Chapter 20

LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS - SHIFT TO A WAR FOOTING

United States deployment planning in the first months of 1965 was influenced decisively by the lack of an adequate logistic base and the sorry state of facilities and arrangements to support US forces in the RVN logistically. The JCS had recognized very early that the existing system for logistic support, minimal even for the advisory effort, would have to be revamped and strengthened before combat troops could be deployed, even under the fairly limited concepts first considered. To do otherwise would have been imprudent at the least. At a longer range, the entire structure of logistic support in Southeast Asia would require great improvement before US contingency plans to meet a wider threat in that area would have any real chance to succeed. In late 1964 and early 1965, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff addressed themselves primarily to the narrower problem of providing, in advance, a system that would allow adequate support for additional men and units and, hopefully, would provide a base for further expansion.

J-4

Westmoreland's Assessment

The defects in the US logistic system within the RVN had been identified and catalogued by General Westmoreland in a detailed study sent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff just a month before the important Washington meetings of November-December 1964. Reflecting the nature of its origins, the overall US logistic system, originally oriented in support of the RVNAF and gradually shaped by expediency and the semi-autonomous nature of US agencies in the RVN, was actually fragmented into 15 different, discrete, not particularly complementary systems, four of them quasi-military (CIA, USOM, CARE, and the Deputy Officer in Charge of Construction (DOICC)) and the remaining ten military (three RVNAF, seven US). Despite the several US military subsystems, the focal point of support was in the Saigon area with the result that advisors and units "up-country" often suffered from lack of adequate support. Nor was there any real common-user basis to the systems. Two subordinate commands under COMUSMACV were charged primarily with logistic support of forces. These were the US Army Support Command (USASCV), responsible for combat support to

the RVNAF; and the Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon (HSAS), charged with logistic support of the US forces in the RVN.[1]

On 30 October, General Westmoreland cited for CINCPAC and the Joint Chiefs of Staff the principal "immediate shortcomings" of the US common-user system in RVN. These were 1) inadequate supervision of the handling of US cargoes at the up-country minor ports; 2) inadequate coordination of logistic functions among multiple MACV commands; 3) inefficiency stemming from a system that operated entirely on a retail basis from Saigon without having any up-country field depots; 4) incomplete support of US forces by HSAS in the common-user supply and services categories. He carefully described each of these deficiencies and its effect upon his command, saying that they should be remedied as soon as possible. In his recommendations for improvement of the system, COMUSMACV called for: 1) expansion of existing systems in volume to accommodate the increased strengths of US forces in RVN; 2) establishment of an integrated up-country retail common-user logistic system; 3) expansion of the base wholesale common-user logistic system into additional supply categories and into services not provided by HSAS; 4) integration of up-country retail and base wholesale common-user logistic systems; 5) elimination of duplication between HSAS and HQ Commandant, MACV, and other minor duplications of support functions; 6) "displacement" of HSAS with a US Army logistic command.

While General Westmoreland seemed, in these terse recommendations, to be calling mainly for a reorganization and revamping of the system in terms of responsibilities and functions and for several thousand trained specialists to man the system and make it work, there were far broader connotations involved. Any significant expansion of US strength in RVN would obviously require millions of dollars worth of construction for cantonments, depots, storage areas, and bases, for air fields and roads, and for improvement of ports and harbors. Stock levels of all types of essential supplies would have to be increased, maintenance and control facilities established, and distribution systems made ready. Major items of equipment would be needed and communications systems would require major improvements to support anything greater than a small addition of advisory personnel.

1. (S-GP 3) MACV Staff Study, "Improvement of US Logistics Systems in RVN," 26 Oct 64, JMF 9155.3 (10 Nov 64) sec 1.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed in principle with General Westmoreland's assessment and limited recommendations and took such actions as were possible in the next several months to support them. Beyond this, as the urgency of the situation in RVN rose early in 1965, they made other recommendations and took other actions to build up the logistic base for support of increased US involvement in RVN within the context of the broader question posed by the communist threat to all of Southeast Asia.

