

military situation worsens dramatically, US deployments will be limited to Program 4-plus (which, according to General Westmoreland, will not put us in danger of being defeated, but will mean slow progress in the South). Associated with this decision are decisions not to use large numbers of US troops in the Delta and not to use large numbers of them in grass-roots pacification work.

(6) *September*: Move the newly elected Saigon government well beyond its National Reconciliation program to seek a political settlement with the non-Communist members of the NLF—to explore a ceasefire and to reach an accommodation with the non-Communist South Vietnamese who are under the VC banner; to accept them as members of an opposition political party, and, if necessary, to accept their individual participation in the national government—in sum, a settlement to transform the members of the VC from military opponents to political opponents.

(7) *October*: Explain the situation to the Canadians, Indians, British, UN and others, as well as nations now contributing forces, requesting them to contribute border forces to help make the inside-South Vietnam accommodation possible, and—consistent with our desire neither to occupy nor to have bases in Vietnam—offering to remove later an equivalent number of US forces. (This initiative is worth taking despite its slim chance of success.)

His closing paragraph repeated his belief that it had to be made clear to political and military leaders alike that the troop limit as imposed by Course B which he recommended was firm and short of an imminent military defeat would not be breached. Westmoreland and the JCS had to be persuaded that the objective was not to attain “victory” but to make progress, albeit slow, without the risks attendant to Course A. He acknowledged that it would not be easy for the President to stick at 550,000 troops in South Vietnam or to limit the bombing program to targets south of the 20th parallel, but that it would be possible, and that in his estimation the benefits of such a course of action far outweighed the political risks which Course A included.

From the standpoint of ground force strategy, what McNaughton was really, it appears, saying was that we should make a decision to basically set our objectives within a time frame geared to South Vietnamese Army and South Vietnamese government progress, and that in doing so our own troops in approximately the current strengths could be devoted to providing the shield while the government of South Vietnam provided the shelter and performed the vital pacification function. As he noted, associated in the decision was the very conscious determination not to use large numbers of U.S. troops in the delta and not to use large numbers of them in what he called “grass roots pacification work,” the two justifications most frequently used to support requests for additional troops. The appraisal, as well as the alternative military courses of action and their analyses contained in this document provided the catalyst for the subsequent and final decisions on Program 5.

## 2. *JCSM 284-67, Persistent Pressure up the Ladder—“Shouldering Out” the Parts*

On 20 May the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted JCSM 286-67, entitled “Operations Against North Vietnam,” a paper primarily concerned with the air campaign. It stated that the JCS were seriously concerned at the prospective introduc-

tion by the USSR into NVN of new weapons including improved anti-aircraft and surface to air missiles, guided missile patrol boats, surface to surface missiles and a variety of artillery and direct fire weapons. They felt that such weapons would further improve the NVN air and coastal defense systems and provide offensive capabilities which would pose additional threats to our forces and installations in SEA. Since the Hanoi-Haiphong areas constituted the principal North Vietnam logistical base through which these arms passed the JCS recommended that this complex be neutralized. This was feasible by direct attack on the areas but such direct attack would entail increased danger of high civilian casualties. Preferable to direct attack the Chiefs recommended that the area be interdicted by cutting the land and sea lines of communications leading into it. However, for such an interdiction campaign to be effective, all the elements of the import system of North Vietnam had to be attacked concurrently on a sustained basis, or, in the Chiefs' estimation, the weight of the attack would be insufficient to reduce imports to a level which would seriously impair the overall North Vietnamese war supporting capability. Accordingly, they recommended first an attack on Haiphong, conducted first by surgically "shouldering out" foreign shipping and then mining the harbor and approaches. This concept of "shouldering out" which was to reappear many times in subsequent JCS communications was to be executed by a series of air attacks commencing on the periphery of the port area and gradually moving to the center of the complex. These attacks were designed to reduce the functional efficiency of the port and could be expected to force the foreign shipping out of the nearby estuaries for off-loading by lighterage. Once the foreign vessels cleared port, according to the JCS calculation the remaining elements of the port could be taken under attack and the harbor mined. While the Haiphong port was being attacked an intensive interdiction campaign would commence against the roads and railroads from China. Concurrently, another series of attacks would be mounted against the eight major operational airfields. These recommendations met with predictably cool response and on 26 July 1967 the Deputy Secretary of Defense, in a memorandum to the Chairman of the JCS, stated that "a final decision on the proposals contained in the memorandum will be rendered in connection with the determination of overall future courses of action in Vietnam which should be completed in the near future."

