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PART: VI.C.

SECTION: a & b - PART FIVE

U.S. STRATEGY & ASSESSMENT IN VIETNAM WAR 1965-67	
PART FIVE: Spring & Summer, 1967	
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D. RESISTANCE TO THE GROUND FORCE INCREASES CRYSTALLIZES

1. Systems Analysis -- Vanguard of the Reaction

The search for alternatives to the major force increases proposed by the JCS was, as we have observed, intensive and widespread but the most cogent critique of MACV's strategy developed in the Systems Analysis Office headed by Assistant Secretary of Defense Alain Enthoven. Here a concentrated attack was launched on the two most vulnerable aspects of COMUSMACV's operations: the feasibility of the "war of attrition" strategy pursued in the face of the uncertainty about NVN infiltration, and "search and destroy tactics to support it." The reaction in Systems Analysis to the 18 March troop request submitted by COMUSMACV was one of surprise and incredulity. Everyone who had worked in the problem area of ground force deployments believed that COMUSMACV had received the message during the Program 4 discussions, that any troops were going to be difficult to come by and those that were forthcoming had to be completely and convincingly justified. 1/

Immediately upon receipt of the MACV requirements request Alain Enthoven ordered that a detailed analysis of the request be made. The initial cuts at the request made by his staff were simply in the form of tables comparing the approved Program #4 and the new force levels required. 2/ These were completed and to the Secretary of Defense within a week after the initial MACV request reached the Pentagon.

The more detailed follow-up analysis prepared in Systems Analysis initially concentrated upon the "unfortunate lack of analysis" in the MACV/JCS request, one which failed to explain how the extra forces were needed to avoid defeat. 3/ Despite this orientation toward the analytic lacunae the germ of the basic, vital critique which was to emerge was there. The preface of the draft lamented the lack of analysis and evidence, seemingly proof in itself that the request should be denied, but more fundamentally it continued:

Despite considerable progress in the Vietnam conflict during the past year, an end to the conflict is not in sight and major unresolved problems remain. North Vietnam still believes it can win in the long run, in the name of nationalism if not communism. It has been fighting for over 25 years against the Japanese, French, and Americans and appears prepared to fight indefinitely. The reaction of COMUSMACV to this unsatisfactory situation is to request more U.S. forces, rather than to improve the effectiveness of the RVNAF, and U.S. and other Free World forces.

Hanoi is willing to wait. We have hurt them some, and we can even hurt them some more, but not so badly as to destroy their society or their hope for regaining in the future the material things they sacrifice today. Their policy will be to wait until dissent in the US (coupled with world opinion) forces us to retire. Our only hope is to establish an equally strong and patient nationalism in South Vietnam.

We, too, must be willing to wait. We cannot establish a strong Southern nationalism in a few months or a year. If we leave before that is one [sic], we will have lost, regardless of the military havoc we have caused in SEA.

Additional forces, added burdens on the US economy, and calling of the reserves will only serve to increase DRV's belief that the US will not remain in SVN for the long pull. Additional forces make it appear that we are trying for the "quick kill." Hanoi knows that we cannot achieve it and that the American public will be bitter and divided unless we do. We should be looking for ways to ease the burden for the years ahead, rather than making the war more costly. 4/

The diversion of resources from other national goals also had costs which demanded accounting:

If we are to stay, we must have the backing of the US electorate. As we divert resources from other national goals, as US lives are lost, and as the electorate sees nothing but endless escalation for the future, an increasing fraction will become discouraged. If this keeps on in the future as it has in the past, we will have to leave SEA before stability is achieved, losing all that we have invested up to that point, and foregoing the general stability of the world which was established as a result of the Korean War. If we are not to lose everything, the trends will have to be changed: the increase in unfavorable public opinion will have to be slowed; the development of SVN society will have to be speeded. 5/

The memorandum recommended that only enough forces be provided to meet minimum military goals:

Thus we must provide only enough US forces to meet minimum military goals. These goals are: (1) to deter a Chinese Communist invasion; (2) to prevent military defeat in South Vietnam, and (3) to prevent excessive terrorism. We have at least sufficient forces presently

deployed to meet these goals.

Additional forces will add additional cost, further degrading public opinion and preventing expansion of critical domestic programs. They would present the prospect of unending escalation, splitting the American public even more openly and seriously. 6/

These goals, of course, differed greatly from those outlined by the Joint Chiefs in JCSM 702-66 in November and JCSM 218-67 in April. The military aims in the Systems Analysis memo were passive in nature, and obviously based upon new assumptions about the likelihood of success, and therefore were directed toward much different terminal goals than those the JCS proposed.

The recommendations made by Systems Analysis were based upon two fundamental arguments: (1) That the additional forces were unlikely to increase VC/NVA losses beyond any level intolerable to the enemy; and (2) that the additional forces would not help the pacification task measurably. 7/ It argued:

Additional forces are very unlikely to increase VC/NVA losses beyond any level intolerable to the enemy. Assuming that the enemy has no control over his losses, the table below shows projected enemy losses. Only when the projection is based on recent peak losses does the rate of enemy losses exceed the rate at which MACV and USIB agree the enemy can go on replacing them indefinitely, and then only by 139 per week for the MACV "minimum essential" force, and 431 for the "optimum" force. Even at a decrease in enemy forces of 431 per week, over 10 years would be needed to eliminate the enemy.

ESTIMATED WEEKLY ENEMY LOSSES FOR DIFFERENT FORCE LEVELS

	<u>Program IV force</u>	<u>MACV "minimum essential" force</u>	<u>MACV "optimal" force</u>
Peak losses <u>a/</u>	3188	3404	3696
Avg. losses <u>b/</u>	2121	2265	22460

DIA USIB estimate of enemy capability to sustain losses indefinitely = 3265.

a/ Based on January-March 1967 enemy losses to all causes.

b/ Based on CY 66.

However, just as we can control our aircraft losses, there is clear evidence that the enemy has considerable control over his ground force losses. He is hurt most often when he chooses to assault U.S. forces (e.g., Junction City). On large operations, stealth is impossible. Consequently over 90% of the large firefights that develop in such operations are initiated by the enemy, and in over 80% of the cases there is a clear indication of a planned enemy attack. The enemy can probably hold his losses (all causes) to about 2000 per week regardless of our force levels or operations. Additional forces cannot defeat him so long as he has the will, some popular support and we lack timely intelligence.

Additional forces will not help the pacification task measurably. This cannot be accomplished with 480,000 or 560,000 U.S. military forces and probably not at all without (1) a far more effective Revolutionary Development (RD) program supported by Vietnamese forces and (2) a more stable and progressive GVN, both of which will require patience and emphasis on political-economic objectives rather than military ones. It is clear from the USMC experience in I CTZ that U.S. forces can deny VC control but cannot secure the population. There were fewer people in the "secured" category in I CTZ at the end of CY 66 than at the beginning.

Our experience in Operation FAIRFAX just west and south of Saigon further supports the conclusion that in spite of good intentions and good actions, the U.S. military cannot undertake pacification and expect to withdraw after a short period, leaving the area secure. In FAIRFAX, still being conducted, 3 U.S. battalions were "temporarily" deployed with 3 ARVN battalions to secure the area near Saigon. The U.S. battalions are still engaged $2\frac{1}{2}$ months longer than planned and will be for the foreseeable future. Fewer than 1 VC per U.S. battalion-equivalent per day has been killed, most of the VC infrastructure has temporarily moved out of the area but has not been captured, the U.S. has made many friends (but of unknown longevity), the ARVN made few friends and actually look worse than before, after comparison with the Americans, and the populace in general are reserving judgment until they know the VC have left permanently. Part of the reason for ARVN ineffectiveness is lack of supplies and support-items (e.g., barbed wire) which the U.S. troops had in ample supply. We would be much better off to provide the GVN with such supplies rather than deploy additional U.S. forces.

