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7780 13 OCT 1968

DISPOSITION FORM

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MACCOC7

SUBJECT

Evaluation of the Defoliation Program (U)

TO Chief of Staff

FROM ACofS, J3

DATE 12 OCT 1968
COL Moran/dot/2116

CMT 1

1. (U) PURPOSE. To provide an evaluation of the defoliation program.2. (C) DISCUSSION.

a. The COMUSMACV was briefed on the herbicide program during the weekly briefing on 25 September 1968 and requested an evaluation of the program. This DF and the inclosed documents summarize significant data and constitute a current evaluation of the program.

b. A brief of the background and capabilities together with advantages and disadvantages of the defoliation program is at TAB A.

c. The MACV Combined Campaign Plan states that defoliation operations will be conducted to improve the security around vital installations, fixed checkpoints, along LOC's and to improve aerial observation of the Viet Cong LOC's, safe havens, and storage sites. Earlier this year the MACV J2 compiled intelligence information on the Viet Cong's impression of the program, and presented qualitative and quantitative data on the benefits to be accrued by continuing the program. This data is contained in TAB B. An extract of testimony by Colonel Dac, a recent Chieu Hoi, (TAB C) gives additional information on the effectiveness of defoliation.

d. [REDACTED] One indication of the demand for defoliation by field commanders is their requirements, which continue to exceed [REDACTED] delivery capabilities. An analysis of requirements versus capabilities is attached at TAB D. [REDACTED] The recent [REDACTED] endorsements of the program by all senior field commanders when queried for a special JCS evaluation of the program [REDACTED] are attached at TAB E through J). Analysis of field commanders' comments indicates that defoliation operations have been instrumental in facilitating aerial observation of infiltration routes, uncovering enemy base camps, and have reduced the number of ambush locations along friendly LOC's. A [REDACTED] conclusion resulting from all recent evaluations is that defoliation provides a 60 to 90 percent improvement in vertical visibility and a 50 to 70 percent improvement in horizontal visibility. Where 100 percent horizontal visibility is required, such as perimeters of base camps and areas immediately parallel to friendly lines of communication, Rome Flows are used to complement defoliated areas. Herbicide is also used to maintain control of vegetation in the Rome Flowed areas.

e. Two additional comments on the herbicide program [REDACTED] are one by the former commander of the 101st Aviation Battalion (TAB K) and one by the ACofS, J2 on imagery Interpretation (TAB L).

f. During Ambassador Bunker's discussion with President Thieu on the release of the "Herbicide Policy Review" (copy at TAB M), President Thieu stated that defoliants should be used only in uninhabited areas and along infiltration routes (TAB N). This

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same recommendation is contained in the Herbicide Policy Review and has been integrated into the present program, consistent with field commanders requirements. A fact sheet inclosing target descriptions and a map showing authorized targets and enemy base areas in comparison to population densities is at Tab Q. Further, the State Department (message at Tab P) queried the Embassy on implementation of this same recommendation. The Embassy reply confirming the shift of emphasis to uninhabited areas is at Tab Q.

3. (C) CONCLUSIONS:

a. That all major commanders consider the use of herbicides beneficial to military operations in Vietnam (Tab E through J).

b. That herbicide operations currently programmed (Tab D, Red Marker) are in consonance with President Thieu's wishes, i.e., that they not be used in populated and cultivated areas; they should be used only in uninhabited areas and along infiltration routes.

c. That the MACV Herbicide Policy Review just published (28 Aug 68) made the same recommendation as President Thieu.

d. That enemy forces consider herbicide operations (defoliation) effective (Tab B).

e. That current sortie availability is such that commanders can receive ~~only~~ 63% of the herbicide effort they have requested (Tab D).

f. That the current ban on herbicide materials should be maintained until further notice.

g. That monthly checks on herbicide operations and stock levels should be continued and a further assessment made when the stock level drops to a 120 day supply.

h. That herbicide operations should be continued as programmed, consistent with the current sortie availability rate, i.e., herbicide operations to be approximately 63% of that requested by commanders.

4. (U) RECOMMENDATIONS: That the conclusions in para 3 be approved.

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COORDINATION.

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Raymond A. Bradley
ELIAS C. TOWNSEND
Major General, USA
Assistant Chief of Staff, J3

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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222

MACCOC7


18 OCT 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF OF STAFF, MACV

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Defoliation Program (U)

- Red marker*
1. (U) Reference COMUSMACV note on the attached DF subject: "Evaluation of the Defoliation Program".
 2. (C) All (100%) of commanders' requests do not meet the policy referred to in 3b and c. Some are disapproved. However, all approved targets do meet the policy referred to in 3b and c.
 3. (C) Paragraph 3e might be better worded by saying: "That the current sortie availability is such that commanders can receive 63% of their approved herbicide effort."

2 Incl


ELIAS C. TOWNSEND
Major General, USA
Assistant Chief of Staff, J3

Approved / ~~Disapproved~~
By COMUSMACV

Date 19 OCT 1968

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