Additional Logistic Units and Personnel

The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not consider it "militarily prudent" to await a contingency before reorganizing the existing logistic support structure in the RVN. They began at once the necessary actions, directing CINCPAC and COMUSMACV to coordinate on a more detailed plan for reorganization, defining the requirement for the Army Logistic Command, and taking into account President Johnson's great interest in third country forces, support of which would be an additional requirement. On 23 December CINCPAC forwarded to the JCS a COMUSMACV plan, which he considered sound and realistic. In addition to asking for an Army Logistic Command of about 2,100 men, General Westmoreland in this plan also called for an Army Engineer Construction Group of 2,400, primarily for construction of camps and bases. The MACV J-4 visited Washington on 28 December to brief the Joint Staff on the plan.[2]

J-4

On 15 January the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended to the Secretary of Defense that he approve, in principle, the introduction of both the Army Logistic Command (Log Command) and the Engineer Construction Group, the former to provide a logistic structure capable of expansion of common-user support, the latter to "alleviate a shortfall" in US construction resources in RVN. They pointed out to the Secretary that by sending the Log Command to RVN, the United States would be preparing for "future adjustments in US strength and changes in method or tempo of operations." The Construction Group would augment the "saturated indigenous contract construction capability" and could operate under hazardous conditions at which civilian contractors would probably balk. They asked

2. (S-GP 4) Ltr, CINCPAC to JCS 23 Dec 64. (TS-GP 4) J-4 TP 12-64, 29 Dec 64, JMF 9155.3 (10 Nov 64), sec 2.

Recognizing the defects in the system, the survey team's report to Mr. Vance agreed that the US Army was best prepared to coordinate and manage common supply and that an Army Logistic Command was the best vehicle for achieving this. Nevertheless the survey team recommended to Mr. Vance that he authorize, for the present, only a small advance party of the Log Command, building it up when appropriate by transferring persons already in RVN performing "housekeeping" functions. They did not believe that facilities were available for the deployment of the Construction Group or for the majority of the Log Command units, nor were funds available to construct such facilities. They recommended against sending the Construction Group, since the commercial contractor construction capability could "possibly" be expanded to take care of all necessary construction. This was in keeping with the tone of much of the survey team's report, which called for use of indigenous civilian and US civilian contract workers in lieu of US military wherever possible. On 12 February Mr. Vance disapproved introduction of the Engineer Group. He approved, in principle, the introduction of the Log Command but authorized early deployment of only 75 men and officers. He directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to complete promptly additional studies of the COMUSMACV Plan and to recommend to the Secretary of Defense actions to bring about the swiftest possible improvement in logistic posture while keeping down deployments. He appointed the Assistant Secretary of Defense (I&L) as the focal point for all necessary actions of the Office of the Secretary of Defense to simplify procedures, remove unnecessary administrative "constraints," and recommend staffing requirements for logistic support functions in the RVN.[5]

On 19 March further augmentation of the Log Command by 543 men and officers was recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A few days later, on 27 March, as decision on further deployments and the possible use of US forces in direct combat appeared imminent, the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked that the full complement of the 2,100-man Log Command be authorized as soon as possible and that the Secretary reconsider his decision with respect to the Construction Group.[6]

---

5. (S-GP 3) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 12 Feb 65, Att to JCS 2343/486-8; JCS 2343/486-11, 25 Feb 65; JMF 9155.3 (10 Nov 64) sec 4.

6. (S-GP 4) JCSM-196-65 to SecDef, 19 Mar 65 (derived from JCS 2343/486-12); (S-GP 4) JCSM-219-65 to SecDef, 27 Mar 65 (derived from JCS 2343/486-14); (S-GP 4) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 2 Apr 65, Att to JCS 2343/486-16; JMF 9155.3 (10 Nov 64) sec 5.

On the same day, in a personal message to General Wheeler, Admiral Sharp called for a US logistic force of between 18-20,000 personnel in RVN to support one Army division, the remainder of the III MEF, the ROK division, and additional air forces in RVN and Thailand. These men were in addition to logistic forces already in RVN but included the Log Command and the Construction Group. On 2 April in connection with other decisions on deployment and employment of forces, the President approved the deployment recommended by CINCPAC. The full Army Log Command and the Engineer Construction Group were approved for deployment as part of this package. (See Ch. 21.)[7]

The Meyer Report

In a separate report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Meyer on 5 February had explained, in greater detail than had the survey report rendered by him and Mr. Gibson, the state of logistic affairs in RVN, with particular emphasis on the specific defieiencies and requirements. The problems which he identified were not capable of quick or easy solution in most instances, and US officials would be compelled to take drastic and expensive measures over an extended period in order to alleviate these problems. The evidence indicates, however, that General Meyer's report was instrumental in bringing about action to improve the RVN logistic base earlier than might otherwise have been the case.

