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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-555-67

17 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Increased Pressures on North Vietnam (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to:

a. NSAM 288, dated 17 March 1964, subject: "Implementation of South Vietnam Program (U)."

b. JCSM-982-64, dated 23 November 1964, subject: "Courses of Action in Southeast Asia (U)."

c. JCSM-811-65, dated 10 November 1965, subject: "Future Operations and Force Deployments with Respect to the War in Vietnam (U)."

2. (U) The purpose of this memorandum is to identify those military actions consistent with present policy guidelines which would serve to increase pressures on North Vietnam (NVN), thereby accelerating the rate of progress toward achievement of the US objective in South Vietnam.

3. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that NVN is paying heavily for its aggression and has lost the initiative in the South. They further consider that many factors--though not uniform nor necessarily controlling--indicate a military trend favorable to Free World Forces in Vietnam. South Vietnam, in the face of great difficulty, is making slow progress on all fronts--military, political, and economic. However, pace of progress indicates that, if acceleration is to be achieved, an appropriate increase in military pressure is required.

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TOP SECRET CONT. 5A

Copy No. 21
Case No. 94-F-0532
T.S. No. 94-JS-041
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4. ~~(S)~~ Military operations in Southeast Asia have been conducted within a framework of policy guidelines established to achieve US objectives without expanding the conflict. Principal among these policy guidelines are:

- a. We seek to avoid widening the war into a conflict with Communist China or the USSR.
- b. We have no present intention of invading NVN.
- c. We do not seek the overthrow of the Government of NVN.
- d. We are guided by the principles set forth in the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962.

5. ~~(TS)~~ Although some progress is being made within this framework, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the rate of progress has been and continues to be slow, largely because US military power has been restrained in a manner which has reduced significantly its impact and effectiveness. Limitations have been imposed on military operations in four ways:

- a. The attacks on the enemy military targets have been on such a prolonged, graduated basis that the enemy has adjusted psychologically, economically, and militarily; e.g., inured themselves to the difficulties and hardships accompanying the war, dispersed their logistic support system, and developed alternate transport routes and a significant air defense system.
- b. Areas of sanctuary, containing important military targets, have been afforded the enemy.
- c. Covert operations in Cambodia and Laos have been restricted.
- d. Major importation of supplies into NVN by sea has been permitted.

6. ~~(TS)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that US objectives in Southeast Asia can be achieved within the policy framework set forth in paragraph 4, above, providing the level of assistance the enemy receives from his communist allies is not significantly increased and there is no diminution of US efforts. However, progress will continue to be slow so long as present limitations on military operations continue in effect. Further, at our present pace, termination of NVN's military effort is not expected

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2

~~SENSITIVE~~

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~~TOP SECRET~~

to occur in the near future. Set forth in the Appendix are those actions which can be taken in the near future within the present framework of policy guidelines to increase pressures on NVN and accelerate progress toward the achievement of US objectives. They require a relaxation or removal of certain limitations on operations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that expansion of US efforts entails some additional risk. They believe that as a result of this expansion the likelihood of overt introduction of Soviet Bloc/CPR combat forces into the war would be remote. Failure to take additional action to shorten the Southeast Asia conflict also entails risks as new and more efficient weapons are provided to NVN by the Soviet Union and as USSR/CPR support of the enemy increases.

7. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that they be authorized to direct the actions in the Appendix.

8. (S) This memorandum is intended to respond to the questions raised by the President at the White House luncheon on 12 September 1967; therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff request that this memorandum be submitted to the President.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS WITHIN PRESENT GUIDELINES WHICH COULD RESULT IN ADDED PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY

SPECIFIC ACTIONS

1. Hai Phong and Hanoi prohibited areas. 2. Hanoi and Hai Phong restricted areas to be properly controlled. 3. Restricted attacks against LOC, rail roads up to five miles from CFR border. 4. CMC/PAC strike and restrike prerogative 1 target outside of redefined restricted area. 5. To authorize strikes against targets in defined restricted areas on a case-by-case basis (to include Hai Phong port). 6. Replenish as required, mine fields in channels and harbors at Hai Phong, Hon Gai and Vinh. 7. Publish warning notice to mariners. 8. Extend mine fields as necessary to bypassing.

