History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

and

The War in Vietnam

1971–1973

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Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with his JCS colleagues, January 1971. *Left to right:* Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., Chief of Naval Operations; General William C. Westmoreland, Chief of Staff, USA; Admiral Moorer; General John D. Ryan, Chief of Staff, USAF; General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., Commandant, USMC.

History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and The War in Vietnam 1971–1973

Willard J. Webb

and

Walter S. Poole

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Foreword

The series of volumes titled *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam* covers the activities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with regard to Vietnam from 1945 to the final withdrawal of US military forces in early 1973. The first volume describes the beginning of the US involvement through the Geneva Conference in 1954; the second volume carries the story through 1959. The third volume, in three parts, traces the expansion of the American commitment in the years 1960–1968. The fourth volume covers the adoption of the policy of Vietnamization and the beginning of the withdrawal of US forces during 1969–1970. The final volume describes the continuing withdrawal and the negotiation of a political settlement; it concludes with the departure of all US troops in the period January through March 1973.

The classified version of this, the final volume, was planned and written by Mr. Willard J. Webb with the assistance of Mrs. Helen Bailey, Mr. Lee Nash, and Mr. William Tobin. Mrs. Bailey researched and wrote initial drafts of Chapters 3, 4, and 6. Mr. Nash did the research and wrote the initial draft of Chapter 1 and did much of the research for Chapter 7, and Mr. Tobin did the research and wrote the initial draft of Appendix 1. Final revision and editing were directed by Dr. Robert J. Watson; Mrs. Janet W. Ball prepared the classified manuscript for publication.

Many individuals assisted with the preparation of the original manuscript. The staffs of the JCS Records and Information Retrieval and Declassification and Archival branches of the Documents Division of the Joint Staff supported the search of Joint Staff files that formed the backbone of the research effort. Special thanks are also due to Mr. Amos Good and the staff of the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to Major Robert Kimmet, USA, of the National Security Council staff for assistance with the records of their offices.

During 1999–2000, Dr. Walter S. Poole revised the classified manuscript to take account of the great amount of material that has become available since the original manuscript was written in the 1970s. A major new primary source, the official diary of Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, contained material that proved particularly illuminating and compelled significant revision of important sections of the volume. The chapters covering the Laotian incursion, Operation LAM SON 719; the North Vietnamese offensive in 1972, and the Christmas bombing are almost entirely new. The section "Why Vietnamization Failed" and the final chapter "The JCS Role: An Overview" have been added. The publication of Henry A. Kissinger's *White House Years* led to reduction of the treatment of the Paris peace talks. Similarly, sections of the classified manuscript dealing with American public opinion and the pacification program were deleted as they have been superseded by William M. Hammond's *The Military and the Media: 1962–1968*, and *The Military and the Media: 1968–1973* and Richard A.

Hunt's *Pacification*. Dr. Graham A. Cosmas read the revised manuscript and made several additions to the text that was then edited by Dr. David A. Armstrong. Ms. Susan Carroll prepared the Index and Ms. Penny Norman prepared the volume for publication.

The volume was reviewed for declassification by the appropriate US Government departments and agencies and cleared for release. The volume is an official publication of the Joint Chiefs of Staff but, inasmuch as the text has not been considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it must be construed as descriptive only and does not constitute the official position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on any subject.

Washington, DC

DAVID A. ARMSTRONG
Director for Joint History

Preface

The volume describes the formulation of policies and decisions that completed the US withdrawal from Vietnam and shifted the burden of combat to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. Using the sources to which he had access, Mr. Willard J. Webb completed a manuscript soon after the war ended. Since that time, a critical source has become available. Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during 1970–1974, kept a daily diary describing his conversations, meetings that he attended, and from April 1972 onward, verbatim transcripts of many of his telephone conversations. With this new material, Dr. Walter S. Poole substantially revised the chapters that covered the Laotian incursion of 1971, the Easter offensive of 1972, the Christmas bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong, and the Paris peace accords of January 1973 followed by their rapid unraveling. He also made small changes to other chapters.

It has been argued that a new US strategy, initiated during 1968-1969, reached a successful culmination in 1972 by showing that the South Vietnamese could stand on their own. The weight of evidence in JCS records—particularly the material in Admiral Moorer's diary—does not support that argument. For President Richard Nixon, Dr. Henry Kissinger, and Admiral Moorer, the outcome of the 1971 Laotian incursion raised grave doubts about whether American efforts to "Vietnamize" the war would succeed. In May 1972, the collapse at Quang Tri convinced them that the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces could not cope with the North Vietnamese attack and that American air power had become indispensable to the Saigon government's survival. Thereafter, the administration's actions can be characterized as attempts to insure that there would be at least a "decent interval" between the signing of peace accords and the dissolution of South Vietnam.

Walter S. Poole

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1

LAM SON 719: The "Moment of Truth"

Inception

The North Vietnamese had been using three major lines of communication (LOC) to supply and replenish their forces in South Vietnam. From October 1966 to January 1970, they relied heavily on the port of Kompong Som (then Sihanoukville) to bring materiel into the southern part of the Republic of Vietnam. The coup that deposed Prince Sihanouk and put Lon Nol in power closed that route. A second major LOC ran from ports in North Vietnam down the South China Sea to many points on the South Vietnamese coast, but by the fall of 1970 MARKET TIME operations had effectively interdicted this sampan-borne source of supply. The one vital link left in 1971 was the route that ran south through the Laotian panhandle.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail was an ever-changing network of paths and roads. The Ban Karai and Mu Gia passes were important entry points from North Vietnam into Laos. From there, men and supplies moved southward to Base Area 604, located on Route 9 about 40 kilometers west of the Laotian border with South Vietnam. From Base Area 604, men and supplies usually moved southeast into Base Area 611 or south to Base Area 612 near Saravane, and then into South Vietnam.

For North Vietnam, keeping the Ho Chi Minh Trail open became a top priority. During the spring of 1970, the communists seized Attopeu and Saravane in southern Laos and threatened the Bolovens Plateau, apparently intending to develop routes farther west of the Laos-South Vietnam border. Within North Vietnam, supplies were shifted southward to build stockpiles that US commanders believed

could be used to support a "crash" logistical campaign. Bulldozers and work crews were seen at the Ban Karai pass and at Tchepone. A US air interdiction campaign, COMMANDO HUNT V, began on 10 October 1970, concentrating against targets just west of the passes. The movement of trucks in the Laotian panhandle fell below the 1969 rate.[1]

President Nixon sensed an opportunity to strike a decisive blow against Hanoi. Senior policymakers in Washington and Saigon were buoyed up by the apparent success of the Cambodian operation. When Ambassador Ellsworth T. Bunker met the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 18 November 1970, he told them that everyone should be pleased with the military aspects of the war and the progress of Vietnamization. Bunker reported that General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., USA, the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, rated South Vietnamese planning and execution of operations in Cambodia as "very impressive." The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., asked about the quality of middle-level South Vietnamese leadership. Bunker claimed that there had been improvements at the province and district levels; corps commanders were "better than ever before. We now talk about their six or seven best divisions, where we used to talk about their best one or two."[2]

The Army Chief of Staff, General William C. Westmoreland, presented to the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) a "Hand in Glove" plan, emphasizing short raids, feints, and mobile operations to disrupt movement along the Trail, but the administration did not pursue his proposal. On 5 November, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, asked the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), to submit plans for the next six months. Admiral John S. McCain, Jr. answered that he anticipated a massive logistics effort by the enemy during the coming dry season. To counter it, McCain presented two plans. The first consisted of coordinated operations by Laotian, Thai and South Vietnamese forces, each operating within its own national boundaries. The second depended upon the Royal Lao Government abrogating the 1962 Geneva accords that had established Laotian neutrality. If that happened, CINCPAC proposed combined operations by Thai, Laotian and South Vietnamese forces inside the Laotian panhandle, to cut the Trail and destroy North Vietnamese units in Southeastern Laos.[3]

By early December, the White House was working upon three plans that could be executed concurrently:

1. A major drive by one, two or three South Vietnamese divisions into the Laotian panhandle, using extensive air cover, to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
2. A strong spoiling attack by South Vietnamese forces into Cambodia, again with strong US air support.
3. Covert operations by South Vietnamese units into North Vietnam.

Before matters could proceed further, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu's approval had to be gained. The Deputy Assistant to the President for

National Security Affairs, Brigadier General Alexander M. Haig, USA, went to Saigon in mid-December for this purpose. If General Abrams deemed the plans feasible, Haig would try to get Thieu to commit to a timetable for executing them.[4]

Concurrently, Admiral McCain told General Abrams to start planning, in coordination with General Cao Van Vien, Chairman of the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff, for major ground operations into the Laotian panhandle. The United States would provide maximum air support to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). In mid-December, just as Brigadier General Haig arrived in Saigon, Abrams submitted a plan in which a multi-regimental task force would seize the Tchepone area, operate within Base Area 604 to destroy stockpiles and facilities, and block major routes both north and south of the Tchepone area. His plan outlined an operation lasting three months. In Phase I, US ground forces would secure a forward operating base and airfield in western Quang Tri province, from which to support RVNAF operations. During Phase II, a South Vietnamese task force would drive into Laos and seize Tchepone; B–52 missions would be flown against Base Areas 611 and 604. In Phase III, South Vietnamese units would destroy enemy forces, stockpiles, pipelines and facilities. Phase IV, the withdrawal, would either be conducted along Route 9 or take the form of attacks to the southeast into Base Area 611; "stay behind" guerrillas and other forces would be inserted. The Cooper-Church amendment barred US ground forces and advisers from Laos and Cambodia, but helicopter gunships, troop and cargo lift would be provided. Abrams thought that this operation, which Admiral McCain whole-heartedly endorsed, would "strike at the heart of the logistic/infiltration network in the Laos panhandle" and would "substantially disrupt the enemy timetable for 1971 and significantly impact on his effort in 1972."[5]

General Abrams' plan reached Admiral Moorer on 15 December. The Chairman remarked that Abrams had abandoned his reluctance to endorse ambitious operations by the South Vietnamese because of "his growing faith in ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] capabilities." Moorer's inclination, he recorded in his diary, was "to go for what Abrams wants us to do . . . exactly like General Abrams wants us to do it *and in no other way*. However, we have to get authorities squared away before we get started." Moorer promptly sent Abrams and McCain a message generally concurring with attacks against Tchepone and the Chup rubber plantation, which lay roughly 25 miles inside Cambodia by the Mekong River. The Chairman took pains to be sure Abrams understood that he was "already sold on the plan and just need[ed] additional ammunition to sell it to higher authority."[6]

On 16 December, General Haig sent a very optimistic assessment from Saigon. One week later, President Richard M. Nixon reviewed the planning with Admiral Moorer, Brigadier General Haig, Dr. Henry Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird. Haig described a four-pronged effort: an ARVN attack up Route 9 to Tchepone; an operation by the ARVN 9th Division to clear Route 7 in Cambodia; an excursion into the Chup planta-

tion; and covert operations against North Vietnam. President Nixon stated that the objective of these operations was "an enduring South Vietnam." Admiral Moorer added that "the operation must succeed and, therefore, we should take such risks as are necessary." Nixon replied, "Let it succeed with a minimum low-key operation as far as US forces are concerned." Nixon asked for Secretary Laird's opinion of the Laotian operation. Laird replied, "Let's take a crack at it." The President then approved the Chup operation but called for further study of Tchepone.[7]

On 4 January 1971, Admiral Moorer formally asked Secretary Laird to approve the Laotian operation. He stressed that, since US troop strength and air assets would decrease, "this may be the last opportunity available to the RVNAF for a cross-border, dry season operation" into the Tchepone logistics hub. Laird and Moorer visited South Vietnam on 9–12 January. General Abrams emphasized to them that the South Vietnamese had become "very different people" from what they were before their lunge into Cambodia. President Thieu told Laird and Moorer that, in December, he had disregarded his commanders' advice and sent troops into Cambodia, where they thwarted a communist drive to isolate the capital of Phnom Penh. Admiral Moorer then flew to Hue where he reviewed operational aspects of the Laotian plan with Lieutenant General Huang Xuan Lam, who would be commanding the Tchepone thrust, and Lieutenant General James W. Sutherland, USA, Commanding General, XXIV Corps. Lam had served as Commanding General, I Corps, since 1966. His loyalty to President Thieu was plain—quelling a Buddhist uprising had been his first task—but he had never commanded a major offensive operation.[8]

In Washington, on 18 January, a MACV team briefed the JCS and other senior officials on General Abrams' plan for Laos. General Westmoreland raised no objection. Next day, at a meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Admiral Moorer, Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard, and the Director of Central Intelligence voted in favor of the Laotian operation. However, Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson objected that an incursion could alienate Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and lead to a north–south partitioning of Laos. In Vientiane, Ambassador McMurtrie Godley told Souvanna of the forthcoming incursion. Souvanna replied that he would have to protest publicly and would expect the ARVN to withdraw within a week or two. Otherwise, he feared that the Chinese would act in north Laos. Why, he asked, could not the operation occur in the tri-border areas and the highlands south of Route 110?[9]

Some last-minute doubts surfaced in Washington. The Chairman asked General Westmoreland to tailor his "Hand in Glove" plan in order to conduct the Laotian operation farther south, if the President so desired. On 26 January, Admiral Moorer passed along some queries to McCain and Abrams. Could the ARVN conduct its thrust without US helicopter support? What was the latest date on which Phase II, the actual entry into Laos, could be cancelled? President Nixon wanted to know what could be done in northern Cambodia if the Tchepone thrust was cancelled.

Which, the President asked, was preferable: a northern Cambodia operation or nothing at all?[10]

In what struck Dr. Kissinger as a petulant response, General Abrams recommended canceling the Laotian operation and opposed substituting ones elsewhere because they would have no more than nuisance value. There was no point, Abrams added, in continuing preparations for Phase I, and he intended to cancel them on 28 January. Admiral McCain concurred. The Chairman replied that the obstacle was primarily political, and told them to resubmit views based "on military considerations alone." Abrams answered by giving the Laotian operation his "unqualified support"; McCain called it "an exceptional opportunity to inflict the maximum damage against enemy personnel, materiel, and psychological pressure." On the afternoon of 27 January, after canvassing his advisers again, President Nixon ordered that all actions connected with Phase I of the Laotian operation proceed. A decision on Phase II, which Moorer told him could be cancelled on 48 hours' notice, was postponed.[11]

Phase I, designated DEWEY CANYON II, began at 0001 local time on 30 January, as US troops maneuvered to secure western Quang Tri province. An assault airstrip became operational at Khe Sanh by 3 February; Route 9 was repaired and cleared to the Laotian border by 5 February. Behind this cover, the better part of two South Vietnamese divisions massed at Khe Sanh in preparation for the cross-border attack. Meantime, at Secretary Laird's request, Admiral Moorer reviewed alternatives to occupying Tchepone and reported that none could substitute for it "in terms of anticipated results and effects on the enemy." The White House, however, was intensely concerned about the parlous state of congressional and public support for the war. President Nixon wanted the thrust presented to the media not as an invasion but as a raid into the Laotian sanctuaries, so that there could be no perception of defeat. On 3 February, Admiral Moorer called General Frederick C. Weyand, USA, Deputy COMUSMACV, to say that "the pressure back here is up to explosive proportions in terms of congressional pressure, media pressure, etc., but I am standing solid on this operation." Weyand commented that he thought this would be "the real turning point of the war." Moorer agreed, saying that was why he was "driving so hard."[12]

On 4 February, President Nixon authorized Phase II. Secretary Laird approved an execute message that would terminate operating authorities on 5 April, thereby limiting the Tchepone operation to six to eight weeks. Admiral Moorer promptly told Brigadier General Haig that he had "implored" Secretaries Laird and William P. Rogers not to impose a termination date and tell Congress about it, as the administration had done during the Cambodian incursion. The White House at once agreed that 5 April would not be treated as a deadline. "If we get a bloody nose," Dr. Kissinger told the WSAG, "we will get out early—on the other hand, if things go well we will stay."[13]

Advance Becomes Consolidation

Phase II opened on 8 February. The Vietnamese name, LAM SON 719, was given to operations in Laos.[14] The ARVN Airborne Division, with the 1st Armored Brigade attached, moved along Route 9 to seize A Loui, which was to serve as the launching point for the final assault on Tchepone. The ARVN 1st Infantry Division, advancing in tandem with the Airborne Division south of Route 9, protected the main force's left flank; ARVN Rangers on the north guarded its right flank. On 10 February, the Chairman informed Dr. Kissinger that General Abrams was "very pleased" with progress thus far but did not want the operation held to a strict timetable. Kissinger emphasized that the administration must remain united: "All our weaker friends need is for something to make them fall off and they will start trying to undermine the operation." Two days later, Moorer reported that things were going satisfactorily but hard fighting would begin soon. Kissinger asked whether General Abrams recognized that stopping the flow of supplies was the main objective, and that the "body count" mattered less. The Chairman assured him that Abrams knew this. The ARVN was moving deliberately, Moorer added, and establishing positions so that units would be in a strong posture as they moved westward across the panhandle.[15]

In fact, the ARVN had run into a superior North Vietnamese force fighting on a battlefield that the enemy had carefully prepared. Since the Cambodian incursions, the Politburo in Hanoi had anticipated additional cross-border offensives during the 1970–1971 Laotian dry season. The North Vietnamese leaders viewed the LAM SON 719 area, which they called the "Route 9-Southern Laos Area," as a likely theater for such attacks. Accordingly, in midsummer 1970, the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) General Staff began drawing up combat plans, deploying forces, and directing preparation of the battlefield. The enemy secretly shifted a main force division from Quang Nam Province in South Vietnam to the Route 9 front and established a provisional corps headquarters to control that division and several from North Vietnam in large-scale conventional combat. As the troops assembled, Group 559, the command that operated, maintained, and defended the Ho Chi Minh Trail, prepared its own units for combat, constructed fortifications, built additional roads for truck movement of supplies, and set up depots and a medical evacuation network.

By 8 February 1971, when the ARVN crossed the Laotian border, the North Vietnamese, by their own account, had massed some 60,000 troops in the Route 9-Southern Laos front. They included five main force divisions, two separate regiments, eight artillery regiments, three engineer regiments, three tank battalions, six anti-aircraft regiments, and eight sapper battalions, plus logistic and transportation units—according to North Vietnamese historians "our army's greatest concentration of combined-arms forces . . . up to that point." In and within easy reach of the operational area, Group 559 had accumulated supplies sufficient to support the force in combat for as long as four or five months.

The North Vietnamese had massed this combat power for a larger purpose than simply defending their critical supply route. They saw and were determined to seize an opportunity to fight a decisive battle on advantageous terms, destroy a large portion of Saigon's army, and thoroughly disrupt and discredit Vietnamization. Indicating the importance Hanoi assigned to the campaign, Colonel General Van Tien Dung, Deputy Chairman of the Politburo's Central Military Party Committee and Chief of the General Staff, journeyed to the front to oversee operations. On 31 January, in an address to the troops on the Route 9-Southern Laos front, the Communist Party Central Committee made clear the operation's objectives:

> The coming engagement will be a strategically decisive battle. We will fight not only to retain control of the strategic transportation corridor, but also to annihilate a number of units of the enemy's strategic reserve forces, to . . . deal a significant defeat to a portion of their "Vietnamization" plot, to advance our resistance effort to liberate South Vietnam and defend North Vietnam, to gloriously fulfill our international duty, and to hone our main force troops in the fires of combat. Our Army must certainly win this battle.[16]

What the allies had envisioned as a search-and-destroy operation similar to those in Cambodia turned into an intense combined arms conventional battle for which the ARVN was poorly prepared. From the beginning, the South Vietnamese met heavy resistance along Route 9 and in the flanking landing zones, where massed antiaircraft guns and artillery inflicted heavy losses in men and helicopters. As the battle developed, the ARVN firebases, especially those north of Route 9, came under attack by North Vietnamese infantry supported by armor and heavy long-range artillery. The enemy pushed the ARVN rangers and airborne troops off four key hilltops, inflicting heavy losses in personnel and equipment. At one position, the enemy overran and captured the commander and staff of the airborne division's 3d Brigade. American fighter-bombers, B–52s, and helicopter gunships took a heavy toll of the North Vietnamese, but the enemy continued to press the attack.[17]

On 13 February, as the speed and violence of the North Vietnamese response were becoming apparent, President Thieu halted the advance for three to five days, ostensibly to consolidate positions and destroy captured supplies. General Vien told Abrams that he hoped the ARVN would reach the high ground leading to Tchepone by 21 February. Admiral Moorer, on 17 February, reviewed matters with the Director, Joint Staff, Lieutenant General John W. Vogt, USAF. The North Vietnamese were moving reinforcements and had massed around 25,000 troops in the area, which was about the number that intelligence had forecast. Vogt reminded the Chairman that General Abrams had said he would welcome North Vietnamese reinforcements, because he would then be able to strike at them.[18]

Meanwhile, on 11 February, Admiral Moorer authorized an increase in the monthly level of tactical air sorties, so long as FY 1971 funding levels were not exceeded. A problem arose because the North Vietnamese had established troop

concentrations and antiaircraft defenses in a location north of Tchepone outside the areas authorized for B–52 strikes. General Abrams, considering bombing to be "essential," requested appropriate authority from CINCPAC and Ambassador Godley. Six camps for Laotian POWs were located in this area, and Abrams asked that the operating restriction around them be reduced from 3,000 to 1,500 meters. Ambassador Godley refused, citing "the potentially severe political repercussions associated with destruction of POW camps." General Abrams, strongly backed by CINCPAC, turned to the Chairman for support. The Director of Central Intelligence reported little indication that the POW camps were still occupied. Admiral Moorer, Secretary Laird and Secretary Rogers all favored the requested bombing without restriction. Ambassador Godley gave way and, on 20 February, CINCPAC approved bombing in that area for the duration of LAM SON 719. Concurrently, General Abrams asked for immediate action to permit 40 B–52 sorties daily through May, and more if the situation warranted it. LAM SON 719, he predicted, could become "one of the most decisive operations of the Southeast Asia conflict." Admiral McCain concurred, pointing out that heavy troop concentrations would present ideal targets for saturation bombing. The Chairman authorized this surge on 21 February.[19]

Even as the fighting in Laos intensified, General Abrams held to a consistently optimistic line in his situation reports while acknowledging the emerging difficulties. Officials in Washington, however, became increasingly concerned and pressed for more timely and accurate information on the operation. On 19 February, after an ARVN Ranger battalion had been driven off a firebase in a bloody combat, Admiral Moorer called General Abrams, who reported that the North Vietnamese "have gone all out for a real fight . . . and it is going to be a tough time over the next several days or maybe weeks." Dr. Kissinger telephoned the Chairman to ask when the ARVN would move forward. Moorer answered, "When they get logistics and the combat situation in hand."[20]

On 22 February, President Thieu told General Abrams that Phase III should begin in about three days. Once the Tchepone area had been cleaned out, Thieu said that he favored withdrawing over Route 922 through Base Area 611. When Abrams' message relaying this information reached Washington, Dr. Kissinger told Moorer that he interpreted it to mean that the ARVN would go in, spend a little time, and then pull right out. Why, Kissinger asked, were 10,000 ARVN reserves uncommitted? He hoped Abrams "did not entertain any thoughts of getting out of there because he has to stay in until April." Perhaps prompted by Brigadier General Haig, Kissinger remarked that ARVN units north of Route 9 had dug in, which would allow the North Vietnamese to attack one firebase at a time. Moorer wrote afterward: "I would like to explain to Kissinger that we are establishing a good solid logistics base," and would move forward when that task was done. President Nixon called the Chairman to ask for his evaluation. "It is tough going but we are coming along all right," Moorer responded. Nixon said that the

ARVN "must continue to take whatever casualties they have to in order to hold their ground and stay in there because that is all we need."[21]

Early on 23 February, General Westmoreland called the Chairman to say that Dr. Kissinger wanted to talk with him.[22] Westmoreland expressed to Moorer his "basic concern that the objective may be more ambitious than the troops can achieve." At the White House, Westmoreland gave Kissinger his view that targeting Tchepone with less than two divisions was too ambitious. Back when he was COMUSMACV, Westmoreland continued, he had concluded that four US divisions would be needed to cut the Trail. He now recommended, instead, "hit-and-run raids out of Khe Sanh to cut the trails at various points." Westmoreland then returned to the Pentagon and debriefed Moorer, who replied that "a mediocre commander in the field can do much better than an expert in Washington and that we should leave the operational commanders alone."[23]

At a JCS meeting on 24 February, while Admiral Moorer was away, General Westmoreland told the Service chiefs that he considered LAM SON 719 to be "a very high risk operation." His conclusions were that the operation had not gone according to plan, surprise was lost, resistance had proved greater than expected, the ARVN was attacking on a narrow rather than a broad front, and that Tchepone itself was open and flat, so that the surrounding high ground must be occupied. As to the Airborne Division, which had buckled under the initial North Vietnamese attacks, Westmoreland stated that the Commanding General "is not a fighter" and that the troops were not accustomed to conducting sustained operations. Ordinarily, they were employed on brief forays, often involving intensive combat, then pulled out of action for rest and rehabilitation. Hence, the Army Chief of Staff declared, "The airborne troops will die easily. . . . If they are defeated it will be a tremendous setback for Thieu."[24]

Early next morning, Admiral Moorer called General Chapman to ask about the previous day's JCS meeting. Chapman replied that, when Westmoreland was speaking, "he was astounded and that all he could do was sit there and scowl." A message from General Abrams arrived, conveying Thieu's new plan. Two Marine brigades would replace the airborne and ranger units; two regiments of the 1st Division would advance northwest. "At the conclusion of these operations," ARVN units would withdraw along Routes 9 and 922 back into South Vietnam. Abrams judged this plan "basically sound." He believed that, when carried out, it "will have positioned the Vietnamese forces firmly astride the enemy system."[25]

That afternoon the Chairman met with Dr. Kissinger, who brought up General Westmoreland's criticisms. Moorer retorted that Westmoreland had made no objection when MACV briefers presented the plan on 18 December, that he had concurred in it when polled by Secretary Laird, and that he had never before said anything about the weaknesses of the Airborne Division's commander and troops. Moorer next explained the new plan to the President and "made the point that this should be considered an area and that Tchepone as a point had really little, if any,

significance." Nixon seemed pleased by the plan and encouraged by the prospect of 6,000 ARVN reserves being committed.[26]

On 26 February, Admiral Moorer advised Secretary Laird that he rated the new plan "militarily sound":

> I am particularly gratified and impressed by the flexibility and adaptability of the RVN forces . . . The modified plan exploits the enemy's decision to engage in large unit actions which makes him more vulnerable to both air and ground attacks. It also provides an opportunity for additional ARVN units to gain battlefield experience, particularly in the area of unit leadership.

That evening, Admiral Moorer reviewed matters with Rear Admiral R. C. Robinson, the Chairman's liaison officer with the NSC Staff. Robinson told him that Brigadier General Haig did not understand why more ARVN troops were not being committed to LAM SON 719. Moorer observed: "this is the moment of truth for South Vietnam and that they should be thinking in terms of committing whatever . . . is necessary to ensure success."[27]

At this "moment of truth," Admiral Moorer had to choose between the appraisals of General Abrams and General Westmoreland. Two factors determined the Chairman's choice. First, like many military men, he was convinced that civilians' penchant for micro-management and half-measures had badly crippled the war effort during 1965–68, hence his remark that a mediocre field commander could do much better than an expert in Washington. For much of LAM SON 719, Moorer discounted the criticisms of Dr. Kissinger and Brigadier General Haig. Instead, he accepted and doggedly defended General Abrams' optimistic appreciations. Second, entirely apart from that issue, Moorer did not hold Westmoreland in high regard.[28] He was at odds with Westmoreland over budget priorities and revision of the Unified Command Plan. Westmoreland's criticisms, coming in mid-operation, struck Moorer and evidently General Chapman as a belated effort at self-justification. Their reaction was unfortunate, because hindsight shows that Westmoreland had identified ARVN weaknesses that eluded the field commanders.

"Bugging Out?"

On 1 March, General Abrams cabled Washington an assurance: ". . . [I]t is clear to me that President Thieu and General Vien are determined to fight these two hard battles [at Tchepone and Chup]. They realize their casualties will be high but they will take it and fight the battle to win." President Nixon asked whether he still believed that the ARVN were fighting well. The Chairman replied "unequivocally that they were." That evening, however, Rear Admiral Robinson told Admiral Moorer that the White House remained concerned about the small weight of ARVN effort compared to the forces available, the drastic compression of the ARVN front,

and the lack of positive tone about what would happen next. Dr. Kissinger communicated to Ambassador Bunker his concern about the constant changes of plan:

> Since receiving information on these various conceptual approaches, events on the ground have not confirmed our ability to accomplish them. . . . An additional factor which concerns me greatly is the limited ARVN strength which has been involved in this operation at a time when the enemy has obviously committed his full resources. . . .
>
> We will do our best to hold the fort. But we must know what we are up against. There is no chance to keep panic from setting in if we are constantly outstripped by events.[29]

The ARVN advance resumed on 3 March. Next morning, General Abrams advised Admiral Moorer: "I think we are going to get done what we set out to get done." He described Lieutenant General Lam as "tough, determined, careful and his spirits are good today." Abrams rated the ARVN 1st Division as "solid from top to bottom." As to the Chup operation, where Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Minh had taken command after the aggressive Lieutenant General Do Cao Tri died in a helicopter crash, Abrams expected to see substantial accomplishments and called Minh an officer "whose credentials are in excellent order." President Nixon, at a press conference that evening, quoted General Abrams' evaluation that "the South Vietnamese by themselves can hack it and they can give a better account of themselves even than the North Vietnamese units."[30]

By 6 March, Dr. Kissinger wrote later, the South Vietnamese were close enough to Tchepone "to sustain the claim of having captured it." Two days later, General Abrams cabled the Chairman that "[m]orale and confidence of the ARVN Commanders has risen appreciably during the last three or four days and I believe they would willingly accept almost any mission assigned." However, he continued, there was a "general feeling" among ARVN commanders "that their mission has been accomplished and it is now time to withdraw. They do not concede that there is still much to be done." Early on 9 March, Abrams reported that President Thieu talked about pulling out of Laos completely by 5 April, allegedly from fear that US air support would end on that date. After contacting Secretary Laird and Dr. Kissinger, the Chairman informed Abrams that authorities would be extended. Moorer also urged Abrams to impress upon President Thieu that this was the RVNAF's last chance to make a dramatic impression upon the North Vietnamese. The White House wondered whether Thieu had seized upon a pretext to justify a quick pullout. Accordingly, Kissinger sent Ambassador Bunker a cable that ended as follows: "We have not gone through all of this agony just for the few favorable headlines achieved as a result of recent successes and would hope that President Thieu would view the situation from the same perspective."[31]

Although some US officials were not willing to recognize it, the "turning point" already had been passed. On 11 March, Dr. Kissinger told Admiral Moorer that the President wanted the ARVN still to be in Laos when he announced the next round

of US troop withdrawals on 7 April. Kissinger said that he did not mind the ARVN moving out of Tchepone as long as the southward flow of men and materiel was stopped. Moorer replied that the major roads would remain cut until "deep into April. We have the initiative now." Next day, Abrams reported that President Thieu planned to stay in Laos by rotating units and temporarily withdrawing some of them. Abrams and Bunker judged this plan militarily sound and suited to preserving a good public image after the operation ended. A skeptical Dr. Kissinger observed to the Chairman that the ARVN had found few supply caches near Tchepone and that the North Vietnamese had just completed an addition to the Ho Chi Minh Trail that bypassed the battle zone.[32]

The North Vietnamese by now had massed five divisions with perhaps 45,000 troops—more than twice the ARVN force in Laos—for counterattacks. On 14–15 March, they drove the South Vietnamese out of Fire Support Base LOLO, three miles south of Route 9. At Secretary Laird's staff meeting on 15 March, General Westmoreland asserted that ARVN tactics were bad and criticized the spiking and abandoning of artillery pieces at LOLO.[33] "In general," Moorer recorded, "he badmouthed the whole LAM SON 719 operation." Next day, Admiral Moorer reassured President Nixon that "things were going pretty well" and the ARVN were carrying out the plan to move units down to Route 914. Moorer asserted that enemy movements through the general area of LAM SON 719 had been "severely disrupted," and that ARVN alleged by the American media to have "fled" were merely moving to higher ground. Moorer later telephoned Lieutenant General Charles A. Corcoran, USA, Chief of Staff, Pacific Command. Corcoran said that he was "beginning to doubt the ARVN were really down on Route 914 in strength. . . . "[34]

On 17 March, General Abrams reported that Lieutenant General Lam did not intend to terminate Phase III until 10 or 15 April, when Phase IV would begin. Lam's plans, however, provided neither for continuing the interdiction of Route 914 nor for moving eastward through Base Area 611. Dr. Kissinger called Moorer to say that he did not understand Abrams' report and wanted to know how long the ARVN would stay in the strategically important positions—Route 914 and the intersection of Routes 99 and 92. Moorer simply repeated that, on 15 April, Lam would end Phase III and start Phase IV, concentrating primarily in Base Area 611. But the Chairman evidently had misgivings. That evening, in a telephone conversation with Lieutenant General Corcoran, Moorer said it looked as though the ARVN had abandoned the plan to attack Muong Nong in Base Area 611. Further, the Chairman suspected that the South Vietnamese had suffered many more casualties than they had reported. Corcoran agreed on both counts, commenting that high casualties probably accounted for Thieu's change of plan. Moorer sent Abrams a cable cautioning: "the redeployment of ARVN forces as outlined . . . could fuel to the current pessimistic press reports claiming a rout of Vietnamese units from Laos. . . . We run the risk of losing most of our high-level political support for prosecuting LAM SON

719 to a successful conclusion and of undermining widespread confidence in the success of Vietnamization to date."[35]

President Nixon spoke angrily to Brigadier General Haig about relieving General Abrams and sent Haig to Vietnam for a first-hand appraisal. Early on 18 March, Admiral Moorer called Abrams to ask for his assessment of the tactical situation. Abrams advised that withdrawals were "proceeding in an orderly fashion." The Chairman observed that Thieu seemed "to be bobtailing this operation," and wondered whether he was unwilling to take more risks for political reasons. A Vietnamese presidential election was slated for September, and a lengthy casualty list would alienate voters. Abrams said that he would talk with Thieu and report back.[36]

The Chairman next telephoned Dr. Kissinger, who had nothing good to say about LAM SON 719. The ARVN, Kissinger noted, were not replacing units supposedly being "rotated" out of Laos. They were off Route 914, "strung along like sausage" on Route 9, and definitely were not headed for Base Area 611. Kissinger's conclusion: ". . . it certainly looks to him like they are 'bugging out'." Admiral Moorer then conferred with the President and Dr. Kissinger at the White House. Nixon said that if the press created the impression that the ARVN withdrawal was really a rout, then Thieu's standing in South Vietnam and around the world would suffer. The problem, the President stressed, lay in maintaining a position with Congress and the public that did not require continual changes.[37]

On the morning of 19 March, General Abrams informed the Chairman that President Thieu expected to complete an orderly, well-executed withdrawal between 5 and 8 April. Before then, Thieu wanted to carry out a raid against either the depot at Muong Nong or the junction of Routes 914, 92, and 921. Abrams also reported that General Weyand had met with Lieutenant General Lam and reviewed fire support plans for covering the retreat: "The support is really lined up and they should be able to pull it off in good shape." Lam was planning an accelerated withdrawal, but Weyand claimed that Thieu would not let him do it. Admiral Moorer relayed Abrams' report to the President. Nixon asked whether the Muong Nong raid would occur in April; Moorer replied that it would. The Chairman agreed with the President "that the real field of battle was in the public affairs arena."[38]

Later that morning, Admiral Moorer had another tense conversation with Dr. Kissinger. Moorer related that the ARVN "have a real solid plan for providing full fire support during withdrawals. Kissinger replied that they have had full solid plans for the past six weeks but none of them have been executed." What "sticks in his craw," Kissinger continued, "is that when they took Tchepone they should have told us what they wanted to do. Instead, they got us babbling about the wrong things and now it looks like a defeat. . . . " He "frankly" did not believe they would execute the raid on Muong Nong. Kissinger read a cable just received from Brigadier General Haig in Saigon, stating that "in his judgment the ARVN have lost their stomach for Laos and the problem isn't to keep them in but rather to influence them to pull out in an orderly fashion."[39]

The ARVN withdrawal, conducted mainly along Route 9, ran from 17 until 24 March. A North Vietnamese ambush on 19 March littered the road with wrecked vehicles. Artillery pieces were abandoned, and a good many men had to make their way on foot to landing zones for evacuation.[40] American media carried pictures of ARVN soldiers clinging to the skids of US helicopters. On 23 March, Admiral Moorer reviewed the situation with Lieutenant General Melvin Zais, USA, Director, J–3, and Lieutenant General Richard T. Knowles, USA, Assistant to the Chairman. Both officers recently had completed tours in Vietnam. General Zais related that Dr. Kissinger had asked him the previous day whether ARVN morale was shattered. Zais replied that it had not been; some units performed splendidly. The Chairman told Zais that he was troubled by General Westmoreland's adverse comments about the Airborne Division's commander. "It seems to me that they fought well," Moorer recorded. "Both Knowles and Zais agreed in my assessment."[41]

LAM SON 719 ended on a sour note. Generals Lam and Sutherland agreed upon a plan for two battalions to assault Muong Nong and remain there for several days. The US contribution would consist of B–52s, gunships, troop-carrying helicopters, and 24-hour coverage by forward air controllers. President Nixon called the operation "vital if we are to end LAM SON 719 on an upbeat note and give the South Vietnamese a credible image as a continuous threat to the enemy." But the raid, slated for 28 March, was cancelled because heavy antiaircraft fire prevented tactical air strikes from clearing the area. When Admiral Moorer passed along this news, Dr. Kissinger's reaction was blunt: ". . . our tigers can't go through with it." Moorer said that they would try again against other targets. Kissinger replied: "we don't want to look ridiculous and land in some uninhabited area or on a mountaintop." Moorer assured him that they would only do something useful. During 31 March–1 April, ARVN raiders occupied Cua Viet in Base Area 611; they reported 85 enemy killed by air, one killed in action, and a moderate amount of supplies destroyed.[42] By this time, too, the Chup operation was petering out. President Thieu promised to replace one particularly dilatory colonel but delayed doing so.[43]

In retrospect, the "moment of truth" had revealed the Saigon government's shortcomings. President Thieu's performance during LAM SON 719 resembled President Ngo Dinh Diem's policy of preserving politically dependable units and declaring phantom victories, although in Thieu's case caution perhaps was justifed considering the unexpected strength of the opposition in Laos. Perhaps LAM SON 719 gave South Vietnam a year's respite. Probably, though, this display of the RVNAF's weakness emboldened Hanoi to bid for victory in 1972. Hanoi's official history declared in retrospect that the "Route 9-Southern Laos victory" marked "a new level of maturity for our army and was a concrete demonstration . . . that our army and people were strong enough to militarily defeat the 'Vietnamization' strategy of the American imperialists."[44]

Public and Private Assessments

President Nixon and Admiral Moorer had agreed: "the real field of battle was in the public affairs arena." In an address to the nation on 7 April, announcing the phased withdrawal of 100,000 more troops, Nixon claimed that the RVNAF had proved able to "fight effectively" against the very best North Vietnamese units, damaging the enemy's logistics even more severely than the Cambodian incursion. Soon afterward, General Abrams advised CINCPAC that, "although it is too early to make a final judgment, LAM SON 719 may well prove to have been a pivotal point in the Indochina conflict." The ARVN had demonstrated "an ability to mount a complex, multi-division operation, in conditions of difficult and unfamiliar terrain, adverse weather and against the best forces that a determined enemy could muster." Dr. Kissinger gave his own staff an upbeat assessment:

> The ARVN fought extremely well. Eighteen out of 22 of the battalions turned in a creditable performance.
>
> Reports of a rout are largely exaggerated. Even the photographs of ARVN troops clinging to the skids of outbound choppers provide proof of their order and discipline—particularly when one sees that the troops are bringing with them their rifles and other gear, hardly a characteristic of panic-stricken soldiers.[45]

Much of the American media came to a different conclusion. According to *Life* magazine "the NVA drove the invading forces out of Laos with their tails between their legs." *New York Times* reporter Gloria Emerson interviewed ARVN survivors at Khe Sanh and concluded that their morale was "shattered":

> Through an interpreter they spoke of how the North Vietnamese outnumbered them and advanced in wave after wave, running over the bodies of comrades and never stopping. . . .
>
> It was a test, and now most South Vietnamese forces admit frankly that their forces failed. . . .
>
> What has dramatically demoralized many of the South Vietnamese troops is the large number of their own wounded who were left behind, begging for their friends to shoot them or to leave hand grenades so they could commit suicide before the North Vietnamese or the B–52s killed them. . . .
>
> Some soldiers who had been in the drive into Cambodia said they had never dreamed that the Laos operation would not be as simple. Since there was no significant fighting in Cambodia, these South Vietnamese felt that the enemy was no longer a threat. They learned differently in Laos and they will not soon forget it.
>
> In American helicopters they came out of Laos this week without their combat packs, their rations or their steel helmets—and sometimes without their weapons. Nothing mattered, they said, except getting out. . . .[46]

Privately, senior policy makers were in certain respects almost as critical as the media. On 10 April, Rear Admiral Robinson told the Chairman that Dr. Kissinger was

"furious" with Generals Abrams and Weyand because they had gone on leave simultaneously at the crucial time of the ARVN withdrawal. Kissinger also criticized them for not effecting better tactical and support coordination. Kissinger believed "we came so close and a little push would have made a lot of difference"—a questionable assertion given the situation and the enemy's strength. General John D. Ryan, the Air Force Chief of Staff, smarted under allegations that tactical air support to the ARVN had been inadequate. He arranged a briefing that Admiral Moorer heard on 14 April. Among the points made was the absence of cross-talk among the 1st Division, the Marine Division, and the Airborne Division. Since US Air Force officers did not know where emergencies were occurring, they had split sorties evenly among the divisions. Also, "it took us a long time to realize that the ARVN never operated two divisions before side by side." One week later, General Ryan told the Chairman that he believed General Abrams "did not have a feel for the intensity with which Washington viewed the LAM SON 719 operation and as a result left the conduct of this operation up to his subordinates." Ryan further argued that Lieutenant General Sutherland and other Army officers had sought to use LAM SON 719 as a means to demonstrate the all-purpose nature of helicopters. They failed to use tactical air power adequately, Ryan claimed, until the loss of Fire Support Base LOLO proved that helicopters could not operate by themselves.[47]

Secretary Laird expressed mixed views of the operation. He claimed that when he discussed the incursion with President Thieu in January, Thieu had predicted that the offensive would last no more than five to eight weeks; hence LAM SON 719 had ended about on schedule. Laird thought the operation would "prove to be a success, after a period of several months" because the enemy "had taken heavy casualties and their logistics flow had been hampered." "It may be sometime," however, "before the impact will be clear." In the meantime, Laird feared that adverse media coverage of the battle would create a "bad image" of the ARVN in the United States. Later on, he referred to the extensive abandonment by the South Vietnamese of expensive American equipment as a "fiasco."[48]

Admiral Moorer realized, belatedly, how often his upbeat reports to President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger had been out of touch with battlefield developments. He had put his trust in senior Army officers and, with the exception of General Westmoreland, they proved to be wrong. Late in June, the Chairman spoke with Lieutenant General Michael S. Davison, USA, Commanding General, II Field Force, Vietnam. Davison was "quite critical" of Lieutenant General Lam and also spoke harshly of Lieutenant General Le Nguyen Khang, Commandant of the Vietnamese Marine Corps, for trying to "sabotage" Lam and for making repeated trips to Saigon during the operation. Moorer reacted by dictating the following "Note for the Diary":

> After talking with Lieutenant General Davison and recollecting my meeting with Davison, Abrams, Bunker and Sutherland in anticipation of LAM SON 719, I am appalled that they did not take into consideration at that time General Lam's competence. As a matter of fact, none of my Army advisers

> (which included two full generals and four Lieutenant Generals) gave me any reason to believe that Lam could not hack it. . . . They failed to appreciate that the President had so much riding on this golden and last opportunity to punish the enemy. Davison criticized General Khang for going to Saigon frequently during the course of LAM SON 719, yet General Weyand took 10 days leave at Pearl Harbor and General Abrams simultaneously spent the weekend in Bangkok during the height of the action. . . . If the Army advisers knew so much about Lam's competence and the limited competence of the ARVN in Military Region I to conduct this operation, they should never have let this operation be approved, or they should have moved a leader like General Tri with military experience in multi-division cross-border operations up to Military Region 1 to conduct it.[49]

During the North Vietnamese offensive in the spring of 1972, Admiral Moorer would take a much less sanguine view from the outset and rely heavily upon appraisals from Air Force officers.

2

Policy and Strategy, 1971–Early 1972

The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not seek to intensify military operations in South Vietnam during 1971 and early 1972. The United States was withdrawing from that Southeast Asian country, and the removal of US forces, which had begun in mid-1969 and increased in 1970, accelerated during 1971 and the early months of 1972. At the start of 1971, more than 335,000 US troops remained in South Vietnam. During the course of the year, the United States took approximately 177,000 men out of Vietnam; by mid-year, US forces no longer participated in major ground combat operations; and when the enemy launched his April 1972 offensive, US strength stood at less than 100,000 men. Although the United States was steadily reducing its commitment in South Vietnam, there were constant pressures for greater reductions in force and activity levels. From within the government came demands for faster withdrawals in order to reduce expenditures, and public and Congressional critics of the war wanted expedited reduction of the US troop commitment in Vietnam. As a consequence, the Joint Chiefs gave considerable attention to determining the size and schedules of the redeployment increments and to reconciling requirements, particularly air sortie rates, with available resources. Perhaps because of the pressure for larger and faster US withdrawals, the President and his advisers conducted assessments and reviews during 1971 and early 1972 of US policy and strategy in South Vietnam and the situations in Cambodia and Laos. The Chiefs, of course, participated in these efforts.

A Vietnam Review, April–July 1971

United States policy toward Vietnam remained unchanged in 1971, President Nixon told the Congress in his foreign policy report on 25 February 1971. The "one irreducible objective" was "the opportunity for the South Vietnamese people to determine their own political future without outside interference." To accomplish this purpose, the United States would continue to pursue a negotiated settlement. But, failing in that, the United States would transfer combat operations to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces and withdraw US troops.[1]

To implement this policy, the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV), trained and prepared the South Vietnamese forces for the combat mission while continuing to exert as much pressure as possible on the enemy with existing resources. These resources had declined dramatically by the beginning of 1971 and the South Vietnamese had taken over a large share of the ground war as US units were increasingly restricted to support and air operations.

On 7 April 1971, President Nixon announced another reduction in US strength. Citing the LAM SON 719 operation, he claimed that Vietnamization was succeeding. Consequently, the United States would remove 100,000 additional troops between 1 May and 1 December 1971, reducing US strength to 184,000. "The American involvement in Vietnam is coming to an end," the President said. "The day the South Vietnamese can take over their own defense is in sight." Although the President did not publicly state it, all US ground personnel would be out of offensive combat operations by the summer and the United States would no longer have a combat reserve in South Vietnam. The United States had retained air and ground reserves in Vietnam to assist the Vietnamese against an attack or in an offensive of their own. By December, however, the Vietnamese would be more nearly on their own.[2]

In addition to the accelerated withdrawal of forces, budget considerations affected US strategy and operations in South Vietnam in 1971. On 21 April 1971, the Secretary gave the Chairman and the Military Departments the planning guidance for the FY 1973–1977 Defense program,[3] including planning assumptions for South East Asia:

	End FY 1971	*End FY 1972*	*End FY 1973*
Maneuver battalions	33	5	0
Tactical air sorties (per month)			
Air Force	10,000	5,000	0
Navy	3,600	1,800	1,800
Total	13,600	6,800	1,800
B–52 sorties (per month)	1,000	1,000	300
Military manpower	254,700	100,000	43,400

Shortly before the Secretary issued budget guidance, he had asked for a review of military strategy for Vietnam. On 12 April 1971, he noted that, since the last JCS assessment of this matter in July of the previous year, a number of major developments and trends had become evident: the sharp reduction of US forces, with a further reduction announced by the President; the sustained improvement of the RVNAF and its recent successful operation in Laos; the continuing decline in the size and effectiveness of enemy forces and the reduced level of combat; and the economic, political, and pacification progress in South Vietnam. Accordingly, the Secretary wanted the Joint Chiefs to assess US strategy in light of these changes. Although the review would focus on mid-1971 through mid-1973, he instructed the JCS not to ignore the longer term. It was important, he told them, to consider fully the constraints on US operations. The costs of any proposed strategy must be within available resources, and proposals for the RVNAF should not require significant added financial or manpower resources.[4]

The President at the same time wanted a complete assessment of the situation in South Vietnam covering the period through 1972. On 15 April 1971, Dr. Kissinger initiated a National Security Council (NSC) review of Vietnam, tasking the Vietnam Special Studies Group (VSSG) and its member agencies to prepare a number of preliminary studies. Included were an estimate of possible enemy strategies, to be prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and development of alternative RVNAF improvement packages, the responsibility of the Department of Defense.[5] Kissinger's tasking included several studies on political and economic matters in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, including a projection of economic stabilization prospects for the area, an assessment of possible regional cooperation, and an analysis of the political situation in South Vietnam.[6]

The Senior Review Group (SRG) considered several of the preliminary studies on 27 April, including the CIA paper on enemy options and probable strategy choices. The Agency foresaw the following options: continued protracted war; a major offensive in Military Region 1, in Military Region 2, or in Cambodia; simultaneous offensives in both Military Regions 1 and 2; simultaneous offensives in Military Region 1 and Cambodia; or a major offensive throughout South Vietnam and in Cambodia. Agency analysts believed that all options, except the last, were possible during the 1971–1972 dry season (October 1971 through May 1972). Summing up, the CIA foresaw "progressively higher levels of combat over the next 12-18 months," probably focused upon MR 1, which was close to enemy supply lines, and MR 2, where the balance of forces was favorable to the enemy. By the early part of the next dry season (October–December 1971), North Vietnam could support an offensive in either region. By the middle of the season, the enemy would be able also to support an offensive in Cambodia or a simultaneous offensive in MRs 1 and 2. By June 1972, MR 1 and the highlands of MR 2 were the "most likely area for offensive action."[7]

Dr. Kissinger found the CIA estimate "helpful," but wanted it refined. He was concerned about the possible outcomes of the various options. He hoped to be able to advise the President not only on what the enemy might do but also what the remaining US and South Vietnam forces could do if the enemy executed these options. Moorer volunteered to prepare an answer these questions.[8]

The study was prepared by the Joint Staff and submitted to the Senior Review Group for a meeting on 24 May 1971. The Joint Staff reviewed the seven enemy options advanced by the CIA and concluded that the enemy could meet the manpower requirements for all of them. Logistics would be the principal constraint on enemy capabilities. They believed an enemy offensive in the northern part of South Vietnam was possible as early as October 1971. Moreover, Joint Staff officers expected the North Vietnamese to attempt to achieve "at least one dramatic tactical victory" in South Vietnam or Cambodia during 1972 in order to improve the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) morale and diminish US and Republic of Vietnam (RVN) resolve.

In assessing the friendly situation and courses of action, Joint Staff officers used the US force level of 184,000 on 1 December 1971 announced by the President on 7 April. For the later period, three alternative forces were projected: 150,000 on 30 June 1972 declining to a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) level (roughly 50,000) by 30 June 1973; 100,000 on 30 June 1972 reducing to a MAAG level by 31 December 1972; and 50,000 on 30 June 1972 remaining at that ceiling. Within these levels, they listed approaches available to the allies: to meet the varying enemy threats by temporarily redeploying RVNAF units from low-threat areas or from the General Reserve, by permanently redistributing RVNAF forces, or by deploying ROK forces; to conduct a preemptive offensive; or to accelerate the improvement of the RVNAF.

The Joint Staff concluded that the forces remaining in South Vietnam on 1 December 1971 could meet the assumed threat without a major redistribution through normal use of the RVNAF General Reserve. It appeared unlikely that the enemy could significantly set back pacification progress or RVN security prior to that time. Thereafter, the situation in South Vietnam would vary in accordance with the alternative US force structure assumed. At the 150,000 level, the enemy threat could be met through normal use of the General Reserve; at 100,000, the enemy could be contained with "some difficulty" by permanently strengthening selective RVN forces in Military Regions 1 and 2 and using the General Reserve in those regions as required; at 50,000, the threat could be met in 1972 but with increased risk because of major reductions in US support available to the RVNAF. Regardless of the US force size, air power was crucial to allied success and the assessment advocated an aggressive air interdiction program, at least through the 1972–1973 dry season.