Real Estate and Construction

According to General Meyer, the greatest single factor affecting force deployment and logistic support in RVN was the shortage of real estate and facilities. There were at least nine different channels through which facilities might be programmed, funded, and constructed. But long lead times involved in securing approvals of funding, design, and materials, and in site selection, had resulted in unusually long delays. In February 1965, approved and funded programs for construction in RVN approximated $46 million. Various other proposals for construction awaiting funding and approval could reach at least $140 million. General Meyer noted that Raymond-Morrison-Knudsen (RMK), the civilian contractor for US construction in

7. (TS-GP 1) J-4 TP 3-65 for CJCS, 4 Apr 65, JMF 9155.3 (5 Apr 65) sec 1.

RVN, could probably expand its capability far beyond the currently projected workload.[8]

General Meyer charged that lack of coordination between various US components in RVN and the tendency to "go it alone" without coordinating through MACV, had resulted in competition for real estate and delays in needed construction. There was an immediate need for a technical staff within MACV capable of 1) making a master plan for all installation development in the RVN, 2) coordinating facility sitings and real estate acquisitions, 3) coordinating and approving all component construction programs, and 4) establishing priorities for all facilities designed and constructed by the Deputy Officer in Charge of Construction (DOICC).[9]

General Meyer also stated that planning for programs in RVN by all Services and the MAP had, until recently, been on the assumption that US forces would be withdrawn by June 1965. This had resulted in constant adjustment, ad hoc solutions, and expensive crash actions, particularly with regard to construction. General Meyer told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that an integrated construction program should now be developed to support currently known requirements, using all available sources of funds. Additional reprogramming of current approved programs should take place as necessary.

"Long-range logistic planning should not be confused with short-range political actions and reactions, or on long-range military political objectives," he cautioned. "While the latter might well be to finish the job as soon as possible, long lead time actions (construction and other logistic programs) should be developed over at least a three year period."[10]

In-Country Military Reorganization

Supply and logistic problems were compounded in the RVN, in General Meyer's view, by the unconventional structure of the US military management organization. He pointed out that MACV's management structure was unique, thus complicating

8. (S-GP 4) Rpt, Dir of Log to JCS, 5 Oct 65, Att to JCS 2343/486-11, JMF 9155.3 (10 Nov 64) sec 4. Hereafter cited as "Meyer Rpt."
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

logistic and supply procedures. The amalgamation of MACV and the MAAG in 1964 had created, in effect, a fifth Service operating without backup structure and with ad hoc procedures. The 2d Air Division, which operated as a conventional component command structure, had the least administrative difficulty. The US Army Support Command, Vietnam (USASCV), was about 80 percent an Army component, having an overextended span of control, yet lacking the full capability of the 2d Air Division. The US Marine Corps and the US Navy units were essentially self-sufficient and small in numbers. Probably for this reason, they were without any major logistic problems. The advisors were in "no-man's land" and had no support authorized through Service channels.[11]

General Meyer proposed that the Joint Chiefs of Staff request CINCPAC to prepare a plan to remedy these structural peculiarities by: 1) making MACV a true area unified commander under CINCPAC; 2) confirming the 2d Air Division commander as an Air Force component commander in RVN; 3) redesignating USASCV as US Army, Vietnam, and giving it the same status and capability as 2d Air Division; 4) keeping the desirable features of Service command channels and backup support through the 13th Air Force in the Philippines and the US Army, Ryukyu Islands, on Okinawa; 5) giving the commander of the HSAS the additional duty of Commander NAV Forces Ashore, Vietnam; 6) as soon as practicable and on a corps area or other appropriate geographical basis, phase the responsibility for funding of logistic support of the MACV advisors to their own Service components. In some cases Navy advisors in predominantly Army areas could be shifted locally to Army support, but the Navy Commander ashore would have the responsibility to assure their support.

As follow-on actions, General Meyer proposed that the logistic responsibilities of the HQ Commandant, MACV, be phased out and that fiscal and funding procedures be established to relieve field commanders of working with the current inter-Service support agreements, which were cumbersome.

Coordinated Logistics Planning

General Meyer suggested that there was a real need for long-range logistic planning within the US structure in RVN.