On the same date, 20 May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted their World-wide Posture Paper. The most significant recommendation in it was a proposal that a selective call-up for the Reserves be made so that the U.S. could more effectively fulfill world-wide commitments. In it the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that the nation must be able to (1) send large U.S. forces to any of the several trouble spots, such as Korea and Berlin; they also noted that we could not respond fast enough with sufficient forces to meet most of these contingencies. They also wrote that we must meet CINCPAC's FY 68 force requests, and to do so would require an addition of 2½ division forces or the now familiar "minimum essential requirements" stated by General Westmoreland in his original 18 March request. The Chiefs also believed that we had to "regain the Southeast Asia initiative and exploit our military advantage." They stated that they believed present air restrictions crippled our war effort and that limitations should be reduced on targets as well as the rules of engagement, and that more forces, primarily air, evidently, should be sent. Moreover, they believed that we should reinforce as fast as possible, to prevent the enemy from adjusting to the increases in pressure, as he had been able to do thus far.

Of seven alternate U.S. force postures they reviewed, the JCS considered only two to be "adequate." The alternative they endorsed provided the following in-

creases to the approved forces: 4½ active army divisions; one navy attack carrier; two carrier air-wings; two battleships; two gun cruisers; as well as 570 UE Air Force tactical fighters, 72 UE Reconnaissance Aircraft and 80 UE C130's. They did not propose any new permanent additions to the United States Marine Corps. In their estimation the proposed force structure would be adequate to meet the FY 68 CINCPAC "minimum essential force requirements" for SEA without changing current rotation policies. It would also provide forces to reinforce NATO as well as respond to other major contingencies including MACV's tentative FY 1969 add-on requirement for 2½ divisions and 90 tactical fighters. (This was, of course, the "optimum" force which the 18 March COMUSMACV request had contained.) The JCS proposed to extend terms of service, and to call up Reserves to provide this capability quicker. The Reserves they proposed to call would be two Army and one Marine division forces, plus 15 Naval Reserve destroyers and two Naval construction battalions. In addition, an unspecified number of individual Reservists would be needed along with certain types of Reserve equipment and aircraft. The Reserves would be replaced by permanent units during FY 69-70. The Marine Reserve Division would be deployed to SVN to be replaced after a year by an Army Division, while the Marine Reserve Division would then revert to Reserve status. In the JCS estimate they stated that we could meet the FY 68 CINCPAC requirement by March 1968 if we called Reserves or by September 1969 if we did not. The Chiefs were particularly exercised at the prospect of very slow U.S. build-up over time which would continue to permit the VC/NVA to react. They commented that:

The rate at which US power has been applied has permitted North Vietnamese and Viet Cong reinforcements and force posture improvements to keep pace with the graduated increases in US military actions. It is fundamental to the successful conduct of warfare that every reasonable measure be taken to widen the differential between the capabilities of the opposing forces. Target system limitations, rules of engagement, and force curtailments have combined to militate against widening the gap between the total Free World force capability, including South Vietnam, and the capability of the enemy to generate, deploy, and sustain his forces while improving the defense of his homeland.

