but was reluctant for several reasons; lack of security on airstrips, difficulty in supporting of aircraft and crews and loss of control over the aircraft and crews. Permanent deployment would and did provide the localized skill in visual recon, increased the air force capability to accurately direct air strike against known targets.

The hand held camera showed great promise as a cheap adjunct to the expensive RF-101 operation. However, the acquisition of the camera and the photo processing cells necessary to make the photography available was still in progress.

The concept of target centers must be sold as each of the four corps in ARVN. Initial steps were in progress by MACV to accomplish this but based on experience in the III Corps; progress would be slow and had to begin with an all American effort. This effort had to be shifted as rapidly as possible to the Vietnamese to minimize the connotation of a unilateral operation..."

CINCPACAF, towards the end of the year, indicated that damage to North Vietnam could have been greater, in 1965, had he been permitted to attack targets concentrated within the Hanoi-Haiphong sanctuary areas, such as POL, airfield and railroad yards. Although considered successful, U.S. air damaged only 36 percent of the airfields, 20 percent of the railroad yards and 25 percent of the POL storage. (The remaining percentages were denied attack since they were within the sanctuary areas.) Airpower could have struck the electric power and POL on a highly selective basis without overly endangering the civilian population; however, high level decisions denied attacking those targets. 96/

One of the most difficult intelligence problems in the in-country air operations was locating valid targets, i.e., knowing where the Viet Cong were located and what they were likely to do. Targets in South Vietnam were extremely perishable and there was a need for a quick reaction capability to identify them for immediate strikes. It was felt at some intelligence levels that an intelligence organization working with the Air Force and Army personnel at the Sector (Province) level was lacking and could be exploited to gain current information on Viet Cong activity. 97/

The pre-planned target system used in 1965 in IV Corps area, according to one report, was inadequate for the type of war being fought in the Delta. TACC had requested targets be called into strike-plans 24 hours before the target would be struck. This forced the division to use intelligence information 24 hours old, then wait another 24 hours to

hit the target. The Viet Cong were too mobile for the employment of this type of request system. ^{98/}

Ordnance for fighter sorties flown in 1965, in support of actions in South Vietnam had to be monitored closely. Target selection was oftentimes in heavily wooded areas. This posed a question as to whether or not all targets being struck in 1965 were producing desirable results. ^{99/}

11. Air Support in South Vietnam

Early Evaluation of Requirements: Early in 1965, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that he was concerned over the gain in Viet Cong influence in SVN. He informed CINCPAC that to offset this advantage the U.S. should increase its combat air effort in South Vietnam to include concentrated bombing of Viet Cong base areas and provide increased air response over critical areas in which the Viet Cong retained the tactical initiative. He noted that at the beginning of the year, tactical air was not available in-country in sufficient quantity to satisfy daily sorties requested. The number of aircraft was insufficient to mount sustained efforts of any magnitude against base areas. He noted that the expansion of VNAF could not do this job since they had already expanded at the maximum rate consistent with experience and resources. He felt it necessary to introduce U.S. air and overt employment of U.S. close support aircraft to maintain military superiority over the Viet Cong. COMUSMACV said that to do this job effectively, the tactical aircraft in-country should be relieved of artificial restrictions and that they should be operated solely under U.S. control. He recommended modern jet aircraft be used since they had faster

response, increased ordnance load capacity, and the ability to carry newer weapons. Success of air support would require well-planned and cohesive air campaigns. 100/

COMUSMACV directed his staff to prepare a study on the ability to find suitable targets to support additional requirements for air and to determine the probable impact of air effort. The study revealed that additional resources could be employed in concentrated bombing against Viet Cong bases and increased air alert over critical areas. 101/

MACJ2 estimated that early in 1965 there were from 28,000 to 34,000 hard core Viet Cong plus 60,000 to 80,000 part time Viet Cong (farmers by day). The heaviest concentrations were in the Mekong Delta and the area north of Bien Hoa. Large scale Viet Cong activities were also increasing along the coastal areas south of Da Nang to Quang Ngai and Qui Nhon and in the Phuoc Tuy Province. The main headquarters were located in Tay Ninh Province (C-Zone) and in Phuoc Thanh (D-Zone). MACJ2 noted that Viet Cong were appearing in steadily increasing numbers up to battalion sized forces of between 300 to 600 men. Early in the year MACJ3 estimated some 47 such battalions in operations. The Viet Cong modus operandi was to ambush large units during the day and hamlets and outposts at night. It was noted that harassments increased from 40 per month in April and May 1964 to 135 towards the end of the year, or a three-fold increase. By early 1965, increasing aggressiveness was seen in attacks upon district capitals such as An Lao and Thien Giao and the mortaring of Bien Hoa. Viet Cong ambushes became frequent, and

contrary to their usual tactics, they had, in some instances, remained in prolonged contact. ^{102/}

According to the study, Viet Cong bases were established in sparsely populated places, remote from normal ARVN ground operations, and relatively well-protected from aerial observation by vegetation and terrain. These camps were used as rest areas, training bases, supply depots, hospitals, assembly areas for troop units, etc. Some of these areas, such as War Zones "C" and "D", Do Xa, and the U Minh Forest were well-known. Other areas less well-identified existed in the Plain of Reeds, in Phuoc Tuy Province, along the infiltration route through the western part of the Central Highland and at other points in the I and II Corps areas. ^{103/}

The study revealed that in spite of excellent Viet Cong camouflage, doctrine, and discipline, it was often possible to find a probable Viet Cong location through trail networks and breaks in the vegetation detected in aerial photography or by visual reconnaissance. Infrared Reconnaissance and other technical means often gave precise indications of probable Viet Cong activity. ^{104/}

Early in the year, the III Corps Target Center had developed 149 static targets to be attacked in the ACORN RING program, which was focused on War Zones "C" and "D". In addition, the Target Research and Analysis Center (TRAC), which had been newly organized, had identified a total of 121 transitory target indications. It was found that 50 to 70 percent of these targets had not been attacked at that time because of a shortage of aircraft or they were out of range of existing artillery positions.

This same problem could be carried to the other Corps areas, i.e., I, 105/ II, and IV Corps.

Although probable targets could be located with fair accuracy, the study pointed out that precision was a matter of degree. In many cases the suspect target area might be several hundred yards off to the side. Viet Cong doctrine required dispersion, and the target might actually be a complex of camps, each dispersed within its own area. The Viet Cong doctrine also required below-ground shelters for each individual, and in many cases, foxholes with overhead cover were supplemented by elaborate tunnels or deep shelters for personnel, supplies and other facilities. Implementation of this doctrine had been excellent, and as a result, targets usually consisted of small groups of well-protected 106/ individuals and supplies dispersed over a fairly large area.

Visual reconnaissance, both Army and Air Force observation aircraft, had been extremely successful in generating targets in the base areas. Daily flights over the same area by the same personnel, who were sensitive to the changes in appearance and tempo of activity within the area, was necessary. Repetitive flights over a given location would detect well-concealed targets which might escape a more casual visual or a normal photographic reconnaissance effort. It was felt that this effort could be expanded. The study noted that, as of mid-January, there were 50 Army and 25 USAF O-1 aircraft in SVN, in addition to 38 possessed by the VNAF. A coordinated visual reconnaissance effort using the aggregate of these three sources, as well as pilot reports of other aircraft, would

provide a source of potentially good targets. 107/

A meeting was held at MACV headquarters, on 13 May 1965, to discuss air support and ground operations in the Kontum area and War Zone "D". It was decided that priority for major air strikes would go first to the Kontum area and then Zone "D". To strike targets in Laos, adjacent to Kontum, required Laotian approval. Once obtained, MACV wanted immediate air strikes under FAC control in the Kontum area, including use of SAC B-108/B-52s against targets on the RVN side.

The program for Zone "D" called for coordinated operations including air strikes and follow-up ground operations. It was envisioned that the 173rd Airborne Brigade would be used on these operations along with ARVN airborne troops. Day and night harassment by air was also part of the plan. B-52's would be used when clearance was obtained. 109/

12. Adequacy of Air Support

During late summer, 1965, concern had been expressed by certain members of Congress as to the state of preparedness of the Armed Forces to conduct tactical air support operations in SVN. 110/

The Chairman of the House Arms Services Committee had established a subcommittee on tactical air support and designated several congressmen and professional staff members to serve on the committee. On 18 September 1965, CINCPAC informed COMUSMACV that subcommittee chairman, Otis J. Pike, New York, had indicated his inquiry would be into the following aspects of tactical air support: 111/

The adequacy or inadequacy of close air support.

Recent progress in developing and producing new type aircraft for tactical warfare.

The development of tactics and new techniques for air support.

The cost, quantity and effectiveness of the various tactical aircraft.

Representative Pike and his subcommittee counsel indicated that the committee desired to limit its inquiry to the close air support being provided in Vietnam. They did not propose to inquire into the adequacy of existing logistic and support facilities for tactical aircraft, nor did they plan to examine in depth the present and future capabilities for maintaining superiority in tactical situations. 112/

As part of this inquiry, recent returnees from Vietnam with experience in close air support were to be called as witnesses. The desired witnesses would be forward air controllers, tactical fighter pilots, operations officers from the tactical air control center, tactical squadron commanders, battalion advisors, company commanders, and Army personnel were to be provided by the Navy and the Marine Corps. 113/

After testimony by these witnesses, each service would be called to testify on its inventory of close air support aircraft, and the training given to pilots in aircraft for close air support. The adequacy of air control communications equipment, and other related subjects such as target identification and marking, and night attack capabilities would also be examined. Committee meeting dates were scheduled for 22-23 Septem-

ber 1965. 114/

The Secretary of Defense, in December, was concerned that the U.S. Army did not receive the same degree of close air support as the Marine Corps. This concern precipitated a survey by CINSTRIKE of combat air support. 115/

COMUSMACV also informed 2d Air Division that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had formed a study group to develop a comparative analysis of the Marine Corps and Air Force Close Air Support performance in SVN, up to 27 December 1965. The study group would, in turn, make recommendations based on the results of the study conducted. He instructed all DASC's to provide 2d Air Division with appropriate information in format set forth by JCS on 22 December 1965. He further requested 2d Air Division to reply directly to CINCPAC, with information to MACV, on the specific information required by JCS and CINCPAC. 116/ He also expressed concern that, particularly in I Corps, the existence of air resources under several services was not permitting the most efficient use of air support. 117/

This situation had not been resolved by the end of the year and COMUSMACV requested that a seminar be conducted on this matter. 118/

The following are excerpts from comments on 1965 air support by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle G. Wheeler, in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee: 119/

General Wheeler: "When I was out in Vietnam at Christmas time, I travelled around, visiting a number of the units, and I always inquired about the quality of the air support. All of the officers with whom I talked told me that in their experience the air support they were getting was better in quality, quantity, and responsiveness than they had ever seen before -- and some of them were fighting their third war. I must say we are using close air support in quantities out there beyond anything in our experience before in three wars. I am talking about the number of sorties, the actual closeness with which these people put the ordnance down, and so on. Sometimes they are 20 to 40 meters in front of our own troops. This is getting pretty close, almost too close for comfort..."

Secretary McNamara: "It is because of that tremendous increase in tactical airpower over the last few years that you are now able to do what General Wheeler said is being done, supply close air support to the Army in the intensities and quantities never before provided the American Army. They need it and they are benefitting from it. I think they are completely satisfied with it."

"I know of no request by the Army for any particular kind of Air Force aircraft. Frankly, I do not think they care so long as there is adequate close air support for their operations. I think another point, however...is a belief on the part of some in the Army that they should have their own close air support within the Army itself. They have, at various times, suggested that and I have turned them down."

13. Efforts During 1965 to Minimize Civilian Casualties

The problem of non-combatant casualties remained serious during 1965. Non-combatants were living in areas either under complete control of the Viet Cong or where the Viet Cong maintained their grip by terrorism. Many of these areas provided staging bases for the Viet Cong and, as such, could be considered as prime targets for attack. Such a situation called for careful application and conduct of military forces. While maximum effectiveness in operations was desirable, a conscious effort had to be made to minimize non-combatant casualties. 120/

On 14 August, JCS requested a prediction of the amount of village clearing operations envisaged for U.S. troops. He also asked for information concerning the use of air power for interdiction and close support missions which might result in non-combatant casualties. 121/

COMUSMACV informed JCS that the problem arose because of the tendency to consider hamlets, in Viet Cong controlled territory, as "fair game" 122/ which frustrated U.S. pacification goals upon entering such villages.

JCS inquired if it were possible to distinguish between villages/hamlets in which the populace was formerly loyal to RVN and those in which the populace had never been loyal and were bonafide Viet Cong. They visualized that the former would be struck by air only if used as a base for an attack or fire was actually emanating from them. No such restraints would be required for the latter. JCS added that advisory pressure on the Vietnamese should be exerted to insure that they appreci-

ated the necessity for preventing civilian casualties. ^{123/}

The vast majority of hamlets under Viet Cong control were, in COMUSMACV's opinion, at one time loyal to the RVN. However, living areas in Viet Cong war zones were considered by COMUSMACV as "fair game." He reemphasized his point that the battle was for the hamlets; thus U.S. forces could not be restricted to operations in unpopulated jungles. ^{124/}

On 13 September CJCS informed COMUSMACV that the MACV program for maximum protection of non-combatants was considered excellent by authorities in Washington. He added that there was, however, a semantic problem with regard to free strike zones since the terminology implied indiscriminate bombing. CJCS understood that, even in those areas, air strikes were against military targets and normally were under radar and FAC control. He felt it desirable, to eliminate the use of the term free strike zone and refer to these areas as special strike zones.

JCS desired information on this subject including interdiction targets during a typical day, target identification, approval authority required, type of control, weapons used, results, and the comparative weight of interdiction versus close support missions within SVN. ^{125/}

COMUSMACV, therefore, directed an overall evaluation of the entire subject of the use of air power and directed that several specific areas be looked into. The following were points of reference: ^{126/}

Re-designation of "Free Bomb Zones" should be made

as suggested by the CJCS.

FACs and strike pilots should be thoroughly familiar with the area in which they operate.

Determination should be made of the adequacy of targets identification in villages/hamlets.

"Targets of suspicion" should be regarded with suspicion.

COMUSMACV had noted earlier that eagerness of pilots to get into the war could contribute to indiscriminate and wasteful use of air strikes. 127/

The two basic objectives of COMUSMACV was to design a target acquisition and identification system which would maximize effectiveness of air firepower and minimize combatant casualties. He desired recommended changes in organization, policy and procedures for air operations in RVN that would improve this situation. He pointed out that with the increased number of U.S. forces, undesirable incidents could be expected to increase. It was essential that they not be exploited to turn the Vietnamese people against the U.S. 128/

On 10 September, COMUSMACV convened the USMACV Tactical Air Firepower Board composed of senior officers to review the entire range of problems associated with the increased scope of U.S. air effort and capability. He pointed out that in the course of the Board's review, they would address the problem of free bomb zones and all related matters. The Board was scheduled to complete its study by 30 September at which time COMUSMACV would send a complete resume of its findings and recommendations to

General Wheeler. ^{129/}

In answer to certain specific questions posed by General Wheeler, ^{130/}
General Westmoreland responded as follows:

A sizeable targeting effort is represented at the Saigon level by the Target Research and Analysis Center.

Further, a country-wide surveillance system involving USAF, VNAF, and USA O-1 aircraft is generating increasing numbers of targets from visual observations conducted on a sustained basis by observers who have become familiar with the terrain and situation within a particular province which is their area of responsibility.

In all cases this targeting is done in full collaboration with RVNAF elements who have final approval authority.

With respect to approval authority the CTOC retains final approval authority and also assesses priorities and forwards requests to the direct support center which is colocated with the CTOC.

In the case of U.S. elements, lateral coordination is effected at the level of the CTOC.

Close air support of U.S. troops in combat with the Viet Cong is provided at the request of the U.S. commander under adequate forward air control.

With regard to type of control, General Westmoreland stated that virtually all air strikes were under control of an airborne FAC, whether USAF or VNAF. The FAC identified the target, contacted friendly troops or authorities in the area and oriented incoming strike crews. The FAC marked the target and adjusted the bomb pattern to cover the target area. He noted variations, giving instances where weather obscured the

pre-planned target, in which case, aircraft were often diverted in flight by the FAC to strike targets of opportunity in what was referred to as a free bomb zone. Clearance from province officials and the appropriate CTOC was required prior to attack on these targets. ^{131/}

Resume of the Board's findings and recommendations were as follows: ^{132/}

Findings:

1. The existing Tactical Air Control System was considered well designated to provide the restraints necessary for the controlled application of air firepower in RVN. Incidents of errors were found to be surprisingly few in number. Hence, changes were considered necessary only to cope with the U.S. buildup in RVN.

2. Operational personnel in the field did not fully understand COMUSMACV policies on target selection criteria and rules of engagement.

3. "Free Bomb Zones" should be retained because of the operational flexibility they permitted, but the need for unlimited attacks in these zones without FAC control did not exist. Further, the term implied inaccurate and adverse connotations.

4. U.S. ground force senior advisors had inadequate G-2/G-3 air staff and organic intelligence personnel.

5. Insufficient RVNAF observers were available to accompany FAC's and U.S. armed helicopters.

Recommendations

1. Air attacks on known or suspected Viet Cong targets in hamlets

and villages should be controlled by airborne or ground FAC's and an RVNAF observer in the case of armed helicopters and should be accomplished only after joint US/VN approval. Prior warning to the villagers would be necessary except in conjunction with the movement of ground forces through the area. Such restrictions were also recommended for artillery and naval gunfire.

2. COMUSMACV policy on target selection and rules of engagement should be placed in a single document.

3. "Free Bomb Zones" should be renamed "Specified Strike Zones", portions of which would be designated "Jettison Areas" for free bombing and the remainder would require the control, by a FAC, of all bombing in daylight.

4. More detailed information would be required in reports pertaining to incidents of unauthorized bombings.

5. A MACV Tactical Operations Center should be established.

6. Improvement of communications, air traffic control, advisory staffs and availability of ARVN observers was necessary.

7. Efforts must be consolidated during the year to minimize non-combatant casualties in South Vietnam. 133/

14. Year-End ALO/FACs Evaluation

When the decision was made to increase U.S. advisory efforts in Vietnam in 1961, the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) did not have a system for controlling air strikes. A 13th Air Force Operations Plan es-

established the requirement for a Tactical Air Control System (TACS) in South Vietnam. In 1963, the VNAF air request net was established to improve response time. In 1965, Air Operations Center (AOC) was redesignated the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) and the Air Support Operations Center (ASOC) became the Direct Air Support Center (DASC). The buildup of USAF strike and reconnaissance aircraft in South Vietnam paralleled the growth of the TACS. Early in 1966 the Deputy Director, TACC, in his end of tour report, commented as follows:

"To be responsive to all requests and maximize the use of air sorties TACC maintains scramble authority of all ground alert aircraft. Each DASC has divert authority for sorties pre-planned for their area. This practice encourages Corps to pre-plan questionable targets in order to have committed sorties to their area for direct purposes. Under the present system the Corps G-3 is not required to approve the immediate requests and the DASC unilaterally diverts the pre-planned sorties as he sees fit. While this procedure apparently has been satisfying the ARVN forces, due to an abundance of sorties available, this procedure is not in keeping with the U.S. Army concept of air support. As agreed by both USAF and USA, the Joint Air Ground Operations System (JAGOS) allows for the appropriate level ground commander to make the decision as to where and in what priority he wants tactical air support applied. Implementation of the JAGOS in RVN would convey to the appropriate level of command (Army) the decision as to which of his units gets air support and in what priority. This would then end the confusion of pre-planned sorties not honored because of diverts to immediate requests by other organizations. The JAGOS would screen and approve pre-planned requests. The Corps commander would be required to approve all immediate requests."

In early 1966, efforts were underway to revise the TACS in accordance with JAGOS. ^{134/}

15. Airborne Command Post:

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TAC Airborne Battlefield Command Control & Communications

System:

PACAF informed, in November 1965, that a TAC airborne battlefield command control and communications system (ABCCC) had been undergoing tests at Tan Son Nhut following submission of an operational requirement by 2d Air Division in August 1965. Employment of the system, over the two months prior to November 1965, was intended as a feasibility test. Sufficient results, however, had been obtained under combat conditions to prompt 2d Air Division to ask for two additional units. Hq USAF directed TAC to identify two additional C-130's for necessary modifications to accommodate the 47 foot ABCCC van. The 4th quarter of fiscal 135/ 66 was the target date for completion of this modification.

Introduction of the Airborne Command Post into the system greatly improved the capability of the TACS. The Airborne Command Post directed and diverted aircraft to appropriate targets, requested additional air if required, functioned as a communications relay and maintained contact with search and rescue centers as well as rescue aircraft. 136/

In the past, close air support had been somewhat limited by the inability to control air strikes for night operations and during conditions of adverse weather. All-weather control of close air support strikes would be possible with the ground based MSQ-35 radar bombing unit, which had been introduced into RVN in 1965, with the first installation operational at Bien Hoa. 137/

The Deputy Director of TACC recommended that a suitable FAC aircraft

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be procured to replace the O-1s being used in Vietnam. The O-1 aircraft had limitations as a FAC vehicle. It had no armor, inadequate rate of climb and zoom capability, inadequate top speed, carried insufficient marking rockets, its high wing restricted air to air visibility and the rate of engine failures was excessive. The mission required continuous operation at low level and the O-1 had no bail out capability necessitating an emergency landing in event of in-flight emergencies. 138/

Manning the ALO-FAC positions with tactical fighter pilots created a serious drain on these limited assets in 1965. The TACC Deputy Director felt that the RVN Tactical Air Control System, during 1965, had done, with few exceptions, an outstanding job. From his experience in Vietnam, he felt that the minimum training required for a FAC prior to arriving in the Vietnam theater should consist of the following: 139/

Qualification in O-1 aircraft.

General instruction in the air-ground system.

USAF doctrinal instruction relative to application of tactical air power.

A comprehensive course on tactical weapons.

The Deputy Director also pointed out that the Tactical Air Control System exercised operational control through the Direct Air Support Center to the Tactical Air Control Party. The Forward Air Controller, as the head of the TACP, was not only the air advisor to the ground commander requiring tactical air support, but was also the interface of the TACS with the ground commander. The pilots, as of early 1966, assigned to the

Tactical Air Support Squadrons (TASS), were qualified and functioned in FAC position and were under the operational control of TACC but were not within the TACS command line. By virtue of being under the operational control of TACC and in the command line structure of another organization (505th Tactical Control Group), the individual was placed in the position of serving two masters. Mission accomplishment of the vital DASC function was the responsibility of the DASC Deputy Director while the authority over resources (FAC and O-1 aircraft) to perform the mission was vested in the TASS Squadron Commander. He noted that more effective use of personnel and aircraft resources could be realized if the command line and chain of operational control were one and the same. As a means of resolving this problem he recommended assignment of the TASS squadrons to the DASC with the DASC Deputy Director as the Squadron Commander. ^{140/}

16. FAC Problems

The planned expansion in ground forces assigned to Vietnam required a re-examination of FAC requirements. Although some of the ground units would have FAC's with them, others would not. The 2d Air Division wanted to reevaluate the FAC requirement as the incoming units took to the field.