In brief, the additional forces are likely neither to reduce the enemy force nor contribute significantly to pacification. These goals can only be met by improving the efficiency of the forces already deployed and, particularly, that of ARVN. But additional U.S. forces decrease the incentive to MACV and the GVN to make the Vietnamese shoulder a larger portion of the burden. The RVNAF appear to have done well by all statistical measures in IV CTZ, where they have been provided only logistical and combat support by the U.S., and very badly in the other areas where the U.S. has taken over the war while denying them significant support. 8/

Finally, it returned to the "old" piaster issue which had proven such a potent instrument of control earlier during the Program 4 deliberations:

Additional forces will also damage the SVN economy, as we saw when Program 4 was approved. Inflation in January-March 1967 was 20%. Even apart from the rice situation, prices were up 7%, or 28% on an annual basis. The inflation still hits hardest GVN civilian and military personnel, on whom we must rely to eventually pacify the country.

MACV, of course, appears to be doing a good job of holding down piaster spending. Program 4 forces now appear to cost P41.0 billion in CY 67, after correcting for an apparent reporting errors and MACV might be able to hold to about P44 billion in CY 68 even with increased forces. Nevertheless, the SVN economy is still far from sound, and more forces compound the problem. 9/

It closed by carefully listing the following recommendations:

1. That additional forces for SEA not be approved and the currently approved Program #4 ceiling be firmly maintained.
2. MACV be directed to submit a plan by Aug 1, 1967 to enhance the effectiveness of the RVNAF forces. In the long term the RVNAF must assume a greater role for maintaining the security of SVN. The longer the task is delayed, the more difficult it becomes. We have made the Koreans into an effective fighting force, and we must do the same for the RVNAF. They can do the job far better and cheaper than we can, and they will remain after we leave.

3. MACV be directed to submit a plan by the same date, to increase the effectiveness of approved US and FVMAF forces. This should include consideration of changes in tactical employment (e.g., greater use of long-range patrols, fewer battalions in static defense, and more efficient use of available helicopter resources).

4. Consideration be given by MACV, CINCPAC, and the JCS and OSD of possible steps to reduce the cost of our efforts in SEA. The conflict is almost certainly going to be a long one. If we expect the American public to support such an effort for an extended period of time we must hold the costs to an acceptable level. 10/

The draft included two tables, one a summary of deployments to Southeast Asia and the other a breakout of the additional MACV requirements request. These are shown in the tables on pages 111 and 112.

SUMMARY DEPLOYMENTS TO SEA

	Program #4			FY 1968 ^{b/}	
	1967		1968	MACV Requirement	Minimum Optimum
	June	Dec	June	Essential	
Personnel SVN (000)	441.0	473.2	482.6	558.9	676.4
US Maneuver Bns	82	90	90	108	130
Artillery Bns	56 $\frac{2}{3}$	59 $\frac{2}{3}$	61 $\frac{2}{3}$	75 $\frac{2}{3}$	89 $\frac{2}{3}$
Engineer Bns	53	54	53	67	79
Fighter-Attack A/c (US)	999	1042	1002	1146	1182
InCountry Naval Vessels	381	424	430	589	589
Plaster Expenditures (6 months ending) ^{a/}	20.3	20.3	20.0	23.2	29.0

^{a/} OASD(SA) Estimate

^{b/} Level off cost for 6-month period. Includes CINCPAC estimated contract construction.

Additional MACV Requirements

	<u>Minimum Essential</u>	a/	<u>Optimum</u>	b/
Strength (000)	84.1	c/	201.6	
Maneuver Bns	21		43	c/
Divisions		(2)		(3)
Brigades		(1)		(5)
Artillery Bns	15		28	
Engineer Bns	14		26	
Tactical Fighter	8		13	
APB (Barracks Ships)	3		3	
ARL (Repair Ship)	2		2	
RAS (River Assault Sqds)	2		2	
LST	9		10	
PBR (River Patrol Boats)	50		50	

a/ Required by 30 June 1968. Includes Practice Nine Forces (7822 personnel) approved on 8 Apr 67.

b/ Includes "Minimum Essential;" required ASAP, assumed to be 31 December 1968.

c/ JCS recommend 1 USMC and 1 USAR division if reserves are called, adding 12,300 personnel.

NOTE: Includes organic as well as non-organic units.

Enthoven was given the final draft just discussed on the 28th. He was not completely satisfied with the basic thrust of the paper -- to him it did not adequately emphasize the deeper political and psychological issues bound up in seemingly endless troop increases with little or no promise of ultimate success. The Assistant Secretary sat down and drafted an outline for a final memorandum he intended to take to Mr. McNamara. In it he cogently laid out his opposition to further increases and the reasons why. He believed that "adding 200,000 Americans" would not do anything significant, considering that:

...(a) VC/NVA losses don't go up in proportion to our forces; they haven't in past 18 mos.

(b) even if they did, additional 200,000 U.S. forces wouldn't put VC/NVA losses above their ability to sustain or their willingness to accept.

(c) Our studies indicate VC/NVA control their losses, within wide limits. They start most fights. Their losses go up when they're attacking. 11/

The final point as to whether the VC/NVA could control their ground force losses within wide limits was based upon a Systems Analysis study of small unit engagements during 1966. 12/ In the study, SA concluded that: 13/

5 MAY 67 08 25



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

4 MAY 1967

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Force levels and enemy attrition (U)

Although MACV has admitted to you that the VC/NVA forces can refuse to fight when they want to, this fact has played no role in MACV's analysis of strategy and force requirements. (For example, in his October 1965 briefing, General DePuy said, "The more often we succeed at (search and destroy operations) the less often will the VC stand and fight.") Because enemy attrition plays such a central role in MACV's thinking, and because the enemy's degree of control over the pace of the action determines how well he can control his attrition, we have taken a hard look at the facts on the enemy's tactical initiative. From reliable, detailed accounts of 56 platoon-sized and larger fire-fights in 1966 we have classified these fights according to how they developed. The first four categories in the table all represent cases in which the enemy willingly and knowingly stood and fought in a pitched battle; these categories include 47 (84%) of the 56 battles. The first three categories, enemy ambushes and assaults on our forces, have 66% of the cases; these three plus category 4a, comprising the cases where the enemy has the advantage of surprise, have 70% of the cases.

The results are independently confirmed from two sources. First, the ARCOV study, which analyzed a different set of battles in late 1965 and early 1966, found that 46% of the fights begin as enemy ambushes and that the enemy starts the fight in 88% of the cases; moreover, it found that 63% of the infantry targets encountered were personnel in trenches or bunkers. Second, we have analyzed the After-Action Reports submitted to MACV by the line commanders in the field; although generally vague and incomplete in their descriptions of what happened, they broadly confirm the drift of the above numbers.

These results imply that the size of the force we deploy has little effect on the rate of attrition of enemy forces. This conclusion should scarcely surprise you in view of the trend of enemy losses in 1966 and in view of the obvious sensitivity of month-to-month enemy losses to his known strategic initiatives. What is surprising to me is that MACV has ignored this type of information in discussing force levels. I recommend that you inject this factor into the discussion.