With respect to enemy courses of action, the Joint Staff concluded that, although an attack in Military Region 1 in 1972 was the easiest course for the

enemy to support, chances for success were limited. The enemy would be engaging not only the best of the RVNAF forces but also forces that could easily be reinforced by the RVNAF General Reserve. Prospects for the enemy were better in Military Region 2, where the RVN forces were "less capable." A simultaneous enemy offensive in both Military Regions 1 and 2, though unlikely, could cause "political repercussions" in both Saigon and Washington. An offensive in Cambodia, for which the enemy had only marginal capabilities, could increase the direct threat to the lower portion of South Vietnam. The Joint Staff report ended with a caveat that the conclusions were not valid for 1973 and might in any case be invalidated by political developments, which had not been considered.[9]

On 24 May 1971, the Senior Review Group decided that further studies which focused on the lower alternative US manpower figures assumed in the report (100,000 and 50,000) were needed; by implication at least, the 150,000-man strength was rejected. The working group was instructed to prepare a new paper to analyze probable enemy strategies; the adequacy of friendly forces to meet each strategy (in terms of deficits or surpluses of battalions); the ability of the currently planned RVNAF to meet the probable threats through temporary redeployments with mid-1972 US force levels of 100,000 or 50,000; and ways of improving the RVNAF to cope with the situation in 1972. The Department of Defense was to study alternative force structures for the 100,000 and 50,000 manpower levels. The Joint Chiefs were to submit a study of ARVN cross-border actions that might be taken in 1972 to disrupt enemy supply activities in southern Laos and Cambodia.[10]

On 2 June 1971, the Director of the Joint Staff gave the Assistant Secretary illustrative models for US structures at levels of 50,000 and 100,000 in mid-1972. The models assumed alternate mission priorities of "support" or "retrograde." The former placed emphasis on the provision of combat and service support for the RVNAF while the latter stressed increased combat service support for accelerated retrograde of US materiel at the sacrifice of combat support, adviser, and intelligence functions. The Director cautioned the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ISA) that the models were illustrative only and relayed the COMUSMACV position that while a mid-1972 force level of 100,000 could be met with acceptable risks, a 50,000 level could not. The paper was sent to the SRG members on 8 June 1971.[11]

On 8 June 1971, the NSC staff circulated a VSSG summary. The group first reviewed the probable threat to South Vietnam in 1972. Probably, the tempo of enemy action would exceed that of the previous three years. The paper set forth as the "most probable" enemy option in 1972 the conduct of a major multi-battalion offensive of 5 to 10 days' duration in Military Region 1 while continuing protracted war throughout the remainder of South Vietnam and in Cambodia; the worst case was a multi-battalion attack simultaneously in Military Regions 1 and 2 or in Military Region 1 and in Cambodia, however, the working group believed such possibilities were only marginally feasible.

The working group next analyzed the relation between these threats and the balance of forces and projected a shortfall in friendly strength in Military Region 1. The RVNAF would need a permanent force augmentation there even for protracted war. On the other hand, if friendly forces in Cambodia operated effectively enough to hold the enemy to protracted war in Military Regions 3 and 4, the RVNAF should have a surplus amounting to as much as one division in Military Region 3 and up to 1 1/2 divisions in Military Region 4, in addition to the current 18 battalion general reserve. On balance, it seemed that the RVNAF might be able to cope with the most probable enemy threat, but should the worst threat develop, loss of substantial areas in Military Region 1 and Military Region 2 was likely. The summary paper concluded with a discussion of possible improvements in the RVNAF to counter the shortfalls in Military Regions 1 and 2. It considered qualitative improvement of existing forces, redistribution of existing units, and possible increases in the RVNAF to 1,200,000 men, but no conclusions or preferences on the alternatives were included.[12]

The Senior Review Group resumed its discussion of the threat in Vietnam on 9 June 1971. According to Dr. Kissinger, the recent discussions had provided "a much better understanding" of present and projected situations. The Group agreed that the threat facing the RVNAF at probable US force levels in 1972 (that is, 100,000 or 50,000 men) was serious and that urgent measures must be taken to strengthen further the South Vietnamese forces. Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard agreed to provide a final set of alternatives for RVNAF improvement for Presidential consideration.[13]

On 10 June, the Joint Chiefs responded to Secretary Laird's request for a study of possible RVNAF cross-border operations against enemy supply activities in southern Laos and Cambodia. They assumed that the war would continue more or less as before through 1972, that the RVNAF would continue to improve, and that monthly air sortie rates would be maintained at the following levels: tactical air, 10,000 in FY 1972, 8,000 in FY 1973; B–52, 1,000 through both FYs; gunship, 700 for 1972, with the 1973 rate still to be determined. The JCS pointed out that additional funds would be required to support these sortie levels.

In presenting alternatives for cross-border operations, the JCS observed that the ideal method of shutting off enemy supplies would be to interdict them "at or near the source"; however, they recognized that such an operation was out of the question. The alternatives submitted for consideration were:

> 1. A major offensive into southeastern Cambodia, followed or accompanied by one into northern Cambodia, plus multi-battalion raids into southern Laos and unconventional warfare in Laos and northern Cambodia at present or higher levels.
>
> 2. Same as the preceding, except for omission of the offensive into northern Cambodia.
>
> 3. Continued operations at reduced levels in the border areas of southern Cambodia, with small-scale raids against specific targets in border areas of

southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia and continued unconventional warfare in Laos and northern Cambodia.

The Joint Chiefs preferred the first, but observed that it would probably become infeasible in early 1972 because of limited resources. The second was less desirable, but the JCS considered it the most effective choice possible in 1972. They dismissed the final alternative as it would foster a long-term decline in RVN security.[14]

The Secretary forwarded the JCS study to the SRG, stating that it was intended to supplement the earlier Joint Staff assessment. No action was taken on the study.[15]

Also on 10 June, the Chiefs provided the Secretary the review of military strategy in Southeast Asia requested on 12 April. They noted favorable developments including: the progress of allied forces, the improvement of the RVNAF, the decline of enemy strength, and the general improvement in the situation in Vietnam. Nonetheless, they pointed out, the enemy retained the capability to continue offensive and defensive operations, and there was no evidence that the North Vietnamese had relinquished their goals of unification of Vietnam and domination of all of Indochina. The Joint Chiefs assumed that the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union would continue to supply materiel and training assistance and advice to North Vietnam. In an assessment of possible enemy operations in the FY 1972–1973 period, the JCS gave much the same forecast as the one contained in the earlier Joint Staff assessment—continued protracted war with periodic "high points" in South Vietnam and Cambodia and, possibly, a major offensive in late 1972 or early 1973.

Considering allied capabilities for the same period, the Joint Chiefs noted that US redeployment was proceeding at a faster rate than had been assumed during the planning for RVNAF development. Projected withdrawals during the next several months would reduce US forces to a point where the ground troops could only defend the remaining US forces and installations. They added, however, that the RVNAF combat elements, together with US combat and air support remaining through December, could still meet the threat in South Vietnam, support operations in Cambodia, and interdict enemy lines of communications. Under planned redeployments from 1 December 1971 to the fall of 1972, US capability would be reduced "dramatically." At a force level of 100,000, the US combat support for the RVNAF would be restricted, the Chiefs stated. Below a 60,000-man level, US support would be "minimal." The JCS warned that the air activity levels prescribed in the Secretary's budget planning guidelines of 21 April were inadequate.

In considering military strategy for Southeast Asia, the Joint Chiefs maintained that continued effective air interdiction would be essential. In addition, an adequate allied military strategy must include ground interdiction operations "at the maximum level of intensity" reasonable with the resources available. They then provided three military strategies, designated I, II, and III, which differed primarily in the level of interdiction envisioned. All three provided for continued in-country operations by national forces, supplemented in each case by one of the three

proposals for RVNAF cross-border operations already set forth by the JCS.[16] The Chiefs preferred Strategy I, which called for the highest level of military activity, through the third quarter of FY 1972, and thereafter Strategy II, with a somewhat lower level. They recommended provision of US air support levels of 10,000 monthly tactical air sorties in FY 1972 and 8,000 in FY 1973 and 1,000 monthly B–52 sorties throughout both fiscal years. Additional costs for these air activity levels, the JCS stated, should be covered by supplemental funding.[17]

The Secretary evidently disapproved the JCS recommendations, which received no further consideration.[18] Meantime, on 18 June 1971, the Deputy Secretary of Defense provided the other members of the Senior Review Group the final set of alternatives for RVNAF improvement. Mr. Packard summarized the Group's general agreement that the enemy could support protracted war with associated high points throughout 1972. The greatest threat was to the northern part of the Republic of Vietnam (MR 1), although offensives in MR 2 or in Cambodia were also possible. This threat, coupled with continuing US redeployments, would result in "a potentially significant shortfall" of South Vietnamese units in the two northern military regions. This situation could lead to a short-term enemy success in that area, such as the capture of a major population center or the defeat of a major ARVN unit, and temporarily reverse progress in Vietnamization and pacification. To prevent such an occurrence, the Deputy Secretary presented three alternative methods of strengthening the RVNAF:

> 1. Continued efforts to improve the RVNAF, plus temporary redeployment of forces from the General Reserve (normally based in Military Region 3) to meet the projected threat in Military Regions 1 and 2.
>
> 2. Same as the preceding, plus a permanent increase in the forces allotted to Military Regions within the current ceiling of 1.1 million men, by moving forces from other Military Regions or by inactivating units elsewhere to make men available for new units in those Regions.
>
> 3. Expansion of the RVNAF to 1.2 million men, permitting the creation of two new divisions from the 100,000-man increase.

Mr. Packard also presented two US redeployment options for 1972: withdrawal at an approximate rate of 12,500 men per month to reach a level of 100,000 by the end of FY 1972 and a 50,000 to 100,000 level at the end of the first quarter of FY 1973; or withdrawal at a monthly rate of 17,700 achieving a 50,000 to 70,000 strength by the close of FY 1972. The Secretary preferred the latter.[19]

On 23 June 1971, Admiral Moorer suggested to the Secretary another means of reducing the enemy threat to Military Regions 1 and 2. He relayed a suggestion by COMUSMACV to create a buffer zone around Military Region 1 in order to deny the enemy free access to its northern portion. The zone would extend from the DMZ to 18° north and into the Laotian panhandle, and tactical air would be employed within this zone to eliminate surface-to-air missile sites, antiaircraft artillery installations, airfields, and transshipment points. Admiral Moorer judged the concept "militarily

feasible" and believed that it could increase the security of the northern portion of the Republic of Vietnam, but he forwarded it to the Secretary only for information as he doubted that it could be implemented because of the current "domestic and political situation." The Secretary agreed, and the suggestion was dropped.[20]

After consideration of the Senior Review Group's assessment of the military situation in Vietnam, the President decided on 3 July that the United States would provide additional support to the RVNAF. He selected the second alternative set forth in the Deputy Secretary of Defense's 18 June paper; the United States would provide quality improvement in RVNAF plus reallocation of forces within the regions of South Vietnam. The President directed immediate implementation of this decision, but he did not act on the question of the rate of US redeployment, which the Deputy Secretary had raised.[21]

After nearly three months of effort, the NSC Vietnam assessment was complete. It brought no changes in US strategy because the United States had reached the point where it no longer had a choice of military strategies in Vietnam. United States troops no longer participated in offensive ground operations, and US influence on strategy was restricted to the conduct of air operations, the provision of combat support for the RVNAF, and leverage on the South Vietnamese through the assistance furnished for improvement and modernization of their forces.

A Review of the Cambodian Situation

Assessment of policy and strategy for the war in 1971 could no longer be restricted to South Vietnam alone. In the previous year US and South Vietnamese forces had invaded Cambodia to destroy enemy forces and bases. Although all US forces were withdrawn by 30 June 1970, RVNAF operations in Cambodia, with US air support, proceeded throughout the remainder of 1970 and during 1971. Moreover, the United States continued the air interdiction operations in Laos that had begun in 1964, and the RVNAF with US support launched the massive LAM SON 719 attack into Laos in February 1971.

A few days prior to his call for the Vietnam assessment, the President directed an "on the ground" investigation of the military situation in Cambodia. Dr. Kissinger told the Secretaries of State and Defense on 8 April 1971 that the President wanted a "small elite team" of not more than three persons to study the capabilities of the Forces Armees Nationales Khmeres (FANK) and their proper role in the Vietnam War.[22]

The assessment team, consisting of three Department of Defense representatives, visited Cambodia and submitted its findings to the Secretary of Defense on 14 May 1971.[23] The team reported that, during the past year, the enemy had been deprived of his Cambodian sanctuary and forced to withdraw over half of his forces from MR 3 in South Vietnam to protect supply lines in Cambodia. Already the ARVN had seized the initiative by deploying troops into Cambodia, forcing the

enemy onto the defensive. The FANK, however, had not been able to take the offensive, and much smaller NVA forces held the initiative over a much larger FANK. Of more concern to the assessment team was evidence that the NVA was attempting to use the small communist group in Cambodia (the Khmer Rouge) and other dissident elements to build a strong Khmer Communist Party. This effort posed the danger of a civil war in Cambodia that would tie down the FANK and threaten the noncommunist government. Such a danger was more to be feared than possible NVA attacks in Cambodia.

The team noted the light tempo of combat in Cambodia; 85 percent of the FANK had defensive missions and operations were short-range. Team members considered only 35 percent of the Cambodian forces trained and ready for combat. Artillery and air support was inadequate and satisfactory communications and transportation systems did not exist. The team predicted that the period through November 1972 would be used by both sides for preparation.

The team believed that the government of Premier Lon Nol had failed to mobilize its resources to carry out its strategy, which called for securing the main centers of population and extending control as its military and economic strength increased. If the Cambodian Government did not meet its goals within approximately a year, the team warned, the probability of success would decrease "with each passing day." Cambodia's three major needs were for a training capability, an adequate logistics base, and a strategic plan. Proper US support was essential. So far, the team complained, US policy in the country appeared to be to maintain a "low profile," rather than preserving the Cambodian Government. It would also be necessary for the United States to develop adequate measures of progress in achieving military objectives, as had been done in South Vietnam.

The assessment team also examined the Military Assistance Program (MAP) for Cambodia. The United States had initiated this effort the previous year; the current objective was creation of a FANK of 220,000 men by the end of FY 1972. But the team found some conflict over this goal. The Military Equipment Delivery Team (MEDT), the agency responsible for administering the program in Cambodia, favored the 220,000-man force; the Embassy, on the other hand, opposed it as requiring too large and conspicuous a US advisory effort.[24]

On 7 June 1971, the Senior Review Group, after listening to the team's findings, discussed the Cambodian situation at some length. The Department of State representative spoke of a need to determine US objectives in Cambodia and warned of political constraints against a large US presence there. Army Chief of Staff, General William C. Westmoreland, representing the Chairman, described Cambodia as having military potential but stressed the need for a larger US aid effort, including an increase in the small US advisory force there. Dr. Kissinger commented that Cambodia had not made effective use of the assistance already furnished. After some discussion, the Group reached the following decisions:

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would prepare a military assistance plan aimed at improving the logistics and training capabilities of the FANK and supplying additional equipment. The plan would include an examination of alternative strategies and would give particular attention to the extension of control by the Cambodian Government over the countryside.

2. The United States would emphasize to the Cambodian Government the vital need to strengthen Cambodian military capabilities and to improve operational effectiveness.

3. The question of the number of US advisory personnel in Cambodia would be resolved in light of the military assistance plan. Neither a high nor a low "profile" was desired as such; the size of the advisory group would be based upon the need, tempered by the possibility of stationing some advisors outside Cambodia or, at most, assigning them to Cambodia temporarily.

Three days later, the Secretary of Defense tasked the Joint Chiefs with preparation of the plan requested by the Senior Review Group, specifying that the proposed aid program should use the planning figure of 220,000 men already approved.[25]

In preparing their response, the Joint Chiefs used a report of a MACV conference during the period 14–18 May 1971 which had reached much the same conclusions. The enemy was currently following a protracted war strategy in Cambodia, attempting to restore lines of communications and to interdict major highways to isolate population centers. Should the enemy rebuild depleted stockpiles in Cambodia, he would probably conduct "limited offensive operations" to secure his "logistical lifeline" throughout the eastern part of the country. The conferees agreed that the FANK needed both technical and military assistance, which should provide unsophisticated and basic equipment that the Cambodians could use and maintain.[26]

The Joint Chiefs provided the Secretary of Defense recommended programs and actions designed to improve the "productivity of US efforts to assist Cambodia and increase effectiveness of the Cambodian Armed Forces" on 30 June 1971. They cautioned that the task was an "extremely ambitious undertaking."

With respect to the strategy for Cambodia, the JCS used the one approved by the President on 26 October 1970 in National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 89.[27] The preservation of the Government of Cambodia was judged militarily beneficial to Vietnamization as long as the costs were limited and US forces were not committed to Cambodian defense. Consequently, US efforts would focus primarily on Vietnamization in South Vietnam, while providing economic and military assistance to Cambodia and encouraging RVN and Thai forces to assist the Government of Cambodia in defending its territory.

The Chiefs recalled that support of Cambodia with Military Assistance Program funds began in May 1970. Current planning provided for a MAP-supported FANK of 220,000 men at the end of FY 1972, and the Joint Chiefs submitted a recommended force structure to meet that goal, together with a paramilitary force structure of 143,000 men. The Department of Defense had asked the Congress for $200 million in FY 1972 MAP funds for that purpose, but the JCS now

expected final MAP costs for Cambodia for FY 1972 to be between $325 and $350 million. They suggested that pressure on the MAP budget might be alleviated by using Agency for International Development (AID) funds where appropriate. The JCS also submitted plans for training the FANK, for logistic support of the Government of Cambodia, for counterinsurgency programs in Cambodia, and for improvement of FANK operational capabilities.

More US personnel would be needed to administer an expanded Cambodian MAP, and the Joint Chiefs recommended 179 additional personnel (83 US military, 2 US civilians, and the remainder third country nationals) for the Military Equipment Delivery Team. They also proposed 450 more personnel (410 US military, 40 contract personnel) in South Vietnam to support the US assistance effort in Cambodia. These increases would raise the number of personnel involved in Cambodian MAP to a total of 202 in Cambodia and 790 in South Vietnam.[28]

On 15 July 1971, Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard agreed with the JCS interpretation of US strategy as approved in NSDM 89, but he believed that several aspects of their submission needed refinement. With regard to the plans for the FANK, Mr. Packard wanted improvement of Cambodian training cadre stressed rather than use of third country facilities and personnel. "The development of early Cambodian self-sufficiency in training," he said, "should be a defined goal of the program." At the same time, he warned the Joint Chiefs that it was unlikely that additional MAP funds for Cambodia above the $200 million budget request would be approved. He viewed the proposal for additional personnel to administer the MAP for Cambodia as "a major change in the character of the assistance program and US involvement." Packard feared that such increases would receive unfavorable Congressional and public reaction and asked the JCS to revise their proposals to reflect his comments.[29]

The Chiefs reviewed their Cambodian proposals and presented the results to the Secretary of Defense on 30 August 1971. They reduced the projected funding requirements for a FANK structure of 220,000 to $275 million and recommended that the FY 1972 Cambodian MAP be funded at that level. Since this figure was $75 million above the current Department of Defense budget request, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggested possible reductions in case additional funds could not be provided. These included postponement of various costs to FY 1973 or FY 1974, seeking a transfer of AID funds to the Cambodian MAP, or reducing the FANK manpower goal to 177,000. The number of personnel required to administer the Cambodian MAP was reduced to 402 in South Vietnam while the number in Cambodia was maintained at 202. The number of US personnel, however, could be reduced to 468 (106 in Cambodia and 362 in South Vietnam) by using FANK mobile training teams and third-country nationals. The Chiefs also revised the plans to improve the FANK to conform to the Deputy Secretary's guidance concerning self-sufficiency and use of Cambodian facilities and potential. In addition, the JCS requested a decision on Cambodian assistance by 1

October in order to draw up a "realistic program definition and funding estimates" for the FY 1973 Cambodian MAP before 1 December 1971.[30]

No decision on the Cambodian program had been made by 1 October, but on 16 October, Secretary Laird informed the Secretary of State that he had reviewed the JCS recommendations on Cambodia and reached several tentative decisions. Training facilities, within Cambodia and outside, would be established to provide training for a FANK of 220,000 men to be attained by December 1972. For this purpose, eight more persons would be required for the MEDT in Cambodia. A logistics assistance program for Cambodia would be authorized, using third-country contract personnel. Deputy COMUSMACV, General Fred C. Weyand, USA, as the US military representative to the Tripartite Committee, would be responsible for improving the effectiveness of military operations in Cambodia.

The estimated cost of this program for Cambodia was approximately $252 million, or $52 million more than the amount in the budget. The Secretary of Defense planned to authorize actions within his department to reduce the shortfall to $40 million, and he asked the Secretary of State for a "firm commitment" to provide this $40 million from funds under Department of State control. Otherwise in order to keep within the $200 million ceiling, it would be necessary to reduce the manpower goal for the FANK to "about 180,000 men," delaying the projected timetable for extension of FANK control of the countryside.[31]

Secretary Laird's letter served as the basis for discussion of the Cambodian assistance program at a meeting of the Senior Review Group on 18 October 1971. Deputy Secretary Packard reiterated that $250 million was required for a 220,000-man force in FY 1972, although "it may be possible to adjust somewhat." The SRG agreed that $310 million FY 1972 economic and military assistance (without breaking down that figure) in the President's budget request was essential to achieve US objectives in Cambodia. Further, the Group set a planning goal of a trained Cambodian force of 220,000 by January 1973. Since it was uncertain how much military assistance the Congress would approve for Cambodia for FY 1972, they asked the Department of Defense to analyze three alternative military assistance programs for FY 1972 at levels of $200, $225, and $250 million, indicating the differences in program composition and in offensive FANK capability at the end of FY 1972.[32]

Secretary Laird submitted the analysis of the three alternative MAPs to Dr. Kissinger on 20 October. A funding level of $250 million, which the Secretary recommended, would support a force structure of 220,000, allowing the Government of the Khmer Republic to consolidate control throughout the southern part of the country. At the $225 million level, attainment of the 220,000 goal would have to be postponed until 1973, with resulting increase in costs in that year. A $200 million program would require a reduction of the force objective to 185,000, jeopardizing the ability of the Cambodian forces to extend control over the countryside.[33]

In the end, no further funds for the FY 1972 Cambodian MAP were approved. On 1 December 1971, the Secretary of State informed Secretary Laird that, even

though Congress had not yet completed action on appropriations for FY 1972, it appeared that no additional funds would be available for the Cambodian MAP. Hence, Secretary Rogers continued, "we should plan on a MAP figure of $200 million." Nor did the Nixon administration ask the Congress for further MAP funds for Cambodia, apparently anticipating an adverse reaction. In fact, Congress approved only $180 million in MAP funds for Cambodia in FY 1972.[34]

The Management of Military Assistance in Cambodia

Both the amount of military assistance for Cambodia, and the procedures and organization for the administration of this assistance caused problems within the US Government. This matter was hinted at during the SRG consideration of the JCS recommendations for greatly increased numbers of personnel to support the military assistance effort in Cambodia and in Mr. Packard's decision to limit the number to the minimum necessary. But the issue of control and supervision of the military assistance program for Cambodia was more involved and of longer standing.

To administer the US military assistance in Cambodia, the Joint Chiefs had recommended and the Secretary of Defense had approved in December 1970 the creation of the Military Equipment Delivery Team. The JCS had urged a team of approximately 110 personnel, but the Secretary approved only 60 with no more than 10 assigned in Cambodia initially. The Secretary recognized that experience might demonstrate a need for a larger team, implying that he was willing to consider requests for expansion of the team after it was functioning.[35]

A joint State-Defense message of 8 January 1971 informed the US Ambassadors in Cambodia and South Vietnam and CINCPAC of the activation of the MEDT with an initial strength of 60. Of these not more than sixteen would be assigned to Cambodia, including six already there; the remainder, including the Chief, would be located in South Vietnam, with temporary duty authorized in Cambodia as needed and agreed to by the Chief of the US Diplomatic Mission in Phnom Penh. Interagency discussions were under way regarding supervision of the Team. Since the previous fall, the Political-Military Counselor of the Embassy in Phnom Penh had served as the Special Representative of CINCPAC for Military Assistance and that arrangement would continue. Team members permanently stationed in Cambodia would be assigned to the US Embassy for duty on the staff of the Political-Military Counselor. The military command channel would run from the Secretary of Defense through CINCPAC to the Chief of the MEDT.[36]

Subsequently, on 27 January 1971, CINCPAC submitted to the Joint Chiefs terms of reference for the MEDT developed by representatives from his headquarters, from COMUSMACV, and from the US Embassy in Phnom Penh. An accompanying joint table of distribution provided for an initial strength of 60 for the team with an eventual authorization of 113. The mission of the Military Equipment

Delivery Team would be the administration and direction of the MAP for Cambodia. The team would be headed by a chief who would serve "under the military command of CINCPAC" and would be immediately subordinate to him. At the same time, the team chief would function "under the supervision of" and "have direct access to" the Chief of the US Diplomatic Mission in Cambodia and would keep him fully informed regarding plans and activities of the MEDT. Irreconcilable differences with the Chief of the Diplomatic Mission would be referred by the Chief of the MEDT through appropriate channels "to higher authority" for settlement.

The proposed MEDT terms of reference named COMUSMACV as the coordinating authority to insure that US military assistance to Cambodia was compatible with the Vietnamization program. The team chief was to coordinate closely with the commander in South Vietnam. The Counselor for Political-Military Affairs, US Embassy Phnom Penh, under the overall supervision of the Chief of the US Diplomatic Mission, would continue to serve as the CINCPAC Special Representative for Military Assistance; in that capacity he was authorized direct communication with CINCPAC, COMUSMACV, and the Chief of the Military Equipment Delivery Team.[37]

While these terms of reference were in final preparation, CINCPAC and Mr. Emory C. Swank, the US Ambassador in Phnom Penh, exchanged a series of messages on the relationship and responsibilities of the Military Equipment Delivery Team within the US Diplomatic Mission. The Ambassador suggested the MEDT terms of reference be revised to specify that the Chief of the US Diplomatic Mission was responsible for and controlled the military assistance program for Cambodia and that all aspects of the program would be coordinated with the Chief of the Diplomatic Mission or his designated representative before implementation. Admiral McCain, however, did not consider it appropriate to outline the responsibilities of the Chief of the Diplomatic Mission in the MEDT terms of reference. Ambassador Swank concurred provided their message exchange "is considered to constitute part of the agreement," and CINCPAC agreed.[38]

The JCS concurred in both the joint table of distribution and the terms of reference and forwarded them to the Secretary of Defense for approval on 23 February. They told him that the joint table of distribution reflected their earlier view that approximately 110 personnel would ultimately be needed to supervise the military assistance program for Cambodia. As MACV was reduced in strength, many functions currently performed by that command in support of Cambodian military assistance would have to be assumed by the MEDT which would need additional personnel. The Joint Chiefs brought to the Secretary's attention the message exchange between CINCPAC and Ambassador Swank concerning the functions of the MEDT and its relationship with the US Diplomatic Mission in Cambodia. Since these messages could be considered as abridging the responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense, the Chiefs did not consider them to be a part of the terms of reference.[39]

On 16 March 1971, the Secretary of Defense approved the MEDT terms of reference (with minor editorial changes) and the table of distribution. He authorized

CINCPAC in coordination with the US Ambassador in Cambodia to enlarge the team up to the strength provided for in the joint table as necessary for support of the Cambodian military assistance program. Adjustments to the existing limit of 16 MEDT members in Phnom Penh would be "subject to approval of the Secretary of Defense in coordination with the Secretary of State without reopening the issue of the terms of reference." On the same day, Secretary Laird sent the Secretary of State the terms of reference and the table of distribution. He added that the Department of Defense considered the message exchange between CINCPAC and Ambassador Swank "an acceptable field interpretation of the language of the TOR [terms of reference] though not actually constituting a formal part of the TOR." He also informed Secretary Rogers that the terms of reference would become effective four days later.[40]

A week later, the Secretary of State wrote to Secretary Laird: "It is difficult to understand why, on a matter of this importance, we should be presented with a document which is proposed to become effective four days after receipt by us." He was willing to concur in the terms of reference with the understanding that the message exchange between CINCPAC and Ambassador Swank was "an authoritative confirmation" of the language used in the terms of reference. If the message exchange was not so accepted, then he would have to insist on certain changes in the document to reflect accurately the status of the Chief of Mission as defined by Presidential directives. The two most significant changes would make the Chief of the Military Equipment Delivery Team "a part of" the US Diplomatic Mission and would require the entry into Cambodia of all MEDT personnel of the rear echelon to be subject to authorization by the Ambassador, rather than in "coordination with" the Ambassador as set forth in the terms of reference.

Secretary Rogers concurred "generally" with the joint table of distribution, noting that certain passages in the statement of functions appeared to be open to misunderstanding. Specifically, he referred to a sentence that gave the Chief, MEDT, responsibility for "operating" the forward element of the team, whereas the joint State-Defense instruction of 8 January stated that this forward element would be assigned to the Embassy Phnom Penh for duty on the staff of the Counselor for Political-Military Affairs/Special Representative of CINCPAC for Military Assistance.[41]

Secretary Laird replied on 9 April that Ambassador Swank had received the MEDT terms of reference and table of distribution in draft on 15 January; no subsequent changes had been made in these drafts except a few suggested by the Ambassador. As for messages between CINCPAC and the Ambassador, Mr. Laird considered them "useful field interpretation of the standard language used in such Terms of Reference" and accepted them as such, but nothing more. Laird believed that the MEDT Chief's functions and relationship to both the Ambassador and CINCPAC were spelled out clearly in the document as written.[42]

The Secretary of State still did not accept the Defense position. On 25 April he insisted that the exchange of messages between the Ambassador and CINCPAC

must constitute an integral part of the MEDT terms of reference. He based his position on a Presidential letter of 9 December 1969, which specified that the chief of a diplomatic mission should direct and coordinate the activities of all elements of the mission. Secretary Laird, in reply, felt that Secretary Rogers was making too much of the matter. After all, they had both agreed on the "fundamental aspects" of the MEDT, including its relationships to the Ambassador and to CINCPAC. The existing arrangements for the MEDT, which appeared to be working satisfactorily, were, in Laird's view, in accord with the Presidential letter cited by Secretary Rogers. In the light of the crucial importance of military assistance to Cambodia, Mr. Laird urged that present arrangements continue and that the general issue of the control of military assistance groups be left for later consideration. Following a return from an overseas trip, Secretary Rogers, in a letter of 19 May, accepted Secretary Laird's position on the matters at issue.[43]

Despite this agreement, it appeared almost immediately that the current arrangements for the MEDT were not satisfactory. On 22 May 1971, Admiral Moorer complained to the Secretary of Defense that Ambassador Swank was hampering the activities of the MEDT. Placing a "very narrow" interpretation on his instructions that the United States should maintain a "low profile" in Cambodia, the Ambassador had imposed "stringent limitations" on the number of US military personnel in Cambodia. The table of distribution, as Admiral Moorer pointed out, which had been accepted by the Secretary of State, gave the MEDT a total strength of 113. The Chief of the MEDT had recommended that 93 of these be permanently assigned to Cambodia as of 1 August. But the Ambassador had restricted the number of permanently stationed military personnel in Cambodia to 16, and would agree to the addition of only seven by 1 August. The field commanders believed, and the Chiefs agreed, that the military assistance program in Cambodia could not be properly executed under these limitations. Moorer urged that Secretary take up the matter with the Secretary of State.[44]

The Senior Review Group, in consideration of the Cambodian assessment on 7 June, had agreed that the size of the US Military Assistance Group in Cambodia would be resolved in the context of the decision on a military assistance plan for that country. "Neither a high or a low profile is a principal objective," Dr. Kissinger said, but rather provision of the required personnel to do an effective job.[45] But before the SRG could act, Secretary Laird brought the matter of increased personnel for the MEDT to the attention of the President on 21 June. He recommended that, of the 113 authorized personnel for the team, at least 50 should be based in Phnom Penh, including the Chief who was still in Saigon. Transferring the Chief of the MEDT to Phnom Penh would eliminate the need to designate the Counselor for Political-Military Affairs to the Embassy as the CINCPAC Special Representative for Military Assistance in Cambodia. Mr. Laird appreciated the importance of maintaining a low military profile in Cambodia, but considered it imperative to deploy the additional personnel to carry out military assistance responsibilities.[46]

Secretary Rogers did not concur with Mr. Laird's proposal and so informed the President on 28 June. He told the President that Ambassador Swank had recently recommended an increase in personnel from 16 to 23 to supervise the delivery of military assistance material to Cambodia. At any one time, an average of five (and at the present time there were 30) additional MEDT personnel were on temporary duty in Cambodia to assist in MAP duties; Rogers believed these numbers were sufficient. He also noted that the SRG would shortly be considering a paper prepared by the JCS, which would contain recommendations on the future size of the MEDT in relation to strategy for Cambodia. Any decision on MEDT personnel, Secretary Rogers believed, could await the strategy review.[47]

The President's decision was relayed to his two Secretaries on 1 July 1971. The President authorized an expansion of the MEDT in Phnom Penh to 50 persons, as Secretary Laird had desired. At the same time, he directed the Secretary of Defense to coordinate the introduction of the additional personnel with Ambassador Swank. The President also desired that the Counselor for Political-Military Affairs in the US Embassy continue as the CINCPAC Special Representative for Military Assistance in Cambodia and that "his position in the Embassy staff be strengthened commensurate with the role of coordination of all security related programs."[48]

A Review of US Activities in Laos

During the spring of 1971, US officials also reviewed developments in Laos as they affected the war in Vietnam. No US ground forces operated in Laos, but over the years, the United States had supported various irregular operations there. The Central Intelligence Agency had been responsible for these operations, but by early 1971, these activities had expanded beyond the ability of the CIA to support them. The President and his advisers discussed this matter at San Clemente on 31 March 1971 and decided that an interagency ad hoc committee should study the problem. Accordingly, the Chairman designated Major General Frank B. Clay, USA, Deputy Director for NSC Affairs, Plans and Policy Directorate, J–5, Joint Staff, to chair a committee with representatives from the Departments of State and Defense, the CIA, and the NSC staff. The committee would prepare recommendations for actions necessary to support irregular forces in Laos.[49]

General Clay submitted the committee report on 19 April 1971. The committee set forth US objectives in Laos as the maintenance of the present neutralist government in that part of Laos that permitted a buffer area between China and North Vietnam on the one hand and Thailand on the other. In addition, the United States wished to interdict North Vietnamese (NVN) lines of communication and base areas in Laos to support Vietnamization. In pursuit of these goals, US military assistance to Laos had expanded from $12.5 million in FY 1963 to $258 million for

FY 1971. With this increase, "the complexion of US operational involvement had changed from the guerrilla to a more conventional form of warfare."

The committee concentrated on improvements in five problem areas identified by the CIA: coordination among forces in Laos and among the US authorities supporting them; programming and funding; air support; logistics; and training. The committee noted that the US effort in Laos had grown up piecemeal, undergoing considerable expansion even while subject to constraints imposed by the desire to avoid an irrevocable break with the Geneva settlement. A hodgepodge of irregular units operated under CIA direction, usually with prior approval of the US Ambassador for each operation. The United States provided logistic support, through the MAP, for the regular Laos forces and for irregular third country forces in Laos. This support was normally provided by the Deputy Chief, Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) Thailand, but on occasion, the Ambassador requested support directly from CINCPAC, the CIA, the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense. The Central Intelligence Agency was responsible for logistic support of Lao irregulars.

The committee failed to reach a clear agreement on how to bring order to this somewhat chaotic situation. A majority of members favored establishing a forward element of MACV in Udorn to review plans and coordinate operations, or, alternatively, a military assistance coordinator at Udorn who would coordinate both operations and logistic support. Other alternatives suggested by the committee were a coordinating committee at Udorn; a CINCPAC representative, disguised as a Defense Attaché in Vietnam, to coordinate activities in Laos; or a full-fledged military assistance command in Laos.

No system for regularly budgeting and funding the costs of irregular operations in Laos existed. Responsibility was split between the CIA and the Defense Department. The committee believed that existing arrangements could be made to work satisfactorily if requirements were known far enough in advance. The members warned, however, that any additional funds for Laotian operations would come at the expense of existing Department of Defense programs.

Tactical air support requirements for irregulars in Laos were estimated by the Central Intelligence Agency as part of its responsibility for directing the operations of these groups. This support was furnished by USAF aircraft or by the air forces of Laos or Thailand (RLAF or RTAF), both of which were supported by US military assistance. The CIA was asking for a very high level of support at a time when available air assets were decreasing; monthly sortie requirements in Laos were projected at 2,500 through FYs 1972 and 1973, whereas tentative Department of Defense fiscal guidance assumed averages for all of Southeast Asia of 10,200 in FY 1972, dropping to 5,300 in FY 1973. The committee pointed out that the CIA requirements could not be satisfied by the existing resources of the RLAF and RTAF. It recommended that these forces be provided with additional aircraft (T–28s) and pilots through the military assistance program and that additional USAF A–1 aircraft be provided to operate from Thailand.

Logistic support in Laos, like funding, was a divided responsibility. The Department of Defense supported the regular Lao forces and third-country irregulars in Laos, while the CIA supported Lao irregulars. The committee proposed the Defense Department gradually assume responsibility for providing standard military equipment and supplies for all friendly forces in Laos by FY 1973, with CIA retaining procurement and distribution of non-standard items. The force available for operations in Laos was being enlarged by the establishment of a force of 24 Special Guerrilla Units (SGUs) in Thailand. The Central Intelligence Agency had asked for 60 additional instructors from the US Army Special Forces to train these new units. But the committee considered that the necessary training could be provided within existing personnel ceilings, supplemented by personnel on temporary duty.

The committee concluded its report with an expression of concern over the lack of strategic guidance for operations in Laos. There seemed to be two opposing trends at work: a greater US involvement coinciding with a general de-escalation of US activity in Southeast Asia generally. The committee recommended a review of US policy goals for Laos, both short- and long-term, to resolve this conflict. The members also called for a military assessment of the relative value of enlarging the irregular forces operating in Laos as compared with improvement of the regular forces of both Laos and Thailand.[50]

The Joint Chiefs forwarded the committee report to the Secretary of Defense on 3 May, together with their comments. They "generally" concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the report. To improve the coordination of US support for operations in Laos, they favored a structure "somewhat between" the options of a MACV Forward at Udorn and a Military Assistance coordinator at Udorn. With respect to air support for operations in Laos, the JCS preferred the committee's proposal to expand the RLAF and RTAF forces; they opposed any increase in the USAF A–1 force in Thailand, which would "adversely affect Vietnamization." They judged the recommended policy review "of particular importance" in determining the proper course of action in Laos.[51]

On 8 June 1971, the Secretary of Defense resolved the issue of coordinating machinery for operations in Laos. He directed CINCPAC to relocate the Deputy Chief, Joint US Military Assistance Group, Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI), to Udorn to provide "closer supervision" of the Laos assistance program and to serve as "the nucleus of a possible military assistance coordinator" at Udorn. CINCPAC was to draw up a detailed plan for the establishment and operation of the new coordinator. The Secretary later directed that the military assistance coordinator for Laos continue to use the title Deputy Chief, JUSMAGTHAI, after relocation in Udorn. Laird feared that a change in the title to Military Assistance Coordinator for Laos might cause "undue apprehension about the true nature of our limited support effort." CINCPAC prepared the plan and, on 20 August 1971, the Chiefs directed its implementation; staffing and terms of reference for the office were approved on 5 February and 4 April 1972.[52]

Meantime, on 8 June 1971, the Secretary of Defense had forwarded copies of the committee report, together with the JCS comments, to the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Director of Central Intelligence, and Dr. Kissinger. He informed them of his action to establish a military assistance coordinator, but more important than better management of military aid, Secretary Laird thought, was a thorough review of US policy toward Laos. He felt that the United States must avoid increased commitment to Laos, which would be inconsistent with the US policy of withdrawing from Vietnam.

Pending the outcome of such a strategy review, Mr. Laird wrote, the Department of Defense was implementing within existing military personnel ceilings the committee's recommendations for improvement in programming, funding, logistical support, and training. Air support would be provided for friendly forces in Laos from programmed resources. He was confident that attack sortie levels would be adequate, especially if supplemented with additional T–28 or other trainer aircraft for the RLAF and RTAF and with contract support for theater air and helicopter lift, including medical evacuation.[53]

Despite the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Interagency Committee, the Chiefs, and the Secretary of Defense that a review of policy toward Laos be conducted, none took place. The Secretary did ask the Joint Chiefs on 8 June 1971 for "an assessment of the relative merits of expanding irregular forces operating in Laos" as contrasted with qualitative improvement of regular Lao forces. But, before the JCS had prepared the assessment, the SRG and the WSAG agreed on 10 August 1971 that emphasis in Laos would be placed on the Special Guerrilla Unit Program for the near term. As a result, the Chiefs did not proceed with the requested assessment, nor was there any further consideration of policy toward Laos during the remainder of 1971 or in the first several months of 1972.[54]

Reassessments in Early 1972

The lengthy Washington reviews of the situations in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos during the first six months of 1971 brought no revisions in US objectives in those countries. Consequently, US operations in Southeast Asia during 1971 proceeded without basic change except for accommodations to the accelerating drawdown of US troops and tightening US budget strictures. By the end of the year, however, there were increasing indications of an enemy offensive, and the NSC staff decided to assess the situation in South Vietnam once again to assist the President in making various approaching decisions. Accordingly, the Vietnam Special Studies Group was directed to revise the Vietnam assessment prepared the previous May particularly the section dealing with the enemy threat, the main force situation, and the status of RVNAF improvement.[55] The new assessment was prepared by an interagency task force chaired by a representative of the JCS and was based

on information supplied by the CIA and the Department of Defense. The Chairman forwarded the updated assessment to the Secretary on 10 January 1972 for transmittal to the VSSG. Admiral Moorer pointed out to the Secretary that, although the assessment did not have "the formal concurrence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," it had been noted by them and the military Services.[56]

The updated assessment indicated that the enemy situation had developed as anticipated although some enemy deployments threatening South Vietnam that had been expected during the period October through December 1971 were only then occurring. The new assessment reviewed the seven enemy options identified in the earlier study, and its conclusions were much the same as those reached six months earlier. It still considered that the enemy had the manpower to execute any of the options, but that logistics remained a constraint. An attack in Military Region 1 would be the easiest option for the enemy to support, but its chances for success appeared limited. The enemy would face the best South Vietnamese troops, which could be reinforced by the RVNAF General Reserve. An attack in Military Region 2 might have a better chance of temporary success, since reinforcement of the widely dispersed RVNAF units would be more difficult. Simultaneous offensives in both Military Regions 1 and 2 could cause "political repercussions in Saigon and Washington" and set back Vietnamization at least temporarily, while an offensive in Cambodia would give the enemy freer access to border base areas and increase the direct threat to the lower half of South Vietnam. But these options, as well as an offensive in both Military Region 1 and in Cambodia, were judged to represent the margin of enemy capabilities. A simultaneous attack in Cambodia and throughout South Vietnam was judged beyond the enemy's capabilities throughout CY 1972. No single option could be pinpointed, but it seemed probable that the enemy would attempt to achieve at least one "dramatic tactical victory" in 1972.

The new assessment claimed that the allied progress reported in May 1971 had continued over the past six months although the rate of progress had slowed. The strength of friendly forces had declined but not to the extent envisioned in May 1971. Certain ROK forces expected to return home had remained in South Vietnam, and some RVNAF reserve elements, formerly in Cambodia, had returned to South Vietnam. Consequently, there were 233 allied maneuver battalions in South Vietnam on 1 December 1971, a decrease of 24 from 1 May 1971. There had also been a slight gain in the "control situation" during the past six months. A loss of control by the Republic of Vietnam in Military Region 1 had been more than offset by gains in Military Regions 3 and 4, while there had been no change in Military Region 2. The pacification program had also made progress despite losses in one or more provinces in each Military Region. RVNAF improvement had continued, with new units being created ahead of schedule. Further, a new RVNAF division had been activated in Military Region 1, and two brigades of the Vietnamese Marine Corps division had been moved there.

After comparing enemy capabilities against friendly courses of action, the assessment team concluded that the allied forces remaining in South Vietnam on 1 July 1972 could meet the expected threat without a major redistribution of forces through normal use of the RVNAF General Reserve. It was unlikely, therefore, that the enemy could achieve "lasting significant setbacks" to pacification or security in South Vietnam prior to 30 June 1972. After that date, and assuming a 60,000-man US force level, the enemy threat could be met but with increased risk. The use of combined US and RVNAF air power against enemy forces assembled for offensive action and enemy infiltration systems was considered "crucial" to allied success.

Once again the evaluation for 1972 would not carry over into 1973. By then, the enemy would have the benefit of another Laotian dry season to infiltrate men and materiel and the US capability would have declined further. How the situation developed in 1973 depended on factors that could not be adequately determined at that time: the effectiveness of US air interdiction, the success of RVNAF preemptive operations in Laos and Cambodia, RVNAF ability to maintain the MARKET TIME barrier, and the degree of improvement in Cambodian forces. Moreover, political and economic developments in Southeast Asia could seriously affect the military situation.[57]

The Senior Review Group considered the updated assessment on 17 January 1972 and requested further evaluation of the military situation in South Vietnam and measures designed to improve US and RVNAF capabilities in light of the enemy threats expected through 1 July 1972. However, the assessment had been overtaken by events. The President had announced on 13 January that US forces in Vietnam would be reduced to 69,000 by 1 May 1972, thus altering the balance of forces and throwing the conclusions of the assessment into question. Admiral Moorer furnished some information to the Secretary of Defense to be used in responding to the SRG request of 17 January, but it appears that no further action was taken to revise the assessment.[58]

During this same period, Secretary Laird had set his staff to reviewing US strategy for Southeast Asia after completion of Vietnamization. A task force in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) considered alternative strategies for the FY 1973–1976 period, concentrating primarily on the requirements for South Vietnam. The Secretary forwarded a summary of this analysis, in the form of a draft memorandum for the President, to the Chairman, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, and several Assistant Secretaries of Defense for comment on 22 January 1972.

The OSD task force saw the paramount US interest in Vietnam and mainland Southeast Asia as the retention of US credibility as a national power through demonstration of its capability and will to keep commitments and to implement the Nixon Doctrine. United States objectives in South Vietnam were the development of a South Vietnamese capability for defense against a communist takeover; release of all US prisoners and an accounting of the missing in Indochina;

a ceasefire for Southeast Asia; and withdrawal of all US forces from Vietnam. It was doubtful that either the Congress or the American people would be persuaded to accept the continuing outlay of US resources in mainland Southeast Asia at present levels. Political realities precluded either a primarily US or US-supported military solution in Vietnam. North Vietnam, however, showed no indication of abandoning its objectives of controlling South Vietnam, reuniting Vietnam, or extending its sphere of influence over all of Indochina.

With regard to the future, the task force was not optimistic. It did maintain that "Vietnamization has worked militarily and US ground combat forces should not be needed in mainland Southeast Asia beyond the end of FY 1972 for other than political/negotiating purposes." Despite this success, however, no mainland Southeast Asian country, with the possible exception of Thailand, could support the force the United States had helped develop. The RVNAF, even with US efforts to keep it austere, had continued to develop in sophistication in order to deal with the enemy threat. Moreover, current assistance programs would not provide the full interdiction and communication capabilities deemed necessary. Nor did the task force believe that regional cooperation could replace US support in Southeast Asia. Although economic and military coordination was slowly developing among the mainland Southeast Asian countries, adequate regional military arrangements did not yet exist. In addition, there would be heavy financial cost involved in continuing US support to the Southeast Asian allies, amounting probably to some $15 billion in military and economic aid for the period FY 1973–1976.

Three alternative strategies were presented for FY 1973–1976:

> 1. Total withdrawal of all US forces from Vietnam by the end of FY 1973, with no subsequent military assistance to South Vietnam or other mainland Southeast Asian countries. Estimated cost of this alternative was $5.6 billion.
> 2. Measured withdrawal, with redeployment of all US combat forces, retaining some 10,000 troops for military assistance and technical support, plus continued economic and military assistance including the use of US out-of-country bombing capabilities, if required. Estimated cost was between $12.9 and $17.9 billion depending on whether a cease-fire developed.
> 3. Delayed withdrawal, including not only economic and military assistance but also retention of certain US combat forces (approximately 60,000 men) through FY 1974. Estimated cost was $14.9 to $20.2 billion.

The task force did not consider the alternatives as mutually exclusive; it would be possible to change from one to another as the situation dictated. The measured withdrawal strategy seemed most likely to meet US goals in Southeast Asia at that time. By withdrawing all combat forces, the United States would place "squarely on the South Vietnamese" the responsibility for defending their country while still providing South Vietnam the means for this task. In addition, the measured withdrawal option would clearly signal to Hanoi further US willingness to reduce its direct involvement in the war and would eliminate US combat casualties and reduce

the cost for support of US forces in South Vietnam during the period in question. Domestic objections to US military forces remaining in Vietnam could be answered by stating that this presence was negotiable.[59]

The Joint Chiefs reviewed the alternative strategies and told the Secretary on 9 February 1972 that a clear-cut estimate of the future situation in Indochina could not be made at that time. The formidable problems facing South Vietnam, the uncertainties about the amount and extent of US support, the question of the South Vietnamese will to persist, the resilience of the communist infrastructure in South Vietnam, and the enemy's demonstrated ability and willingness to pay the price for perseverance—all of these cast doubt upon the long-term prospects for survival of the Government of Vietnam. The JCS affirmed their support for a balanced 1.1 million-man RVNAF structure until hostilities ceased or were considerably diminished, but they also recognized that South Vietnam could not sustain nor the United States support a force of that size after the end of the hostilities. They did believe, however, that there would be "a continuing requirement" for US advisory personnel and US air support "in the foreseeable future."

After these general observations, the Joint Chiefs made specific comments on the strategy paper. Among other things, they suggested elimination of inferences that Vietnamization would be "successfully concluded in all aspects" by the end of FY 1972. They appreciated the fiscal problems facing the United States, but noted that the cost of the delayed withdrawal strategy, the most expensive alternative, was relatively slight when compared with "the US investment in Southeast Asia over the past 9 years." Moreover, they believed that the success of Vietnamization could hinge on continued US support of South Vietnam.[60]

Subsequently, on 14 February 1972, Admiral Moorer forwarded to Secretary Laird comments by CINCPAC on the strategy alternatives. The field commander proposed an additional alternative, which he called "calculated withdrawal." The object was to retain as many US troops in Vietnam as possible until the South Vietnamese had demonstrated their ability to cope with the threat. CINCPAC recognized that the decision to reduce US forces to 69,000 by 1 May 1972 was probably irreversible, but he urged that subsequent redeployments be tailored to a "cut and try" approach, instead of making a commitment to the rapid drawdown postulated in the task force's alternatives.[61]

The Secretary of Defense did not submit the alternative strategies for Southeast Asia to the President, nor is there any record of further action on them. The Secretary did on 9 March 1972 issue planning guidance for Southeast Asia force and activity levels for FY 1974–1978, directing that this document serve as the basis for all plans for US operations in Southeast Asia. The guidance provided for a US force structure of 43,400 men in South Vietnam at the end of FY 1973. A year later the US forces would decline to 25,000 and remain at that level through 1978. The Secretary also directed a gradual decline in US tactical air and B–52 strikes in Southeast Asia with these operations to be terminated by the end of FY 1975.[62]

Later, on 16 March 1972, CINCPAC submitted to the Joint Chiefs a "political/military assessment" of the situation in Southeast Asia. In sum, he believed that North Vietnam would continue to threaten friendly nations in Southeast Asia during the coming years. Consequently, the United States should provide all possible diplomatic, political, economic, and indirect military assistance in order to create a neutral buffer, composed of Laos and Cambodia, between North Vietnam and Thailand while concurrently giving highest priority to maintenance of "a strong South Vietnamese armed force" and to building a similar counter-balancing force in Thailand. Also essential, the commander said, was "a credible offshore US deterrent military capability in the Philippines, Okinawa, Korea, Japan and Guam." Again, no action resulted from this assessment, though the Chiefs told CINCPAC that they would use it in developing "the many studies" concerning Southeast Asia then in progress.[63]

As had been the case with the reviews during 1971, the updated Vietnam assessment in January 1972 and the subsequent OSD strategy reappraisal brought no changes in either US policy or operations in South Vietnam. Undoubtedly both the President and Secretary Laird found these efforts helpful as background for their decisions on troop redeployments, force and activity levels, and peace initiatives, but no specific actions or directives resulted from the studies. With the forces and resources remaining in South Vietnam by March 1972, the United States had little flexibility left to alter either its policy or strategy there.

3

United States and Free World Troop Withdrawals in 1971

In 1969, the United States had adopted the policy of Vietnamization which sought to strengthen the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam to a point where they could assume the combat mission. United States redeployments began in mid-1969 and proceeded steadily. President Nixon had announced three US redeployments—25,000 in June, 40,500 in September, and 50,000 in December—on a "cut and try" basis. Then on 20 April 1970, he announced a longer-range program calling for the withdrawal of 150,000 US troops from South Vietnam to be completed by the end of April 1971. This redeployment was to consist of three additional increments with the timing and pace determined by the military situation and the status of diplomatic negotiations. By the end of 1970, the United States had completed two of the increments and withdrawn 90,000 men of the 150,000 total.

During 1969 and 1970, the United States had redeployed 205,500 men, leaving an actual strength in the Republic of Vietnam on 31 December 1970 of 335,794 US troops within an authorized strength of 344,999. In the absence of progress in the peace negotiations, the scheduling and size of the first four redeployment increments had been based on the military situation and the progress of the RVNAF. But with the fifth increment in the latter part of 1970, budget and manpower limitations within the Department of the Army became an important consideration in the withdrawal planning. Thereafter financial and manning constraints, as well as the progress of Vietnamization, would determine the rate of US redeployments. While withdrawals in 1969 and 1970 had been accomplished without major adverse effects on COMUSMACV's operational plans or logistic capability, the point had been reached by the beginning of 1971 where careful planning and coordination would be needed to insure retention in South Vietnam of balanced combat forces and the orderly retrograde of equipment.[1]

United States Redeployments, January–April 1971

Between 1 January and 30 April 1971, the United States carried out Increment 6, nicknamed KEYSTONE ROBIN CHARLIE, withdrawing 60,000 more troops from South Vietnam. This withdrawal, which had been planned in 1970, completed the 150,000 redeployment announced by the President on 20 April 1970. In all, 41,848 US Army, 5,600 US Navy, 373 US Air Force, and 12,179 US Marine Corps personnel departed South Vietnam during the four months. In the course of this increment, the US Army 1st Cavalry Division headquarters and two brigades returned to the United States, leaving only the Division's 3d Brigade and various support elements in Vietnam. Other major US Army units in KEYSTONE ROBIN CHARLIE were the remaining brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (-), the 5th Special Forces Group, and one battalion of the 173d Airborne Brigade. The Marine Corps withdrew the major portion of the III Marine Amphibious Force, reducing its strength in Vietnam by half. With the completion of Increment 6, authorized US strength in South Vietnam stood at 284,000 while actual strength sank to 272,073.[2]

Planning for the Next Presidential Announcement

Though there had been no decision or public announcement of further troop reductions beyond the 150,000 to be withdrawn by April 1971, both the American public and the US Congress expected the redeployments to continue. The first months of 1971 saw a review by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense of the matter of additional US troop withdrawals in anticipation of another Presidential announcement upon completion of KEYSTONE ROBIN CHARLIE. It was unlikely that the Joint Chiefs could reverse or even slow the momentum of US redeployments, and they faced a number of difficult questions in insuring the safety of the US troops remaining in Vietnam and protecting the goals of the Vietnamization program.