At the end of the year certain problems remained. The ALO/FAC at Chuong Thien Province, IV Corps, felt that, during 1965, air power was the main factor preventing the Viet Cong from controlling the Delta (IV Corps); IV Corps was not provided enough resources to effectively accomplish the FAC mission since aircraft allotments were curtailed to

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provide larger commitment in I and II Corps. ^{141/}

He felt the working relationships between the Air Force, the U.S. Army, and the Province Chief was outstanding; however, he thought the use of air power on division operations was usually wasteful. He noted that the Vietnamese Division Commander always requested more air strikes than he needed, doing so against the advice of the Division ALO. IV DASC usually gave him what he requested. He pointed out that division contact with the Viet Cong, from 7 May 1965 until early 1966, was es- ^{142/} timated to involve less than 10% of their operations. He commented that:

"The rest of the time we have had to waste many flights of fighters by bombing houses and trees with no Viet Cong located there. I felt that division operations should be given only the minimum of pre-strike flights necessary to support the troop lifts. After this, if they make contact, we should rely on immediate air required which has proved to be effective and sufficient. Further, DASC should back the decision of the division ALO as to the pre-planned air required."

Another problem, he added, was a one day "no bomb" restriction established by the division on the area in which they planned to operate. He assumed that the division did this so that the Viet Cong would not leave the area but added that it did not operate that way. On two occasions, the Viet Cong moved out of the area and the division could not ^{143/} find them the next day. He stated:

"This is strictly a Vietnamese policy, but I have recommended to the Division ALO that it be changed."

He noted that when a division operation was planned, no one from

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province level was present. He felt that the Province FACs and the U.S. Army S-2 should assist in planning an operation in their province, since the FAC was thoroughly familiar with the province, and the Army S-2 was knowledgeable of local Viet Cong activities. 144/

Another problem was with the RVN forces. While relying on air support for their ground operations, they would not allow strikes close to their positions. A Viet Cong tactic was to let the RVN get within 300 meters and then stop them. When engaged, the RVN forces would not advance, nor would they allow air strikes that close to them. The FAC noted that CBU and napalm could have been used to wipe out the Viet Cong but the RVN would not allow this. 145/

In the same vein the Operations Duty Officer, TACC, presented, at the year end, some of the problem areas of FAC. He stated: 146/

"In Operation Gibraltar, 20 miles west of Qui Nhon, the 101st Airborne had planned a heliborne operation into a Viet Cong controlled area. The operation was scheduled for 0700 hours with a flight of A-1Es and three flights of F-100s providing pre-strike of the landing zone. The Army was notified that the pre-strike could not be accomplished. The ALO recommended that the operation be delayed for 24 hours. The Army proceeded without the pre-strike and the rest is history. At approximately 0800 hours TACC received word that the operation had been started and that the unit was in real trouble. The weather was definitely too low for strikes but approximately 50 air strikes were diverted into the area and neutralized the large Viet Cong force until reinforcements could be brought in."

He further commented:

"As a FAC talking to the unit under attack, their

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vernacular and methods of describing enemy locations were useless to me in pinpointing the enemy positions. Such transmissions as "Azimuth 134, 600 yards" are of little value until the sender's position is established."

He also noted that numerous times "flocks" of helicopters wandered into the target area creating mid-air collision hazards for the strike pilots, hampered already by the low ceiling and poor visibility. The whole operation emphasized the need for command relations orientation and coordination of FAC activities. ^{147/}

He felt that the coordination of air requests at every level was a problem that had grown with the increase of U.S. units stationed in the RVN. In II Corps, for instance, there were five major units, two Korean and three American. Consolidation of all air requests for these units occurred at DASC ALPHA. Coordination at that level was paramount in assuring that the units would receive the required air support; however, indications were that the supervision and coordination at the DASC level left something to be desired. ^{148/}

Most pre-strike and close air support missions requested aircraft from 0700 to 0800. Of the 400 daily sorties, not all were available between 0700 and 0800. It appeared that one Army unit was unaware of the other units operational plans and this made the role of the DASC very important. He felt that Air Force personnel on duty in the DASC's should detect such problems and coordinate them before they ever reach TACC. ^{149/} By the end of the year, substantial improvement in FAC operation was noted by General Kruzal. He stated:

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"Substantial increases were made in the number of Forward Air Controllers (FAC) and Air Liaison Officers (ALO)."

Prior to the Phase I buildup there were 67 FAC's and ALO's in RVN. By year end, there were a total of 224 - more than a three-fold increase. This did not include Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP's) provided for U.S. and Third Country forces. There were 49 TACP's being provided by TDY personnel for these ground units. Programmed PCS replacements would begin arriving in early January 1966. 150/

After the close of the year, MajGen Rossen, MACV, felt that the requirements for additional forward air controllers (FAC) to support ARVN, U.S. and Free World Military Assistance Force Units and to insure positive target identification and control of air strikes were recognized as being critical. 151/

17. Reconnaissance

PACAF noted that USAF reconnaissance in Southeast Asia had progressed from a token force, in early 1964, to wing size by the end of 1965. To improve U.S. reconnaissance posture: 152/

Details were being completed on formation of a tactical recon wing with headquarters at Tan Son Nhut.

Support was being solicited from Headquarters USAF for early deployment of additional RF-4Cs to Udorn.

Staffing was being made for the proposed conversion of RB-57s (6091st Yokota) to an ECM configuration, and deployment of six to eight ADC B-57 ECM aircraft, so as to increase the capability

against the SA-2 and AAA threat.

Request was made to increase, to 18, the UE for RF-101 squadrons.

PACAF noted that the RF-4C had averaged an eight sortie rate since arriving in-country. Although the RF-4C had full sensor capability for side looking radar, night and day photo, in addition to IR, 153/ MACV requirements necessitated its use exclusively in the IR role.

In November, PACAF pointed out future needs in reconnaissance to include: 145/

1. Improved equipment for photo processing cells to increase mobility and effectiveness of these units.
2. Development and procurement of a real-time readout reconnaissance capability.
3. Development of follow-on tactical Elint/ECM capabilities.
4. A firm concept of operation for tactical Elint.

Pre-attack reconnaissance photography was inadequate early in the year; however, the problem was being resolved in increments. 155/

18. Big Eye

The USAF, in March 1965, proposed to integrate an element of five EC-121D aircraft into the Tactical Air Control System of Southeast Asia. The aircraft, provided on a rotational basis by ADC, would operate from a forward base in SEA and be capable of maintaining one 24 hour per day station or two stations of shorter periods. The aircraft would provide

an airborne extension of the TACS. It would be a coordination center, communications relay and an extension of the MIG CAP interceptor and fighter control. ^{156/}

The EC-121D would be equipped with APD-35 search radar, with a range of 180 to 200 nautical miles, an APS-45 height finder, with a range of 100 to 120 miles, five ground stabilized PPI scopes, two HF/SSB radios, eight UHF radios, one VHF radio, and an IFF/SIF interrogator. ^{157/}

The PACAF plan called for moving two EC-121s to Da Nang where test missions could be flown to prove out operational techniques, communications and coordination channels. The EC-121 was to be used as an airborne extension of ground based radar coverage to provide early warning and intercept assistance to aircraft during offensive air operations in SEA. They would operate from Taiwan, staging through Da Nang for refueling and pre-mission briefing. Two aircraft would be in place at Da Nang for back-up. Continuous airborne AEW&C stations manning was not possible due to the number of aircraft and the distance from Taiwan. However, a number of alternate AEW&C stations would be designated, each designed to provide radar coverage of the coastal target areas, their approaches, and the aircraft routes to and from strike areas. ^{158/}

All AEW&C stations would be located over water in the Gulf of Tonkin and flown below 2000 feet to permit optimum radar coverage over water and over coastal areas. This would give warning of a MIG threat to ranges of 120 nautical miles. CAP aircraft would be overhead to protect the EC-121. ^{159/}

CINCPAC directed a two destroyer radar picket to the Gulf of Tonkin, on 9 April. They were to warn friendly aircraft of possible MIG attacks, control intercept as feasible, and monitor the flight tracks of friendly aircraft. The 2d Air Division was asked to assure that this operation was coordinated with the EC-121 "Big Eye" operations. 160/

Two additional EC-121s were ordered to Taiwan by the JCS after CINCPAC requested them on 28 April. These aircraft would augment the existing EC-121 force. 161/

PACAF approved consolidation of fighter protection for Big Eye (EC-121) and Queen Bee (C-130B) aircraft, which were considered vulnerable. The escort of Queen Bee aircraft was a firm requirement of the JCS. The method of protecting the aircraft was left to the discretion of the 2d Air Division Commander. 162/

The EC-121 "Big Eye" missions were considered essential to the Rolling Thunder strikes. CINCPAC stated that it was in the best interest to have "Big Eye" for all Rolling Thunder missions, but this might not be possible. PACAF was studying the possibility of expanding Big Eye coverage for all daylight missions. 163/

Tests of the EC-121 in June as an airborne command post for RVN were inconclusive. This was due to the lack of an EC-121 backup FM or VHF equipment common to FAC aircraft and the non-availability of ARVN representatives from the CTOC. Current intelligence data was available

in the aircraft to the extent required, the FAC having more recent information. Intelligence data to allow the EC-121 to control strikes had to come from ground sources where it was continually updated. The airborne CTOC representatives would only know whether or not the general area was under Viet Cong control. ^{164/}

Combined USAF/Navy Rolling Thunder operations were normally conducted during the 12 daylight hours. A Big Eye sortie required eight escort fighters airborne during the period on-station. Four aircraft provided area escort, while four were being air refueled. If USAF/USN Rolling Thunder strikes and armed recce were all provided Big Eye support, it would require about 3000 escort hours per month. At a utilization rate of 65 hours a month, 51 aircraft could accomplish this. ^{165/} To ease the 2AD workload, PACAF urged that the Navy escort Big Eye during Navy periods of operations. The Navy felt that the CAP effort required to protect the EC-121 would not warrant its employment for Navy operations. ^{166/} PACFLT said adequate coverage was provided Navy strikes by two picket ships between 1830 N and 1930 N on latitude 10700E, and there was no need for Big Eye. CINCPAC agreed with this, making it unnecessary for the USAF to provide Big Eye support to Navy daylight Rolling Thunder missions. ^{167/}

The Air Defense Battle Commander, Da Nang Air Defense Sub-Sector, presented his personal opinions of aircraft control problems between commands. He stated: ^{168/}

"The profusion of aircraft performing diverse

missions over the Gulf of Tonkin created a rather complicated control problem, particularly when operating outside land based radar coverage. The Navy had shipborne radar of good capability and overlapping coverage. The Navy EA-2 aircraft, equipped with airborne radar, was used extensively to supplement shipborne capability and to control certain defensive escort and CAP aircraft."

It was his opinion that the Navy could control all missions over the Gulf. However, USAF was employing EC-121 aircraft (Big Eye) for control of Elint escort fighters in the Navy radar environment, even though its capability to perform such a mission was marginal. During negotiations with the Navy, which resulted in USAF/USN agreement on such matters as cross tell and mutual support, control of USAF escort aircraft was informally discussed. CTF-77 staff personnel were of the opinion Navy could do the job and would be willing to do so, stating:

"As a matter of fact, referenced agreement has a provision whereby the Navy would accept control of USAF aircraft when Big Eye was not on station. This could well be carried a step further - discontinue the Big Eye mission. If NVN MIG-21s, were to become more active over the Gulf, the problem of coordinating the activities of two control agencies operating in the same airspace could introduce an element of confusion which would undoubtedly be to our disadvantage."

19. Continuation of Farmgate Program

USAF desired to retain the Farmgate (A-1E) program in Vietnam. It felt that more airpower used in a close support role would hasten the Viet Cong defeat. Past experience had shown that timely fixed wing aircraft support was often not available because of aircraft shortages.

According to a pilot in the 1st Air Commando Squadron, the A-1E was being diverted from its close air support role to that of an interdiction bomber. He stated after the end of the year that: 169/

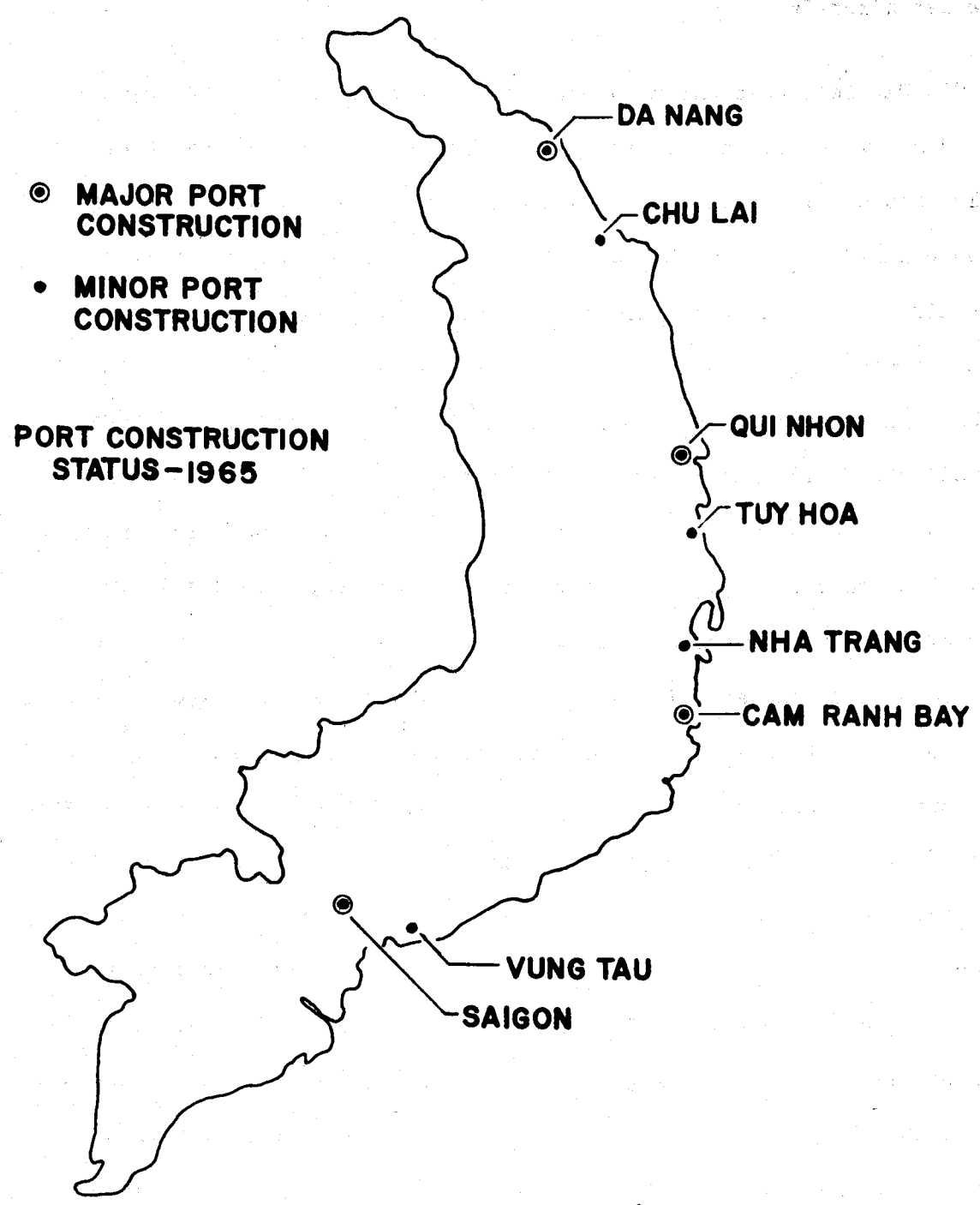
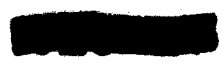
"The A-1E has proven itself in combat, time and time again. It was defended against charges of obsolescence with the fact that it was extremely accurate and relatively invulnerable to small arms fire. This has been verified on numerous occasions, but it is just that - a very accurate close support fighter, relatively invulnerable to small arms fire. We are presently using it as a long range, all weather, interdiction bomber. A-1Es take off after 2400 and penetrate thunderstorms for one hour and fifteen minutes to deliver bombs for harassment. These could be delivered by jet aircraft in less than half the time and they could top the weather and accomplish the same results because pinpoint accuracy is seldom important on these missions. This accuracy is required on some of the daylight targets and the A-1 can deliver, but time over enemy territory and enemy defenses are on the increase."

20. Base Development

Early in 1965, the need for additional bases to support the expanding U.S. posture in SEA was given considerable attention. By early May, 2d Air Division had selected several locations in South Vietnam for possible development. Existing bases were small and congested and were limited in facilities to accommodate the expansion. Only three jet-capable airfields were available early in the year, Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut and Da Nang. All three were overworked and crowded with a wide variety of U.S. and VNAF aircraft. The anticipated force increases and plans for expanded air operation in North Vietnam required not only jet-capable fields but other fields to accommodate the rotary wing and

170/
propeller aircraft.

CINCPAC felt that Cam Ranh Bay was ideally suited for the development of a new logistics base and jet airfield. The Saigon logistics complex was wholly inadequate to support operations in SEA of the magnitude planned. Cam Ranh Bay would meet the requirements not only for a jet air base complex but also for a second major deep water port, closer to both primary supplies and the field forces. The co-location of the logistic base with a badly needed jet capable airfield, CINCPAC pointed out, would improve both logistic and tactical operations. The area had natural security, deep water and considerable sparsely populated land, which made it an ideal location for basing air, ground and naval activities. CINCPAC further noted that a developed Cam Ranh Air Base would be highly desirable in the event of overt aggression, since it would give the U.S. a facility of its own to counter such aggression. It could also support counterinsurgency operations. CINCPAC said that the logistics objective was to set up a U.S. base with a central control of common-user items for all deployed forces, including key items for the RVNAF. Shipments could be made from CONUS, Okinawa and other Pacific points, direct to Cam Ranh and moved from there by air, land, and water LOC's to required using points. Having a base at Cam Ranh would reduce the dependence on the flow of combat cargo to Saigon via the vulnerable Saigon River. It would also reduce port congestion in Saigon and would lower airlift requirements. A significant factor was that it could act as an alternate in case of temporary close-downs at other bases. Construction of this facility would allow dispersion, and decrease vulnerability to



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enemy attack or accident. CINCPAC asked JCS, on 30 May, for approval to plan development of Cam Ranh as a major U.S. port and logistics complex to support the war in RVN. Authority to develop a jet capable combat and logistical airfield and authorization to divert to Cam Ranh Bay some of the logistic forces planned and approved for the Qui Nhon/^{171/} Nha Trang area and other areas was also requested.

Great interest was being engendered in the construction of jet-capable expeditionary tactical airfields as a result of a Navy/Marine joint effort at Chu Lai. When air support requirements could not wait for contractors to complete permanent type air bases, a Navy/Marine team provided a field that was operational less than thirty days after construction started. Major material utilized in the construction of this 8,000' runway was aluminum matting. CINCPAC gave considerable study to this construction and, as a result, approved that Cam Ranh base would have dual runways, ^{172/} a single AM-2 mat runway 8,000' in length to provide an early operational capability and concurrent construction of parallel ^{173/} permanent runway.

PACAF also considered the area south of Phan Rang (1131 N and 10859 E) as suitable for a 10,000' jet capable airfield. Adequate materials were available, the runways could be aligned with prevailing winds and surrounding real estate was very lightly populated and, therefore, probably easy to procure. A beach two miles away could be developed for LST landings and the flat area would make the base easy to defend. The Phan Rang base would allow maximum operational flexibility for the employment of

174/
tactical fighters.

PACAF also considered the feasibility of another runway at Qui Nhon, which would be aligned with prevailing winds. Materials were available for construction, security conditions were good, and the airfield could be supplied from Qui Nhon or an LST landing along the coast. The central location of Qui Nhon made it an excellent base for tactical fighter support of programmed forces. 175/

Tuy Hoa was considered but it presented problems of logistical support and security, even though the operational location was ideal. Initial surveys of Phan Ri and Phan Thiet indicated that construction and engineering problems, security and high terrain precluded their development for jet airfield use. 176/

PACAF recommended to CINCPAC that priority be given to airfield development in the Phan Rang and Qui Nhon area, after Cam Ranh Bay and Qui Nhon. 177/

The anticipated deployments and expanded air operations required not only the development of new airfields but also the improvement of existing airfields to accommodate jet aircraft. JCS, therefore, directed CINCPAC, on 3 March, to review base development plans in SEA. 178/ The 2d Air Division Commander recommended priority improvements as follows: Vung Tau, Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa and Nha Trang. He further informed COMUSMACV, on 11 March, that Pleiku and Can Tho were considered for improvement but not recommended, Pleiku was in the highlands at a consider-

able distance from the coast and would be difficult to supply. Can Tho was built on re-claimed paddy land and had a severe settling problem. While the asphaltic covering was elastic enough to endure the settling without severe damage, concrete surfaces required for parking and at each end of the runway could not be used, since it was too rigid to absorb the settling stresses. ^{179/}

With Cam Ranh Bay completed on 1 November and Phan Rang in December, South Vietnam, by the end of the year, had five jet-capable fields, i.e., Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Da Nang, Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang. These facilities, however, were not sufficient to accommodate the expanding air operations and, as of the end of the year, 2d Air Division recommended feasibility studies and surveys for possible additional jet fields at Hue and Qui Nhon. ^{180/} Airfield congestion was delaying scheduled arrivals of aircraft and airfield saturation in South Vietnam was causing operational difficulties. ^{181/} The pace of the buildup was faster than construction programming. Base development was hindered constantly during the year by shortages of materials, skilled engineers, funds and construction equipment. Also, construction programming required elaborate documentation, which was often outdated by the time it was compiled into usable form because of the rapidly changing complexity of construction requirements, slow supply pipelines, and delivery delays. ^{182/} In spite of this, considerable progress had been made by the end of the year in base development.