---

11. Ibid.

The increase in US effort, the mutual dependence of the US and GVN elements, and the impact of "possible changes in direction" created a need for formal integration of logistic planning at the top level. Although there was much opportunity for mutual support and many logistics-type subpanels in RVN, military logistic problems tended to be solved either unilaterally or functionally. Many US quasi-governmental military or US civilian executive departments were involved. General Meyer pointed out that there was a requirement for a logistic planning and advisory council of the US Mission Council, with membership from the Embassy, USOM, CAS, MACV, 2d Air Division, USASCV, and HSAS at a minimum. This council would establish joint and combined long-range logistics objectives, standards, and policies affecting all US interests. It would determine mutual support, available or required, from indivisual plans and programs. It would exploit civil assistance (AID) programs to assist military logistic effort where mutually beneficial and would relate changes in military plans and strengths to logistic effort and "constraints."[12]

The Military Logistics Council

In proposing a top-level logistics council in RVN, General Meyer was calling on his own experience as a member of the Military Logistics Council (MLC) that had been established as an informal, but effective, coordination body by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in April 1963. The membership of this important body comprised the J-4, the Special Assistant for Strategic Mobility, Joint Staff (SASM), the Director, DSA, and the logistics chiefs of each of the Services. This MLC was an informal, but influential, body which served as a forum for discussion of logistic matters and problems of mutual interest. While not empowered to take actions in its own right, the very composition of the body, encompassing, as it did, the widest range of military logistics knowledge within the Department of Defense and composed of men in key positions, gave it an influence in logistics matters that enabled it to identify and solve many of the logistics problems, large and small, that developed in connection with the war in RVN. The MLC met regularly to consider these problems

J-4

12. Ibid.

and was instrumental in expediting solutions through Service channels or through joint action.[13]

In February, as a result of a Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, proposal to the Service Chiefs, the MLC was designated the central point of contact between the Joint Staff and the Service Staffs in logistics matters associated with the improvement of US readiness to support a higher level of actions in Southeast Asia. The MLC would provide the medium for transmission of information and for informal coordination of the Service logistic positions. The MLC would, in cases of disagreement, submit logistics problems to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for resolution.[14]

Maintenance

General Meyer noted that the US capability for maintenance of noninstalled equipment was practically nonexistent outside the Saigon area. In Saigon the US Army had a very small detachment of maintenance technicians augmented by local nationals, but up-country maintenance, for other than organized units, was limited to first echelon. The problem was particularly serious in maintaining such important items as portable generators, the only source of electric power in remote areas. General Meyer proposed that a field maintenance capability for Army vehicles, weapons, and signal equipment be established at Da Nang and that maintenance detachments be set up at existing US bases at Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Can Tho, and at each of the US aviation battalion locations. Roving maintenance teams would service other small units. At a longer range other field maintenance activities would have to be established when facilities were available to accommodate them. Better use of inter-Service maintenance arrangements for common items was also indicated.[15]

---

13. (U) Interv, Willard J. Webb with CAPT C.E. Smith, USN, Chief, Plans Division, J-4, 16 Jan 69.

14 (TS-GP 4) JCS 2339/174-2, 7 Mar 65, JMF 9155 (19 Feb 65) sec 3.

15. (S-GP 4) Meyer Rpt.

Ammunition Handling and Storage

In view of the possibility of commitment of US combat forces, it was essential to establish an ammunition supply system to provide for the orderly receipt, storage, and issue of ammunition. Input had exceeded the handling and depot capacities both in-country and at enroute staging bases, resulting in violations of safety rules and regulations. General Meyer stated that a safety surveillance capacity was lacking even though urgently required. Long lead time projects were underway to provide additional ammunition handling and storage facilities. Other possibilities such as "floating storage" and better delivery schedules were being looked into. Projects underway to position additional lighterage capability in RVN would improve the ability to handle ammunition at in-country ports. The J-4 recommended that US Army and USAF supervisory personnel be placed at each major ammunition dump to supervise the labor force, to maintain records, and to establish surveillance and safety measures. In the meantime, US ammunition should be stored at GVN ammo storage points as much as possible.

J-4

The Joint Chiefs of Staff made General Meyer's report available to the Joint Staff for their information in connection with the continuing efforts to coordinate the closely related requirements for improvement of the RVN logistics base and for the other readiness measures involved in the deployments projected for SVN.

General Meyer's observations on the logistic weaknesses were reinforced by the Chief of Staff, Army, upon his return from the RVN in mid-March. As had General Meyer, General Johnson noted the seriousness of the construction problem. Among his recommendations which the President approved, he suggested that MACV be provided with "quick release" authority and funds for construction projects in RVN to permit meeting tight deadlines and to reduce the scope of activities which would otherwise require extensive military construction effort. He suggested that a MACV-controlled stockpile of construction materials and equipment be established within three or four days' sailing time of RVN to assure the timely availability of essential supplies and equipment. At the same time General Johnson noted the great need to reorient the supply flow in the RVN from north-south to east-west in order to shorten the delivery times and to decrease reliance on Saigon. He also recommended beginning dredging operations

at the harbors of Da Nang, Qui Nhon, and Nha Trang so that ocean-going ships could berth at those up-country ports to land supplies.[16]