Despite the lack of any Presidential decision on redeployments beyond April 1971, the Secretary of Defense had set forth budget guidelines on 5 June 1970 for US force and activity levels in Vietnam for FY 1971 through FY 1973. He had directed assumption of a US strength of 260,000 men by 30 June 1971 (end FY 1971) lowered to a 25,000-man Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) structure with a 19,000-man supplement by the end of FY 1973. But later budgetary and manpower decisions during 1970 convinced the Chiefs that an authorized strength of 260,000 could not be attained. They brought this matter to the attention of the Secretary of Defense on 17 December 1970, showing how budget and manpower restrictions had necessitated changes in earlier planning factors. Consequently, they said, the 5 June 1970 force goals could no longer be met. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with one exception, recommended a revised US force structure in Vietnam for the end of FY 1971 of 255,000 men (198,000 Army, 11,600 Navy, 44,700 Air Force, and 700 Marine Corps) in place of

the 260,000 figure approved by the Secretary. For the end of FY 1972, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, again with one dissent, called for a US structure of 200,000 (152,800 Army, 8,400 Navy, 38,100 Air Force, and 700 Marine Corps) in South Vietnam. The dissenter in both instances was the Army Chief of Staff, General William C. Westmoreland, who believed that his Service could meet such levels in Vietnam only through serious degradation of force levels elsewhere, including NATO.[3]

The Secretary had deferred a decision on the JCS recommendations pending a visit to Vietnam in January 1971, but he did assure the Chiefs that funds to maintain their proposed manpower strengths were included in the FY 1972 budget recommended to the President. On the last day of 1970, the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved Program Budget Decision 505, which provided funds to support a US Army force level in Vietnam of 198,000 at end of FY 1971, as recommended by the Joint Chiefs, but only 115,000 by the end of FY 1972, instead of the 152,800 proposed by the JCS.[4]

The Secretary did travel to South Vietnam in January 1971. During the course of the visit, he, General Abrams, and Ambassador Bunker met on 11 January with President Thieu, who suggested that the bulk of any additional US redeployments in 1971 be delayed until after the South Vietnamese elections scheduled for the forthcoming August and October. Mr. Laird was noncommittal, indicating that he would raise the matter with President Nixon and US "military leaders."[5]

Despite Secretary Laird's earlier promise, he did not make a decision on Southeast Asia force and activity levels upon his return from Vietnam in January 1971, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded additional comments on this matter on 16 February 1971. They informed the Secretary that the field commanders concurred in the JCS recommendations of the previous December for total US forces of approximately 200,000, including 151,945 US Army troops, in South Vietnam at the end of FY 1972. This level, according to the field commanders, would be sufficient to reinforce the RVNAF, prevent a serious setback to Vietnamization, and meet contingencies that might develop. It would also provide US military resources to encourage the Republic of Vietnam to continue combat and combat support assistance to the Government of Cambodia, assistance considered essential to the eventual success of Vietnamization.

The Joint Chiefs acknowledged a "severe" impact on the US Army in supporting an end FY 1972 manpower authorization of 151,945 in South Vietnam, stating that additional funds and manpower would be required beyond that included in Program Budget Decision 505. Nevertheless, the Chiefs concluded that "at this point in time," the stated requirements of the field commanders were "prudent planning goals." They promised another assessment of the matter by 30 April 1971 and urged maintenance of the flow of draftees at a high level through the first half of 1971 in order to maintain the option of a 200,000-man strength in Vietnam at the end of FY 1972.[6]

Meantime, on 10 February 1971, the Deputy Secretary of Defense had issued tentative fiscal guidance for FY 1973–1977 that projected a US force structure in South Vietnam at the end of FY 1972 of 153,600, including 115,000 Army, 8,400 Navy, 29,600 Air Force, and 600 Marine Corps personnel. Thereafter, the Secretary of Defense directed the Joint Chiefs on 23 February to use these figures for future planning. They were well below what the Chiefs and the field commanders had recommended, and the Army strength was the same as that in Program Budget Decision 505, one that the Joint Chiefs considered inadequate. The JCS pointed out these discrepancies to the Secretary on 3 March 1971, reiterating that a US force level of 200,000 in Vietnam at the end of FY 1972 was a prudent planning goal at that time.[7]

Contingency Planning for a Cease-Fire

In late 1970 and early 1971, the possibility of a political settlement and a cease-fire arose, adding another factor to be considered in the planning of further US withdrawals. On 18 November 1970, a few weeks after President Nixon had offered a cease-fire in place, Secretary Laird had asked the JCS for a contingency plan for accelerated US redeployments on a schedule that would provide a secure withdrawal of US forces and an orderly turnover of the US combat role to the Republic of Vietnam based on a cease-fire to take place on 1 January 1971.[8] He wanted the plan prepared "on a close-hold basis," without the participation of the field commanders.[9]

The Joint Chiefs submitted an outline plan on 12 December 1970. All combat troops would be redeployed by 31 December 1971; a "rollup" force would be retained until the spring of 1972 to dispose of facilities, materiel, and supplies; and a "shortfall" force to offset South Vietnamese deficiencies until completion of the RVNAF improvement and modernization program would redeploy in the period between 1 January 1972 and 1 July 1973. By the latter date, US forces in Vietnam would be reduced to a MAAG and MAAG supplement.[10] If required, the MAAG and its supplement could be withdrawn by October 1973.[11]

Secretary Laird approved the plan on 30 December for planning purposes but considered it only one option. Since the President had made clear US willingness to negotiate an agreed timetable for complete troop redeployments as part of an overall settlement, Laird asked the JCS to study a rapid redeployment schedule, in which all US troops, including the rollup and shortfall forces, would be withdrawn by 31 December 1971 with retention of a MAAG and MAAG supplement or a Defense Attaché Office. This time, at the request of the Joint Chiefs, the Secretary authorized participation of the field commanders in the planning.[12]

The Chiefs furnished the Secretary their second cease-fire redeployment plan on 30 January 1971. It had four variants, differing only in the size and functions of the MAAG structure retained in Vietnam upon completion of the US redeployment.

The JCS pointed out that the plan had "significantly undesirable features," including disruption of the Vietnamization program and the development of the RVNAF. They recommended that the plan be considered only as an illustrative outline for an accelerated US withdrawal in the event of a cease-fire. Later, both CINCPAC and COMUSMACV prepared redeployment contingency plans for a possible cease-fire.[13]

COMUSMACV Plan 208

While in Saigon during January 1971, Secretary Laird directed General Abrams to prepare on a very close-hold basis a contingency plan to reduce US troops in South Vietnam to a level of 60,000 by September 1972. Abrams completed Contingency Plan 208, on 8 March 1971 and a team from his headquarters presented it to the Secretary on 16–17 March 1971. COMUSMACV based his plan on a number of assumptions, including three with implications for the security of his command beyond 1 January 1972: (1) current and planned cross-border operations would further reduce the capability of the Viet Cong-North Vietnamese Army to conduct major offensive action against the RVN; (2) there would be no major political upheavals in South Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia; (3) tactical air sortie rates of 10,000 and 8,000 per month through FY 1972 and 1973 would be available, together with 1,000 B–52 sorties per month in both fiscal years.

Contingency Plan 208 would retain sufficient US troops in Vietnam during the summer and fall of 1971 to provide stability during the South Vietnamese congressional and presidential elections, as President Thieu had requested; would allow acceleration of retrograding of US supplies and equipment; and would facilitate the redeployment of the equipment of one Thai brigade. Under the plan, US troop redeployments would average a little more than 13,300 per month for FY 1972, and resulting US force levels would be: 255,000 by 30 June 1971, 233,000 by 31 October 1971, 95,00 by 30 June 1972, and 60,000 by 31 August 1972. The level of 95,000 on 30 June 1972 would be far below that called for in the tentative fiscal guidance issued by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 10 February 1971.[14]

On 18 March, COMUSMACV provided CINCPAC additional comments on future force withdrawals in response to Admiral McCain's request. As redeployment progressed beyond 1 May 1971, he said,

> the ability of U.S. ground forces to influence the situation in RVN will rapidly decrease and an increasing share of the burden will have to be assumed by the RVNAF. As each subsequent increment redeploys, flexibility essential to accommodating changes falls off rapidly and the total spectrum of redeployment actions requires precision and coordination.

With the removal of the bulk of US ground troops by late 1971, General Abrams observed, the US role would be limited to the "dynamic defense" of US installa-

tions, protection of equipment and supplies to be retrograded, and assistance in RVNAF improvement. He thought that US force levels as of 1 July 1972 might vary anywhere between 153,000, as provided in the Deputy Secretary of Defense's tentative fiscal guidance, and the 90,000 set forth in his contingency plan. He doubted, however, that forces larger than those in his plan could influence the situation. Moreover, Abrams believed that in the current "U.S. national environment" US forces remaining in South Vietnam by September 1972 would be down to what he had proposed. He recommended approval of Contingency Plan 208 for detailed planning with a 1 September 1972 force level goal varying from 60,000 to 90,000 spaces. He also recommended planning for and initiation of long lead-time actions to accomplish transfer and retrograde of excess equipment and stocks, the retention of sufficient air assets in Southeast Asia throughout FY 1972 and FY 1973, and continuation of the "single air war concept" through the period.[15]

The Joint Chiefs discussed the COMUSMACV views in executive session, and Admiral Moorer informed both COMUSMACV and CINCPAC on 19 March 1971 that, although the Chiefs recognized political realities, they believed their recommendation on US troop redeployments should be based "primarily" on military considerations. The JCS wanted to get an early decision on US troop redeployments through 31 December 1971, but with a public announcement by the President of only the withdrawals in the period May through October 1971.[16]

Further JCS Recommendations

Meantime, on 17 March, the Secretary of Defense requested JCS consideration of US redeployments from Vietnam in preparation for a Presidential announcement in April. He wanted evaluation of three alternatives: (1) COMUSMACV Contingency Plan 208, providing for a US force in South Vietnam of 95,000 by 30 June 1972 and 60,000 by 31 August 1972; (2) a withdrawal of approximately 12,000 spaces each month reaching a MAAG/MAAG supplement structure of 43,000 by the end of calendar year 1972; (3) the tentative fiscal guidance of 10 February 1971 with the objective of a US structure of 153,600 in Vietnam by the end of FY 1972.[17]

The Joint Chiefs sought the views of CINCPAC and COMUSMACV. General Abrams reiterated his support for his Contingency Plan 208 with a US force level between 60,000 and 90,000 by 1 September 1972. Admiral McCain, however, recognized the dilemma of reconciling military requirements and political realities and proposed deferral of a final decision on end FY 1972 force levels until a further assessment in late 1971. He recommended the "purely military position" supporting a 200,000 force level at the end of FY 1972 with reduction to about 120,000 by the end of December 1972 recommended by the JCS and the field commanders in February.[18] McCain thought any announcement should cover only redeployments through October 1971.[19]

On 26 March 1971, the Joint Chiefs responded to the Secretary of Defense. They outlined varying levels of the three alternatives and the air sorties required to support those levels. They also presented a fourth alternative, the "MACV/CINCPAC/JCS Planning Goals," which was the force recommendation presented by them in February, providing for an end of FY 1972 force structure of approximately 200,000 (199,000 in this instance). The Chiefs cautioned that all four withdrawal alternatives involved extremely high risks unless supported by adequate air sorties. They did not favor the adoption of any of the four, but did present the minimum essential US force levels in South Vietnam through 1971, which corresponded exactly with Contingency Plan 208 figures for 1971: 255,000 on 30 June, 233,000 on 31 October, and 199,000 on 31 December. They recommended the air sorties needed to support these force levels and requested provision of additional funding and manpower as necessary. Finally, they urged announcement of redeployment plans only through 31 October 1971 and no decision on redeployments beyond 31 December 1971.[20]

Three days later, on 29 March 1971, the JCS met with Secretary Laird and discussed two additional redeployment proposals: one of 100,000 troops between 1 May 1971 and 1 January 1972, and the other of 150,000 troops between 1 May 1971 and 1 May 1972. Admiral Moorer told CINCPAC and COMUSMACV several days later, that Secretary Laird had indicated that future US redeployments would proceed at a rate of at least 12,500 per month.[21]

The Joint Chiefs provided the field commanders both their 26 March recommendations and the additional alternatives discussed with the Secretary on 29 March. On 1 April, Admiral Moorer supplied Secretary Laird with COMUSMACV's comments on these alternatives; he concurred in the JCS position, which reflected his own Contingency Plan 208. In addition, Abrams considered the alternative to withdraw 100,000 US troops between 1 May 1971 and 1 January 1972 excessive since this would redeploy 15,000 more troops than proposed in Contingency Plan 208. The withdrawal of 150,000 US forces between 1 May 1971 and 1 May 1972, on the other hand, would be manageable, the General believed, since it would actually redeploy 5,000 less troops than Contingency Plan 208 during the same period. Abrams also supported periodic short-term redeployment announcements in preference to one covering a longer period.[22]

The President's Decision

On the evening of 7 April, shortly before President Nixon was to address the nation, Secretary Laird met with the Service chiefs; Admiral Moorer was out of town. Mr. Laird said that the President would announce a 100,000-man withdrawal over seven months and asked for their support. General Westmoreland said that he would go along with this decision. Admiral Zumwalt saw nothing to cause concern,

as long as the required tactical air power was available.[23] At 2100 hours the President announced that, between 1 May and 1 December 1971, 100,000 more US troops would leave South Vietnam. At the same time, he called upon Hanoi to engage in serious negotiations to end the war and to agree to the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war. Despite heavy pressure to name a date for ending US involvement in Vietnam, the President declined to do so, explaining that such action would throw away the principal bargaining counter to win release of US prisoners as well as remove the enemy's strongest incentive to end the war by negotiation and give enemy commanders information to plan attacks against remaining US forces at the most vulnerable time.[24]

The President did not follow the military advice of the Joint Chiefs in his redeployment decision. He chose an option that was both larger and faster than any considered by the Chiefs. The President's decision would result in a US strength of 184,000 men in South Vietnam by 1 December 1971, whereas the Chiefs had only reluctantly recommended a figure of 199,000 as a minimum level on 31 December 1971. The nearest thing to the President's option considered by the JCS was the withdrawal of 100,000 troops in the period May through December 1971, a possibility that COMUSMACV and the Chiefs judged "excessive." Evidently, as in 1969 and 1970, political realities influenced the President to decide on redeployments larger than those recommended by his principal military advisers.

Two days later, on 9 April 1971, Secretary Laird confirmed the President's announcement, authorizing troop levels in South Vietnam of no more than 254,700 on 30 June 1971, no less than 205,000 on 1 October, and no more than 184,000 on 1 December 1971. Several days later, he informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that although the President had not announced US troop redeployments for the period after 1 December 1971, he had committed himself to continuing the current pace of withdrawal until US troops were reduced to the size of a MAAG.[25]

US Redeployments, May–November 1971

Following the President's decision on 7 April, the Services, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACV planned and carried out the 100,000-man withdrawal in three increments. Increment 7, nicknamed KEYSTONE ORIOLE ALPHA, removed 29,300 troops during the period 1 May–30 June 1971; Increment 8, KEYSTONE ORIOLE BRAVO, 28,700 between 1 July and 31 August 1971; and Increment 9, KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE, 42,000 from 1 September through 30 November 1971. ALPHA consisted of 15,030 Army forces, 516 Navy, 985 Air Force, and 12,769 Marine Corps; another 821 in-country Marine Corps spaces were transferred to the Air Force. The total Marine Corps reduction of 13,590 consisted of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade, the 1st Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, two fighter squadrons of the 1st Marine Air Wing, and remaining combat support and combat service support

elements. This withdrawal left only 546 Marines in South Vietnam on 30 June 1971 and ended the active combat role of the US Marine Corps in South Vietnam. Major Army units in KEYSTONE ORIOLE ALPHA were two battalions of the 23d Infantry Division and one of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).[26]

The 28,700 US forces withdrawn in KEYSTONE ORIOLE BRAVO were made up of: 21,769 Army troops including two combat brigades, the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the 173d Airborne Brigade (-); 1,122 Navy forces associated with three landing craft repair ships, 5,700 Air Force personnel representing one tactical reconnaissance squadron, two airlift squadrons, four tactical fighter squadrons, and one special operations squadron; and 109 Marines.[27]

There was a delay in approval of the troop list for KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE because of a question over the final destination of the 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron. The Air Force wanted to return the unit to the United States while CINCPAC wanted it moved to Thailand. The JCS approved the troop list so the redeployment could proceed on schedule, holding the question of the Air Force squadron in abeyance. Eventually, on 6 October, the Joint Chiefs notified the field commanders that the 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron would return to the United States. Meantime, KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE was proceeding and by 30 November the following forces had left South Vietnam: 35,000 Army troops (two infantry brigade headquarters, six infantry battalions, two armored cavalry squadrons, ten artillery battalions, 12 aviation companies, and five engineer battalions), 1,400 Navy forces (the in-country portion of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, elements of logistics support units, and spaces associated with miscellaneous staff and unit reductions), and 5,600 Air Force personnel (two tactical fighter squadrons, two tactical airlift squadrons, and one special operations squadron).[28]

The withdrawal schedules for KEYSTONE ORIOLE BRAVO and KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE allowed the maximum flexibility in logistics planning while at the same time assuring political stability in South Vietnam during the election period. The completion of KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE on 30 November 1971 accomplished the 100,000 withdrawal announced by the President on 7 April 1971 and brought actual US strength down to 178,266, well below the 184,000 figure authorized by the Secretary of Defense for that date.[29]

In the course of this redeployment, the drawdown reached the point where US troops no longer engaged in active ground combat operations. During the summer of 1971, US ground forces assumed a mission of "dynamic defense," protecting US installations, processing equipment and supplies to be retrograded, and assisting the development of the RVNAF.[30] At this time, the RVNAF assumed responsibility for all major ground combat action. General Abrams developed the dynamic defense concept in late June, and the shift by US forces from active combat to security operations occurred gradually in the succeeding months. It was only in November, however, that President Nixon announced that US forces in South Vietnam were in a defensive posture. The turnover of combat responsibility to the

South Vietnamese marked the end of the first phase of Vietnamization. Now US forces in South Vietnam would concentrate on the second phase, the development of air, naval, artillery, and logistical support capability necessary for "effective independent security." Already in progress concurrently with the first, the second phase would take much longer to complete.[31]

Planning the Next Redeployment

Immediately after the announcement of 7 April, the President and his advisers, including the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense, began to consider the size and timing of US withdrawals beyond 1 December. On 21 April 1971, Secretary Laird issued guidance for the FY 1973–1977 Defense Program that included his promised decision on US force and activity levels for Southeast Asia. He set forth the following US force levels in South Vietnam: 254,700 at the end of FY 1971, 100,000 at the end of FY 1972, and 43,400 at the end of FY 1973. The Secretary anticipated that these force levels would be revised over the next few months. Since the President had approved redeployments only through 1 December, the assumed level for the end of FY 1972, Mr. Laird advised, was subject to "substantial change."[32]

On 15 April, the President had directed a complete assessment of the situation in South Vietnam through calendar year 1972. Carried out within the NSC system, the assessment examined enemy and allied strategies and needed improvements for the RVNAF; US redeployments were considered. The results of the two-month review were summarized by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in a draft decision paper of 18 June 1971. It was the general agreement of the Senior Review Group that the probable enemy threat in the coming period, coupled with continuing US redeployments, required additional measures to strengthen the South Vietnamese forces, and Packard outlined a series of incremental alternatives to accomplish this objective. The Deputy Secretary also presented two US withdrawal options for 1972: redeployment at a rate of 12,500 men per month, reaching a level of 100,000 by the end of FY 1972 and 50,000-70,000 by 30 September 1972; or a monthly rate of 17,700, attaining a 50,000-70,000 level by 30 June 1972. The President approved only measures to improve the RVNAF and made no decision on the size of further US redeployments.[33]

Subsequently, on 6 August 1971, after returning from another visit to Saigon, Secretary Laird requested that the Joint Chiefs develop, for planning purposes, two possible forces of 60,000 US troops in South Vietnam. He wanted a "refined and updated" version of the balanced force called for in COMUSMACV's Contingency Plan 208 and another to be achieved by the end of FY 1972 that would maximize helicopter lift.[34] The Joint Chiefs furnished the two force structures to the Secretary of Defense on 20 August 1971. The modified CONPLAN 208 force would provide a reasonable amount of additional helicopter lift—enough to meet requirements—without sacrificing other capabilities. The second force would provide

"maximum" lift, but at the expense of other capabilities. The JCS preferred the modified CONPLAN 208 force, since it would spread the redeployment over a longer time, until September, instead of 1 July 1972.[35]

The Secretary rejected the modified CONPLAN 208 force endorsed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, apparently because it did not meet the 1 July 1972 target date. United States objectives in Southeast Asia, he told the Chiefs on 26 August 1971, required planning for a US force alternative that included the following: (1) a US strength in South Vietnam of 60,000 by the end of FY 1972 (30 June 1972); (2) priority missions in South Vietnam of helicopter support to permit the equivalent of 1.5 assault helicopter companies and 0.5 assault support helicopter companies for each ARVN/VNMC division, logistics retrograde and RVNAF backup support, intelligence collection, advisory effort, and security; (3) turnover of all functions practicable to the RVNAF, including security for US forces where located close to South Vietnamese facilities; (4) provision of tactical air and tactical airlift by out-of-country and offshore forces as far as possible with extraordinary procedures to insure adequate air defense and timely tactical air support in South Vietnam; (5) maximum base consolidation and turnover to the Government of Vietnam. The Secretary stressed the vital necessity for placing US forces "in a posture to carry out any redeployment plan the President should choose to announce in November." Administrative difficulties, such as logistics retrograde or base turnover, he insisted, must not be allowed to limit the President's options.[36]

Meantime, General Abrams had prepared and submitted to CINCPAC on 28 August his OPLAN J208, a revision of Contingency Plan 208. This new plan presented alternative US force levels of 100,000 or 60,000 in South Vietnam on 1 September 1972.[37] Abrams observed that the 100,000 level was a "notional" force since he expected to reach that level in the first half of June 1972. He considered the 60,000 structure more "definitive" and the plan included a concept of operations and employment for that force level. In OPLAN J208, COMUSMACV assumed a tactical air sortie rate of 8,000 per month through FY 1973 and provided for a balanced force to conduct the air war, to furnish combat support and combat service support to the RVNAF, to provide advice and assistance, to provide limited US ground security units for dynamic defense of command and vital installations, to allow a sustaining base for the residual US force, and to accomplish orderly retrograde of essential supplies and equipment. COMUSMACV believed that redeployment to a 60,000 level on 1 September 1972 could be met with an acceptable risk, but that a faster withdrawal risked success of Vietnamization.[38]

McCain forwarded COMUSMACV OPLAN J208 to the JCS on 7 September 1971, but in the interval since COMUSMACV had prepared the plan, the Joint Chiefs had asked the field commanders for an alternative force concept to meet the requirements outlined by the Secretary on 26 August 1971. Accordingly, COMUSMACV prepared and submitted to CINCPAC on 5 October 1971 OPLAN J208A, providing for a 60,000 force level in South Vietnam by the end of FY 1972 (30 June 1972).

Essentially, OPLAN J208A was OPLAN J208 compressed to meet the earlier completion date of 30 June 1972 instead of 1 September 1972 and with provision for helicopter support as directed by the Secretary. Admiral McCain relayed this latest COMUSMACV plan to the Chiefs on 8 October characterizing it as "reasonable." He warned, however, that any adverse change in the situation in Vietnam might render the plan unduly risky.[39]

On 22 October the JCS forwarded OPLAN J208A to the Secretary of Defense, comparing it in detail with the revised Contingency Plan 208 recommended on 20 August. They labeled the former the "alternative force" and the latter the "revised MACV CONPLAN 208." Projected US force levels were:

Date	*Alternative Force 30 June 1972*	*Revised MACV CONPLAN 208 1 September 1972*
1 December 1971	184,000	184,000
1 May 1972	84,000	122,000
1 July 1972	60,300	—
1 September 1972	—	61,803

The Joint Chiefs noted that the "alternative" force would provide the required helicopter lift desired by the Secretary and that the final major combat force compositions of both forces would be essentially the same. The primary difference was in the timing, with the "alternative" force being reached two months earlier and requiring a more accelerated redeployment of the remaining US major combat and combat support forces between December 1971 and April 1972. The Chiefs foresaw two major impacts of the "alternative" force. One was the redeployment of US engineer units at a more rapid rate than previously planned, delaying completion of the lines of communication program and, ultimately, hindering the internal development and defense of the Republic of Vietnam. The other was the required closure of air bases at Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang during the fourth quarter of FY 1972, necessitating relocation of units in order to maintain the required monthly tactical air sorties through 30 June 1972.

The Chiefs advised the Secretary that the "alternative" structure would provide a balanced force by 30 June 1972, but cautioned that the accompanying accelerated removal of US combat support might adversely affect RVNAF ability to absorb and adjust to increased operational responsibilities. They supported the position of the field commanders that, although the risks involved in execution appeared acceptable at that time, changes in the military situation might make its execution risky with respect to the security of US forces, orderly retrograde, and RVNAF development, and might reduce leverage for negotiating the release of US prisoners of war.[40]

The November Announcement

During the summer of 1971, while the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary struggled with the size and timing of further US withdrawals, the President and Dr. Kissinger pursued secret negotiations to end the war.[41] In efforts not publicly revealed until the following year, the United States offered at the end of May 1971 to set a deadline for withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam in exchange for a prisoner release and a cease-fire. Again in August 1971, the United States offered to withdraw all its troops within nine months of the date of an agreement, providing an agreement was signed by 1 November 1971. But when 1 November 1971 passed with no positive response from the North Vietnamese, the President moved ahead with preparations for the announcement of the next US troop redeployment, dispatching Secretary Laird, Admiral Moorer, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), G. Warren Nutter, to Saigon for an assessment.[42]

One issue confronting the President as he considered further US redeployments was the possibility of assigning only volunteers to duty in Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs had opposed such a practice in May 1971, and they affirmed their opposition to the Secretary of Defense on 9 November 1971, stating that a volunteer approach to duty in Vietnam was contrary to the best interests of the US armed forces. It was doubtful that a volunteer force in Vietnam could be sustained with the required force mix; moreover, such a policy would establish an undesirable precedent. The hardships endured by troops assigned to South Vietnam, as US involvement dwindled there, they believed, would be no greater than, or very much different from, those in other remote areas such as the Republic of Korea. The JCS advice was heeded, and the United States made no effort to introduce an all-volunteer force into South Vietnam.[43]

After consulting with Secretary Laird upon his return from Saigon, President Nixon made his decision on further redeployments. At a press conference on 12 November 1971, he announced that 45,000 US troops would leave South Vietnam during the next two months—25,000 in December 1971 and 20,000 during January 1972. The offensive ground combat role for US forces in South Vietnam had ended, he said, and troops remaining were in a defensive posture. Nixon promised another redeployment announcement before the first of February 1972, stating that the size of this withdrawal would be determined by the level of enemy activity and, particularly, the rate and route of enemy infiltration during December and January; the progress of the RVNAF, and movement in obtaining the release of all prisoners of war in Southeast Asia and a cease-fire.[44]

Three days later, on 15 November 1971, the Secretary authorized the Joint Chiefs to proceed with the redeployments announced by the President, reaching 159,000 spaces or below by the end of December 1971 and 139,000 by 31 January 1972. For planning purposes the JCS were to "look towards a US force goal in the Republic of Vietnam of 60,000 by 30 June 1972," while giving consideration to levels above and

below that figure in order to maintain flexibility. At the President's request, Laird directed the Chiefs to take measures to insure against any comment or speculation on what US force levels would be after January 1972.[45]

The Joint Chiefs gave both CINCPAC and COMUSMACV the Secretary's guidance. Regarding the 30 June 1972 force structure, they considered that COMUSMACV OPLAN J208A provided an adequate basis for a 60,000 level and J208 for a higher level. Since there was no plan for a structure smaller than 60,000 by the end of FY 1972, the Chiefs tasked CINCPAC to prepare an appropriate plan.[46]

US Redeployments, December 1971–January 1972

Subsequently, CINCPAC prepared and the JCS approved on 26 November the troop list for the 45,000-man withdrawal announced by the President on 12 November. Designated Increment 10 (KEYSTONE MALLARD), the redeployment began on 1 December and met the schedule announced by the President with 25,000 forces departing during December 1971 and another 20,000 in January 1972. KEYSTONE MALLARD comprised 36,718 Army, 2,017 Navy, and 6,265 Air Force troops. Army units included two infantry brigade headquarters, six infantry battalions, five air cavalry troops, five artillery battalions, 13 separate aviation companies, and other combat support elements organic to the redeploying combat units. The Air Force withdrew one tactical airlift and one tactical air support squadron; the Navy removed various minor support elements.[47]

With the completion of KEYSTONE MALLARD on 31 January 1972, the United States had announced and carried out 10 redeployment increments totaling 410,500 troops and including 102 maneuver battalions, 66 artillery battalions, and 33 attack and fighter squadrons. United States strength in South Vietnam at the end of January 1972 stood at 136,505,[48] including only 13 maneuver battalions.[49]

Reduction of Free World Military Assistance Forces

As the United States withdrew its troops from Vietnam and relinquished its ground combat role, other troop contributors began to consider reduction in their contingents in Vietnam. At peak strength in 1970, the forces of these countries totaled about 70,000 and amounted to more than three full US Army infantry divisions. During 1970, four free world countries besides the United States had combat forces deployed in South Vietnam. The Republic of Korea (ROK) was the largest contributor with a Marine brigade, two infantry divisions, and support units for a total of about 50,000 troops. Next came the Kingdom of Thailand with small naval and air force units and the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force (RTAVF), known as

the Black Panther Division, and subsequently the Black Leopard Division, consisting of a headquarters, two infantry brigades of three battalions each, two light artillery battalions, one medium artillery battalion, a cavalry squadron, and engineer battalion, and appropriate support, for a total of approximately 11,000 men. Australia had about 7,600 combat troops in Vietnam, including a combat brigade and support, a squadron of Canberra bombers, a detachment of Caribou aircraft, a guided missile destroyer, and combat advisers; New Zealand had two infantry companies and some other units, amounting to about 550 men. Australia and New Zealand bore the cost of furnishing and supporting their troops in Vietnam although the United States did supply some selected support on a reimbursable basis. The ROK and Thai troops in Vietnam had always been fully supported by the United States.[50]

With the accelerating US troop withdrawals in 1970, both Australia and New Zealand announced reduction of their forces in Vietnam. The first redeployment of free world military assistance forces from Vietnam occurred in November 1970 when New Zealand withdrew a company and Australia followed that same month with the removal of its 8th Battalion of about 900 men.[51]

At the beginning of 1971 both the Republic of Korea and the Royal Thai Government were contemplating redeployment of some troops from South Vietnam. On 11 January 1971, President Park Chung-hee of Korea announced that his government planned a step-by-step withdrawal of the ROK military forces then in Vietnam. The next day the Prime Minister of Thailand announced redeployment of all Thai forces from Vietnam by February 1972, with the first 5,000 troops to leave in July 1971.[52]

These announcements, combined with the redeployments already begun by Australia and New Zealand, convinced US officials of the need for an assessment of the future role of free world troop contributing countries in South Vietnam. As the Secretary told Admiral Moorer on 3 February 1971, the assessment would be an interagency effort within the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam. As the first step, State and Defense had dispatched a joint message to the US Embassies in the troop contributing countries requesting responses on this matter. The Secretary told Moorer that, although Defense participation in the assessment would be within the context of the Ad Hoc Group, he wanted the advice and comments of the JCS separately. He posed a number of questions to the Joint Chiefs including: Should the troop contributing countries be encouraged to maintain a presence in Vietnam? If so, to what extent? What should be the nature of the US commitment to the maintenance of the troop contributing country forces if their members were radically reduced?[53]

Asked for his views, CINCPAC told the Chiefs on 26 February 1971 that the military forces of the troop contributing countries should "phase down roughly parallel to US reductions." He favored encouragement of the troop contributing countries to retain a presence in South Vietnam to foster regional cooperation, to assist the development of the RVNAF, and to promote the economic stability of South Vietnam. He believed that the phaseout of Australian, New Zealand, and Thai

military forces would have little impact on plans for Vietnamization, but that the departure of the much larger ROK forces was a different matter. Reduction of the Korean forces, he said, should be subject to the same planning factors as US redeployments—i.e., based on the ability of the RVNAF to assume the areas of responsibility without serious degradation to overall security. Admiral McCain believed it reasonable to assume a withdrawal of one ROK division or the separate ROK Marine brigade first, followed by other elements, on a time schedule that would permit economical phasing of transportation plus adjustments to special support arrangements such as ROK combat rations. McCain thought that the United States should provide only equipment, operations and maintenance, and incidental personnel costs related to keeping ROK troops in Vietnam as opposed to the current extensive US support to the ROK in South Vietnam plus additional expenses in Korea associated with the maintenance of the ROK forces in Vietnam.[54]

The JCS on 12 March 1971 gave the Secretary of Defense their views on future troop contributing country forces and roles. They believed that, as the United States withdrew its combat forces from Vietnam, the troop contributing countries should be encouraged to continue their support to the Republic of Vietnam with a shift of emphasis from combat forces and support to civic action, nation-building, and advisory roles. The level of US support for the troop contributing country forces would, they believed, determine the force level retained in South Vietnam, and they noted three courses of action the troop contributing countries might adopt at differing levels of US support. If there was no net cost to the United States, there would probably be no troop contributing country participation in any form with the exception of Australia and New Zealand. If the United States furnished military assistance and replenishment costs only, then Thailand and the Republic of Korea would likely retain token support forces, but if the United States supplied military assistance, replenishment, and operations and maintenance costs, Thai and ROK non-combat support units would probably be provided.

The Joint Chiefs urged that the redeployment of ROK troops from South Vietnam follow those of the United States, with the ROK Marine brigade, because of its peculiar logistics arrangements, coming immediately after the departure of the US Marines. Then, with RVN concurrence, the first ROK division-equivalent should return home during the last half of FY 1972 (January to June 1972) and the remaining ROK combat forces should redeploy in the first half of FY 1973 (July–December 1972). Agreeing with CINCPAC, the Joint Chiefs thought that the Republic of Korea should be encouraged to shift to increased military civic action and nation-building support. They added, however, that US support for such continued participation should be negotiated separately without involving the United States in "complex, open-ended support arrangements."[55]

After considering the JCS comments together with responses from concerned US Embassies, the Secretary of Defense outlined on 26 March 1971 the Department position on troop contributing country forces in South Vietnam. He believed that the

United States should support withdrawal of the combat forces of these countries at "a measured pace" generally parallel with the US reduction, and at the same time encourage the troop contributing countries to keep, "at least temporarily," a token military force in Vietnam to foster regional cooperation. As a "second stage," he said, the United States should suggest that these countries replace their combat contingents with advisory, training, and medical assistance units. With specific reference to the Korean forces, the Secretary favored the JCS position for withdrawal of the ROK Marine brigade in mid-1971, one infantry division in the January–June 1972 period, and the other division thereafter with withdrawal completed by the end of 1972, but he said a decision should await completion of studies underway in Seoul. As to the Thai forces, Mr. Laird favored persuading the Thais to maintain a symbolic presence in South Vietnam, possibly in the civic action and nation-building area.[56]

Subsequently, an "interagency agreement" was reached that the nature and extent of the Republic of Korea Forces in Vietnam (ROKFV) presence in South Vietnam would be a matter for negotiation between the Governments of South Vietnam and the Republic of Korea, with the United States in the role of a "closely interested third party." Then, at the invitation of the United States the foreign ministers of Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand met with the South Vietnamese foreign minister and the US Secretary of State in Washington on 23 April 1971 to review troop contributions in Vietnam. The assembled ministers recognized the "notable progress" accomplished in bringing an end to the North Vietnamese aggression in South Vietnam, which permitted reexamination of the future combat role of the troop contributing countries. They noted both the steady assumption of the South Vietnamese forces of their own self-defense and the continuing US redeployments and agreed that it was possible for them to withdraw "some" of their combat forces. They further agreed that, as their combat forces left Vietnam, they should "strive" to provide military support forces for training, construction, medical, and other similar purposes for "a further period." No announcements of actual force reductions occurred at the meeting, but the ministers did note the announced plans of Australia, New Zealand, and Thailand to reduce their forces, and the Korean foreign minister stated that his government planned to withdraw one division from South Vietnam though he gave no specific date.[57]

ROK Withdrawals

The NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam now took up the matter of ROK withdrawals. In a paper prepared in May 1971 for Senior Review Group consideration, the Ad Hoc Group noted that the ROK forces in Vietnam had given a rather "dilatory" performance in the past several years in comparison to their good record in the earlier stages of the war. During 1970, the ROKFV troops had represented 17 percent of the friendly main force strength in MR 1 but had experienced only 2 percent of

the casualties. Similarly, in MR 2, where the ROK troops made up 30 percent of the regular combat forces, they were credited with only 14 percent of battalion days of combat and had taken only 18 percent of the casualties. All observers, the Ad Hoc Group said, agreed that the ROKFV was not being used to the greatest advantage. The Group then presented four alternatives for ROK forces in South Vietnam for FY 1972: to maintain the current structure intact, to withdraw the Marine brigade alone or with one of the Army divisions, or to withdraw all three major units. Although the Ad Hoc Group indicated no preference among these alternatives, it did urge that, in negotiations with the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Vietnam, the United States oppose any increase in the cost of US support for the ROKFV beyond that estimated for FY 1972. This position did, in effect, amount to a choice since the first three alternatives would all require increases in support costs for FY 1972. In addition, the Ad Hoc Group believed that the United States should get "considerably enhanced military combat returns for our financial contribution" from whatever Korean forces remained in South Vietnam for any period.[58]

The Senior Review Group considered the Ad Hoc Group paper on 24 May 1971 as part of the overall assessment of the situation in South Vietnam.[59] In preparation for this meeting, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) and the Director of the Joint Staff recommended support for alternative four, redeployment of all ROK forces parallel to the US withdrawals, with ROK troops remaining in their current areas until withdrawn to Korea. They also recommended no increase in the US support of the Republic of Korea Forces Vietnam beyond that currently estimated for FY 1972.[60]

General William C. Westmoreland attended the 24 May Senior Review Group meeting as Acting Chairman since Admiral Moorer was in Europe. He was emphatic about the need to retain some ROK forces in South Vietnam through CY 1972. He did not think the RVNAF could contain a large-scale enemy attack in either MR 1 or MR 2 in view of US redeployments and favored using the ROKFV to strengthen the defense in the two northern military regions. He suggested the possibility of creating a ROK mobile task force of 8,000 to 12,000 men to meet emergency situations in the two military regions. The Senior Review Group reached no consensus on this matter, but did agree that the Vietnam Ad Hoc Group should prepare a paper for the President setting forth the alternatives with probable effects and estimated costs for each.[61]

Subsequently, the Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam developed a further paper on ROK forces in Vietnam, which was circulated to the SRG members on 18 June 1971. The Ad Hoc Group again noted that the ROKFV was not being used to best advantage. Further, the Group observed that the Korean forces in South Vietnam had been involved in a "continual and well-organized pattern of irregular practices." Investigations had revealed substantial amounts of US funds and property diverted from intended purposes by the ROKFV. The Ad Hoc Group again presented four ROK redeployment alternatives open to the United States. Three of the four were

the same as the alternatives of the Group's earlier paper: (1) withdrawal of the entire ROKFV from Vietnam on a schedule roughly parallel to the US withdrawals; (2) retention of the ROKFV in Vietnam through CY 1972, gradually returning it to Korea in CY 1973; (3) return to Korea of a force equal to a division (the Marine brigade plus support troops) beginning in October 1971 and keeping two division equivalents in Vietnam through CY 1972. The final alternative of the 18 June paper, reflecting General Westmoreland's earlier proposal, called for the establishment of a ROK mobile task force of 8,000 to 12,000 men to remain in South Vietnam through CY 1972 with the balance of the ROKFV redeploying to Korea following the South Vietnamese presidential election in October 1971. The group had included this last alternative despite the opposition of General Abrams, who had cited the high level of US support required as well as the higher ROK combat exposure and casualty rates involved. No matter which alternative was selected, the Ad Hoc Group again recommended no increase in already planned US support for the ROKFV and insistence on enhanced military return for the US financial contribution.[62]

The choice among the ROK force alternatives could not be decided solely on the basis of the forces needed in South Vietnam and the costs involved. In the final decision, the President had to consider current US negotiations with the Republic of Korea. The United States had decided in 1970 to withdraw 20,000 US forces from Korea by 30 June 1971. Although President Nixon had directed in October 1970 that there would be no further withdrawals from Korea, both the Departments of State and Defense agreed that US ground forces in the Republic of Korea could be further reduced by the end of FY 1973 (30 June 1973). Officials of the two departments believed it desirable for the United States to notify the Republic of Korea one year in advance if it planned further redeployments from Korea. But in this situation, if the United States should press the Republic of Korea to keep the ROKFV in Vietnam, then the Koreans would be in a position to insist that the United States not reduce its force levels in Korea. Nevertheless, the Ad Hoc Group in the 18 June paper suggested that the United States inform the Republic of Korea, "at about the same time we negotiate the issues concerning the ROKFV," of plans for reductions in US ground forces in Korea during FY 1973.[63]

On 23 June 1971, the President selected what amounted to the third alternative proposed by the Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam in the 18 June paper. He tentatively decided that the United States would support the continued presence of the two ROK divisions in Vietnam through CY 1972 (allowing redeployment of ROK forces equal to a division in FY 1971) and would reconsider this position after the 1971-1972 Vietnam dry season. In return for this support, however the United States would insist upon improved combat performance by the ROKFV; moreover, the cost of US support would be limited to the amount already estimated for FY 1972. In order to prevent any linkage between the question of ROK troops in Vietnam and the retention of US troops in Korea, the United States would take the position that,

in continuing to support the ROKFV in South Vietnam, it was merely acquiescing in a request by the Republic of Vietnam.[64]

General Westmoreland was reluctant to accept the President's decision on Korean force withdrawals. He told Admiral Moorer on 16 July that he wanted to make his position and rationale "a matter of record." He feared that the RVNAF could not contain a large-scale enemy attack in either MR 1 or 2 and that it would be prudent to leave all the ROK forces in Vietnam through CY 1972. The Army Chief believed that the past performance of the ROK forces had led to an underestimation of their capabilities and he again advocated the creation of a ROK mobile task force of 8,000 to 12,000 men available for movement throughout Vietnam. He recognized General Abrams' opposition to such a force but argued that the advantages would outweigh the disadvantages. The Joint Chiefs took no action on Westmoreland's proposal, which received no further consideration.[65]

The United States informed the Republic of Korea through diplomatic channels of its decision to support two ROK divisions in Vietnam until 1973, and the Republic of Korea pressed ahead with plans to reduce ROKFV. Shortly thereafter the Republic of Korea announced its intention to withdraw 10,000 troops from Vietnam by June 1972 in the first phase of a redeployment that would eventually reduce the Korean force in Vietnam to about 5,000 troops. The Republic of Korea planned to deactivate one division plus a Marine brigade in the latter part of 1972 so that its armed forces could remain within the 600,000-man strength ceiling as had been agreed with the United States. The Republics of Korea and Vietnam concluded a working arrangement to carry out the redeployment, and the United States had no direct involvement in that arrangement except to encourage both countries in their task and assist wherever possible. Subsequently, the ROK field commander in Vietnam advised COMUSMACV that the 10,000 ROK troops scheduled for redeployment would comprise the 2^{d} Marine Brigade and elements of the ROK 100th Logistical Command.[66]

The actual withdrawal of the first 10,000 ROK forces did not begin until late 1971. Planning for the redeployment called for seven increments and the first two, consisting of 2,449 Korean troops and associated equipment, departed South Vietnam during December 1971. The remaining five increments left during the next four months. The ROK 5th Marine Battalion and the ROK 2^{d} Marine Brigade Headquarters redeployed on 24 February, and the remainder of the 2^{d} Marine Brigade and the 100th Logistical Command left on 1 April completing the 10,000-man ROK withdrawal.[67]

The intention of the Republic of Korea in July 1971 to begin withdrawal of its forces from Vietnam raised the difficult matter of disposition of ROKFV equipment. Much of the equipment used by the Korean troops in South Vietnam, approximately $70 million in value, was on loan to the Republic of Korea with the title held by the United States. The United States was not committed to transfer any of this equipment to the Republic of Korea except as might be used to replace MAP items lost

or destroyed through combat or other normal wear. But "from the standpoint of intergovernmental relations and cost effectiveness," the Joint Chiefs and the field commanders generally favored transfer of the equipment. The matter was complicated by the fact that the Congress, in the Department of Defense appropriation bills for FY 1971, had stipulated a worldwide limit on the disposal of excess defense articles of $100 million, valued at one-third of original cost.[68]

The JCS raised the question of ROKFV equipment with the Secretary of Defense. They favored transfer of all US-titled equipment held by the ROKFV to the Republic of Korea except for the following items: those determined by the Services to be unsuitable for transfer; those that could not be used effectively or maintained by the ROK forces; those that were classified material, including classified munitions; those that were politically sensitive, such as toxic or incapacitating agents and associated munitions; and those required for RVNAF improvement. Cost incident to redeploying the equipment, such as packing and crating, they said, should be applied to the ROK five-year modernization program. The turnover of equipment to the redeploying ROKFV troops should be made in the most favorable possible terms for the Republic of Korea since the cost of reequipping them in Korea would have to be paid out of the Military Assistance Program and would reduce the money available for modernization of ROK forces. The Joint Chiefs requested authority for the timely transfer of US-titled equipment held by the ROKFV to the Republic of Korea, except for exempted items, at one-third of the acquisition cost.[69]

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) on 2 September informed the Chairman that the Secretary of the Navy on 30 August 1971 had determined that US Marine Corps equipment on loan, with the exception of that required by the US Marine Corps and not compatible with the ROK MAP, could be transferred to the Republic of Korea as excess. Pricing of US Army non-excess defense articles at one-third cost, the Assistant Secretary said, would require a determination by the Secretary of the Army that such a reduced price reflected the actual condition and market value of the equipment in question. The Assistant Secretary asked that the Joint Chiefs reconsider their one-third pricing formula in light of the special ruling that would be required of the Secretary of the Army.[70] On 14 September, the Department of the Army ruled that US-titled equipment on loan to the ROKFV that was not excess might be offered to the Republic of Korea at 56 percent of the standard cost. Four days later, the Secretary of Defense informed CINCPAC of approval for the transfer of US Marine Corps equipment on loan to the ROK Marine Brigade as excess.[71]

In response to the Assistant Secretary of Defense's request, the JCS reviewed their position on the pricing formula for the Army equipment. They informed the Secretary of Defense on 30 October 1971 that the acquisition cost of US-titled major US Army items in the hands of the ROKFV was estimated at $13.4 million, of which $4.7 million was excess to the Army and $8.7 million was not. They affirmed their recommendation on transfer to the Republic of Korea, but with Army items not in excess priced at 56 percent of acquisition value instead of one third. They

expected this transfer of Army equipment to have a minimal impact on the Army portion of the ROK five-year modernization program and noted that, by the time the ROKFV had redeployed to Korea, the value of the US-titled equipment not excess and desired by the Republic of Korea might be considerably reduced.[72] The Secretary of Defense subsequently authorized transfer of US-titled equipment held by the ROKFV to the Republic of Korea as recommended by the JCS. On 2 November 1971, Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard wrote the ROK Minister of Defense confirming the US decision.[73]

Redeployment of Thai Forces

The redeployment of Thai forces from South Vietnam began in 1971. The previous fall, Admiral McCain had proposed the return of Thai forces beginning in January 1971 in order to upgrade the Royal Thai Army. His proposal was not adopted, but the withdrawal of Thai troops was soon under discussion among Thailand, the United States, and South Vietnam and in November 1970 the three countries agreed to set up a joint committee to supervise the Thai withdrawal. Then on 12 January 1971, the Thai Prime Minister announced plans for the redeployment of the Thai contingent in Vietnam with 4,000 troops to depart in August 1971 and all forces by the following February.[74]

Each year Thai forces in Vietnam had rotated home in two increments, the first in January and the second in August. As each increment redeployed, it was replaced in South Vietnam by a new one. In accord with the Prime Minister's January 1971 announcement, the increment that redeployed in August 1971 was not replaced. This increment consisted of the brigade and a portion of support elements of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force; the remaining elements of the RTAVF in Vietnam were designated a task force. This force began a stand-down on 9 December 1971 and redeployed to Thailand between 3 January and 4 February 1972. Earlier, on 9 May 1971, the Royal Thai Navy Patrol Gunboat Medium (PGM-12), whose mission was to prevent coastal infiltration, had returned to Thailand, and the 45-man Thai Air Force, Victory Flight, withdrew from South Vietnam in November-December 1971. When the RTAVF completed its redeployment in February 1972, a residual force of about 200 remained as a temporary headquarters element in Saigon to complete administrative and logistic actions for the Thai forces with a final departure scheduled for April 1972.[75]

The disposition of US equipment in the hands of the departing Thai forces was governed by an agreement signed in 1967. This document, the Unger-Dawee agreement, committed the United States to transfer the equipment furnished to the Thai forces in Vietnam to the Royal Thai Government upon redeployment of those forces to Thailand. Other provisions required the United States to construct and equip an overseas replacement training center in Thailand that would revert

to Thai ownership when training of Thai personnel for the RTAVF in Vietnam had been completed, and to furnish Thailand a HAWK missile battery, including training and equipment. With the redeployment of the Thai forces from South Vietnam in 1971, the United States transferred US-titled equipment used by the Thai forces in Vietnam to the Royal Thai Government. At the same time, training at the overseas replacement center ceased, and approximately $500,000 in equipment and consumable supplies were also transferred to the Royal Thai Government. In August 1971, Thailand agreed to accept 18 UH–1 and two CH–47 helicopters as a substitute for the pledged HAWK missile battery, and by the end of the summer of 1971, only two US commitments remained under the 1967 agreement: US support for the Thai residual forces in South Vietnam and personnel liability claims.[76]

At the request of the Departments of State and Defense, COMUSMACV prepared during the summer of 1971 an analysis of RTAVF performance in South Vietnam. The two departments wanted the study for use in developing future policy toward Thailand as well as in determining military assistance requirements. On 23 August, General Abrams submitted the analysis to CINCPAC, who relayed it to the JCS on 5 October with his concurrence. According to COMUSMACV, the RTAVF in South Vietnam had been "adequately trained and exceptionally well equipped," but had had little combat experience and had been reluctant to coordinate or conduct operations with the ARVN. Commanders of maneuver units lacked confidence in their artillery and had employed gunships for close support of troops. The RTAVF in South Vietnam, Abrams concluded, had relied excessively on helicopters for movement of troops and had been hesitant to undertake aggressive operations on foot.[77]

Australian and New Zealand Redeployments

New Zealand continued the redeployment of its forces from South Vietnam begun the previous November.[78] In February 1971, the New Zealand Special Air Service, 4 Troop, returned home and the 161 Battery of the Royal New Zealand Artillery redeployed during April and May 1971, leaving a total of 264 New Zealand troops in South Vietnam.[79]

Both New Zealand and Australia announced on 18 August 1971 plans to withdraw all of their remaining combat troops from South Vietnam. Australian Prime Minister William McMahan stated that the bulk of the Australian forces would be home by Christmas, and he pledged economic assistance for South Vietnam over the forthcoming three years in place of active military assistance in the war. Australian forces began a three-phase redeployment the following day, 19 August. On 7 November the Australians turned over the military installation at Nui Dat to the RVNAF and 400 Australian troops departed for home. On 8 December 1971 the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, the last Australian combat battalion, left and

by 8 January 1972 all but 1,618 Australian troops had withdrawn from Vietnam. Subsequently, on 7 March 1972, the 1st Australian Task Force stood down, ending the combat role of Australia in the Republic of Vietnam, and by the end of March 1972, the Australian Army Force strength in Vietnam had declined to 150. These remaining troops constituted a small headquarters in Saigon and the Australian Training Team, Vietnam, stationed in Phuoc Tuy Province and scheduled to remain in South Vietnam for an indefinite period.[80]

The final withdrawal of New Zealand combat forces occurred in December 1971 with the redeployment of the remaining company and the 1st New Zealand Service Medical Team. New Zealand continued to assist the Republic of Vietnam with the New Zealand Army Training Team, Vietnam, a 25-man team stationed at the Chi Lang National Training Center in Chau Doc Province to train Regional Force officers. New Zealand also provided a four-man contingent to serve with the Australian Army training team in Phuoc Tuy Province, whose mission was to train Regional and Popular Forces in jungle warfare techniques.[81]

The actual strength of the free world military assistance forces in South Vietnam declined from 67,400 on 1 January 1971 to 54,497 on 31 December 1971. These redeployments continued in the first half of 1972. The actual strength of the free world military assistance forces had fallen to 38,531 men by October 1972, 38,230 of which were troops of the Republic of Korea.[82]

Table 1
Actual Strength of Military Forces in Vietnam 1971

	US	*FWMAF*	*RVNAF*
January 31	334,850	67,433	1,054,125
February 28	323,797	67,791	1,049,163
March 31	302,097	67,513	1,057,676
April 30	272,073	66,563	1,058,237
May 31	252,210	66,586	1,060,597
June 30	239,528	66,842	1,060,129
July 31	225,106	64,762	1,057,924
August 31	216,528	61,256	1,052,353
September 30	212,596	60,538	1,047,890
October 31	198,683	58,813	1,043,232
November 30	178,266	58,526	1,040,640
December 31	158,119	54,497	1,046,254

Source: COMUSMACV Command History, 1971, Annex J.