Additional airfield facilities were required to accommodate the

expanding C-130 force. By the end of the year, a priority list was established for the improvement and construction of adequate airfield facilities for the C-130's. First priority went to My Tho (Tan Hiep). The others in priority order were: Ben Cat, Phuc Vinh, Trung Lap, Duc My, Tay Ninh, Puoc Binh, An Loc, Cheo Reo, Phan Thiet, Bao Loc and Vinh Long. ^{183/}

At the end of the year, the Secretary of Defense was informed that the deployment of logistics would have to be accelerated to meet the requirements for base development and construction. ^{184/}

21. Logistics

One of the most formidable tasks in 1965 was to create a rational and functioning logistical organization in Southeast Asia. ^{185/}

The concept of operations prior to the buildup was not prepared to accommodate the sudden surge of military activities. One of the unfortunate problems was that there were no supply pipelines established to support urgent requirements generated by the rapid buildup. The pressure to satisfy requirements resulted in seeking of new supply areas and assistance from Clark AB, Philippines, Bangkok, Thailand and Japan. ^{186/}

The logistic system in the PACOM area was based on a rear hardcore base posture (main operating base) located in Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines with a series of forward operating bases in SEA, Taiwan, and South Korea. This system allowed supply flexibility in that certain

assets were repositioned at forward operating bases with logistic control centralized by geographical area through the 13th and 5th Air Force. 187/

A key problem in supporting sustained air operations was the lack of a significant maintenance capability at forward bases. This was compounded by the fact that neither PACAF nor TAC had enough field maintenance test equipment to deploy with individual squadrons. Only organizational maintenance was performed at forward bases in SEA, Taiwan and Korea with all heavy maintenance and base supply accounts at the six rear main operating bases - Misawa, Yokota, Tachikawa, Kadena, Naha, and Clark. Extensive operations would place a tremendous load on these six MOB's. 188/

22. POL

Following the Gulf of Tonkin incident during the second half of 1964, there was a continuing appraisal of PACOM capability to support intensified operations in Southeast Asia. 189/

Normal military operations in Southeast Asia were completely dependent on commercial sources for stocking, distribution and resupply. Pre-positioned POL stocks were adequate for only the first stages of accelerated operations, and there were serious limitations to the prompt resupply which would be required by a continued high consumption rate. 190/

About 80 percent of the bulk POL in RVN was stored at commercial

terminals at Nha Be at the beginning of 1965. Destruction of this facility would have a serious impact on operations conducted from Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa airfields. In recognition of this, COMUSMACV, jointly with the commercial operators, exercised particular care to protect the facility. 191/

To improve the storage capacity at TSN, and to improve the dispersion posture, CINCPACAF had proposed to erect 10,000 barrel tanks. CINCPAC preferred to achieve the same ends by expanding commercial storage at the field, but he left CINCPACAF the decision to erect the tanks or request additional commercial storage through service channels. 192/

The situation at Bien Hoa was similar in some respects. Resupply was by commercial storage through service channels. 192/

The situation at Bien Hoa was similar in some respects. Resupply was by commercial tank trucks from Nha Be, and there was a shortage of tankage. 193/

At Da Nang, there was a small ESSO terminal, and the FY65 MAP programmed 25,000 barrels of POL storage at the Da Nang airfield. Plans for a new runway at the field would require construction of an additional 35,000 barrel storage capability. Similarly, the new airfield planned for Chu Lai would require a 50,000 barrel storage capability. Major additional requirements for accelerated operations included an amphibious assault bulk fuel system with 5,000 feet of buoyant pipeline at Da Nang Bay. 194/

During June and July there was increasing concern over the possibility of the Viet Cong destroying major POL terminals in RVN. Early in August, at ESSO's Lien Chieu terminal, the Viet Cong destroyed two 20,000 barrel JP-4 tanks, burned a 10,000 barrel JP-4 tank and a 2,300 barrel aviation gasoline tank, and damaged a 10,000 barrel tank. Additional damage was sustained by the shore line when a moored ship departed without disconnecting. The tank farm was rendered temporarily unusable, and 129,000 barrels of assorted POL reserve stocks was rushed to Da Nang for Da Nang, Chu Lai, Hue and Phu Bai. ^{195/}

During July, at CINCPAC's direction, a military POL distribution system was established in South Vietnam to support the expanding U.S. force. CINCPACAF was assigned responsibility to service airfields as designated by COMUSMACV. ^{196/} At the end of the year this system was functioning smoothly and meeting the military requirements.

CHAPTER VI

THE VNAF

1. The Capabilities and Limitations of the VNAF

Early Evaluation:

Early in the year the Second Air Division Commander presented an overall evaluation of the VNAF: ^{1/}

"The Vietnamese Air Force now has four operationally ready A-1H squadrons. A fifth squadron is to be activated in May, and a sixth is programmed for September, this year. The VNAF has assigned 86 A-1H's, with a programmed buildup to 150 aircraft by October 65. Present A-1 pilot strength is 127 operationally ready pilots of which 61 are night operationally ready. Total A-1H proposed pilot strength is 300.

In January, the VNAF produced 1629 A-1 strike sorties. By March, they should be flying 2,000 sorties per month and projected further into the future, the VNAF should top 2,600 A-1 strike sorties by 1 July.

Although the VNAF is plagued by the lack of positive timely direction from the top because air Vice Marshal Ky is to a considerable extent preoccupied with politics, I credit the unit with the potential of becoming an excellent fighting force. Several young field grade officers are showing promise as good leaders and while the morale and prestige of the unit is at a new high as the result of recent strikes in North Vietnam, daily siestas and week-end slackening of effort is still a way of life.

Generally, I assess the proficiency of VNAF pilots as running from excellent to poor, much the same as in any air force, however, the number in the lower average bracket is rather large. This is due principally to the lack of experience and the difficult conditions under which the average strike pilot has been trained. Therefore, he is going to require considerable seasoning. As an example, because there is not a scorable range in country, proper instructions in ground gunnery cannot be given.

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Relatively few of the VNAF pilots are instrument proficient. This, of course, is not a limitation on day operations, but most positive on numbers of pilots available for night operations. Again, the index comes back to the few all around qualified pilots who then determine the number of combat sorties which can be flown daily. In order to minimize the impact of a shortage of flight and element leaders, we have encouraged the VNAF to operate in flights of two wherever possible.

The potential of the VNAF is not necessarily determined by the capabilities and limitations of the strike pilot because there are serious deficiencies in the availability of "behind the lines" support personnel and equipment. Such items as adequate numbers of trained munitions load crews and ordnance handling equipment is but one example of physical restraint on the turn around capability of VNAF.

The tactical air control system is hampered by lack of qualified VNAF personnel in key positions. Not only are qualified VNAF personnel lacking in the ASOC's, but also in the capacity of forward air controllers. In the latter case we have been unable to achieve the desired dispersal of liaison aircraft coupled with a forward air controller throughout all key areas of the country. This assignment of the forward air controller with a liaison aircraft to all such provinces is essential to the gathering of intelligence and the identification of targets. The simple matter of dispersing these aircraft is not entirely restricted by the VNAF. There are presently insufficient secure airfields to which these aircraft can be deployed on a permanent basis."

3. Performance

By mid-year the in-country evaluation of the VNAF remained essentially that expressed by General Moore. On 11 May, the Deputy Directors of the ASOC expressed concern over the operation of the VNAF at Can Tho. They presented their criticism to the 2d Air Division Commander

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as follows: 2/

"The helicopters and liaison aircraft in Can Tho are commanded by very junior officers who exercise little, if any, control over the detachment. The aircrews can not be located at times. They take a 2½ to 3 hour lunch period during which time they are away from the base and no one is available for flight. And other indications of no control by the commander concerned is apparent. In addition to the above, the following specific items were mentioned: (1) Poor utilization of aircraft. (2) Unit will not fly at night. This pertains to both helicopter and liaison detachments. (3) Med Evac by the helicopters is not satisfactory. This is due to slowness in responding when required, refusing to fly at night and general lack of will to complete the mission in face of enemy action. (4) Scheduled take off times are usually late. (5) Refuse to turn around an aircraft even for an emergency. (6) No American advisors are with the detachment and American advisors and commanding officer of the unit seldom visit the detachment while deployed at Can Tho."

Complaints about VNAF performance, particularly in the IV Corps area, continued. Major General Robert R. Rowland, Chief of the Air Force Advisory Group, attempted to obtain corrective action through VNAF headquarters. Some of the complaints, General Rowland pointed out, stemmed from the fact that New Can Tho (Binh Tuy) was not ready for VNAF operations. Due to saturated ramp space, the VNAF had been maintaining a limited deployment of seven liaison and four helicopter aircraft at Can Tho. Since the only available VNAF quarters and mess were in town, crews had to stay in the city of Can Tho, about 15 minutes from the base. The alert facility had only one telephone for use by both liaison and helicopter crews. Only one truck was available for transportation to the airfield. When facilities at Binh Tuy were completed

level (IV Corps) were found to be almost totally ineffective in employing tactical air as it was used in the Delta. There appeared to be little VNAF control and direction given the FAC once he was deployed in the field. Although the VNAF FAC's flew as many hours as an American FAC, these hours were poorly utilized. Their flying time was spent on VR, from which USAF received very little information or assistance. The air cover mission was essentially the only time a VNAF FAC would expend a tactical fighter. The IV DASC Duty Officer stated that: "The majority of VNAF tactical fighters, other than those on air cover, are expended by American FAC's. The VNAF FAC problems stem from the lack of division and sector control, non-utilization of the single sideband net, and in many cases, lack of initiative on the part of the VNAF FAC's themselves." He added that the situation could be remedied by assigning a VNAF ALO to each division. ^{7/}

4. Modernization of the VNAF

General: The need for modernization of the VNAF was apparent early in the year; however, it was necessary first to examine the VNAF capability and force strength and to study and discuss what requirements the VNAF could best handle.

5. VNAF Air Request System

To start with, the operational procedures for the VNAF were studied by 2d AD and new guide lines were provided. For instance, in January 1965, a proposed directive "VNAF Air Request System" was submitted to

this problem would probably be resolved. ^{3/}

In regard to the superior performance of U.S. Army choppers in the med-evac function, General Rowland pointed out that VNAF had only four H-34's on day alert at Can Tho while the U.S. Army had some 80 aircraft available. The VNAF performance in IV Corps proved the charges of poor aircraft utilization to be in error. In the period March through April 1965, U-17A and H-34 aircraft were programmed for 90 and 45 hours per month per aircraft possessed, respectively. The U-17's flew 88.6 hours and the H-34's, 55 hours per month. During the period, the H-34's evacuated 314 casualties, airlifted 560 passengers, and delivered 12.6 tons of supplies. ^{4/}

To improve VNAF operations, General Rowland suggested that USAF personnel having knowledge of deficiencies report these at once to the Chief of the Air Force Advisory Team - 7 in Can Tho. Those problems which are unknown are difficult to resolve. ^{5/}

As of the end of the year, ALO/FAC, Chuon Thien Province, observed that the VNAF FAC's were being assigned for 15 day periods and then assigned to another province. They did not stay overnight and usually were not present for the morning briefing, thus making it difficult to coordinate activities for the day. It was felt that the VNAF FAC's should make the immediate airstrikes in the province not in support of U.S. forces, adding that they had access to VNAF A-1's from Binh Tuy for these strikes. ^{6/}

Also, as of the end of the year, the VNAF FAC's stationed at sector

the VNAF for their comment and concurrence. VNAF proposed a complete revision in which the original intent and purpose was lost. It was also diluted by a series of VNAF aims and objectives not compatible with those in the original U.S. proposed directive. However, by joint U.S.-VNAF effort, the problem was worked out and a final directive substantially paralleling the U.S. proposal was published on 12 March 1965.^{8/}

The Commander 2AD, 22 March 1965 noted: "The slow but sure implementation of the VNAF Air Request Net has contributed significantly to the responsiveness of both VNAF and USAF air."^{9/}

6. The F-5 Aircraft Proposal for VNAF

Although CINCPAC, in November 1964, had turned down a similar request, COMUSMACV, in May 1965, agains asked CINCPAC for authority to add eight F-5's and support equipment to the FY66 MAP so the F-5's could be acquired by the VNAF in the third quarter of FY66. He said recent events indicated the need for a review of the program objective for a VNAF A-1H capability to permit concurrent acquisition of jet aircraft with the buildup of the sixth A-1H squadron. This was based on two considerations. First, should Hanoi and Saigon agree to cease hostilities, the RVN would have in being a jet air force. There were no illusions about NVN living up to a cease-fire or settlement. Second, with the introduction of more and more U.S. jet units and their increased use in counterinsurgency and overt operations, the priority for timely development to the full six squadron VNAF A-1H capability could

be stretched out. This would provide personnel for F-5 training immediately. The envisioned FY-67 VNAF fighter-bomber position was for 10/ six A-1H and one F-5 squadrons.

CINCPAC replied that the disadvantages of such an introduction, which he listed in November, still applied. Also, the shortage of VNAF pilots, the high pilot attrition rates, the lack of jet maintenance experience, associated training problems and the re-allocation of PACOM F-5 aircraft further complicated the problem. 11/

While he recognized that these problems were not insurmountable, CINCPAC said that the results of F-5 field testing in Vietnam should be evaluated. If the aircraft proved highly acceptable for counterinsurgency and close support operations, CINCPAC would consider reopening the issue with the JCS and would be in a stronger position to counter the SecDef's decision turning down the proposal. Until the results of the field test were known, the COMUSMACV request for eight of these aircraft to go to the VNAF was disapproved. 12/

COMUSMACV, in July, again repeated the request for the introduction of F-5's into Vietnam. The Ambassador, Saigon, had concurred with COMUSMACV's outlined plan for the phasing of F-5's into the VNAF. Prime Minister Ky and the VNAF were also keenly interested in the F-5 program. 13/

CINCPAC felt that it would be logical to await the results of the Skoshi Tiger combat evaluation of the F-5 before introducing the aircraft

into the VNAF. This thinking was supported up to the Secretary of Defense. On the recommendation of CSAF, the Secretary of Defense, in July, authorized combat trials of the F-5 in Vietnam. Twelve F-5 were diverted from MAP production and modified for combat in RVN. October saw the initial operations of these aircraft in Vietnam. From these trials it was learned that utilization rates were high and maintenance requirements low. Ground fire in December resulted in loss of one craft, the only loss in this trial program. Tests continued with an expected date of completion being February 1966. ^{14/}

7. A-1 Availabilities

Availability of A-1 aircraft became a concern to the Secretary of Defense in mid-1965. Substitution of B-57's was under study. During this period, the Secretary of State suspended the delivery of A-1's to the VNAF. There were indications that there were insufficient A-1's to meet USN requirements and substitution would have to be considered. ^{15/}

Later study indicated there were sufficient A-1's to meet the requirements of USN and the RVNAF. Based on this the Secretary of Defense directed resumption of A-1 delivery in order to sustain the approved six strike squadron force structure (150 aircraft). ^{16/} As a result 21 A-1's were delivered to VNAF and an additional eight, previously diverted to Subic Bay, were depreserved and flown to SVN. ^{17/}

Although four B-57 aircraft were delivered to the VNAF in August, it is to be noted that the CINCPAC did not want the VNAF to have them. As an alternative he proposed acceleration be made of the study to

replace VNAF A-1's with F-5's. Therefore, on 10 December, CINCPAC recommended that the conversion of the first A-1 squadron to F-5's take place at the end of the third quarter of FY 67. It was recommended by CINCPAC that four A-1 squadrons be retained and the decision to convert the second squadron to F-5's be withheld until the Skoshi Tiger operation had been evaluated. 18/

8. Year End Proposals and Plans for VNAF resources Buildup

In October, 2d Air Division Commander stated that the time had arrived for an orderly modernization of the VNAF. He felt the VNAF had progressed sufficiently in technical capabilities, training, and leadership to warrant such a buildup. 19/

Also in October, the JCS requested review of VNAF aircraft requirements, giving consideration to and providing recommendations on the following: 20/

1. VNAF aircraft utilization, maintenance, capability and manning toward improving effectiveness of VNAF strike squadrons.
2. Desirability, feasibility and implication of a squadron of jet aircraft. Balance of strike squadrons using A-1, T-28 or the OV-10A type.
3. Consider adding F-84 and F-86 to list already being considered for the jet squadron.

Air Force Advisory Group analysis in October 1965 of requirements by aircraft type were as follows: 21/

Tactical Fighters: Current combat usage shortens the A-1 life

span. The U.S. inventory of the type has dwindled and no production facility is in being to manufacture similar types. There is a continuing need to compress strike reaction time with a faster aircraft having higher combat effectiveness along with excellent maintainability.

The F-5: The F-5 is currently being provided other MAP countries and limited evaluation of Skoshi Tiger appears favorable. Furthermore, the F-5 has inherent air defense capability not now existing with current VN weapons systems. (In this connection AFAG recommended conversion of two A-1 squadrons to the F-5 beginning with a one squadron addition in the FY 66 Military Assistance Program.)

Transport Aircraft: The C-47 is supportable through June 72, but cannot meet the demands for adequate personnel and logistics transport, air resupply, medical evacuation, and outsized loads. AFAG cited an OSD Transport Aircraft Study which concluded that the C-119G had greatly improved performance and reliability over the C-47. Also the C-119G was supportable through 1975. AFAG recommended conversion of the two existing C-47 squadrons (and one programmed in FY 66) to C-119G type aircraft (U/E 16) at a rate of one squadron annually, programming to commence in the 1967 MAP, with unit conversion to be based on aircraft availability.

Helicopters: The H-34 helicopter was considered by AFAG inadequate under the conditions being experienced in SVN. The UH-1D was better suited. Therefore, AFAG recommended conversion of four existing H-34

squadrons to type UH-1D (U/E 20) at a rate of one squadron annually, programming to commence in the 1967 MAP, with unit conversion to be based on unit aircraft availability.

Tactical Reconnaissance: AFAG found that the three assigned RC-47's had limited reconnaissance capability. Since mid-range planning envisaged gradual displacement of USAF forces performing the reconnaissance function, an effort to improve the VNAF capability should be developed. It appeared that the reconnaissance version of the F-5 (RF-5) would provide the best vehicle for modernization of the VNAF reconnaissance function. From a standpoint of materiel and training, it would be compatible with the proposed tactical fighter conversion. They recommended that the reconnaissance version of the F-5 be considered for modernization of the VNAF reconnaissance force.

Liaison and Flight Trainer: AFAG found the O-1 and U-17 aircraft of the four VNAF Liaison Squadrons and the training center adequate for current and foreseeable mission requirements. No conversion program was contemplated at that juncture. AFAG recommended that their proposal be approved and forwarded to CINCPAC for consideration as soon as possible. ^{22/}

In November, a MACV sponsored briefing drew the following conclusions on VNAF Strike Aircraft Requirements: ^{23/}

1. The VNAF can do better; while their strike capability trend is encouraging, MACV must work to increase their capability.

2. The A-1 aircraft appears to be the best all-around strike vehicle if it can be properly stationed throughout the country.

3. The next best in-country strike aircraft is the F-100. The F4C appears to be an improvement over the F-100, both in bomb load carrying capability and as an air defense weapon.

4. The A-1 would be fully competitive with the F-100 if sufficient ordnance and spares were programmed to increase its capability.

5. All factors being considered, including off-shore support, the carrier sortie is equivalent to the ground-based sortie.

6. USMC aircraft effectiveness is adversely affected by a shortage of ordnance.

7. Whereas the absence of B-52 strikes would have increased the requirement for tactical strikes, the B-52 strikes have not decreased the requirement for in-country tactical air strikes.

8. The average number of sorties per battalion may be reduced from six to five; however, plans must be ready to reinforce the tactical air capability if experience show that this reduction provides an insufficient sortie rate. Plans will provide at least three more tactical aircraft squadrons in-country to meet a surge in air operations.

9. A number of factors could increase the sortie requirements. Factors to be considered were: possible escalation of the war, an improving target acquisition capability, a substantial increase in VC anti-aircraft weaponry, etc.

10. A stepped up air campaign against NVN, beyond MACV

cognizance at that time, could generate requirements for more tactical aircraft to be based in SVN.

By the end of the year, COMUSMACV's concept for strike squadron modernization was as follows: ^{24/} Convert to two squadrons in central SVN to provide quick reaction either north or south performing close air support and other tactical missions, as required, in the present conflict. These aircraft could also assume an air defense role when U.S. Forces leave the country. The two Jet squadrons would be supplemented by the remaining four A-1 Squadrons, one in each Corps area, to conduct tactical operations in the counterinsurgency role. He felt that partial conversion to jet aircraft had definite advantages. In event of an agreement involving U.S. withdrawal, this would avoid the specter of a jetless RVN facing jet-equipped NVN, and would be a shot in the arm for RVNAF prestige.

COMUSMACV stated that the VNAF in December 1965, possessed some jet capability in air crew and maintenance personnel. Thirty-two maintenance personnel had received training on jet aircraft in CONUS, 40 pilots had received jet indoctrination and eight pilots and 16 maintenance personnel were receiving B-57 training at Clark AB. In short, the VNAF would be capable of operating and maintaining F-86's provided adequate formal training were conducted. ^{25/} He felt that training of VNAF by Third Country would be undesirable. VNAF considered it had the same level of experience and combat readiness as other MAP supported countries. Therefore, it would be considered a loss of prestige to have any such country

provide training toward modernization. Further, the language barrier would present a problem. ^{26/}

In spite of large potential dollar savings, COMUSMACV firmly advised against any further consideration of F-84 or F-86 as substitutes for F-5 in proposed conversion for the following reasons:

1. The F-84 was not suitable as an Air Defense Weapon and the F-86 could not approach the F-5 performance. Further, increasing Soviet support to NVN could include the MIG-19/21 and the F-86 was considered no match for these aircraft.

2. The F-5 could operate from less sophisticated runways than the F-86.

3. Maintenance man hours per flying hour factor for the F-86 is 23 compared to 16 for the F-5.

4. The F-5 had a twin-engine reliability which would probably reduce attrition.

5. The F-5 was already in PACOM countries and was still in production. Therefore, support should extend into late 1970's, whereas the F-86 was being phased out of inventories. Limited number of aircraft types would greatly reduce complexity of MAP support.

6. Prime Minister Ky had viewed ROKAF and Skoshi Tiger operations and was most impressed with the F-5. He was aware that other PACOM MAP countries had received the aircraft and he would strenuously oppose

introduction of any less capable aircraft, particularly since his air force was actively engaged in hostilities. As far as re-equipping the six VNAF Strike Squadrons with F-86's, he felt that it was not desired to convert more than two of the squadrons to any jet, particularly the F-86. For the type missions the A-1's were flying, the F-86 performance would be inferior in load, loiter time, maneuverability, maintenance requirements, and operation from unimproved runways.

9. Force Strength

To accommodate requirements for an expanding VNAF, manpower was examined and recommendations made for training, placement and proper utilization.