Support of Contingency Plans

All of the requirements for improving the logistics base in the RVN lay within the broader scope of the requirements for supporting US military operations contemplated, under CINCPAC OPLANs 32-64 and 39-65, to meet any concerted communist attack on Southeast Asia. Virtually no actions were contemplated or taken in RVN which did not contribute to the strengthening of the overall US position to carry out those broader contingency plans. In late February, at the direction of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (I&L), the Joint Staff, the Services, and the DSA made an analysis of the ability of the United States to carry out these contingency plans as of 20 February 1965. Logistics factors were included as a major consideration of this analysis. With specific regard to RVN the following broad requirements were noted: 1) improvements to rail and road nets in RVN; 2) improvements to secondary ports and provision of lighterage capability; 3) construction and/or improvement of airfields at Bien Hoa, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Tam Ky, Tan Son Nhut, Pleiku; and 4) construction of a hospital facility at Saigon.[17]

Construction of Airfields in RVN

CINCPAC had stated to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in late 1964 that if the United States intended to remain in Southeast Asia, a stronger and more responsive system of airfields would have to be developed. He had recommended that a jet-capable airfield be constructed at Chu Lai at an estimated cost of $6.5 million and that a second jet-capable runway be constructed at Da Nang parallel to and similar to the existing runway at a cost of about $3.5 million. On 11 November 1964 the Joint Chiefs of Staff had informed the Secretary of

16. (TS-GP 1) Memo, CSA to SecDef et al., 14 Mar 65, OCJCS File 091 Vietnam Mar 65.
17. (TS-GP 4) JCS 2339/174-2, 7 Mar 65, JMF 9155 (19 Feb 65) sec 3.

Defense that because of the contemplated increase in deployments and the need to enhance the logistic support capability and to cope "more flexibly with a wide range of future exigencies," these projects at Chu Lai and Da Nang should be approved. They also recommended that funds be made available for architectural and engineering studies in connection with with these projects.[18]

Secretary McNamara generally agreed with the need for improved base support in Southeast Asia, and he approved interim funding for the architect-engineer studies required prior to expansion of the Da Nang airfield and the new field at Chu Lai. He deferred a decision on actual construction, however, to await the outcome of these studies and to evaluate the need for these facilities "in light of the current situation."[19]

With the development early in 1965 of new courses of action to meet the growing enemy threat, it became more and more obvious that more facilities would be required. The United States had increased the number of personnel and aircraft in RVN and had thus created a very high density of aircraft of all Services at the three major airfields in RVN. The situation prompted CINCPAC to provide the Joint Chiefs of Staff with a timetable indicating that the design work for the Chu Lai airfield could be completed by 1 August 1965. If the funds required were made available in April, by June the design work would be sufficiently advanced so that actual construction could begin. Both projects could be completed by June 1966. The Joint Chiefs of Staff immediately passed this information on to Secretary McNamara, stating that "The changing military situation and fluid political environment in Southeast Asia underscore the importance of contingency preparations." They pointed out that Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut, and Bien Hoa air bases, the only jet-capable airfields in RVN, had approached the point of saturation. There were five airfields in Thailand but these were subject to some limitations, including longer flying time to targets and restrictions imposed by the Government of Thailand.[20]

J-4

18. (TS-GP 3) JCSM-950-64 to SecDef, 11 Nov 64, JMF 9155.3 (26 Sep 64).
19. (TS-GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Airfield Support of Contingency Plans for Southeast Asia (C)," 23 Dec 64, same file.
20. (TS-GP 3) JCSM-144-65 to SecDef, 4 Mar 65 (derived from JCS 2343/483-2), JMF 9155.3 (26 Sep 64).

The Da Nang/Chu Lai area had major military advantages which should, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed, be exploited. These were the fact that the area could be supported by sea over the beach, it was ideally located for strikes against NVN or South China, and it was directly accessible from the US bases at Okinawa and in the Philippines. In view of the "constant increase of communist activity in Southeast Asia, the need to prepare for a wide variety of courses of action which includes sizeable air operations, the high density of aircraft of all Services and RVNAF and low dispersal capability," the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that the Secretary of Defense reconsider his deferral of the projects at Chu Lai and Da Nang. They further recommended that the projects be funded under a special contingency authorization or other authorization, such as MAP or AID, and not out of a Service budget.[21]