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year interval
Declassified after 12 years
DD Form 5800.10

20 JUN 1967

Alain Enthoven

Alain Enthoven
Assistant Secretary of Defense

Enclosure

The table entitled: "Types of Enemy Engagements Described in Combat Narratives," (below) presents the study data in tabular form:

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENTS DESCRIBED IN COMBAT NARRATIVES

<u>Category Description</u>	<u>Nr. of Engagements</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Percent Subtotals</u>
1. Hot Landing Zone. Enemy attacks U.S. troops as they deploy onto the battlefield.	7	12.5	
2. Organized enemy attack against a U.S. static defense perimeter.	17	30.4	
3. VC/NVA ambush or encircle and surprise a moving U.S. unit, using what is evidently a preconceived battle plan.	13	<u>23.3</u>	66.2
4. A moving U.S. unit engages the enemy in a dug-in or fortified position:			
a. The main engagement comes as a virtual surprise to the American tactical commander because the enemy is well concealed and has been alerted either by observations of our unit or by our engaging apparent stragglers nearby.	7	<u>12.5</u>	78.7
b. The U.S. tactical commander has reasonably accurate knowledge of enemy positions and strength before committing his forces.	3	<u>5.4</u>	84.1
5. U.S. unit ambushes a moving enemy unit.	5	8.9	
6. Chance engagement, both sides surprised.	<u>4</u>	<u>7.1</u>	
TOTAL	56	100.1	

The United States could not adequately "pacify" either, in Enthoven's estimation, but it could provide an "umbrella" against VC/NVA main forces. He assumed our forces were adequate for that based on:

(a) experience of past year (VC/NVA haven't won a battle; they've taken heavy losses trying)

(b) look at force ratios, corps by corps and consider our firepower/mobility advantage on top of that. 14/

The finished memorandum as it emerged provided a powerful set of reasons for holding the ground force line: 15/

Draft #1
RMurray/hap
May 1, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Increase of SEA Forces

MACV has asked for a "minimum essential force" which would add 2-1/3 divisions, 8 tactical fighter squadrons, and 85,000 personnel to Program 4. His "optimum force" would add 4-2/3 divisions, 13 tactical fighter squadrons, and 200,000 personnel, for a total of about 670,000 in SVN.

MACV/JCS offer no analysis to show that these extra forces are needed to avoid defeat, or even that they are likely to achieve any specific goal. But I am concerned far less about this unfortunate lack of analysis than I am by the whole strategy which such a massive increase in combat forces must imply.

Though the North Vietnamese are indeed communists, we have come up against something more than just Marxism. We are facing the strongest political current in the world today: nationalism. That is the force which welds the North Vietnamese together, just as it does so many other peoples today.

Having seen both the Japanese and the French come and go, the North Vietnamese are now fighting the United States. For their little country to triumph finally over the greatest nation the world has ever known would surely serve as the ultimate vindication of nationalism as a policy. Enticed by this goal, and hardened by 25 years of more-or-less continuous fighting, the North Vietnamese will, I fear, continue

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to endure great hardship. We have hurt them with our bombing, and we can hurt them more. But we can't hurt them so badly as to destroy their society or, more to the point, their hope, not only for regaining the material things they sacrifice today, but the whole of South Vietnam.

But how can they hope to beat this great nation? As MACV himself said before the Congress, the enemy "believes our Achilles heel is our resolve." They believe that public opinion in the United States will eventually force our retirement. And they could be right.

As for our own goals, I see only one way of establishing stability in Vietnam. We must match the nationalism we see in the North with an equally strong and patient one in the South. No matter what military success we may achieve, if we leave before that is done, there can be no stability, and we will have lost everything we have invested in South Vietnam. Indeed, we will jeopardize much of the general stability in the world which we bought at the price of the Korean War.

Therefore, I see this war as a race between, on the one hand, the development of a viable South Vietnam and, on the other, a gradual loss in public support, or even tolerance, for the war. Hanoi is betting that we'll lose public support in the United States before we can build a nation in South Vietnam. We must do what we can to make sure that doesn't happen. We must work on both problems together: slow the loss in public support; and speed the development of South Vietnam. Our horse must cross the finish first.

With regard to public support, some people feel we simply have no business being in this war, while others are just against all wars. We can't do much about that. But there are other factors influencing

public support that we can control. Casualties are one. Diversion of the national wealth from badly needed domestic programs is another. But the biggest of all may well be escalation.

Since 1961, and particularly since 1965, the public has seen an apparently unending escalation of this war. This must have a strong psychological effect. There must be many who are more concerned about the unbroken upward movement of spending and casualty rates than they are about the current levels. Our escalation is designed to put pressure on the North Vietnamese. But they may be more resolved to withstand it than the United States electorate is. I believe that's the basis of Hanoi's strategy.

If MACV's additional forces are approved, our casualty rate may not rise, but our expenditure rate certainly will, and the ominous history of unending escalation will be maintained. That combination will reduce public support, and we will have even less time to develop a strong nation in the South.

With regard to developing that nation, more United States forces aren't going to solve the pacification problem. In spite of the Marines' ability to deny the Viet Cong control of an area, there were fewer people in the "Secured" category in I Corps at the end of 1966 than at the beginning. In Operation Fairfax, southwest of Saigon, the 3 U.S. battalions which were "temporarily" deployed with 3 ARVN battalions to secure the area were supposed to leave 2½ months ago. But they are still there, and will be for the foreseeable future. The kill rate per U.S. battalion-equivalent has been less than one V.C. per day, and most of the V.C. infrastructure has evaded capture by

moving out. Though the U.S. forces have made many friends (of unknown loyalty), the ARVN has made few and, in comparison with the Americans, the ARVN has lost prestige in the eyes of the populace, who are still worried that the V.C. may return.

Part of the reason for the ineffectiveness of the ARVN is a lack of supplies and support items, such as barbed wire, which the U.S. forces have in abundance. While more U.S. forces would bring more barbed wire, that's doing it the hard way. The pacification program depends, instead, on better support for Vietnamese forces and a more energetic national Government. This program requires not only time and patience, but political and economic progress rather than military victories.

As we saw when Program 4 was approved, additional forces are a burden on the South Vietnamese economy. Inflation in the first 3 months of 1967 alone amounted to 20%. Even apart from the rice situation, prices rose 7%, or 28% on an annual basis. MACV is doing a good job in holding down piaster spending. It looks like the Program 4 forces will cost P41 billion in 1967, and MACV might be able to hold to P44 billion in 1968, even with increased forces. Nevertheless, the SVN economy is still far from sound, additional forces would mean slower progress, and the inflation would still hit hardest on the very civilian and military personnel on whom we must rely if pacification is ever to succeed.

Furthermore, if we continue to add forces and to Americanize the war, we will only erode whatever incentives the South Vietnamese people

may now have to help themselves in this fight. Similarly, it would be a further sign to the South Vietnamese leaders that we will carry any load, regardless of their actions. That will not help us build a strong nation.

If you agree that more U.S. forces would speed the "horse" that is carrying public opinion toward rejection of the war, while slowing the "horse" carrying the development of a strong nation in the South, the only justification left would be to achieve other military objectives, of which I can imagine four:

1) To deter a Communist Chinese invasion. I see no sign of a change in Communist Chinese intentions. Were they to invade, they would face a formidable force already in place, and more available if needed, particularly with mobilization. Furthermore, I feel that the very nationalism which drives the North Vietnamese also inhibits them from calling in the same Chinese who have subjugated them in the past.

2) To prevent a military defeat in South Vietnam. I do not think there is danger of any significant military defeat, given the forces we have in place now. I have attached an appendix to this memorandum which shows that we already enjoy favorable force ratios.

3) To prevent terrorism. Though there is terrorism in South Vietnam now, I doubt that additional U.S. combat forces would significantly reduce it. This is a job for police-type forces, not maneuver battalions.

4) To raise VC/NVA losses to a level they cannot sustain. Presumably, this would be something above the weekly loss rate of 3,265 which the DIA/USIB estimate they can swallow indefinitely.