Proposals for increased force strength had obtained the support of CINCPAC. Further, force strength was under consideration by the Secretary of Defense early in the year. On 13 April, the JCS approved the acceleration of the force structure expansion, the funding of FY66 MAP for Vietnam, increase of U.S. advisors for the VNAF and the addition of 17,347 spaces. Late in the year, CINCPAC recommended that the VNAF be increased to 14,658 from the authorized strength of 12,752.^{27/} By the end of the year, force strength was 12,976^{28/} with authorized strength of 14,658.^{29/}

Following a meeting in July between General Moore and General Westmoreland, COMUSMACV took the following position:

1. Eight VNAF pilots should be attached for jet training to USAF B-57 squadrons during FY66 with four B-57's having VNAF markings.
2. In the first quarter of FY66, 23 VNAF pilots and maintenance personnel would commence training in the CONUS.
3. The F-5 test unit train 15 VNAF pilots, composed of eight VNAF B-57 pilots, and seven pilots with jet experience.
4. Transfer 12 F-5 test aircraft to the VNAF in FY1966 and activate a seventh VNAF squadron.

General Moore presented this COMUSMACV position to Ambassador Maxwell Taylor on 18 July and received his approval. ^{30/}

2d Air Division Commander, at the end of October, felt that with the expansion of the Vietnamese Air Force, added emphasis must be placed on the development of effectiveness and professionalism. He noted that progress had been made in the area of leadership, training and capability. ^{31/}

General Schinz, AFAG, said that the development of the Vietnamese Air Force had been characterized by rapid expansion and an accompanying dilution of skilled technicians and leaders to cope with increased requirements. Therefore, his advisory efforts were being directed toward the development of a more professional force. This included establishing an effective command and control system, leadership training in management and discipline and increasing technical capabilities to provide

the skill levels required of a modern air force. He stated: "Progress in these areas have been such that we should look now to an orderly modernization of the Vietnamese air force."^{32/}

He considered the authorized size of the VNAF was adequate for the future and within the manpower capability of the country to support; however, he felt it necessary to commence long range programming for modernization in order to maintain a dynamic and effective force for the future.^{33/}

CHAPTER VII

DEPLOYMENTS TO SUPPORT THE 1965 SEA BUILDUP

Following the August 1964 incident in the Tonkin Gulf, deployments of air units to Southeast Asia and other Pacific bases were made in preparation for any further eventuality. ^{1/} Although no retaliatory strikes were made following the mortar shelling of Bien Hoa in November 1964 and the Brink BOQ bombing in December 1964, planning for NVN strikes was accomplished early in the year and units were earmarked and ready for such strikes. ^{2/} A total of 305 aircraft, under operational control of 2d Air Division (222 in SVN and 83 in Thailand), were available on 1 January 1965 for any eventuality. Ten B-57's at Bien Hoa were remnants of a force deployed in August 1964 following the Tonkin Gulf incident. The F-100's at Da Nang had been deployed in 1964 to strike Pathet Lao gun positions which shot down two U.S. Navy planes flying reconnaissance over Laos. The six F-102's at Tan Son Nhut were there as a result of the Tonkin incident and remained as an air defense force. The O-1F's stationed at Bien Hoa were assigned to the Tactical Air Support Squadron. The RF-101's flew reconnaissance missions over Laos and RVN and were operating out of Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The RB-47's had infrared reconnaissance capability and were also operating out of TSN. Thailand based F-105's and F-100's were flying air strikes against Pathet Lao/Viet Minh positions in the corridor, through which supplies and personnel were being infiltrated into Laos and South Vietnam, and as escort for Yankee Team reconnaissance missions over Laos. The T-28's at Udorn were used in counterinsurgency

operations in Laos, while the RT-28's were used for training and COIN operations. The helicopters based at Udorn were being used for rescue support. ^{3/}

In contrast to the 1 January picture, the 2d Air Division had 765 aircraft (579 in SVN and 186 in Thailand) under operational control at the end of December 1965. ^{4/} It strengthened the RVNAF and assisted them in regaining the military initiative which they lacked at the beginning of the year. While it did not end the war in 1965, it frustrated both the Viet Cong and Hanoi plans to win the war in 1965. It disrupted the enemy, through close air support, in his plans to carry out sustained ground operations. It brought the war into his haven area by concentrated air operations against the remote VC bases and camp areas. Because of these deployments, major bases were either expanded, developed or planned. Increased air logistics were provided to critical areas for combat support. The enemy's logistic time table and plans were continually upset by sustained interdiction of land and water infiltration routes in Laos and South Vietnam. Sections of the highway and railroad system, which had been closed by prior VC action, were opened as a result of the efforts of air. Secure areas were enlarged through air supported ground actions and advances. But most important, this growth provided the United States, by the end of the year, with a powerful force and base of operations in Southeast Asia from which to challenge and counter Communist strategy in the area.

1. Free World Forces Deployments

During the year token combat support was given by seven nations and 23 others provided assistance of varying magnitude.^{5/} The question of deploying Free World Forces into SVN first presented itself in April 1964 when the President of the United States announced that the U.S. would welcome other nations military assistance to South Vietnam in order to counter the insurgency and defeat the Viet Cong.^{6/} Until this time, the only nation furnishing military assistance was Australia. They provided a small Army training team that became integrated into the American Advisory program.^{7/} The next Australian deployment, August 1964, consisted of an aviation detachment of six caribou aircraft and 74 personnel sent to SVN to become part of the SEASIA airlift effort.^{8/} In early June 1965, Australia again deployed forces to South Vietnam. The contingency consisted of the 79th Signal Troop; Headquarters, Australian Army, Far East; First Battalion, RAR, and a logistical support company. They were attached to the 173rd Airborne Brigade at Bien Hoa.^{9/} Later, on 30 September, an Australian 105mm howitzer battery, air reconnaissance flight, armored personnel carrier (APC) troop, and a field engineer troop were deployed to Vietnam.^{10/} With the addition of another signal troop, the Australian force strength at the end of the year stood at 1,557.^{11/}

New Zealand also furnished token support. The military engineer team that had been sent on 20 Jul 1964 was replaced on 21 Jul 1965 with a 105mm howitzer battery, which was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.^{12/}

The first deployment of Korean forces was made in August 1964 and consisted of a small medical team and karate instructors.^{13/}

In January, a small contingent of non-combatants were sent to SVN. On 16 March, an Army engineer battalion was deployed to Di An, Bien Hoa Province. ^{14/} Deployment of the ROK Marine Brigade and the ROK Capital Infantry Division was completed on 8 November 1965 and assigned to security of Cam Ranh Bay and Qui Nhon. ^{15/} At the end of the year, Korean strength in SVN stood at 20,620 personnel. ^{16/} Their deployments in 1965 was second only to the United States in total numbers.

At the end of the year, 72 Philippine personnel were in SVN; Thailand had 17 men. ^{17/} The Republic of China also furnished 20 political warfare advisors in the fall of 1964, and on 25 November 1965, furnished the VNAF with two C-46 aircraft as cargo carriers. ^{18/}

To further increase deployments, the JCS proposed, in late Dec 1964, the formation of an International Force. Such a force, according to JCS, would repulse a possible NVN attack against South Vietnam. JCS proposed that this force be based south of, but in the vicinity of, the DMZ at a time coordinated with possible pre-planned air offensives against NVN. The magnitude of this force would serve as a deterrent to the enemy, and be able to survive any attack should it develop. The composition of the force would be a U.S. core with optimum force contributions by a maximum number of allied nations throughout the world. All nations, except Thailand, were considered possible participants. The JCS planned to develop more definite guide lines for this project before requesting specific comments from CINCPAC. ^{19/}

MACV considered the plan for an International Force in the RVN mili-

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BUILDUP, FREE WORLD, 1965

MONTH	ROK	AUST	NZ	PHIL	ROC	THAI
JAN	140	162	24	32	14	16
FEB	609	162	25	28	14	16
MAR	2,127	160	25	31	16	16
APR	2,126	164	20	65	16	16
MAY	2,130	192	23	65	16	16
JUN	2,398	1,177	24	65	16	16
JUL	2,557	1,185	125	70	21	16
AUG	2,550	1,185	125	76	21	16
SEP	2,598	1,511	119	76	21	16
OCT	16,671	1,534	125	72	20	16
NOV	20,990	1,534	123	72	20	16
DEC	20,620	1,557	119	72	20	16

Fig. 10

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1942

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tarily unsound for several reasons: It established a static defensive military position on relatively unfavorable terrain; it was subject to isolation in event of a NVN double pronged attack along the Mekong River Valley and the coastal plains; logistic support for such a force was not considered feasible. ^{20/}

MACV also pointed out that such a move might prove SEATO a "paper tiger." The Philippines was the only SEATO country willing to join the SVN effort. France and Pakistan would not participate. The UK, Australia, and New Zealand were involved in Malaysia. The limited forces of Thailand were required for her own defense. ^{21/}

2. January - February Deployments and Proposals for Deployments

Deployments commenced on the 1st day of January 1965, when the 509th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, an F-102 organization, along with the 510th Tactical Fighter Squadron, an F-100 organization, arrived at Da Nang. ^{22/}

A few days later the 37th Air Base Squadron, based at Nha Trang, was redesignated the 37th Air Base Group, in preparation for its expanded support mission. ^{23/}

The VNAF increased its inventory of A-1E's and by the end of the month possessed 79 fighters, with another eight in depots and eight in maintenance.

The possibility of relieving the congestion at Tan Son Nhut by deploying one C-123 Squadrons was discussed; however, all areas suggested pre-

sented problems in way of readiness, so the idea was dropped for the time being. 24/

Late in January, 13AF proposed that the RF-101 Tactical Reconnaissance Task Force (TRTF) be moved from Tan Son Nhut to Don Muang, in order to improve the Barrel Roll program. 5AF opposed this move, believing that Udorn was a more suitable location in that it would allow faster response to the Laotian needs. In addition, it would cut sortie time and eliminate the courier service from Tan Son Nhut to Udorn. COMUSMACV, in mid-February, approved the move to Udorn, however, he desired to retain control of Yankee Team assets. 26/

The six RF-101's which would be added when the TRTF was moved to Udorn would give 2d Air Division a total of 14 aircraft between Tan Son Nhut and Udorn. There would also be back-up facilities to support a total of 18 RF-101's, four RB-57's, and three RC-47's in Southeast Asia. 27/

On 13 February, a detachment of TDY A-1E's were ordered to Qui Nhon by the Commander 2d Air Division at the request of COMUSMACV. A flight of six A-1E's moved to the II Corps base, the first deployment of USAF strike planes to this area. Deployment was made due to the critical nature of the situation in II Corps. 28/

At the same time, JCS considered the feasibility of deploying nine additional tactical fighter squadrons to WESTPAC and 30 B-52 aircraft to Guam to support air operations in the SEA. 29/

During the January - February period, the deteriorating military

situation prompted immediate considerations for deployment of other U.S. elements and Free-World Forces into SVN. COMUSMACV informed the JCS that military considerations dictated certain priorities for future deployments to Da Nang followed by deployments to the Saigon/Bien Hoa/Vung Tau complex and the Nha Trang/Cam Ranh Bay complex. COMUSMACV further informed JCS that he was considering recommending two engineer battalions and an infantry battalion be placed midway between Saigon and Bien Hoa to bolster that area. In addition to building its own camp, this task force could construct extensive field headquarters for the U.S. mission and major support elements located in the populated Saigon/Cholon area. It would also upgrade the security of the Saigon/Bien Hoa/Vung Tau complex. ^{30/}

In mid-January 1965, CINCPAC requested the American Ambassador's views on deploying HAWKS to Da Nang. ^{31/} Ambassador Taylor concurred with the deployment ^{32/} and, on 8 February, one battery of the 1st LAAM Battalion arrived at Da Nang and became operational the next day. ^{33/} The second LAAM battery arrived at Da Nang on 15 February. ^{34/} Both batteries became 100 percent operational on 18 February. ^{35/} A reinforced Marine engineer company (150 personnel) accompanied the LAAM Battalion with their mission to construct LAAM sites on Monkey Mountain and Hill 327. ^{36/}

Towards the end of the month, the first contingent of 600 Korean non-combat troops arrived in Saigon to relieve Vietnamese troops which were sorely needed in the field. ^{37/}

3. March Deployments and Requirements

The USMC Boat Landing Team was scheduled to arrive at Da Nang at 0800 hours on the 8th of March. CINCPAC had designated the 2d Air Division as the coordinating authority for tactical air support and air traffic control in the MACV area of responsibility. In view of no anticipated opposition, the poor weather forecasted, and the absence of a firm agreement, the Commander of Task Force 7 proposed not to establish an AOA. USN liaison officers would be ashore at the beach and at ASOC headquarters in Da Nang. Four A-1H's were requested for close air support along with CAP aircraft to protect the landing force. ^{38/}

The first units of a 3,500 man Marine force moved into Da Nang Airfield and took up positions around the missiles in the area. ^{39/}

On March 18th and 19th, the 416th and the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadrons from England AFB, La. arrived at Da Nang to perform rotational duty. On 16 March, an additional 1,000 Korean non-combatant troops arrived in RVN. The final plane load of the 716 Military Police Battalion troops were deployed to the Saigon/Cholon on 21 March to strengthen security of the area, ^{40/} and to improve U.S. response in event of escalation.

USAF aircraft strength at the end of March had changed little over what it was at the beginning of the month, and aircraft requirement discussions had been taking place. Shortly after the first retaliatory strikes against the DRV, PACAF recommended the deployment of 15 strike squadrons to the Pacific area. CINCPAC recommended deployment of only the first four squadrons. PACAF believed that emphasis should be placed on destroying VC and NVN capabilities and resources which might support the

Viet Cong. They agreed with CINCPAC that a large force was not necessary to conduct severe crippling actions against NVN during the eight week period, beginning in mid-March. Deployed PACAF forces, carriers, and the SAC force on Guam would provide the capability in the Western Pacific to inflict major destruction. ^{41/}

However, PACAF differed with CINCPAC on deploying only four strike squadrons. Larger deployments around the periphery of Communist China rather than large scale ground deployments in Southeast Asia would convey a message to Peking more effectively. The PACAF commander said these major ground deployments were inconsistent with sound strategy which should take advantage of U.S. superiority in air and naval strength. Placing the principal emphasis on Southeast Asia might mislead Peking and encourage their strengthening of the Hanoi regime rather than coping with possible actions elsewhere on the China periphery. ^{42/}

Commenting on logistic support for OPlan 39 deployments, the PACAF commander said that the Air Force logistic problems were mainly in SEA where base support was austere. The deployment of two additional squadrons proposed by CINCPAC would bring the SEA posture almost to OPlan 39 level. ^{43/}

CINCPACAF recommended deployment, as soon as possible, of the remainder of the 15 squadron package around the periphery of China. This would deter the CHICOMS and probably stop or limit their air deployments to Southern China. He said that during the 1961 Berlin situation and the 1962 Cuban Crisis, significant Air Force deployments provided the deter-

rence required at the time, although few other combat forces were deployed. ^{44/}

During the visit of the Chairman of the JCS, General Earle Wheeler on 5-12 March, the 2d Air Division provided him, through COMUSMACV, with a list of units "required to win the war in RVN." The 2d Air Division requested deployment of nine units or augmentation as follows: ^{45/}

1. Retention of 24 Bien Hoa-based B-57's on a rotational basis.
2. Deployment of a composite F-100/F-105 wing to RVN with wing headquarters and two F-100 squadrons at Da Nang.
3. Deployment of a third squadron of F-105's in the above wing to Tan Son Nhut.
4. A squadron of 16 C-131/T-29 aircraft, each equipped with three side firing SUU-11A guns, be provided.
5. That the total RB-57E's deployed to Tan Son Nhut for IR reconnaissance be increased to 16.
6. That three more O-1F squadrons of thirty aircraft each for increased surveillance and control of air strikes be provided.
7. That two additional ACR detachments of three aircraft each for Pleiku and Can Tho be provided.
8. That one squadron of 16 C-47 aircraft equipped with 1,000 watt speakers be provided to increase and exploit psywar operations.
9. That an RC-130 detachment of two aircraft, based at Clark, be provided to operate in RVN for photographic coverage of large areas.

The 2d Air Division Commander informed COMUSMACV that the above unit requirements were needed to match increased VC pressure. In-country air resources were not adequate to meet air needs. In many situations, such as ambushes, the period of engagement was less than 30 minutes. Air alert was a proven primary counteraction to these short-lived incidents and 2d Air Division did not have enough aircraft to provide such air cover. An

appreciable number of hard targets, including major communist base camps, could not be destroyed due to insufficient numbers of aircraft. Deployments of additional A-1E's were required since the majority of these aircraft were required for training VNAF and only a few were available for combat. Second Air Division noted that B-57's and F-100's were effectively employed against quick response targets in SVN, yet in March, only 18 B-57's were in RVN. A squadron of 16 C-131/T-29 aircraft, each equipped with three side firing SUU-11A guns, was desired, since tests of side-firing SUU-11A Gun Pods on a C-47 had proved very effective. VC night attacks had increased since 1 January by almost 20%. Second Air Division felt that the T-29 aircraft, with a radar capability permitting navigation to remote targets without assistance from ground navigational aids, made it ideal for night interdiction operations against the VC. The additional RB-57E aircraft were required to augment the tactical reconnaissance aircraft which, in March, were targeted for 50% more targets than they were operationally capable of completing. Additional O-1F's were needed. Fifty-two FAC's were assigned to 44 different locations in RVN, while there were only 23 O-1F aircraft. Additional ACR detachments were needed, to supplement those in existence at Da Nang and Bien Hoa. In March, the airborne psywar capability consisted of seven single engine liaison type aircraft (U-17, U-10 and U-6), capable of carrying only two 250 watt speakers. They were effective only at low altitudes (500 to 1,000 feet) which made them vulnerable to ground fire, and limited their operations to safe areas. The C-47, equipped with the 1,000 watt airborne speakers, could do an effective job flying around 3,000'. ^{46/}

Following the Viet Cong attack on the U.S. Embassy on 20 March, PACAF recommended the immediate deployment of four USAF fighter squadrons which had been approved by the JCS on 1 March. ^{47/} The JCS approval called for the deployment of five tactical fighter squadrons: F-100 squadron at Da Nang; F-105 squadron to Takhli (Thailand); three O-1 squadrons to RVN; one Reconnaissance Task Force (RTF), consisting of six RB-66's, to Clark /TSN; F-4C squadron to Ubon/Udorn. It was estimated that these deployments would be completed by 20 April 1965. ^{48/}

PACAF was especially anxious at the end of the month to bring the RB-66 Reconnaissance Task Force into SEA. Since its earlier request for such a force, several factors had been added:

1. Air actions in SEA had increased in tempo.
2. There was a drastic increase in Barrel Roll night operations.
3. Jets were released for strikes in South Vietnam requiring night photo and IR.
4. The increased Rolling Thunder program against North Vietnam included strikes against radars calling for a tactical ELINT capability.

PACAF wanted two night photo planes, two strobe night photo-IR planes, and two ELINT aircraft. ^{49/}

On 15 March, the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Da Nang requested two marine fighter squadrons be moved immediately to Da Nang Air Base. The Brigade wanted immediate approval, since it considered a Viet Cong attack on the Da Nang Air Base was possible at any time. The aircraft would

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provide close support to destroy such possible enemy attacks and augment the Hawk defense system. ^{50/}

On 17 March, Second Air Division Commander recommended to COMUSMACV that such a move not be made into Da Nang until such time as the Marine Expeditionary Brigade was engaged in active combat operations against enemy forces and had a requirement of its integrated air/ground team. He supported his recommendations as follows: ^{51/}

"When the decision was made to move the Marine Hawk Battalion and its defensive ground elements to Da Nang, it was indicated that marine aircraft would not be brought into country until the marine force was engaged in ground operations. There are no indications that such ground operations are imminent and it is believed that the threat of an attack on the Da Nang Air Base complex is no greater now than prior to the Marine Brigade arrival. On the contrary, it may be considered even less likely because of the Brigade's presence.

Da Nang Air Base is heavily congested at present and because of political restrictions, all USAF jet operations on Barrel Roll and choke point seeding missions in Laos must be launched from bases in Vietnam. Da Nang is the primary base for these operations. Queen Bee and Box Top operations require heavy support by USAF aircraft which are based at Da Nang. Rolling Thunder missions also are supported by aircraft, both USAF and VNAF, from Da Nang and on certain missions the normal complement of aircraft at this base is augmented to the point of complete saturation of the available parking areas. Such augmentation is by both VNAF and USAF aircraft.

The 2d Air Division is responsible for the air defense of Vietnam and has placed F-102 all Weather Interceptors at Da Nang for this purpose. This detachment is thoroughly indoctrinated with the area and tied in with the radar coverage provided. The F-102 detachment, augmented as required by other USAF jets now at Da Nang, can cope with any ex-

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expected enemy air threat. The USAF pilots based at Da Nang are combat capable jet tactical fighter pilots, thoroughly qualified to provide close air support for ground operations to include any conducted by the U.S. Marine Corps. If the Marine fighter squadrons are placed at Da Nang at this time, it will require the removal of some aircraft presently based there. Since Da Nang is one of the three jet capable bases in SVN, priority for operations there must be given to high performance jet aircraft. It follows, therefore, that lower performance aircraft would be moved first. Army Aviation units, SEA airlift squadrons of C-123 aircraft, and a VNAF wing of A1H aircraft fall in this category. The removal of any aircraft now at Da Nang would be undesirable at this time."

In response to a recommendation that three C-130 aircraft operate out of Da Nang in night flare training program, CINCPACAF objected because of current and anticipated congestion of RVN bases. As an alternative, he suggested a reevaluation of operating bases in Thailand be made. ^{52/}

MACSOG, in February, asked for six configured C-123's for employment in 34A operations. If delivered in March, the three C-123's borrowed from ^{53/} 2AD would be returned.

CINCPAC and PACAF agreed to the desirability of using C-130 aircraft with U.S. crews for 34A operations. The C-130 would give a significant increase in payload, reducing the number of resupply lifts required for ground teams and allowing for bigger lifts. It also had an all weather capability, could perform at high altitude, and had greater speed. The ^{54/} use of U.S. crews was expected to enhance the mission considerably.