9. The of navigable RVN rivers. Mine navigable waterways throughout RVN to within 5 NM of border (authority currently limited to those of 20° N).

10. Offensive naval surface force operations 11. RVN military/logistic watercraft and 12. Suitable targets in RVN ashore north of latitude to the redefined buffer zone 13. RUCON operations now limited to south of 20° N).

14. Based SAM missiles against RVN aircraft both over and in airspace over RVN.

15. Bombing of Laotian waterways traffic (SEKONG). 16. Special saturation bombing interdiction air-zones in Laos, e-g, northwest of DMZ, Nape Gia Passes.

17. Night of Laos, by day and night, by B-52s en route from targets in Vietnam or Laos. 18. Bombing attacks on Laos. 19. Requirement for cover strikes in SVN when 20. Targets in Laos.

21. Authorized size of exploitation force.

22. Current DANIEL BOONE reconnaissance program 23. Ending the area of operations for the full 24. Of the SVN/Cambodia border; authorize use 25. Helicopters; remove limitations on number of 26. Missions. 27. DANIEL BOONE forces to conduct limited 28. Search/interdiction activity; authorize calling in 29. Air strikes on enemy targets near the border.

30. Actions to increase the credibility of a 31. National resistance movement in RVN. 32. Intelligence collection and covert physical 33. Action missions.

ADVANTAGES

34. Greater destruction of RVN war-supporting 35. Facilities. 36. Increased destruction of air defenses 37. Including airfields. 38. Reduce logistic support of NVA/VC. 39. Secure efficient use of available forces. 40. Permissible impact on reducing friendly 41. Casualties, particularly in critical 42. Areas. 43. I Corps/DMZ area. 44. Permits timely reaction against targets 45. Of opportunity.

46. Reduce import of war-supporting materials.

47. Interdict internal waterway LOCs. 48. Destroy waterborne logistic craft and block channels. 49. Require great RVN sweeping effort. 50. Reduce POL and other cargo distribution.

51. Interdict coastal water traffic. 52. Reduce use of land LOCs by harassing gunfire.

53. Increase destruction of enemy air forces. 54. Inhibit enemy air operations.

55. Increased interdiction of LOCs and reduction of 56. Supplies to NVA/VC.

57. Greater operational efficiency and quicker reaction 58. Time for B-52s.

59. Disrupt sanctuaries. 60. Increased efficiency of interdiction. 61. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC.

62. Disrupt sanctuaries. 63. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC. 64. Improve intelligence. 65. Discourage use of Cambodia as sanctuary for NVA/VC 66. Forces. 67. Provide self-defense of US forces.

68. Harass RVN within country. 69. Require RVN to divert resources to internal security.

RISKS/IMPACT

70. Charges of escalation. 71. Increased use of CFR airfields for storage or 72. Training, but not for combat missions. 73. Increased CFR AAA and Engineer support in 74. RVN.

75. Soviet Union may cancel existing negotiations 76. With the US and initiate propaganda campaign. 77. Possible Soviet activities to increase tensions 78. In other parts of the world but major con- 79. Frontations would be unlikely. CFR would 80. Strengthen defensive posture and may increase 81. Military aid to RVN; unlikely to initiate 82. Offensive air or surface actions.

83. No specific military reaction from communists. 84. Some increased propaganda against US action.

85. Possible naval and air reaction by RVN in 86. Northern waters. 87. CFR or Soviets might provide additional patrol 88. Craft.

89. RVN air and surface attack possible. 90. USSR or CFR might provide RVN with coast 91. Defense missiles.

92. No immediate reaction other than propaganda. 93. No Laos reaction.

94. Possible political reactions.

95. Souvanna would probably not object if he could 96. Deny the actions and avoid publicity. 97. Possible increased NVA forces and activities 98. In Laos.

99. Cambodia would protest expansion of operations 100. To Cambodian soil and might seek to defend 101. Its territory. 102. Adverse political reaction.

103. RVN would accuse the United States of attempting 104. To bring about downfall of Government of RVN.