

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



MACJOIR

8 NOV 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Revised Policy on Use of Defoliants

1. COMUSMACV agrees that we should attempt to devise a new policy on the use of defoliants along the following lines:

a. Define a large, heavily-populated area in all four CTZs where use would be totally and publicly banned. In fact, this area would be so defined as to cover those areas where there is very little use of defoliants any longer in any case;

b. Similarly define the remaining area as that where defoliants can be used under present procedures.

2. The purpose of this exercise would be to meet criticisms of excessive use of defoliants by clarifying that they will no longer be used in large areas, while in reality not restricting our use of defoliants (since they are not now normally used in this area anyway). In addition, there would be an escape clause to category a. above, which would permit the use of defoliants even in the prohibited area provided that a strong case could be made to MACV/JGS.

3. Appearing to restrict the use of defoliants in this manner would

a. help meet US and Vietnamese criticism of these operations;

b. increase peasant confidence so that they would grow more rice;

c. be of psywar value by suggesting that large areas were sufficiently pacified by now that large scale defoliants use was no longer necessary.

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4. I would like the staff to prepare a map showing areas in which such a ban on the use of defoliants could reasonably be applied, based on experience over the last six months and expected operational requirements. If the staff believes that there are strong objections to the proposed policy it should also specify.

5. Please regard this as an urgent project so that I can give Gen. Westmoreland at least a preliminary view no later than 20 November 1967.

RWK

R. W. KOMER
Deputy to COMUSMACV for
Civil Operations and RD Support