On the most optimistic basis, 200,000 more Americans would raise their weekly losses to about 3,700, or about 400 a week more than they could stand. In theory, we'd then wipe them out in 10 years. But to bank on that, you have to assume that (1) enemy losses are just proportional to friendly strength, and (2) that the unusually favorable kill ratio of the first quarter of 1967 will continue. However, if the kill ratio should be no better than the 1966 average, their losses would be about 2,100 -- less than 2/3 of their sustaining capability.

But even that figure is misleading. Losses just aren't directly related to the size of our force. Between the first and fourth quarters of 1966, our forces increased 23%, but their losses increased only 13% -- little more than half as much.

Finally, the most important factor of all is that the enemy can control his losses within wide limits. The VC/NVA started the shooting in over 90% of the company-sized fire fights; over 80% began with a well-organized enemy attack. Since their losses rise (as in the first quarter of 1967) and fall (as they have done since) with their choice of whether or not to fight, they can probably hold their losses to about 2,000 a week regardless of our force levels. If, as I believe, their strategy is to wait us out, they will control their losses to a level low enough to be sustained indefinitely, but high enough to tempt us to increase our forces to the point of U.S. public rejection of the war.

In summary, I feel that adding more U.S. combat forces would be a step in the wrong direction. They are not needed for military security,

and they could not force higher losses on the North Vietnamese. But they might play right into the hands of Hanoi by burdening the United States and increasing internal opposition to the war, while delaying the birth of the strong nation in the South which is our only hope of real stability.

Therefore, I recommend the following:

1) Maintain the Program 4 ceiling.

2) Tell the electorate that, barring the unexpected, we'll stick with the present forces which are all we need, not only to stop the VC/NVA militarily, but also to exact a high price from Hanoi. Tell them that our "escalation" will now turn toward the building of a nation which will be strong enough to bring a natural stability to Vietnam so that we can leave for good.

3) Tell MACV to start making good analyses of his operations and feeding them back into his planning so that we can get more out of not only the U.S. and allied forces, but the ARVN as well.

4) Find ways to reduce costs for the long haul ahead. For example, cut back on the costly but ineffective bombing north of Route Package 4.

I know it's much easier to write down these recommendations than it is to get agreement on carrying them out. But I think we're up against an enemy who just may have found a dangerously clever strategy for licking the United States. Unless we recognize and counter it now, that strategy may become all too popular in the future.

A.E.

Enclosure

Attached as an Appendix to the basic memorandum was also a detailed, corps by corps, analysis of COMUSMACV's minimum force requirement. Not only did this analysis question the calculations that had furnished the basis of the requirements but it criticized the unselective and unquantified goals: infiltration to be impeded, invasion deterred or defeated, TAORs expanded and joined, enemy driven to the hinterlands, base areas destroyed, LOC's secured, RD programs expanded, and GVN control extended.

The thrust of its conclusions was that emphasis should be placed not upon more forces, but upon employing the ones we already had in SVN more effectively.

In detail, it explicated the Systems Analysis view of how COMUSMACV's employment of forces by Corps could be improved: 16/

CONUSMACV's Minimum Force
Requirement - An Analysis

Ground Forces

MACV indicated on 18 March, and in Appendix B to JCSM 218-67, that his minimum essential needs are 2-1/3 divisions for I CTZ. He now proposes that 1-1/3 divisions go to I CTZ to supplement 2 brigades moved from III CTZ, (a total of 2 divisions instead of 2-1/3) and 1 division goes to III CTZ. The III CTZ thus gains one brigade on balance.

The 1-1/3 more divisions in I CTZ appears excessive for the mission. The total threat to I CTZ is only 95,000 VC/NVA personnel, including irregulars and political infrastructure. There are already more than 200,000 friendly forces there, not counting the 2 SLF battalions earmarked for I CTZ support. Any invasion by the NVA divisions now near the DMZ could easily be held with the forces now deployed and available to MACV. Calculations indicate that the 2 Army brigades already sent to I CTZ plus one more brigade (already in Program 4 for PRACTICE NINE) should be adequate to hold the DMZ and to extend the Marine tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) throughout the coastal plains area of I CTZ. Uncertainties and other calculations may well produce different results, but informal USMC staff review indicated our calculations were reasonable. In any event, these calculations are reproducible.

The MACV requirement is based on no known calculations. It is based on unselective and unquantified goals: infiltration to be impeded, invasion deterred or defeated, TAORs expanded and joined, enemy driven to hinterlands, base areas destroyed, LOCs secured, RD programs expanded, and GVN control extended.

The division for III CTZ is justified by MACV to replace the 9th division, always designated for IV CTZ, not III CTZ. Nonetheless he could have argued that at least 2/3rd of the division is required to replace the 2 brigades sent to I CTZ. There is no evidence that the programmed III CTZ forces, without the 2 brigades but with the additional brigade equivalent now programmed (1 more Australian bn, an airborne bn, and an armored cavalry squadron) is inadequate; or that added forces could accomplish more. The force ratio would still be about 345,000 friendly to 74,000 enemy (4.7 to 1). In addition there is a mechanized battalion programmed for IV CTZ that might well be used more effectively in II CTZ. Moreover, the way III CTZ forces are employed, in multi-divisional operations of the Junction City/Mauhattan variety, should be analyzed with great care before additional forces are even considered. Our analysis has shown that present forces could be employed more effectively (and at less cost) if greater emphasis were given small unit operations.

Furthermore, it is not clear that the entire 9th Division should be afloat, one brigade at the Dong Tam Base and one brigade at a base in III Corps (in addition to the separate mechanized battalion). These forces, working with the ARVN, should be adequate to counter the VC main force units and provide needed security for the RD effort. The threat in IV Corps is primarily from small units and guerrillas and should be encountered on that level, not with multi-brigade operations.

A greater return can probably be realized by giving the ARVN better support rather than increasing the size of the U.S. forces. The 2 ARVN divisions in IV Corps have less than half the artillery support of U.S. forces; five 105/155mm tubes and no heavy artillery tubes per ARVN battalion (in U.S. Army battalion equivalents) compared to ten 105/155mm tubes plus two and one half 175mm and 8" tubes per battalion for the U.S. Army forces. In addition, the amount of tactical air and armed helicopter support provided the ARVN forces country-wide is meager compared to that provided U.S. forces. During the 4th quarter of 1966 each U.S. battalion received about 500 hours per month of UH-1 support versus only 120 hours per battalion-equivalent for ARVN. In IV Corps the ARVN received 280 hours per battalion per month; in the other corps areas only 60 hours. There is no indication MACV has the same sense of urgency about increasing ARVN effectiveness as it has about increasing the number of U.S. forces.

This same document provided an alternative approach to calculating the minimum essential force. It is quoted in its entirety below, for it argues that given new objectives (those of preventing military disaster and providing time for ARVN first to improve and then do its job) the minimum essential force was 28 battalions smaller than that already programmed in Program 4: 17/ (Again, assuming that the present enemy threat remained constant.) The approach read:

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO CALCULATING THE MINIMUM ESSENTIAL FORCE

U.S. objectives in SVN require U.S. and FVMAF forces sufficient to prevent military disaster and to provide time for the ARVN first to improve and then to do its job. This force is 28 battalions smaller than the Program 4 force for the present enemy threat.

Before U.S. intervention, the VC decimated and demoralized the ARVN reaction and reserve force by successful ambushes and attacks. The 17 US/FV battalions deployed by July 1965 ended the deteriorating trend. In both I CTZ and II CTZ, VC control over the population peaked by July 1965, and it declined even earlier in III and IV CTZ.