PACAF suggested basing the crews and aircraft at Nha Trang, using Da

Nang and Thai bases when increased capabilities required or when deception was necessary. The aircraft would be under MACSOG control. The aircraft would fly at lowest possible altitudes to avoid radar surveillance, flying through valleys and below ridge lines as much as possible. Under moonlight, the planes could fly less than 500 feet above ground. Where altitude was required, such as leaflet drops, the planes could come in low, as far as possible, and then climb. ^{55/}

Crews, military or civilian, would have to be trained for low level flying at night in mountainous areas, and in survival techniques. Civilian crews would be sanitized with fictitious names, bank accounts, documents, identification and mail arrangements. Military crews would retain their military identity. Aircraft would also have to be sanitized. ^{56/}

In March, there were 52 FAC's and 23 O-1F aircraft assigned in RVN. ^{57/}
Deployment of TACP's was as follows:

	<u>FAC's</u>	<u>RADIO OPERATIONS</u>	<u>LOCATIONS</u>
I Corps	10	16	8
II Corps	10	14	6
III Corps	15	19	12
IV	15	19	12
Special Forces	4		
Airborne Brigade	1		
AOC	$\frac{3}{58}$	$\frac{11}{79}$	$\frac{1}{39}$

With addition of jets to the strike force, additional air support

would be needed. 2d Air Division proposed a TACP be assigned to each Province, as well as to the Corps, division, and regiment. This would provide liaison with field commanders, access to intelligence (critical), better targeting capability and enhanced ability to exploit the additional air effort. ^{58/}

To do this, four squadrons of 30 aircraft per squadron were needed. Total additional requirement was: ^{59/}

90 liaison aircraft

82 FAC's

126 radio operators

Deployment of radar personnel and equipment, as of the end of March, was as follows:

CINCPAC, early in January, concurred in CINCUSARPAC and DA opinions that, in view of radar equipment limitations, an evaluation of one counter mortar radar section (AN/MPQ/4A) and one battalion ground surveillance section (AN/TPS-33) be conducted prior to deploying the requested number by type. Bien Hoa was suggested as initial evaluation site. ^{60/}

COMUSMACV carried out action directed by CINCPAC. ^{61/} CINCUSARPAC was informed that technical testing was not considered necessary but an evaluation would be made and appropriate recommendations made to CINCPAC and USARPAC by COMUSMACV. ^{62/}

The counter mortar and ground surveillance radar sections arrived

7 Feb 1965 and were operational 8 Feb 1965. ^{63/} COMUSMACV, in view of the Pleiku incident, requested reconsideration of the 2 Dec 1964 request for eight counter mortar radars and three ground surveillance radars ASAP. ^{64/} CINCPAC directed CINCUSARPAC to deploy two AN/TPS 33 ground surveillance radars to SVN ASAP and recommended that the seven remaining counter mortar radars be obtained from CONUS resources. ^{65/}

The CG, U.S. 25th Infantry Division notified MACV that two AN/TPS 33 ground surveillance radars departed Hawaii for RVN 131307Z Feb 1965. MACV assigned COMUSMACV operational control of two ground surveillance radars on 24 Feb 1965. ^{66/} The radars were to be located at Camp Holloway, Pleiku, and 8th RRU at Phu Bai, with one ground surveillance radar operational at Camp Holloway, Pleiku, 4 March 1965, and one ground surveillance radar operational at 8th RRU Phu Bia, 8 March 1965.

Operational control of ground surveillance and counter mortar radars as Bien Hoa passed from 2d Air Division to SA-II Corps on 29 March 1965. ^{68/}

4. Marine Deployment Plans

On 3 April 1965, COMUSMACV requested representatives of CG, 9th MEB, 2AD, COMSEVENTHFLT to meet at 2AD on 5 April to write an SOP for close air support of 9th MEB. MACV pointed out that landing the 9th MEB at Da Nang had altered the procedure for employment of Seventh Fleet carrier aircraft. MACV granted clearance for Seventh Fleet naval aircraft to provide CAS to the 9th MEB under conditions set out in MACV msg 101605Z Mar 1965. MACV modified these procedures to preclude requirement of USAF FAC and

provided procedures for Seventh Fleet carrier aircraft to be passed to the 9th MEB Tactical Air Control System for the conduct of air strikes. ^{69/}

CINCPAC concurred in COMUSMACV requirement for: Two additional BLT's, one to be positioned at Da Nang and one at Phu Bai; one Marine F-4 squadron; and necessary MEB, RLT, MAG headquarters and control and support personnel, ^{70/} as required.

JCS directed CINCPAC to accomplish the following actions once Ambassador Taylor obtained clearance from RVN: ^{71/}

1. Expand the mission of Marine elements to include engagement in counterinsurgency combat operations.
2. Deploy one BLT to Phu Bai and one BLT to Da Nang.
3. Deploy one Marine F-4 Squadron to Da Nang.
4. Deploy necessary MEB, BLT and MAG Hq control and support personnel as required.

CINCPAC directed elements of this command to be prepared to deploy additional elements of the 9th MEB after Ambassador Taylor obtained clearance from the RVN: ^{72/}

1. CINCPACFLT: Deploy Marine elements to Da Nang and assign the forces to 9th MEB on landing. Make maximum use of sealift.
2. CINCPACAF: Be prepared to provide airlift as required.
3. COMUSMACV: Assume operational control of additional MEB forces upon landing. Provide CINCPAC with command arrangements and concept

for counterinsurgency combat operations when developed and agreed upon. Notify CINCPAC when Ambassador Taylor's clearance day (C-day) has been obtained.

CG, 9th MEB submitted to COMUSMACV his concept for counterinsurgency combat operations on 6 Apr 1965 as follows:

COMMAND RELATIONS: CG, 9th MEB exercises operational control over all Marine forces, I Corps area, for tactical operations and close air support. Coordinates and cooperates with I Corps commander for tactical operations of mutual self-interest. CG, 9th MEB assumes responsibility for defense of Da Nang Air Base and commands all defense efforts for U.S. forces thereat.

CONCEPT FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY: Envision ARVN units being used for search and clear, find and fix operations with MEB units committed only when appropriate target has been located and confirmed. ^{73/}

CINCPAC determined that movement by sea was the most feasible method for accomplishing deployment of the MEB. ^{74/}

JCS approved CINCPAC's sealift deployment plan of additional MEB elements on 6 Apr 1965. The SLF was to be retained on a 96 hour readiness posture in the South China Sea area. ^{75/}

CINCPAC requested COMUSMACV to comment ASAP regarding the ability of Da Nang to accept the A-4 and F-104 squadrons. ^{76/}

COMUSMACV advised CINCPAC that C-day was 10 April 1965, Saigon time, and requested that the flight echelon of the F-4 squadron be delayed until

requested. 78/

CTF 76 informed COMSEVENTHFLT that on 8 April, General Westmoreland, Maj Gen Collins, Rear Admiral Wulzen and Brigadier General Carl mutually accepted the following: 79/

1. TG 76.6 land BLT 2/3 in Da Nang over Red Beach Two/Tien Sha ramp, when directed.

2. TG 76-7 land BLT 3/4 over Red Beach Two/Son Hue River, when directed.

3. CTG 79.4 deploy two companies of BLT 2/3 to Hue Phu Bai by helo after landing. Return these companies to Da Nang concurrent with helo lift of BLT 3/4 personnel from Red Beach Two to Hue Phu Bai.

CG, 9th MEB informed COMUSMACV on 9 April 1965 that a conference at Da Nang of USAF, USA, AVN, USMC determined ramp, hangar space and billeting area adequate to receive F-4 squadron without immediate displacement of current tenants. He recommended deployment of F-4's to Da Nang on C-day, 10 Apr 1965. 80/

COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC on 10 April that the F-4 squadron was cleared to enter Da Nang ASAP. 81/

COMUSMACV submitted to CINCPAC, on 10 April 1965, the concept of employment of the 9th MEB for counterinsurgency operations and the command relations between 9th MEB and RVNAF.

On 11 April, 2d Air Division requested specific guidance on the employment of Marine aircraft in SVN. 2d Air Division position was that air

defense and all in-country strikes be under their operational control.

A sense of urgency existed. ^{82/}

CG, 9th MEB informed MACV that LOI of 7 Apr 1965 assigned operational control of F-4 squadron to 2d Air Division and that this was not in consonance with CINCPAC msg 270115Z Feb 1965. CG, 9th MEB recommended that 2d Air Division be coordinating authority for matters pertaining to tactical air support and air traffic control and that the LOI be changed accordingly. ^{83/}

COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that RVN clearance had not been obtained to employ 7th Fleet Air in support of BLT 3/4 landing on 14 April 1965. ^{84/}

COMUSMACV, on 16 April 1965, informed CG 9th MEB and Commander 2AD that Marine air would be under the operational control of the 2AD. ^{85/}

MACV established operating procedures for Marine aircraft in South Vietnam on 27 April 1965 ^{86/} and approved introduction of additional O-1B aircraft into SVN. ^{87/}

5. April Deployment and Support Activities Planning

On 9 April 1965, CINCPAC convened a conference at PACOM Headquarters to discuss force deployments and support requirements for such deployments. It was CINCPAC's desire to establish, based on developed plans, the movement schedules for logistics and support activities. He felt that these schedules should be on a time-phased order of priority. During the conference the types of USAF aircraft to be deployed were discussed. ^{88/}

Since there was some question about bedding down the additional air units which were scheduled to come to RVN, PACAF conducted a capability study, on 12 March, on force requirements and deployments. On 5 April, 13th AF informed 2AD that the third squadron of F-100's yet to be deployed from Clark Air Base should join the other two already at Da Nang, rather than go to Tan Son Nhut, as desired by MACV and 2d Air Division. 2d Air Division felt that Tan Son Nhut was more desirable because the squadron could better support operations in the III and IV Corps areas, where 85% of the outpost attacks occurred. 13AF felt that, although TSN was capable of handling the F-100's, it was not desirable because the contingency plan programmed TSN for transport type operations. Further, crowded conditions at TSN would require relocation of aircraft which were then in place. Logistical and munitions procedures would have to be established for the different type equipment. Since contract fuel servicing was primarily used at TSN, refueling units would have to be positioned to service the fighter squadron. It was emphasized that locating this squadron at Da Nang would be better from an operational and logistical viewpoint, pointing out that, at Da Nang, logistical and munitions procedures were already established for F-100 aircraft. PACAF agreed with 13AF that logistics would be simplified by putting all the F-100's at Da Nang; however, there would be a distinct operational advantage in having two bases for F-100's. 13AF also commented that the B-57 force at Bien Hoa could adequately react to targeting in the delta area and no loss of effectiveness would result because of relocation of the F-100's at Da Nang. Additional operational benefits would be obtained because of the large force at Da Nang. 13AF

said that targets to the north were of a magnitude that large forces could be profitably employed on them. 89/

PACAF supported the suggestion made by 2d Air Division that the O-1F's be bedded down at New Can Tho with a split squadron operation in II Corps, between Pleiku and Nha Trang, each having 15 O-1F's. PACAF favored Vung Tau and Hue for the other two squadrons rather than Bien Hoa and Da Nang. Vung Tau was building up to a major complex as part of the costal enclave strategy. Hue would be less subject to congestion than Da Nang. 90/

Early in April (5 and 8 April), the 6234th Tactical Fighter Wing, Provisional, was designated and organized at Korat Air Base, Thailand and the 6235th TFWG was designated and organized at Takhli Air Base. Both were attached to the 2d Air Division for operational control.

On 10 April, the following detachments of the 8th Aerial Port Squadron were designated and organized at locations indicated: 92/

Det 10: Soc Trang Airfield, Vietnam
Det 11: Vinh Lung City, Vietnam
Det 12: Quang Ngai Airfield, Vietnam
Det 13: Ban Me Thuet Airport, Vietnam
Det 14: Hue Airport, Vietnam

On 12 April, the first USMC F-4B aircraft of a scheduled squadron arrived at Da Nang and, on 13 April, the EC-121's deployed to TSN. 93/

On 19 April, a squadron-sized element of F-104C aircraft arrived at

Da Nang, the first F-104 organization to be assigned to Vietnam. ^{94/}

6. May Preparations

Preparations were under way for deployment of the F-100 squadron which would give additional support to the Airborne Brigade in II, III and IV Corps. It would be necessary to relocate Army Support Command helicopters and munitions storage areas to accommodate the squadron. MACV wanted the advance echelon by 15 June, with all 18 planes in place ten days later. ^{95/}

2d Air Division, on 19 May, requested that the 14 B-57's at Clark, originally scheduled to be moved to Bien Hoa on 21 May, go to Tan Son Nhut because the Bien Hoa runway was undergoing repair. 2d Air Division estimated that the B-57's could move to Bien Hoa by 25 May. ^{96/}

Earlier in the month, PACAF asked 5th Air Force to make permanent the TDY deployment of six RF-101's. ^{97/}

The accidental explosion aboard a bomb-laden B-57 triggered a series of explosions at Bien Hoa airfield, on 16 May, that killed 27, injured 103 persons and destroyed ten B-57's, one F-8U, and one A-1E. In addition, three C-47's, two A-1E's, and two H-43's had minor damage. Fifteen VNAF A-1H's experienced major damage and 15 minor damage. The fire station and vehicle maintenance shops were extensively damaged and the JP4 POL storage area was destroyed. Other damage included the B-57 ramp, an access taxiway to the ramp and the control tower. Three B-57's had left the ramp and were taxiing on the parallel runway at the time of the ex-

plosion. Other B-57's were in the process of starting engines. A Navy Crusader had just entered the parking area on the B-57 ramp and had shut down, when the explosion occurred. ^{98/} MACV informed CINCPAC that the combat capability lost at Bien Hoa as a result of this incident could be re-established by the immediate deployment of eight F-100's to Da Nang and replacing the destroyed and damaged B-57's at Bien Hoa. ^{99/}

Various deployments were made during the month to Korat Air Base, Thailand, Takhli Air Base, Thailand, Da Nang Air Base, Pleiku Airport, and Binh Thuy Airport (New Can Tho.) ^{100/}

7. June Deployment Rationale

In June, CINCPAC proposed deployment of U.S. and third country forces in South Vietnam. His rationale was based on the need for securing the heavily populated coastal areas and then moving inland to the less populated regions. The areas of heaviest population in Vietnam were along the coast in the I and II Corps zones and in the Mekong Delta region. These areas produced nearly all the rice in Vietnam and some of the principle fishing areas were on the coasts off these areas. Also, the principal north-south lines of communication were along the coast by coastal junk traffic. ^{101/}

If these areas were made reasonably secure, CINCPAC wrote to JCS in June, the VC would be restricted to the mountain areas where there was little food and few people. The extensive coastal periphery would allow the U.S. to apply power at points of its own choosing. The many bays and beaches provided numerous points of egress inland. By controlling areas in

the coastal plain and in the Mekong delta, control of the insurgency in key areas of South Vietnam would be effected. Control of the less sparsely populated highland and mountain areas would be less decisive, although this area would have to be controlled if all of South Vietnam were to be under a friendly government eventually. 102/

The planned U.S. force commitments to South Vietnam for ground operations were not of a magnitude to allow simultaneous major efforts to establish positive control of the coastal, highland and mountain areas. ARVN was already having difficulty in coping with increased Viet Cong activity. CINCPAC said the U.S. ground force employment in Vietnam must be concentrated in areas offering maximum gain. These areas were on the northern and central coast and in the delta. U.S. commitments to Vietnam since February were in consonance with this strategy and actions currently under way were an extension of it. It began with landings and occupation of areas on the northern coast at Da Nang and Hue Phu Bai, and continued with landings at Vung Tau, Bien Hoa and Chu Lia. Combat forces landings at Quang Ngai was planned and recommended to the Secretary of Defense for approval. 103/

These initial actions allowed U.S. forces to move aggressively against the Viet Cong from secured base localities, which the enemy could not isolate. As the level and intensity of operations increased, Viet Cong mobility, morale, and ability to mount offensive actions in the lowlands would decrease, CINCPAC said. The enemy would be forced on the defensive, perimeters of U.S. areas would enlarge and ultimately one area would be

connected with another. Large segments of the transportation and communications net and crop-producing areas in the vital coastal regions would be free. The VC's remaining sanctuary would be the sparsely populated, spottily cultivated inland highland and mountain areas. 104/

CINCPAC said that a single, flexible military strategy, with operations geared to it, became more important as the force buildup continued. Force requirements, capabilities, deployments, phasing, and commitments would then become inter-locked. All should be planned and executed within the context of a single strategy and this strategy should be focused on control of the economically, politically, and militarily important coastal areas of central and northern South Vietnam and the Mekong Delta. The strategy should aim at decreasing Viet Cong mobility, morale and ability to mount offensive operations, forcing the Viet Cong to the defensive in or near key coastal areas, enlarging the size of friendly held areas, and connecting friendly areas by means of cleared zones.

To carry out this strategy, CINCPAC recommended that the Army's Air Mobile Division operate from Qui Nhon, clearing heavily populated areas in Binh Dinh Province until the area from south of Qui Nhon to Quang Ngai was reasonably secure. The Air Mobile Division was ideally suited for this type of operation. He was apprehensive about the deployment of the Air Mobile Division to the Highlands area, which COMUSMACV had proposed earlier. 105/

In early June, a board review of force requirements was conducted in

light of the changing situation in Southeast Asia. There were indications that the conflict in SEA was in the process of moving to a higher level. Some PAVN forces had entered SVN and more appeared to be on the way. Additional jet fighters and some jet light bombers had been deployed to NVN. Elements of the 325th PAVN Division were in the northern zone of II Corps and it was possible that the major portion, if not all, of the division was then deployed in the Kontum, Pleiku and Phu Bon area. Elements of the 304th PAVN Division were suspected to be in the Panhandle and capable of following the 325th. The heavy actions in Phuoc Long and Quang Ngai and initiatives in Pleiku, Kontum, Phu Bon and Thua Thien demonstrated Viet Cong strength and their determination to employ their forces aggressively. Events, as well as captured Viet Cong prisoners and documents, suggested that a summer offensive had started to destroy government forces. It appeared that the Viet Cong planned to isolate and then attack district towns concurrently with their attempt to destroy government forces. ^{106/}

It was noted that the Viet Cong had not employed their full capabilities. Only two of the nine Viet Cong regiments were heavily engaged, one in Phoc Long and one in Quang Ngai. It was probable that the Viet Cong had committed similar proportions of their separate battalions. They were showing a willingness to sustain heavy losses in order to achieve the objectives. New weapons with heavier firepower had been introduced and given to main force units. Results of recent engagements indicated that the Viet Cong main forces units were the product of improved training and discipline. ^{107/}

For the summer offensive, the Viet Cong appeared capable of mounting regimental-size attacks in virtually all provinces. Viet Cong force disposition indicated that major actions were likely in the Binh Duong-Phuoc Thanh Long area north of Saigon, and in the Quang Ngai-Quang Tin area in central Vietnam. Pleiku, Phu Bon, Kontum and Binh Dinh Provinces also had increased force disposition to carry out major actions. In addition, they could strike other areas with little or no warning, as they were capable of concentrating in regimental strength in short order. 108/

The ARVN forces were experiencing difficulty coping with the increased capability of the Viet Cong. Further, their desertion rate was inordinately high and battle losses were greater than expected. Four ARVN battalions had been rendered ineffective through Viet Cong action in the I and II Corps zones, and ARVN troops were reluctant to assume the offensive.

When ARVN battalions could not be brought up to full strength, as planned in March, force ratios heavily favored the Viet Cong. It appeared that the enemy would take any steps necessary to tip the balance to their favor. It was felt that the U.S. must be prepared for escalation of the conflict, to include enemy air action. Time was critical and additional support was through deployment of additional U.S. or third country forces.

To meet the threat, the following deployments were recommended:

1. Immediate deployment of two battalions of the 3rd Marine Division together with supporting divisions and air elements (approximately 8,000 personnel).

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

2. 8,000 Army logistic and other support personnel deployed according to a schedule planned on 31 May.

3. 21,000 U.S. Army Air Mobile Division and logistic personnel deployed through Qui Nhon to An Khe Pleiku and Kontum. It was then estimated that Qui Nhon would be ready to receive the Air Mobile Division 1 August. It was also recommended that the IV Corps Headquarters with approximately 1,500 personnel be deployed concurrently with the Air Mobile Division.

4. ROK Marines (approximately 4,000 personnel) could be readied for movement soon after 1 July and an additional 14,500 ROK Marines together with a U.S. logistical increment be deployed on 15 September. The 1 August deployment would be to Cam Ranh Bay and the additional deployment would go to the general area of Qui Nhon.

5. Tactical fighter squadrons be deployed to Cam Ranh Bay when the expeditionary landing field was completed in that area.

6. Naval aircraft carrier support of in-country operations be provided as required.

It was recommended that certain additional deployments might be required and should be planned:

1. Three U.S. Army Hawk Battalions to Tan Son Nhut, Qui Nhon and Cam Ranh Bay in that priority.

2. The remainder of the 1st Infantry Division or the 101st Airborne Division to start deployment beginning 1 October.

3. One additional MAB should be planned to reinforce the III MAF.

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

4. Additional tactical air units for support of the increased U.S. forces.

5. Required combat and logistical support forces to include helicopter units to support the other deployments recommended above. In this connection it was pointed out that additional airfields in SVN and Thailand might be required. PACAF studied the possibility of an additional jet airfield and came up with five possibilities: Tuy Hoa, Phan Ri, Phan Thiet, Phan Rang and Phu Bai (Hue). Phu Bai (Hue), at the end of the month, 109/ was considered the best.

By the end of June, the buildup called for 34 U.S. infantry battalion equivalents and a total deployment of 175,000 men by 1 September. This included the 1st Cavalry Division, the ROK Division, and the 1st Infantry Division, plus supporting forces. 2d Air Division proposed two F-4C fighter wings at Cam Ranh Bay, numbering some 5,200 personnel including support. 110/

The prospect of introducing F-86's into South Vietnam was raised in connection with the proposed deployment of a South Korean Division. 111/ PACAF supported deployment of a ROK F-86F squadron, which was rated as C-1 by the MAP in Korea. MACV at the same time felt that jet base loading in RVN would not allow acceptance of an ROK F-86 squadron, but such a deployment would be considered in future plans. 112/

The move of three F-4B squadrons to Da Nang was being further considered. PACAF felt that this meant a further encroachment on the USAF capability there, and told 2d Air Division that while the three squadrons could be accepted with crowding, it was necessary for the 2d Air Division squadrons

to remain there. PACAF took the position that it could take one F-4B squadron, preferably under the control of the AFCC through the TACS. 113/

To make room for the Marine F-4B squadron, 2d Air Division planned to move its C-123 squadron, which would eventually have to be moved anyhow. Ramp space had to be made available for a second F-4B squadron in the near future without jeopardizing U.S. jet parking if possible. 114/

The first four F-100's arrived at Tan Son Nhut on 18 June. On 23 June, 18 F-100's of the 416th Squadron moved from Da Nang to Bien Hoa and on the same date, 12 B-57's left Tan Son Nhut for Da Nang. On 27 June, the 18 F-100's of the 309th Squadron arrived from the CONUS to replace the 615th Squadron, which departed Da Nang on the 28th. The remaining 12 B-57's moved from Tan Son Nhut to Da Nang on the 29th of June. 115/

The buildup of the 20th, 21st, and 22nd Tactical Air Support Squadrons, (TASS) which would supplement the 19th TASS, proceeded at a rapid pace. On 10 June, a second increment of 315 personnel scheduled for Binh Tuy arrived at Tan Son Nhut with 50 going to the new base, the remainder staying at Tan Son Nhut until accommodations were available at Binh Tuy. 116/

Ninety USAF O-1 pilots for the three new squadrons were due to arrive between 9 June and 30 September. All would receive in-country training before deploying to their prospective corps areas. The 22nd TASS, which was scheduled for Binh Tuy, would cover the IV Corps area. The 20th TASS was scheduled for Da Nang, using the old runway until the second runway at Da Nang East was completed. It would cover the northernmost I Corps area. The 21st was earmarked for Pleiku in the II Corps area of central

Vietnam when new airfield construction was completed. Pending this time, they would use Camp Holloway. The 19th had been in place at Bien Hoa since June 1963. 117/

In Thailand, there were 110 land based jets and eight prop combat planes.

