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## CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT REQUEST

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S&C/JCS CONTROL NO: 008A 24 63, 24 Jan 1963

\*ORIGINATOR: AAP (who has on PR. Will transfer to Hist)

\*DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\*CLASSIFICATION: \_\_\_\_\_

\*SUBJECT: "Protection of Helicopters"

NUMBER OF COPIES DESIRED \_\_\_\_\_

REQUESTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

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DECLASSIFIED

AAP (DCS(Air))

008A 24 63 #1 (S)

R:

"Protection of Helicopters". 24 Jan 1963

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IN PROCESSING AREA

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**SECRET**HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS ROUTING SHEET  
NAVMC HQ 335h-CMC (REV. 9-60)

S&amp;C NO.

008A2463

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THRU

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REMARKS (Entries to be dated and signed)

See inside 770

Answer at Tab A

14 MAR 1968

28 JAN 1963

Date

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A - FOR APPROPRIATE ACTION

B - FOR COMPLIANCE

C - PREPARE REPLY FOR SIGNATURE

OF

D - FOR COMMENT

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**SECRET**

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

28 Jan 63

From: Chief of Staff

To: (1) - CMC

(2) - ACME

(1) Follow-up re  
Helio Armor

P

SSS per on paper &  
P from down more -  
Dues (for) 1/2 of  
#Dues

Tab A is answer to CMC query

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10  
5010-104

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

## Memorandum

TO : Commandant of the Marine Corps

AAP-mog  
DATE: 008A2463  
24 Jan 1963

FROM : Deputy Chief of Staff (Air)

SUBJECT: Protection of Helicopters

Ref: (a) My memo AA-3-lbm of 21 Jan 1963

1. Reference (a) was submitted as the recommended Marine Corps policy concerning the protection of helicopters. It is apparent from the comments of the Commandant that specific information is desired on current and planned actions that will provide protection to the Marine helicopters operating in South Vietnam.

2. The following measures are designed to afford the maximum protection to Marine helicopters operating in South Vietnam, consistent with the accomplishment of their mission which is to provide transportation for South Vietnam forces and equipment.

a. Armor - Protection has been provided to crew members and vital mechanical components in the form of flak suits and armor plating of sufficient strength to counter small arms fire up to 30 cal. armor piercing rounds.

b. Armament - Crew members are equipped with hand held weapons, including the Armalite AR-15 and the grease gun. These weapons are used for fire suppression.

c. Tactics -

(1) Maximum use is made of contour flying and approaches beyond effective small arms range.

(2) Precision formation flying provides maximum surprise, passive protection and rapid entry into and exit from launching zones.

d. T-28 Support (CAS) - VNAF aircraft are used for pre-briefed strikes or "on-call" missions. The "on-call" missions are relayed through an observer who is airborne in an observation aircraft.

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
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008A2463

Subj: Protection of Helicopters

e. Reconnaissance - Accomplished by aircraft normally seen in the area in order to avoid suspicion and preserve surprise.

3. The only Marine aircraft in South Vietnam are the transport helicopters and OE's of TU 79.3.5. Therefore, the policy of providing support with fixed wing aircraft is not being implemented.

4. Pre-attack of landing zones by fixed wing aircraft in the situation that currently exists, has proved unsatisfactory in that such attacks have forewarned the VC and has permitted them to either disperse, prior to the arrival of the helicopters, or as in some instances provided the VC the opportunity to get set and offer considerable resistance during the approach, landing and retirement.

5. Close air support of the helicopter landing phase by T-28's of the VNAF (MAP-Jungle Jim) has been effective to some degree and will improve as communications/control procedures are better coordinated.

*me Carl*M. E. CARL  
Acting**SECRET**  
SECRET

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF**22 Jan 63**From:** Chief of Staff**To:** Dep C/As (Air)(1) - See CMC cmts  
at chd(2) - Provide specific  
info x Expedite action,

⑦

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10  
5010-104

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Commandant of the Marine Corps      DATE: 21 Jan 1963  
FROM : Deputy Chief of Staff (Air)  
SUBJECT: Policy Statement concerning protection of helicopters  
Ref: (a) Verbal request of Chief of Staff

1. In response to reference (a) the following brief statement concerning Marine Corps policy for provision of helicopter protection against enemy ground fire is provided for your consideration. This office is in process of developing a more formal, detailed explanation of the reasons and conclusions which support this policy which could be used for publication, if desired.

## STATEMENT

The Marine Corps considers that protection for helicopters falls into two categories:

(1) Protection for transport helicopters and (2) protection for assault support (observation) helicopters.

### Transport Helicopters

Protection for these helicopters will be indirectly enhanced by employment of the following tactics:

- (1) Thorough reconnaissance of approach and landing zones.
- (2) Neutralization of approach and landing zones by air strike and artillery/naval gun fire.
- (3) Surprise by utilization of helicopter mobility.
- (4) Escort by tactical, fixed wing aircraft.

Due to the excessive weight and performance penalties involved when compared to the very limited effectiveness derived, transport helicopters will not be provided with offensive armament other than hand held weapons operated by the aircraft crew.



AA-3-lbm  
21 Jan 1963

Subj: Policy Statement concerning protection of helicopters

Vital areas of the helicopter, such as engine and crew compartments will be protected by armor plating of sufficient strength to counter small arms fire up to 30 cal. armor piercing rounds.

Primary reliance for offensive fire support will be placed upon tactical, fixed wing aircraft operating in an escort and landing zone neutralization role in that only fixed wing aircraft are considered to be suitable for such support from a vulnerability and fire effectiveness standpoint.

#### Assault Support Helicopters

In that these helicopters will normally be required to operate either singly or in small numbers of two or three in performance of their primary mission of observation, liaison, spotting, etc., escort protection by fixed wing aircraft will not be practical. Since the provision of suppressive armament, primarily externally podded automatic weapons, does not impose severe performance penalties on the ability of this aircraft to carry out its primary mission, this means of protection will be provided. This armament, in connection with the increased maneuverability available in light helicopters is considered adequate for operations in an environment where helicopters, regardless of additional armor and armament protection, will be capable of operating.

✓ A minimum of armor protection for vital areas such as engine and crew compartments will be provided within tolerable weight limitations.

Due to its extreme vulnerability, it is the policy of the Marine Corps not to arm any helicopters with an offensive air-ground weapon capability leading to their deliberate employment in offensive air-ground operations against enemy ground fires.

*M. E. Carl*  
M. E. CARL  
Acting

22 Jan 63

**From:** The Military Secretary

**For:** Chief of Staff

CMC comments on attached

DCofS(Air) memo.

V/R

otj

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF**21 Jan**From: Chief of Staff**

**To:** 1) CMC - { new helio armament  
(2) ACME and armor.

Interim - Follow up

(b)