Secretary McNamara approved the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation that the new airfield be built at Chu Lai and the additional runway and connecting taxiways be built at Da Nang. He ordered construction begun as soon as possible. He stated, however, that because the projects had been "Navy sponsored" from the start, owing to the predominant Marine usage under CINCPAC OPLANs, the Department of the Navy would be the sponsoring Service and would furnish funds from its military construction program.[22]

Laying the Ground Work for an Expanded War

Closely allied to the construction and other requirements for logistic readiness were important measures that would have to be taken to lay the ground work for an expanded war in RVN. It was possible that a much greater US involvement, up to and including a full-scale war, would result from enemy reaction to US actions in Vietnam. Thus far, US military, economic, and political programs in Southeast Asia had been geared to a situation in which US forces were not directly involved in combat. On 16 March, after talking with the Chief of Staff, Army, General Wheeler told the Director, Joint Staff, that there was a need for early action to shift US governmental procedures

21. Ibid.
22. (TS-GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Additional Airfield Support for Southeast Asia," 18 Mar 65, JMF 9155.3 (26 Sep 64).

and operations to a footing more suitable for the prosecution of the war. Substantial adjustments would have to be made in military programs, and changes in programming methods and program execution might be needed. He instructed the Director, Joint Staff, to direct the Joint Staff to prepare quickly specific recommendations for adjustments that could be made within the authority of the Secretary of Defense and the President and for adjustments requiring legislation, funding, military personnel, direction and control of US military operations in Vietnam, and any other authorizations required, including standby authority.[23]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff called at once on the field commanders to describe those problems that had developed within their areas of responsibility as a result of trying to carry on wartime operations using procedures geared to a peacetime situation. Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland replied promptly, and their views were used extensively by the Joint Staff in the preparation of its study.[24]

J-4

As a result of this study on 2 April 1965 the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense which set forth in detail the various problems that existed in bringing support of RVN operations up to a wartime footing.

"The effectiveness of US military actions in the measure and scope now required to prosecute the war in Vietnam will be enhanced by the adjustment of those present peacetime US policies and procedures which have been the basis for our support of the RVN," they told Secretary McNamara. "We are in war in which a loss would be viewed world-wide as a US defeat. We must not permit this to happen. Consequently, it is considered prudent that immediate steps be taken to remove all administrative and procedural impediments that hamper us in the prosecution of this war."

They informed the Secretary that "substantial adjustments" in present policies and procedures were required, and

23. (TS-GP 3) CM-488-65 to DJS, 16 Mar 65, JMF 9155.3 (16 Mar 65).
24. (TS) JCS 2343/540-1, 24 Mar 65, JMF 9155.3 (16 Mar 65).

in a series of appendices to their memorandum recapitulated for him these necessary adjustments.25

Funding the War

With respect to funding the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reminded the Secretary that money to support operations in Southeast Asia came through several funding channels and was restricted as to its use and controlled by various administrative procedures. The FY 1965 MAP and related fiscal support had been developed for a noncombat military situation. The combat operations now taking place were being supported by the individual Services, which had to reprogram their respective peacetime budgets and the Military Assistance Program (MAP) in order to provide this support. Each Service, the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted, thus had to expend considerable administrative effort and cut back on its other priority programs. The Army, for example, could not build up reserve supplies and, indeed, could barely maintain its existing levels. Added to the diversion of operating funds for supporting combat activities, combat losses were causing attrition of equipment and supplies at a rate far exceeding the planned peacetime rate. To accomplish even the limited reprogramming of funds within their authority, the Services had to cut back previously prepared programs in order to meet the more urgent needs of Southeast Asia on a stopgap basis.26

Under normal procedures, military construction for Southeast Asia required about two years from the first determination of a requirement until construction of a facility was approved. Even though Congress had granted authority to approve and program emergency construction projects, this authority was limited to approximately $41 million during the remainder of FY 65. Current construction requirements were in excess of this amount.

In their memorandum of 2 April the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary of Defense that these conditions could not be continued during "war type" actions. The present system entailed delay, and denied flexibility to commanders.

---

25. (TS) JCSM-238-65 to SecDef, 2 Apr 65, JMF 9155.3 (16 Mar 65).

26. (TS) App A to JCSM-238-65 to SecDef, 2 Apr 65, JMF 9155.3 (16 Mar 65).