Table 2
US Redeployments in 1971

Increment	*Period*	*Authorized Ceiling*	*Spaces Reduced*	*Combat Forces MVR BN*	*ARTY BN*	*ATK/FTR* SQDNS*
VI (KEYSTONE ROBIN CHARLIE)	1 Jan–30 Apr 71	284,000	60,000	15	8	0
VII (KEYSTONE ORIOLE ALPHA)	1 May–30 Jun 71	254,700	29,300	6	2	2
VIII (KEYSTONE ORIOLE BRAVO)	1 Jul–31 Aug 71	226,000	28,700	6	5	5
IX (KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE)	1 Sep–30 Nov 71	184,000	42,000	8	10	2
X (KEYSTONE MALLARD)	1 Dec 71–31 Jan 72	139,000	45,000**	6	5	2

Source: COMUSMACV Command History, 1971, p. F-1-1.

* Includes both USAF and USMC squadrons.

** 2,000 spaces in December 1971 and 20,000 spaces in January 1972.

4

Determining US Air Support Levels for Southeast Asia in 1971

The use of air power assumed mounting importance in Vietnam during 1971. As the American ground forces departed, commanders turned more than ever to air resources to find and destroy the enemy and his supplies, to support friendly ground operations, and to protect the residual US forces. But budget strictures limited the air activity levels available in Southeast Asia. These monetary restrictions, beginning in 1969, had continued throughout 1970 and would become even more severe in 1971. Early in October, Admiral Moorer cautioned CINCPAC that "we were losing our support back here [in Congress] and we would probably get money for one more year of operations . . . time is running out."[1]

On 5 May 1971, Admiral Moorer told Joint Staff officers that President Nixon believed the last opportunity for substantially improving ARVN capabilities was at hand. Therefore, all tasks that the ARVN would have to perform after US forces departed had to be examined. Clearly, Moorer continued, the President wanted a "substantial, visible" increase in the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program. The President, according to Moorer, was "holding his ground" against antiwar critics and running withdrawals at a pace designed to insure that the South Vietnamese could "hack it."[2]

At the time, the National Security Council was conducting an extensive assessment that included an examination of the RVNAF. Throughout the first half of 1970, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had opposed Secretary Laird's efforts to restrict air activity levels in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, the President resolved the issue in August 1970 when he directed the Department of Defense to fund a monthly Southeast Asia activity level of 14,000 tactical air (both Air Force and Navy), 1,000 B–52, and 1,000

gunship sorties in FY 1971. By the end of 1970, however, the Joint Chiefs feared that decisions were being made to reduce sortie rates in Southeast Asia in FY 1972 on the basis of fiscal rather than operational needs and they launched a series of appeals to the Secretary of Defense on this matter. Often they combined these positions on air support with ones dealing with US force levels.[3] In late December 1970, the JCS asked the Secretary to continue air activity levels in Southeast Asia for the remainder of FY 1971 as currently programmed and to approve for FY 1972 a minimum of 10,000 (7,300 USAF and 2,700 USN) tactical air, 1,000 B–52, and 700 gunship monthly sorties. In reply, the Secretary of Defense had deferred a final decision, but assured the Chiefs that funds to fly the sortie levels they had recommended were included in the FY 1972 budget submitted to the President. On 31 December 1970, Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard approved an additional $249.1 million in FY 1972 funds for Southeast Asia that included support for monthly sortie rates of 10,200 tactical air, 1,000 B–52, and 700 gunship.[4] Although the Deputy Secretary's decision seemed to fulfill the JCS recommendations for air activity levels, this action proved only temporary, and throughout 1971 the Joint Chiefs would be occupied with obtaining funds for adequate air support in Southeast Asia.

Air Support for FY 1972

Late in 1970, Dr. Kissinger told Admiral Moorer that he deemed it "absolutely necessary" to keep US Air Force and Navy assets in Southeast Asia, even if that meant accelerating the withdrawal of US Army units. Otherwise, Kissinger feared, "our posture in Southeast Asia would come apart, all at the same time." He asked the Chairman to take whatever action was necessary to maintain air strike capabilities there "far into the future."[5]

On 21 January 1971, Admiral Moorer told Secretary Laird that air sorties for FY 1972 as provided in the Deputy Secretary's recent budget decision were the "minimum" necessary for interdiction operations in Laos and Cambodia and for the security of US forces in Vietnam. The Chairman did not expect the enemy to decrease infiltration into South Vietnam and he anticipated increased requirements for tactical air support for the remaining US forces. As he explained to the Secretary:

> As US redeployments continue, the selective application of air power assumes greater importance as a primary means to bring concentrated firepower to bear rapidly wherever and whenever required to counter enemy efforts. Retention of this flexible capability is essential to the successful prosecution of our war effort and the success of Vietnamization.

To allow the Services to proceed with planning, Admiral Moorer requested an early decision and announcement to support the air activity levels set forth by the Deputy Secretary on 31 December. Secretary Laird replied to Admiral Moorer

on 9 February 1971 that he did not want to make "a firm decision" on the FY 1972 levels until results of the current dry season air campaign could be assessed. In the interim, however, he authorized the Services to plan on the basis of the tentatively approved Presidential budget (presumably the sortie rates sanctioned by the Deputy Secretary's 31 December 1970 decision).[6]

After receiving the comments of the field commanders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff took up US force and activity levels in Southeast Asia with the Secretary.[7] With regard to the latter, they told him that the field commanders supported the JCS' December recommendations for a rate of 10,000 tactical air, 1,000 B–52, and 700 gunship sorties per month throughout FY 1972. To meet these requirements, the Chiefs said, it would be necessary to retain five additional tactical air squadrons in Southeast Asia at the end of FY 1972 as well as to retain in the active force one tactical fighter wing scheduled to be transferred to Reserve status. One aircraft carrier and carrier wing tentatively planned for deactivation would have to be retained in the Western Pacific or replaced from forces committed to NATO.[8]

Secretary Laird was still not prepared to make a final decision on air activity levels. But, in the meantime, on 10 February, Deputy Secretary Packard had issued tentative fiscal guidance for the FY 1973 planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS) cycle, and Secretary Laird instructed the Joint Chiefs to use that document for planning. This guidance provided for monthly sorties in Southeast Asia for FY 1972 equal to those in the earlier 31 December decision—10,200 tactical air, 1,000 B–52, and 700 gunship sorties. But these rates were averages and by the end of FY 1972, monthly tactical air sorties would drop to 6,800 (with no change in the B–52 and gunship rates). The JCS reviewed this tentative guidance and advised the Secretary that the end FY 1972 air activity levels for Southeast Asia set forth were well below those recommended by the field commanders; they reiterated support for their earlier recommendations on this matter. Since ongoing operations could change the situation in Southeast Asia, the Chiefs did promise to review the air activity question again before 30 April.[9]

At this time, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were also considering a "banking" concept for air sorties in Southeast Asia, holding rates as far as possible below authorized ceilings when the military situation permitted to allow increased rates in times of particular need. The Secretary of Defense had raised this possibility in February, but on 5 March, the JCS recommended against adoption of such a system. The field commanders kept sorties at the lowest level possible, they said, and to adopt the Secretary's suggestion would only require additional effort to administer without any real advantages in practice.[10]

The Joint Chiefs addressed air activity levels for Southeast Asia again on 26 March in recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on force withdrawals. On that occasion, they provided the Secretary an evaluation of four possible US redeployment alternatives. All four, they told him, were "critically contingent" upon US air levels of 10,000 and 8,000 tactical sorties per month throughout FY 1972 and FY

1973, respectively, and 1,000 B–52 sorties per month for both fiscal years. Since current programming and fiscal guidance did not allow for rates at these levels, the JCS recommended that additional funding be provided.[11]

During early April, the Joint Chiefs continued to press Secretary Laird for adequate air support for operations in Southeast Asia. In connection with redeployment planning, they informed him on 1 April that COMUSMACV supported the recommendations for air support previously presented. Moreover, while General Abrams was agreeable to a process of averaging sorties throughout the fiscal year, he believed that sufficient air assets must remain in Southeast Asia to support the authorized sortie level plus a reasonable surge capability as of the last day of each fiscal year, and he did not favor any plans for banking of sorties. On 3 April, Admiral Moorer again presented the JCS position on air activity levels for FY 1972 and FY 1973 to Secretary Laird, stressing the importance of a prompt decision, especially for the Navy, since a lengthy program of carrier and air wing inactivation was involved. Three days later, in an evaluation of RVNAF improvement, the JCS told the Secretary that they, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACV urged support of the air activity levels recommended on 26 March to assure the progress of Vietnamization and the secure withdrawal of US forces.[12]

Finally, on 21 April, the Secretary of Defense issued planning and programming guidance for the FY 1973–1977 Defense Program that included a separate section on Southeast Asia. With respect to air support, Mr. Laird established the following levels for Southeast Asia:

Tactical air Sorties/Month	*End FY 1971*	*End FY 1972*	*Average FY 1972*	*End FY 1973*	*Average FY 1973*
Navy	3,600	1,800	2,700	1,800	1,800
Air Force	10,000	5,000	7,500	0	3,500
Total TACAIR	13,600	6,800	10,200	1,800	5,300
B–52 Sorties per month	1,000	1,000	1,000	300	650
Gunship Sorties per month	1,000	700	700	0	350

Mr. Laird anticipated that these Southeast Asia assumptions would be revised in the coming months, adding that sortie levels for FYs 1972 and 1973 were under review with a firm decision expected within a few weeks.[13]

In the meantime, Secretary Laird had asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Services to consider additional ways of reducing air support requirements in Southeast Asia. On 7 April, the day the President announced the withdrawal of 100,000 more US troops from South Vietnam by 1 December 1971, Mr. Laird noted that planning for air activity levels had reached a critical juncture. The Department of Defense, he said, must pursue US foreign policy goals in Southeast Asia while at

the same time lessening American involvement. Noting the "pressures and temptations to hold onto the reins" there, especially in the area of air support, he asked the service Secretaries to review the problem of air support. Specifically, the Secretary wanted the Services to consider the Chairman's 3 April presentation; Mr. Laird followed up with a request to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chairman on 13 April to consider a new alternative force posture involving complete withdrawal of Air Force assets from South Vietnam by the end of FY 1972, basing sufficient air assets in Thailand to provide tactical sortie levels of 10,000 per month at the end of FY 1971, and 5,000 at the end of FY 1972, for an average of 7,500 per month.[14]

The Secretary of the Air Force replied on 23 April that his service was prepared to provide the level of air support specified in the tentative fiscal guidance for FY 1972 issued by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 12 February. But additional funds and manpower would be needed to support the higher sortie rates recommended by the Joint Chiefs. The Air Force Secretary saw some advantages in the alternative of early withdrawal of Air Force assets from South Vietnam in terms of security of US forces, but he pointed out that significantly increased manpower authorizations would be needed in Thailand as well as additional funds. Moreover, air capabilities in Vietnam would be degraded.[15]

On 21 April 1971, the Secretary of the Navy voiced his strong impression that both past and present air sortie requirements had been overestimated. He acknowledged the difficulty in "second guessing" the field commanders and the Joint Chiefs but, based on conversations with combat pilots, he believed sorties could be reduced during the rainy season. Accordingly the Navy Secretary recommended an available monthly Navy tactical air sortie rate of 2,700 with actual executed sorties held below that figure, as opposed to the JCS support for a Navy tactical sortie level of 2,700 without qualification, within the recommended total of 10,000 per month for FY 1972. The Secretary of the Army, a few days later, deferred to Mr. Laird's judgment since he had not been fully exposed to the rationale of the JCS and the field commanders on Southeast Asian air requirements; however, the Army Secretary had found little evidence to support the recommended increase in the programmed sorties levels.[16]

The Joint Chiefs still did not agree that air support could be reduced in Southeast Asia; they told the Secretary on 26 April that the sortie levels of his 13 April proposal would not meet foreseen requirements. They repeated their recommendations of 26 March 1971 that 10,000 and 8,000 tactical air sorties per month throughout FY 1972 and FY 1973, respectively, and 1,000 B–52 sorties per month through the end of FY 1973 be used for planning and budgeting purposes and that additional funds be supplied to meet these levels. As for the suggestion to remove all US tactical air assets from South Vietnam by the end of FY 1972 with basing in Thailand instead, the JCS saw both advantages and disadvantages. While supporting the concept in general, they recommended deferral of any decision pending resolution of redeployments after December 1971.[17]

The question of air sortie levels became even more complicated on 28 April when Dr. Kissinger advised the Chairman and the other members of the Senior Review Group of requirements for various studies for use in the ongoing NSC assessment of the situation in South Vietnam.[18] Among other studies, Dr. Kissinger wanted an analysis of the manpower and logistical implications of "air interdiction at the 10,000 tactical air and 1,000 B–52 sortie rates established by the President for CY 1972." The complicating factor was the time period involved. The most recent authoritative ruling that the JCS and the Services had was the Secretary of Defense's planning and programming guidance of 21 April 1971, which specified an average monthly tactical air sortie rate of 10,200 through fiscal 1972, tapering to an actual rate of only 6,800 by the end of FY 1972.[19] The President's ruling, if definitive, would have continued the 10,000-rate through 31 December 1972. The latter approach would, of course, meet the Chiefs' recommendations, but was Dr. Kissinger's statement an announcement of Presidential approval or merely an assumption for study purposes? Dr. Kissinger did not elaborate, and Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., brought this matter to JCS attention on 6 May 1971, pointing out the discrepancy between the Secretary of Defense's 21 April guidance and Dr. Kissinger's request. If, as indicated in the latter, a level of 10,000 tactical sorties per month, of which 2,700 would be Navy, were to be maintained throughout 1972, then the Navy would have to maintain three attack carriers off Southeast Asia. Admiral Zumwalt said the Navy would require additional funds to retain the required number of carriers in the Pacific.[20]

Joint Staff action officers apparently interpreted Dr. Kissinger's 28 April memorandum as a Presidential decision to support the higher air support levels as recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff; they incorporated the higher rate in briefing papers for the Chairman on 7 May and again on 17 May. This matter was resolved on 17 May when the Joint Chiefs discussed the sortie level question and associated Service problems with the Secretary of Defense and Mr. Laird apparently told them that the President had not made a decision on air activity levels. Although no record is available of this meeting, Admiral Moorer on 20 May provided the Secretary, "in accordance with our discussions on 17 May 1971," a summary of incremental costs and manpower increases to support the JCS recommended levels of 10,000 and 8,000 tactical air sorties through FY 1972 and FY 1973, respectively, and 1,000 B–52 monthly sorties for both fiscal years. These costs amounted to an additional $170 million in FY 1972 and $500 million in the succeeding year. Admiral Moorer then recommended approval of these levels (with additional funding and manpower as necessary) for FY 1972, thereby indicating that no final decision had been made on the sortie levels. He also sought approval of the FY 1973 capability for planning.[21]

Secretary Laird advised Admiral Moorer on 11 June 1971 that there was little or no chance of securing additional funds for the air activity rates advanced by the Joint Chiefs. In fact, he was making every effort to avoid reductions below the

currently programmed levels. He was impressed, he acknowledged, by the "strong views" of the JCS on the necessity of their recommended sortie levels for the success of the Vietnamization effort over the next two years. But if the higher levels were approved, reductions in other programs would be necessary, and he did not think it fair to ask the Air Force to bear the major share of the added air operations costs. Could he have, he asked the Chiefs, the assurance of each of them that they would be willing to make appropriate reductions in their Service programs in order to share the cost of the additional sorties? He also inquired whether attention to "adequacy and effectiveness, as opposed to any specified or predetermined operating rates," might reduce the number of sorties needed? Specifically, he suggested periodic surges as opposed to flying continuously high rates. The same day, 11 June, the Secretary also approved the retention of the carrier USS *Hancock* through the end of FY 1972 in order to continue the deployment of three carriers in the Western Pacific. The Navy absorbed the additional costs of about $34.1 million and 4,100 manpower spaces required by this retention.[22]

The Joint Chiefs replied on 28 June 1971; they supported the position they had put forth on 26 March (10,000 tactical air and 1,000 B–52 sorties per month in FY 1972 and 8,000 tactical and 1,000 B–52 sorties in FY 1973) as essential for the success of Vietnamization and for the safety of remaining US forces. Moreover, they continued to recommend additional funding to meet these levels since reprogramming within current fiscal limitations would require reductions in other programs. The JCS, "with all the Service Chiefs concurring," told Mr. Laird of their willingness to provide for the additional costs by "equitable sharing." Should it still be impossible to achieve their recommended activity levels, the Chiefs had considered alternative programs of air operations in Southeast Asia and supplied the Secretary six "resource-constrained" options. All of them, they told the Secretary, incurred significant risks either in Southeast Asia through undesirably low sortie levels or in other areas because of reductions and shortfalls required by necessary reprogramming. Of the six, the Joint Chiefs of Staff favored "Option D," providing for a monthly average of 11,100 tactical air sorties in the first quarter of FY 1972, 10,000 per month in the second and third quarters, and 9,700 (with a surge capability to 10,000) in the fourth quarter. For FY 1973, Option D would supply a monthly average of tactical air sorties of 7,100 (5,000 Air Force and 2,100 Navy) per month for the first three quarters and 6,300 (4,200 Air Force and 2,100 Navy) in the final quarter. The B–52 sorties in this option would average 1,000 per month through FY 1972 and 800 per month through FY 1973; gunship sorties would average 700 per month in both fiscal years, with 300 per month in FY 1973 flown by the Vietnam Air Force (VNAF).

While Option D did not meet all the requirements of the field commanders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed it approximated them and involved the least risk of all the alternatives examined. Accordingly, if additional funding could not be provided, the JCS recommended approval of Option D for planning and programming. They

did not address the Secretary's suggestion concerning more effective management of sorties in place of higher levels except to state that the field commanders should have the flexibility to vary sorties within the limits of the force capability so long as total expenditures over the year remained within authorized levels.[23]

A Tentative Decision

On 1 July 1971 the Secretary of Defense informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he was sending a memorandum to the President supporting their views on air levels for FY 1972 as outlined on 28 June. The level of air operations for Southeast Asia for FY 1972 and FY 1973 was to be reviewed by the Senior Review Group during July, Secretary Laird continued, and alternatives would be submitted to the President for decision. Pending that action, the Secretary directed the Joint Chiefs to implement the program recommended in their Option D for FY 1972. Secretary Laird also concurred with a proposal by the Secretary of the Navy to maintain two attack aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific during the wet season and three during the dry season, an action he considered consistent with Option D. Finally, he directed the JCS to continue to plan on the basis of the fiscal guidance for Southeast Asia for FY 1973. He did not elaborate but, presumably, referred to the planning and programming guidance issued on 21 April.[24] He added that air operations for FY 1973 would be reviewed at the appropriate time in the future.[25]

In his 1 July decision, Secretary Laird also agreed that the field commanders must have flexibility to vary sortie levels according to circumstances. It was important, he said, for COMUSMACV to save sorties in periods of reduced threat and inclement weather to allow surges in periods of greater need. Accordingly, he again requested comments on a "banking" procedure, whereby COMUSMACV would prepare an advanced schedule of monthly sortie rates for the fiscal year, varying them in accord with enemy activity patterns and seasonal weather conditions. Total sorties in the schedule, the Secretary said, should be less than the total permitted by the fiscal guidance to allow a reserve.[26]

The Joint Chiefs still opposed banking of air sorties in Southeast Asia.[27] They told the Secretary of Defense on 29 July 1971 that neither COMUSMACV nor CINCPAC favored his recent proposal in this regard. While there were seasonal patterns in the air effort, prediction of monthly requirements was "difficult and of questionable accuracy." Consequently, they urged that the field commanders be permitted to manage sorties within the total annual authorization as provided in their Option D of 28 June.[28]

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General John D. Ryan, had suggested the possibility of reducing B–52 operations in Southeast Asia. In the preceding 12 months (FY 1971), the field commanders had varied tactical air rates in Southeast Asia with a net savings of over 22,000 sorties, allowing the JCS to assure the Secretary of

Defense of the flexibility of the commanders in responding to military requirements. A similar savings, however, had not been possible for B–52 operations. The sorties flown during the first part of 1971 had averaged more than the authorized 1,000 per month, the surges being to support LAM SON 719 operations and then to exploit the lucrative targets that developed as a result of that operation and to limit the flow of supplies to enemy forces operating in Cambodia and the southern part of the Republic of Vietnam. Consequently, the Strategic Air Command had agreed in February 1971 to increase the daily B–52 rate from 30 to 40 sorties and, at COMUSMACV's request, this higher expenditure continued through May. During that month, however, the JCS directed a return to the authorized 1,000 monthly rate on 1 June to coincide with the start of the southwest monsoon and an anticipated drop in enemy infiltration activities. Ryan believed that B–52 sorties during the monsoon season were of limited value, especially considering the cumulative effect of previous bombings on the same targets. Therefore on 21 July 1971, he suggested the possibility of reducing B–52 operations in Southeast Asia during the current wet season.[29]

The JCS did not accept the Air Force proposal for any reduction in B–52 sortie rates in Southeast Asia, but Admiral Moorer on 2 August did urge the field commanders to consider managing the B–52 program to conserve expenditures as the situation allowed. He told the commanders that, although the Joint Chiefs had succeeded in obtaining Secretary of Defense support for the current B–52 sortie levels through the remainder of FY 1972, the Services were under continuing pressure to make further reduction in operating expenditures with sortie reductions frequently cited as a possible source for savings. Recent studies within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Admiral Moorer continued, had suggested limiting tactical and B–52 air strikes to known or validated targets to achieve budget reductions. Even though the Joint Staff had resisted such suggestions, Admiral Moorer requested CINCPAC to consider the "negotiating advantages" accruing from management of the FY 1972 B–52 program by varying monthly sorties, without relinquishing any assets, when the military situation permitted.[30]

A Final Decision

At long last, on 12 August 1971, Secretary Laird informed the JCS of the decision on air support levels for Southeast Asia. He told Admiral Moorer that the following monthly sortie rates "will be budgeted" for each fiscal year:

	FY 1972	*FY 1973*
Tactical air	10,000	8,000
B–52	1,000	1,000
Gunship	750	750

He added that COMUSMACV was "authorized and encouraged" to keep the number of sorties (including B–52s) "as low as the tactical situation permits," though it was not necessary to provide an advance schedule of proposed sortie expenditures. The Secretary did not explain how the decision on these rates was reached. He had told the Joint Chiefs on 1 July that the question of Southeast Asia air levels would be reviewed by the Senior Review Group with alternatives submitted for the President's decision. Available records, however give no indication of such Senior Review Group consideration or Presidential action. Apparently, the President did approve the levels provided the Chiefs on 12 August 1971, for subsequently Secretary Laird referred to the FY 1972 sortie rates approved by the President. In any event, the levels announced by Secretary Laird on 12 August were higher than those reluctantly recommended by the Joint Chiefs in their Option D on 28 June and tentatively approved by the Secretary on 1 July 1971. In fact, these 12 August activity levels were identical to those the JCS had advocated throughout the first six months of 1971 though with the stipulation to hold below those rates to the extent the military situation allowed.[31]

When the Secretary of Defense announced the FY 1972 and FY 1973 air activity levels on 12 August, he asked the Joint Chiefs to recommend the mix of Air Force and Navy tactical air sorties for those two years and the basing plans for Air Force units using two possible assumptions: that the Air Force would withdraw entirely from South Vietnam in FY 1972 or that it would retain two operating bases there at the end of that year. In reply the JCS submitted three options for the mix of tactical air sorties in FYs 1972 and 1973. They preferred Option 3, which provided:

	FY 1972 (by quarter)				FY 1973 (by quarter)			
	1st	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*
USAF	8,300	6,900	6,700	6,700	5,100	4,700	4,700	4,700
USN	2,100	3,100	3,300	3,300	2,900	3,300	3,300	3,300
	10,400	10,000	10,000	10,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000

The other two options would have assigned the Air Force larger, though varying, proportions of the total.

The Joint Chiefs told the Secretary that Air Force squadrons to support Option 3 could be based in Southeast Asia without an increased manpower ceiling in Thailand if two operating bases were retained in South Vietnam at the end of FY 1972. If no bases were retained, they continued, then Air Force squadrons for Option 3 could be based in Thailand only with an increase of 1,250 US personnel in that country. The JCS believed that the un-programmed costs for Option 3 could be absorbed without unmanageable impacts on risks in FY 1972, but that the impacts for FY 1973 would be serious, involving "significantly increased risks." They recommended approval of Option 3 for execution in FY 1972 and for planning in FY 1973 with provision of additional funds to

cover un-programmed costs. If such funds were not available, the JCS recommended that these costs be shared equally among the Services and other DOD activities with exact costs developed "in Secretarial channels."[32]

The Secretary of Defense approved Option 3 for planning purposes on 20 September 1971. He told the Service Secretaries to defer until FY 1973 the procurement of all air ordnance required for the additional sorties involved, stating that other costs for FY 1972 should be reprogrammed from within the current Navy and Air Force budgets. For FY 1973, additional costs would be added to current programs, but Secretary Laird warned that the added costs for FY 1973, like those for FY 1972, might ultimately have to be absorbed. He emphasized the need to reduce the costs of Southeast Asia operations, particularly those of the Navy. Authorization to maintain a sortie-level capability, he said, did not mean the authorized level had to be flown. Rather, "the tactical situation and the availability of valid targets should be the determining factors." He expressed gratification with the recent overall Southeast Asia air effort in this regard, especially the Air Force record, and urged that all possible benefit should be derived from the presence of three attack aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific.[33]

At the end of September 1971, Secretary Laird directed that the transition from the FY 1972 to the FY 1973 sortie levels take place over a three-month period, as had been the practice in previous years, to facilitate planning and to reduce personnel and logistical turbulence. Attack carrier deployment schedules and Air Force deployment and inactivation plans, he said, should reflect this transition during the fourth quarter of FY 1972 (April–June). At the same time the Secretary directed the Services to maintain the capability to fly the 10,000 monthly tactical air sorties "directed by the President for FY 1972." This could be done, he said, by relying on the surge capability of the forces in Southeast Asia or by making temporary use of other CINCPAC resources.[34]

Problems stemming from redeployment of the 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) illustrated the difficulty of reconciling withdrawals with sortie levels. Early in October, a JCS message to General Abrams directed that the squadron redeploy to Clark Air Force Base. The message was released without getting clearance from Secretary Laird despite Admiral Moorer's instruction to do so. Subsequently, Secretary Laird sent Abrams a back-channel message to the effect that he had not wanted to remove the squadron but was going along with a JCS recommendation; COMUSMACV then formally protested losing the squadron. His argument for retention was couched in such a way as to eliminate A–1s, F–105s and B–57s from the calculation, making it difficult to reach 10,000 tactical sorties without retaining the 480th TFS. The Assistant to the Chairman characterized this as the first time that Abrams had accused the JCS of not supporting him. The Chairman telephoned CINCPAC, directing him to make a plan for augmenting MACV with squadrons based in the Philippines. The important thing, he felt, was to keep 198 F–4s in South Vietnam, even if there had to be daily ferry flights from Clark Air Base. Moor-

er also commented that March 1971, during Lam Son 719, had been the only month when sorties exceeded 10,000: "Any time you feel you are hurting just yell." The Director, Joint Staff, drafted a reply to COMUSMACV; Admiral Moorer told him to include a statement that $400 million had been diverted from FY 1973 priority projects to maintain sortie levels. The Chairman recorded in his diary that "the more times I read Abe's message the madder I got. . . . " The 480th TFS was withdrawn.[35]

After many months of effort, air activity levels in Southeast Asia seemed to be fixed. But even these rates were not able to withstand the continuing pressures for further budget reductions. Although the Services had programmed for 8,000 tactical air sorties per month for FY 1973 in accordance with the decision of 12 August 1971, the Secretary of Defense on 23 December 1971 approved a new Program Budget Decision providing for an average of 6,000 tactical air sorties per month in FY 1973 while retaining a force structure to support a normal level of 7,100 per month and a surge capability of 9,700 per month. This decision was based on the assumption that there would be three attack carriers available for the first half of 1973 and two for the second half, and it reduced obligational authority for FY 1973 by $27.3 million. Average monthly sorties for FY 1973 under this new decision were:

Service	*Service*	*Force Capability*		
	Estimate	*Average*	*Normal*	*Surge*
Air Force	4,800	3,700	4,800	5,500
Navy	3,200	2,300	2,300	4,200
Total	8,000	6,000	7,100	9,700

Source: (S) Program Budget Decision 316, 23 Dec 71, Att to J–5 Briefing Sheet for CJCS on a Memorandum by the CSAF to be Considered at the JCS Meeting on 26 January 1972, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71)

During 1971, US commanders in Vietnam employed air assets within established activity levels, but there was considerable uncertainty throughout much of the year as to what those levels would be in the coming months.

5

The Conduct of the War in South Vietnam, 1971—Early 1972

During February–March 1971, the ARVN made a brief, costly foray into Laos. The leadership in Hanoi decided during 1971 that US withdrawals were reaching the point where a conventional invasion stood a good chance of success. The communists fought a holding action in the South while North Vietnam prepared its offensive. By the end of 1971, the strategic initiative had shifted to Hanoi; in the spring of 1972, the North Vietnamese made an all-out bid for victory.

The Enemy

Information available to US officers during the first half of 1971 indicated that the enemy had been compelled to go on the defensive. During 1971, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong (VC) pursued objectives in South Vietnam unchanged from previous years. The enemy sought to overthrow the existing government of South Vietnam, replace it with a communist regime, and unify all of Vietnam. This had been the enemy goal since the beginning of the conflict, though the strategy and tactics for achieving it had changed over the years.

The enemy's main force warfare strategy, culminating in a series of unsuccessful offensives in 1968, had proved extremely costly in terms of manpower and resources, and in 1969, the enemy had abandoned this strategy to return to one of protracted conflict. In late 1969 and 1970, enemy leaders called for a two-track policy of building socialism in the north while continuing the war in the south, and North Vietnamese

and Viet Cong operations concentrated on rebuilding base areas, conservation of forces, surges of activity, and defeat of the RVN pacification program.[1]

The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong continued to pursue a protracted war strategy in 1971. Directive 01/CT–71, issued by the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) in late 1970 or early 1971, provided general guidelines for the year. The military mission of the directive called for continual attacks to achieve piecemeal victories, to defeat allied efforts, and to counter the pacification program. The directive stressed equal use of main force and guerrilla tactics; main forces would be employed against US and RVN mobile troops with guerrilla warfare used in both rural and urban areas. The VC/NVA forces would also rebuild secure bases in remote areas. As the United States continued to withdraw its forces, the Republic of Vietnam would be required to increase conscription and taxes. Such action would bring civilian discontent, providing exploitable weaknesses for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. Another possible source of exploitation listed by the directive was the vulnerability of the RVN outposts and local security network manned by the Regional and Popular Forces and by the People's Self Defense Forces.[2]

A second directive, COSVN 06/CT–71, issued in June 1971, set forth guidelines for activities during the RVN congressional and Presidential elections in August and October 1971. In November 1971, COSVN issued Directive 39 to cover the remainder of 1971 and early 1972. It, in effect, admitted the success of the RVN pacification program and emphasized the importance of regaining political control in the countryside.

At the start of 1971, US intelligence sources estimated that there were 230,060 VC and NVA forces in South Vietnam, approximately 8,000 less than a year earlier. These forces made up some 244 maneuver battalions, 27 less than the previous year, and were directed from Hanoi by the High Command of the North Vietnam Armed Forces. Command over the upper part of South Vietnam was exercised through four major tactical headquarters covering the following areas: The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) Front; Military Region Tri Thien Hue (MRTTH), extending southward from the DMZ almost to Da Nang; Military Region (MR) 5, the central coastal region; and the B–3 Front, the central inland area. North Vietnamese command over forces in the lower part of South Vietnam (roughly the area of RVN MRs 3 and 4) was through the Central Office for South Vietnam, the military arm of which was the South Vietnam Liberation Army (SVNLA) Headquarters.[3]

Enemy forces in South Vietnam were organized into divisions, regiments, battalions, and smaller units, and assigned to the various military regions. All NVA units in South Vietnam were main force units. In addition, there were VC main forces, consisting largely of personnel from North Vietnam. Local forces were organized as battalions or smaller groupings and were usually subordinate to the province or district level organization, and generally did not move outside of the province or district to which they were assigned. Increasing numbers of NVA personnel were appearing in local forces, though in lower ratios than in the main force units. Also included in

the local forces were the guerrillas, part-time soldiers subordinate to the district level organization, who, usually, did not operate far from their home areas.

In 1971, the enemy suffered an estimated 98,094 killed in action, including operations in Laos and Cambodia. Allied actions and programs seriously restricted enemy recruitment of personnel within South Vietnam during the year, and the enemy increasingly relied on infiltration of replacements from North Vietnam. United States military authorities in South Vietnam estimated that between 60,000 and 70,000 enemy personnel were infiltrated into Cambodia and South Vietnam during the year and an additional 10,000 into southern Laos, representing a marked increase over similar figures for the preceding year.

In accordance with the strategy of protracted war, enemy activity in South Vietnam during 1971 was generally at a low level. There were, of course, sporadic surges of action in different parts of the country. In RVN MR 1, allied forces succeeded in keeping main force enemy units out of the lowland areas, but these units operated in strength along the DMZ and in the unpopulated western areas of the region. In addition, throughout the year, there was considerable military and terrorist activity in the southern sector of the region. The enemy forces in RVN MR 2 consolidated and resupplied troops and bases in the Central Highlands in anticipation of the 1972 spring offensive. As a result, the population centers of the region were relatively free of enemy presence. Nevertheless, at the end of the year the greatest enemy threat in South Vietnam remained in the two northern military regions of the country.

In the COSVN area of South Vietnam, enemy forces were fairly active along the Cambodian border. There they resupplied and refitted, avoiding major contacts, employing economy of force tactics and carrying out terrorism and sapper attacks. Elsewhere in MR 3, including Saigon and its environs, enemy activity remained at a generally low level throughout the year. In the Delta, RVN troops had operated since August 1969 unassisted by US ground forces. In accordance with COSVN Directive 01/CT–71, during 1971 enemy forces concentrated on overrunning government bases in outlying areas. In the course of the year, the enemy took 96 such outposts, incurring few losses and achieving psychological gains in the local population's perception of enemy strength.

In the last several months of 1971, US and RVNAF commanders became aware of enemy preparations for a large-scale offensive. Various indicators revealed a logistical buildup designed to move supplies through the Laotian panhandle to forces in southern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. During a broadcast over the Liberation Radio in late October, General Cuu Long called for annihilation of the "Saigon puppet" main force troops. Aerial reconnaissance showed stockpiles of supplies and petroleum products, numerous new warehouses near infiltration routes, and significant increases in material stored at major transshipment points. Lines of communications in Laos and Cambodia were expanded in the south and west and major enemy transportation units also extended their areas of operation

in the same areas. To protect the extended lines of communication in southern Laos, the enemy deployed 45 to 50 antiaircraft artillery battalions, as well as surface-to-air missile units to nearby areas.

The Allies

The most significant aspect of friendly activities in 1971 was the continuing withdrawal of US forces and the RVNAF assumption of all offensive ground combat operations. At the beginning of 1971, the United States forces in the Republic of Vietnam numbered 335,794. During the year, nearly 180,000 US troops departed Vietnam, leaving 158,119 at the end of December 1971. This withdrawal reduced allied maneuver battalions in South Vietnam from 273 in January to 231 in December. After August 1971, the role of US troops was limited to support and training for the RVNAF and providing security for US bases.[4]

With redeployments and the removal of forces from offensive combat, US combat casualties dropped significantly in 1971. During the year, 1,380 personnel were killed in Southeast Asia, 1,289 in South Vietnam and the remainder in Laos and North Vietnam. The 1971 total was nearly 3,000 less than the 4,225 combat deaths in the preceding year and over 8,000 less than the figure for 1969.[5]

Non-combat deaths (from accidents, drug abuse, and other miscellaneous causes) showed no dramatic decline. On 8 February 1971, the Secretary of Defense commended Admiral Moorer on the steady reduction of combat casualties but questioned the lack of progress in reducing non-combat deaths. "It seems to me," he told the Chairman, "we might have expected the level of non-combat deaths to decline as our troop strength declines."[6] Admiral Moorer replied that the level of noncombat deaths was, indeed, "a matter of serious concern to all commanders within MACV." He assured the Secretary that the Services and General Abrams were working to reduce non-combat deaths. Admiral Moorer described recent measures taken to increase emphasis on training, preventive practices, and safety precautions. These actions, he concluded, should begin to diminish non-combat deaths in Vietnam. The number did decline from 1,841 in 1970 to 953 in 1971.[7]

While the RVNAF assumed greatly expanded combat responsibilities in 1971, they did not attain their authorized force level of 1,100,000. On 1 January 1971, RVNAF strength stood at 1,074,410; at the close of the year, this figure had dropped slightly to 1,046,254. Nonetheless, COMUSMACV judged the RVNAF in 1971 "a strong, broadly based military establishment, an establishment which will be difficult for an aggressor to defeat on its home ground."[8]

In addition to US and South Vietnamese troops, allied forces included contingents from third country contributors. These forces, together with those of the United States, were known collectively as Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF). At the beginning of 1971, the third country forces in Vietnam totaled

67,444 men, representing seven countries. The Republic of Korea contribution was by far the largest. The ROK personnel had participated in combat operations in Vietnam since October 1965, and as 1971 began, 48,537 ROK troops were deployed along Highway No. 1 in central Vietnam. During the year, they took part in three large operations. They carried out DOKURI 71–1, a large search and clear operation, between 22 February and 11 March. Subsequently the ROK forces launched an operation on 23 April 1971 to counter enemy plans to disrupt the RVN congressional elections. This operation continued until 14 May and a similar one followed between 21 June and 11 July. The Republic of Korea began to withdraw forces from South Vietnam during 1971, and by the end of the year, 2,449 men with their equipment had returned to Korea.[9]

Australia, New Zealand, and Thailand all had combat troops in South Vietnam at the beginning of 1971, but these three countries substantially reduced their contingents during the year.[10] The remaining three contributor countries were the Philippines, the Republic of China, and Spain. The Philippines had reduced its forces from slightly over 2,000 men to 74 medical and dental personnel during 1969 and 1970 and the Philippines contingent in Vietnam dropped to 60 personnel in 1971. The Republic of China contribution to South Vietnam was a group of 31 military advisers, and this contribution remained unchanged throughout 1971. Spain had maintained a military medical team in Vietnam since November 1965, but withdrew the last seven members of the team in December 1971, citing a shortage of medical personnel at home.[11]

The guide for the conduct of operations by all allied forces in South Vietnam in 1971 was the Combined Campaign Plan, 1971 (AB 146). The Combined Campaign Plans dated from 1966 and were published annually for each calendar year. Theoretically, they were combined documents prepared jointly by the RVNAF Joint General Staff and the MACV staff, though they had been primarily US efforts. Issued on 31 October 1970, the 1971 document was principally a Vietnamese plan prepared with US cooperation. Following the format of previous versions, the 1971 Plan called for the RVNAF and the FWMAF to assure the security of the Vietnamese people through the accomplishment of two objectives: defeat of the VC/NVA and participation in the RVN 1971 Pacification and Development Plan. Operations to achieve these objectives included sustained, coordinated, and combined mobile operations against VC/NVA forces; ground, sea, and air operations to interdict enemy land and water lines of communication; maintenance of air and naval superiority in the air space and waters of the Republic of Vietnam; and conduct of border and coastal surveillance, including cross-border and counter infiltration actions. The 1971 plan also provided for operations to build on progress made by the RVNAF in the previous year with "minimum participation" by US and other third country forces.

The 1971 Combined Campaign Plan recognized the diminishing US presence in South Vietnam, stating that the United States would retain minimal combat,

combat support, and combat service support capability in South Vietnam to assist the RVNAF. The South Vietnamese forces, meantime, would develop and improve in order to become self-sufficient and capable of assuming the entire responsibility for the war. In a specific division of responsibilities, the plan assigned the RVNAF: neutralization of enemy main and local forces; conduct of anti-infiltration operations; prevention of enemy main force incursions into secure areas; control and improvement of lines of communication; participation in pacification; defense of key government and military installations; and support of the Phung Hoang program to eliminate the Viet Cong infrastructure. In addition, for the first time, the RVNAF was charged with the conduct of cross-border operations in authorized contiguous areas.

In accordance with the expanding RVNAF assumption of responsibility for the war, the Combined Campaign Plan, for the first time, assigned the VNAF the task of maintaining air supremacy over the Republic of Vietnam and the contiguous areas when authorized. The United States would support the VNAF in both combat operations and in the attainment of self-sufficiency.

United States responsibilities differed from previous years. No longer would US forces carry out mobile operations to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces, base areas, and resources. Rather, the 1971 Combined Campaign Plan provided that US and third country forces would: conduct operations in support of the RVNAF to reduce the flow of enemy men and materiel; assist in opening lines of communications and in securing designated areas; provide limited combat and combat service support to the RVNAF; and support the RVN pacification program.[12]

A Revised Mission for US Ground Forces

As US forces continued to redeploy from South Vietnam during the early months of 1971, the question arose of the mission for the remaining US troops once responsibility for ground combat operations was turned over to the RVNAF as anticipated on or about 1 July 1971. Asked about this matter by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Abrams responded on 8 March that US ground forces remaining in South Vietnam could not assume a purely noncombat role:

> As long as US forces are stationed in a hostile environment, they must not be placed under the restriction that they cannot engage in offensive combat operations. Instead of restrictions on participating in combat, the degree of participation should be considered as the function of the forces available . . . . To assume a guard-type security posture would be detrimental to the security of the command.[13]

The Secretary of Defense, too, was concerned with this question and asked the Chairman on 21 April 1971 about the concept for employment of US forces after

1 July 1971. Admiral Moorer replied on 27 April, pointing out the difficulties that would result from a literal interpretation of any statement that remaining US forces would not engage in "any form of ground combat operations." To permit US forces to defend themselves and their installations adequately, he explained, they would have to patrol actively. Moreover, they would have to protect US artillery employed on fire support bases as well as US airfields, helicopter installations, and communication centers. Admiral Moorer also anticipated "severe" leadership and morale problems if US soldiers, having been told that the RVNAF had assumed responsibility for all ground combat operations, were required to conduct defensive patrolling beyond the perimeters of their installations. Consequently, Admiral Moorer recommended that both public pronouncements and official documents not speak of transferring "all ground combat responsibilities," but rather refer to "passing to the RVNAF primary responsibility for ground offensive combat operations."[14]

Secretary Laird agreed with the Chairman, but as he pointed out to Admiral Moorer on 10 May 1971, the RVNAF assumption of the "primary responsibility" for ground combat operations would mark "a significant change in the relative roles of US and Vietnamese forces." For example, the Secretary did not visualize that US forces would conduct or participate in the ground phase of "major preplanned combat actions" after 1 July 1971 although they would have "an active combat role" in defending the remaining US presence.[15]

Four days later, on 14 May 1971, the Joint Chiefs forwarded to the Secretary a statement of the role for US ground forces in South Vietnam after 1 July 1971 that provided for: (1) "dynamic defense" of US installations; (2) security and processing of equipment and supplies to be retrograded; (3) development of the RVNAF by supplying essential combat and combat service support. The term "dynamic defense," they explained, did not imply a static garrison-type defense posture, which would be militarily unsound. Rather, the concept encompassed the conduct of operations by US forces out from vital installations and in concert with RVN Regional and Popular Force units, keeping the enemy off balance and disrupting his operations. In addition, US forces would continue to supply artillery, air, engineer, communications-electronics, intelligence, and naval support for RVNAF operations and for the defense of key US, FWMAF, and RVNAF bases. United States naval forces would be positioned offshore to provide naval gunfire, air, and coastal patrol support; Air Force units would conduct tactical air operations in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as required; and US advisers would assist in developing and training the RVNAF and in supporting the South Vietnamese pacification effort.[16]

The adoption of this changed concept of operations for the remaining US ground troops in South Vietnam raised a problem concerning the designation given the operations still conducted by US forces. Admiral Moorer brought this aspect of the matter to the attention of the field commanders on 5 June, requesting them to take a "close look" at the system of reporting the status of US units. He wanted to insure a clear reflection of the type of operations in which the units were actually engaged.

Many persons who read and used those reports, he cautioned, might draw invalid conclusions from the daily portrayal of US activity by employment categories. He instructed the commanders: "we will have to be especially precise in the way . . . we report activities of maneuver battalions." He noted that most of these units were still being reported as engaged in "combat operations" with only a few in "security" or "pacification" actions. He considered it misleading to continue to report as combat operations the activities of units carrying out dynamic defense. "From our point of view," Admiral Moorer said, "dropping the term combat operations would solve the problem." Moreover, Admiral Moorer pointed out that reports were still listing US casualties in "large-scale" operations bearing code names. Possibly, he suggested, the use of code names for operations should be discontinued, since over the years operations so designated had been associated with large offensive ground actions.[17]

General Abrams subsequently issued guidance to his subordinate commanders in June 1971 defining the terms "combat" and "security" operations. The former included those that were "primarily offensive in nature" and normally involved units of battalion size or larger operating against formations beyond striking distance (35-50 km) of US installations, facilities or unit bases. Security operations were defensive actions against enemy incursions of any kind that, if permitted to proceed unchecked, would threaten US installations, facilities, or units. This latter category normally included reconnaissance, ambush operations, reaction to local enemy contact, and other operations involving units of company size or smaller. Some US commanders in Vietnam objected to being considered in anything but a "combat" role. But as the Director, Joint Staff, remarked to the Chairman, there need be no stigma attached to the "security" role, since it permitted, and indeed required "aggressive offensive operations."[18]

Ground Operations

In fulfillment of the Combined Campaign Plan, allied forces in 1971 sought to defeat the VC/VNA forces, and to thwart their objective of taking over South Vietnam. To accomplish this goal, the allies pursued a three-pronged attack consisting of coordinated ground operations to locate and destroy enemy main and local forces, a combined interdiction program to prevent infiltration, and attempts to neutralize the Viet Cong infrastructure. The ground war during the year was characterized by a low level of enemy activity resulting, according to COMUSMACV, from significant losses inflicted upon the enemy, allied success in carrying the war to areas outside South Vietnam, and the enemy's need to concentrate on the security of his logistical system.[19]

The ground operations in South Vietnam varied from military region to military region. The enemy threat was greatest in MR 1 and consequently more allied forces operated there in 1971 than in any other region. Regular RVNAF units conducted

combat operations to find and destroy enemy main forces and base areas in the foothills and mountains in the western portion of the region, while Regional and Popular Forces provided security and community development support in the populous coastal area. In addition, considerable effort was devoted to prevention of enemy infiltration of main force units across or around the DMZ.

The first three months of 1971 were quiet in MR 1. During January, maneuver forces pursued search and clear operations against enemy main force units. In February and March, most allied troops in the region were occupied in either direct participation or support of LAM SON 719,[20] the RVNAF incursion into Laos. Launched on 30 January, this operation was the largest ground action of the year.

No US ground troops entered into Laos, but the United States did furnish extensive air support for LAM SON 719. Even after the operation ended, the United States continued to supply support for RVNAF crossborder operations into Laos. At Admiral Moorer's request, the Secretary of Defense extended such authority, initially, until 15 June 1971 and, eventually, through 30 September 1971. In the second extension, however, the Secretary stipulated that:

> subsequent to 15 July 1971, I desire that US support be limited to planning assistance and coordination, and the use of US TACAIR and B–52's. In emergency situation [sic] which exceed RVNAF ability to react within available resources, additional authority is granted to employ US helicopter gun ships and logistic helicopter [sic] for extraction purposes.[21]

Meantime, on 28 March 1971 Fire Support Base MARY ANN, manned by an element of the 196th Brigade of the 23d US Infantry Division, had come under enemy attack. After firing 50 to 60 rounds of 82mm mortar fire into the base, enemy sappers penetrated the base perimeter. Following some initial confusion, the US forces drove the enemy from the base. But, during the 20-minute engagement, 33 US soldiers were killed and 76 wounded, two 155mm howitzers destroyed, and numerous small arms and miscellaneous gear damaged or destroyed. Enemy losses were 12 killed. The Commanding General, 23d Infantry Division, told General Abrams that "we may have been the victims of some complacency"; there had been no enemy activity in the immediate vicinity of the base for months.[22]

The apparent complacency of US forces caused concern in Washington. At the request of the Secretary of Defense, General Abrams conducted an investigation, and Admiral Moorer submitted the results to the Secretary on 4 May. The US forces had, indeed, been complacent. There had been no recent local patrolling to screen the immediate vicinity of the base; observation and listening posts did not exist outside the base; the perimeter guard was undermanned; and there were no interior or roving guards within the base except at the 155mm weapons. In addition, no reaction force had been designated, the alert signal was not sounded at the time of the initial attack, and anti-intrusion devices as well as measures to increase troop alertness were minimal.[23]

Secretary Laird expressed alarm to Admiral Moorer that "any U.S. military organization in Southeast Asia could grow so careless and be so ill-prepared for action." He "assumed" that the military chain of command had insured against further negligence of this kind. The Admiral replied that General Abrams had directed his entire command to review, and improve as necessary, readiness measures. After completion of a final investigation, five Army officers, including one general, received reprimands.[24]

With the end of LAM SON 719 in April, allied commanders in MR 1 launched LAM SON 720, a stepped up action against enemy supply and base areas and infiltration routes. Forces of the US 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and the 1st ARVN Division took part in this operation in the Da Krong and A Shau valleys of Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. LAM SON 720 continued into May 1971. In June, enemy pressure forced the ARVN to evacuate Fire Support Base FULLER in Thua Thien Province.

The summer brought continuing redeployment of US forces from MR 1 and the withdrawal of the remaining forces from offensive operations. In late June, US forces began "dynamic defense," with primary attention devoted to defense against enemy incursions. Operations included reconnaissance, ambush patrols, and reaction to local enemy contact.

In September, the RVNAF carried out LAM SON 810, a two-week interdiction campaign in western Quang Tri Province. The following month, two brigades of the US 23d Infantry Division ceased the dynamic defense operations, which they had pursued since July, and began to leave Vietnam, along with an armored cavalry squadron. To compensate for this loss, the RVNAF activated a new combat unit, the 3d Infantry Division, in MR 1. The new division, although not completely activated until the following March, assumed responsibility for an area along the DMZ in northern Quang Tri Province in November. The remainder of the year was quiet in MR 1 and, at the end of the year, the last US Army division in-country, the 101st at Phu Bai, was in a stand-down posture.

In all operations in MR 1, the enemy enjoyed the advantage of a sanctuary of sorts in the DMZ. He moved men and weapons there at will, positioning them against allied forces in MR 1 just below. The allies could launch artillery attacks against enemy targets in the DMZ below the Provisional Military Demarcation Line (PMDL), could return enemy fire from anywhere in the DMZ, and could invade the zone to repulse any large enemy attack emanating from the zone. But they were not allowed to operate at will in the DMZ, nor could they carry out pre-emptive attacks against enemy buildups or weapons in the DMZ above the PMDL. As a consequence, the enemy was able to launch artillery attacks from the upper half of the DMZ at the time and place of his choosing, with the allies powerless to respond until the attack actually occurred.

In turning down a JCS request in August 1970 for expanded DMZ authorities, the Secretary of Defense had asked that he be kept informed of activities in or

near the DMZ that "significantly" increased the threat to allied forces. On 10 March 1971, Admiral Moorer informed the Secretary of Defense that there had recently been a number of attacks by fire on allied installations in MR 1. In addition, MACV had identified movement of two medium artillery weapons into the upper half of the DMZ. These pieces were not only in a position to attack US and RVN forces below the DMZ, but they could interdict the eastern half of Route 9, the primary line of communication supporting LAM SON 719. In accord with a recommendation of CINCPAC, Admiral Moorer requested authority for an air or artillery strike, as appropriate, to eliminate the artillery pieces, and the Secretary of Defense approved a week later, granting the authority through 31 March 1971.[25]

Subsequently, on 27 March 1971, Admiral Moorer informed the Secretary of Defense that recent enemy activities in the DMZ portended an attempt to move artillery into "previously prepared, widely dispersed, and easily camouflaged positions throughout the sanctuary of the DMZ" above the PMDL. To remove that threat the Admiral requested standing authority to attack NVN artillery targets anywhere in the DMZ.[26]

On the following day, 28 March, visual reconnaissance was conducted in anticipation of the one-time strike authorized by the Secretary on 17 March. The reconnaissance revealed that the site was empty and the strike was not carried out. Instead, CINCPAC asked for authority to strike three newly identified artillery sites in North Vietnam just above the DMZ as well as for continuing authority for armed reconnaissance to locate and destroy field artillery pieces in North Vietnam below 17°10' north. Admiral Moorer relayed the CINCPAC request to the Secretary of Defense, concurring that the sites in question threatened US forces. "The sanctuary areas in and north of the DMZ must be denied to the enemy," he told the Secretary, "if we are to minimize the risk to our troops operating in northern MR 1 adjacent to the DMZ and reduce US casualties."[27]

The Secretary of Defense did not approve either authority. He told the Chairman that it was not his intention to "create sanctuaries in and north of the DMZ." But, in the absence of "more definitive intelligence" of enemy activity in the DMZ, and until there was more positive evidence of enemy artillery in North Vietnam shelling US forces in South Vietnam, the Secretary declined to grant the recommended authorities. He reminded the Chairman that authority already existed to counter artillery fire from north of or from within the DMZ with heavy ground or naval gunfire and tactical air until the enemy weapons were destroyed.[28]

Two months later, on 27 June 1971, the Chairman informed the Secretary of Defense of recent enemy activity in and near the DMZ, including the loss of Fire Support Base FULLER that significantly increased the threat to allied forces. He told the Secretary that enemy initiatives in northern MR 1 presented a grave danger to the security of troops and installations in Quang Tri Province. Recent US troop withdrawals as well as the current RVNAF posture precluded effective defense, the Admiral believed, so long as the DMZ remained an enemy sanctuary.

