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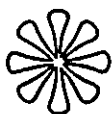
ITEMS SPECIFIED IN THE SPECIAL APPENDIX
FILED ON JUNE 21, 1971 WITH THE
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

II. Portions of Exhibits 7 and 7A the disclosure of which would slow the U.S. program of shifting military responsibility in Vietnam to South Vietnamese forces

6. Sec. IV, C. (3), at pages 77-82

*No argumentation provided
in source document
"Special Appendix"*

Section II, Item 6



UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

IV. C. 3.

EVOLUTION OF THE WAR

THE ROLLING THUNDER PROGRAM BEGINS

LOC targets in ROLLING THUNDER 10-13, Phase II armed raids would be conducted concurrently with these actions and would be continued indefinitely to make DRV support to the VC in SVN and PL/VM in Laos as difficult and costly as possible.

As these recommendations reached the JCS, the Joint Chiefs were intensely pre-occupied with an interservice division over the issue of the nature and extent of proposed large-scale U.S. troop deployments to South Vietnam, requiring adjudication among at least 10 separate proposals, and among widely differing views of the several Service Chiefs. There were also substantial differences over the future character of the bombing program. On this latter issue, Air Force Chief of Staff General McConnell took a maverick position, opting for a 28-day air program against North Vietnam to destroy all targets on the 94-target list. He proposed beginning the air strikes in the southern part of North Vietnam and continuing at two- to six-day intervals until Hanoi itself was attacked. "While I support appropriate deployment of ground forces in South Vietnam," McConnell wrote, "it must be done in concert with [an] overall plan to eliminate the source of [the] insurgency." McConnell believed that his proposal was consistent with previous JCS views on action against the North and would be a strong deterrent against open Chinese intervention. 104/

General McConnell withdrew his 28-day proposal from JCS consideration when it became apparent that the Joint Chiefs were inclined to accept much of the CINCPAC recommendation for a "LOC-cut program" as summarized above, and to incorporate some of McConnell's concepts in a 12-week air strike program that the Joint Staff was preparing in response to the Secretary of Defense's request and in accordance with his guidance. The JCS 12-week program was briefed to the Secretary of Defense conceptually on March 22 and submitted to him formally on March 27 under cover of a JCS memorandum of that date. 105/

The program is described in a detailed Annex to the memorandum as follows:

1. Concept. The concept, simply stated, is to conduct an air strike program during the remaining 10 weeks of a 12-week program which increases in intensity and severity of damage over the period. The program can be considered in four phases.

a. The initial phase consists of a three-week interdiction campaign against the vulnerable Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) LOCs south of the 20th parallel. The concept of this campaign is to conduct strikes against a number of inter-related but separated choke points which will disrupt the flow of military supplies and equipment and tax the DRV capability to restore these facilities. Essential to the success of this phase is the initial attacks on targets No. 14 and 18.8 [Thanh

Hoa and Dong Phuong RR/Highway bridges/. The dropping of at least one span in either and preferably both of these bridges will sever the main north-south railroad and highway routes in sufficient depth for an effective follow-on program. This initial action would be accompanied by an intense armed reconnaissance mission to destroy the isolated transport equipment. Subsequent strikes against choke points throughout the isolated area are designed to make the program effective and to complicate the DRV recovery program. Day and night armed reconnaissance would be conducted at random intervals to harass these recovery efforts and to sustain the interdiction, including armed reconnaissance against junk traffic over sea LOCs. This initial program should bring home to the population the effects of air strikes since consumer goods will be competing with military supplies for the limited transport. An effective interdiction in this area will also impede the DRV capability to mass sizeable military forces and to deploy air defense resources. The remaining few installation targets in this area would be left for later strikes by VNAF. Also, the interdiction in this area would be sustained by VNAF as US strikes moved to the north.

b. The second phase, the launching of the interdiction campaign north of the 20th parallel, introduces a consideration which was not a major factor in the campaign in the southern DRV; i.e., the possibility of MIG intervention as strikes are made against targets progressively closer to the Hanoi-Haiphong area. In order to reduce this possibility to a minimum, the first week of air operations north of the 20th parallel includes strikes against the radar net in the delta area to blind or minimize DRV early warning and intercept capability. Following these preparatory attacks, operations against the LOCs north of the 20th parallel are scheduled with the primary objective of isolating the DRV from external overland sources; i.e., rail and highway supply routes from Communist China. Subsequent to cutting these primary LOCs, the initial phase of the interdiction campaign would be completed by striking LOC targets in depth throughout the area of the DRV north of the 20th parallel.

c. Having completed the primary interdiction program in the delta area, a substantially lower effort should maintain its effectiveness. With his overland LOC cut, blocked, and harassed, the enemy can be expected to turn more and more to his port facilities and sea LOC. The ninth week air strikes will include attacks against these port facilities and the mining of seaward approaches to block the enemy from relieving his resupply problems over the sea LOC. Strikes will be initiated during the tenth week against ammunition and supply dumps to destroy on-hand stores of supplies and equipment to further aggravate his logistic problems.

d. In the wind-up phase of the 12-week program (during the eleventh and twelfth week), strikes against on-hand supplies, equipment, and military facilities will be continued, attacking remaining worth-while targets throughout the DRV. As a part of this phase, industrial targets outside of population areas will be struck, leading up to a situation where the enemy must realize that the Hanoi and Haiphong areas will be the next logical targets in our continued air campaign.