Since then, the enemy increased from 99 to 151 infantry-type battalions at the end of December 1966. As of 31 December 1966 we had 98 infantry-type battalions, more than enough to counter the enemy force considering the intelligence available. Of the 98 battalions 34 were engaged in TAOR patrol; 46 were engaged in operations that were initiated by hard intelligence; and the 18 others were predictably unproductive. The 46 battalions were obviously sufficient to counter the 151 VC/NVA infantry-type battalions, witness the total lack of enemy success. This suggests that we need 1 battalion for each 3 enemy infantry-type battalions, in addition to those needed for static defense. The 18 battalions ineffectively employed plus the 10 additional infantry-type battalions in Program 4 that close after January 1, 1967 are enough to counter 84 additional enemy bns. Thus we need deploy no more forces until the enemy goes above 235 battalions, which does not seem to be his present intent. (The enemy peak was 155 infantry-type bns in July 1966, and was 147 at 31 March 1967).

US/FW Force Requirement

<u>Enemy Force</u>	<u>Required Mobile US/FW Force</u>	<u>US/FW Force for TAOR Patrols</u>	<u>Total Required U.S. Force</u>
151	46	34	80
235	74	34	108

The 3 to 1 ratio is supported by results in battle. Our forces routinely defeat enemy forces outnumbering them two or three to one. In no instance has a dug-in U.S. company been overrun, regardless of the size of the attacking enemy force, and nothing larger than a company has come close to annihilation when caught moving. Seven battalions of Marines defeated two NVA divisions in HASTINGS, and single battalions of 1st Air Cavalry defeated regimental-sized forces in pitched battles in the Ia Drang Valley in the Fall of 1965.

These factors need confirmation, in actual practice, by how well the forces are doing in the field and by progress in RD. VC/NVA military victories and large areas succumbing to VC require a reaction regardless of calculated force requirements. But there is no sign of anything like that in the foreseeable future. Moreover, a sharp improvement in our effectiveness should result from improvements in the flow of intelligence and in the tactical employment of our forces. Achieving such improvements should be the main objective at this time. 18/

So armed, on May Day Enthoven carried the finished memorandum to McNamara's office and proceeded to discuss its contents. However, probably not to his surprise, he found that McNamara was thinking along the same lines -- in fact, he had already set John McNaughton to preparing a Draft Presidential Memorandum setting forth the same basic political arguments that Systems Analysis was making. The "hard" data in the Enthoven memorandum was the kind of back-up McNamara understood and appreciated and it buttressed most of the beliefs he already held. He asked Enthoven for some detailed follow-up related to VC/NVA control of engagements and casualties. There is no record that the Assistant Secretary left the signed memorandum with the Secretary of Defense, but there seemed little requirement for that. The ideas and position in it had been escalated to the DPM level where such ideas would receive the highest level attention and consideration. 19/

2. A New Look At the "Plimsoll Line": Alternatives to Increases Restudied

Shortly after the first hard signs of resistance began to surface in May an SNIE analyzing Soviet attitudes and intentions toward the Vietnam war was published. It was an SNIE which in effect reinforced the fears which many held about increasing the intensity of the Vietnamese conflict. The SNIE concluded that at some point the USSR would create an atmosphere of heightened tension with the United States if, in fact, U.S. force increases and intensified bombing continued. In the words of the estimate:

This document, coming as it did at such a crucial juncture in the deliberations over ground force strategy and deployments in Vietnam, had a significant impact upon the thinking of those charged with making the decision of "go" or "no go," and the document itself was quoted throughout some of the explicit development of alternatives which followed its publication in both Systems Analysis and in ISA.

As McNaughton worked on a series of drafts preparing the 19 May DHM which was to follow, a number of leads were being pursued throughout the government, all related in some way to relieving the pressures for more United States troops in Vietnam. One of these was a directed effort to obtain more allied troops especially from the nations on the periphery of South Vietnam or near Southeast Asia. On 4 May McNaughton asked that an analysis of South Vietnamese troop deployments in relation to population of the participating countries be prepared. This analysis, based upon population of the countries involved, concluded that for an increase of 100,000 U.S. troops the "allocable" share for various countries would range from 14.5 thousand for Korea to 53.4 thousand for Indonesia. For the details of this particular study see the following table: 21/

SVN TROOP DEPLOYMENTS IN RELATION TO POPULATION
(Population in Millions; Troops in Thousands)

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Current or Approved Strength in SVN No.</u>	<u>Per Million of Population</u>	<u>Increase Required To Meet US Ratio</u>	<u>"Allocable" Share Per 100,000 US Troops b/</u>
US	200	470 <u>a/</u>	2.35	--	100.0
Korea	29.1	45.8	1.57	22.6	14.5
Australia	11.7	6.1	0.52	21.4	5.8
New Zealand	2.7	0.5	0.18	5.8	1.3
Philippines	33.5	2.1	0.06	76.6	16.7
Thailand	33.4	0.3	0.01	78.2	16.7
Indonesia	106.9	--	--	251.2	53.4
Rep of China	13.2	--	--	31.0	6.6
Malaysia	<u>9.8</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>23.0</u>	<u>4.9</u>
	440.3	524.8		509.7	219.9

a/ Excludes naval forces in South China Sea and US forces in Thailand.

b/ 100,000 troops represents 500 per 1,000,000 of US population. "Allocable" shares for other nations are calculated on this basis.

Somewhat along the same line, on 11 May, Walt W. Rostow prepared a paper devoted to what he termed a "troop community chest operation for Vietnam." Rostow had seen the ISA Annex which we just mentioned, and commented that he felt that a project that Bill Leonhart had been working on which related to Vietnamese force deployments to the level of each contributor's armed forces might be more meaningful and realistic plus having the very desirable characteristic of being more negotiable because it would require no country to increase its total armed forces in order to send troops to Vietnam. The table that he attached to the paper showed that if each country dispatched the same percentage of its total armed forces to Vietnam as the United States had done, about 14%, that there would now be an additional 70,000 troops in that country. Furthermore, if you asked each country to contribute an increment to match an additional United States increase of 100,000, and if those increments represented the same percentage of each country's total armed forces, then the result would read something like this: Korea - 18,700; Australia - 2,000; New Zealand - 400; Thailand - 4,000; and the Philippines - 1,300; for a total of 126,400 troops added. This approach is interesting because later in July President Johnson was to begin "arm twisting" a number of national Heads of State, and the force totals developed here by Leonhart provided the base line from which he negotiated. 22/

The other events of note, both directed at increasing the effectiveness of American forces already in Vietnam, occurred during early May. The first was the issuance of NSAM 362, entitled "Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification," in which Mr. R. W. Komer was appointed the Deputy for Pacification (Revolutionary Development) with the personal rank of Ambassador to operate under COMUSMACV. This, as we noted earlier, was partially the outcome of President Johnson's desire to get the pacification program back on the track. Komer as well as most of the officials concerned with the decision, had known that this development was coming since the time of the Guam Conference. In the NSAM the President noted:

Our purpose of unifying responsibility for Pacification (RD) under COMUSMACV is to permit logistic and administrative economies through consolidation and cross-servicing. I expect sensible steps to be taken in this direction. Any inter-agency jurisdictional or other issues which may arise in country will be referred to the U.S. Ambassador....

This new organizational arrangement represents an unprecedented melding of civil and military responsibilities to meet the overriding requirements of Viet Nam.