He requested authority to use tactical air, artillery, naval gunfire, area denial air munitions, and B–52 strikes, if surface-to-air missile (SAM) defenses allowed, throughout the entire DMZ.[29] The Secretary turned down the request on 1 July 1971. Although he shared the Chairman's concern, he saw no indication that expanded authorities in the DMZ were critical to countering the enemy threat in western Quang Tri Province.[30]

Both the Joint Chiefs and COMUSMACV were reluctant to accept the Secretary's decision as final. On 8 July 1971, the Chairman forwarded the Secretary a Defense Intelligence Agency appraisal of the situation in the DMZ, and General Abrams discussed the matter with Dr. Kissinger a few days earlier when the latter was in South Vietnam. The General stressed the need for a five to ten day air campaign against enemy installations in the DMZ and North Vietnam to a depth of 25 miles north of the PMDL.[31]

A few days later, General Abrams submitted an updated assessment of the situation in MR 1 and the DMZ, together with a detailed plan for a special interdiction campaign there. Included was provision for a two- to three-day air strike of all military and logistics targets in North Vietnam below 17°35' north. A MACV representative briefed both the Joint Chiefs and Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard on the DMZ situation and the plan, and Lieutenant General Melvin Zais, USA, Director of Operations, Joint Staff, followed with "a very strong and convincing case" in support of the MACV recommendations.[32]

On 19 July, the Chairman told the Secretary of Defense that the current threat in MR 1 required a major US effort focused on the "total enemy system" within and north of the DMZ. Admiral Moorer believed that a concentrated program launched against this threat at that time would not only diminish the present danger but also the "threat potential" for the next year. Destruction of the enemy capabilities in lower North Vietnam and the DMZ sanctuaries was essential to insure safe and orderly US withdrawals and achievement of RVNAF self-sufficiency. Admiral Moorer provided the Secretary the COMUSMACV plan, recommending that it be forwarded to "higher authority" for approval.[33]

The Secretary of Defense did not approve the plan. On 24 July 1971, he told Admiral Moorer that he found insufficient changes in the military situation since their exchange on this matter in June to warrant revising his earlier decision. "Moreover," he told the Admiral, "there are non-military considerations which make the initiation of military actions such as those you propose exceedingly difficult at this time." Although not elaborating on those considerations, he did promise to monitor developments in MR 1 and the DMZ closely. Meanwhile, he assumed that the existing authorities would be used to the "maximum."[34]

No further action was taken in 1971 to expand the operating authorities in the DMZ. In August, Dr. Kissinger asked the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam to develop a paper on diplomatic and military options available to counter North Vietnamese road building in the DMZ and western Quang Tri Province. The JCS prepared a

draft for the military portion of the study. After consulting CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, Admiral Moorer suggested the following: B–52 strikes below the PMDL; tactical air and fixed and rotary wing gunship strikes in the DMZ; artillery attack from fire bases along the DMZ; and ground interdiction. Both the field commanders and the Chairman believed that, in order to deal effectively with the threat posed by the road network, it would be necessary to carry the interdiction beyond the PMDL into North Vietnam, and Admiral Moorer requested appropriate authorities for that purpose. But no action was taken on his request, nor did any further developments result from the Ad Hoc Group's study.[35]

Ground combat operations in Military Region 2 during 1971 were similar to those in MR 1. The allies faced a significant enemy main force threat throughout the year. Allied maneuver battalions operated against the enemy main force units, usually in the western area of the region while the territorial forces sought out the Viet Cong infrastructure. In addition, the Republic of Korea forces supported pacification efforts in the coastal area.

The year began in MR 2 with a low level of combat activity. The enemy ended the Tet truce with attacks by fire on several cities in the region, and heavy combat followed until mid-April. Thereafter, there was a brief lull until early May when the enemy began to increase pressure on allied fire support bases in western Kontum Province. The RVNAF reacted with 14 maneuver battalions. The month of June brought a period of reduced combat activity that lasted throughout the rest of the summer. In August, the US 173[d] Airborne Brigade, which had operated in the region, left Vietnam. During the remainder of the year, the RVN forces maintained pressure on the enemy, conducting continuous search and destroy operations.

In November, intelligence began to indicate a building enemy threat in the western highlands of the region, and the RVNAF initiated Operation QUANG TRUNG II/4. It consisted of increased border surveillance through the establishment of artillery-supported operational bases for saturation patrolling and ambushing along infiltration routes. When QUANG TRUNG II/4 terminated on 22 December, the RVNAF reported 228 enemy killed, five prisoners taken, and 42 individual and 51 crew-served weapons captured.

In November 1971, the RVNAF Commander of MR 2 planned an interdiction operation into Base Areas 701 and 702 in Cambodia to destroy enemy supplies, equipment, and personnel. Although the RVNAF would conduct the planning, coordination, and execution, the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John D. Ryan, advised the Secretary of Defense on 13 November that some US air support would be required. Specifically, General Ryan requested authority to use the assets of two US air cavalry troops for screening the west flank of the area and for armed reconnaissance as well as provision of helicopter medical evacuation, troop lift, resupply, and equipment removal left in emergency situations. The Secretary agreed two days later stating that the authority would expire upon completion of the operation, but no later than 20 December 1971.[36]

Subsequently, the RVNAF conducted a battalion-sized raid into Base Area 702 on 14 December 1971. United States B–52 and VNAF tactical air strikes, together with US air cavalry reconnaissance, preceded the attack. The action lasted for seven hours and damaged an extensive logistics storage area. On 17 December 1971, the Chairman notified the Secretary of Defense that the VNAF planned further raids into the two base areas, and Admiral Moorer asked for extension of the US support authorities for a 60-day period. The Secretary approved, but no further operations into Base Areas 701 or 702 occurred in 1971. Despite the success of the cross-border raid into Cambodia as well as of QUANG TRUNG II/4, at the end of the year allied commanders in MR 2 expected an enemy offensive in early 1972.[37]

There was little combat activity in Military Region 3 during the first nine months of 1971. This situation allowed most RVNAF forces in the region to engage in counter-infiltration operations along the Cambodian border and in Cambodia. The major RVNAF cross-border operation in Cambodia during 1971 was TOAN THANG 01/71, a combined ARVN-FANK effort to disrupt enemy attempts to restore logistics bases along the Mekong River and to remove enemy pressure on populated areas east of the Mekong River and below Route 7. The United States participated in the planning, and seven RVNAF multi-battalion task forces were committed to the operation. As recommended by COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and the Chairman and approved by the Secretary of Defense, the United States provided airlift for TOAN THANG 01/71, both fixed and rotary wing for medical evacuation, logistic movement and troop lift when VNAF resources and capabilities proved insufficient.[38]

TOAN THANG 01/71 began on 4 February 1971 when two RVNAF task forces moved into the Chup Plantation area of Cambodia. In the initial phase, RVN and Cambodian forces cooperated in searching out and destroying enemy troops and supplies. Numerous contacts were made with the enemy during the first ten days of the campaign. Thereafter contact was sporadic until 17 March when two RVNAF task forces again became engaged in the Chup area. Heavy fighting lasted for two days, and US tactical air, B–52s, and helicopter gunships supported the battle. Then, the level of action dropped off, except for occasional surges, and a general lull began in mid-April that lasted until late May.[39]

On 5 May, the Secretary of Defense questioned the value of TOAN THANG 01/71. From the available reports, he found it difficult to see how the pattern of recent activity had been productive. Moreover, he was concerned about possible "adverse impacts" of continuing the operations and asked Admiral Moorer for his views and recommendations.[40]

The Chairman replied on 19 May that TOAN THANG 01/71 continued to serve "the underlying purpose of Vietnamization." It had tied down the major elements of three enemy divisions, denying their employment in critical areas in Military Regions 3 and 4 in South Vietnam; it had thwarted enemy plans to restore base areas along the Cambodia-Vietnam border; and it had reduced enemy pressure

on the Government of Cambodia during a critical period of FANK development. Although the current action was "more modest" than during the early weeks of the operation, Admiral Moorer expected the ARVN, supported by tactical air, would continue to disrupt enemy intentions in Cambodia. In addition, he believed that the RVNAF had demonstrated their ability to plan and execute a complex operation and would probably pursue TOAN THANG 01/71 until the wet season. Premature withdrawal of US support, Moorer concluded, could undermine RVNAF confidence and the will to conduct such operations in the future. He recommended US support for TOAN THANG 01/71 through the dry season.[41]

After reviewing Admiral Moorer's assessment, the Secretary on 11 June approved US air support for TOAN THANG 01/71 through 30 June 1971. Subsequently, on 25 June, the Acting Chairman, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, informed the Secretary of Defense that enemy forces and activities in Cambodia still posed a threat in both the TOAN THANG 01/71 area and in the adjacent portion of South Vietnam. Admiral Zumwalt believed that the original objectives of TOAN THANG 01/71 remained valid and requested further extension of US support through 1 November 1971. Mr. Laird agreed on 30 June and extended authority for US support as requested.[42]

While the RVNAF maneuver battalions operated along and across the Cambodian border, the territorial forces pursued pacification objectives throughout the rest of MR 3. United States troops continued redeployment from the region. By May, two brigades of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, the remaining brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment had all departed Vietnam, giving a larger security role to the territorial forces in MR 3.

The low level of military action in MR 3 continued until late September 1971. Then enemy activity increased markedly in the northwestern part of Tay Ninh Province. Main force units launched coordinated attacks against the RVNAF, apparently hoping to make an impact on the RVN presidential election scheduled for 30 October 1971. Timely RVNAF reinforcement and an integrated fire support plan forced withdrawal of the attacking enemy forces by 26 October, and military activity in MR 3 returned to a low level for the last two months of the year.

The ARVN proceeded with operations in MR 4, as they had since August 1969, unassisted by US ground forces. The South Vietnamese forces attempted to saturate the area with search and clear operations to eliminate enemy forces and bases. The most important of these operations during 1971 were the 21st ARVN Division's U Minh campaign and the 9th ARVN Division's Seven Mountains effort in the western part of the region. In addition, the ARVN carried out limited cross-border operations into Cambodia throughout the year. As mentioned earlier, the enemy adopted a new tactic in MR 4 of overrunning ARVN outposts, and the number of posts overrun increased alarmingly during the year.

Following the pattern of earlier years, US and RVN forces observed brief ceasefires to mark Tet, Buddha's birthday, Christmas, and New Year's. In all four instances,

the Republic of Vietnam restricted the truces to 24 hours rather than matching longer periods proclaimed by the enemy. Experience had taught that the enemy never respected the holiday standdowns, regardless of the length. Thus shorter periods brought fewer casualties for the allies. As in previous years, US and RVN forces suspended all offensive ground operations during the truces although remaining on alert and patrolling base areas. During the Tet truce, 261800 to 271800 (Saigon time) January 1971, there were 59 major and 58 minor incidents; 18 allied personnel were killed, including one US soldier, eight RVNAF troops, and nine Vietnamese civilians. For Buddha's birthday, the allies suspended action from 081200 to 091200 (Saigon time) May 1971, but enemy observance was little better than in the Tet cease-fire. Three US and ten RVNAF soldiers and ten civilians were killed in some 78 (45 major and 33 minor) enemy-initiated incidents. The 24-hour Christmas and New Year's standdowns began at 241800 and 311800 (Saigon time), respectively. In both, incidents and casualties were lower than in the previous truces. Thirty major and 18 minor incidents were reported throughout South Vietnam during the Christmas cease-fire and 34 major and seven minor incidents during New Year's. No US casualties occurred during either period, though seven RVNAF soldiers were killed during the Christmas truce and 20 soldiers and one civilian during New Year's.[43]

Naval Operations

Allied naval operations in and around South Vietnam in 1971 followed the pattern of the preceding year. The Vietnamese Navy (VNN), with decreasing US support, engaged in two principal operations: MARKET TIME, to interdict seaborne movement of men and supplies into the Republic of Vietnam; and the Southeast Asia Lake-Ocean-River-Delta Strategy (SEA LORDS), to prevent waterborne infiltration from Cambodia over internal waters into MR 4 and southern MR 3.

The MARKET TIME operation maintained three barriers: an air patrol to provide an early warning against infiltration of large steel-hulled NVN trawlers; an outer surface barrier that patrolled 12 to 40 miles off the RVN coast to stop large craft; and an inner surface barrier of small patrol craft to interdict junks and sampans. In September 1970, the VNN had assumed full responsibility for the inner surface MARKET TIME barrier and the operation was renamed TRAN HUNG DAO XV. All vessels of the inner barrier were commanded and operated by the VNN in 1971 though the United States continued to provide advisers. The United States also retained responsibility for both the outer surface barrier and for the air patrol throughout the year.[44]

During 1971, the United States began a program, ACTOVRAD, of building and turning over to the VNN a network of coastal radar stations. These installations, when fully operational, would provide a detection capability equivalent to the US Navy P–3 aircraft manning the MARKET TIME air patrol. The first ACTOVRAD

station became operational on 1 July 1971 and was turned over to the VNN a week later. By December 1971, the VNN operated seven of the planned sixteen stations, and the remaining nine would be operational by 30 June 1972.[45]

The Vietnamese Navy forces were active in patrolling the MARKET TIME inner barrier in 1971. They inspected an average of approximately 135,000 craft per month along the South Vietnamese coast from the 17th parallel to the Gulf of Thailand. Nonetheless there was some increase in sea infiltration after the South Vietnamese took over control.[46]

The Secretary of Defense, on 18 May 1971, noted this decline in MARKET TIME effectiveness. He considered the prevention of significant enemy infiltration by sea to be "crucial to the success of the overall interdiction effort" and asked the Chairman about additional measures to assist the Vietnamese in MARKET TIME operations.[47]

Admiral Moorer replied on 14 June. He told the Secretary that, although the turnover of ships and craft to the VNN was "well planned and orderly," the results of the rapid VNN expansion were beginning to show in the form of preventive maintenance deficiencies and lack of adequate leadership among the young officers. The Commander, US Naval Forces, Vietnam (COMNAVFORV), was implementing appropriate measures, including a greater concentration of advisory emphasis on logistics and maintenance. In addition, COMNAVFORV had recommended to the Vietnamese Chief of Naval Operations several measures to improve MARKET TIME effectiveness. He had proposed a restructuring of the inner barrier and a concept of task units under the command of a senior naval officer to cover high threat areas to place boat commanders under more experienced supervision.

Admiral Moorer expected the COMNAVFORV actions to bring some improvement, but he cautioned Secretary Laird that the progress of VNN surface MARKET TIME forces, however great, would not completely stop sea infiltration. The Vietnamization of MARKET TIME did not include a Vietnamese air barrier patrol. Therefore the VNN operations simply could not match MARKET TIME when combined US air and surface forces participated. Should the remedial actions initiated by COMNAVFORV fail to bring improvement, then the United States might be forced, the Admiral believed, to reevaluate the "scope" of its involvement in the operational aspects of the program. But for the present, Moorer favored postponing additional action pending further experience with the VNN operation of the MARKET TIME inner barrier.[48]

After reviewing the Chairman's comments, the Secretary of Defense directed "aggressive" pursuit of the COMNAVFORV MARKET TIME corrective measures. He thought it might be advantageous to retain the MARKET TIME air barrier beyond the end of FY 1972 when termination was currently planned. Further, he wanted attention given to measures allowing the RVNAF to assume the air patrol mission and capability. Accordingly, the MARKET TIME Operations Annex to the Combined Interdiction Campaign Plan for FY 1972, submitted by the Joint Chiefs to the Secretary of Defense on 23 August 1971, provided for a MARKET TIME

maritime air patrol by US aircraft throughout FY 1972.[49] Although the VNAF would assume a share of the air patrol, it would not be able to support all of the requirement. As a consequence, the US Navy P–3 aircraft, currently performing this function, would remain on station and would not be "Vietnamized."[50]

The other major allied naval operation in 1971, SEA LORDS, was, with one exception, completely a VNN responsibility and had been redesignated TRAN HUNG DAO. The exception was SOLID ANCHOR, a project to establish a base for both coastal junks and patrol craft fast (PCF) at old Nam Can City to assist expansion of RVN control in An Xuyen Province. On 1 April 1971, however, SOLID ANCHOR, the last US Navy operation in Vietnam, was turned over to the VNN and renamed TRAN HUNG DAO IV. Throughout 1971, the US Navy continued to supply limited air support to SEA LORDS.[51]

All through the US combat involvement in South Vietnam, allied ground actions had been supported by naval gunfire. On 6 April 1971, however, the Secretary of Defense questioned the need for such support in light of the diminishing number of suitable targets in coast areas. In reply, Admiral Moorer objected to any withdrawal of remaining US naval gunfire support capability from South Vietnam. It was too early, he told the Secretary, to judge whether the RVNAF artillery would be able to assume the complete naval gunfire support mission. Moreover, he thought any such withdrawal unwise at that time in view of the accelerated redeployment of US combat forces.[52]

Still not convinced of the need to retain naval gunfire capability off South Vietnam, Secretary Laird asked the Chairman on 11 May 1971 to study the possibility of terminating this support except for emergencies. Admiral Moorer continued to insist that this capability was necessary. It was his "considered opinion," as well as that of the field commanders, that naval gunfire support was a valuable contribution to the total fire support resources available for Southeast Asian operations. He recommended retention of this support until redeployment of US combat forces was completed. At that time, the need for naval fire support would be reassessed. This exchange ended discussion of the matter and no reduction in US naval gunfire support occurred in 1971.[53]

Appraisals of the ARVN: Washington Versus Saigon

Would the ARVN be able to bear the entire burden of ground combat? The MACV headquarters was much more optimistic than some members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; MR 1 became the focus of JCS concern. During a JCS meeting on 26 March 1971, as LAM SON 719 was ending, General Westmoreland said that replacing ARVN losses from the Laotian incursion would take nine to twelve months. He predicted correctly that when US forces in MR 1 were thinned out, which would occur very soon, the northern provinces would become the main

battleground. Would the strength of the ARVN suffice? How did they plan to meet the situation? The JCS held the questions in abeyance.[54]

The issue resurfaced early in June 1971. The President was informed, in his daily briefing, that elements of two North Vietnamese divisions had entered the northernmost province of Quang Tri, raising the total there to seven infantry and two artillery regiments. Dr. Kissinger communicated Nixon's concern to Admiral Moorer. The Chairman, in turn, advised Admiral McCain and General Abrams that he shared the President's worries about the trend of events. The recent ARVN performance at Snuol, in Cambodia, had fallen below expectations. The reporting of events from the field, Moorer told Abrams and McCain, had been slow and piecemeal: "The credibility of the military organization is at stake. I must be kept better informed." On 8 June, Moorer received a reply from Abrams that he considered satisfactory. Two weeks later, after visiting Saigon, Admiral McCain reported General Abrams as being very worried about Cambodia but "not very concerned about Military Region 1." Admiral Moorer wrote in his diary: "I am!"[55]

In July, the J–3, Joint Staff prepared an assessment of the situation in MR 1. The Director, Lieutenant General Melvin Zais, USA, who earlier had commanded the 101st Airborne Division and XXIV Corps in MR 1, gave the JCS a briefing on 12 July, stressing how friendly strength had been reduced while enemy strength and activities were increasing. Admiral Moorer thanked Zais for "a very sobering presentation"; General Chapman called it "a very gloomy picture." General Westmoreland called Zais' briefing "far more realistic" than the one given by a MACV team.[56] Westmoreland recommended permanently stationing another division in MR 1. General Chapman agreed: "Let's put the 3rd Marine Division back in." He also wanted to threaten Hanoi with "appropriate action" if violations of the 1968 understanding continued. The Director, Joint Staff, commented that expansion of DMZ authorities had already been sought three times. Each time, the Secretary had disapproved on grounds of harming the Paris peace talks. Discussion turned to whether to bomb North Vietnam and then resume negotiations or vice versa. General Westmoreland observed that, based on his experience, "if we hit them first it would nullify any political initiative," because the North Vietnamese "would immediately take a hard position" from which "to save face they would not budge." Westmoreland and Chapman characterized J–3's presentation as "a shocker" that should be toned down before being presented to higher authority. The Director called attention to Secretary Laird's statement that US withdrawals were irreversible and the South Vietnamese must do the job. "That is the political decision," General Chapman commented, "I am strong for the principle of providing military advice."[57] No formal recommendation to send back the 3rd Marine Division was made. In any case, the strength of antiwar feeling would have ruled out any return of ground combat units. General Westmoreland also recommended creating a ROK mobile task force to help meet attacks in MRs 1 or 2. The Joint Chiefs did not adopt his proposal.

Early in November, Secretary Laird and Admiral Moorer went to South Vietnam, where they heard very optimistic reports from senior US officers. In Saigon, General Abrams briefed them about what he judged to be ARVN improvements in planning ability and air-ground integration. He asserted that "leadership throughout Vietnam was good—the Military Region commanders are outstanding." Only two divisional commanders, those of the 22d and 23rd in MR 2, struck him as below standard. Secretary Laird observed that members of Congress were asking why the South Vietnamese could not defend themselves when they were getting six times as much aid as North Vietnam was receiving. Abrams answered that the South Vietnamese people "have a far higher standard of living and, after all, that is what they are fighting for." What confidence do we have, Laird asked, that the ARVN could carry out interdiction tasks along the Laotian and Cambodian borders? Would South Vietnam collapse if US air activities were curtailed after FY 1972? Abrams answered that the South Vietnamese needed to draw a defensive line along their border through the Chup Plantation to Kompong Som. Turning to economic issues, the Director of the Agency for International Development reported that South Vietnam's commercial imports would reach $700-750 million. Funds from AID would cover $400-450 million of these imports. The impact of losing these funds, the Director believed, would be so drastic that the government could not survive, and military operations could not be sustained.[58]

Admiral Moorer went next to MR 2 where, after speaking with US and Vietnamese advisors, he concluded that "the government presence and concern for the people is getting down to the grass roots level." At Da Nang, Moorer conferred with Lieutenant General Lam, who said that "in 1972 the enemy would not be ready for any big attack in Military Region 1." Lam felt that Regional and Popular forces could "handle" the lowlands and that, "the most the enemy could deploy would be 3-4 divisions." Lam claimed that he could deal with 3-4 divisions but would depend on B–52 strikes and upon US helicopters for deep reconnaissance. In Military Region 4, the senior US advisor gave the Chairman his estimate that the Mekong Delta would be pacified by September 1972.[59]

Admiral Moorer visited Phnom Penh and spoke with Prime Minister Lon Nol, who was anxious to go on the offensive despite the FANK's many weaknesses. Moorer recommended that he request President Thieu to send ARVN troops back into Chup, where they could either destroy the 9th NVA Division's logistics base or force that division to pull back from the Route 6 area. Moorer also flew over key terrain in Laos, inspected some key positions, and judged the situation there to be "reasonably good."[60]

Returning to Saigon, Admiral Moorer gave General Weyand his judgment that Lam Son 719, the ARVN victory at Krek in Cambodia, and COMMANDO HUNT V had hurt the enemy badly enough that Hanoi "just might decide" in 1972 to limit offensive actions to northern Laos, concentrate on solving supply problems in the south, and observe the impact of President Nixon's approaching trip to China: "In

other words, to take a year's holiday." Summing up, Moorer wrote after flying back to Washington, the South Vietnamese "have continued to make excellent progress and the overall military situation in SVN is encouraging."[61]

Viewed in retrospect, these appraisals usually proved sounder the farther away the individuals making them were from the scene of the action. The near-disaster of 1972 would show that Generals Westmoreland and Chapman had rated the gravity of the danger in Military Region 1 more accurately than did General Abrams and Lieutenant General Lam. The outcome of LAM SON 719 had raised serious doubts in Admiral Moorer's mind about ARVN capabilities and MACV's assessment of them. When the Chairman toured South Vietnam, however, he let himself be persuaded by US officers on the scene that the RVNAF was rising to the challenge and all would likely go well. The spring 1972 offensive wrecked that illusion.

6

Air Operations in Southeast Asia, 1971–Early 1972

Air Operations

With the continuing US redeployment and the removal of US ground forces from combat during the year, air operations became increasingly important. Both the remaining US units and the RVNAF depended more than ever on air power to furnish the support that the departing troops had previously supplied. As COMUSMACV aptly put it: "airpower in 1971 literally took up the slack in US offensive power."[1]

Although the employment of air resources for combat support and for interdiction followed the pattern of previous years, the situation in 1971 was different: not only were US ground forces leaving South Vietnam but also US air forces and their equipment were drawn down as well. Fewer airplanes and personnel now had to provide the same type of strike missions, support, reconnaissance, interdiction, airlift, and search and rescue as in previous years. Only technological advances and improved weapons made this possible.[2]

United States air activity levels for Southeast Asia remained fixed for the first six months of 1971 at 1,000 B–52 and 14,000 tactical sorties per month, and then tactical sorties dropped to 10,000 per month during the last half of the year.[3] The number of US aircraft, however, declined significantly during the year. The 1st Marine Air Wing redeployed to Japan; aircraft carriers on YANKEE STATION off Vietnam were reduced from three to two; and the last F–100 fighter bomber squadrons returned to the United States, leaving the F–4 and a few F–105G fighters in Thailand as the main fighter aircraft for tactical air operations in Southeast Asia,

aside from Navy carrier planes. At the end of the year, there were 833 US Air Force planes in Southeast Asia, of which 384 were based in South Vietnam. The United States also turned over several air bases to the South Vietnamese during 1971, including Ban Me Thout, Phu Cat, Nha Trang, and Binh Thuy.

Improvement and expansion of the Vietnamese Air Force proceeded during the year.[4] On 31 December 1971, the VNAF had 42 operational squadrons of all types, including 9 fighter, 15 helicopter, 7 liaison, 4 transport, and 2 gunship. The VNAF flew gradually increasing numbers of sorties month after month. In all, the VNAF carried out 650,979 sorties in 1971, almost doubling the 383,240 total of the previous year.

The most significant US air operation in South Vietnam was the support of LAM SON 719 during February and March. B–52s bombed the landing zones in Laos prior to RVNAF air assaults; tactical air strikes directed by forward air controllers followed, and before the helicopter assaults, tactical aircraft laid down smoke screens interspersed with cluster bombs.

In Cambodia, US air resources supported the almost year-long TOAN THANG 01/71 operations. In addition, the United States assisted the South Vietnamese with air support for Mekong River convoys, furnishing air protection for the military and commercial convoys proceeding up the Mekong from Tan Chau in the Republic of Vietnam to Phnom Penh. Air Force and Army assets were committed to the initial aerial defense when the convoys began on 12 January 1971, and the 7th Air Force directed continuous aerial coverage. Forward air controllers of the USAF provided day and night coverage, calling in AC–119 gunships as needed. This Mekong River defense proved so successful that in 1971 only one tug and one barge were lost to enemy action.

United States B–52 and tactical air forces carried out interdiction operations in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos throughout 1971. The largest interdiction program was conducted in the southern part of Laos and was known as STEEL TIGER. There US Air Forces had attempted since 1965 to restrict and halt the movement of men and materiel from North Vietnam over the Ho Chi Minh Trail into Laos and, eventually, into South Vietnam. Following the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam in 1968, particular attention was assigned to the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the STEEL TIGER area. The United States instituted semi-annual campaigns to follow the cyclical dry-rainy seasons of the area. The first such operation, COMMANDO HUNT, covered the dry season during November 1968 to April 1969. Interdiction operations in Southern Laos during the summer of 1969 were designated COMMANDO HUNT II, and COMMANDO HUNT III followed during the 1969–1970 dry season.[5]

Enemy infiltration over the Ho Chi Minh Trail was estimated to be greater in the 1970–1971 dry season than in previous years, and COMMANDO HUNT V was launched in October 1970 to interdict that activity. Continuing into April 1971, COMMANDO HUNT V combined tactical air strikes, gunships, B–57 bombers, and B–52 attacks to disrupt the enemy flow of supplies. Seventy percent of the autho-

rized Southeast Asian tactical air sorties as well as a large portion of the B–52 sorties during this period were allotted to COMMANDO HUNT V. Although COMMANDO HUNT V ended on 30 April 1971, air interdiction of enemy infiltration through southern Laos continued. A summer campaign, COMMANDO HUNT VI, began on 15 May 1971. The mission was the same as the earlier dry season campaign, but monsoon weather precluded a comparable level of activity. On 1 November 1971, US forces launched COMMANDO HUNT VII, the 1971–1972 dry season interdiction operation in southern Laos. In this campaign, however, the number of available sorties was reduced almost a third from the previous year, reflecting the continuing reduction of US forces.

United States Air Forces also conducted interdiction in Cambodia, especially in the eastern portion to assist in the campaigns against the Ho Chi Minh Trail movement. Use of B–52s in the southern Laos-eastern Cambodia area for interdiction missions was particularly heavy at the beginning and end of 1971.

There was some question among US officials in Washington as to the effectiveness of the US and allied air interdiction in Southeast Asia. On 28 June 1971, Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard submitted to the Senior Review Group a DOD paper that presented both sides of the issue. Although there was consensus that the interdiction campaigns waged since 1965 had destroyed supplies and disrupted the flow of enemy materiel into South Vietnam, disagreement centered on the extent to which this disruption had influenced North Vietnamese strategy. While one side argued that the enemy had been neither "resource-constrained" nor severely limited by the bombing of the Laotian road net, the other side held that this interdiction had been a key factor in the enemy switch from a main force to a protracted war strategy. The Defense study did not resolve the argument, but officials in Washington did agree on the need to continue the effort and to provide the South Vietnamese with an interdiction capability. With the continuing drawdown of US forces, it was essential that the VNAF take over interdiction. Consequently, the United States initiated in October 1971 an accelerated program, CREDIBLE CHASE, to test and evaluate a concept to improve the RVN air interdiction capability.[6]

In addition to the interdiction in southern Laos, the United States also conducted air operations in northern Laos in 1971. There, in operations that had begun in 1964, tactical air and B–52 forces provided interdiction, armed reconnaissance, and ground support to Major General Vang Pao's forces. The United States also continued to use its air resources in Southeast Asia for reconnaissance and the collection of intelligence and for search and rescue operations. The latter category was credited in 1971 with 250 "saves," of which 142 were "combat saves."

All US air operations in Southeast Asia at the beginning of 1971 were conducted under consolidated authorities issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with Secretary of Defense approval, on 5 November 1970. In Laos, these authorities provided for air strikes in the BARREL ROLL area of northern Laos and for tactical air, B–52, and armed reconnaissance operations in southern Laos. The authorities

allowed for only limited defensive US air operations over North Vietnam, while in Cambodia they permitted B–52 and tactical air interdiction, air reconnaissance with armed escort and flak suppression, and search and air rescue operations. In addition, search and rescue and recovery operations were authorized in support of the Vietnamese Air Force, the Cambodian Air Force, and the Royal Thai Air Force in emergencies and when such operations were beyond the capabilities of those Southeast Asian nations.[7]

In April 1971, the Southeast Asia air operating authorities were extended through 1 November 1971 with only two minor changes: IRON HAND aircraft overflight of North Vietnam was widened to allow positioning between US and allied planes in the Republic of Vietnam, in addition to planes in Laos, and surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft artillery sites in North Vietnam. The three interdiction areas in Cambodia, FREEDOM DEAL, FREEDOM DEAL ALPHA, and FREEDOM DEAL EXTENSION, were combined into one area referred to as FREEDOM DEAL.[8] The following air authorities, which previously did not have expiration dates, were included in the consolidated Southeast Asian authorities that extended through 1 November 1971: current air operations in the Republic of Vietnam; search and rescue operations for US personnel throughout Southeast Asia; B–52 strikes in support of operations along Route 4 in Cambodia; use of US transport for airborne insertion and resupply of SALEM HOUSE reconnaissance and intelligence teams in Cambodia; US leaflet operations against the NVA/VC forces wherever US air strikes were authorized in Cambodia; B–52 strikes in Laos and the Republic of Vietnam when approved by CINCPAC and CINCSAC and coordinated with the US Embassy in Vientiane or Saigon; manned tactical reconnaissance in North Vietnam below 19° north and elsewhere in Southeast Asia except in the BARREL ROLL NORTH area where JCS approval was required; and high and low altitude drone and SR–71 missions over all of Southeast Asia and U–2R operations over all of Southeast Asia except North Vietnam. These authorities were subsequently extended to April 1972.[9]

With the increasing withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam, the Deputy Secretary of Defense grew concerned about the ability of the Southeast Asian countries to assume their own air defense. As a consequence, the Air Force undertook in early 1971 a study of the Southeast Asian air defense systems and the possible development of a single integrated air defense system for the area. The results of the study were submitted to the JCS on 2 April 1971. The Air Force concluded: the current air defense systems could not be maintained without US logistical support for the foreseeable future; the current and presently programmed systems could be improved without a correspondingly enlarged US presence, but an increase in size and sophistication of programmed forces would require a corresponding increase in US logistic support; the current air defense systems of the Republic of Vietnam and Thailand could not defend the entire area against an all out North Vietnamese air attack and, consequently, some type of US presence or commitment was needed as a deterrent; an improved air defense system was required to support the planned

RVN interdiction program and counter North Vietnam's air support of its ground force operations; and the effectiveness of programmed air defense systems for Southeast Asia could be enhanced by upgraded radar capabilities, increased interceptors, and provision of additional aircraft shelters and ground-to-air weapons to reduce vulnerability of air bases in high threat areas. Even with additional resources, autonomous air defense systems would fail in the face of a common enemy. Defense of the Republic of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand depended upon their cooperation, and the United States should encourage and sponsor a mutual security arrangement among those countries.[10]

The Joint Chiefs reviewed the study and forwarded the Air Force conclusions to the Secretary of Defense on 28 June 1971. They emphasized the need for a regional air defense system, but were skeptical whether the countries could overcome their longstanding hostilities and suspicions of one another. The Chiefs also cautioned against provision of complex equipment beyond the maintenance capabilities of the Southeast Asian countries. They recommended that the United States pursue negotiations for a mutually acceptable air defense system among the Republic of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. They also recommended that, as long as US aircraft supported the RVN effort, US air defense aircraft be committed to Southeast Asia and that air defense operating teams be retained at key radar sites.[11]

The Secretary of Defense agreed that undue sophistication should be avoided in development of Southeast Asian air defense systems and that these systems must be kept in the perspective of overall requirements. He approved the JCS recommendations to the extent that existing bilateral working relationships should be improved to provide more effective coordination of the air defense effort. But he saw neither need for nor prospect of multilateral air defense agreements at that time. The US air defense capability should be retained, he stated, to provide protection for US forces. The resulting regional protection was merely incidental to the US capability.[12]

The Search for Air Operating Authorities against North Vietnam in 1971

United States pilots in 1971 faced a growing enemy air defense threat when conducting missions near North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese had begun augmenting these defenses in late 1969, and the buildup proceeded through 1970 and into 1971. The enemy moved surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), antiaircraft artillery (AAA), and MIG aircraft into the southern areas of North Vietnam targeted against US planes operating in nearby Laos and, in early 1971, began to direct these defenses against US planes over South Vietnam just below the DMZ.

Almost simultaneously with the initiation of the enemy air defense augmentation, both COMUSMACV and CINCPAC, supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had begun to request increased operating authorities to counter the threat. United States pilots were allowed to react in self-defense, and on two occasions, 1–4 May 1970 and 20–21 November 1970, offensive strikes were approved against air defense targets in North Vietnam.[13] But despite the repeated recommendations of the field commanders and the Joint Chiefs, the Secretary of Defense had not granted standing authority for preemptive attack of enemy air defense installations in North Vietnam. With the withdrawal of US forces from ground combat operations during 1971, US air power took on even greater importance as a means of halting enemy infiltration into South Vietnam. Consequently, the field commanders and the Chiefs were even more concerned with the threat to US air operations and efforts to obtain authorities to destroy weapons based in North Vietnam that endangered US operations in South Vietnam and Laos.

The Secretary of Defense on 1 January 1971 authorized a one-time attack of SAM sites in North Vietnam but weather conditions prevented execution.[14] As a result, when the authority expired on 18 January 1971, the NVN SAM threat remained undiminished. On 20 January 1971, the Chairman told the Secretary of Defense of this situation and the continuing threat. Admiral Moorer proposed further armed reconnaissance in the lower portion of North Vietnam along certain key routes, followed by "onetime" strikes when SAM sites or equipment were located. The suggested name for such an operation was LOUISVILLE SLUGGER.[15]

On the following day, Admiral Moorer sent Secretary Laird two plans for air strikes against North Vietnam. Requested by the President, the plans were for a 72-hour protective reaction operation against SAM facilities and supply lines below 19° north and a 72-hour air and naval attack of the supply system along the NVN coast. The Secretary acknowledged the plans two days later, stating that he had told the President of them, but no action was taken to approve strikes against North Vietnam.[16]

Admiral Moorer repeated his recommendation for attack of the North Vietnamese SAM sites on 29 January 1971. The strikes, he told the Secretary, would be limited to not more than 16 F–4 strike and suppression aircraft for each SAM target discovered. This time Mr. Laird approved and the JCS authorized CINCPAC to conduct armed reconnaissance and one-time strikes along carefully delimited roads leading from North Vietnam into the Laotian panhandle. The authority extended through 10 February 1971 with the number of aircraft as specified by Admiral Moorer.[17]

Once again poor weather conditions over North Vietnam prevented action before expiration of the authority. Accordingly, on 11 February 1971, the Chairman recommended an extension until such time as the strike could be executed. On the previous day, 10 February 1971, Admiral Moorer had also provided the Secretary of Defense an assessment of the North Vietnamese SAM, AAA, and MIG threats to US

interdiction and other air activities. These enemy defenses, Admiral Moorer said, had forced the United States to divert "significant numbers" of fighter aircraft from interdiction missions in order to protect the B–52 force operating in Laos near the NVN border. He noted that the B–52s were frequently diverted from the most lucrative targets to lesser ones to avoid the enemy defenses.[18]

The Deputy Secretary of Defense extended the strike authority to 18 February and, when poor weather again prevented implementation, the authority was extended through 28 February. United States forces conducted strikes against SAM targets in North Vietnam on 20, 21, and 28 February. The announced purpose for these LOUISVILLE SLUGGER attacks was a reaction to recent missile firings at US aircraft. A total of 67 strike sorties destroyed or damaged 4 SA–2 missiles, 15 SA–2 transporters, and 14 "vehicles."[19]

It soon became apparent that LOUISVILLE SLUGGER had not deterred the enemy, and SAM firings at US aircraft in Laos continued. For the first time since 1967, SAMs were fired at allied planes over South Vietnam below the DMZ. Even before the completion of the LOUISVILLE SLUGGER operation, the Chairman urged approval of a "concentrated effort" against the North Vietnamese SAM defenses. Specifically he recommended a one-day strike of approximately 250 sorties, with a second strike the following day if reconnaissance indicated suitable targets, against SAM, AAA, and lucrative targets in North Vietnam below 18°15' north and within 30 kilometers of the Laos-NVN border.[20]

Before the Secretary replied to this request, Admiral Moorer pressed for a much more ambitious air strike program. On 4 March 1971, he explained to Secretary Laird that authority for one-time strikes was not adequate to meet the threat. Such restricted reaction gave the enemy a "distinct advantage," while limiting the US ability to meet the growing air defense threat. Before US forces could strike identified sites, the enemy, using the cover of darkness and adverse weather, was able to relocate his firing elements. It was essential, Admiral Moorer believed, to strike enemy SAM assets when and where they were found. To do so, CINCPAC and COMUSMACV required strike authority on a continuing basis.[21]

Approval was given for a one-time protective reaction strike and the Joint Chiefs directed implementation on 5 March during the period through 10 March. The Secretary did not approve continuing strikes against NVN air defenses. He told Admiral Moorer on 6 March 1971 that such action would be "inappropriate—or at least premature" at that time. He realized that protection was vital for the aircrews and planes flying over Laos and conducting unarmed reconnaissance over North Vietnam, but he was concerned about the consequences of granting continuing authority to strike SAM targets. Unless the United States struck repeatedly and on a sustained basis, it risked failing to achieve any substantial results. Yet repeated strikes would abrogate the November 1968 bombing halt understandings and the Secretary was not ready to take such an action. Mr. Laird had hoped that the authorities allowed in 1969 and 1970 would be adequate. Before granting additional

ones, he requested an assessment of the military value of the strikes already carried out, an indication of the sufficiency of the existing authorities, a "stringent" assessment of the military value of proposed additional authorities, and a detailed review of the costs and risks, "military and otherwise, associated with repetitive attacks against North Vietnam.[22]

Poor weather again delayed execution of the one-time strike. After an extension of the authority, US Air Force and Navy planes carried out protective reaction strikes on 21 and 22 March 1971 in the lower NVN panhandle, as outlined by the Chairman in his original request of 25 February. This operation, nicknamed FRACTURE CROSS ALPHA, used 234 strike and 30 reconnaissance sorties, to destroy eight SA–2s, two SA–2 transporters, one FANSONG radar, six control vans, 64 buildings, and 45 trucks. One F–4 was lost, but the crew was recovered.[23]

Meantime, on 19 March 1971, Admiral Moorer forwarded the requested assessment of the need for standing authority to attack air defense targets in North Vietnam to the Secretary. He regretted Mr. Laird's impression that the authorities granted in 1969 and 1970 were adequate. To the contrary, evidence accumulating as early as October 1970 had indicated that the enemy intended to contest US air operations in the vicinity of the Laos-NVN border. The Chairman agreed fully with the Secretary that, without repeated and sustained strikes, the United States risked failure to achieve "any substantial or durable" military benefits. "Had we earlier permitted the field commander the latitude to attack these targets as they were discovered," Admiral Moorer continued, "I am convinced the threat would have been contained well below the current level." After discussing the impact of the enemy air defenses, but without considering the costs or risks involved in added authorities, Admiral Moorer again requested standing approval to strike SAM targets in North Vietnam. He wanted authority to attack SAM and AAA sites as discovered in the NVN panhandle (Route Package 1) within 19 nautical miles of the Laos border and to retaliate within 72 hours (or a week if the weather was unfavorable) against any SAM or AAA site below 20° north that fired at US aircraft.[24]

The Secretary of Defense did not reply immediately and, in the interim, the Chairman took up countering the increasing MIG presence in the lower part of North Vietnam. The concern of the field commanders and the Joint Chiefs with the growing air defense threat in North Vietnam during 1971 was not limited to the SAM and AAA sites. As early as 14 January, the Acting Chairman, Admiral Zumwalt, had requested permission either to strike MIGs on the ground or engage them in the air in North Vietnam below 20° north. No action resulted, and on 14 April 1971, the Chairman again broached the MIG issue with the Secretary. He recounted a growing number of MIG deployments to the lower area of North Vietnam, stating that this increased MIG activity had become a "major consideration" in the conduct of US air operations in Southeast Asia. Current countermeasures, the Chairman said, were clearly inadequate to dissuade the enemy from establishing strip alert facilities within range of US aircraft. He repeated the recommendation of 14 January and, additionally, wanted

permission for the field commanders to attack any MIG within 20 nautical miles of the BARREL ROLL EAST area of Laos.[25]

Two days following the submission of the MIG request, the Chairman also submitted a codification of existing, as well as proposed, air operating authorities for Southeast Asia. In November of the previous year, the JCS had codified all the SEA air authorities into the single integrated interdiction program, and the Secretary of Defense had approved these rules through 1 May 1971. Regarding North Vietnam, the codification had encompassed principally self-defense measures, including: (1) immediate protective reaction strikes, without subsequent retaliation, by fighter aircraft, including IRON HAND, against any SAM or AAA site in North Vietnam below 20° north that fired on or was activated against US aircraft conducting missions over Laos or North Vietnam; (2) overflight of North Vietnam by IRON HAND aircraft to the extent necessary to position themselves between SAM and AAA sites in North Vietnam and B–52s operating in Laos to protect the B–52s from attack; (3) engagement by friendly aircraft and surface-to-air missiles of enemy aircraft over North Vietnam that indicated hostile intent against US or allied planes operating outside the border of North Vietnam; (4) overflight of North Vietnam by laser-illuminator aircraft, not to exceed three nautical miles, in order to guide ordnance onto selected targets in Laos close to the NVN border. These authorities were due for renewal. The Chairman asked for their continuation until 1 November 1971; he also requested additional authorities, or "modifications," for operations in North Vietnam, which in effect consolidated the outstanding requests for standing authorities against both SAM and MIG targets.[26]

The Secretary of Defense was still unwilling to expand air operations over North Vietnam. On 26 April 1971, he told the Chairman that he considered the existing rules adequate to handle the MIG threat. Two days later, on 28 April, he addressed the 19 March request concerning NVN SAMs. He considered that current "countermeasures, tactics, and operating authorities" provided sufficient protection for US aircraft and crews at that time. The next day, he extended the existing SEA air operating authorities until 1 November 1971, but did not include the "modifications" for North Vietnam requested by the Chairman.[27]

The North Vietnamese air defense activities continued unabated, and the Joint Chiefs were reluctant to accept the Secretary's decision as final. On 29 April 1971, Admiral Moorer informed Mr. Laird of recent MIG activity against US aircraft in Laos near the NVN border. He repeated his belief that "a substantial expansion" of existing operating rules was required to defend against MIG activity below 20° north. Specifically, Admiral Moorer requested approval to launch anti-radiation missiles against active enemy ground controlled intercept (GCI) sites below 20° north when MIGs were airborne in the area. Laird denied the request.[28]

On 1 May 1971, CINCPAC reported a continuing MIG threat and location of new SAM and AAA sites and equipment. He wanted to conduct appropriate strikes but the Acting Director of the Joint Staff was, initially, reluctant to

press the matter further. He told Admiral Moorer that reiteration of such recommendations to the Secretary of Defense was not advisable in light of the recent denials of similar requests. The continuing NVN air defense buildup, apparently, overcame the Director's reluctance, and on 12 May 1971, the Chairman began a renewed series of requests, which continued into July 1971, for permission to attack both SAM and MIG targets in North Vietnam. The Secretary of Defense did not approve any of these requests. He did, on 15 May 1971, assure the JCS that he was "vitally interested" in the protection of the lives of US aircrews. But, as only one US plane had been lost in the thousands of sorties flown over Laos and North Vietnam during April and May, he believed current authorities were satisfactory.[29]

With the arrival of the summer rainy season in 1971, allied air operations over both Laos and northern South Vietnam slackened with a corresponding decline in enemy air defense activities in the lower part of North Vietnam. But the approach of the fall dry season brought an increase in both. By mid-September 1971, the US commanders realized that North Vietnam intended to contest allied planes near its borders, perhaps to an even greater degree than during the previous dry season. To meet this threat, the Secretary of Defense approved and the Joint Chiefs directed the execution of a strike against air defense, logistic, and other military targets in North Vietnam as far as 20 kilometers north of the DMZ. In discussions with Secretary Laird, this limit was extended to 30 kilometers. The White House authorized 30 miles, then 35. CINCPAC wanted to deploy a second carrier for PRIZE BULL. However, USS *Midway* was in Yokosuka, Japan, too far away to take station in time; USS *Enterprise* was in Singapore, but having it sail two days ahead of an announced departure would forfeit surprise. A second carrier was not used.

On 21 September, in bad weather that required all-instrument attacks, 198 planes destroyed a POL storage area and several AAA radars without loss. Seventh Air Force wanted to have Navy A–7s fly formation with USAF F–4s using Loran gear; the Navy would not do it. Subsequently, Admiral Moorer agreed with CINCPAC that it would have been "very dangerous" for a mixed formation to fly on instruments against missile defenses.[30]

The PRIZE BULL strike did not remove the NVN air defense threat, and the remainder of 1971 witnessed a resumption of the requests for expanded authority to counter this challenge. On 20 October 1971, Admiral Moorer described the current MIG disposition in North Vietnam below 20° north that was endangering US B–52 operations in Laos and requested appropriate strike action. The Secretary, however, declined to approve the request. He readily admitted that the loss of a B–52 "would indeed be unfortunate," but asked for an assessment of limiting B–52 operations to areas less susceptible to MIG attack.[31]

On 21 October 1971, the Chairman provided the Secretary a codification of air operating authorities for Southeast Asia that included not only the existing rules scheduled to expire on 31 October 1971 but also various new ones. With respect to North Vietnam, new proposals included the designation as hostile any airborne

MIG below 19° north and standing permission to attack during actual engagement controlling GCI sites in North Vietnam below 20° north.[32]

On 22 October 1971, the Secretary notified Admiral Moorer that the matter of Southeast Asia air authorities required "detailed examination." He extended the current rules until 15 November, pending a review of new ones requested the previous day, but Mr. Laird never approved the expanded authorities. On 12 November 1971, he extended existing authorities until 1 December 1971, and extended them monthly, thereafter, until the April 1972 offensive.[33]

Meanwhile, Admiral Moorer had responded to the Secretary's request for an assessment of the restriction of B–52 operations to areas less vulnerable to enemy MIG attack. He supported the position of COMUSMACV and CINCPAC that B–52 operations were vital to the success of the interdiction campaign and must be continued in Laos near the NVN panhandle in order to restrict enemy movement through the Laotian LOC network. "All appropriate measures within our ability and authority," the Chairman assured the Secretary, "will be taken to defend against a MIG attack." But Admiral Moorer did not believe that the "inherent potential" for a successful MIG attack on a B–52 could be ignored.[34]

On 6 November, one MIG–21 evidently moved to Dong Hoi airfield. Next day, a reconnaissance flight with five escorts flew over the field. When antiaircraft batteries opened fire, escorts expended ordnance on the AAA site. Admiral Moorer was in Saigon that day and met with General John D. Lavelle, Commanding General, Seventh Air Force. The Chairman "complimented" him on the mission, agreeing that there had been a need to determine whether there were MIGs at Dong Hoi.[35] Four months later, it would become known that this was the first of 28 missions involving false reporting by Seventh Air Force.

In early November 1971, reconnaissance revealed additional MIG deployments to airfields in lower North Vietnam near the pass areas into Laos. On 13 November, the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Ryan, informed the Secretary of Defense of this situation, citing an increased number of aircraft deployed to Bai Thuong and staged to Vinh, Quan Lang, and Dong Hoi. Protective reaction strikes in support of reconnaissance missions over these three latter fields had not deterred the enemy. General Ryan explained that the transitory nature of MIG deployments to the three fields militated against a request to strike newly located MIGs. But he did recommend execution of an attack (FRACTURE DEEP) against Bai Thuong, a hub of MIG activity in the panhandle and a field that had remained occupied throughout the summer monsoon.[36]

The Secretary of Defense did not approve the plan, and on 24 November 1971, the Chairman again requested expanded authorization to meet the growing MIG threat. This particular request was spurred by a North Vietnamese attempt to shoot down a B–52 on 21 November. Currently, US fighter aircraft escorting the B–52s, the Chairman said, could engage in immediate protective reaction against attacking MIGs, including hot pursuit and strike of the airfields where the MIGs landed.