There were 205 U.S. combat jet aircraft based in South Vietnam at the end of June and 45 prop aircraft. The U.S. Navy, on five carriers, had 294 jets and 48 prop planes in the combat category while VNAF had no jets and 111 prop fighters. Another 72 jets were programmed for Thailand and 15 USMC jets for Vietnam. 118/

On Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa, there were 269 strike aircraft, although the accepted capacity was 264 aircraft. An additional 519 non-strike aircraft were also based on these installations. The field at Chu Lai had 60 Marine aircraft, the number for which it was designed. 119/

No improvement in congestion was expected at Bien Hoa until October, when VNAF A-1H's could be moved to other airfields. Three USAF squadrons scheduled for Cam Ranh Bay would remain in Thailand until the Cam Ranh Bay runway was completed. 120/

USAF jet aircraft were employed to 114% of standard performance, with USAF prop aircraft being used to 100% of standard. USN aircraft averaged slightly less than 100% standard utilization. This meant that there was no meaningful increase which could be squeezed out of the available forces. 121/

Of the three CVA's operating off Vietnam, two were at Point Yankee for support operations in Laos and North Vietnam while one was stationed off Nha Trang for in-country support. COMUSMACV had stated a requirement for continuous support by one carrier. In June, this carrier was averaging about 85 sorties a day for support of in-country operations.

8. July Strength and Resources Buildup

By early July, 2d Air Division and VNAF resources showed significant increases.

2d Air Division personnel strength in SVN jumped from 5,118 PCS and 1,521 TDY persons in January to 7,497 PCS and 3,204 TDY in June. Likewise, 2d Air Division personnel strength in Thailand increased from 1,041 PCS and 1,536 TDY persons in January to 2,336 PCS and 3,538 TDY in June.

As compared to 222 aircraft possessed in January, the number doubled to 460 in early July. By the second week in July, the USAF strength picture was as follows: ^{123/}

<u>BASE (SVN)</u>	<u>USAF AIRCRAFT</u>
Bien Hoa	147
Da Nang	77
Tan Son Nhut	86
Nha Trang	<u>15</u>
Total SVN	325
 BASE THAILAND	 135
Total	460

The greatest number of USAF aircraft in SEA consisted of F-105's followed by C-123's. The following gives a breakdown of aircraft possessed as of 14 July:

<u>TYPE AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>NUMBER POSSESSED</u>
F-105	79
C-123	65
F-100	58
A-1	50
O-1	49
B-57	32
RF-101	25
F-102	20
F-4	20
HH-43	17
F-104	15
RB-66	9
C-47	5
KC-135	4
RB-57	3
BC-121	3
U-10	3
HU-16	<u>3</u>
TOTAL	460

The VNAF strength increased from 53 craft in January to 318 by the end of July. Strength breakdown by the end of July is reflected on the following page: 125/

<u>TYPE AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>NUMBER POSSESSED BY VNAF</u>
A-1H	102
O-1A	68
H-34	65
U-17A	44
C-47	28
U-6A	7
RC-47	3
EC-47	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	318

Increased deployments and buildup of the U.S. position in Southeast Asia required organizational changes. Six USAF bases in Thailand were transferred to 13th Air Force from 2d Air Division. In addition, tactical fighter wings were established at Korat in Thailand and Bien Hoa and Da Nang in RVN. 126/

The President announced on 28 July that the U.S. fighting forces in Southeast Asia would be increased sharply. Plans formulated to accommodate required deployment of forces were completed and published on 30 August 1965. 127/

The following is a chronology of significant deployments during July:

1. On 1 July, the 8th Bomb Squadron, assigned to the 405th Tactical Wing, Clark AB, Philippines, and flying B-57's, rotated to Da Nang for TDY. 128/

2. On 7 July, 8,000 additional Marines landed at Da Nang and

129/
Qui Nhon.

3. On 8 July, the 436th Tactical Fighter Squadron, equipped with F-104 Starfighters, arrived at Da Nang Air Base on temporary duty. 130/

4. On 17 July, SAC B-52's from Guam were used in a close air support role for the first time since they were introduced into the Vietnam conflict on 18 June. They flew in support of Vietnamese Marines, clearing the area around Mang Yang Pass, in conjunction with Operation Thong Phong. 131/

5. On 24 July, the 8th Bomb Squadron departed Da Nang and was replaced by the 13th Bomb Squadron. 132/

6. On 28 July, President Johnson announced that U.S. troop strength in Vietnam would raise to 125,000. 133/

9. August - September Deployment Planning

By the end of August, a three phased plan had been developed by which free world and U.S. forces would be deployed and committed to action in SEA with the objective of ending the war.

Phase I (change the trend) covered the period up to the end of 1965. During this period, bases would be developed and secured by deploying reserve reaction forces in addition to those already committed. They would be used for quick reaction missions and as relief forces in critical situations. 134/

On 30 September, JCS directed CSAF to deploy additional units to South Vietnam. Deployment was to be completed by 1 November, and included four tactical fighter squadrons and support personnel totalling 5,607 135/ persons.

The following deployments were made during the August-September period: On 19 August the VNAF received their first jet aircraft--USAF B-57's. On 8 September, U.S. forces in South Vietnam reached 100,000. 136/

10. Additional Deployments Foreseen in October to Increase Sortie Rates

On 4 October, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that in view of the additional capabilities afforded by increased B-52 strikes, armed helicopters and separate artillery, the planning factors for aircraft requirements for Phase II programming (resumption of offensive) appeared realistic. COMUSMACV, at the same time, conditionally concurred in a proposed reduction of combat aircraft requirements pending further study. 137/

On 7 October, CINCPAC completed an analysis of sortie requirements and concluded that an additional four combat air squadrons would be required to satisfy the sorties requirements of the maneuver battalions. 138/

On 15 October, Phase II requirements and deployment schedules were presented to JCS as a COMUSMACV-CINCPAC joint package. JCS favorably considered the program and on 18 October, gave it to the Secretary of Defense, who presented it to the Army Policy Council, the Marine Corps Staff, the Air Force Staff, the Service Secretaries, the Under Secretary of Defense and

139/
the Secretary of State.

On 23 October, the JCS directed the CSAF to deploy the remainder of the RF-4C squadron together with its 528 personnel to Tan Son Nhut. 140/

On 29 October, CINCPAC notified JCS and COMUSMACV that authority had been granted for immediate deployment of an F-4C squadron to Clark AFB. The squadron would eventually move to Da Nang and provide air defense and air escort duty in exchange for F-102 and F-104 detachments presently 141/ there.

As of 31 October, the USAF had 23 types of aircraft in Vietnam totalling 441 aircraft. VNAF had eight types, totalling 395 aircraft. The U.S. Army had 1,169 rotary wing and 320 fixed wing aircraft while the USMC had 158 rotary wing and 112 fixed wing aircraft. 142/

October deployments were as follows: On 7 October, the U.S. military strength in South Vietnam reached 140,000 with the arrival of 1st elements of the 15,000 man 1st Infantry Division. On 8 October, the 20th Helicopter Squadron was organized at Tan Son Nhut and assigned to 2d Air Division. The mission of this unit was to provide personnel and cargo airlift and participate in search and rescue operations. It had eight Ch-3Cs and was under the operational control of the 6250th Combat Support Group. Also, on the same day, initial elements of the ROK Capital Division landed at Cam Ranh Bay. On 12 October, the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair) was organized at Phan Rang AB. It was tasked with major facility construction and expansion. On 22 October, the first H-1B air-

craft was assigned to the Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF). The 4503rd Tactical Fighter Squadron arrived at Bien Hoa from Williams AFB, Arizona. Nicknamed "Skoshi Tiger", the 4503rd flew the F-5A Freedom Fighters, testing its proficiency in combat. These were the first F-5A's to be flown in the RVN. On 24 October, the 13th Bombardment Squadron departed Da Nang and was replaced by the 8th Bombardment Squadron. On 27 October, the 16th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron deployed from Shaw AFB, S.C. to Tan Son Nhut for a one year PCS tour. Relieved from assignment to PACAF, it was further assigned to the 2d Air Division and placed under the operational control of the 6250th Combat Support Group. On 29 October, the 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron was ordered to move from Holloman AFB, New Mexico to the RVN, with further assignment to the 6252nd Tactical Fighter Wing at Da Nang. With 18 F-4C's, its mission was air defense and providing escort for reconnaissance missions in support of USAF and VNAF air operations. ^{143/}

On 29 October, nine RF-4C aircraft, equipped with AN/ASS-18 scanners, arrived in the RVN. They were the first increment of a total of 18 RF-4C ^{144/} equipped with the latest reconnaissance equipment.

11. November 2d Air Division Counter Proposals on Deployment

On 23 November, 2d Air Division Commander concurred with COMUSMACV's October proposal that 17 USAF jet squadrons and USAF/VNAF A-1 squadrons would be adequate to support U.S. Army/ARVN/Third country forces planned for Phase II. However, he had reservations concerning several statements ^{145/} in a proposed COMUSMACV message to CINCPAC:

1. A statement that during the last two months, Air Force and

VNAF were forced to reduce ordnance loads from those normally carried was questioned. General Moore said the drop was the result of using greater number of 500 pound bombs instead of 750's. While this reduced total tonnages, it did not represent a commensurate reduction in capability since the 146/ 500 pound bombs were appropriate for the targets.

2. COMUSMACV stated that "the A-1 aircraft appeared to be the best all-around in-country strike vehicle." General Moore commented that while the A-1 has proven to be dependable and capable of large loads, its slow speed cut down reaction time. An A-1 required 38 minutes flying time to reach a target 100 miles from its base while and F-100 needed only ten minutes. General Moore recommended that the statement be changed to read "the A-1, F-100, and B-57 are the most effective in-country strike aircraft at this time." He also wanted it noted that the F-4C would be an improvement over the F-100, both in bomb capacity and in its dual role as an air defense weapon. 147/

3. General Westmoreland said that a carrier sortie was equivalent to an in-country based sortie. General Moore's response was that, although both could carry equivalent ordnance loads, the response time of carrier aircraft did not provide the operational flexibility to meet a rapidly developing or changing tactical situation. 148/

4. A statement was made by COMUSMACV that 19 U.S. jet strike squadrons should be deployed in-country and the CVA requirement deleted. General Moore wanted this changed to read a "total of 23 jet strike

squadrons be deployed in-country: Six USMC and 17 USAF." ^{149/}

At the end of the month, in reply to a proposal by LtGen Thomas P. Gerrity, Hq USAF, that support would be simplified by basing all F-4C's in Thailand and F-105's in Vietnam, General Moore said that the two aircraft complemented each other in the air war in North Vietnam and Laos. This, plus the requirement for the numbers of fighter squadrons and availability, appeared to make it impractical to separate aircraft by country. He informed that they were separated by base wherever possible. ^{150/}

Deployments during November were as follows: On 2 November, the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing was reassigned from England AFB, La. to Bien Hoa to replace the 6251st Fighter Wing. The following units were also reassigned from England AFB to Bien Hoa simultaneously with the wing: The 531st Tactical Fighter Squadron, the 3rd Armament and Electronics Maintenance Squadron, the 3rd Field Maintenance Squadron, the Organizational Maintenance Squadron, and the 303rd Munitions Maintenance Squadron. The 531st Tactical Fighter Squadron did not arrive in the RVN until 14 December. On 8 November, the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing was deployed from MacDill AFB, Florida, to Cam Ranh Bay with further assignment to the 2d Air Division.

On 10 November, the 510th Tactical Fighter Wing arrived in Vietnam from England AFB with 22 F-100's. The unit kept 18 of the Super Sabres to perform its tactical air strike mission and released four as replacements for other tactical units. On 12 November, the 20th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron from Shaw AFB, S.C. was deployed to Tan Son Nhut for a one year PCS tour. The 20th flew in-and-out country reconnaissance sorties with 12

RF-101's furnished by the 15th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Kadena AB, Okinawa. On 14 November, the 4th Air Commando Squadron was deployed to Tan Son Nhut from England AFB, La. On 20 November, 17 U-10's arrived, to be used in the psywar program. The U-10's joined the four C-47's already assigned to the 5th ACS. 151/

12. The Year-End Deployment Picture

Further buildup of tactical fighter squadrons was anticipated based on the Secretary of Defense's tasking DOD to plan support for Steel Tiger at 100 sorties per day, Barrel Roll at 50 sorties per day and the B-52 strikes at 800 per month, within six months. Specific requirements were under study. Among factors being considered were flak suppression and improved intelligence. 152/

On 7 December, COMUSMACV recommended that 23 jet strike squadrons be deployed in South Vietnam which would consist of 17 USAF squadrons and six USMC squadrons. In addition, one aircraft carrier would be employed until sufficient aircraft were in-country to meet strike requirements. 153/ The Secretary of Defense wanted the carrier relieved as soon as possible believing that extended use of it was most inefficient. He wanted sufficient ground-based aircraft in-country to replace the carrier. 154/

On 13 December, COMUSMACV proposed to CINCPAC an interim beddown of three F-4C Squadrons, which would otherwise be delayed, into Phan Rang airfield. Bien Hoa was selected for one F-100 squadron, with Phan Rang an alternate field. PACAF concurred with bedding-down the F-100 squadron and CINCPAC requested JCS to deploy this squadron to Bien Hoa with a

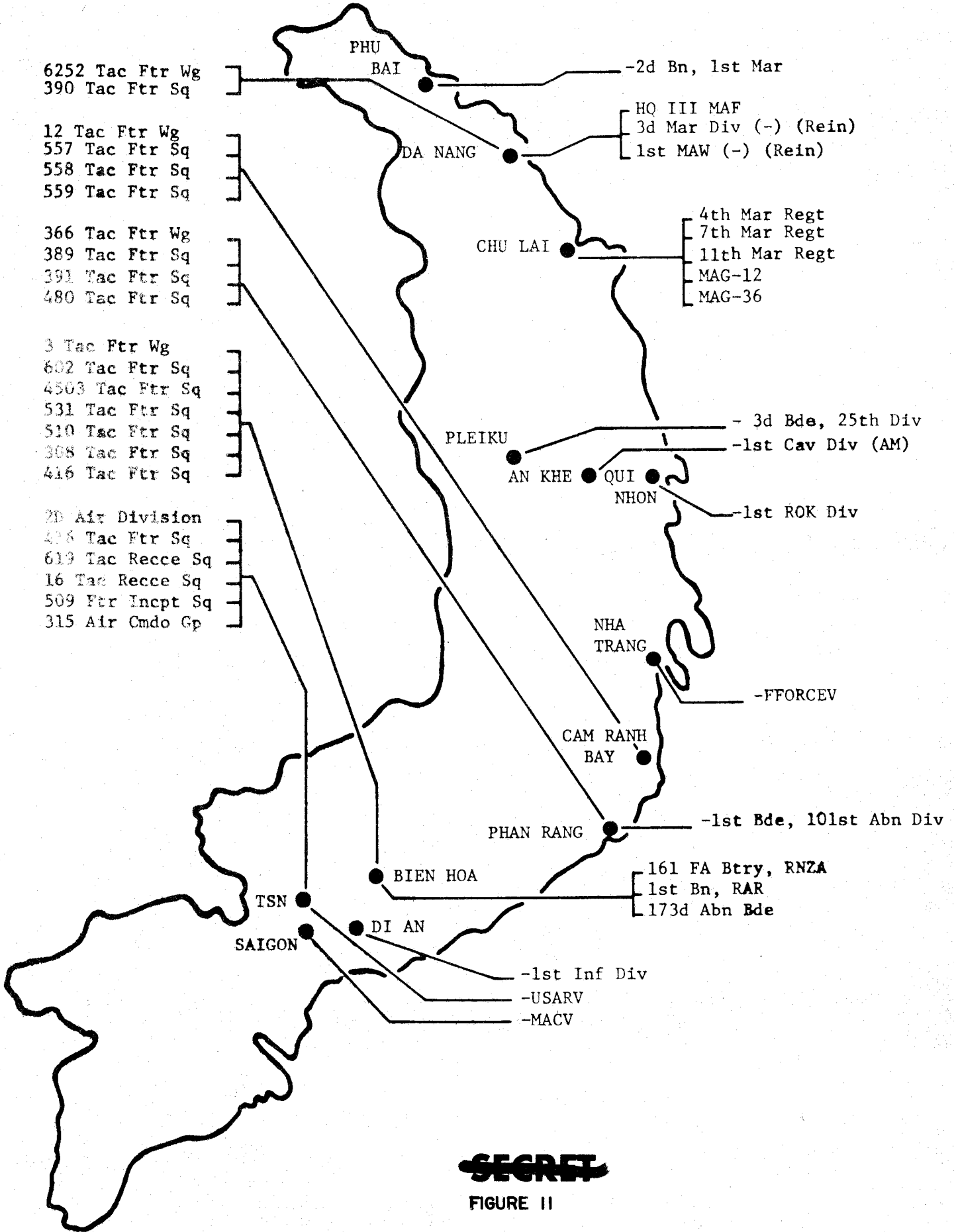
closure date of 1 February 1966.

On 29 December 1965, discussing the use of Da Nang, COMUSMACV stated that more than eight U.S. Marine squadrons were required to support Marine ground units. He agreed to planning for ten squadrons, provided a minimum of two were committed daily to 2d Air Division for its use. Programming of these additional jet squadrons was not to reduce requirements for 23 156/ USAF jet squadrons in-country.

During the late November conference in South Vietnam, Secretary McNamara requested that troop lift and deployment schedules for Phase II and IIA be established. A conference was scheduled for 6-21 January 1966 to consider airfield requirements, tactical fighter squadron requirements, 157/ sortie rates, munitions and other subjects.

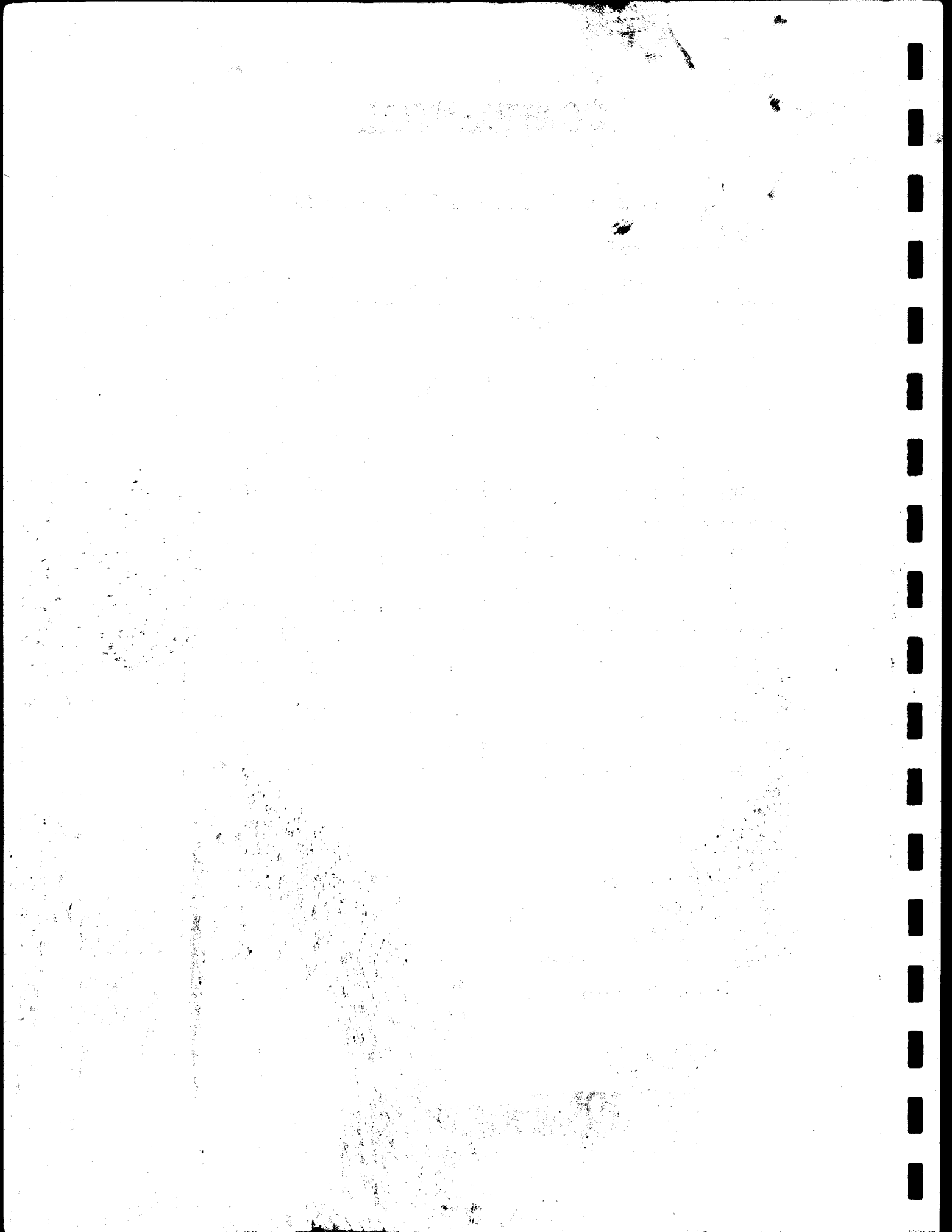
December deployments were as follows: On 2 December the nuclear powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise entered combat, sending sorties against Viet Cong targets in the RVN. On 6 December, the 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100's) arrived at Bien Hoa from Homestead AFB, Florida. On 11 December, the first Air Force CH-3C helicopter was flown from Tan Son Nhut after being airlifted from Eglin AFB, Florida and reassembled locally. On 14 December, the 531st Tactical Fighter Squadron arrived at Bien Hoa, replacing the 429th Tactical Fighter Squadron which had been there TDY for three months. The 531st, which was assigned to the 625th Tactical Fighter Wing, flew F-100's. On 24 December, the 8th Bombardment Squadron departed Da Nang and was replaced by the 13th Bomb Squadron. On 27 December, the 559th Tactical Fighter Squadron was directed to move