Further, the system required that details be forwarded through several echelons of command to the national level for decision. "Limitations and restrictions which hinder the prosecution of the war must be removed," the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary.[27]

The Secretary of Defense already possessed, however, certain authorities that he could use in emergencies. For example, Congress had granted him authority to transfer up to $200 million between appropriations. He could also provide funds on a deficiency basis to pay for an increase in military personnel beyond those provided in annual appropriations if the President decided to support the increase. Further, the President could suspend the apportionment process which apportioned funds on a time-phased basis. He could also direct the Secretary of Defense to submit supplemental appropriation requests to Congress. Finally, deficiencies could be incurred as required for necessities for any current fiscal year without dollar limit for fuel, subsistence, transportation, clothing, and medical supplies for US forces beyond the amount of appropriations available.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff specified for Secretary McNamara those actions which he could take without delay to augment Service accounts.[28]

J-4

The MAP

The MAP had undergone major reprogramming because of the threat in Southeast Asia. Normally military assistance was supplied on a peacetime basis, but some exceptions had been made in the case of Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs of Staff informed Secretary McNamara that MAP administrative and legal procedures were cumbersome. The MAP was a cyclic system involving long lead time for planning and implementation. Moreover, it had a highly centralized management which was not susceptible to rapid changes in requirements. In RVN, Laos, and Thailand requirements for money and materiel were changing rapidly, not only in kind but in magnitude. Approved levels for materiel planning, programming, and management in RVN were exceeded by immediate demands, yet the complicated,

27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.

relatively unresponsive system remained unchanged. A change in the system which would free it of its close fiscal control and administrative overhead requirements and which would reduce lead times and make it more flexible was definitely indicated, particularly in RVN but also in Thailand and Laos.

The MAP system for supply and funding required programming major end items on a line-item basis. Each line item was funded separately. This assisted in expediting supply but caused burdensome procedures for the Services, the unified commands, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

MAP deviation procedures were very complicated since they were designed to maintain an "audit trail" of obligation and expenditure of funds as well as "what happened and why" when program requirements changed. All changes to the RVN program were eventually recorded in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Both Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland considered these deviation procedures an undesirable administrative burden.

The Services could not respond readily to wartime MAP demands because, with few exceptions, they had not been authorized to procure and stock materiel in anticipation of MAP requirements. This had caused losses from Service stocks or extraordinary procurement actions. Adding to the cumbersome nature of the MAP was a restriction imposed by the Foreign Assistance Act that prevented any grant-aid MAP item costing more than $100,000 from being furnished to any country unless the Chief of the MAAG certified in writing within six months to 30 days prior to delivery that the country had the capability to use the item effectively.

Since the war in RVN had become a major factor in US funding policy, the United States had reprogrammed within the world-wide MAP to support the war. The Joint Chiefs of Staff noted that the FY 1965 MAP, for example, had not been adequate to fund requirements for Vietnam without a serious impact on the programs of other countries. The FY 1965 program for Vietnam had grown from an original $205.8 million established in July 1964 to $278.8 million by 16 February 1965. CINCPAC estimated that actual FY 1965 requirements for Vietnam as of 2 April 1965 stood at $327.5 million. Requirements for MAP programs in other countries such as Korea, China, Greece, and Turkey had lessened somewhat but these countries were important to the collective defense arrangements of the United States and any cuts in their already reduced programs

could have serious political repercussions. Such cuts might also create uncertainty in the minds of other US allies as to US sincerity and true intentions.

Several steps had been taken in the past to simplify the MAP system. Authority had been delegated to unified commands and the military departments to make changes to the MAP without the Office of the Secretary of Defense approval for high-volume, low-value transactions without policy significance. Also, the changes in line-item records were made by the military departments after implementation. Another technique, the "shopping list," had been employed infrequently to obtain early high-level decision to provide some unprogrammed items which were, in effect, unforeseen requirements. These expedients did not alter the basic MAP system, which required a high level of detailed planning and centralized management. The Military Construction Program (MCP) under the MAP was more inflexible than other MAP procedures because of stringent legislative barriers which imposed peacetime restrictions on military construction appropriations that unduly lengthened lead time for approval and funding of vital construction projects in RVN. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended to the Secretary of Defense that he immediately increase the availability of funds for both the MAP and Service programs to support Southeast Asia actions through use of his appropriation transfer authority. They also recommended that he develop supplemental appropriation requests for submission to Congress at an early date.29

The Joint Chiefs of Staff pointed out that the situation in RVN, Thailand, and Laos was beyond the scope of the MAP as presently set up. The MAP system required a level of detailed planning and centralized management warranted only under peacetime conditions. This system, said the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with its requirement for close fiscal control and resultant delays, denied responsible commanders the flexibility needed in a wartime situation. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that "MAP procedures for the RVN, Thailand, and Laos, and all other MAP supported International Military Assistance Forces which may be deployed to Southeast Asia, should be streamlined and separated from the world-wide MAP."30

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.