Often, however, the US fighters could not carry out reaction against enemy airfields because they were configured primarily with air-to-air munitions. Accordingly, Admiral Moorer sought permission to expand the time allowed for protective reaction against hostile MIGs and the fields from which they operated. Instead of the currently authorized immediate reaction, the Chairman recommended a 24-hour period with extension to 72 hours in case of bad weather. But the Secretary took no immediate action on this request.[37]

On 1 December, Secretary Laird told Admiral Moorer that he did not believe the military was "stretching" existing authorities far enough. Already, he believed, there was authorization for escorts to carry out a protective reaction strike. The Chairman called CINCPAC to discuss this problem. The Director, Joint Staff, Lieutenant General Vogt, was due to attend a Hawaii conference with Admiral McCain and General Lavelle. The Chairman and General Vogt favored the tactic of "trolling" which would involve running a reconnaissance plane over an airfield until it drew fire, after which the escorts would attack. Moorer told Vogt to give conferees in Hawaii "the flavor of the Washington ideas on protective reaction." Nine months later, Lavelle would invoke conversations with Vogt in Hawaii to justify his extremely liberal interpretation of "protective reaction."[38]

Meanwhile, on 17 November, the White House decided to conduct another PRIZE BULL operation against North Vietnam. Upon recommendation from CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, the strike area was widened and the target list broadened to include radar, SAM and AAA sites, supply dumps, truck parks and airfields. On 30 November the Chairman submitted several plans to the Secretary: (1) FRACTURE DEEP, a one-day attack against four airfields; (2) PROUD BUNCH, a maximum one-day effort against a variety of targets below 17° 45'; and (3) PROUD DEEP, which he recommended, a consolidation of the previous two. Bad weather imposed a long delay. Meanwhile, CINCSAC unilaterally halted B–52 operations along the border of Laos and North Vietnam where MIGs were challenging the bombers. Admiral McCain protested strongly to the Chairman. On 1 December, Admiral Moorer told CINCSAC that it certainly would have been helpful if Washington had received advance warning about the "precipitous termination" of B–52 operations. The stand-down, Moorer continued, had placed a "very heavy burden" on the field commander. He instructed CINCSAC to develop procedures to minimize the risk but continue vital interdiction operations. In a message to CINCPAC, Moorer directed the convening of a conference, mentioned above, that would explore all air operating authorities and review the danger to B–52s. Secretary Laird decided that B–52 strikes would continue while the Hawaii conference was being held.[39]

President Nixon decided that all lucrative targets below 20° would be attacked. But he did not want the three-day strike against North Vietnam, now code-named PROUD DEEP, to be carried out while Congress was in session. Admiral Moorer told CINCPAC that sandwiching the strike into the time of the congressional

recess, while taking the Christmas cease-fire and the unusually bad December weather into account, made matters difficult. PROUD DEEP was executed during 27–29 December; poor weather forced a complete reliance upon instruments during the 28 December attacks. More than 200 Air Force and Navy planes took part; three aircraft were downed by SAMs, with one crewman recovered. Enemy air defenses had evidently become too strong to be degraded by PROUD DEEP. During 1970, according to Admiral Moorer, only three SAMs were fired from sites south of 20°. On 29 December, 24 SAMs were fired against one mission.[40]

Covert Operations against North Vietnam

During 1971, the United States planned and supported to a limited extent covert operations against North Vietnam. As the result of a Washington Special Actions Group meeting on 2 December 1970, Dr. Kissinger requested the development of selected options in Cambodia, Laos, or North Vietnam with the objective of enabling the United States to wrest the initiative from the enemy instead of continually reacting to enemy moves. The Joint Chiefs submitted to the Secretary on 5 December a series of overt and covert options. They fell into three categories: short term spoiling-type operations designed to keep the enemy off balance and use minimum resources; more ambitious undertakings requiring longer time and more resources; and deception and psychological feint operations to support the previous two categories.[41]

The Secretary forwarded the JCS proposals to Dr. Kissinger, but recommended against implementation pending a further review. Subsequently, the Joint Chiefs reconsidered the options and Admiral Moorer submitted a revised list on 4 January 1971. The new options, he believed, had the highest probability of success, would give the enemy concern, and could be implemented within existing capabilities. The original JCS options had included North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, but the new ones provided only for the following actions against North Vietnam: small-scale air attacks; Patrol Torpedo Fast (PTF) boat attacks on NVN coastal shipping[42]; coastal attacks by fire; capture and subversion of North Vietnamese fishermen; and PTF destruction of a NVN trawler at sea. All of these actions, except for the air attacks, could be conducted by indigenous personnel.[43]

Throughout January, the Chairman provided the Secretary various refinements to the options and several additions, including proposals for both cross-beach and airborne raids against petroleum and logistics facilities. On 3 February 1971, however, Secretary Laird notified Admiral Moorer that he was not prepared to approve any of the options for implementation at that time. He felt that the small-scale air attacks of North Vietnam would have minimal effect and might be viewed by the public as "a unilateral US resumption of the air war over NVN with its attendant unfavorable impact upon the Paris Negotiations along with widespread domestic

and international political repercussions." Nor did the Secretary feel the other actions justified the political and military risks involved. However, he did direct continuation of planning for those and other possible covert actions.[44]

Admiral Moorer narrowed the contingency options against North Vietnam to interdiction of NVN coastal shipping by PTF boats, nicknamed NEWPORT CASINO; and coastal attacks by fire using PTFs, nicknamed SPRUCE GUM. The PTFs would be manned with Vietnamese crews and no US personnel would be aboard. Admiral Moorer submitted plans for these operations to the Secretary on 5 February 1971, recommending immediate execution. This time the Secretary approved and, on 7 February 1971, the JCS authorized CINCPAC and COMUSMACV to carry out the plans; no US personnel would participate.[45]

Subsequently, PTF craft, manned by South Vietnamese crews, conducted maritime harassing operations against NVN shipping on two occasions, the first off Quang Khe on the night of 10–11 February and the second off Vinh during the night of 19–20 February. The actions resulted in five enemy ships sunk and four heavily damaged with eight prisoners and numerous documents captured. The cost to friendly forces was one crewman killed and minor damage to one PTF boat. The nicknames for these operations were changed from the English designations NEWPORT CASINO and SPRUCE GUM to HAI CANG TUDO at the direction of the Secretary of Defense. Since the operations were conducted by the South Vietnamese, he wanted them to have Vietnamese names. The field commanders and the Chairman recommended execution of a third HAI CANG TUDO mission, an attack by fire against petroleum and transshipment targets at Quang Khe, using captured NVN 122 mm rockets, but the Secretary did not approve the mission.[46]

The United States also conducted amphibious feints off the coast of North Vietnam in February and March 1971 in support of the LAM SON 719 offensive in Laos. On 4 February, Admiral Moorer provided Secretary Laird a plan to deploy an Amphibious Ready Group and a Marine Amphibious Unit off the southern coast of North Vietnam. Such action was designed to convey to the North Vietnamese the impression that a raid was being planned and to cause them to hold forces in-country in anticipation of an impending attack. CINCPAC had strongly recommended approval of the plan, and Admiral Moorer concurred in that recommendation.[47]

The Secretary of Defense approved the plan and, on 5 February 1971, the Joint Chiefs authorized deployment of the amphibious forces to waters off North Vietnam. Subsequently, at Admiral Moorer's request, the Secretary agreed on 3 March 1971 to the movement of the amphibious group further up the NVN coast in order to maintain the enemy's concern over possible coastal attack. The operation was completed on 6 March. Whether it diverted any North Vietnamese forces from the fighting around Tchepone was never determined.[48]

In February 1971, CINCPAC had developed a general concept for agent operations in North Vietnam. It provided for the recruitment of both short- and long-term agents with about three months required for the training of the former and 9 to 14

months for the latter. Admiral Moorer forwarded the concept to the Secretary on 17 February stating that:

> The momentum of current operations against North Vietnam must be maintained; the initiative is clearly ours in overt operations in Cambodia and Laos and in successful covert operations by Patrol Torpedo Fast boats against the coast of NVN. These operations have caused confusion and frustration within the NVN government.

Admiral Moorer thought that ultimately all types of agents should be introduced into North Vietnam, and he recommended initiation of the CINCPAC program. No US personnel or "attributable resources" would be required and the Vietnamese would do all the recruiting and training.[49]

The Secretary of Defense approved the concept for agent operations in North Vietnam on 20 February provided that the Joint General Staff would undertake the program. He stipulated that there should be no US participation in the actual operations, although COMUSMACV might assist in planning and training. General Abrams approached the Chief of the Joint General Staff (JGS), General Vien, who believed that the proposal should be discussed by President Thieu and Ambassador Bunker. Subsequently, the Secretary, at Admiral Moorer's request, asked the Secretary of State to have Bunker approach Thieu.[50]

Secretary Rogers, however, expressed "considerable skepticism" about the agent program. He told Secretary Laird on 21 May 1971 that similar operations in the past were of little or no intelligence value and of only minor use for harassment. In addition, Secretary Rogers feared that, even though no US personnel or attributable resources would be used in execution of the program, the United States would be blamed, since it would be involved in recruitment and training. He suggested an interdepartmental evaluation of the proposed operations. Although Secretary Laird favored such a project, there was no evaluation and the record reveals no further consideration of the agent program.[51]

Throughout 1971, the United States carried out covert psychological operations against North Vietnam. These consisted primarily of "black" and "grey" radio broadcasts and the insertion of psychological operations materials into North Vietnam. On 6 December 1971, the Chairman submitted to the 40 Committee, a special committee of the National Security Council, a three-phase program for expanded covert psychological operations in North Vietnam. The first phase would revitalize ongoing actions, while the second and third would expand them. No US personnel would participate in the execution of the operations although they would be used for training and as advisers. Admiral Moorer requested that the Committee approve the first phase of the program for immediate implementation and approve in principle the remaining two phases, but the record does not reveal further action on this matter.[52]

In February 1972, COMUSMACV undertook to prepare a cover and deception plan for operations with the ostensible purpose of disrupting NVA forces and preventing their movement into South Vietnam. When learning of this planning, the President requested that it be broadened to include a full range of ground, sea, and air options. Subsequently, Assistant Secretary of Defense G. Warren Nutter told Admiral Moorer that South Vietnamese assets should be used to the maximum extent possible and that there should be no US ground troop involvement.[53]

On 23 February, the Chairman forwarded to the Secretary "conceptual planning options" for cover and deception operations against enemy forces in North Vietnam. These included: a RVNAF ground attack across the DMZ; increased carrier operations; an amphibious operation north of the DMZ; covert attacks in NVN waters; and combinations of the above options.

The Chairman doubted that the outcome of any of the options warranted the risks and expenditures of resources involved. As US redeployments continued, the Republic of Vietnam had to assume increased responsibility for "the total conduct of the war effort." As a result, the RVNAF was stretched thin and troop deployments necessary to give credibility to the projected operations would leave critical areas undefended. In addition, Admiral Moorer questioned whether credible deception operations could be conducted in light of the accelerated US withdrawals, the reduced in-country support for the RVNAF, and the political constraints precluding expansion of the US combat role in South Vietnam. For these reasons, he recommended against implementation of the options. The Secretary of Defense relayed them to Dr. Kissinger, agreeing with Admiral Moorer that the expenditure of the necessary resources could not be justified at that time, and the available record reveals no further action on this matter.[54]

Approaching Offensive: Military Operations, January–March 1972

There had been indications of enemy plans for an attack during the latter half of 1971, and these signs increased significantly during January 1972. Growing enemy troop movements and improvements of his logistics network in western Quang Tri Province, in the DMZ, and in North Vietnam just above the DMZ, all portended an approaching ground attack. In addition, during the first two months of 1972, the enemy became increasingly bold in his air defense activities, stepping up attacks against US interdiction operations in Laos, and carrying out troop and supply movements in support of the impending offensive. He continued to employ MIGs for this purpose and introduced SA–2 missile batteries into heretofore lightly defended areas of Laos, the lower part of North Vietnam, and even into the DMZ. Moreover, US reconnaissance indicated construction work on the airfields in the

NVN panhandle to enable MIGs to use them as well as a marked increase in conventional anti-aircraft artillery forces in the same area.[55]

To counter the enemy air defense, the Chairman on 10 December 1971 had asked the Secretary of Defense for authority to use IRON HAND aircraft equipped with anti-radiation missiles in protective reaction against GCI and associated radars below 20° north that were activated whenever MIG aircraft were deployed or operating in that area. The Secretary did not reply until 8 January 1972 when he requested a further assessment before making a final decision. He asked about the capabilities of enemy radar in the lower part of North Vietnam, the US ability to attack specific radars, and measures that might be taken within the existing authorities to counter the increased threat to allied aircraft.[56]

The Chairman submitted the assessment two days later. He related that, between 4 October 1971 and 8 January 1972, there were 43 penetrations of Laotian air space by MIG aircraft, 17 of which occurred in the first seven days of January. He continued:

> It is obvious that the character of our air operations in Laos has taken on a new dimension. Whereas we previously enjoyed freedom of the skies and were concerned primarily with the SAM/AAA threat, we now face a determined, clever and more qualified enemy in the air. Against this new threat, we are forced to operate in the fringe area of our radar and radio coverage and at the limits of aircraft endurance. On the other hand, the enemy is working at or near optimum capability under close radar control [in] a friendly environment, in proximity to his airfields, over familiar geography and [with] the added comfort of base sanctuary.

Admiral Moorer carefully detailed for the Secretary the actions undertaken to increase and improve warning and alert procedures as protection against the enemy air defenses. He shared the opinion of the field commanders that there was little further that could be done in that regard. What was required was authority to attack MIGs, both airborne and on the ground, anywhere in North Vietnam below 20° north as well as their supporting airfields, facilities, GCI sites, and associated radars. Ten days later, on 20 January, Moorer provided the Secretary additional information in response to the 8 January request and repeated the recommendation for authority to employ anti-radiation missiles against GCI air defense radars in North Vietnam.[57]

Meantime, General Abrams was seeing increasing signs of a buildup for an enemy offensive. On 11 January, he forwarded a warning of such an attack to CINCPAC and Admiral Moorer. Recent intelligence, he said, revealed enemy preparations for intensified military and political actions during the spring of 1972. Nine days later, on 20 January 1972, he described for his superiors "in the clearest possible manner" the impending enemy offensive against South Vietnam. He believed that high level decisions and planning for such effort had already been made although he could not be sure of the precise plan of attack. He reported major

movement of NVA units toward northern MR 1 and MR 2 in South Vietnam. General Abrams expected recently intensified enemy MIG activity to continue, as well as increased movement of SAMs and AAA to the area just north of the DMZ in order to "complicate our operations." The enemy had already moved these weapons into the Laotian panhandle.[58]

To counter this buildup and to be prepared when the enemy offensive broke, General Abrams requested the following authorities, to be invoked as appropriate when the battle began: strike of enemy MIGs on the ground at Dong Hoi, Vinh, and Quan Lang; fighter strike, including IRON HAND, of active GCI radars below 20° north; fighter strike, including IRON HAND, of occupied SAM sites and associated equipment in North Vietnam located within 19 nautical miles (SAM range) of the PMDL or the Laotian border as far north as 19 nautical miles above Mu Gia Pass; fighter strike of enemy logistic support facilities below 18° north. General Abrams also recommended the use of sensors throughout the DMZ to provide necessary intelligence to assure the safety of US forces and employment of fixed and rotary wing aircraft for logistic support, troop lift, and medical evacuation to assist the RVNAF in limited cross-border operations in Laos and Cambodia when requirements exceeded the VNAF capabilities. The seriousness of the developing situation and the need for prior preparation, General Abrams said, demanded urgent consideration. "The stakes in this battle will be great," he believed. "If it is skillfully fought by the RVN, supported by all available US air, the outcome will be a major defeat for the enemy, leaving him in a weakened condition and gaining a decisive time for the consolidation of the Vietnamization effort." Both Ambassador Bunker and CINCPAC supported General Abrams' assessment, and Admiral Moorer forwarded it the same day to the Secretary of Defense recommending that it be sent to the White House.[59]

Heretofore, in the continuing search for expanded air operating authorities against North Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs had relied on the Chairman to pursue these operational matters with the Secretary of Defense. But on this occasion, they addressed the Secretary as a body. On 21 January, they told him that recent evidence strongly pointed to a major enemy campaign in the near future. They shared the concern of the field commanders over the developing situation. The outcome of the ensuing battle, the JCS thought, might well depend on the effective use of US air power. The North Vietnamese had already expanded their operating areas to the point where MIG incursions into Laos were commonplace. This growing threat had required the United States to allocate large numbers of tactical air sorties to an anti-MIG role at the expense of US interdiction operations. The SAM and AAA threat had also expanded.

The Joint Chiefs told the Secretary that the previous requests for additional air authorities remained valid. They "urgently" recommended approval of the authorities requested by General Abrams the previous day and recommended that the field commander's assessment be forwarded to the White House. This latest request was

more urgent, they believed, and required immediate attention because of the threat of substantial ground operations. In the impending battle, the field commander must have the authority needed to insure effective use of air power. The authorities requested by General Abrams, the JCS said, would allow flexibility in application of air assets for "optimum impact on the ground situation" while continuing overall interdiction against the enemy's vital logistic pipeline.[60]

The Senior Review Group met in a "principals only" session on 24 January 1972 to consider the increasing enemy threat to South Vietnam together with Abrams' request for authorities to cope with the anticipated enemy offensive. The available record does not reveal what transpired at the meeting, but a modified version of authorities desired by General Abrams was approved. For, on 26 January 1972, the Chiefs notified both CINCPAC and COMUSMACV that "pertinent" operating authorities had been examined. When the expected ground campaign developed, the following authorities would be effective, in addition to those currently available: intensified reconnaissance of the vicinity of the Dong Hoi, Vinh, and Quan Lang airfields with "associated protective reaction" strike if the involved reconnaissance aircraft were fired on; and consideration as hostile and engagement of MIGs from the above fields when "encountered" below 18° north. The Joint Chiefs also authorized employment, until 1 May 1972, of anti-radar missiles against primary GCI sites outside RP 6 when MIGs were airborne and indicating hostile intent, and planning for a one-time attack of all threatening radars below 20° north with execute authority to be provided on "a case-by-case" basis depending on the circumstance. Should these authorities prove inadequate, the JCS told the field commanders, consideration would be given to a one-time strike of threatening SAM facilities. The Chiefs also directed the preparation of plans for attack on those NVN logistic support facilities that could be expected to support a major attack into South Vietnam. Again execute authority would be retained in Washington, but the Joint Chiefs expected rapid approval once the battle began. In accordance with General Abrams' request, the JCS directed aerial implanting of sensors in the DMZ above the PMDL and the provision of fixed and rotary wing aircraft for logistic, troop lift, and medical evacuation support for RVNAF operations along the Laotian and Cambodian borders. Since substantial enemy attacks could begin without much additional warning, they requested CINCPAC to alert all friendly forces of the possibility of an enemy attack and to increase the vigilance of US forces throughout South Vietnam.[61]

In their discussions at the 24 January meeting, the members of the Senior Review Group had considered possible air strikes against North Vietnam, and on the following day, Admiral Moorer submitted a "concept plan" for such strikes to the Secretary of Defense. The plan provided for "short duration operations against military and war support targets" in the NVN panhandle (below 18° north) with strikes against troop concentrations and artillery sites. Such operations were designed to disrupt the enemy supply system as well as to destroy supply

stockpiles in North Vietnam and the means for introducing those supplies into Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. The plan included options for a one, two, or three day operation with flexibility "to play the weather" by continuing the visual bombing attack for as long as necessary to accomplish the objective. Moorer preferred the three-day option and asked the Secretary to approve the plan and forward it to Dr. Kissinger for the President's approval.[62]

No action resulted from the Chairman's request, but on 2 February, Secretary Laird asked Admiral Moorer "on an urgent basis" for plans for operations against North Vietnam. The Secretary wanted four plans to cover an attack of logistics and military personnel targets in North Vietnam below 19° north; a strike of GCI radars in North Vietnam below 20° north; a surge in US air activities, including stepped up tactical air sorties and increased B–52 capability; and a plan to meet an all-out enemy assault across the DMZ. Admiral Moorer responded on 7 February. Plans dealing with logistics targets, threat radars, and an enemy assault across the DMZ were designated FREEDOM PLAN, FREEDOM DASH, and FREEDOM MANDATE. Plans for augmentation of US air assets provided for the movement of a fourth carrier, the USS *Kitty Hawk*, to WESTPAC, a B–52 capability of 1,500 sorties per month, and deployment of one F–4 squadron from Korea. However, no action was taken on the plans.[63]

Meantime, COMUSMACV and CINCPAC had requested a temporary augmentation of US tactical air assets for operations in Vietnam and Laos. They were concerned over the enemy's "continued aggressiveness in gaining additional control in new areas" in Cambodia and Laos and his "unprecedented" opposition to US air interdiction operations. Vehicles and equipment continued to move through the passes into southern Laos and South Vietnam, surface-to-air missiles and associated equipment had been introduced into southern Laos, and the enemy was using MIGs to attack friendly aircraft in northern Laos. These activities, as well as the necessary defenses to counter them, had strained the US ability to meet sortie requirements during peak periods of "simultaneous and widespread" enemy action. Accordingly, Admiral Moorer requested that the Secretary of Defense authorize on 2 February 1972 implementation of a CINCPACAF plan, COMMANDO FLASH, to deploy up to three cells of six F–4 aircraft from the Philippines to Udorn and Ubon Air Bases in Thailand and to Da Nang.[64]

On 4 February, the Secretary authorized the execution of COMMANDO FLASH for a period of 30 days to begin on the date the first increment of aircraft arrived in Southeast Asia. The Joint Chiefs relayed this authorization to CINCPAC the following day, directing that, for security reasons, there be no public announcement or comment of any kind at that time about "this activity." Subsequently, on 28 February 1972, the Chairman requested and the Secretary approved a 30-day extension of the COMMANDO FLASH deployment.[65]

As an additional means of countering the enemy air defenses, CINCPAC had developed a plan to employ TALOS/TERRIER missiles against the MIG threat.

The plan provided for the positioning of two US Navy TALOS/TERRIER-equipped ships in the Gulf of Tonkin to create a SAM environment to destroy hostile MIGs as they proceeded below 20° north. Admiral Moorer secured Laird's approval, and CINCPAC executed the plan during the period 29 January through 5 February 1972. Four TALOS missiles were fired and one was believed to have destroyed a ground control intercept site at Cam Ngoc-Le Nghia on 4 February. Following that action, US forces observed "a virtual standdown" of the NVN GCI sites for three days, possibly as a defensive measure.[66]

The United States stepped up air operations in the central highlands area in MR 2 and in the northern part of MR 1 in an attempt to disrupt enemy troops massing for the expected offensive. The 18 additional F–4 aircraft supplied by the COMMANDO FLASH deployment provided "a significant increase" in US Air Force sortie generation capability, and on 12–13 February, a sustained maximum air effort was conducted in the central highlands. All available air assets were turned to this effort on a round the clock basis. Allied aircraft flew a total of 1,072 sorties, including 868 US tactical air, 100 VNAF tactical air, 34 gunship, and 70 B–52. No allied losses occurred, but bomb damage assessment revealed numerous damaged or destroyed enemy structures, trucks, caves and tunnels, guns, and storage areas.[67]

The intensified allied air operations did, apparently, delay the enemy offensive, but the air defense threat continued unabated. On 1 March 1972, CINCPAC submitted a plan for a 48-hour attack to eliminate MIG airfields. The plan was not approved, but the JCS informed Admiral McCain that it was being held as "an on-the-shelf contingency option."[68]

On 2 March 1972, Admiral Moorer told Secretary Laird that the SAM threat in the pass areas of Laos and the area of South Vietnam below the DMZ continued to interfere with air interdiction operations. There were now 28 SAM battalions currently stationed in North Vietnam below 20° north, and eight US aircraft had been lost to SAMs since the beginning of the current dry season. It was apparent, Admiral Moorer stated, that the enemy was determined to cover his intensive logistic effort to support an impending offensive with the most extensive possible defense. To deny the enemy the benefit of sanctuary, and to reduce the effectiveness of his air defenses, the Chairman supported recent proposals by COMUSMACV and CINCPAC for tactical air strikes against both logistic support facilities in the NVN panhandle and SAM sites located within 19 nautical miles of the PMDL or the Laos/NVN border to a point 19 nautical miles north of Mu Gia Pass.[69]

A week later, on 9 March 1972, Moorer again warned the Secretary of continuing enemy preparations for a major offensive. After giving a detailed assessment of the situation, he went on to request additional authorities to limit the enemy's options in the approaching battle and to reduce the prevailing danger to friendly air operations in the NVN border areas. These expanded authorities included: tactical air strike and naval gunfire attack of SAM sites, MIGs, GCI sites, AAA, long-range artillery, tanks,

and logistic facilities in North Vietnam below 18° north; and employment of area denial munitions throughout the northern portion of the DMZ.[70]

On 11 March, the Chairman told the Secretary of Defense that an attack appeared "imminent." Current intelligence and field assessment indicated the movement of VC/NVA units into Hue, the B–3 Front, and MR–3, and CINCPAC wanted to take additional preparatory actions. In order to reduce the reaction time should additional reinforcement of US air forces in Southeast Asia become necessary, CINCPAC had proposed the relocation of 18 US F–4D aircraft, with associated personnel and equipment, from Korea to the Philippines. There, the crews would receive combat training and theater indoctrination and be available for rapid deployment to South Vietnam and Thailand. In order to avoid any political problems arising from the withdrawal of the planes, the F–4Ds would be replaced in Korea with F–4C aircraft from Okinawa. Admiral Moorer supported CINCPAC's proposal, telling the Secretary that the "threatening situation" made it prudent to take such preparatory measures.[71]

The Secretary approved the movement of the F–4Ds from Korea to the Philippines on 15 March, adding that "further approval" would be needed for deployment of the aircraft to Southeast Asia. He did not, however, grant the Chairman's requests of 2 and 9 March for air strikes and naval gunfire against NVN air defense targets. On 22 March, he affirmed all existing authorities and stated that these authorities and "the firm RVNAF posture" had, from all reports, disrupted the enemy's offensive plans. He did authorize employment of area denial munitions in the upper half of the DMZ with the authority extending through 1 May 1972. In the event of "significant adverse changes" in the military situation, he would reconsider requests for expanded authorities in North Vietnam.[72]

The expected enemy offensive still had not developed by the latter part of March. Allied forces in South Vietnam remained on alert and the JCS and the field commanders had augmented US air resources in Southeast Asia. They also wanted to carry out preemptive air strikes against the continuing enemy preparations just above the DMZ in North Vietnam, but Secretary Laird, mindful of the political implications, resisted such action in the absence of an enemy attack.

The war's unpopularity and the approaching presidential election severely limited the administration's freedom of action. Dr. Kissinger persuaded the President to "stay his hand until any fair-minded person could see that it was not we who had sought a test of arms; then we should hit in great force."[73]

Unauthorized Bombing

Despite the careful control exercised by the Secretary of Defense through the Joint Chiefs over US air operations against North Vietnam, a number of unauthorized US strikes did occur during the winter. Between 8 November 1971 and

8 March 1972, US aircraft of the 7th Air Force conducted 28 such strikes against military targets in the lower part of North Vietnam and reported them as protective reaction even though they were planned rather than in reaction to enemy firing.[74]

On 8 March 1972, a noncommissioned US airman in Thailand wrote to General John D. Ryan, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, telling of this violation of the rules of engagement in Southeast Asia. General Ryan immediately dispatched the Air Force Inspector General to investigate the charge, and the resulting report confirmed the allegation. Some missions had been flown in violation of the rules of engagement and there were irregularities in the subsequent operational reports.[75]

General Ryan then summoned General John D. Lavelle, USAF, the Commander of the 7th Air Force, to Washington to explain the situation. General Lavelle admitted that he had authorized a small number of such attacks and had erroneously reported them as protective reaction. Following consultations with the Secretary of the Air Force, Admiral Moorer, and the Secretary of Defense, General Ryan allowed General Lavelle to retire for "personal and medical reasons" at the rank of lieutenant general. The Director of the Joint Staff, Lieutenant General John W. Vogt, USAF, was selected on 6 April to replace General Lavelle as the 7th Air Force Commander, and a Department of Defense spokesman announced the command change the following day, but did not explain the change.[76]

Rumors about this incident soon began to circulate, and US Congressman Otis G. Pike of New York, himself a former Marine pilot, requested a Congressional inquiry. Subsequently, on 12 June 1972, the Investigating Subcommittee of the House Committee on Armed Services held a hearing on the unauthorized bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. The Subcommittee heard Generals Ryan and Lavelle, and the latter confirmed his authorization of the strikes, though he placed the number "in the neighborhood" of twenty. He admitted "a very liberal interpretation" of the rules of engagement but justified the strikes against airfields, missile sites and equipment, radars, and heavy guns in North Vietnam just above the DMZ in order to check the expanding enemy air defense threat and to protect US aircrews. Lavelle acknowledged that some incorrect reports had been submitted on these missions, but believed that his "superiors," including General Abrams, were aware of "what he was doing."[77]

The Congressional hearing did not end the controversy over Lavelle's relief. General William Westmoreland, the Chief of Staff of the US Army, retired on 1 July 1972, and the President named General Abrams to succeed him. But Abrams' Senate confirmation became ensnared in the Lavelle matter. General Abrams left Vietnam for Washington on 29 June, but because of Congressional dissatisfaction with General Lavelle's removal, the Senate Armed Services Committee delayed Abrams' confirmation hearings pending investigation of the Lavelle affair. In September, the Committee conducted an inquiry into the Lavelle relief together with hearings on General Abrams' nomination. The Senate Committee voted unanimously to confirm General Abrams on 6 October 1972 and the Senate followed suit a few days later

by a vote of 84 to 2. The Committee also confirmed the Air Force's decision on General Lavelle, and voted to strip him of another star, lowering him to the rank of major general. This action was a token punishment as Lavelle retained the retired salary of a full general.[78]

Later, in December 1972, the House Committee on Armed Services issued the report of its Investigating Subcommittee on the unauthorized bombing in North Vietnam. The House took issue with their Senate colleagues, finding General Lavelle's action "not only proper, but essential" to meet the increased enemy radar coverage endangering US aircrews. The Subcommittee stopped short, however, of declaring the General's authorization for the strikes legal, and no further action resulted.[79]

To prevent such unauthorized bombing from occurring in the future, the Secretary of Defense implemented a number of actions within the Department of Defense during the fall of 1972 to strengthen civilian control. He created a new group of inspector generals in the unified commands to conduct regular checks of procedures to insure compliance with instructions from Washington. Henceforth, reporting by Service inspector generals would be to their civilian Service secretaries in addition to their respective military chiefs, and the second Deputy Secretary of Defense, a position recently authorized by the Congress, would concentrate on maintaining operational control of forces in the field. Finally, the Secretary directed the newly established Defense Investigative Service to work directly under him rather than the individual services and all echelons of the Department of Defense to give close scrutiny to the "accuracy and completeness" of operations reports.[80]

7

Expansion and Improvement of the RVNAF in 1971

Since 1969, the United States had emphasized a program of strengthening and improving the RVNAF to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the combat burden as the United States disengaged from the conflict. President Johnson had initiated the improvement program in 1968 and President Nixon had greatly expanded and accelerated it in 1969 and 1970. At the beginning of 1971, the revised Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program (CRIMP), as approved by the Secretary of Defense on 5 June 1970, provided for a 1.1 million force structure for the RVNAF to be attained by the end of FY 1973 (See Table 3). On 31 December 1970, the RVNAF had reached an actual strength of 1,054,125.[1] Recruitment was under way to meet the authorized CRIMP ceiling of 1,078,345 for the end of FY 1971.[2]

While improvement of the RVNAF appeared to be progressing satisfactorily at the beginning of 1971, it would receive considerable JCS attention in the coming months. By mid-year US redeployments had reached the point where US forces no longer participated in major offensive combat operations and the RVNAF had to assume the missions vacated by the US troops. In addition, the Secretary of Defense on several occasions during the year called upon the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the military commanders to plan additional specialized capabilities for the RVNAF. However, no additional funds were supplied, and the Joint Chiefs had to juggle existing US military resources to accomplish these programs without further degrading US force posture and readiness. They also had to negotiate the narrow path between strengthening the RVNAF and stretching its limited leadership resources too thin.

Table 3
The Revised Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program Approved by the Secretary of Defense on 5 June 1970*

Forces	*FY 1971*	*Proposed End FY 1972*	*FY 1973*
Regular Forces			
ARVN	434,019	441,829	447,456
VNN	39,611	39,611	39,611
VNAF	38,780	44,712	46,998
VNMC	13,462	13,462	13,462
RF	294,446	294,446	294,446
PF	258,027	258,027	258,027
Total RVNAF	1,078,345	1,092,087	1,100,000
Total Paramilitary	179,410	163,285	149,160
Total RVNAF plus Paramilitary	1,257,755	1,255,372	1,249,160

* The Secretary of Defense approved the revised CRIMP for FY 1971–1972 and the FY 1973 portion for planning purposes.

The RVNAF Force Structure Review

In December 1970, COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff reviewed the FY 1972–1973 RVNAF structure, and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird was presented with proposed changes to the approved structure by the Vietnamese Ministry of Defense during a visit to South Vietnam in January 1971. The principal proposals were for acceleration of 7,913 manpower spaces from FY 1973 into FY 1972, thereby attaining the projected 1.1 million man ceiling by the end of FY 1972 instead of FY 1973 as currently planned, and for various changes within that ceiling to correct existing short-falls. On 6 February 1971, COMUSMACV submitted the same recommendations to CINCPAC, stating that fulfilling this program would enable the South Vietnamese to assume a much greater responsibility for the war as US forces continued to redeploy. Subsequently, on 17 February 1971, CINCPAC concurred and forwarded these recommendations to the Joint Chiefs.[3]

On 5 February 1971, COMUSMACV had forwarded CINCPAC a progress report on leadership, morale, and training in the RVNAF during 1970. It was the commander's view that leadership in the RVNAF was improving at a satisfactory rate "quantitatively and qualitatively." The Chief of the Joint General Staff and the Joint

General Staff as a unit, he said, were performing in an "eminently" satisfactory manner, and appointment of new commanders in MRs 2 and 4 had given all four MRs excellent leadership. Division and regimental commanders, with a few exceptions, were satisfactory, and the quality of leadership at battalion and lower levels in both the regular and regional forces was expected to improve as projected force levels were obtained. Nevertheless, leadership remained a problem for the RVNAF; advisers' reports rated the leaders of many units as weak or mediocre. Corrective measures, COMUSMACV explained, had to consider many factors, such as social, cultural, religious, ethnic, and political influences, some of which had existed for centuries. Many of the bravest and most experienced leaders had been killed, and the limited supply of qualified leaders had been further dissipated in the expansion of the RVNAF and the diversion of many leaders to governmental and other nonmilitary positions.

General Abrams described programs to build RVNAF morale in the areas of food, housing, clothing, pay, terms of service, medical care, and leave, stating that they had achieved some beneficial effect. But it was difficult to assess progress in this area. Cross-border operations, increased mobility and time away from base camps, assumption of greater combat responsibility, and decreased US combat assistance tended to degrade morale; success on the battlefield tended to improve it. He believed that the most positive measurement of improvement in morale was increased effectiveness of the RVNAF units in combat and he found that "RVNAF units on the whole have become more aggressive and effective in 1970." In the 5 February report, COMUSMACV rated ARVN training programs as "very satisfactory." In a later report, he indicated that the training efforts of the VNAF, VNN, and VNMC were making progress though some continuing problems remained.[4]

CINCPAC sent the MACV report to the Joint Chiefs on 25 February with additional comments. He pointed out the continuing problem in improving RVNAF leadership which he attributed to the rapid expansion of the forces. However, he was encouraged that the leveling off of desertion rates during 1969 and 1970, except during the Cambodian incursion, indicated that this problem was stabilizing and "more amenable to solution."[5]

Meantime, a sharp rise in infiltration of enemy personnel into South Vietnam occurred in January and early February 1971, and on 10 February the Secretary of Defense requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff assess the capability of the Government of Vietnam to interdict North Vietnamese infiltration of men and supplies into the South both then and after completion of the improvement and modernization program. Mr. Laird wanted to make sure that there was no misunderstanding of the direction in which the Department of Defense was moving in long-standing efforts to strengthen the RVNAF. While the United States could not give the RVNAF all the capabilities of the US forces then in South Vietnam, he did not think that "semantic differences" should be allowed to obscure the fact that an interdiction capability could be developed by the South Vietnamese. "Acceptably effective interdiction"

could take place at or near destination points. Methods of interdiction might include disruptions by ground and naval forces, location of enemy caches through judicious use of financial incentives, political pressures, and air interdiction.[6]

The outcome of LAM SON 719 raised serious questions about whether the RVNAF could stand up to the NVA. The administration chose to avoid any public airing of this issue, choosing to portray the outcome in the best possible light. Accordingly, it measured the progress of Vietnamization mainly in terms of the manpower expansion, training, and equipment provided rather than by battlefield prowess.

On 26 March 1971, the President met with Dr. Kissinger, Secretary Laird, Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard, and Admiral Moorer and discussed RVNAF progress and the possibility of accelerating US troop redeployments from South Vietnam. At that meeting, Secretary Laird gave the President a memorandum on RVNAF improvement and modernization, summarizing statistically the progress of the CRIMP as of the beginning of 1971.[7] After studying this memoramdum, President Nixon directed Dr. Kissinger, Secretary Laird, and Admiral Moorer on 1 April 1971 to conduct a detailed analysis of future plans for expanding and modernizing the South Vietnamese forces. Specifically he wished an analysis for the period 1 May 1971 to 30 June 1973 of illustrative levels of major items of equipment for the RVNAF ground forces and for air and navy units with emphasis on helicopter troop and cargo lift, helicopter gunship, and tactical air capabilities. They were also to consider expanding RVNAF ground forces beyond the 1.1 million level.[8]

Secretary Laird wanted to use the work currently underway on RVNAF improvement and modernization in the preparation of the analysis for the President. On 8 April 1971, he asked the Joint Chiefs to complete their recommendations on the FY 1972 RVNAF force changes proposed by the Government of Vietnam, the evaluation of the RVNAF interdiction capability, and the annual review of RVNAF leadership and morale by 23 April 1971. The Secretary intended to base his analysis for the President on "the RVNAF capability to conduct protracted war, to counter the main force threat, to interdict the flow of men and materiel from the north, and to provide local security in the countryside," and he requested recommendations the Chiefs thought appropriate.[9]

The JCS had these tasks well in hand; two days earlier, they had provided the Secretary an optimistic assessment by CINCPAC and COMUSMACV of RVNAF improvement. The next day, they gave the Secretary both the COMUSMACV report and the CINCPAC comments on leadership, morale, and training in the RVNAF during 1970. They made no comment on the report except to state that "excellent progress" was made during 1970 in improving the quality and quantity of RVNAF training. Although several "minor difficulties" remained, they believed that the problems had been recognized and were being addressed.[10]

On 19 April, the Joint Chiefs sent the Secretary their review of the JCS and COMUSMACV proposals for the FY 1972–1973 RVNAF force structure (See Table 4). They recommended approval of the acceleration of the 7,913 space increase

from FY 1972 to FY 1973 as well as the RVNAF force structure changes within the 1.1 million force ceiling for FY 1972. They also requested planning approval for related changes within the established ceiling for FY 1973. The acceleration, they told the Secretary, assumed that the RVNAF would undertake an increasingly greater responsibility for the war in the coming months. While this proposal would speed up achievement of the RVNAF manpower ceiling by one year, it would not accelerate activation of major RVNAF units into the same time frame except for one air defense artillery weapons battalion and three station hospitals. Consequently, the RVNAF would be able to maintain its training facilities and pipeline at near capacity.

Table 4
The JCS RVNAF Force Structure Proposals as Submitted to the Secretary of Defense on 19 April 1971 in JCS 180–71.

RVNAF Service	*FY 1972 Present*	*FY 1972 Accelerated*	*Difference*
ARVN	441,829	447,456	+ 5,627
VNN	39,611	39,611	0
VNMC	13,462	13,462	0
VNAF	44,712	46,998	+ 2,286
RF	294,446	294,446	0
PF	258,027	258,027	0
Totals	1,092,087	1,100,000	+ 7,913

Acceleration would supply the ARVN 5,627 spaces in FY 1972 to augment existing units and 2,286 spaces for the VNAF in the same period to accomplish recruiting and training for units scheduled for activation in FY 1973. No acceleration would occur in the Vietnamese Navy or Marine Corps, since those services were currently scheduled to reach their final ceilings in the 1.1 million structure by the end of FY 1972. The most significant changes in the ARVN resulting from the proposed revisions within the overall ceiling would include an additional armored cavalry squadron to be positioned in MR 2, 10 M–106 self-propelled mortar platoons, and 10 military police companies. In addition, increases totaling over 6,000 spaces in the combat service support structure would enhance the ARVN capability in the areas of air operations, logistics, maintenance, and medical treatment. The territorial forces would be expanded through the addition of 17 Regional Force battalion headquarters and 219 Popular Force platoons. Changes in the Navy would permit: activation of the Coastal Surveillance Radar System (ACTOVRAD); turnover of 29 US river patrol boats to the VNN; improved coordination of riverine operations; augmentation of the Viper patrol craft building and operation program; and improved logistics, base maintenance, and support. Proposed revisions in the VNAF would allow enhanced self-sufficiency primarily in base operating support,

logistic depot repair, and UH–1 helicopter maintenance. In addition, the Marine division would be reorganized to improve command and control and to upgrade maintenance capability.

The Joint Chiefs estimated the cost of these force structure proposals at an additional $88.585 million. The cost breakdown for the US Services was as follows:

	Personnel	*Equipment*	*O&E*	*Total*
Army	$12.2	$55.3	$19.4	$86.9
Navy	0.0	0.0	.435	.435
Air Force	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marine Corps	0.0	1.210	.04	1.250
Total	$12.2	$56.510	$19.875	$88.585

The JCS asked the Secretary for additional FY 1972 funds and procurement authority to replace US equipment delivered to the RVNAF in these programs. They also recommended authority for the Military Departments to deliver major items of equipment in FY 1972, at an unprogrammed cost of $56 million.[11]

On 19 April 1971, the Joint Chiefs sent the Secretary an appraisal of RVNAF interdiction capability. They explained that the CRIMP was not designed to provide the South Vietnamese forces with an out-of-country air interdiction capacity. The rationale for the CRIMP program was that the progress and momentum of pacification made it reasonable to assume that the Viet Cong threat would decline as the GVN capability improved and that the RVNAF would be able to cope with the combined VC/NVA threat in-country by mid-1973 with MAAG assistance. Also included in this rationale was provision for continuation of certain elements of US out-of-country and offshore tactical support beyond mid-1973. Moreover, the Joint Chiefs did not believe that interdiction at the place of destination, suggested by the Secretary, was the best method of dealing with the problem. From a tactical standpoint, they said, it was more "cost effective" to aim principal interdiction efforts at choke points in the enemy's infiltration system.

The RVNAF did have some interdiction capability. The VNAF could conduct limited air operations outside the RVN borders against low-threat areas, and this capacity would be further improved upon completion of the CRIMP in 1973. Aircraft currently in the VNAF inventory and programmed in the CRIMP would be highly vulnerable in actions against strongly defended enemy sanctuaries, but the JCS thought the VNAF could be further strengthened by substituting aircraft with greater capabilities for some types planned in the CRIMP. Efforts in that direction were under study. In addition, the acceleration of VNAF manpower spaces, as proposed by the Joint Chiefs in the RVNAF force structure review, would improve helicopter maintenance, ultimately augmenting the VNAF interdiction potential.[12]

The Chiefs also anticipated that the continued improvement of the 37 Ranger Border Defense Battalions would increase RVNAF effectiveness in controlling

enemy infiltration across the RVN borders. Further, the approved CRIMP would supply the VNN with a means of preventing significant enemy infiltration by sea. Finally, they pointed out that the RVNAF already possessed a special cross-border capability targeted exclusively against activities in Laos and Cambodia. Although these operations were directed primarily to intelligence collection, they did represent a limited interdiction asset. For these reasons, the JCS were not convinced that efforts to give the RVNAF additional interdiction capability were warranted at that time. Though they did not oppose such efforts, they did request that major changes in the CRIMP wait further review of the RVNAF force structure and assessments of projected US redeployments and the results of the current (1970–1971) dry season campaign.[13]

On 23 April 1971, the JCS advised Secretary Laird that they anticipated "no significant adverse effects" on the RVNAF improvement and modernization program from either the cross-border operations or the accelerated US redeployments. But continuation of the current US withdrawal rate beyond 30 November 1971, they believed, could "impact adversely on the program." The RVNAF force structure, the Joint Chiefs told Mr. Laird, was designed to provide a "balanced mix of forces with increased firepower, tactical mobility, and logistical support capabilities," and it was important to avoid disruptive changes and to retain a degree of stability. Therefore, they opposed any drastic force structure changes or additions of unprogrammed new and sophisticated equipment that could impede the success currently enjoyed in RVNAF training, logistical, and maintenance programs. Moreover, they did not consider that either the South Vietnamese manpower or economic base could support an increase in the RVNAF force level above 1.1 million men under present conditions. In conclusion, the Chiefs recommended early approval of the proposals for the FY 1972–1973 RVNAF force structure that they had submitted on 19 April 1971 together with provision of additional FY 1972 funds and procurement authority.[14]

On 3 June 1971, after reviewing the various JCS submissions, the Secretary made his decision on the RVNAF structure that the United States would support in the new fiscal year. He approved the force structure modifications for FY 1972 within the 1.1 million man ceiling and the acceleration to achieve that ceiling by the end of FY 1972 recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 19 April 1971. Force structure modifications for FY 1973 were approved for planning. Secretary Laird did not, however, provide more funds for RVNAF improvement and modernization. The additional $88.585 million needed for FY 1972, as estimated by the Joint Chiefs, would have to be found within the resources available to the military departments. Laird did authorize COMUSMACV to continue to refine the RVNAF tables of organization and equipment so long as personnel and equipment changes did not exceed approved ceilings.[15]

A Presidential Decision on RVNAF Improvement

While the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary were resolving the questions of the RVNAF structure during the spring of 1971, the National Security Council conducted an extensive Vietnam assessment that included an examination of the RVNAF.[16] Among a number of preliminary studies used in the review was an appraisal by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) of the RVNAF improvement and modernization program which was submitted to the Senior Review Group on 19 May 1971. This appraisal was, in fact, the Secretary of Defense response to the President's 1 April request for a detailed analysis of future plans for the RVNAF, and the day before submission to the Senior Review Group, the Secretary had sent the same appraisal to the President.[17] It had been submitted along with requests for adjustment of the FY 1972 and 1973 RVNAF force structure. These had been put forward by COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff and agreed to by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[18]

The Assistant Secretary concluded that the improvement and modernization program had given the RVNAF a potential ability to cope with the VC/NVA threat as projected. Whether the South Vietnamese could realize that potential depended on their "national will, leadership, and morale." Minor adjustments would be needed in the equipment provided under current plans. RVNAF interdiction systems and techniques did exist but needed continued improvement and added impetus. Moreover, the "manpower and economic impact resulting from the size of the RVNAF" made future force reductions essential.

One problem raised by the Assistant Secretary was the possibility of an unfavorable ratio of South Vietnamese to enemy main force units in Military Regions 1 and 2 during FY 1972, if US redeployments continued. In the "aggregate," South Vietnamese forces outnumbered the enemy significantly, but assuming a US force of 50,000 and the maximum estimate of VC/NVA strength, there could be a deficit of 44 RVNAF battalions in Military Region 1 and a surplus of only eight in Military Region 2. A decision to place additional defensive capability in the northern Military Regions would be required.[19]

After a lengthy review, the Senior Review Group concluded that the threat confronting the RVNAF in South Vietnam was serious and that additional measures were urgently required to strengthen the South Vietnamese forces. The Group presented the President three alternatives for RVNAF improvement: (1) qualitative improvement in the RVNAF and temporary commitment of RVNAF general reserve forces from Military Region 3 to Military Regions 1 and 2; (2) improvements as in the first alternative, but with permanent allotment of increased forces in Military Regions 1 and 2 within the current 1.1 million man RVNAF ceiling by either moving forces from the other regions or inactivating units in other areas to allow increased authorization in the northern regions; (3) expansion of the RVNAF to a 1.2 million man ceiling and the creation of an additional two-division force.[20]

Meantime, Dr. Kissinger told senior officers of the President's overriding concern that, for domestic political reasons, no major setbacks occur in 1972. Secretary Laird and the services seemed to be losing sight of this, Kissinger said, and appeared increasingly willing to accept greater risks. After reviewing the Vietnam assessment, the President made two decisions to strengthen the RVNAF and improve the situation in the northern regions of South Vietnam. On 23 June 1971, he decided that the United States would support the continued presence of two ROK divisions in South Vietnam throughout 1972 thereby allowing the RVNAF more flexibility in force dispositions.[21] Then on 3 July 1971, he approved US support for the RVNAF in accordance with the second alternative proposed by the Senior Review Group. He directed the Department of Defense and the US Mission in Saigon: to institute training and promotion programs to improve RVNAF leadership and morale as well as programs for combat pay for units in isolated areas; to increase manning levels in RVNAF combat and other key units to 90 percent; and to strengthen the RVNAF by adding a division in Military Region 1 and a division headquarters with appropriate support in Military Region 2 (being careful not to lower security in the other MRs). Should the Government of Vietnam request US support for additions to the 1.1 million RVNAF ceiling in FY 1972, and should the US Mission judge that the alternative of adding RVNAF forces by removing or demobilizing units in Military Regions 3 and 4 involved excessive risks, the United States would be willing, the President said, to consider an increase in the ceiling. But US support would be contingent upon demonstration that the increase would not jeopardize the attainment of the manning level of 90 percent in combat and other key units. The President's decision of 3 July, in effect, confirmed the Secretary's earlier action on the FY 1972 RVNAF structure. No strength increases beyond the 1.1 million man ceiling were approved nor were additional FY 1972 funds provided for the improvement program.[22]

The Joint Chiefs advised General Abrams of the President's decision on 8 July 1971, but an implementing directive was delayed pending the return of the Secretary from a trip to the Far East. In view of the many programs under way for improving the RVNAF, the Director of the Joint Staff believed that only minimum guidance need be given the field commanders; the Secretary did not agree. After his return to Washington, Mr. Laird advised the Chairman that, while he agreed that the President's decisions were "consistent with the numerous programs already underway," more would have to be done to achieve the full potential of the RVNAF. The success or failure of the Vietnamization program would ultimately rest on the "will, desire, and initiative" of the South Vietnamese.[23]

Secretary Laird was concerned with the inability of the RVNAF to achieve program objectives. Earlier, on 23 June 1971, he had raised the continuing leadership problem in the RVNAF and asked the Chiefs about additional measures in this area. He was convinced that there was "still a long way to go" in improving the performance and effectiveness of the RVNAF leadership. Laird found it hard to reconcile

the generally favorable reports given him on RVNAF training with operational failures such as air-ground and fire control inadequacies during the LAM SON 719 and Snuol operations, deficiencies of the MARKET TIME forces, and the inability or unwillingness of the VNAF to fly at night. He also noted inefficient personnel management that allowed RVN country-wide average combat unit strength to "drift" at under 80 percent while the overall RVNAF strength stood at nearly authorized levels. It was essential, the Secretary said, for the full potential of the RVNAF force structure to be attained. Mr. Laird asked COMUSMACV to review current programs, report his findings, and make recommendations for measures to implement the President's recent decisions.[24]

COMUSMACV conducted the review, and on the basis of the commander's findings, the JCS sent two reports, one dealing with RVNAF leadership and a second on programs to implement the Presidential decisions on RVNAF improvement, to the Secretary of Defense. In the first, the Joint Chiefs outlined the status of efforts to enhance RVNAF leadership, including: identification and elimination of weak leaders; the battlefield promotion system designed to recognize and accelerate advancement of promising leaders; and an improved leadership evaluation system. They judged that, despite the expansion of the South Vietnamese forces and their increased responsibility for combat operations, RVNAF leadership was improving both quantitatively and qualitatively. Nevertheless, continued improvement was required, and the Chiefs believed that current programs emphasizing rapid promotion of proven leaders, removal of ineffective commanders, and improved morale and training were adequate.

Addressing the President's decisions, the Joint Chiefs advised the Secretary that the Vietnamese Joint General Staff had actions underway to allot a higher proportion of men to combat units as well as efforts to improve RVNAF morale and lower desertions. These efforts included a pay increase for military personnel financed through economic assistance from the US Agency for International Development. In addition, COMUSMACV and the US Embassy in Saigon sought tighter enforcement of the South Vietnamese desertion law to stem what accounted for the "largest single manpower loss to the RVNAF." To strengthen the RVNAF in the north, the Joint General Staff was working on a plan to deploy an additional "division-sized force" to MR 1. In addition, a series of other measures were under consideration to strengthen forces there and in MR 2, including provision of additional artillery units in both regions, a medium tank battalion for MR 1, additional armored cavalry squadrons in MR 2, and enhanced VNAF and VNN forces in both regions

The JCS also reviewed current RVNAF training efforts. In April 1971, the JGS Central Training Command had taken action to standardize training with yearly training quotas and objectives. In addition, the ARVN refresher training program attempted to train all ground force units (ARVN, Regional, and Popular Force), battalion size and below, once every three years. Refresher-training goals had not

been met, but added emphasis and resources were being devoted to this effort. The recent RVNAF cross-border operations into Laos and Cambodia had exposed operational deficiencies largely attributable to the inability of regimental, division, and corps operations centers to "orchestrate" large combat actions effectively. Staff exercises and war games were being conducted to address the problem. Unit training was being conducted in the VNAF to improve combat effectiveness and correct the inability or unwillingness to fly at night. Fighter and helicopter pilots were receiving additional night flying training and the VNAF training center was being expanded. The Joint Chiefs noted a more basic problem: the RVNAF was only beginning to develop the necessary integrated air-ground capability to identify targets properly and to conduct tactical air strikes at night. For the Navy, the GVN was carrying out programs to increase unit training, enhance combat effectiveness, and overcome deficiencies in the logistic system and MARKET TIME operations. All these programs would be reviewed and changed as the RVNAF demonstrated the ability to absorb new responsibilities with the objective of achieving the results desired by the President.[25] Viewed in retrospect, Secretary Laird's criticisms proved much closer to reality than the JCS reply. MACV was out of touch and the Joint Chiefs did not recognize this fact, choosing instead to follow the dictum that the field commander knew best.

