

schooling. The JCS concurred on 23 October, adopted the 850,000 figure as a revision of Phase I, and asked for more funds to support the larger force.²¹ Mr. Nitze approved on 1 November.²²

Post-Hostilities Planning

(U) [redacted] related to a faster South Vietnamese buildup was U.S. planning for the end of hostilities (T-Day) and the beginning of force withdrawals from South Vietnam (R-Day).

[redacted] On 25 July 1968 Mr. Nitze asked the service secretaries and the JCS, in cooperation with OSD, to submit troop redeployment proposals to meet each of three alternate U.S. and allied post war force structures (designated plans A, B, and C). Plans A and B called for the retention in South Vietnam of 30,000 U.S. and allied troops (a 13,425-man Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) and 16,575 residual personnel) six and 12 months, respectively, after all other allied forces were withdrawn from the country. Plan C envisaged leaving 149,030 troops (a 13,425-man MAAG, and a two-division corps with 135,605 supporting personnel) 12 months after all allied forces were withdrawn.²³

[redacted] In submitting their redeployment proposals the JCS said that the strength levels provided in plans A and B were inadequate. Air Force and Navy air units, they felt, should be retained in South Vietnam until the VNAF completed its expansion. Communication requirements alone would absorb about 6,500 U.S. personnel, leaving only 10,000 spaces for combat and combat support. This would provide little room to incorporate other allied units. The substantial manpower in plan C, on the other hand, would leave insufficient troops in the United States to meet contingencies outside of Southeast Asia if current plans to cut overall American military force levels were carried out.²⁴

[redacted] Under Secretary Hoopes amplified Air Force needs for OSD's plans A, B, and C but offered an alternative plan D. Submitted to OSD on 2 October as Air Force Operations Plan 12-68, it would stretch out the redeployment of U.S. forces from South Vietnam over an 18-month period, and supporting forces 36 months; enlarge the USAF posture in the Pacific area to support the VNAF and resume hostilities if necessary; and demonstrate American resolve to help Asian allies.²⁵

[redacted] Mr. Nitze accepted the JCS-prepared redeployment proposals but asked for more data on a speedy withdrawal from South

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Vietnam, possibly in accordance with provisions of the Manila Communique of 24 October 1966.* He agreed, that a 135,000-man residual force in South Vietnam might be too large, and he saw no need to change current estimates of future U.S. force strength (i.e., the fiscal year 1971 "baseline" force structure in the five-year defense plan). He envisaged returning to a June 1964 post-hostilities defense posture in PACOM.²⁶

However, the JCS believed that the administration should clarify the meaning of the Manila Communique. Six months would be insufficient to permit an orderly withdrawal and to dispose of military assets. There was a need, furthermore, to clarify the status of a MAAG and the extent U.S. combat support forces should back an unbalanced South Vietnamese force structure pending its complete modernization.²⁷

Post-hostilities planning gained new urgency after the President, on 1 November, ordered a complete halt to the bombing of North Vietnam. On 13 December, the JCS again sent OSD three alternate U.S. force structures to aid the RVN forces after the war's conclusion:

<u>Alternate</u>	<u>MAAG Troops</u>	<u>Support Troops</u>	<u>Other Troops</u>	<u>Total</u>
I	14,313	24,697	None	39,010
II	14,313	24,697	32,303	71,313
III	14,313	24,697	131,519	170,529

Alternative III would comprise a balanced, two-division corps with supporting elements. The Air Force portion for the first force structure would include only headquarters personnel and five advisory teams; for the second, a total of 10,861 personnel; and for the third, 25,676 personnel as part of the two-division corps. The second and third force structures would include numerous USAF fighter, reconnaissance, airlift, training, and other units.²⁸ The JCS, with Air Staff concurrence,

*The Communique stated in part: "The people of South Vietnam will ask their allies to remove their forces and evacuate their installations as the military and subversive forces of North Vietnam are withdrawn, infiltration ceases, and the level of violence thus subsides Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled."

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also submitted plans to OSD for disposing of the U.S. communication system, much of it Air Force, in South Vietnam. 29

~~SECRET~~ To facilitate work on post-hostilities arrangements, Deputy Defense Secretary Nitze on 18 December asked the services to maintain quarterly reports of T-Day planning, with emphasis on schedules for U.S. troop redeployments from Southeast Asia and plans for force adjustments on a worldwide basis. 30

~~SECRET~~ At year's end the Air Staff and other services felt the administration still needed to clarify the meaning of the Manila Communique of 24 October 1966 regarding troop redeployments from South Vietnam, the status of a MAAG, and what U.S. and allied forces should retain in-country to compensate for RVN military deficiencies in combat and technical capability. 31

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