Therefore, I count on all concerned -- in Washington and in Viet Nam -- to pull together in the national interest to make this arrangement work. 23/

This NSAM, of course, represented the fruition of what had been a long-standing recommendation to consolidate Revolutionary Development under the individual who possessed primary responsibility and controlled the resources, COMUSMACV. However, in the estimation of many, especially those who evaluated its later effectiveness and tried to determine whether or not any real good had been accomplished by the reorganization, it represented yet one more instance of the American penchant for organizational tinkering, one which usually relieved the people making the organizational changes from really getting down and rooting out the basic causes of the problem. 24/ The other interesting evaluation concerned the question of what level of combat service support staffing there should be in South Vietnam. In April, a number of studies were made, all designed to try to determine whether the level of combat service support was too high, about correct, or needed some revision in the upward direction. 25/

Mr. Victor K. Heyman, Director of the SFA Programs Division in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Systems Analysis), toured the Vietnam area in early May and visited the First Logistical Command. He was concerned generally whether manning levels were adequate to the task assigned by COMUSMACV, and, specifically, whether or not the new peak level of 70,000 men to be reached during Program 4 was excessive. In his trip report, he observed that the Army Program 4 strength of 322,000 included only 66,000 men in maneuver battalions. Furthermore, if combat support, aviation companies, advisors, special forces, division and brigade staffs, and construction battalions were added, these increases would bring the "combat" total to only 165,000 men or 51% of the total Army force. He felt that the balance of 157,000 in other units appeared excessive and recommended to Secretary McNamara that the JCS be asked to analyze it.

In particular, United States Army Vietnam, First Logistical Command was scheduled to total, as we noted, approximately 70,000 men at the peak of Program 4. This was the equivalent of nearly 5 Army divisions or 70 infantry battalions. Furthermore, the First Log Command did not include aviation supplies/maintenance units or construction battalions and the substantial combat service support staffing which was organic to divisions and separate brigades. To these increments must be added the 40,000 man equivalent furnished by contractors, local national employment and support from the off-shore bases. Although comparing the services could be misleading because of different doctrines and organizations, a rough comparison revealed that the Army ratio was about one man in First Log Command to support 3.6 men in other USARV

units compared to a Navy-Marine Support ratio in 1st Corps Tactical Zone of 1:5.6 men. In view of the different tactical situations (the I CTZ one was more intensive combat) Heyman was led to conclude that a detailed review of Army support should be made -- since simply comparing the ratios suggested that 45,000 men might be adequate for the 1st Log Command or that the Command need not be increased until USARV strength exceeded 462,000 men. In view of this analysis, Heyman recommended that Program 4 should be cut to its essentials to "improve the tooth to tail rate" and that until the review which he had recommended had been completed the Secretary of Defense should defer approval for deployment of any First Log Command units through August 1967. 26/

The Secretary of Defense approved this recommendation to defer further incremental increases to First Log Command and asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a detailed study justifying added increases and analyzing in depth the Combat Service Support Staffing levels in South Vietnam. 27/

3. The Quest for Capabilities: The Search for Limits

Great emphasis in May focused upon capabilities, with particular attention being paid to just what capabilities the services had to provide troops and units (or equivalents) below the point where they would be reduced to calling upon reserves or drawing down units already in Europe. On May 5, Systems Analysis forwarded a brief study to the Secretary of Defense which analyzed the additional MACV requirements and compared them to the estimated capability of the services to provide matching units. The study, which concluded that the services had only the capability to provide 66,000 of the 186,000 troops requested under the MACV "Optimum Plan" and only 19 maneuver battalions of the 42 included in that larger plan is presented in the table on the following pages. 28/

Additional MACV Requirements
and Estimated Capabilities
December 31, 1968

	<u>MACV Optimum</u>	<u>Estimated Capability</u>
<u>Land Forces</u>		
Strength (OOO)	186	66
Divisions	3	2 ^{b/}
Brigades	5	4 ^{a/}
Maneuver Bns	(42)	(19) ^{a/}
Artillery Bns	28	28
Engineer Bns	20	0 ^{c/}
Aviation Cos.	22	0 ^{c/}
Signal Bns	5	3 ^{d/}
<u>Naval Forces</u>		
Strength - In-country only (OOO)	8.5	8.3
Riverine Assault Forces		
APB (Barracks Ships)	3	3
ARL (Repair Ship)	2	2
AN (Net Tender)	1	1
RAS (River Assault Sq)	2	2 ^{e/}
River Patrol Forces		
PBR (River Patrol Boats)	50	50
Landing Ships		
IST (Tank Landing Ship)	10	0 ^{f/}
Gunfire Ships		
CA (Cruiser--8")	1	1 ^{g/}
DD (Destroyer--5")	5	5 ^{h/}
Construction Battalions		
M/CB	5	5
<u>Tactical Air Forces</u>		
Strength (OOO)	6.5	6.5
Tactical Fighter	13	13 ^{i/}
Construction Squadron	1	1
<u>Total Personnel (OOO)</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>81</u>

OASD(SA)
5 May 1967

- a/ Includes one Armored Cavalry Regiment of 3 squadrons, and 9th MAB from Okin.
- b/ 6 bns of 101st Abn plus 1 airborne tank bn
- c/ Trained personnel not available under current rotation policy
- d/ Further analysis may show more available
- e/ Using 70 LCM-6s from war reserve.
- f/ Five LSTs now scheduled for transfer to MSTTS (Korean manning) can be retained and added to SEVENTH Fleet. No real increase in SEA lift would result.
- g/ To meet this requirement indefinitely two ships must be activated. Four 8"-gun cruisers now in fleet can meet requirement through Oct '68. Activation of BB as recommended by SecNav would provide needed ship through April 1969. Second ship must be activated for operations after 1969.
- h/ Destroyer requirement can be met in various ways: 1) increase the number of LANTFLT destroyers rotated to PACFLT. This can be done without affecting SIXTH Fleet deployments but would require a further increase in LANTFLT operations tempo; 2) Reactivate mothballed DDs; or 3) Use Naval Reserve Training Fleet (Cat. A) DDs and replace them with reactivated Mothballed DDs.
- i/ Includes 11 Air Force and 2 Marine squadrons. The 11 Air Force TFS can be provided two ways: 1) Deploy 5 CONUS F-4, 1 F-111, 1 F-100 and 3 A-1 squadrons. The A-1 squadrons would be formed using surplus Navy aircraft; 2) 3 F-4 squadrons from WESTPAC could be deployed in lieu of the A-1 squadrons but this would necessitate 2 or 3 of the remaining 4 WESTPAC squadrons being returned to CONUS to augment the training base.

This document reflected the Secretary of Defense's immediate concern with trying to find maneuver battalions and troops within existing service capabilities and trying to avoid approaching the personnel "sound barrier" and that of having to call up reserves or to partially mobilize units. As a check on this analysis, on 8 May Secretary McNamara distributed the estimate to the services and asked their comments. On 12 May, General Johnson of the Army replied that the Army could probably exceed the estimated capability by about 6 maneuver battalions. He based this new estimate upon the assumption that procurement of critical items of equipment could be accelerated by mid-year 1967, that some withdrawal of equipment from the Reserve Components and non-deploying STRAF units would be authorized and that some new methods would be developed to accelerate the Army's ability to sustain forces in short tour areas. He did not elaborate upon this final assumption, one which was to prove one of the Army's primary personnel problems, that of either extending the length of short tours or changing basic policies about consecutive tours to these areas.

The upshot of all of this concern about capabilities was a May 18 memorandum prepared for the Secretary of Defense by Alain Enthoven, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis. In it, he analyzed and synthesized the information presented on the additional deployment capability of the services. Crucially it noted that the Army had the capability of providing 84,000 more troops, some 24,000 greater than the original estimate which had been given to McNamara earlier in the month. It included 21 maneuver battalions instead of 16. But, again, this estimate was based upon the assumptions that the deployment of the 5th Mechanized Division, then NATO-committed, and the rest of the 101st Airborne Division would be approved for deployment to SEA; that an as yet unidentified improved solution to the rotation base problem could be found and that there would be more and faster procurement of equipment, especially helicopters. End strength increases for the Army at the end of FY 69 were estimated to be 177,000 compared with the 110 to 120,000 which had been previously calculated. The increase by December 1967 was to be 77,000 and by June 1968, 118,000. The latter figure was about 70% of the strength required by December of 1968. 30/

The significance of the 18 May memorandum seems to be that it said: within rather narrow limits the figure of 60 - 65,000 is the Army's capability to provide troops in the form of maneuver battalions properly equipped, ready for deployment within the time frame - all below the requirement to mobilize the reserves. It also indicated that the Air Force, although strained and possibly drawing down units in Europe and other STRAF directed missions could meet the deployment schedules within both the "optimum" and the "minimum essential" range, although it would be preferable in the view of Harold Brown to meet only the minimum essential requirement and to leave the TFS's which

were already assigned to NATO on that station. The 60,000 figure which we just mentioned was to reappear later, much later in fact, when Secretary McNamara travelled to Saigon in late July to "negotiate" the new force levels for Program 5.