The Secretary of Defense told Admiral Moorer that he had relayed the JCS reports on RVNAF improvement to the President. Mr. Laird believed that the plans and actions underway by COMUSMACV had achieved commendable progress, but he expressed concern over the lack of clearly assigned priorities and target dates. The Secretary listed the areas that required further action: strengthening of forces in Military Regions 1 and 2, particularly the provision of an additional division in MR 1; reform of RVNAF personnel practices to assure a 90 percent manning level; and a renewed attack on leadership and morale problems. Since redeployment of more US troops would impose further limitations on COMUSMACV's capabilities, Laird urged that actions be carefully chosen to achieve the greatest impact. He wanted a report on these matters by 15 October.[26]

Planning and actions to strengthen the RVNAF in MRs 1 and 2 proceeded. In September 1971, COMUSMACV concurred in a JGS proposal to activate a new ARVN infantry division in MR 1 using a nucleus of units already operational in the area; the Joint General Staff activated the 3d Infantry Division on 21 October 1971. The new division would be fully deployed by April 1972; until that time, elements of the RVN Marine Corps division would be moved to MR 1 while the 3d Infantry Division received unit training. In addition, the Joint General Staff ordered the movement of three ARVN artillery battalions and a newly activated M–48A3 tank battalion into MR 1 and an armored cavalry squadron into MR 2. By reducing the authorized strength of the Popular Force platoon, the Joint General Staff was able to activate 302 additional PF platoons in MRs 1 and 2; eight Regional Force battalion headquarters were added there as well. Actions to strengthen the VNAF

and VNN in the two northern regions included: the transfer of a VNAF AC–46 gunship squadron from MR 3 to MR 2; turnover of ACTOVRAD sites in Da Nang and Mui Dinh to the VNN with three remaining sites in MR 1 to be transferred to the Vietnamese by February 1972; turnover of the Naval Intermediate Support Base at Thuan An and the Naval Operating Base at Chu Lai to the VNN; planned relocation of a detachment of F–5A aircraft from MR 3 to MR 1 in January 1972; and activation of one UH–1H squadron at Nha Trang in November 1971 and another at Da Nang in February 1972 ahead of the planned activation dates of March and June 1972.[27]

On 9 November 1971, the JCS sent the Secretary another report on improvement in the South Vietnamese forces that responded to the Secretary's 4 September request and the President's desire for follow-up on this subject. They described the measures taken to strengthen the RVNAF in MRs 1 and 2, and added that COMUSMACV had approved a JGS concept of standardized Ranger battalions/groups and addition of a Ranger component to the RVNAF general reserve to provide an additional force capable of deployment. Also, recommendations had been made to the RVNAF in the areas of personnel procurement, distribution and management, and control of desertions in the continuing effort to attain a 90 percent manning level in RVNAF combat units. But the Joint Chiefs admitted that desertions still were the largest single RVNAF manpower loss. There was little manifestation of "a unified concern or effort" by the Government of Vietnam to enforce the law, although the Joint General Staff had repeatedly stressed the need for stronger efforts. The JCS believed that the actions already taken, together with JGS proposals dealing with conscription, terms of service, military pay, and promotions, indicated "an encouraging assessment of GVN/RVNAF determination to enhance Service morale, as well as insure higher manning levels in the Military Forces." However, attempts to enlist the cooperation of GVN civilian officials in the prompt and thorough execution of draft laws must be pursued through Department of State channels while US military advisers continued "to emphasize proper manpower distribution within RVNAF units." In conclusion, the Joint Chiefs assured the Secretary that the goals outlined by the President on 3 July were being pursued vigorously.[28]

The JCS appended a COMUSMACV assessment of the RVNAF leaders to their submission to the Secretary. It was General Abrams' view that the Joint General Staff and the commanders of the four military regions were performing in an eminently satisfactory manner. Of the thirteen RVNAF division commanders (including the commander of the new 3[d] Infantry Division), Abrams considered only one ineffective and one marginal. He assured CINCPAC and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the assignment of the best-qualified RVNAF officers to responsible positions would continue to have his personal attention. COMUSMACV said that he was engaged in a constant dialogue with Vietnamese officials to impress upon them the urgent need for the relief of ineffective officers, and in most instances, his recommendations had been accepted.[29]

During the fall of 1971, Secretary Laird asked about the future of the US advisory effort for the RVNAF. "Obviously," he told the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "as redeployments continue, the US advisory structure must also be reduced." Should the United States seek essentially the same structure and role as before the 1965 buildup, he asked, and should the rate of reduction in the advisory force be tied to reductions in other US forces? In reply, the Chiefs said that the advisory effort was being "continually analyzed and refined," and they expected the organization to evolve based on the requirements and the degree of self-sufficiency attained by the South Vietnamese forces.[30]

Despite US efforts, the actions to enhance RVNAF morale and increase the manning levels of combat units were not successful. Overall strength declined during the last six months of the year and the ARVN was 46,000 personnel short of the planned figure at the end of 1971. In addition, conscription for the year fell 47 percent short of the 66,900-man goal. Consequently, combat infantry battalions had only 65 percent of authorized strength on 30 November 1971 while all other organic division units were at between 96 and 121 percent. Conscription did increase appreciably during December 1971 and ARVN strength rose by 5,856 to 407,963, but this increase would not be reflected in infantry battalions until February 1972 when conscript training was completed. A slight downward trend in the number of RVNAF desertions did occur in the last half of the year, but the overall total for 1971 showed an 18,528 increase over the previous year. The ARVN strength by month during 1971 was as follows:[31]

January	416,609	July	412,549
February	411,958	August	405,745
March	414,069	September	404,704
April	412,035	October	401,526
May	412,705	November	402,107
June	411,693	December	407,963

During the last six months of 1971, COMUSMACV approved adjustments in the RVNAF force structure through tradeoffs within the approved 1.1 million-space ceiling. In making those decisions, he used discretionary authority granted him by the Joint Chiefs.[32] By the end of 1971, MACV had sanctioned 9,413 new spaces for the ARVN: 7,983 for the activation of the new 3^{d} Infantry Division; 894 for the new 20th Tank Squadron (M–48A3); 402 for reorganization and standardization of ranger battalions; and 134 for other miscellaneous units. COMUSMACV had approved the reduction of 4,665 spaces elsewhere in the ARVN, including disestablishment of an electronic combat detachment, a ranger border defense battalion, 13 highland scout companies, 17 highland intelligence platoons, 10 military intelligence detachments for allied units, and 2 military police battalion headquarters. Other spaces were obtained through reduction of interpreter-translator, communications, and

ARVN pipeline personnel and by reorganization of the Inspector General system and the Medical Branch. Since a remaining net increase of 4,748 new spaces had to be accommodated within the 1.1 million RVNAF ceiling, COMUSMACV approved reductions in the Regional and Popular Forces totaling 6,970 spaces in FY 1972 thereby creating 4,748 spaces for the ARVN, 84 spaces for the Regional Forces and 2,138 for the VNAF.

For the VNAF, COMUSMACV approved 249 spaces for the conversion of an AC–47 gunship squadron to the AC–119K gunship, 1,770 spaces for use in acquisition of Phu Cat Air Base, and 368 spaces for miscellaneous purposes for a total of 2,387. These spaces used 2,138 spaces cut from the Regional and Popular Forces as well as 249 spaces within the VNAF pipeline strength.

COMUSMACV also approved 431 new spaces for the VNN: 308 for two Coast Guard high-endurance cutters (WHEC); 99 for one repair, berthing, messing barge (YRBM); and 24 for three landing craft mechanized (LCM–8). To gain these new spaces, COMUSMACV approved cuts of 92 spaces from two coastal minesweepers, 197 spaces from one river transportation escort group, 80 spaces from miscellaneous craft, and 62 spaces from 16 Viper patrol craft.[33]

Against a ceiling of 1.1 million, at the end of 1971, the RVNAF had an actual strength of 1,046,254; comprised of 407,963 ARVN, 42,267 VNN, 49,475 VNAF, 14,312 VNMC, 282,680 Regional Forces, and 248,557 Popular Forces.[34]

Improving the RVNAF Interdiction Capability

Even though the Joint Chiefs believed that improvement of the South Vietnamese armed forces was progressing as rapidly as possible, the Secretary of Defense and his Deputy, David Packard, sought new ways to improve the RVNAF interdiction capability. While it was true, as Mr. Packard told the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Director of the Defense Special Projects Group on 10 May 1971, that the "highly sophisticated US aerial bombardment capability" could not be duplicated in the VNAF, it was also apparent that the US air effort could not continue indefinitely. More would have to be done to improve the indigenous capabilities of the RVNAF with "reasonably unsophisticated systems and within reasonable manpower and dollar limitations." With that end in mind, Packard directed the Service Secretaries and the Director of the Defense Special Projects Group to assess five possible means of increasing the RVNAF interdiction capacity: (1) addition of the CBU–55 (cluster-munition) weapons system to the VNAF inventory; (2) provision of a mini-gunship fleet to the RVNAF to replace the US AC–119/AC130/B–57G aircraft in interdiction operations; (3) replacement of the IGLOO WHITE sensor system with a strategic readout system to permit the RVNAF to measure infiltration into South Vietnam and northern Cambodia; (4) provision of improved equipment for support of raiding parties targeted against the Laotian infiltration

system (both personnel and materiel); (5) appraisal of the RVNAF need for additional border surveillance equipment, including sensors, readout equipment, and radars, to monitor border infiltration.[35]

A week later, on 17 May 1971, Mr. Laird told the Chairman that greater emphasis would have to be placed on imaginative tactics, techniques, and technology to enhance RVNAF interdiction capability. In addition to the studies already assigned to the Military Departments and the Defense Special Projects Group, the Secretary wanted the Joint Chiefs to assess three proposals: RVNAF targeting of personnel infiltration by either ground or air operations employing currently planned force levels (using harassment, terror, and other unconventional warfare tactics); conduct of operations to exploit intelligence of the personnel and materiel infiltration systems; and integration of all RVNAF border surveillance and cross-border reconnaissance capabilities in a single command.[36]

After reviewing these concepts and proposals, the JCS advised the Secretary of Defense that it would be feasible and desirable to increase emphasis on targeting the personnel infiltration system. While total interdiction was not possible, harassing operations would impede infiltration and cause the enemy to commit greatly disproportionate forces to counter this effort. The Joint Chiefs believed that the RVNAF capability could be improved by "establishing all aspects of interdiction as high-priority missions"; by employing the RVNAF Strategic Technical Directorate in the primary task of unconventional warfare and special operations in North Vietnam and enemy-controlled areas of Laos and Cambodia; by developing a strong centralized planning and coordination element under the Joint General Staff, and by expanding the use of psychological warfare, small unit ambushes, mines, and booby traps along infiltration routes. Although complete reconnaissance coverage of the Ho Chi Minh Trail was not possible, targeting of personnel routes could be improved through integration of sensor reports and reconnaissance sightings. To improve cross border operations, however, they advised the Secretary that significant changes would be needed in current rules of engagement to relax restrictions on boundaries, size of forces, and US adviser participation and to remove constraints on use of riot control agents and defoliants by the RVNAF. Finally, the JCS did not consider formation of a force dedicated exclusively to infiltration interdiction to be an efficient application of planned RVNAF resources, nor did they believe that the creation of a single RVNAF command for cross-border and border surveillance forces was desirable.[37]

A matter of further concern to the Secretary was the indication of a possible decline in effectiveness in combating sea infiltration into South Vietnam as the Vietnamese Navy took over the MARKET TIME operations. He raised this matter with Admiral Moorer on 18 May 1971 and received assurances that COMNAVFORV was doing everything possible with available resources to remedy this situation. The Chairman cautioned the Secretary, however, not to expect the same level of

effectiveness from the South Vietnamese operation as had been attained by the combined US air and surface forces.[38]

Meantime, the studies that the Deputy Secretary of Defense had requested on improvement of the RVNAF interdiction capability were completed. On 9 June, the Director of the Defense Special Projects Group submitted a review of the feasibility of developing a simplified strategic readout system to allow the RVNAF to measure infiltration into South Vietnam and northern Cambodia. The next day, the Secretary of the Air Force submitted studies on the CBU–55 munition; a mini-gunship concept, CREDIBLE CHASE, employing short takeoff and landing aircraft to increase RVNAF interdiction and tactical mobility capabilities; and a feasibility study of providing improved equipment to the RVNAF to expand use of small airborne raiding parties. The Secretary of the Army furnished an assessment of the need for more border surveillance equipment on 28 June 1971.[39]

After reviewing these studies and a JCS 15 June paper on improvement of RVNAF interdiction, the Secretary of Defense on 2 July 1971 commented that "realistic RVNAF interdiction capabilities consistent with the eventual withdrawal of US forces from SEA" were being identified, and asked for further refinement of these plans and testing of selected equipment and concepts identified in the studies. Mr. Laird requested that the JCS review the studies and prepare a combined interdiction plan for FY 1972 reflecting increasing RVNAF participation in and responsibility for the entire effort. Specifically, the plan was to include: strengthening of the Vietnamese border surveillance capability; providing the RVNAF with some "primitive" strategic readout system; coordination of selected allied air and ground raids against the enemy's personnel and materiel systems "in the lower threat areas of Laos"; integration of a refined COMMANDO HUNT effort concentrated in the "higher threat areas of Laos"; integration of the system for uncovering enemy material caches through a rewards and incentives program; and improvement of MARKET TIME performance by continuing the US air surveillance and improving RVNAF reaction capability.

In preparing the plan, the Secretary directed the Joint Chiefs to assume that US redeployments and air activity levels would continue "as at present or accelerate" and that current operating authorities for the use of US personnel outside of South Vietnam and employment of US air in North Vietnam would remain unchanged. Laird wanted aggressive pursuit of corrective measures for MARKET TIME operations; further study of "dedicated" versus "decentralized" reaction forces for interdiction; further development of a JCS concept for a "strong centralized planning and coordination element" under the Joint General Staff to manage the interdiction campaign; and continued effort to develop a better intelligence base to assist the South Vietnamese in interdiction operations.

Since the time for planning before the onset of the next dry season was short, the Secretary suggested that the Joint Chiefs might form a special ad hoc task force at CINCPAC headquarters to expedite the task. He also directed the Air Force,

with the assistance of the Army and the Defense Special Projects Group, to design a combat test to take place during the next dry season of selected equipment and concepts that might allow the RVNAF to conduct their own counter-infiltration operations. He was willing to assist in obtaining Congressional approval for procurement of utility STOL aircraft for evaluation.

The Secretary of Defense underscored the importance of this effort:[40]

> I need not remind you that the fate of our national Vietnamization policy rests in part on the evolution of a credible RVNAF interdiction capability at the earliest possible time. If the suggestions proposed and studied by the Services do not represent realistic and useful operational solutions, then I believe it to be incumbent on the JCS to evolve acceptable alternatives. It should be made clear to the Joint General Staff that the interdiction campaign will eventually become their total responsibility. Our process of withdrawal and disengagement is irreversible—including our own expensive and sophisticated air interdiction campaign over Laos.

To implement the Secretary's directive, the Director of the Joint Staff on 12 July 1971 convened an ad hoc group under the chairmanship of the Operations Directorate (J–3) of the Joint Staff with a membership from the other appropriate Joint Staff directorates as well as from the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Defense Special Projects Group. On 26 July 1971, CINCPAC established a task force in Saigon to study specific programs and consolidate them into a single interdiction campaign plan for FY 1972; it included representatives from the CINCPAC staff and Service components, MACV, the 7th Air Force, and a contingent of officers from the Joint Staff, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Defense Special Projects Group.[41]

At a meeting of the CINCPAC group on 29 July 1971, General Abrams expressed concern over the Secretary of Defense's decisions for development of an RVNAF interdiction capability and urged a careful review of the "total" problem facing the RVNAF and a weighing of the interdiction capability in light of the resources available to the RVNAF before the United States committed itself to such an effort. Since South Vietnamese resources were extremely limited, addition of anything to the CRIMP would require cutting something else. Despite his reservations, Abrams agreed that the United States should test everything that offered any chance of success. He saw 1972 and 1973 as "extremely critical years" when the United States must continue tactical air and B–52 support of the RVNAF. Without a US air umbrella, the enemy would be "quick to take advantage," and the United States could lose all that it had invested in Southeast Asia.[42]

The CINCPAC task force identified a number of ways to improve allied interdiction capability both in FY 1972 and in future years. Enemy infiltration was a problem for the Government of Vietnam and for Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand as well. The task force developed OPLAN ISLAND TREE for combined interdiction operations in Southeast Asia for FY 1972. The plan called for a coordinated air,

naval, and ground interdiction effort against the entire enemy infiltration system by the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, with US support. This effort was tailored toward RVNAF assumption of a major portion of the responsibility for interdiction operations in the short term and assumption of the primary role with minimal US involvement in succeeding campaigns. Operations were to be coordinated through the Combined Interdiction Coordinating Committee (CICC), recently established by COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff. ISLAND TREE would serve as the basis for an interdiction annex to the US/RVN Combined Campaign Plan. CINCPAC forwarded ISLAND TREE to the JCS on 5 August 1971 together with a "Compendium of Additional ISLAND TREE Issues."[43]

The Joint Chiefs used ISLAND TREE as the basis for the US/RVNAF Combined Interdiction Plan, submitted to the Secretary of Defense on 23 August 1971. This document was based on the "fundamental strategy" of establishing GVN self-sufficiency with US assistance for interdiction action. It recognized the need for a coordinated effort by Laotian, Cambodian and Thai forces to disrupt the enemy infiltration network beyond the borders of South Vietnam. All operations contributing to interdiction, including land, sea, riverine, psychological and special, would be coordinated to impede the flow of enemy personnel and supplies into South Vietnam. This plan, the JCS assured the Secretary, included all feasible possibilities for improving interdiction in Southeast Asia.

Under the Combined Interdiction Plan, ground actions would include reconnaissance, deception, diversion, and exploitation operations within available resources. Regular RVNAF units would launch larger-scale, less-frequent attacks against lucrative targets in Laos and Cambodia to disrupt the enemy infiltration system. Allied air forces would interdict enemy lines of communication in the COMMANDO HUNT area, including BARREL ROLL, STEEL TIGER, and FREEDOM DEAL operations in Laos and Cambodia. This effort would be principally a US one with some Lao, Thai, and Cambodian support, but it would not be possible to integrate this friendly assistance fully into the COMMANDO HUNT program. In addition, VNAF sorties within the limits of resources would be directed against interdiction targets in Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam with COMUSMACV serving as the coordinating agency for the total air effort against the enemy infiltration system. MARKET TIME patrols would continue along the South Vietnamese and Cambodian coasts with emphasis on improved effectiveness, and riverine operations would be conducted against enemy infiltration along inland waterways and coastal estuaries. In addition, the Combined Interdiction Plan provided for: employment of reconnaissance teams along known or suspected infiltration routes; psychological operations to demoralize the enemy while enhancing the morale of friendly forces; conduct of special operations directed by the RVNAF Strategic Technical Directorate with complete responsibility for special interdiction operations assumed by the South Vietnamese in June, 1973; and an extensive rewards and incentives system to stimulate the flow of information on all aspects of the enemy infiltration system.

Finally, the plan would improve equipment for border ranger battalions and supply improved sensor surveillance of border regions by ARVN divisional forces.

The Joint Chiefs pointed out to the Secretary that, because of the limited time remaining before the onset of the 1971–1972 dry season, only "a minor increase" in RVNAF participation in the FY 1972 interdiction operations was possible and that the US air campaign, COMMANDO HUNT VII, would constitute the largest single element of the Combined Interdiction plan for FY 1972. Continuing US redeployments and the limited capability of the RVNAF would reduce the total interdiction effort in FY 1972 and subsequent years. The JCS did believe, however, that centralized planning and coordination of the overall effort at the JGS level would enhance the "viability and effectiveness" of future operations; to that end, COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff had established the Combined Interdiction Coordination Committee. As US redeployments proceeded, the South Vietnamese would take over the Committee with US advisory help.[44]

Later, the Joint Chiefs told CINCPAC that they did not plan a formal review of his ISLAND TREE OPLAN as they had used it as the basis for the Combined Interdiction Plan for FY 1972, which they had forwarded to the Secretary. The field commander should use this document as a "guideline" for completing interdiction planning for FY 1972 and in developing an appropriate annex for the 1972 Combined Campaign Plan. The JCS authorized and encouraged CINCPAC to implement innovations in this area possible within his resources and authority.[45]

On the same day that the Chiefs provided the Secretary the Combined Interdiction plan, they also gave him their comments on the five Service and Defense Special Projects Group studies on improvements to RVNAF interdiction capabilities. Generally, the JCS found the Revised Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program commensurate with the South Vietnamese capability to assume increasing responsibility for the total war effort, and they again warned against placing "unmanageable burdens" on the RVNAF in the form of new weapons or programs. Few additional improvements for the RVNAF were possible within the current program, they said, and experience had shown that South Vietnamese human, technological, and economic resources were stretched "extremely thin." The Joint Chiefs believed that the CBU–55 munition should be added to the VNAF inventory. The possibility of improved equipment for relay of sensor signals, as already planned for inclusion in the CRIMP, was a promising development to enhance border surveillance. They favored combat evaluation of both the minigunship concept (CREDIBLE CHASE) and improved equipment for airborne raiding parties. Finally, they found the strategic readout system "unrealistic in terms of required resources and cost," but urged a "limited evaluation" of it along with CREDIBLE CHASE. The studies presented other ideas that warranted testing, but those concepts would have to be incorporated into interdiction plans on the basis of feasibility and practicability, considering "available money, skills, allocation of resources, and desired results."[46]

The Secretary of Defense reviewed both the Combined Interdiction Plan and the JCS comments on the Service studies of possible RVNAF interdiction alternatives and told Admiral Moorer on 8 October 1971 that he was encouraged by the increase in RVNAF interdiction capability during the past year. He did not want improvements in RVNAF interdiction capacity tied up in lengthy test cycles; it was imperative, he said, to accelerate the time when the RVNAF could "go it alone." If additional equipment was required to reduce South Vietnamese reliance on US forces, it should be supplied at once. Mr. Laird established the objective of achieving an "optimal RVNAF interdiction capability by the fall of 1972" that could be "self-sustaining with no more than limited US advisory assistance." To accomplish that goal, he directed that the RVNAF assume responsibility for interdiction planning and operations for the 1972–1973 Laotian dry season and that materiel assistance be accelerated to give "all additional feasible capabilities" to the RVNAF during the 1971–1972 season.

With respect to the approaching 1971–1972 campaign, the Secretary stated that current operating authorities would continue with reevaluation by 1 November 1971 and with changes considered on a case-by-case basis. For ground interdiction, he set, as a "reasonable starting point," an objective of ten company-size cross-border interdiction operations per month and battalion raids as required. To increase South Vietnamese involvement in air interdiction in FY 1972, he wanted: an objective established for VNAF contribution to COMMANDO HUNT VII in the low-threat area of southern Laos and northeast Cambodia; immediate improvement in VNAF basing for interdiction purposes; and a program for prompt provision of the CBU–55 to the VNAF. Mr. Laird found the plans for MARKET TIME operations for 1972 sound. He asked that responsibility for special operations be completely transferred to the RVNAF by 1 July 1972 with "US advisory effort reduced in accordance with overall US redeployment planning." Laird did not find the Combined Interdiction Coordinating Committee a completely adequate mechanism for involving South Vietnamese, Thais, Cambodians, and Laotians in the interdiction effort and directed that better methods for integration and coordination of operations be instituted during the 1971–1972 dry season.

Looking to the future, the Secretary directed that the RVNAF interdiction capability receive "priority attention" in the current review of the RVNAF modernization program. Specifically, he directed that these changes be considered: additional radar-equipped C–119s, C–47s, and other suitable aircraft to give the VNAF a "limited maritime air patrol capability"; incorporation of the mini-gunship (CREDIBLE CHASE), subject to successful testing of the program, in the FY 1972/1973 CRIMP "either as part of the interdiction operations or as a substitute for those air assets diverted to that mission"; expanded sensor and radar capability for all ground forces; a sensor delivery and readout capability for the VNAF; and provision of AC–119K aircraft, modification of A–37s, and recommendations for any other significant changes to strengthen the RVNAF interdiction capability. He wanted preliminary views on these

changes by 15 November and final recommendations by 15 February 1972 so that reprogramming could be initiated. In his final guidance, the Secretary stated:

> Every effort must be made to involve the RVNAF to the extreme limits of their capability in all facets of planning, coordination, execution and evaluation of the campaign. Therefore, whenever possible RVNAF resources should be employed and the Vietnamese should plan and control operations.[47]

On 12 November 1971, the Joint Chiefs told the Secretary that the field commanders had been given his objectives and guidelines to achieve an optimum RVNAF interdiction capacity. Both COMUSMACV and CINCPAC had the South Vietnamese interdiction efforts under continuing review and had already begun action for improvements. The commanders were concerned, however, that these programs might not be practical without US support and might require "prohibitive trade-offs" in other areas. General Abrams had noted that the Government of Vietnam must necessarily place primary emphasis on internal security in populated, food-producing, and industrial areas that were vital to its survival. The type and scale of South Vietnamese interdiction operations would depend on the forces available and the situation in each military region.

The Joint Chiefs outlined for Secretary Laird actions underway to carry out enhanced interdiction during the 1971–1972 dry season; they provided specific details on planned land, sea, and air operations and efforts and programs to expand the South Vietnamese interdiction capabilities. The JCS also presented their initial views on Mr. Laird's suggested changes to the CRIMP to improve RVNAF capability for the 1972–1973 interdiction campaign. They believed that the development of a VNAF maritime air patrol capability would degrade other important missions and that action on CREDIBLE CHASE and on a sensor delivery and readout capacity should await the results of scheduled tests. They did not favor more sensors or radars for the RVNAF; they found the current sensor program adequate and stated that addition of more radars would exceed the South Vietnamese support capability. Provision of AC–119K aircraft to the VNAF was planned for late FY 1973, the Joint Chiefs said, and further modification of the A–37 for interdiction operations was being considered. They told the Secretary that, while any one of these proposals might be implemented without degrading other essential RVNAF functions, adoption of the entire set would require reduction of other vital efforts. Offsetting such reductions would require additional contractor assistance adding to "the already significant costs" of the Secretary's proposals.[48] When the Joint Chiefs sent this report on interdiction improvement to the Secretary of Defense, Admiral Moorer was on a trip to the Western Pacific. On his return, Moorer assured the Secretary that field commanders and the JCS gave the highest priority to the Vietnamization of interdiction operations.[49]

The JCS report of 12 November contained their preliminary views on additional changes to the RVNAF improvement and modernization program, and they

promised the Secretary of Defense their final recommendations by 15 February 1972 in accordance with his earlier instructions. The Secretary took no further action on RVNAF improvement during 1971 except for CREDIBLE CHASE.

CREDIBLE CHASE

The idea of a mini-gunship capability to augment RVNAF interdiction efforts arose in May 1971 when Deputy Secretary Packard asked the Secretary of the Air Force to investigate such a possibility. The Air Force developed the CREDIBLE CHASE concept for a large number of "simple, off-the-shelf, light" short takeoff and landing (STOL) aircraft to be armed and operated in an austere environment. The concept would reorient interdiction efforts from southern Laos to the contiguous border areas of South Vietnam and Cambodia where the STOL aircraft could provide continuous coverage of enemy supply corridors. The Air Force proposed to evaluate a squadron of 30 STOL aircraft in a combat situation in southern Laos during the dry season beginning in February 1972.[50]

The Joint Chiefs reviewed the CREDIBLE CHASE concept and told the Secretary that STOL aircraft could have useful applications for the RVNAF in several different roles and missions. They did not, however, make any recommendation on CREDIBLE CHASE, pending the results of the combat tests. They did note that the concept would impact heavily on the RVNAF improvement and modernization program, costing approximately $1.7 billion for three years.[51]

At the direction of the Secretary of Defense a multi-service task force was established in South Vietnam on 27 October 1971 to test the CREDIBLE CHASE concept under combat conditions. A 60-day evaluation would begin about 15 April 1972 and would include armed STOL aircraft, orbiting relay aircraft, ground forces, and sensor equipment. A force of 30 STOL aircraft would be divided between two competitive designs—the AU–23A PACEMAKER and the AU–24A STALLION. Following suitable training of US Air Force and VNAF pilots, a squadron-sized task force would be deployed into a base area along the tri-border area of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to conduct counter-infiltration operations staging from Pleiku; COMUSMACV would control the test through his Deputy for Air Operations and integrate it into the 1972 interdiction program.[52]

In their 12 November progress report on measures to improve RVNAF interdiction capabilities, the Joint Chiefs noted that STOL aircraft might warrant consideration for a variety of missions in South Vietnam. They foresaw the possibility, depending on the results of the combat evaluation, of four to five STOL squadrons for the RVNAF by the end of FY 1973. But to meet that date, they added, immediate action must be taken to begin procurement and funding.[53]

On 29 November 1971, the Secretary of Defense decided that enough was known about the STOL aircraft and their capabilities to proceed immediately with

procurement for the RVNAF. Although Mr. Laird agreed that final assessment of the use of CREDIBLE CHASE aircraft in the interdiction role must wait the results of the impending field test, he did believe these planes could be used in Vietnam for coastal patrol, psychological operations, utility cargo and troop movement, armed reconnaissance, and support of ground force operations. Their low cost and the relative ease of maintenance were additional favorable features. Therefore, he established a planning goal of five operational STOL squadrons (32 each, with a total of 200 to allow for command support and initial attrition) for the FY 1973 interdiction campaign. He requested JCS confirmation that a military requirement existed and could be met by the STOL as proposed in the CREDIBLE CHASE concept. Since provision of STOL aircraft to the South Vietnamese would contribute to the overall Vietnamization program, Mr. Laird wanted the Military Departments to share the burden of absorbing the costs involved; he directed coordination with the Joint General Staff for manpower for the STOL force.[54]

Admiral Moorer replied to Secretary Laird on 3 December 1971, stating that it was difficult to arrive at a "finite" decision on the military requirements for the STOL in South Vietnam before the conclusion of the CREDIBLE CHASE evaluation. Since the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Ryan, was away from Washington, the Joint Chiefs wanted to delay their comments on the STOL until they could discuss the matter with him. The Secretary agreed to wait, but noted: "RVNAF interdiction capabilities must be maximized as soon as possible."[55]

Eight days later, the Joint Chiefs gave the Secretary their comments on the use of STOL aircraft for interdiction purposes in Vietnam. They refused to endorse such a requirement in the absence of completed combat tests. STOL aircraft were not capable of operations in the threat environment in which the US forces currently operated, they said, although it could satisfy other military requirements in South Vietnam. The Chiefs had directed the field commanders to begin preliminary planning with the Joint General Staff to support introduction of STOL aircraft should such a decision be made, but they pointed out that a five squadron force would require about 2,100 additional VNAF spaces. Such an addition, as well as the training and logistics required, they believed, must be carefully weighed against other RVNAF needs. Nor did the JCS favor Service cost sharing for a STOL program. The Services had been required to take substantial reprogramming actions to meet unexpected costs of the Southeast Asian operations, and the Joint Chiefs recommended other means of funding for procurement of STOL aircraft.[56]

On 13 January 1972, President Nixon announced withdrawal of 70,000 US troops during the next three months, reducing US strength in South Vietnam to 69,000 by 1 May 1972; his decision put increased demands on the US forces remaining in Vietnam. Four days later, Admiral Zumwalt complained to Admiral Moorer that the current plans for accelerated improvement of the RVNAF interdiction capability were taxing South Vietnamese resources and causing an "adverse impact" on the overall improvement effort. He relayed and endorsed a CINCPACFLT warning against

assignment of RVNAF personnel and equipment to the CREDIBLE CHASE program prior to final evaluation as serious dilution of VNAF ability to support VNN coastal surveillance, interdiction, and riverine operations might result.[57]

Moorer assured Zumwalt that his views would be taken into account. In fact, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had a few days earlier informed the Secretary of the impacts of meeting the President's new redeployment schedule, pointing out that the CREDIBLE CHASE program could not be supported from Pleiku.[58]

Later, the Joint Chiefs told the Secretary that, in order to meet the new US force level in South Vietnam, it would no longer be possible to conduct the CREDIBLE CHASE evaluation in Southeast Asia. The only feasible alternative was to do the test at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Mr. Laird accepted the change, asserting the importance of improving the RVNAF interdiction capacity:[59]

> I continue to rely on the Joint Chiefs of Staff to determine the most suitable and timely methods to optimize RVNAF interdiction capabilities. Those RVNAF capabilities must be consistent, in turn with the objective of allowing the people of the Republic of Vietnam to determine their future without outside interference.

The JCS canceled the evaluation of CREDIBLE CHASE in Vietnam, and plans proceeded for testing STOL aircraft in the United States with VNAF air and ground crews. In the meantime, the North Vietnamese launched their major offensive into South Vietnam on 30 March, and the President asked the Secretary of Defense to recommend additional equipment that might be given to the South Vietnamese to increase their combat capabilities. Included among the Defense proposals, submitted by Deputy Secretary Kenneth Rush on 19 May 1972, was provision to the VNAF of the 30 STOL aircraft that would become excess in June upon completion of the CREDIBLE CHASE evaluation. The President approved this recommendation that day.[60]

However, in the end, the STOL aircraft were not given to the RVNAF. Following the President's decision, COMUSMACV questioned the survivability of the STOLs in a high threat environment and estimated that 4,100 additional VNAF personnel would be needed to operate and support these aircraft. Consequently, he recommended against their introduction into the VNAF force structure, and Secretary Laird halted all actions relating to provision of the STOL to the Republic of Vietnam pending the outcome of the final tests. The US Air Force conducted operational tests and evaluations of both the AU–23A and the AU–24A STOL aircraft in June and July 1972 and found the planes only marginally effective for the missions tested. The Air Force did not recommend STOL aircraft for an interdiction mission in South Vietnam. The VNAF pilots who participated in the test returned to South Vietnam; the United States gave 14 of the STOLs used in the evaluation to Thailand and 13 to Cambodia, but none to the Republic of Vietnam.[61]

8

The North Vietnamese Offensive

The Attack Begins

After several months of increasingly visible preparations, the North Vietnamese launched their offensive on 30 March 1972.[1] In MR 1, two NVA divisions supported by armor and artillery pushed across the DMZ into Quang Tri Province, and a third enemy division moved eastward from Laos toward Hue in Thua Thien Province. The enemy sought to eliminate the defending fire support bases (FSB) and occupy the provincial capital Quang Tri City. Two hundred and fifty kilometers to the south of the DMZ in the Central Highlands of MR 2, the North Vietnamese attacked in Kontum Province on 31 March, and on 4 April in Binh Long Province in MR 3, a major enemy drive threatened Saigon 100 kilometers to the south. Six fully equipped divisions entered South Vietnam in these three major thrusts.[2]

The leaders in Hanoi had been planning and preparing for this offensive since May 1971. According to their official history, their purpose was to "defeat the American 'Vietnamization' policy, gain a decisive victory in 1972, and force the U.S. imperialists to negotiate an end to the war from a position of defeat." The "immediate objective" was to "launch large offensive campaigns using our main force units in important strategic theaters" simultaneously with "wide-ranging military attacks coordinated with mass popular uprisings aimed at destroying the enemy's 'pacification' program in the rural lowlands." In practice, the anti-pacification campaign had secondary priority. The North Vietnamese designated three theaters for the main force offensive: northwestern MR 3, the Central Highlands, and northern MR 1. Of these three principal attacks, the North Vietnamese considered that in northern MR 1 the most important because there "we could mass our forces, centralize command, and provide adequate logistics support for a massive, extended offensive campaign."[3]

The enemy assault in northern MR1 was the most intense of the offensive and posed the most dangerous threat to South Vietnam. Below the DMZ, the North Vietnamese employed tanks and artillery to overrun South Vietnamese positions, taking advantage of heavy cloud cover that restricted tactical air support available to the ARVN. By 2 April, six fire support bases had fallen and two more were lost that day, leaving only three major bases in the northern part of Quang Tri Province in South Vietnamese hands. The North Vietnamese pushed on, threatening Quang Tri City as the South Vietnamese troops fell back. On 4 April, after forcing the abandonment of one of the last remaining South Vietnamese defense points on the north bank of the Cua Viet River, the North Vietnamese paused briefly to regroup.

The intensity of the enemy attack in MR 2 in the initial days of the offensive did not match that of the fighting to the north. South Vietnamese forces along Rocket Ridge in eastern Kontum Province as well as two regiments northeast of Dak To were in heavy contact with enemy forces, but the full impact of the offensive in MR 2 would not be felt until the middle of April.

After a feint in northern Tay Ninh Province, the main enemy drive in MR 3 began on 4 April when elements of two VC divisions with supporting armor moved from Cambodia into Binh Long Province. The main attack was against the district capital of Loc Ninh on Route 13. Despite a fierce South Vietnamese defense, Loc Ninh fell on 7 April and the enemy pushed down Route 13 toward Saigon to begin a siege of the provincial capital of An Loc which would last for over two months.

Where to Apply Air Power?

An unusual mixture of personalities and events shaped decision-making in Washington. President Nixon had just made his first visit to China and was preparing to go to Moscow and conclude a strategic arms limitation agreement. Nixon believed that defeat in Vietnam could undo his bid to reshape the global strategic equation by "playing the China card" and negotiate with the USSR from a position of strength. For the President, battlefield success became paramount. If that meant relying primarily upon US air power rather than upon the South Vietnamese armed forces, so be it. Consequently, Nixon directed a very strong response and removed many long-standing restraints. For his part, Admiral Moorer had always believed that leaders in Hanoi respected nothing except unstinting force, which the United States government was now prepared to apply.

With Secretary Laird focused upon completing US withdrawals, Nixon and Dr. Kissinger sometimes bypassed normal Defense Department command and communications channels in an effort to preserve secrecy and their freedom of action. As a consequence, the Secretary was, on occasion, not present at meetings where important issues were discussed and decisions made; this had been the case for the schedule of troop withdrawals announced on 20 April 1970 and for the initial

Presidential briefing and discussion of the proposed Cambodian invasion. In both instances, Dr. Kissinger later told Mr. Laird what had taken place.[4] As Chairman, Admiral Moorer's position during the North Vietnamese offensive was almost the direct opposite of that of General Wheeler who, during the Tet Offensive in 1968, had faced a hostile OSD and an ambivalent White House that forced him to spend energy and time challenging civilians' strategy. Conversely, because Nixon and Moorer agreed upon the strategy to be used in response to the North Vietnamese attacks, Moorer could focus upon its execution.

President Johnson, during 1964–1965, had tried to forge a consensus by co-opting dissenters in his administration. The short-term benefit was a show of solidarity to outsiders; the long-term cost was a tendency to settle upon compromises or "middle options" that proved militarily ineffective. President Nixon restricted the circle of decision-makers to those who fully agreed with his approach. Similarly, Admiral Moorer did not strive for consensus and did not always keep the Service Chiefs abreast of developments. The benefit was a clear, forceful policy that produced a battlefield success. The cost was stifling debate about command problems connected with the fundamental issue of whether Vietnamization was working.

In 1972, air power proved to be the decisive weapon, but precisely where and how to apply it became a source of long-running tension between Washington and Saigon. Throughout the spring, President Nixon, Dr. Kissinger and Admiral Moorer were convinced that punishing the North, while simultaneously stopping the invasion of the South, would pave the way for a peace settlement. General Abrams, however, focused on winning the battle in South Vietnam and insisted that the available air power should be applied to that task alone. He maintained that the South, not the North, was the place where the war could be lost. Nixon, and to a lesser extent Admiral Moorer, had lost confidence in Abrams as a result of LAM SON 719. But Secretary Laird retained the highest confidence in Abrams, believing that he had demonstrated unique ability to balance competing, often conflicting, directives from Washington.

On 31 March, the second day of the offensive, President Nixon ordered Admiral Moorer to plan attacks, over a two-day period, against SAM sites as far as 25 miles north of the DMZ. The Chairman responded the next day with options for hitting targets up to 18, 19, or 20 degrees north latitude. On 2 April, the situation in MR 1 worsened. Camp Carroll, a linchpin of the defense that was garrisoned by a regiment of the newly organized Third Division, surrendered after minimal resistance. Bad weather forced tactical aircraft and B–52s to rely on instruments. The President authorized air, artillery and naval gunfire attacks up to 25 miles north of the DMZ as well as B–52 strikes within the DMZ. Plans for mining Haiphong harbor were also updated. By 4 April, the target area in North Vietnam had been expanded to 18° north latitude, and protective reaction was authorized above that line. Poor weather, however, forced cancellation of the two-day strike.[5]

When the WSAG met on the morning of 3 April, Admiral Moorer recorded that the President "was particularly critical of General Abrams and inquired as to where were General Abrams' recommendations for action. . . . He said he would take no excuses and he wanted forces augmented and action taken against the enemy without delay." In reply, Moorer pointed out that COMUSMACV had requested authority for strikes against the buildup in the North repeatedly but unsuccessfully. Evidently, the President was not much mollified. Was MACV repeating the unjustified optimism of LAM SON 719? Later that day, the Chairman told Major General Haig, "I understand the President's problem is that Abrams thought South Vietnam could handle it but all of a sudden they are surprised because the whole town is underwater. Nobody should be surprised, we have been watching it for two months."[6]

On 4 April, the North Vietnamese seized Fire Support Base Anne in MR 1, southwest of Quang Tri City. The President told the WSAG, "there will be no consideration of restraints. We will do things that haven't been considered in several years. . . . Everything we do must be concentrated on breaking the back of the enemy. . . . We will use as many reinforcements as necessary. . . . " At his direction, the JCS ordered sizeable reinforcements: "approximately" 20 B–52s to Guam and 8 tankers to Okinawa, raising the sortie rate by 9 per day; 2 Marine Corps tactical air squadrons to South Vietnam; one CONUS-based USAF F–105 squadron and 2 CONUS-based USAF F–4 squadrons to Thailand. Moorer cabled COMUSMACV and CINCPAC to "come forward with as many imaginative recommendations as possible."[7]

Relations between COMUSMACV and Washington became more strained. Nixon told the Chairman that he wanted a maximum B–52 effort in MR 1 and added: "Is that clear?" Moorer passed this instruction to Saigon. In the White House, at 1130 on 5 April (0030 Saigon time), he took a call from General Abrams who said he "understood" that he was about to receive a directive to put 100 percent of the B–52 missions into MR 1. If that happened, Abrams said, he would resign. As Moorer summarized the conversation, Abrams declared himself "sick and tired of the direction of the tactical effort in South Vietnam by people who did not know anything about it." The Chairman assured him that there was no thought of sending such a directive. "I asked him what was his real problem," the Chairman wrote afterwards. "He could never satisfactorily answer this question and finally settled down. . . . I told him I was sick and tired of all the calls and messages from across the [Potomac] River here too but that is the way life is." Dr. Kissinger and Deputy Secretary Rush heard the conversation.[8]

Also, on 5 April, Admiral Moorer recommended that Lieutenant General John Vogt, USAF, replace General Lavelle. While serving as Director, Joint Staff, since July 1970, Vogt had earned the Chairman's high regard. The Joint Chiefs endorsed Vogt's nomination and President Nixon promptly approved it. Promoted to full general on 6 April, Vogt arrived in Saigon four days later. From the Chairman's standpoint, the appointment proved extremely timely and fortuitous. The Chairman now had his trusted man on the scene and, increasingly, would rely on him for

appraisals and advice. Very soon, at Moorer's direction, Vogt began cabling a daily personal assessment marked "For the Chairman's Eyes Only," through special channels bypassing General Abrams and Admiral McCain. The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, USAF, delivered these messages to Admiral Moorer who passed copies to Dr. Kissinger.[9]

On 6 April, the President decided that, for political reasons, B–52s must strike targets north of the DMZ as soon as possible. He ordered the USS *Midway* to steam from the West Coast, giving the Seventh Fleet five attack carriers. Two days later, B–52s had not struck the North and Nixon felt increasing frustration. Bad weather apparently did not impress him as an acceptable excuse. After the WSAG session that day, the Chairman cabled CINCPAC and COMUSMACV that the President was "extremely out of patience" because "so far, nothing other than routine operations have occurred." He continued: "I cannot impress upon you too strongly . . . how determined he is that the enemy not succeed . . . and how forthcoming he is when presented with requests for authorities and additional resources. . . . " (Mining Haiphong harbor was, in fact, the only recommendation that Nixon had not approved.) The President directed that B–52 operations surge to the "maximum supportable" level above the approved rate of 1,800 per month; all available B–52Ds, B–52Gs, and KC–135s were to deploy to Guam immediately. A sixth carrier, USS *Saratoga*, would shift from the Atlantic to WESTPAC. On 9 April, one Marine Corps F–4J squadron in Hawaii was ordered to Vietnam. Next day the cruiser USS *Newport News* in the Atlantic and two destroyers in the Mediterranean got orders to sail to WESTPAC.[10]

The Offensive Continues

US air attacks did little to slow enemy momentum. In MR 1, the lull in Quang Tri Province, which had begun on 4 April, ended abruptly five days later when the enemy attacked Fire Support Base PEDRO with indirect fire and ground assaults. Heavy fighting raged for two days and, although the North Vietnamese suffered heavy losses, they took several more South Vietnamese fire support bases. Overall, however, their assault bogged down, as a result of ARVN reinforcements and increasing US air support. General Abrams visited MR 1 on 11 April, and the South Vietnamese commander, Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Lam, assured him that the situation was in hand. Thereafter, in mid-April, the RVNAF did launch a counter-offensive in Quang Tri to retake lost bases and clear the area, but little progress resulted from ten days of action.[11]

On 11 April, Admiral Moorer gave Secretary Laird an assessment of enemy capabilities and his thoughts on the length of the offensive. In MR 1, the enemy had not only committed some of his best units, but had assured them the initial advantage of a large cache of prepositioned supplies. In the months October 1971

through March 1972, the enemy had moved some 4,200 to 4,700 tons of ammunition and equipment into Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces and this buildup, Moorer believed, would allow the enemy to continue fighting at the present level for as long as two months. Despite these advantages, the enemy had not captured Dong Ha or Quang Tri City; the Chairman attributed this failure to the "determined ARVN resistance." He believed that the South Vietnamese forces in MR 1, supported by "massive naval and air strikes," would give a good account of themselves. Moreover, as the weather improved, enemy positions and supply lines would "become increasingly vulnerable to air, naval, and ground interdiction."

In MR 2, Moorer thought that the enemy forces would probably break contact soon after the start of the rainy season unless they had taken a key target such as Pleiku or Kontum. But the Chairman believed that the South Vietnamese forces in that area, with reinforcement and strong air support, should be able to contain the enemy without loss of a major population center. As for the situation in MR 3, Admiral Moorer said that the enemy's supply posture there would constrain his offensive operations. He expected the enemy to continue action in the northwestern provinces of MR 3 to tie down ARVN troops, but added that VC forces in that Military Region had "historically" been incapable of contesting ARVN units of equal size. The Chairman predicted that the southwest monsoon would force the enemy to withdraw to base areas in Cambodia by mid-summer.[12]

On 12 April, Admiral Moorer spoke by secure telephone with General Vogt, beginning what would become an almost daily practice. Vogt said that General Abrams was reluctant to release carrier aircraft for operations north of the DMZ "unless they are immediately associated with the battlefront. . . . Every time Abe calls a corps commander they tell him they are hanging on because of tactical air, send more." Moorer replied that the President "does not think Abe understands the real problem. Abe is absolutely right from a purely military point of view but we are playing a political problem with the Russians." Nixon had decided that MG Haig would go to Saigon, make the President's strategy clear to General Abrams, and insure that COMUSMACV would carry it out.[13]

On 13 April, in MR 3, the North Vietnamese surrounded An Loc and started a siege that would last for eight weeks; as many as 160 tactical air and 18 to 21 B–52 sorties were allocated to the town's defense. But, on 13 April, the President also ordered a heavy attack against POL facilities, truck parks, and logistic support in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.[14] General Abrams, supported by Admiral McCain, urged its postponement so that enough planes would be available to defend An Loc and support a counterattack in MR 1. Admiral Moorer recorded that the President reacted angrily. Since Nixon had sent sizeable reinforcements to Southeast Asia "without receiving a single request from Abrams, he does not understand why Abrams needs all of the forces in the country regardless of how many forces are sent there. The strike on Haiphong is part of a progressive and heavy escalation being made for political purposes in an effort to negotiate [an end to] the war."

As the Chairman observed to CINCPAC, if taking away 200 sorties in the South would lose the battle, why had not the seven or eight thousand sorties flown there since 1 April won the battle? Postponement was rejected, but COMUSMACV received 364 vice 200 tactical air and 45 vice 36 B–52 sorties daily. General Abrams cabled another protest: "The risks remain unchanged and in my view are grave." President Nixon spoke about relieving Abrams but did not follow through. The Hanoi-Haiphong strike took place on 15–16 April; Admiral Moorer rated it a "great success."[15]

On 18 April, at Admiral Moorer's direction, CINCPAC dedicated two carriers entirely to strikes against North Vietnam. Major General Haig returned from his trip to Saigon and assured the Chairman that COMUSMACV appeared "very comfortable. . . . He feels stabilized. There will never be anything but static from him on going north but he understands it is a political imperative." On 22 and 24 April, B–52s hit targets between 19 and 20 degrees. Before the spring offensive, B–52s generally aborted missions if there were active SAM sites or MIGs in the target area. Now, they were required to press on to their targets. Authority was given to attack airborne enemy fighters anywhere except the China buffer zone; anti-radar missiles could be launched against any Ground Control Intercept sites. On 25 April, implementing a presidential decision, the Joint Chiefs directed the immediate deployment of two USAF F–4 squadrons from CONUS to Thailand. Also, because drones were not providing enough intelligence coverage, Secretary Laird agreed to raise the northern limit for manned tactical reconnaissance to 20° 25'.[16]

Crisis in Quang Tri

On 23 April, as President Nixon prepared to address the nation, Secretary Laird asked General Abrams for his assessment of the situation. Major General Haig cabled Ambassador Bunker that the President wanted an appraisal "as optimistic as the situation legitimately permits." COMUSMACV replied, "on the whole the effective far outweighs the ineffective." He described the leadership in MR 1 under Lieutenant General Lam as "outstanding: aggressive and confident." In MR 2, where the enemy recently had scored gains in Kontum and Binh Dinh provinces, he labeled ARVN leadership "not strong and certainly not aggressive." Nevertheless, "ten times the air power could not have done the job if the armed forces of Vietnam had not stood and fought. . . . The qualities demonstrated by the South Vietnamese people, in my judgment, assure that they will continue to hold." On 26 April, the President announced a 20,000 man withdrawal over the next two months and told the American people that "if we continue to provide air and sea support, the enemy will fail."[17]

Optimism evaporated very quickly. On 27 April, after resupplying and repositioning their troops, the North Vietnamese opened a new drive to outflank and envelope Quang Tri City. Within one day, ARVN defenses started collapsing. Late

on 28 April, General Vogt called Admiral Moorer to report that "Quang Tri is about done" even though air strikes were "exacting pretty heavy losses on the enemy." Vogt did not want any air assets diverted from MR 1. Moorer reassured him that President Nixon already had ordered a maximum surge effort "against targets directly in support of the land battle." The Chairman told Vogt that he was sending this directive only to CINCPAC because it represented a "180 degree turn" from applying pressure against North Vietnam "and I think Abrams, if he got a message like this, would think everybody was a little nuts."[18]

Quang Tri City was abandoned on 1 May as ARVN soldiers streamed southward in a near rout. The same day, General Abrams reported that dissension among South Vietnamese commanders and failures in command and control constituted "a contributing, if not principal factor" in the debacle: "I must report that as the pressure has mounted and the battle has become brutal, the senior military leadership has begun to bend and in some cases to break. In adversity it is losing its will and cannot be depended on to take the necessary measures to stand and fight." Abrams now saw "no basis for confidence" that either Hue or Kontum could be held.[19] Two hours before this message reached Washington, General Vogt spoke by secure telephone with Admiral Moorer and told him that Quang Tri "is being abandoned not because of friendlies being under pressure but . . . because it's too hot. . . . " ARVN soldiers, Vogt reported, repeatedly broke and ran when they came under fire from 122- and 130-mm artillery; close air support was difficult because they would not hold a defensive line. Vogt also felt that senior US Army officers had been slow to recognize how perilous the situation in Quang Tri had become. He concluded the conversation by telling Moorer that Pleiku in MR 2 and An Loc in MR 3 were being re-supplied by air—USAF, not VNAF—and that ARVN relief forces six kilometers from An Loc "simply won't push through and just sit there" despite heavy tactical air and B–52 strikes.[20]

What had caused the sudden collapse in Quang Tri? As in LAM SON 719, Admiral Moorer had to choose between competing appraisals. General Abrams emphasized shortcomings in ARVN command and control; General Vogt stressed the ARVN's lack of fighting spirit. The Chairman sided with Vogt; so did Dr. Kissinger and President Nixon.[21] Although they never said so explicitly, it can be inferred from their subsequent actions that Nixon and Kissinger recognized the failure of Vietnamization. From this point forward, they looked upon American air power as the only weapon that could save South Vietnam. General Abrams was correct in claiming, "ten times the air power could not have done the job if the armed forces of Vietnam had not stood and fought." But it should have been equally clear that if Saigon's forces alone had been pitted against Hanoi's, the South Vietnamese would not have fought successfully. In October, Admiral Moorer remarked to General Ryan, "the South Vietnamese are far too dependent on air power and must begin to operate along the same lines as the North Vietnamese."[22] But by then the time to take corrective action was long past.

The North Vietnamese Central Military Party Committee had its own explanation of the outcome. In its assessment of the first three months of the offensive, issued on 30 May 1972, the committee "pointed out that our main force troops had achieved superiority in numbers, firepower, and technical military equipment in their attacks and they correctly selected offensive methods, increased our combined arms power, and successfully attacked and destroyed strongly fortified enemy defensive positions." On the other hand, because of "deficiencies in our command organization, in our preparation of the battlefield, and in our rear service preparations," the North Vietnamese had failed to follow up initial successes with effective pursuit.[23]

Mining Haiphong Harbor

As May opened, South Vietnam's survival seemed to hang in the balance. Fire Support Base NANCY, the last friendly position in Quang Tri Province, fell on 2 May. General Abrams' headquarters began working on a plan to evacuate all US personnel within a 30-day period.[24] Prodded by General Abrams, President Thieu replaced Lieutenant General Lam on 3 May; one week later, he relieved the Commanding General of MR 2.