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FIGURE II



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MONTH-END STRENGTHS - US FORCES - 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

Fig. 12

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MONTH-END STRENGTHS - RVN FORCES - 1965

MONTH	VNAF	ARVN	VNMC	VNN	RF	PF	CIDG	POL
DEC 64	10,521	220,360	7,209	8,194	96,049	168,317	21,454	31,395
JAN 65	10,847	218,278	7,336	8,276	98,877	165,026	19,700	33,599
FEB 65	11,258	218,545	7,251	8,399	99,143	161,566	19,150	33,624
MAR 65	11,546	217,593	7,116	8,806	100,018	156,619	19,070	34,751
APR 65	11,949	224,515	6,931	8,892	102,680	152,514	21,000	36,696
MAY 65	11,781	229,006	7,039	9,045	105,506	150,538	20,366	38,831
JUN 65	12,081	234,136	6,842	9,037	107,652	149,029	21,721	43,851
JUL 65	12,351	243,491	6,691	12,931	111,194	144,669	23,130	42,898
AUG 65	12,701	250,288	6,839	13,285	117,162	141,148	23,401	47,206
SEP 65	13,085	257,730	7,249	13,507	120,004	137,806	24,369	48,555
OCT 65	12,830	264,127	7,259	13,786	125,913	135,486	26,557	49,296
NOV 65	12,766	263,928	7,519	14,274	130,704	135,362	28,188	51,668
DEC 65	12,778	267,877	7,380	14,559	132,221	136,398	28,430	52,242

Fig. 13

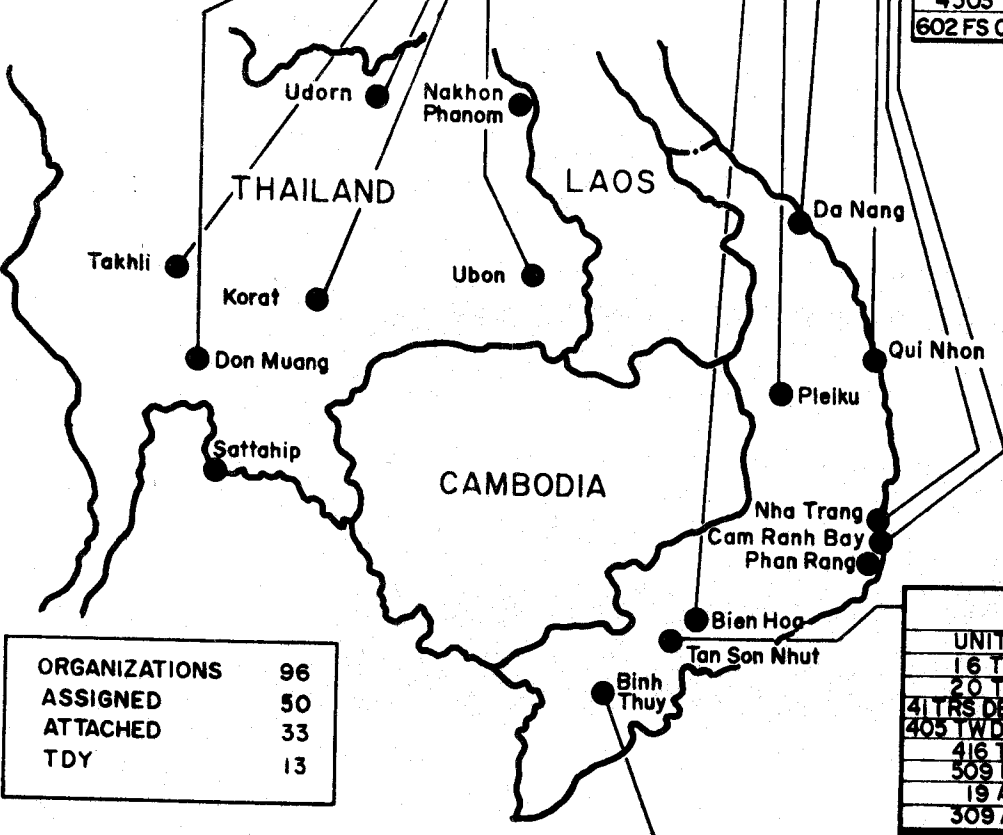
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2 AD MAJOR UNITS ● AS OF: 31 JAN 66

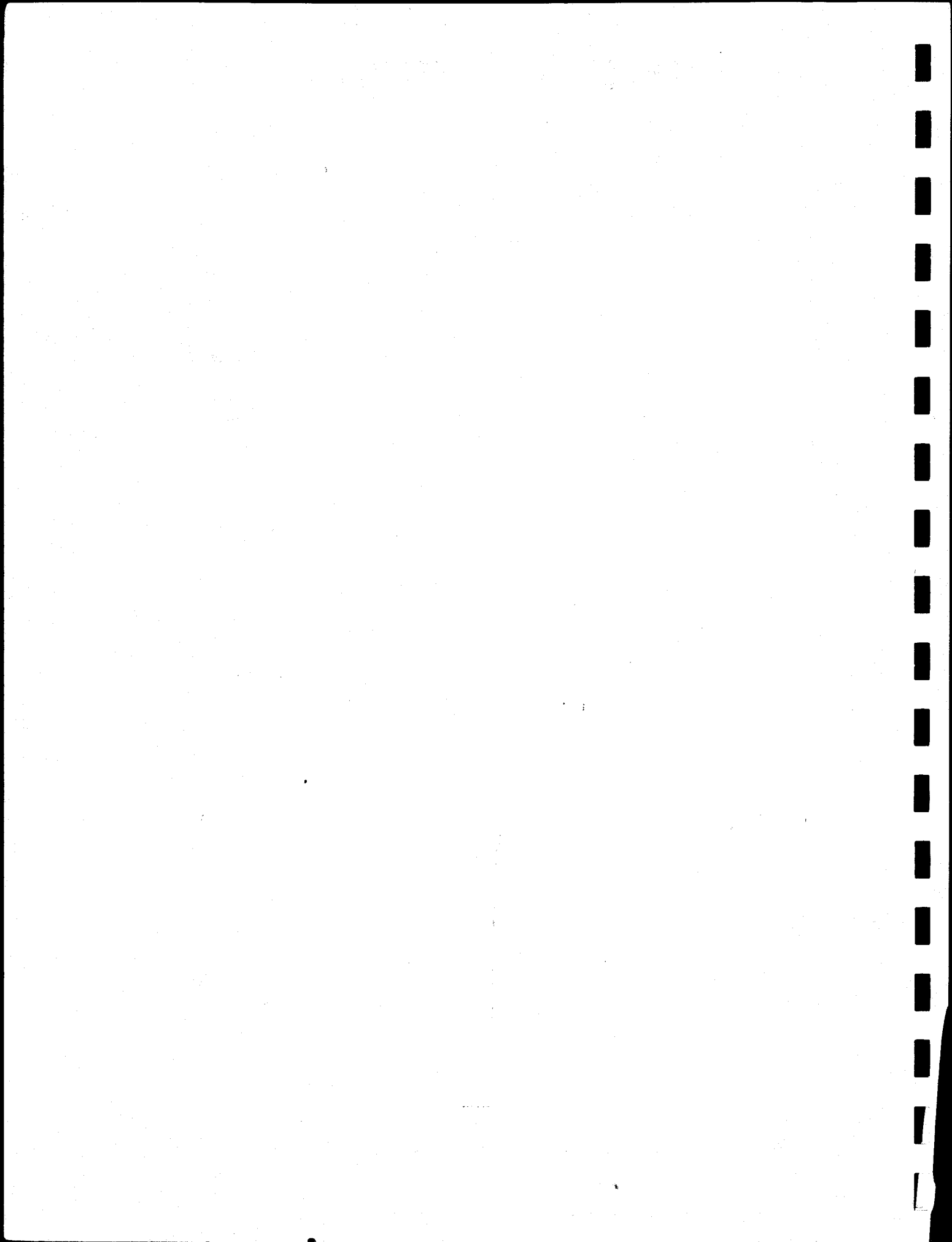
THAILAND			
UDORN			
UNIT	TMS	UE	POSS'D
15 RTF	RF-101	12	12
41 TRS	RB-66C	9	NORPT
	RB-66B	5	5
602FS COMDO	A-1E	8	NORPT
TAKHLI			
41 TRS	RB-66C	9	6
	RB-66B	5	5
353 TFS	F-105	18	19
354 TFS	F-105	15	19
UBON			
41 AD DET 1	C-130	4	NORPT
433 TFS	F-4C	18	15
497 TFS	F-4C	18	16
KORAT			
421 TFS	F-105	18	18
469 TFS	F-105	18	21
DON MUANG			
405 TW DET 4	F-102	4	4

VIETNAM			
DA NANG			
UNIT	TMS	UE	POSS'D
20 TASS	O-1E/F	20	30
311 ACS	C-123	16	13
405FW ADVON	B-57	24	20
390 TFS	F-4C	16	18
480 TFS	F-4C	18	19
QUI NHON			
602FS COMDO	A-1E	8	NORPT
PLEIKU			
1 ACS	A-1E	25	24
21 TASS	O-1E/F	20	38
NHA TRANG			
310 ACS	C-123	16	14
CAM RANH BAY			
391 TFS	F-4C	18	20
557 TFS	F-4C	18	18
558 TFS	F-4C	18	16
559 TFS	F-4C	18	15
BIEN HOA			
19 TASS	O-1E/F	32	30
306 TFS	F-100	18	16
510 TFS	F-100	18	18
531 TFS	F-100	18	18
4503 TFS	F-5	11	11
602FS COMDO	A-1E	25	NORPT



ORGANIZATIONS	96
ASSIGNED	50
ATTACHED	33
TDY	13

TAN SON NHUT			
UNIT	TMS	UE	POSS'D
16 TRS	F-4C	16	20
20 TRS	RF-101	16	12
41 TRS DET 1	RB-66B	3	3
405 TW DET 1	RB-57	4	4
416 TFS	F-100	18	19
509 FIS	F-102	8	8
19 ACS	C-123	16	12
309 ACS	C-123	19	12
BINH THUY			
22 TASS	O-1E/F	30	18



from MacDill AFB to Cam Ranh Bay with further assignment to the 12th
Tactical Fighter Wing in place of the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

On 31 December, the U.S. military strength was approximately 184,000 in
the RVN. 158/

CHAPTER VIII

PLANS AND POLICIES FOR EXPANSION

During 1965, national U.S. strategy was designed to meet the growing threat of the insurgency in SEA. Policy guidance and operational plans were reviewed with a goal of strengthening the U.S. military posture in SEA.

As the situation and requirements changed during the year, conferences held at PACOM prepared detailed programs based on force requirements and policy recommendations. Such conferences were held during April, August, September, October, and December. ^{1/}

No OPLAN was implemented in its entirety in the early part of the year. A brief resume of the various OPLANS and studies guiding U.S. efforts in SEA are listed in the Appendix. Basic assumptions guiding the U.S. strategic policy in SEA during 1965 are also included.

On 26 February 1965, CINCPAC stated his basic concept and plans for coordination of air operations in CINCPAC OPLAN 37-65. During border control operations, CINCPAC felt that it was appropriate that COMUSMACV exercise operational control of certain U.S. land based air units in SEA, with CINCPACFLT carrier based air operating in support. He added that during air attacks on North Vietnam, the operational control of USAF forces in SEA, would be passed to CINCPACAF, except FARMGATE and certain assigned support aircraft. COMUSMACV would be the coordinating authority for air attacks conducted by VNAF/FARMGATE. For air strikes involving

forces under the operational control of CINCPACFLT, CINCPACAF, and COMUSMACV the coordinating authority would normally be CINCPACAF. CINCPAC further stated that the Commander 2d Air Division, as a subordinate of both CINCPACAF and COMUSMACV, had been delegated this coordinating authority;^{2/} he also revised CINCPAC OPLAN 32 (February 1965 Revision), raising the level of POL pre-stockage from 20 to 30 days. Revision was made because of^{3/} the vulnerability of POL system to sabotage and unreliability of the commercial POL distribution system.

On 13 March, JCS requested CINCPAC to develop a time phased course of action which, without prejudice to existing OPLANS, would:

Propose minimum Air Forces required to support deployment into vital areas of SVN, Thailand, and Laos should NVN-ChiCom attack into northern SVN or through Laos and Burma, and concurrently strike NVN and Communist China from the air.

Include logistic actions and facilities required to deploy such forces in a timely manner and sustain them under combat conditions.

CINCPAC tied air deployments and logistics to OPLAN 39.^{4/} The CINCPAC J4 Division study on "Adequacy of Existing and Planned Prepositioning of Material to Support the PACOM/Contingency/General War Plans found that:

The Air Force component had identified the prepositioning requirements to support all existing CINCPAC OPLAN forces including those to deploy from CONUS. Prepositioning was underway and would proceed as facilities could accommodate the material.

All services had actions underway to reach the prepositioning objectives of the most recent CINCPAC OPLAN (at that time which were OPLANS 38-64 and

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39-65).

The prepositioning policy directives of all services were adequate to support CINCPAC OPLANS.

All services had sufficient material prepositioned in the theater to support PACOM forces at the force level of Phase IV, CINCPAC OPLAN 32-64 for not less than the first 60 days of hostilities.

The Viet Cong had continued success in March in segmenting and weakening the RVN. JCS on 20 March, therefore, proposed certain force increases to counter the situation. On 5 April, the Secretary of Defense asked JCS for a plan to support such an increase, and a conference was called at Headquarters CINCPAC to develop this plan.

CINCPAC proposed deploying additional air elements in South Vietnam and Thailand so as to offer a north-south array of air power that would tie the ChiCom air units to north and central China.

The following highlighted CINCPAC's proposal for South Vietnam:

Forces would first occupy and secure a multiple number of coastal bases from which they would engage in counterinsurgency operations in coordination with RVNAF.

These bases, logistically supportable from the sea, would be utilized to support a campaign of increasing magnitude against the Viet Cong.

Great reliance would be placed on GVN forces in tasks involved in population control.

The following command arrangements were proposed:

CINCPAC would exercise overall operational command through component commanders and COMUSMACV, as

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appropriate.

The joint commander for operations in SVN would COMUSMACV.

2d Air Division would carry out the USAF component functions of CINCPAC and the Division would report in that capacity to COMUSMACV.

CINCPAC would have operational control of USAF forces in SEA for air actions against NVN. This operations control would be exercised by CINCPACAF through Commander, 13th Air Force and Commander, 2d Air Division when directed by CINCPAC.

CINCPACAF, when directed, would operate in support of COMUSMACV. In reference to Thailand, CINCPAC recommended that adequate USAF forces be provided to intensify armed reconnaissance and air strike missions against the Pathet Lao/Viet Minh and NVN. CINCPAC recommended that COMUSMACTHAI be established separately from COMUSMACV and that CINCPACAF exercise operational control of USAF units in Thailand.

CINCPAC noted certain limitations existing in lift forces and support facilities which would seriously off-set contemplated deployments. Most significant were:

Terminal base capability to accept transport aircraft in South Vietnam was critical.

Intra-theater airlift was fully committed.

Tactical Air Command C-130's were overcommitted for the FY.

CINCPAC also noted that anticipated deployments would require extensive development of base and support facilities. POL operations in South Vietnam had to be reviewed. These operations were extremely vul-

nerable since they were based entirely on a commercial supply system that received, stored and distributed POL products. Improvement of POL facility in Thailand was also considered necessary.

On 17 April, JCS proposed a U.S. force buildup in South Vietnam to arrest the deteriorating situation and prepare for contingency actions in event of ChiCom overt action. The proposal planned for four phases. Phase I called for securing bases established in enclaves on the coast of SVN. Phase II was to conduct operations from these enclaves. Phase III called for securing U.S. inland bases and areas and Phase IV involved the occupation and improvement of inland bases so operations could be conducted from them. ^{6/}

Under this plan, the Marine Expeditionary Force would move into the Hue-Da Nang-Chu Lai area. The 1st U.S. Air Cavalry Division would take the Qui Nhon-Nha Trang area; the ROK Division Force would be responsible for Quang Ngai, and the 173rd Airborne Brigade would cover the Bien Hoa-Vung Tau enclave. A tailored-down U.S. Army Corps headquarters, with minimal Corps troops, would go to RVN as required and a Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division would be deployed to Thailand to provide security and stability in northeast Thailand. The Air Force would provide cover for these operations and would prepare for sustained operations, as necessary, to arrest the deteriorating situation and to contribute to the deterrent posture and force buildup.

JCS's proposal was based on a review of CINCPAC's 10 April plan and

the recommendations to the Secretary of Defense was fundamentally the same. ^{7/}

To reflect JCS recommendations, a change to OPLAN 37-65 was made by CINCPAC on 14 June, calling for assignment of specific size and distance limitations to cross-border actions (Category 1). It also deleted cross-border actions on the RVN/Cambodian border. ^{8/}

As would be expected, the deployment of U.S. forces to South Vietnam and the use of air power, both in and out-country, involved political considerations. During the first six months of the year, there was no clear-cut, long range basic plan that was adhered to. Deployments and operations were predicated on considerable study through all levels of command up to the Secretary of Defense. COMUSMACV noted in mid-June that, in some instances, it was not possible to determine when a final decision ^{9/} had been made on a particular deployment.

Faced with an increasing vulnerability from the Viet Cong buildup in SVN, the Secretary of Defense, during his July visit to Vietnam, planned an augmentation of assets, manpower, strike capabilities, air lift, reconnaissance and pertinent organizational changes in order to "stop losing and stabilize the situation." The plan also called for the resumption of the offensive, and to extend RVN influence throughout SVN once Viet Cong forces were destroyed. His July 1965 conference generated the Phase I, II and III COMUSMACV concept of operations, which was published 30 August 1965.

This concept was the first attempt to promulgate a master plan for further deployment of US/FWMA forces to RVN. Phase I concerned deployments through the end of 1965; Phase II: 1 January through 30 June 1966; Phase III: 12 to 18 months following completion of Phase II. In November 1965, Phase II was modified to cope with the increased NVN threat, thus adding Phase IIA to the plan. In fact, there were many modifications made in the deployment schedules of all three phases. The significant point is that a plan was developed, approved, and used as a definite guide for the build-up of US/FWMA forces in RVN.

The following are definitions of the Phases:

Phase I: Forces to halt the Viet Cong offensive and stem the tide. This phase encompassed the defense of major air bases; defense of minor bases; reserve, reaction and offensive operations; security of province capitals and critical areas. Termination of Phase I was arbitrarily set for 31 Dec 65.

Phase II: Additional forces to resume the military offensive and to reinstitute pacification measures in high priority areas where this would be highly visible, plus additional reserve/reaction forces required for their support. For planning purposes, Phase II embraced the period 1 January 1966 to 30 June 1966.

Phase III: Additional forces in the RVN to defeat the remaining organized Viet Cong units and to pacify the country. Phase III was arbitrarily defined as beginning 1 July 1966.

A complete re-evaluation of USAF deployment requirements was conducted during August in conjunction with other service requirements, and formed the basis for deployment requirements contained in the following concept of operations:

Assumptions:

The Viet Cong would fight until convinced that military

victory was impossible and then would not be willing to endure further punishment.

That the ChiCom's would not intervene except to provide aid and advice.

That friendly forces would maintain control of the air over RVN.

Objectives:

Defeat the Viet Cong:

Frustrate Viet Cong strategy.

Destroy Viet Cong forces and organizational structures in selected areas.

Defend all important areas successfully.

Expand control in selected important areas.

Destroy selected Viet Cong base areas, or render portions of them untenable.

Open or control select portions of important roads.

Extend government control over all SVN. (CINCPAC defined the role of U.S. military forces in South Vietnam as that of assisting the people, government, and Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam in winning their war against internal subversion and externally supported insurgency.) The essential measures to achieve these objectives were:

Increase the scale, scope and intensity of air against the DRV.

Intensify action against ground infiltration through Laos and Cambodia.

Intensify action against waterborne infiltration.

Conduct offensive operations to seize and hold the initiative in the Republic of Vietnam.

Increase the scope and scale of naval operations.

Improve the PACOM posture to deter ChiCom intervention.

The concept visualized the Strategic Air Command would continue to conduct supporting combat operations in South Vietnam and would be prepared to strike targets in North Vietnam. Further, air, naval, and special operations would be conducted within the country and in the adjacent coastal waters so as to cause the NVN government to cease its direction and support of the insurgency in the RVN. Air Forces from both land and sea bases would progressively destroy the NVN war supporting power. Additionally, preparations would be made to destroy the vital targets within NVN and along the coastal and inland waterways.

The object underlying this concept was to convince NVN that they would eventually be defeated in SVN and to make it as difficult and costly as possible for NVN to direct and support the Viet Cong in SVN. One important aim was to convince the leaders in Hanoi that the U.S. determination and staying power was greater than their own. Another goal was to create a feeling of pessimism and helplessness among the military and civilian forces and civilians in NVN. For operations in Laos the concept had the following objectives:

- Improve the military posture of friendly Laotian forces.
- Reduce the Pathet Lao/Viet Minh effectiveness.
- Reduce communist military incursion into selected buffer area in Laos.
- Demonstrate to the people and government of Laos a U.S. interest in their security.
- Reduce the NVN capability to direct and support the insurgency in South Vietnam.
- Reduce the effectiveness of the Viet Cong supporting bases in Cambodia.

For operations in Thailand the concept included:

To continue air operations against communist forces in NVN and Laos.

To develop a base structure to support U.S. operations in Thailand.

To plan counterinsurgency operations in coordination with the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

To achieve an improved air defense system.

Special operations from Thai bases into Laos were to be executed to reduce enemy infiltration into RVN.

The concept envisioned the following major tasks:

Phase I:

Secure the major military bases, airfields and communications centers.

Defend major political and population centers.

Conduct offensive operations against major Viet Cong base areas in order to divert and destroy Viet Cong main forces.

Provide adequate reserve reaction forces to prevent the loss of secure and defended areas.

Preserve and strengthen the RVNAF.

Provide adequate air support, both combat and logistic.

Maintain an anti-infiltration screen along the coast and support forces ashore with naval gunfire and amphibious lift.

Provide air and sea lifts as necessary to transport the necessary but minimum supplies and services to the civil populace.

Open up necessary critical lines of communication for essential military and civil purposes.

Preserve and defend, to the extent possible, areas now under effective governmental control.

Specifics:

Air Patrols: Such patrols were established to augment the sea patrols. Patrols along the entire coast with a leg of 60 miles off-shore and supplemented by a night flight were considered essential. Additionally, an as required patrol south of Hainan Island to detect southerly movement from the north was necessary. Additional resources would be necessary to improve close-in coastal surveillance and detect and react to night infiltration.