4. Bombing in the North: Its Contribution to the Ground War Reexamined

In early May attention also focused on how the bombing campaign in the North could better contribute to successful military outcomes in the South. Three important memos appeared during the first week in May, all devoted to this problem. On 5 May, in a draft memorandum for the President, John McNaughton proposed that all of the sorties allocated to the ROLLING THUNDER program be concentrated on the lines of communication, or what he called the "funnel" through which men and supplies to the south must flow between 17-20°, while reserving the options and the intention to strike in the area north of this (or in the 20-23° area) as necessary to keep the enemy's investment in defense and in repair crews high throughout the country. In arguing for this course of action, he noted that General Wheeler, when General Westmoreland was in Washington in April, had said that the bombing campaign was reaching the point where all of the worthwhile fixed targets, except the ports had been struck. McNaughton did not believe that the ports should be struck nor closed by mining, primarily because of the confrontation which he saw this might cause with the Soviet Union. Examining the bombing alternatives, he observed that we could continue to conduct attacks north of the 20° parallel, that is continue striking minor fixed targets while conducting armed reconnaissance against movement on roads, railroads and waterways. This course, though, was costly in American lives and in his estimation involved serious dangers of escalation, either with the Chinese or the Russians. The loss rate in Hanoi/Haiphong Route Package 6 for example was more than six times the loss rate in the southernmost route packages 1 and 2, and actions in the Hanoi/Haiphong area involved serious risks of generating confrontations with the Soviet Union and China, both because they involved destruction of MIGs on the ground and counters with MIGs in the air and because they might be construed as U.S. intention to crush the Hanoi regime. The military gain of the expanded bombing appeared to be slight; in fact, McNaughton could locate no evidence at the time to establish some convincing connection between operations in the north against targets north of the 20° parallel and enemy actions in the South. Furthermore, if the United States believed that air attacks in the area would change Hanoi's will, they might have been worthwhile, he added, and consequently reduce the loss of American life in the south and the risk of the expansion of the war in the North. However, McNaughton noted there was no evidence that this would be the case, for there was considerable evidence that such

bombing would strengthen Hanoi's will. He quoted Consul General Rice of Hong Kong when he said that there was very little chance that by bombing we could reach the critical level of pain in North Vietnam and that "below that level pain only increases the will to fight." 31/ Robert Thompson had also been quoted as saying, when he was here in late April, that our bombing, particularly in the Red River Basin area was "unifying North Vietnam." The old argument that bombing in the northern area was necessary to maintain the morale of the South Vietnamese or American fighting men was discounted. Although General Westmoreland had fully supported attacks against targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong areas and had said during his visit here in late April that he was "frankly dismayed at even the thought of stopping the bombing program," his basic requirements had continued to be requests for attacks on what he called the extended battle zone near the DMZ. 32/

McNaughton's closing paragraphs in this memorandum indicate that he was not only interested in trying to develop a better fit between bombing operations in the North and ground operations in the South, but that he was also clearing the way for getting Hanoi to change its position on negotiations. He noted that to optimize the chances of a favorable Hanoi reaction to an American restriction of the bombing the scenario should be:

...to inform the Soviets quietly (on May 15) that within a few (5) days the policy would be implemented, stating no time limits and making no promise not to return to the Red River basin to attack targets which later acquired military importance, and then...to make an unhuckstered shift as predicted on May 20. We would expect Moscow to pass the May 15 information on to Hanoi, perhaps (but probably not) urging Hanoi to seize the opportunity to de-escalate the war by talks or otherwise. Hanoi, not having been asked a question by us and having no ultimatum-like time limit, might be in a better posture to react favorably than has been the case in the past. Nevertheless, no favorable response from Hanoi should be expected, and the change in policy is not based on any such expectation. 33/

This policy, he recommended, should then publicly be handled by explaining (1) that, as always, we had said the war must be won in the south; (2) that we had never believed that the bombing of the war would produce a settlement by breaking Hanoi's will or by shutting off the flow of supplies; (3) that the north must pay the price for its infiltration; and (4) that since the major military targets in the north had been destroyed we were now concentrating on the narrow neck through which supplies must flow, sincerely believing that concentrated effort there as compared with dispersed effort throughout NVN would increase

the efficiency of our interdiction effort; and that (5) we retained the option to return further north and restrike those targets if military considerations so required. 34/

A White House memorandum, prepared by Walt Rostow, on the same subject, essentially repeated what McNaughton had said. To Rostow the policy issues and contention were first revolving around choices involving the North and these, in turn, broke out to either: (a) closing the top of the funnel - under this strategy he meant that we could mine the major harbors and perhaps bomb port facilities and even consider a blockade; in addition, attacks would be made systematically against the rail lines between Hanoi and mainland China. He exhibited little confidence that this would have a very important effect upon the North Vietnamese war effort especially in light of the tremendous costs which he anticipated, especially the political costs vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. He concluded for this expanded course of action that tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and Communist China would surely increase but that if we were very determined we could impose additional burdens on Hanoi and its allies, that we might cut their capacity below requirements, but that the outcome was uncertain; (b) attacking what was inside the funnel. This was essentially what the Air Force and Navy had been trying in the Hanoi/Haiphong area for some weeks. Rostow disagreed with the contention that the attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong area had no bearing on the war in the south, a significant difference from what McNaughton believed. In Rostow's estimation the North Vietnamese had diverted massive amounts of resources, energies and attention throughout the civil and military establishment of North Vietnam. This gross dislocation, in turn, imposed general economic, political and psychological difficulties on the north during a period already complicated by a bad harvest and some food shortages. He did not accept the CIA assessment that the bombings in the North in fact hardened the will of the people, and in his judgment, up to that point our bombing had been a painful additional cost that they had been willing to bear to pursue their efforts in the south. Although he acknowledged that there were uncertainties about the eventual political costs of expanded or continued bombing in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, he played down what was becoming an increasingly attractive line of argument -- that the continuation of attacks at about the level that we had been conducting in Hanoi-Haiphong area would lead to increased Soviet pressure on Berlin or even some kind of general war with the Soviet Union. In fact, in Rostow's words, "What the Soviets have been trying to signal is - keep away from our ships, we may counter escalate to some degree; but we do not want a nuclear confrontation over Vietnam." 35/

The next alternative (c) that Rostow discussed was the one which McNaughton had recommended -- that of concentrating our bombing efforts in Route Packages 1 and 2. The advantages of these he saw would plainly

cut our loss rate in pilots and planes, that we might somewhat improve our harassment of infiltration into South Vietnam, and that we would diminish the risk of counter-escalatory action by the Soviet Union and Communist China, as compared with the first two courses he had listed. He did not recommend that we pursue Course A since the returns "did not on present evidence seem high enough to justify the risk of Soviet-Chinese countermeasures and heightened world tensions." 36/ In this, he felt that he was supported by the conclusions of the majority of the intelligence community. With respect to the second option which he had outlined, he felt:

...I believe we have achieved greater results in increasing the pressure on Hanoi and raising the cost of their continuing to conduct the aggression in the South than some of my most respected colleagues would agree. I do not believe we should lightly abandon what we have accomplished; and specifically, I believe we should mount the most economical and careful attack on the Hanoi power station our air tacticians can devise. Moreover, I believe we should keep open the option of coming back to the Hanoi-Haiphong area, depending upon what we learn of their repair operations; and what Moscow's and Peiping's reactions are; and especially when we understand better what effects we have and have not achieved thus far.