Communications for Command Control

The Joint Chiefs of Staff reviewed for the Secretary the progress that had been made since the United States had started building up and improving communications/electronics systems for command and control in Southeast Asia in 1961 and 1962. The United States had, for example, built a BACK PORCH tropospheric scatter system, a US tactical operations-intelligence radio network, a Tactical Air Control system, a commercial microwave communications system in northeast Thailand and the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, and had set up a hamlet radio program. SYNCOM satellites were being employed operationally, and a WET WASH submarine cable had been extended into the area. However, further improvements were necessary to meet the growing demands on communications systems. As in the case of military construction the machinery employed within the Defense establishment for approving and arranging communications/electronics projects costing more than $100,000 was cumbersome and slow. As an example, one project, the "Integrated US Wideband Communications System for Southeast Asia," first called for by CINCPAC in October 1964 and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 13 November 1964, was still undergoing administrative processing and no implementing directive had yet been issued. Other projects had been called for by CINCPAC and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were currently reviewing them. If these projects were approved, it was essential that some short-cut methods be developed so that they might be implemented much more quickly than normal procedures would allow.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary that the lack of cryptographically secure voice communications equipment was especially serious in Vietnam. The equipment in-country was almost completely occupied and in constant use. Among measures needed to solve this problem were the withdrawal of such equipment from service in other areas, particularly the CONUS, for redistribution in the PACOM area, and provision of additional funds for increasing production of a new generation of voice security equipment and ancillary devices to adapt this equipment to PACOM employment.31

Improvement in Transportation Capabilities

The transportation systems within the United States and from the United States to PACOM and Southeast Asia were modern,

31. Ibid.

well organized, and capable of being expanded rapidly. The Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the Secretary that support of a greatly increased effort in Vietnam would probably require augmentation of the systems both by military reserve and civilian commercial capabilities. This would be complicated by the ceiling established by the Secretary of Defense for FY 1966 on funding of commercial contract airlift. The expansion of the war in Vietnam would require some changes in the DOD Five Year Force Structure and Financial Program so that elements of the active forces scheduled for transfer to the reserves could be kept on active status. These included C-124 and KC97 aircraft and some troopships. The delivery of some new aircraft, particularly the C-141, should be expedited through accelerated production.

J-4

The capacity to receive and discharge cargo and personnel at ports and airfields in Vietnam was marginal and prompt action would have to be taken to increase this capacity. To assist in this, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, the engineer and transportation personnel already requested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 15 January should be accelerated. RVN port facilities were limited for the receipt and discharge of vessels. Discharge in stream and over-the-beach would be necessary. Lighterage craft were on their way to the PACOM from the United States but there were insufficient organized units in the active Army to keep these craft operating without depleting the forces for support of other missions.

Balance of Payments

On 1 October 1964 the Secretary of Defense had, in a memorandum to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, set forth the policy on balance of payments. He had stated at that time "In view of the uncertainties involved in Southeast Asia at this time, it is my intention that balance of payments considerations should not adversely affect the combat effectiveness of our forces directly or imminently engaged in Southeast Asia." Keeping this in mind, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their memorandum of 2 April recommended that the Secretary adjust the balance of payments goals for contractual services in such a manner as to separate costs of operations in Southeast Asia from the achievement of totals established for other areas. "Balance of payments restrictions," they

said, "should not limit the expenditure of funds in the RVN or in those areas in direct support of the war in that area."[32]

In a detailed annex to their memorandum the Joint Chiefs of Staff made additional specific recommendations on each of the major areas, i.e., funding, personnel, communications, that they had considered pertinent.[33]

These recommendations were being made almost simultaneously with Presidential decisions that were to change the course of the war and that cast the United States into the role of a primary participant in the fight against the VC and their sponsor, North Vietnam. The Secretary of Defense had already indicated that he stood ready to support many of the adjustments, all of which had fiscal implications, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were now proposing be made.

In a memorandum dated 1 March 1965, the Secretary of Defense had told the Secretaries of the Services, the Military Chiefs of the Services, and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, that he wanted it clearly understood that there was an unlimited appropriation available for the financing of aid to Vietnam. "Under no circumstances," he said, "is lack of money to stand in the way of aid to that nation." Such assistance would be provided wherever it was needed, either through MAP or through the "application of U.S. forces and their associated equipment."[34]

32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. (S) Memo, SecDef to SecNav et al., 1 Mar 65, Att to JCS 2343/535, JMF 9155.3 (1 Mar 65).