a. Successful prosecution of the war in Southeast Asia requires the maintenance of simultaneous pressure against all echelons of the enemy forces. In South Vietnam, this involves extensive ground, air, and naval operations against Viet Cong/North Vietnamese main forces and major base areas, while continuing revolutionary development and aggressive operations against Viet Cong provincial forces and guerrillas. In North Vietnam, the effectiveness of LOC interdiction cannot be greatly improved without significant reduction of the present restrictions on bombing and mining operations. Deep-water ports then can be closed or neutralized, and it will be worthwhile to intensify the interdiction effort against other LOCs in North Vietnam. Concomitantly, remaining high-value, war-supporting resources should be quickly, but methodically, destroyed. Attacks against population centers, per se, would continue to be avoided. Limited ground action in North Vietnam might also become necessary to destroy forces threatening the northern provinces.

As they continued, however, they fed a fear which was becoming predominant in the administration, that increases in forces might tempt COMUSMACV and

our SEA commanders to expand operations into Cambodia and Laos, thereby complicating an already sensitive political situation:

b. It may ultimately become necessary to conduct military operations into Cambodia to deny the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces the psychological, military, and logistical advantages of this sanctuary. Should the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese forces increase their use of the Laos Panhandle, it might become necessary to deploy additional forces to Thailand and expand operations further to protect South Vietnam. To counter large-scale CHICOM overt intervention in northern Laos, it would be necessary to establish a strategic defense. Invocation of the SEATO Treaty would be indicated. In the event the CHICOMs attack Thailand, use of nuclear weapons against LOCs and supply bases in southern China might be required. Similarly, should the CHICOMs intervene overtly with major combat forces in Vietnam, it might be necessary to establish a strategic defense in South Vietnam and use tactical nuclear weapons against bases and LOCs in South China.

### 3. *The Vance Options—Reexamination of Increases*

On 24 May the JCS submitted to the Secretary of Defense their study entitled, "Alternative Courses of Action for Southeast Asia." This study was in response to a request made on 26 April by Deputy Secretary Vance asking the Joint Chiefs to study in detail the two alternative courses of action, outlined in the State paper prepared earlier by Acting Secretary of State Katzenbach. Strangely enough, between the time of the 26 April memorandum from Deputy Secretary Vance to the Director of the Joint Staff, Course A was altered, changing in the JCS paper from 200,000 personnel to approximately 250,000," roughly 125,000 in FY 68 and another 125,000 in FY 69. In the JCS study this was described as the "optimum force outlined in JCSM 218-67 and includes a  $4\frac{2}{3}$  division force." Course B as it was outlined in the original Katzenbach memo confined troop increases to "those that can be generated without calling up reserves—perhaps 9 battalions (10,000) men in the next year." This figure was altered in the JCS study so that Course B read: "add only forces that can be generated without calling up Reserves. This will amount to approximately 70,000 in FY 68 to include  $1\frac{1}{3}$  Army division force equivalents with a limited capability in FY 69."

Course A which would necessitate a Reserve call-up and a 12-month involuntary extension in terms of service effective 1 Jun 67 was estimated to cost \$12.1 billion through FY 69, as compared to \$7.7 billion for Course B. The end strength increases for Courses A and B were 602,900 and 276,000 men, respectively. Within South Vietnam the additional combat force in terms of battalion months available to COMUSMACV for operations was markedly greater for A than under Course B. The JCS calculated that Course A would add 111 battalion/months in FY 68 and 373 battalion/months in FY 69 for a total of 484. Course B, on the other hand, could add but 39 in FY 68 and 144 in FY 69 for a grand total of 183. This added combat power in Course A which was recommended for deployment in JCSM 218-67 would, in the JCS estimation, improve chances for "progress in the war to a greater extent than the Course B forces. The primary advantage offered is that of flexibility. COMUSMACV would have forces available with which to maintain his present momentum as well as to expand combat and RD operations throughout the country."

If Course A forces were deployed as they desired the JCS noted they could be used to conduct operations in the DMZ, and into Laos or Cambodia if such opera-