I believe the Soviet Union may well have taken certain counter-steps addressed to the more effective protection of the Hanoi-Haiphong area and may have decided -- or could shortly decide -- to introduce into North Viet Nam some surface-to-surface missiles. 37/

Rostow favored the third option ((c) - bombing below the 20°) because, in his words, he felt that we were "wasting a good many pilots in the Hanoi-Haiphong area without commensurate results and that the major objectives of maintaining the B option, or the restrikes back into the Hanoi-Haiphong could be achieved at a lower cost." 38/

He, too, addressed the problem of presenting this to the American public, noting that "we shall have to devise a way of presenting our total policy in Vietnam in a manner which is consistent with diminished attacks in the Hanoi-Haiphong area; which is honest; and which is acceptable to our own people. Surfacing the concept of the barrier may be critical to that turnaround as will be other measures to righten infiltration and improve RVNAF pacification and that provision of additional allied forces to permit Westy to get on with our limited but real role in pacification, notably with the defense of I Corps in the North and the hounding of provincial main force units." 39/

These three memos reflect the basic trend of thought reference the bombing campaigns in the north as they developed in early May. Later in May, as we shall see, the Joint Chiefs of Staff came in with their proposals to "shoulder out" foreign shipping and mining in the harbors in the north and for more intensive interdiction both north of and below the 20th parallel against North Vietnam. This basic dispute led to the preparation of a draft Presidential memorandum at the end of May devoted to an analysis of the bombing and which provided policy recommendations on it for the President. 40

FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with Mr. Philip Odeen, SEA Programs, OASD(SA), on 27-28 August 1968.
2. Draft, "Additional MACV Force Requirements," dtd 23 March 1967, with attached note for Secretary McNamara.
3. Draft memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "SEA Force Requirements," VK Heyman, dtd 28 April 1967.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Draft memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "SEA Force Requirements," Alain Enthoven, 28 April 1967.
12. Memorandum from Alain Enthoven, ASD(SA) for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: "Force Levels and Enemy Attrition" dtd 4 May 1967.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. OASD(SA) Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, "Increase of Southeast Asia Forces," dtd 1 May 1967.
16. "COMUSMACV's Minimum Force Requirement -- An Analysis," undated, but attached to 1 May 1967 Memorandum to SecDef.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. This account was provided by Mr. Philip Odeen of Systems Analysis in an interview on 20 July 1968.

20. SNIE 11-11-67, Subject: Soviet Attitudes and Intentions Toward the Vietnam War, dated 4 May 1967.
21. "South Vietnamese Troop Deployments in Relation to Population," Attachment 5, dated 4 May 1967. This attachment was prepared to be included in the 19 May DPM. However, it was removed from the paper and never forwarded along with the finished DPM.
22. Ibid.; See Memorandum for the President from W. W. Rostow, Subject: "Vietnam Force Level Sharing," dated 10 May 1967. One of the problems which periodically reappeared and was discussed reference asking for greatly increased contributions of allied troops was what the command relationship should be in Vietnam. One of the proposals consistently forwarded was that of developing a "NATO-style" combined U.S. Republic of Vietnamese armed forces Free World Military Armed Forces Command under General Westmoreland. The judgment of all senior people in Saigon had been that the possible military advantages of such action would be outweighed by its adverse psychological impact; that it would cut across the picture of the Vietnamese winning their own war, and lay the United States open to hostile propaganda both within South Vietnam and around the world. This idea of a unified command although surfacing periodically as we have noted was never given serious consideration until much later when the United States at least floated the idea in an attempt to develop entrés to the eventual disengagement. (Memorandum, Subject: Position on U.S./Other Than Vietnamese Armed Forces Free World Military Armed Force Command Relationships, dated 19 May 1967 (in McNaughton papers).
23. NSAM 362, May 9, 1967, Subject: "Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development).
24. Richard C. Holbrooke, Task Force Paper IV.C.11, "Reemphasis on Pacification," see pages 130-137.
25. Memorandum for the SecDef, Subject: Combat Service Support Staffing in South Vietnam, dated 23 May 1967.
26. Memo for SecDef, Subject: Combat Service Support Staffing in South Vietnam, dated 23 May 1967.

27. Memorandum for the Chairman, JCS, Subject: Combat Service Support Staffing in SVN, dated 23 May 1967, H-87175. An interesting and revealing incident occurred when Mr. Heyman visited the 1st Log Command. During the standard briefing, the Commanding General noted that he had "just about the right number of men to do the job now in South Vietnam." This prompted Heyman when he walked down the hallway to the Personnel Section of the 1st Log Command to inquire how many troops they actually had assigned. He was told 58,000. Upon his return he analyzed Program 4 to see that 70,000 had been approved for the program. This convinced him to recommend to McNamara that a hard look be taken at the 1st Log Command since it appeared in the view of the Commanding General that they were doing just fine with some 12,000 troops less than they had asked and had approved in Program 4. (Memorandum, Subject: SEA Trip Report, Victor K. Heyman, Director, SEA Programs Division, dated 11 May 1967.)
28. "Additional MACV Requirements and Estimated Capabilities," December 31, 1968, Prepared by CASD(SA), dated 5 May 1967.
29. Memorandum for the SecDef, from the Secretary of the Army, Subject: Army Capability to Deploy Additional Forces to Vietnam without Mobilization, dated 12 May 1967.
30. Memorandum for SecDef, Subject: Additional Requirement Capability, Alain Enthoven, 18 May 1967. Also see: Memo for the SecDef, from SA, Stanley R. Resor, Subject: Army Capability to Deploy Additional Forces to Vietnam without Mobilization, dated 12 May 1967; and Memo for the SecDef, Subject: MACV/CINCPAC FY 1968.
31. Ibid.
32. Draft Presidential Memorandum, John McNaughton, Subject: Proposed Bombing Program Against North Vietnam dated 5 May 1967.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Memorandum for Vance, et. al., from W. W. Rostow, Subject: U.S. Strategy in Vietnam, dated 6 May 1967.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.

39. Ibid. As the third leg of this intensive inter-agency review of our bombing strategy, Wm. Bundy of State prepared an analysis very similar to that presented by Rostow. He too believed that our options were essentially those of concentrating on the supply routes in Route Packages 1 and 2, restrikes north of the 20th parallel, possible selective additional strikes on sensitive targets in the North, and finally, a major expansion to extremely sensitive targets north of the 20th parallel. His examination of the options concluded that the final option, that is, of not hitting additional sensitive targets, increasing our reaction in our effort in Route Packages 1 and 2 were both preferable to the political consequences of an expansion of the bombing north of the 20th parallel. In this, he was generally in agreement with McNaughton. He believed that basically overall progress in the south was the key element in changing Hanoi's attitude and that any bombing program below the major expansion option or any cessation of bombing without certain reciprocity would be totally negative in its effect on Hanoi. He relegated the bombing program itself to basically a supplementary role in affecting Hanoi's attitude. See memorandum from W. P. Bundy, Subject: Bombing Strategy Options for the Rest of 1967, dated 8 May 1967 (McNaughton papers).
40. See JCSM 286-67, Subject: Operations Against North Vietnam, dated 20 May 1967; and JCSM 312-67, Subject: Air Operations Against North Vietnam dated 2 June 1967.