Base Facilities: An expansion of facilities would be necessary to support the Phase I increase in forces.

I Corps Tactical Air Operations: Offensive and defensive tactical air operations would be conducted to include close air support, interdiction, reconnaissance, air superiority, air transport, search and rescue, and others, as required, in the effort to defeat the Viet Cong. III MAF aviation units would devote priority support to III MAF forces; excess resources would be made available to the 2d Air Division in supporting other forces.

Phase II:

All Phase I measures.

Resume and/or expand pacification operations. Priority will be given to the Hop Tac area around Saigon, to the part of the Delta along an east-west axis from Go Cong, to Chau Doc, and in the provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Tri, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh and Phu Yen.

Participate in offensive operations, as required, to support and sustain the resumption of pacification.

Combat and Logistical Air Support - The commander 2d Air Division, had the mission of conducting and coordinating offensive and defensive air operations, tactical airlift, air traffic control, search and rescue operations, close air support and reconnaissance operations in and out of country and exercised overall air defense responsibility within the RVN. 11/

In-country Air Strike Requirements - Increased sorties, and, hence, increased forces, would be required in order to provide an improved air surveillance/reconnaissance program, to add air support for the increase in numbers and activities of FWMAF and to meet an increased level of enemy activity.

Airlift Operations - An in-country air LOC would be established, necessitating increased airlift resources and bases, controlled by a single manager. Air traffic control facilities would be essential to minimize the increased flight safety hazard caused by increased usage of minimal airspace by a wide range of air operations. Communications would be expanded and improved. Airfield improvements would be necessary to permit the operation of C-130's for delivering troops, supplies and equipment from designated bases. Major marshalling and logistical airfields, secondary marshalling and logistical airfields, tactical employment airfields, and combat emergency landing zones would be required.

Reconnaissance Requirements - An increase of Side Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR), infrared (IR) and visual reconnaissance requirements would be expected. USAF in-country requirements would increase to support additional forces in-country. Out-of-country requirements would also increase in order to maintain existing day reconnaissance capability, establish a night and all-weather capability and increase Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) capability to a satisfactory level.

Phase III:

All Phase I and II measures.

Provide those additional forces necessary to extend and expand clearing and securing operations throughout the entire populated area of the country and those forces necessary to destroy Viet Cong forces and their base areas.

Based on the buildup of U.S./FWMAF ground maneuver battalions and the projected sortie totals required to provide close support to these units, the concept called for a total of 23 USAF and USMC squadrons by the end of Phase I (31 Dec). Seven more squadrons would be added during the first half of 1966 (Phase II) in order to raise this total to 30.^{12/}

As a result of this concept the USAF organizations in Southeast Asia expanded.^{13/}

The August Planning Conference conducted by CINCPAC from 3 to 6 August resulted in a program covering the movement of U.S. and ROK military units to SVN and surveyed the adequacy of personnel and material to achieve the military stalemate with the Viet Cong so envisioned under Phase I concept above. The program developed during the August Planning Conference was based on the CINCPAC April concept and provided an integrated listing of force requirements, troop lists, deployment priorities, jet-capable airfield construction and schedules and transportation schedules deemed necessary to accomplish the stalemate.

To achieve this stalemate, CINCPAC felt that it was necessary to first divide Vietnam into priority areas of "relative importance" to provide: ^{14/}

Thrust in the right direction.

Enhanced direction of effort.

Guided employment and positioning of forces.

The areas of prime strategic interest in order of relative importance designated by CINCPAC was:

Saigon area and Mekong Delta.

The coastal plains.

The highlands.

His strategy was to first concentrate on securing areas of food production and distribution so as to deny food to the enemy and to protect the food being produced and stored for friendly use. Under this concept valueless real estate held by the Viet Cong could be attacked later. Such

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a plan would have direct bearing on the economic, social, and political objectives of the U.S. since its first priority would go to security of areas most important to the viability and welfare of SVN. ^{15/}

CINCPAC's August considerations on Strategy and Concept for operations in Thailand included the following:

Thailand must be included in the basic U.S. military strategy.

To support this strategy there must be a buildup of logistic support bases for Thailand.

The Thai Armed Forces must be positioned in a state of readiness.

Existing airbases must be improved.

New airfields must be constructed.

CINCPAC felt that the above actions were necessary to buildup a US/Thai posture that would deter ChiCom aggression and facilities logistic support of U.S. forces.

During the November conference in Hawaii, CINCPAC stated that the people of South Vietnam were beginning to gain some hope of getting security as a result of the U.S. forces commitment in SVN. He felt that we could lose that feeling if we allowed the upswing momentum to stop and entered into a "plateau" level of effort. ^{16/}

In order to prevent expanding the war through a creeping intervention by the Soviet and Chinese, JCS stated on 27 August that U.S. strategy should not allow the communists to keep pace with or more than match U.S. military efforts. ^{17/}

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JCS informed COMUSMACV that, on 3 Dec 1965, plans had been made for an 'action requirements' planning conference at Headquarters PACOM to work out detailed trooplifts and deployment scheduled for Phase II and IIA. The conference was scheduled 6 Jan - 21 Jan 66. Sortie rates, to include B-52 ^{18/} sorties, munitions, CVA, and airfield requirements were on the agenda.

On 7 December 1965, PACAF provided USAF with pertinent information pertaining to Phase I, II and IIA force requirements. On 8 December, PACAF listed Phase II add-ons. ^{19/}

On 22 December 1965, the RVNAF/JCS Directive AD-140, Ser: 00128 provided the following plan for Air Force Operations in RVN:

To defend the air space over RVN.

To provide air support for CTZ, CMR, Navy Force, and Special Forces on their request.

Conduct air patrol and reconnaissance along the RVN border and along RVN territorial waters.

To conduct unlimited air strikes against Viet Cong secret zones and bases that have been confirmed.

To conduct unilateral air operations as directed by higher command.

On 31 December 1965, CINCPACAF asked 2d Air Division for comments on the feasibility of nuclear operations in Southeast Asia since a proposed plan was being considered at that time. The plan considered the possibility of non-alert sorties with 2d Air Division F-105 aircraft launched from Thailand bases, using air refueling tactics, to strike SIOP and non-SIOP targets in South China. Weapons would be delivered from Clark AB to Thai-

land approximately seven hours after receipt of movement order, in which time, up to 20 F-105's could be configured for nuclear delivery. Between 2½ - 4 hours after arrival of weapons, the aircraft would be loaded and ready to launch, arriving over target 11 to 12 hours after a decision was made to deploy nuclear weapons to SEA. ^{20/}

In summary, as a result of 1965 strategic and tactical planning, the overall growth and effectiveness of Air Force activities in SEA were noteworthy. Plans provided the guideline towards the attainment of strategically desirable objectives in Southeast Asia. The concept and application of air power in counterinsurgency operations was broadened from that of advisory action to overt participation in the defense of SEA.

This brought about changes in the mission of the Air Force in SEA, an expansion of its assets, and the development of a base to counter the increasing Communist thrust and threat in the area.

The expansion of the Air Force in SEA brought about staff reorganizations, changes in command and control while the expansion in the use of air power brought about changes in the rules of engagements and policies of operations.

UNCLASSIFIED

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. (S) History, 2AD, Jul-Dec 64, Vol II.
2. (S) Str Report, MACJI, 13 Jan 66; (S) History, 2AD, Jan-Jun 65, Vol. I.
3. (TS) Minutes, Commanders' Conference, 1965.
4. (S) Briefing, BrigGen Christian, ACOS Jz, Hq MACV, 18 Nov 65.
5. (S) Msg, 5AF, AIG 7011, 261000Z Aug 65.
6. (TS) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 17939, 1 Sep 65.
7. (TS) See Footnote 3, above.
8. (S) History, 2AD, 1965; (C) Msg, MAC 4858, Rosson to Gen Westmoreland, 29 Sep 65.
9. Directive, MACV 525-4, 17 Sep 65.
10. (S) History 2AD, 1965.
11. (TS) Ops Order, PACAF 113-64, 24 Jul 64.
12. (TS) See Footnote 3, above.
13. (TS) See Footnote 11, above.
14. (TS) Msg, PACAF to 13AF, AFED DOP 50029, 230410Z Jan 65.
15. (TS) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 2CCR, 64-TS-2494, 200615Z Oct 64.
16. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 170530Z Aug 64.
17. (TS) See Footnote 3, above.
18. (S) History, 2AD, 1965.
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APPENDIX A

OPERATIONAL PLANS:

The conflict in Southeast Asia is guided under a broad spectrum of various operational plans from those covering a limited war to nuclear strike planning. A brief rundown of the various OPLANS and studies guiding the U.S. efforts in the SEA is as follows:

COMUSMACV/THAI OPLAN 33-63: Provided for covert U.S. support of overt military operations against NVN in retaliation for specific communist insurgency activities in SVN and Laos. Air strikes were included and raids by indigenous personnel in NVN were supported. Superseded by COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-65, 4 March 1965.

COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 1-64: This plan was dated 20 October 1963 and is a U.S. General War Plan for Southeast Asia. The plan calls for defensive and offensive operations in defense of Southeast Asia in order to contribute to the defeat of the Sino-Soviet bloc. No changes other than updating were made during 1965.

CCRSFF OPLAN 4-64: SEATO Plan with restricted security classification.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 32-64 (Phase II, RVN): This plan was applicable to counterinsurgency operations in RVN short of general war and contained four phases:

- a. Phase I - Alert (In effect on 1 January 1965).
- b. Phase II - Counterinsurgency (U.S. unilateral action in RVN, Laos and Thailand). The Phase II, RVN, portions of these plans were essentially implemented by the U.S. buildup during 1965, although on a larger scale than planned. No further revisions were, therefore, considered necessary.
- c. Phase III - Overt NVN intervention.
- d. Phase IV - Overt ChiCom intervention with or without NVN intervention.

COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 32-64 (Phase III & IV): Two changes were issued during 1965:

a. Change 5: Published on 16 February 1965, the change revised the staffing of COMUSSEASIA headquarters resulting from the phase-out of MAAG Vietnam in May 1964, and the requirement for a USMACV "stay behind" staff in Saigon in the event of activation of COMUSSEASIA headquarters.

b. Change 6: Published on 1 November 1965 as Annex I (Air Operations), provides guidance for the coordinated employment of the air resources of COMUSSEASIA with ground and naval operations.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 34-64: Provided for U.S. advice and assistance in RVN on a covert basis to allow the RVN to engage in covert psychological operations against NVN and to conduct hit-and-run attacks against

selected targets in NVN in order to substantially increase the costs to NVN for its involvement in subversion and insurgency in SVN and Laos. Superseded on 21 September 1965 by Annex X (Operations Support) to COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-65.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 34A-64: A special operations plan of restricted security classification. Superseded by Annex X, COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-65 on 21 September 1965.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-64: Published on 15 April 1964, the plan tasked all appropriate U.S. Government agencies to be ready to initiate a wide range of Laotian and Cambodian border control and retaliatory actions against DRV on 72 hours notice. It also tasked them to be ready to initiate a program of "graduated overt military pressures" against DRV on 30 days notice through air attacks by USAF, USN, and VNAF aircraft. The plan was designed primarily for execution by RVNAF with U.S. advisory, planning, operational, and material support. The plan permitted implementing any type action in or out of sequence of escalation. The purpose was to force the DRV to cease its support of the insurgents. The plan called for active U.S. air support when operations were beyond the capabilities of VNAF such as aerial reconnaissance, air strikes by Farmgate, and air strikes by U.S. B-57 aircraft. This plan was superseded by COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-65 on 4 March 1965.

ANNEX R, CINCPAC OPLAN 37-64: This was a plan for air attacks against targets in North Vietnam. A revised annex was prepared in late

1964 to schedule attacks against 94 selected targets so as to inflict the maximum feasible level of damage commensurate with forces available. Distribution of this revised annex was made during the first week of January 1965.

OPLAN 38-64: Provided guidance to military operations to terminate aggression in Southeast Asia. The plan was cancelled on 5 November 1965 since the objectives of OPLAN 38-64 duplicated the objectives in CINCPAC 32 and 39 OPLANS.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 60-64: Provided for emergency evacuation of U.S. and U.S. sponsored non-combatants. With the increasing concern that implementation of the plan was imminent early in the year, Change 4 was published on 11 January 1965 expanding the deployment of BLT's of the 9th MEB to TSN, Bien Hoa, Nha Trang and Da Nang instead of the single location at TSN as had been required previously, and tasking USASCV to prepare a helicopter evacuation plan in support of the basic OPlan. Following the implementation of a modified version of the plan in February, a revision was prepared, incorporating lessons learned from the evacuation, and published in September 1965 as COMUSMACV OPLAN 60-65.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 61-64: Provide for the physical security of critical U.S. installations in SVN. Change 1 was published in early January 1965 to provide for more stringent security measures at all USMACV units and installations and the classifying of security conditions

to permit maximum dissemination and implementation of instructions. At the end of the year this plan was awaiting supersession as a result of the publication of USMACV Directive 380-8, 9 July 1965, Subj: Military Security - Physical Security; and 38--13, 3 December 1965, Subj: Military Security--Security of Key U.S. Personnel.

COMUSMACV OPLANS 98-64 and 98-64A: These plans for covert operations were superseded by COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-65 with Annex X during the year.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 37-65: This plan was initiated in 1964 and was published on 4 March 1965. The plan superseded a number of other COMUSMACV OPLANS and provided for the employment of U.S. forces in conjunction with RVNAF to halt NVN support of communist insurgent forces in RVN and Laos by the application of selected military pressures on Laos, Cambodia and NVN.

ANNEX X (SPECIAL OPERATIONS) AND CHANGE 1: (Minor revision) was published in September 1965 and November 1965 respectively.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 38-65: The plan provided for military operations against NVN and Chinese Communist Forces, installations and facilities in the defense of Southeast Asia, and in offensive operations against mainland China. The plan was redesignated COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 38-65 during 1965. No changes were made in the plan in 1965. Primary emphasis was placed on air and naval power to conduct operations against NVN and ChiCom forces in SEASIA as part of an overall plan to conduct military

operations against those same forces in both SEASIA and Communist China.

One objective of the plan was to cause cessation of NVN aggression in SVN and interference with the pacification of South Vietnam. Another objective was to seek to control the scope and intensity of the conflict to a limited war so as to minimize the risk of escalation to a general war, recognizing that this may require controlled and deliberate intensification of the conflict.

Subordinate Commanders were tasked to develop detailed lists of combat, logistical and administrative units, by type and quantity, required for the execution of this plan. In addition subordinate commands were instructed to make maximum use of local national forces and resources and to provide maximum operational support to local national forces. Subordinate commands were also instructed to anticipate the introduction of allied forces from external sources, and to design supporting plans to facilitate transition to combined and/or coordinated operations. They were further instructed that nuclear weapons would be used only as authorized by the President and that any plans prepared in support of OPLAN 38-65 would so stipulate. Instructions also provided that toxic chemical and biological weapons would be used only as authorized by the President and/or as directed by CINCPAC. Subordinate commands were also instructed to be prepared, without serious detriment to other missions, to render emergency logistic support to overcome existing deficiencies and meet operational requirements of the local national forces.

COMUSMACV OPLAN 39-65: Provides for the employment of U.S. forces, in conjunction with available allied forces, to conduct limited war contingency operations against Communist China and NVN in the defense of SEASIA. Preemptive offensive or counter-offensive operations might be made using air and naval forces with minimal ground forces to deter, prevent, or cause cessation of ChiCom aggression. The plan remained basically unchanged during the year except for redesignation as COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 39-65.

OPLAN 65-65: This was a new plan initiated in 1965 in which COMUSMACV and COMUSMACTHAI were tasked to prepare supporting plans for the security of selected personnel and equipment.

COMUSMACV/SEASIA OPLAN 22-66: This plan was developed in 1965 and was published on 18 September 1965. The plan provided for military assistance in the event of revolutionary outbreaks in NVN. It envisaged a three phase operation:

- a. Phase I: Planning, training, intelligence, psywar and covert and overt activities.
- b. Phase II: All measures short of direct U.S. intervention.
- c. Phase III: All measures including direct U.S. intervention. Military and paramilitary forces from SVN and active and passive groups from NVN would be employed.

ANNEX J TO JSOP-71: COMUSMACV's submission for Annex J to JSOP-71 was forwarded to CINCPAC on 10 Sep 1965. It was based on the ultimate

withdrawal of US/FWMA forces from RVN and represented a significant increase in projected RVNAF strengths over the 1964 submission. The more significant changes included:

- a. Modernizing VNAF and VNN.
- b. Providing an air defense capability by FY1970.
- c. Establishment of a military reserve force.

NUCLEAR STRIKE PLANNING, CHINA: The JCS established during 1965 a plan for nuclear strikes on China (and Korea) in isolation from the USSR. CINCPAC forces were given the essential role in the execution of this plan.

APPENDIX B

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS GUIDING U.S. STRATEGIC POLICY FOR SEA IN 1965:

During 1965, the following assumptions guiding U.S. strategic policy in SEA remained:

- a. Conditions short of general war will exist.
- b. Military actions will be part of a coordinated, diplomatic, military, economic, and psychological program directed as causing the enemy to cease external aggression.
- c. The USSR will not intervene directly although the USSR may provide supplies, equipment, and weapons (other than nuclear) to NVN and Communist China.
- d. Use of appropriate classified munitions, including nuclear, controlled fragmentation, toxic, and biological weapons will be authorized to the degree necessary to achieve the objectives of the plan.
- e. Laos, Thailand, the Republic of Vietnam, China, Philippines, and Korea, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand will, in varying degree, join with military forces in the regional defense effort and supporting operations contemplated by OPLAN 38-65, although the intent to do so may not be stated until this plan is executed.
- f. Friendly national forces participating in the execution of this plan will accede to U.S. operational control.
- g. Operations will be conducted against Communist forces and

facilities in Cambodia and Burma as necessary, regardless of the political status of these countries, in order to ensure the security of Thailand's left flank and to delay possible Communist advances through Cambodia against RVN or Thailand.

h. Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, the Republic of Vietnam, Philippines, Korea, and China will permit use of bases and facilities within their boundaries by US/Allied Forces.

i. Indonesia will remain neutral with respect to the conflict in Southeast Asia, but may take advantage of the situation to increase military pressure on Malaysia.

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GLOSSARY

AAA - Antiaircraft Artillery
ABCCC - Airborne Battlefield Command Control & Communications
AC&W - Aircraft Control and Warning
ADC - Air Defense Command
AEW&C - Aircraft Early Warning & Control
AFAG - Air Force Advisory Group
AFCC - Air Force Control Center
AGM - Air-to-Ground Missile
ALO - Air Liaison Officer
AMEMB - American Embassy
AOB - Air Order of Battle
ARC LIGHT - B-52 Strikes
ARVN - South Vietnamese Army
ASOC - Air Support Operations Center
AW - Automatic Weapons

BARREL ROLL - U.S. Air Operations in North Laos
BLT - Battalion Landing Team

CAS - Close Air Support
CBU - Cluster Bomb Unit
CHECO - Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations
CIDG - Counterinsurgency Defense Group
CINCPAC - Commander in Chief, Pacific Area
CINCPACAF - Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces
CINCPACFLT - Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
CINCUSARPAC - Commander in Chief, U.S. Army, Pacific
CINCUSTAF - Commander in Chief, U.S. Tactical Air Forces
COIN - Counterinsurgency
COMUSMACTHAI - Commander, U.S. Advisory Commission, Thailand
COMUSMACV - Commander, U.S. Advisory Commission, South Vietnam
CONUS - Continental United States
CRP - Control & Reporting Post (Port)
CSAF - Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force
CTF - Carrier Task Force
CTZ - Corps Tactical Zone
CVA - Assault Aircraft Carrier (USN)

DASC - Direct Air Support Center
DMZ - Demilitarized Zone
DRV - Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
DTG - Date/Time Group

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ECM - Electronic Countermeasures
ELINT - Electronic Intelligence

FAC - Forward Air Controller
FAR - Laotian Ground Forces
FARMGATE - U.S. Advisory Reconnaissance Operation
FLAMING DART - First Air Strikes in North Vietnam
FM - Frequency Modulation
FWMAF - Free World Military Assistance Forces

GAM - Ground-to-Air Missile
GCI - Ground Controlled Intercept (Radar)
GVN - Government of Vietnam

IR - Infrared

JAGO - Joint Air/Ground Operations
JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff
JGS - Joint General Staff (Vietnam)

KBA - Killed by Air
KIA - Killed in Action
LAAM - Light Antiaircraft Missile
LCU - Landing Craft, Utility
LOC - Line of Communication
LOI - Letter of Instructions
LST - Landing Ship, Tank

MACTHAI - See COMUSMACTHAI
MACV - See COMUSMACV
MAP - Military Assistance Program
MEB - U.S. Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MIGCAP - Anti-Mig Combat Air Patrol

NVA - North Vietnamese Army
NVN - North Vietnam

OP - Operation Order (e.g. OP-00, OP-01, etc.)

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PACAF - Pacific Air Forces
PACOM - Pacific Command
PAVN - Peoples' Army of (North) Vietnam
PL - Pathet Lao
POL - Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants

RCT - Regimental Combat Team
RF - Reconnaissance Fighter
RKG - Royal Cambodian Government
RLG - Royal Laotian Government
ROB - Radar Order of Battle
ROK - Republic of Korea
ROKAF - South Korean Air Force
ROLLING THUNDER - U.S. Air Strikes in North Vietnam
RTF - Reconnaissance Task Force
RTG - Royal Thai Government
RTG - Reconnaissance Task Group
RVN - Republic of (South) Vietnam
RVNAF - South Vietnamese Air Force

SAC - Strategic Air Command
SAM - Surface-to-Air Missile
SAMOB - SAM Order of Battle
SEA - Southeast Asia
SLAR - Side-Looking Radar
SLF - Sea Lift Force
SOG - Saigon
SSB - Single Sideband
STEEL TIGER - U.S. Air Operations in Laotian Panhandle
SVN - South Vietnam

TAC - Tactical Air Command
TACC - Tactical Air Control Center
TACP - Tactical Air Control Party
TACS - Tactical Air Control Squadron
TASS - Tactical Air Support Squadron
TRAC - Target Research & Analysis Center
TRTF - Tactical Reconnaissance Task Force
TSN - Tan Son Nhut AB (Saigon)

UHF - Ultra High Frequency
UN - United Nations
USAIRA - U.S. Air Attache
USAVN - U.S. Army, Vietnam
USARPAC - U.S. Army in the Pacific

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VC - Viet Cong
VHF - Very High Frequency
VNAF - South Vietnamese Air Force
VR - Visual Reconnaissance

WESTPAC - Western Pacific

YANKEE TEAM - U.S. Air Operations in Laos

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