2. [The program includes] an anti-MIG strike package; however, as provided in the policy guidance furnished the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this mission will not be executed unless the DRV MIG aircraft are able to impair the effectiveness of the strike forces. Combat air patrol aircraft, in sufficient numbers to deter MIG attack, will accompany all missions and will engage these DRV aircraft as required to protect the force. Strike forces and armed reconnaissance aircraft may persist in their missions but other reconnaissance missions will break off mission to avoid contact with MIG aircraft if feasible. Heavily populated areas will be avoided by both strike and armed reconnaissance missions.

3. Strike sorties for the next ten weeks would total approximately 3,000 or roughly 300 per week. CINCPAC has reported a capability to conduct approximately 1,600 strike sorties per week on a sustained basis. This leaves ample margin for US air support within South Vietnam and Laos and substantial armed reconnaissance to sustain the LOC interdiction...

Interestingly, the Joint Chiefs did not endorse the entire air strike program they submitted to the Secretary of Defense. They recommended that only the first phase (third, fourth, and fifth weeks of the program) be approved for execution. They had evidently failed to reach agreement on the later phases (weeks six through twelve), and indicated to the Secretary of Defense that they were still in the process of "considering alternatives for a follow-on program of air strikes beginning with the sixth week. They will advise you further in this regard, taking account of the developing situation, the current policy considerations, and military measures available to us."

As matters developed, however, even the three-week program endorsed by the JCS was not approved by the Secretary of Defense, though it strongly influenced the new interdiction-oriented focus of the attacks that were to follow, as well as the particular targets that were selected. But neither the Secretary of Defense nor the President was willing to approve a multi-week program in advance. They clearly preferred to retain continual personal control over attack concepts and individual target selection. Consequently, although the Joint Chiefs strongly urged

that "the field commander be able to detect and exploit targets of opportunity..", action in the air war against the DRV continued to be directed at the highest level and communicated through weekly guidance provided by the Secretary of Defense's ROLLING THUNDER planning messages.

IX. REASSESSMENT AS OF APRIL 1 AND THE NSAM 328 DECISIONS

A. The Situation in South Vietnam

A curious phenomenon concerning the period of late March and early April 1965 was the great divergence among views that were being expressed about the then prevailing state of affairs in South Vietnam. Some quite favorable assessments emanated from Saigon. For example, MACV's Monthly Evaluations for March and April were most reassuring:

March, 1965: Events in March were encouraging...RVNAF ground operations were highlighted by renewed operational effort...VC activity was considerably below the norm of the preceding six months and indications were that the enemy was engaged in the re-supply and re-positioning of units possibly in preparation for a new offensive... In summary, March has given rise to some cautious optimism. The current government appears to be taking control of the situation and, if the present state of popular morale can be sustained and strengthened, the GVN, with continued U.S. support, should be able to counter future VC offensives successfully.

April, 1965: Friendly forces retained the initiative during April and a review of events reinforces the feeling of optimism generated last month...In summary, current trends are highly encouraging and the GVN may have actually turned the tide at long last. However, there are some disquieting factors which indicate a need to avoid overconfidence. A test of these trends should be forthcoming in the next few months if the VC launch their expected counter-offensive and the period may well be one of the most important of the war.

Similarly encouraging comments were contained in Ambassador Taylor's NODIS weeklies to the President -- e.g., in Saigon 2908, March 11, 1965:

The most encouraging phenomenon of the past week has been the rise in Vietnamese morale occasioned by the air strikes against North Vietnam on March 2, the announcement of our intention to utilize U.S. jet aircraft within South Vietnam, and the landing of the Marines at Danang which is still going on. The press and the public have reacted most favorably to all three of these events.

And in Saigon 2991, March 17, 1965:

With the growing pressure on North Vietnam, the psychological atmosphere continues to be favorable. What is still missing in this new atmosphere is the image of a Vietnamese Government giving direction and purpose to its people.

On the other hand, a much more sobering assessment was contained in General Westmoreland's Commander's Estimate of the Situation in South Vietnam, dated 26 March 1965, which bluntly asserted that RVNAF would not be able to build up their strength rapidly and effectively enough to blunt the coming VC summer offensive or to seize the initiative from them. The document also estimated that the program of air activity against the North, while it might ultimately succeed in causing the DRV to cease its support of the war, would not in the short run have any major effect on the situation in the South.

The view from Washington was even less hopeful. Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton summed up the situation in the following words:
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The situation in general is bad and deteriorating. The VC have the initiative. Defeatism is gaining among the rural population, somewhat in the cities, and even among the soldiers -- especially those with relatives in rural areas. The Hop Tac area around Saigon is making little progress; the Delta stays bad; the country has been severed in the north. GVN control is shrinking to enclaves, some burdened with refugees. In Saigon we have a remission: Quat is giving hope on the civilian side, the Buddhists have calmed, and the split generals are in uneasy equilibrium.

A more complete and balanced overview was prepared by McGeorge Bundy in a memorandum outlining "Key Elements for Discussion" for an April 1 meeting with the President:

Morale has improved in South Vietnam. The government has not really settled down, but seems to be hopeful both in its capacity and in its sense of political forces. The armed forces continue in reasonably good shape, though top leadership is not really effective and the ratio of armed forces to the VC build-up is not good enough.

The situation in many areas of the countryside continues to go in favor of the VC, although there is now a temporary lull. The threat is particularly serious in the central provinces, and the VC forces may be regrouping for major efforts there in the near future.

Hanoi has shown no signs of give, and Peiping has stiffened its position within the last week. We still believe that attacks near Hanoi might substantially raise the odds of Peiping coming in with air. Meanwhile, we expect Hanoi to continue and step up its infiltration both by land through Laos and by sea. There are clear indications of different viewpoints in Hanoi, Peiping, and Moscow (and even in the so-called Liberation Front), and