President Nixon was ready to escalate pressure against the north dramatically. On 2 May, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC and CINCSAC to plan upon hitting logistic targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area during 6–7 May, using 18 to 30 B–52s each day as well as tactical aircraft. General Abrams objected: "President Thieu has asked me to give top priority on air support to MR 3 for the next three days. . . . I feel that we must give him our full support. In this situation interruption of our support to key ARVN commanders is reflected in their will and determination." Admiral McCain supported him, and Nixon reluctantly cancelled the strike.[25]

What about Haiphong Harbor, which for years the Chiefs had wanted to block? CINCPAC had recommended aerial mining on 5 and 23 April, telling the Chairman that a plan was "on the shelf" and could be executed within 72 hours. On 4 May, Admiral Moorer presented a mining proposal to the WSAG. Late that afternoon, Nixon called Moorer to the White House and ordered him to prepare, on a very close-hold basis, to mine North Vietnam's ports beginning 9 May at 2100 Washington time. Moorer promptly told the Acting Director, Joint Staff, to have a few experts lay out a proposal using CINCPACFLT's basic plan. Neither Secretary Laird nor the Service Chiefs, except Admiral Zumwalt, were informed.[26]

Early on 5 May, the mining team gave Admiral Moorer a briefing that he rated "outstanding" on such short notice. The Chairman explained matters to the Service Chiefs that afternoon and brought Secretary Laird up to date the following morning. When the NSC convened on 8 May, President Nixon authorized not only mining of the ports but also an aerial interdiction campaign extending throughout North

Vietnam, except for a buffer zone along the Chinese border. That afternoon, however, Moorer had to deal with a consequence of keeping decisions so closely held that the full range of expertise could not be brought to bear. The President planned to say, in a speech scheduled for 1900 hours, that ships of other countries would have 72 hours to leave the North Vietnamese ports in safety. It was learned, however, that a few mines might arm in less time. The Chairman quickly conferred with experts and "72 hours" was changed to "three daylight periods."[27]

On the evening of 8 May, President Nixon told the nation that: "United States forces have been directed to take appropriate measures within the territorial and claimed waters of North Vietnam to interdict the delivery of any supplies. Rail and all other communications will be cut off to the maximum extent feasible." The mining and air campaigns were named POCKET MONEY and LINEBACKER. As a precaution with Secretary Laird's approval, the Joint Chiefs of Staff increased the readiness levels of US forces worldwide to DEFCON 4 (PACOM was already at DEFCON 3 and SAC at DEFCON 4); they remained at these levels until 1 July.[28]

During a two-minute period while the President spoke—the morning of 9 May, Vietnam time—US aircraft planted 36 MK–52 mines in the Haiphong ship channel. CINCPACFLT called the Chairman's Executive Assistant six minutes later to report success. For Admiral Moorer, this was a moment of great professional satisfaction; the administration finally had done what he had long argued was essential.[29] In the early afternoon of 9 May, President Nixon telephoned the Chairman: "I just wanted to tell you that we are depending on you to . . . zero in. Do not go to secondary targets. We are going to get rail lines, POL, cement plants, power plants, and airfields, but there is no damn excuse now. You have what the military claimed they never got authority to do." Moorer replied: "We are going to do it, Mr. President, I thought that was a magnificent talk. . . . "[30]

Nine ships departed Haiphong before the mines activated; 27 more remained in port. On 11 May, US aircraft laid mines in the ports of Thanh Hoa, Dong Hoi, Vinh, Hon Gai, Quang Khe, and Cam Pha, cutting off all seaborne supply. The USSR protested that two of its ships were damaged on 9 May. Since President Nixon would visit the Soviet Union starting 20 May, Secretary Laird directed "extraordinary measures" to reduce the probability of hitting foreign vessels. Replying, Admiral Moorer thought it more likely that North Vietnamese antiaircraft fire had damaged the Soviet ships. Nevertheless, he emphasized to CINCPAC on 11 May "the necessity to insure that no third country ships are damaged . . . in the immediate future." Still, he continued, "under no circumstances must we permit further use of [the Haiphong] channel. . . . " CINCPAC was to prepare a reseeding plan and keep one carrier with mine-laying capability "on the line." Two days later, with the Secretary's approval, Moorer authorized CINCPAC to attack North Vietnamese ships and aircraft either engaged in or configured for mine clearance.[31] Haiphong would stay closed until a peace agreement was signed.

South Vietnam Survives

The collapse of Quang Tri marked the low point of the campaign. The North Vietnamese, massed in the open, had never been so vulnerable to attack from the air. On 4 May, General Vogt assured Admiral Moorer that aircraft had dropped "enough ordnance on them to stunt their growth for twenty years. . . . I honestly think [we have inflicted] fifty percent casualties." Enemy official historians agreed, noting that because of heavy American air strikes the attacking forces could bring up "only 30 percent of the supplies called for in our plan." The new commander in MR 1, Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, took vigorous action to round up stragglers and reorganize units. On 5 May, the 1st ARVN Division launched a counterattack southwest of Hue to relieve pressure on two fire support bases. General Abrams recommended giving the ARVN a limited number of the new tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missiles. The weapons would go to selected teams of the 1st ARVN and Marine Divisions that had demonstrated the will to stand and fight enemy armor. Admiral Moorer agreed and Secretary Laird approved. General Vogt focused US air assets upon locating and hitting the artillery that might fire on Hue. The 2d Brigade of the ARVN Airborne Division moved from MR 3 to MR 1. On 13 May, Marines and paratroops started pushing back into Quang Tri Province. The situation in MR 1 stabilized and then gradually improved. In MR 2, during 14–17 May, a North Vietnamese assault on Kontum was thrown back. Likewise, in MR 3, the ARVN and the US Air Force kept the North Vietnamese out of encircled An Loc. On 17 May, Vogt told Moorer that he was in daily contact with US advisors "and they have all gotten very optimistic all of a sudden. . . . I think this meat-grinder is getting to them. For the first time . . . , I really feel we are 'over the hump'."[32]

LINEBACKER also aimed at cutting rail and all other communications to interdict the flow of supplies to the battlefield. Priority targets included POL storage and pumping stations; railways, roads, and associated bridges and tunnels; means of transportation (trucks, rolling stock, and watercraft); repair facilities for maintaining them; war supplies and support materials; ports; and transshipment points. A long list of specific targets was supplied and the Joint Chiefs authorized addition of fixed transportation and interdiction targets at CINCPAC's discretion, except for those within a 10-nautical mile radius of Hanoi and Haiphong or in the Chinese buffer zone. Armed reconnaissance was also authorized against choke points and other time-sensitive transportation and interdiction targets that developed outside the restricted areas. Initial efforts were to concentrate on targets in the area between the Chinese buffer zone and Hanoi, in areas around Hanoi and Haiphong, and on lines of communication leading from the Hanoi-Haiphong area south. To enhance interdiction further Admiral Moorer secured Secretary Laird's approval to use aerial denial munitions, including MK–36 destructors. These munitions were already authorized for POCKET MONEY operations, and now they could be

employed against appropriate land targets throughout North Vietnam below the Chinese buffer zone as well as in inland and coastal waters. As Moorer explained to the Secretary, LINEBACKER would complement the POCKET MONEY operations. In the near term, he expected it to disrupt the North Vietnamese supply and distribution system while over the longer term it should limit the enemy's ability to maintain an adequate logistic network, ultimately reducing his war-making capacity and lowering the level of combat.[33]

After the initial strike, LINEBACKER missions were planned and carried out daily as weather permitted. Usually the strike missions consisted of 8 to 12 bombers accompanied by appropriate fighter and support aircraft. The North Vietnamese responded to the US air attacks with all the resources at their command, launching MIGs and firing SAMs. During May, North Vietnam fired 429 SAMs, downing six US aircraft.[34]

Although the original LINEBACKER target list was extensive, many targets remained exempt from attack. Included were numerous targets within 10-mile radius control circles surrounding Hanoi and Haiphong and in the buffer zone along the Chinese border as well as dams, dikes, and locks. Almost from the beginning of the campaign, COMUSMACV and CINCPAC pressed for permission to hit some of these restricted sites. Responding to requests from the field commanders, the Joint Chiefs on 16 May authorized attack of several railroad bridges and tunnels in the Chinese buffer zone, directing maximum caution to avoid overflight of Chinese territory; and additional targets in the buffer zone were approved on 23 May. The Chiefs also removed a large number of fixed targets within the Hanoi and Haiphong radiuses from the restricted category on 16 May. In a related action, they prohibited all air strikes within a 10-nautical mile radius of Hanoi during the period 21 May through 1 June and within a 5-nautical mile radius for the succeeding period 2 through 5 June in order to avoid any political repercussions during the President's visit to Europe and the Soviet Union. Meantime, on 12 May, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations had suggested to Admiral Moorer that the interdiction effort could be "significantly" enhanced by attacking all North Vietnamese irrigation, flood control, and waterway targets to flood LOCs, thereby contributing to the interdiction campaign. The JCS did not act on his proposal; and dams, dikes, and locks remained in the restricted category.[35]

Paradoxically, the initiation of LINEBACKER was followed by a reduction in the tension between COMUSMACV and the White House over the allocation of the air effort. This was so in spite of the fact that after 9 May, more than 50 percent of air attack sorties went to the north compared to 13 percent during the previous month. Notified in advance of the new campaign, General Abrams welcomed it as "certain to have strong impact on the enemy." His change of attitude was due to a number of factors. The burden of LINEBACKER was carried by tactical fighter-bombers, which were best suited for precision strikes, some with the new, guided "smart" bombs, against transportation and industrial targets. Abrams thus could concentrate the B–52s in the south to support the ARVN. In addition, the steady buildup of US air

strength in Southeast Asia made more sorties available for all purposes. Most important, during May and June the tide of battle turned in South Vietnam. Bolstered by highly effective US air support, the ARVN halted the enemy attacks at Hue and other points and prepared its own counteroffensives. Still, Abrams insisted that while the attacks on North Vietnam were achieving "very substantial" results, "it is not possible to lose the war in the north but it is still possible to lose the war in the south and we must not turn loose of this until the job is done."[36]

Reaction to POCKET MONEY and LINEBACKER

President Nixon's decision for the mining and bombing of North Vietnamese territory and waters brought a loud public outcry. Reaction was immediate both in the United States and around the world. The Soviet Union on 11 May described the US actions as "fraught with serious consequences for international peace and security." The Soviets did not, however, cancel Nixon's trip to Moscow planned for later in May. A summit meeting ended with the signing of arms control agreements. The official news agency of the People's Republic of China called the US action a "dangerous move" and "flagrant provocation against the people of Vietnam and the world over." The communist countries of Eastern Europe echoed the sentiments of the Soviet Union and China, and both France and Japan deplored the latest actions by the United States.[37]

At home, in the United States, an intense wave of protests followed the President's announcement on 8 May. Mass marches, silent vigils, and traffic blocking sit-ins erupted on campuses and in major cities on 9 May and continued without interruption for the next several days. While most began as peaceful demonstrations, some turned into violent confrontations with police. Serious incidents occurred in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Boulder, Colorado; Madison, Wisconsin; Gainesville, Florida; and Berkeley and San Jose, California. Protests of varying sizes, accompanied by violence and arrests, also took place in New York, Boston, Washington, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco.[38]

In Washington, protesters rallied at the Capitol on 11 May, causing the building to be closed to the public. A few days later, during the early morning of 19 May, an explosion damaged the Pentagon, though no one was injured. Mass demonstrations followed for several days and police clashed with demonstrators at the Capitol and the Pentagon. In all, more than 400 persons were arrested.[39]

As might have been expected, reaction was also immediate in the Congress. For the most part, the Republicans praised the President's leadership and determination while Democrats repeated the terms "reckless," "dangerous," and "desperate" in commenting on the 8 May announcement. Senators Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, and Edmund Muskie, all aspiring to the Democratic presidential nomination, were quick to criticize the President's decision. The Senate Democratic Caucus condemned

the "escalation of the war in Vietnam" on 9 May by a vote of 29 to 14. The caucus also endorsed the cutoff of funds for Vietnam operations approved the month before by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.[40] The following day, 10 May, the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted a measure setting 1 October as the final date for the withdrawal of all US ground and air forces from Indochina subject only to prior release of US prisoners. A few days later, however, the Senate accepted an administration proposal to add a clause to the proposed "end of the war" legislation providing that the withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam should be conditional upon "an internationally supervised cease-fire."[41]

This victory over the anti-war forces in the Senate did not end the skirmishing between the Congress and the Nixon administration over the bombing of North Vietnam. On 23 May the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a military aid program that included an end-the-war amendment sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. But later, on 3 July, the House Foreign Affairs Committee defeated a bill calling for US withdrawal from Indochina by 1 October 1972 and substituted a resolution backing the withdrawal terms offered by President Nixon. Subsequently, the full House also rejected another end-the-war amendment offered to a military procurement bill.[42]

Renewed Authorities and Further Augmentations

By the end of May, POCKET MONEY had effectively closed Haiphong harbor; LINEBACKER had interdicted the rail lines leading from China to Hanoi and railroads to the south had been cut as well. Now the enemy had to use the highways to receive and move his supplies, making roads, bridges, petroleum pipelines, and fuel storage areas prime targets. Accordingly, on 26 May 1972, Admiral Moorer advised CINCPAC that it was "increasingly important to interdict these highway nets, as well as [to] strike the rolling stock, transshipment points and storage areas associated therewith." He wanted a coordinated program developed to insure that all suitable road net targets were struck and that the highway system north of Hanoi and Haiphong was "covered thoroughly with armed reconnaissance against fleeting targets."[43]

All the temporary air and naval operating authorities granted to meet the enemy offensive would expire on 1 June, and on 26 May Admiral Moorer requested that the Secretary extend these authorities for the duration of the "on-going" campaign against North Vietnam. The Chairman also sought certain revisions required by the expansion of operations during May. He wanted sanction of various support operations for LINEBACKER, including weather reconnaissance, flak and SAM suppression, flare, escort, reconnaissance before and after strikes, ECM and ELINT support, search and rescue, air refueling, and airborne early warning. He also

requested approval to implant sensors in North Vietnam below the Chinese buffer zone to detect activity and develop targets.[44]

Before granting the Chairman's request for a blanket extension the Secretary wanted a codification of all other temporary authorities, including those for LINEBACKER and POCKET MONEY which had no specific expiration dates, to facilitate his review. In the interim, he did extend all the temporary authorities until 1 July 1972. He added a proviso that there be no attacks on helicopters and transports in North Vietnam because of possible consequences of mistakenly firing on third country or ICC aircraft. The JCS passed this extension to the field commanders on the same day, 1 June.[45] The LINEBACKER operations required additional air resources and the United States carried out more augmentations in May 1972. In all of these actions, the Chairman requested approval, the Secretary approved, and the Joint Chiefs issued the necessary directive to the commanders involved.

Even before the initiation of LINEBACKER, the JCS on 3 May ordered the deployment of the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing, consisting of four F–4 Squadrons (72 aircraft and approximately 4,300 personnel) together with 16 KC–135 aircraft and approximately 583 additional personnel, from Europe to Thailand. This transfer necessitated the reopening of Takhli Air Base in Thailand on an austere basis with a capability to support tactical operations for a period of 90 days.[46]

Once LINEBACKER began, additional requirements arose. Accordingly, on 11 May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered the Commander in Chief, Readiness Command (CINCREDCOM), to deploy two C–130E squadrons (32 aircraft) to the Pacific Command to alleviate an airlift deficiency there.[47] Then on 15 May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed CINCPAC to deploy two US Marine Corps A–4 squadrons with necessary logistics and support personnel from Japan to Bien Hoa in South Vietnam.[48] Next on 20 May, they ordered the deployment of 7 B–52G aircraft from CONUS to Guam with additional KC–135 aircraft as required.[49] When the WSAG met on 19 May, just before President Nixon left for the Moscow summit, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew reported on his trip to the western Pacific. General Abrams had told Agnew that B–52s were "the principal factor that had maintained the morale of the ARVN as well as the integrity of the delicate fabric of the GVN system and its will to resist." Agnew said that CINCPAC had expressed hope that no more limitations would be placed upon LINEBACKER. Nixon, reacting sharply, ordered that 100 more B–52s be sent to Southeast Asia. Admiral Moorer was taken by surprise. Afterwards, he told Dr. Kissinger that neither he nor the field commanders saw a need for more B–52s: "they got all the authority they can handle, morale is high, knocking the hell out of them. . . ." Kissinger, nonetheless, asked the Chairman to "hold things together for the sake of peace in the family" and "move some B–52s out there."[50] Accordingly, on 23 May, the Chiefs directed deployment of another increment of 66 B–52G aircraft, including eight currently en route, from CONUS to Guam. Thirty-two were to be moved immediately with the remaining planes to follow as soon as parking stubs could be made ready at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam.[51]

The movement of these B–52s to Guam completed the US force augmentations to meet the enemy offensive. As indicated in the following table,[52] these step-by-step increases more than doubled the US capacity to strike the enemy:

	1 Jan 72	*24 May 72*	*% Increase*
TACAIR			
Land-based	212	480	126
Sea-based	121	334	176
B–52s	42	148*	252
KC–135s	64	129	102
Other Aircraft	110	149	35
Naval Gunfire Ships	16	54	238

*This figure of 148 included only 8 of the 66 B–52G aircraft ordered deployed on 23 May; the remaining 58 had yet to arrive in Southeast Asia and their subsequent arrival raised the total B–52 strength to 206.

In the meantime, the issue of replacement of carriers in the Western Pacific had arisen. In early April, the United States had increased the carriers on line in the Western Pacific from three to six to provide additional air support in Vietnam. By late May, when it was apparent that tactical air would be needed at current levels for some time to come, CINCPAC pointed out that two of the carriers were "critically" overdue for rotation and wanted to relieve them with one carrier from the US west coast and another from the Atlantic. Admiral Moorer requested Secretary Laird's approval on 27 May, noting that movement of the carrier from the Atlantic would prevent the United States from maintaining its commitment of six carriers available for NATO within 48 hours. Nevertheless, the Secretary approved, and the Joint Chiefs issued the necessary instructions. The USS O*riskany* moved from the West Coast to relieve the USS *Constellation* and the USS *America* from the East Coast replaced the USS *Coral Sea*, maintaining six carriers on line to support the Vietnam operations.[53] On 27 May, with Secretary Laird's approval, the JCS continued all the temporary Southeast Asia air and naval augmentations until 30 June 1972.[54]

The augmentations carried out during April and May to meet the enemy offensive were expensive in funding and manpower, and the Secretary was anxious to weigh the operational advantages against the costs. As early as 26 April, Mr. Laird had asked the Chiefs to assess any further force augmentations from the standpoint of budgetary, logistical, manpower, and operational impacts. While not questioning the "operational and political benefits," he said, "the reality of resource limitations and costs . . . remains."[55]

The Joint Chiefs and the Secretary discussed this matter on 1 May, but Mr. Laird was not entirely satisfied. He told Admiral Moorer on 3 May that he had come away from the meeting with the impression that "we still had considerable homework to do in delineating and assessing the full impact of the recent force augmentations." He

again asked for an assessment of this matter. Laird also wanted a plan for retaining the augmented air and naval forces as well as measures, and associated impacts, to assure sortie and gunfire levels that could be supported without constraints.[56]

On 10 May, the Chiefs provided the Secretary a US Force Augmentation Plan for Southeast Asia. The current air and naval augmentation forces together with the associated air sortie and gunfire levels could be maintained, they said, with only minor problems for a six-month period from April through September (actually 179 days—the 'full TDY period'). Maintenance of these forces and levels would, however, cause a significant impact on vital programs and capabilities outside Southeast Asia and should the tempo of operations increase or be prolonged beyond the six-month period the seriousness of this operational degradation would grow progressively worse. Moreover, drawdown of various munitions and equipment was restricting the US ability to respond to situations in the NATO area and elsewhere.[57]

Five days later, the Joint Chiefs presented Mr. Laird an overall assessment of the US augmentation to date. They estimated the cumulative costs for the period through 30 September at $3.12 billion, a figure that would require extensive reprogramming in FY 1972 Service budgets if supplemental funding or other relief was not supplied. They spelled out in detail the logistic impacts involving primarily high attrition of aircraft and certain items of equipment as well as extremely high expenditures of both air and surface munitions. The JCS again said that manpower for the augmentations would not be a problem in the period through September though the buildup of these forces in Southeast Asia was causing "a severe degradation" in the US military capability to respond to crises in other areas; this impact would grow more severe as the duration of the augmentation lengthened. Concluding, the Chiefs asked Laird to forward their views to the President.[58]

With the additional deployments following the initiation of POCKET MONEY and LINEBACKER, the Secretary of Defense requested an updated assessment of the augmentations on 24 May. Specifically to be included was the JCS judgment on recent deployment of B–52Gs and the "incremental military value" in relation to cost; Admiral Moorer asked to be relieved of this tasking. Recent changes, he believed, were not of such a magnitude as to require a major change in the earlier JCS positions. The Secretary thought otherwise and the Joint Chiefs provided a new assessment on 31 May. They now placed the cost of the augmentations through 30 September 1972 at $3.75 billion; affirmed the judgments in their previous report, and concluded that "prolonged deployment of the augmentation forces and replacement of projected material losses have aggravated and compounded the problems previously identified." With regard to the operational impact of the additional movements to Southeast Asia, the JCS listed further degradation in responsiveness to NATO, in readiness of antisubmarine warfare forces, and in the PACOM Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). Answering the question about operational benefits of the extra B–52 forces, they cited the increased number of daily sorties. The incremental military value of the planes, they said, could only be

determined in light of a specific situation and the manner in which COMUSMACV targeted the planes.[59]

The Secretary expressed surprise at the JCS evaluation of the value of the additional B–52s. "If I understand your position correctly," he told Moorer on 7 June, "you and the Joint Chiefs feel we should leave all 206 B–52s in SEA in hope that some proper situation will prevail at some time in the future and that MACV will target these B–52s in some effective manner." In reply, the Chiefs observed that their 31 May submission had assessed the importance of the B–52 augmentation, but they set out in greater detail the benefits of the added B–52Gs. These planes allowed increased sorties and an improved night/all weather capability and were part of achieving a balance between LINEBACKER efforts, close air support, and interdiction in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. There was a military requirement for all 206 B–52s currently in Southeast Asia and the JCS recommended retaining them until the situation improved.[60] With some minor adjustments, all the air and naval augmentation forces were retained in Southeast Asia throughout the remainder of 1972. Monthly extensions were made; each was separately approved by the Secretary of Defense.[61]

The Enemy Offensive Plays Out, Operations May–June 1972

The capture of the last RVNAF base in Quang Tri Province on 2 May marked the high point of the North Vietnamese offensive. Fierce fighting would continue for several more months, but the enemy would win no more dramatic battles or advance further into South Vietnam. Slowly, the RVNAF began to regroup and recapture lost territory.

On 4 May, Admiral Moorer compared the effectiveness of the RVNAF and North Vietnamese Army units for the Secretary of Defense. While the kill ratio in the fighting from 30 March through 30 April had favored the RVNAF by 6.7 to 1, "analysis of the quantitative factors and enemy activity" indicated that the enemy could replace personnel losses on a one-for-one basis. Although enemy equipment losses would affect his combat support capability over the longer term, Moorer doubted that these losses were "yet considered sufficient to render this combat support ineffective." In the fighting to date, the Admiral continued, the RVNAF had virtually exhausted their reserves while the enemy still had a relatively uncommitted division north of the Demilitarized Zone. He believed, however, that the great majority of the RVNAF remained an effective fighting force and that with continued US support the South Vietnamese should be able to contain the offensive in the long term. "The central point to be understood . . . ," he told the Secretary, "is that

all our efforts of the past several years are at stake, and the effectiveness of RVNAF and GVN leadership at this time is the crucial ingredient."[62]

Following the loss of Quang Tri Province, President Thieu decided to bring fresh military leadership into MR 1. General Abrams had urged such a course in order to bolster the ARVN will to fight. On 4 May, President Thieu replaced Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Lam, the commander of the region, with Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, the commander of MR 4 who earlier had commanded the 1st ARVN Division in MR 1, and also relieved Brigadier General Vu Van Giai, the Commander of the Third Division, who had been responsible for the defense of Quang Tri City. Lieutenant General Truong took immediate action to regroup the South Vietnamese forces in MR 1. He set up straggler control points at Hue and Da Nang to reorganize units and troops falling back from the Quang Tri battles and, with Major General Frederick J. Kroesen, Jr., USA, the Senior US Commander in MR 1, he established a joint forward command post at Hue. Simultaneously, Brigadier General Nguyen Duy Hinh, the new commander of the Third Division, began to rebuild his forces near Phu Bai southeast of Hue.

Under new leadership and with battered units reformed, the South Vietnamese forces began to reassert themselves in MR 1. On 5 May, the 1st ARVN Division launched operations southwest of Hue to relieve enemy pressure on two fire support bases. Assisted by US tactical air and B–52 support, the South Vietnamese forces made steady progress. They not only removed the threat to the two bases, but in a second thrust on 14–15 May they retook Fire Support Base BASTOGNE, which had fallen to the enemy on 28 April. These actions eased the pressure on Hue and captured eight tons of enemy ammunition.

Meantime, the RVNAF Marine Division had resumed operations in its area of responsibility along the coast between Hue and the Quang Tri border. On 8 May US and South Vietnamese forces launched an intensive campaign of tactical air, B–52, naval, and artillery fire against enemy concentrations in southeastern Quang Tri Province. The following day the 2d Brigade of the Vietnamese Airborne Division moved from MR 3 to MR 1 and came under the operational control of the Marine Division. Reinforced, the Marines launched their first offensive action on 13 May. Two battalions, carried by US helicopters, landed behind enemy lines in Quang Tri while a third battalion crossed the Tach Ma River into the enemy-held province. These forces linked up, claiming to have killed more than 300 North Vietnamese troops before returning to friendly positions the next day.

On 21 May, a strong North Vietnamese force with armor support attacked the Marine Division. Several days of heavy fighting followed, but the South Vietnamese held their positions. The Marine Division counterattacked on 24–25 May with another airmobile and amphibious assault into Quang Tri, claiming 505 North Vietnamese killed, destroying large caches of enemy ammunition and food, and freeing 5,000 civilians from enemy control. Contact with the enemy continued for the remainder of the month, but the Marine defenses held.

Heavy fighting in MR 1 proceeded throughout the month of June but without significant result. The South Vietnamese Marines carried out additional assaults into Quang Tri on 8 June and again ten days later, on 18 June, killing significant numbers of enemy troops and destroying supplies and equipment. The enemy, in turn, attacked into the coastal area above Hue on 20 June with tanks and infantry, engaging both the Marine and Airborne Divisions. The fighting lasted through 26 June, but the enemy made no gains. Meantime, the 1st ARVN Division continued limited operations west and southwest of Hue to increase the depth of the defenses around the city. Activity was light until 10 June when heavy contact began and continued for over a week. With US air support, the ARVN troops stood fast. Another enemy attack against the 1st ARVN Division began on 26 June, but again the South Vietnamese troops were not dislodged.

The North Vietnamese recognized that the tide was turning. In Hanoi, the Politburo and Central Military Party Committee ordered their troops on the main battlefields to "shift over to combating the enemy's counterattacks" while continuing "attrition operations" and sending a portion of the main force units into the lowlands to work with local forces to disrupt pacification. At this time, some of their infantry companies in front of Hue were reduced to less than 20 men, half of the artillery's prime movers had been knocked out, and the artillery had no ammunition reserves. Reinforced by two fresh divisions from the north, the remaining troops dug in and prepared for a tenacious defense.[63]

In MR 2 North Vietnamese troops encircled the provincial capital of Kontum City at the beginning of May and were increasing the pressure on the outlying defenses of the city. Many civilians had already been airlifted out as the South Vietnamese defenders braced for the push on the city itself. On 10 May, Thieu removed Lieutenant General Ngo Dzu from command of MR 2, replacing him with Major General Nguyen Van Toan, the deputy for operations to the commander of MR 1.

The battle for Kontum began on 14 May. Preceded by heavy attacks by fire, the enemy launched an armor-supported drive on the city. Assisted by tactical air strikes and supporting fire, the defending South Vietnamese repulsed the enemy, but he attacked again on 25 and 26 May. Sappers penetrated Kontum's defenses and by the following day, the enemy occupied strong points in the north, northeast, and southeast portions of the city. Fighting raged for three days and then the enemy attack subsided. Gradually, ARVN troops cleared the enemy from the city and opened the Kontum airfield on 8 June. The level of activity was light throughout the remainder of June as the South Vietnamese proceeded with clearing operations northwest and north of the city.

There was other serious fighting in MR 2 during May in the area around Kontum Pass and the Route 14 area. On 4 May, ARVN forces attacked the Pass, which the enemy had closed in April, from north and south. They did open the Pass but did not succeed in clearing Route 14. Efforts to open the highway continued throughout the rest of May and most of June. Finally, by 26 June, enemy resistance

began to falter, and on 30 June, a convoy of 36 vehicles traveled from Pleiku to Kontum City for the first time since mid-April.

In MR 3, the siege of the provincial capital of An Loc continued through May. The enemy shelled the city daily but failed in repeated efforts to breach An Loc's defenses, as B–52 strikes proved extremely accurate and effective. South Vietnamese forces attempting to move up Route 13 from the south to relieve the city were unsuccessful and the siege continued into June. By the end of the first week of June, however, the enemy grip on An Loc began to slip. On 8 June, patrols from the city and the ARVN 6th Airborne Battalion moving up from the south linked up 1.5 miles below An Loc. Additional elements joined up the next day and began to consolidate and occupy the high ground dominating the southern approach to the city. The following day, 10 June, the first substantial airlift since the siege began was conducted into the city. Some 119 reinforcements arrived and over 100 wounded troops were evacuated. By 11 June the siege was definitely broken and more than 1,000 refugees moved out of An Loc along Route 13 to resettlement centers. The remainder of June brought sporadic enemy attacks by fire and small ground contacts around An Loc as the South Vietnamese proceeded to expand and clear their perimeter.

US Actions in June

By June, the military situation was finally beginning to improve for the South Vietnamese; the Joint Chiefs did not want to let up the pressure on the enemy. On 6 June, they told the Secretary of Defense that it was essential to exploit the damage already inflicted on North Vietnam by increasing the "intensity and scope" of the current air campaign. Noting the military force now assembled in the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), as well as the prospect of three months of favorable weather, the JCS saw a situation that presented "undoubtedly a final and unique opportunity to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the North Vietnamese to engage in meaningful negotiations." They proposed a "continuing and aggressive" air campaign against the entire "war-making capacity" of North Vietnam, including transportation and logistics targets, the electrical power net, and communications and command and control facilities.

Specifically, they requested authority to strike 44 additional targets not on approved lists. These comprised sites in the restricted areas around Hanoi and Haiphong, including the Hanoi/Gia Lam airfield, the Hanoi and Haiphong railroad yards, the Hanoi thermal power plant, and four industrial sites, one of which was the only steel plant in North Vietnam. They also wanted authority for armed reconnaissance along railroads and highways within the Chinese buffer zone to within seven nautical miles of the Chinese border. This intensified effort against targets in North Vietnam would be complemented by expanded air operations in South Vietnam and adjacent areas, and the Joint Chiefs proposed additional mining to seal

off coastal areas in the event the People's Republic of China attempted to resupply North Vietnam "via close-in coastal waters." These efforts, they concluded,

> will deal a severe blow to the enemy's war-making capability and his resolve to continue. In our judgment, we are at a crucial juncture which requires a firm decision to take the entire target array under attack as the best course of action to assure attainment of our objectives in Southeast Asia.[64]

On 12 June the Secretary authorized attacks on 28 of the recommended targets in the period through 1 July 1972, but he withheld approval for the remaining ones including the Hanoi/Gia Lam airfield. He also disapproved any expanded armed reconnaissance near the Chinese border, though he was willing to consider requests for specific strikes within the buffer zone, as he had in the past. The Secretary found it increasingly difficult to monitor the scope and pattern of the US interdiction campaign, and earlier, on 2 June, he had asked Admiral Moorer for a listing of all authorized targets in North Vietnam. Now, he requested a survey of targets in North Vietnam to identify those of primary military value, those indirectly supporting the enemy offensive, and those of psychological value. Within those categories, he wanted the targets arranged in order of importance. This information, he told Admiral Moorer, would aid him in evaluating future target requests and permit a more thorough assessment of the air campaign.[65]

The JCS passed authorization to attack the additional targets to the field on 15 June and, on 21 June Moorer gave the Secretary the requested survey of all targets in North Vietnam. Thereafter, on 26 June, the Chairman requested approval to strike two radio receivers in the Hanoi area, targets that the Secretary had disapproved on 12 June. But the Secretary was still unwilling to approve these targets, telling the Chairman that the current approved target list was adequate. In addition, the Secretary wanted to approve any new targets "selected primarily for high psychological impact like electronic power installations, communications/command and control sites, and industrial facilities."[66]

In the meantime, Moorer had responded to specific questions from Secretary Laird on the concept for and operation of the air interdiction campaign against North Vietnam. There were two major objectives, he told Mr. Laird on 15 June: (1) to reduce the enemy's ability to wage main force war in South Vietnam and limit future enemy options to guerrilla and economy of force tactics; (2) to destroy the will of the North Vietnamese government and populace to continue the war and induce a willingness to participate in productive negotiations. To achieve these overall purposes, Admiral Moorer listed a number of specific military objectives, including disruption or destruction of transportation systems, repair facilities, stocks of materiel and supplies—specifically petroleum, oils and lubricants (POL), key power plants, airfields, and communications. He could not develop a definite schedule for attainment of these objectives because of various intangibles such as

the US ability to detect and counter enemy reactions. Moorer added that the bombing should not be limited solely to transportation and logistics targets and stated:

> The US now has a perishable opportunity to attain its objectives in Southeast Asia. A military force has been assembled in WESTPAC which is adequate to the task. . . . At this critical period for US policy in Indochina, the United States must not unnecessarily restrict the application of its main strength, lest the enemy be given the chance to survive the next few months and later to accommodate his logistic system to a reduced air campaign.[67]

During June 1972, several questions arose concerning the mining of North Vietnamese waters. Since only limited areas of the coast of North Vietnam were mined, CINCPAC feared that infiltration of supplies was occurring by small craft in inlets not accessible to large vessels. To detect such infiltration, Admiral Moorer requested authority on 10 June for manned tactical reconnaissance along the entire North Vietnamese coast to within five miles of the Chinese border; the Secretary denied his request on 30 June 1972.[68]

Another issue concerned the reseeding of the mines in the Haiphong channel. On 18 June, CINCPAC reported to Washington the presence of approximately 50 small North Vietnamese craft in the channel and the assumption that these craft were carrying out minesweeping. The following day, while assessment of the North Vietnamese activity continued, Moorer passed this information to the Secretary and requested authority to reseed minefield segments 2111A and 2111B in the Haiphong Channel. But Mr. Laird did not approve; he told the Chairman that he would reconsider his decision "when dictated by enemy mine countermeasures activity or the approaching automatic sterilization of the two mine fields."[69]

During June, Admiral Moorer also complained of Chinese efforts to frustrate the US campaign to cut off seaborne supply to North Vietnam. Since mid-April, he told Mr. Laird, the People's Republic of China had rotated merchant vessels to the offshore islands along the southern North Vietnam panhandle as a tactic to keep anchorages at Hon Nieu and Hon La Islands continuously occupied. As a result, the United States had to expend significant air and surface resources to maintain surveillance in order to be ready to strike North Vietnamese lighters when they cleared the Chinese ships. Moreover, on 9 June, a Chinese ship at Hon Nieu had fired on a US surveillance aircraft. Moorer recommended a formal protest to the People's Republic of China as well as authority to destroy any ship in North Vietnamese waters that fired on US ships or planes. He also wanted permission to mine the waters around Hon Nieu, Hon La, and Hon Me with notice to the Chinese to leave those waters within 48 hours. By 29 June, the Secretary had not replied; Moorer repeated his request which the Secretary then denied.[70]

All the temporary operating authorities granted to counter the enemy offensive would expire on 30 June. At the end of May the Chairman had sought extension of these authorities for the duration of the air and naval campaign against North

Vietnam but the Secretary had renewed them only for the month of June pending a codification of all other temporary authorities including those for LINEBACKER and POCKET MONEY.[71] Admiral Moorer submitted the requested codification on 9 June, but the Secretary did not grant a blanket extension of the authorities. Consequently, on 23 June 1972, Admiral Moorer asked the Secretary to continue all the temporary authorities, including those for LINEBACKER and POCKET MONEY, through 31 July 1972; Mr. Laird did so on 26 June 1972. Thereafter these authorities, with the exception of LINEBACKER, were extended on a monthly basis until the end of hostilities in January 1973.[72]

Throughout May and June 1972, all dams and dikes in North Vietnam remained exempt from US air attack. The closest the United States came to such an attack was a strike against the Lang Chi hydroelectric power plant. Consideration of such a strike in a WSAG meeting in early June produced some hesitancy because of the possibility of damage to the adjacent dam and spillways. Both Dr. Kissinger and Secretary Laird were absent from Washington at that time; later Admiral Moorer assured Mr. Laird that there was little chance of conventional bombs weakening the dam or spillways or of any extensive flooding resulting from inadvertent damage to the dam. He urged the Secretary to discuss the strike with Dr. Kissinger and approve attack of the Lang Chi power plant. Approval was secured and the JCS authorized the attack on 8 June. They cautioned CINCPAC to attack only the transformers and the substation and to take special precautions to reduce damage to the dam and spillways.[73]

Even with the prohibition against strike of dams and dikes as well as the precautions observed in bombing targets near such sites, reports did circulate of damage to dams caused by the US air attacks. President Nixon was questioned on this matter on 29 June, and he termed the reports "inaccurate." The United States tried, he said, "to hit only military targets and we have been hitting military targets. We have had orders out not to hit dikes because the result in terms of civilian casualties would be extraordinary." These orders, he said, remained in effect. A few days later, a Department of State spokesman hedged the President's statement somewhat. He put the US air strikes in North Vietnam in the context of the US air effort, explaining that there might be inadvertent damage to dams and dikes when located near military targets.[74]

In early June, the People's Republic of China made allegations of US intrusion into Chinese air space, of a bombing of Chinese territory, and of fragment damage to a Chinese merchant vessel. From the beginning of the air attacks against North Vietnam in response to the spring offensive, the United States had taken precautions to avoid violation of Chinese territory or air space. The JCS had prohibited over-flight of the People's Republic of China and had reinstated a buffer zone in North Vietnam along the Chinese border, as had been the case during ROLLING THUNDER. To guard against inadvertent penetration of China's air space, no air attacks were allowed in this buffer zone without special permission. At the Secretary's direction,

Admiral Moorer investigated the Chinese charges and reported no evidence to support the alleged violations. He assured the Secretary that every effort was being made to avoid such a violation.[75]

The United States continued the LINEBACKER campaign throughout June, inflicting considerable damage upon North Vietnam. A Defense Intelligence Agency assessment in early July evaluated the air effort as follows:

> The current campaign against North Vietnam has inflicted a progressively greater burden on the regime and the population. Hanoi's manpower and material resources have been heavily taxed, and the population's morale has been strained by the disruptions inflicted on the internal supply and distribution system and other targets. These strains have been compounded by the extra efforts required to counter restrictions on the flow of supplies into North Vietnam and southward to the battlefield area.
>
> Air and naval operations are adding substantially to the heavy price paid by the North Vietnamese in the battle area in the South.

The United States had carried out 14,621 air strikes and 836 naval gunfire attacks against North Vietnam in the period between 9 May and 15 June 1972. Air strikes had effectively closed both the northeast and northwest rail lines from China, forcing movement of supplies by means of truck and watercraft. In North Vietnam's panhandle the air campaign had disrupted and delayed highway traffic, the primary transportation mode in that area, but the enemy had resorted to alternate roads, bypasses, and ferries. Strikes against watercraft and transshipment points along inland waterways had destroyed about 1,100 barges, waterborne logistics craft, and assorted rivercraft and forced the enemy to limit his activity to hours of darkness. The net effect of the effort in the panhandle was a substantial reduction in the enemy capability to move supplies into and through southern North Vietnam.

The air campaign did significant damage to the North Vietnamese POL and electric power systems. Petroleum stocks had been reduced from 103,000 metric tons to some 40,000 metric tons, a seven-week supply, and the major power plants of Lang Chi and Uong Bi, accounting for over 40 percent of the total national capacity, would require extended periods of repair. From 9 May on, most of North Vietnam's industrial plants had ceased to operate or were operating at reduced levels. Major facilities for barge construction and ship repair, coal processing, and production of construction materials, as well as sugar, paper, and textile mills had been struck. The cumulative impact of the strikes on industrial plants was reinforced by the degradation of the electric power supply, shortages of raw material imports, and the departure of foreign technical experts.

Despite extensive damage, North Vietnam was able to carry on operations in South Vietnam. The Defense Intelligence Agency reported continued movement of supplies into South Vietnam even though air and naval attacks were creating logistics problems. Shortages of ammunition had not yet manifested themselves in overall reductions of enemy expenditure, but DIA claimed certain combat units had experienced serious

ammunition supply problems and said that enemy concern about the ability to meet future distribution requirements had become evident. North Vietnam was making efforts to cope with the situation by strengthening and expanding service apparatus in the North Vietnamese panhandle and MR 1. The North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam were in good logistics posture at the beginning of the offensive, and DIA analysts believed substantial stocks remained despite drawdowns caused by operational expenditures and losses from the US air campaign.

The DIA reported the success of POCKET MONEY throughout June in denying North Vietnam supplies by sea. Since the mining on 9 May, no ships had attempted to enter or leave major ports, and the only known shipments by sea to North Vietnam were small amounts lightered ashore from Chinese ships at the anchorages off Hon Nieu and Hon La in the panhandle. Mining operations, naval gunfire, and air strikes had seriously curtailed use of small river ports and transshipment points, and coastal traffic, the primary means of distributing supplies to the southern panhandle, had been halted. Consequently North Vietnam had been forced to shift to overland routes for the import of essential supplies from the People's Republic of China.[76]

Writing after the event, North Vietnamese historians acknowledged the difficulties posed by the US air assault:

> Because the enemy had escalated his operations rapidly, was conducting massive bombardments, and was using many new types of weapons and items of technical equipment . . . , many of our units and local areas suffered heavy losses. Almost all of the important bridges on the railroad lines and on the road network were knocked out. Ground transportation became difficult. Coastal and river transportation was blocked. The volume of supplies shipped . . . to the battlefields fell to only a few thousand tons per month.[77]

Hampered by supply problems and growing RVNAF resistance, the enemy offensive in South Vietnam had halted by the end of June. In MR 1, the RVNAF was on the offensive, and the South Vietnamese forces had repulsed the attack on Kontum in MR 2 and broken the siege of An Loc in MR 3. On 20 June, Admiral Moorer asked the field commanders: what could the enemy do in South Vietnam in the next 30 days and what could the RVNAF do to meet the enemy action?[78]

General Abrams responded with a picture of growing RVNAF strength, and CINCPAC endorsed his position. Although the enemy was continuing preparations for an attack against Hue, the RVNAF position in MR 1 had steadily improved since early May. The South Vietnamese had made good progress in rebuilding depleted forces, in improving command and control and fire support coordination, and in conducting aggressive ground actions, and these activities had steadily eroded enemy units and logistics. Moreover, the South Vietnamese had initiated a coordinated operation in early June in preparation for a major offensive to retake Quang Tri City scheduled to begin on 28 June. Even if the enemy attacked Hue before this operation began, COMUSMACV predicted the RVNAF would prevail.

In MR 2, General Abrams reported that the enemy had logistics and personnel problems and that the RVNAF could gradually reassert influence over lost territory. The enemy failure to take An Loc and manpower and equipment losses, COMUSMACV believed, had significantly degraded the enemy capability to launch and sustain a main force offensive in MR 3. The RVNAF reserves engaged in the An Loc battle were now available for use in other areas; the Airborne Brigade was to assist in the counter-offensive in Quang Tri. COMUSMACV believed that the enemy planned, but could not mount, major activity in MR 4. General Abrams stated that the failure of the North Vietnamese invasion had discouraged "the already ineffective VCI in RVN" and that only sapper activity and terrorism were to be expected from the Viet Cong during the next 30 days. In this same period, he said, the "RVNAF, with our continued full support, can hold its own and make progress in regaining lost territory."[79]

The Joint Chiefs had prepared their own assessment. "The steady improvement in the friendly situation in recent weeks has been marked," and:

> The main enemy offensives appear to have been blunted. The GVN has retained its stability, and the people have not rallied to support the enemy. The enemy continues to suffer heavy losses in both manpower and material, and the impact of air and naval campaigns in NVN should further aggravate his resupply problems. The delays imposed on the enemy have provided time for the RVNAF to strengthen their defenses and prepare for counteroffensive action.

The Chiefs cautioned the field commanders that maintenance of the present level of US forces "in-theater," as well as the associated budgetary support, for an extended period would be "extremely difficult." Thus they said, "prospects of a long stalemate along presently held lines would give rise to the difficulties previously experienced here and can only hasten the reduction in US support levels." The current situation, they continued, presented what, in all probability, was "a final opportunity" to regain the momentum lost after 30 March 1972. The "overall goal" for the next three months, they told the field commanders, must be to reestablish South Vietnamese control over key areas lost in the recent offensive to present the strongest possible negotiating position" in Paris and "to demonstrate to the world community the military strength of the GVN." The JCS believed that the highest priority for the RVNAF should be to retake Quang Tri City and the coastal lowlands south of the Cua Viet River with the objective of seizing all the territory in Quang Tri Province along the coast to the Demilitarized Zone. Other objectives were to restore South Vietnamese control in MR 3 and MR 4 to the west and northwest of Saigon, to remove the threat to Kontum City, and to restore control in Binh Dinh Province in MR 2. The Joint Chiefs wanted the field commanders to underscore the urgency of regaining the territorial initiative with the GVN and the RVNAF Joint General Staff.[80]

The RVNAF Counteroffensive, July–October 1972

The South Vietnamese forces in MR 1 attacked northward on 28 June to retake Quang Tri Province. The Marine and Airborne Divisions, supported by Ranger units and elements of the 1st and 2d ARVN Divisions, pushed into the enemy occupied province from Thua Thien in a series of ground and helicopter assaults. The RVNAF moved steadily ahead and by 7 July had reached Quang Tri City. There the South Vietnamese offensive halted, blocked by determined enemy resistance. After several weeks of heavy fighting, the South Vietnamese breached the northeast wall of the citadel of the provincial capital on 25 July, but were not able to dislodge the enemy.

At a WSAG meeting on 4 August, Dr. Kissinger asked why the South Vietnamese were still trying to capture the Citadel. He wondered whether they were squandering manpower in this effort. Admiral Moorer replied that the South Vietnamese did not want to leave the Citadel behind in their advance and that only a small force was being devoted to the actual assault. A representative of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), Major General David E. Ott, USA, pointed out the psychological importance to the RVNAF of retaking the Quang Tri fortress. Dr. Kissinger was not completely convinced. Referring to the struggle for the Citadel, he said: "We are not interested so much in achieving great victories. We just have to avoid a major setback."[81]

The battle for the Quang Tri Citadel continued. On 7 September, the South Vietnamese forces regrouped and began a new coordinated assault on 9 September. That day, the Airborne Division secured three enemy strong points just to the south of the fortress, and on 12 September, the RVN Marines broke through the northeast corner. Fierce fighting raged for two more days, but by the afternoon of 14 September, the entire Citadel was in friendly hands and the South Vietnamese declared Quang Tri City recaptured the following day.

Throughout the remainder of September, action was light in MR 1 as South Vietnamese units rested, refitted, and eliminated small pockets of enemy resistance in Quang Tri City. Then, on 30 September 1972, the Airborne and Marine Divisions attacked to the west and southwest of the city to seize fire support bases lost the previous April. Again the South Vietnamese met determined enemy resistance and heavy fighting ensued. By the middle of October, monsoon rains began to restrict tactical air support for the ground forces and progress slowed. Finally, on 31 October, the Airborne Division reoccupied Fire Support Base BARBARA, one of the main objectives of this action; the nearby Fire Support Base ANNE remained under enemy control.

Meantime, the South Vietnamese had resumed the offensive in MR 2. There, on 19 July, they began a three-phased operation, BAC BINH VUONG 22/8, to retake territory lost to the enemy in northern Binh Dinh Province. Following B–52, tactical air, and naval gunfire bombardment, elements of the 40th Regiment air assaulted into enemy held areas while the rest of the regiment and the 19th Cavalry attacked

through Bong Son Pass. The operation went according to plan; by 24 July, the South Vietnamese had returned Hoai Nhon and Hoai An to their control and Route 1 was open. The RVNAF cleared the recaptured areas during the last days of July and carried out additional, though smaller, operations to regain lost territory in August. Thereafter, military activity in MR 2 was at a low level.

With the failure of the enemy siege of An Loc, the major battles were over in MR 3. The enemy continued frequent attacks-by-fire and occasional ground probes as the South Vietnamese expanded their control to the east of the city, but the last six months of 1972 was a stable period in MR 3.

LINEBACKER and POCKET MONEY Continue

The United States furnished helicopter, fixed wing gunship, B–52, and tactical close air support, and both US Army and US Marine Corps helicopters airlifted RVNAF units into combat. Consequently, US air activity levels continued to increase in South Vietnam during the summer months, with B–52 sorties reaching a peak of 3,407 for August. The largest concentration of these sorties was flown in MR 1 to assist the assault on Quang Tri.[82]

The POCKET MONEY mining was maintained and the LINEBACKER campaign grew more intense each successive month in the period June through August. Air attacks struck petroleum, transportation, and logistics targets throughout North Vietnam except in restricted control areas around Hanoi and Haiphong and in the buffer zone along the Chinese border. During the summer of 1972, field commanders, supported by the Chairman, repeatedly sought permission to hit various exempted targets.[83]

In the latter part of July, Admiral Moorer asked the Secretary to approve a total of 20 additional targets in the Haiphong control area and to grant standing authority to strike petroleum storage and transportation facilities in a limited portion of that same area. Laird approved some of the targets, withheld others, and did not give the standing authority Moorer desired.[84] On 9 August, the Chairman sought permission for a B–52 strike of a railroad yard and repair area in Hanoi; on 16 August for attack of the Gia Lam airfield in Hanoi; on 30 August for 16 targets in the Hanoi control area and another 13 in Haiphong; and on 5 September rail and road facilities in Hanoi. The Secretary did not approve any of these requests. On 27 September, Admiral Moorer did receive authority to strike a Hanoi radio receiver used for communications and intelligence purposes.[85]

The field commanders had found the restrictions on air operations in the area of North Vietnam near the Chinese border a particular hindrance to the effectiveness of the interdiction campaign and had sought expanded authorities in this Chinese buffer zone from the beginning of LINEBACKER. On 10 July, Admiral Moorer explained to Secretary Laird that the current restrictions on air strikes within the

buffer zone limited ability to interdict the complete North Vietnamese transportation system and requested approval for selected strikes along lines of communication up to the Chinese border as well as sanction for manned tactical reconnaissance and low altitude drone flights to within 10 miles of the Chinese border.[86]

Moorer's request came just as the People's Republic of China accused the United States of further violations of its territory, charging that US planes struck two Chinese fishing boats on 20 June and bombed their territory on 5 July. These allegations caused the President and Dr. Kissinger considerable concern. Admiral Moorer's Assistant, Vice Admiral John P. Weinel, cabled the Chairman, who had just left for Europe, that: "HAK [Henry A. Kissinger] is about to have a baby. . . . Things are serious and the word from the 'top' is that once more heads will roll." Secretary Laird called the Director of the Joint Staff "to read the riot act concerning border violations" and directed dispatch of a strong message to the field. The Joint Chiefs told CINCPAC on 11 July:

> The Chinese buffer zone is established to preclude an inadvertent overflight of the People's Republic of China. The recent increase in buffer zone and PRC intrusions or allegations thereof has aroused grave concern at highest level. Result is an imperative requirement for whatever measures are needed to:
>
> a. provide absolute assurance that PRC border violations will not occur, and
>
> b. establish a source of data on all US aircraft tracks in vicinity of buffer zone so that we can with full confidence respond to allegations of violations.

They directed CINCPAC and CINCSAC to take specific actions to preclude Chinese border incursions and to report all ordnance expenditures and fuel tank releases that might have impacted in the buffer zone or the People's Republic of China.[87]

At CINCPAC'S direction, CINCPACFLT and the Commander, 7th Air Force, investigated all LINEBACKER and POCKET MONEY activities in the appropriate time periods and found no positive evidence to substantiate the Chinese charges. In commenting on this matter, CINCPAC told Admiral Moorer:

> I believe you should be aware of likely consequences emanating from our application of more stringent controls to effect the required degree of assurance that border violations are precluded. . . . The best interdiction points on the NE rail line lie within the buffer zone.

Effective interdiction was difficult, and he recommended authority at an early date for strikes, under positive control, within the Chinese buffer zone.[88]

Needless to say, the Secretary did not approve Admiral Moorer's request for strikes or manned reconnaissance in the buffer zone. But the Chairman did not let the matter rest. On 19 July he pointed out the extent to which the North Vietnamese were using the buffer zone as a sanctuary for receipt and transfer of supplies destined for the south and, five days later, requested authority to strike three railroad bridges in the buffer zone.[89] On this occasion, the Secretary was willing to

attack targets in the buffer zone. Accordingly, the JCS directed CINCPAC to plan an operation against the three bridges. They then authorized the attack on 17 August as a one-time exception to the restrictions in the buffer zone; the authority lasted through the end of August. Poor weather conditions prevented successful strikes during August and the authority was extended throughout September and, subsequently, into October 1972.[90]

Meantime, in extending the temporary Southeast Asia operating authorities at the end of July, the Secretary had relaxed the restriction against action in the buffer zone to allow aircraft hitting nearby targets to penetrate the zone to within 20 nautical miles of the Chinese border. He granted this modification to permit US pilots greater tactical flexibility and more options to avoid enemy air defenses. Two weeks later, the authority was expanded to include support aircraft.[91] The Secretary did not approve an early September request to hit a key rail and road bridge in the buffer zone approximately eight miles from the Chinese border.[92]

Public opposition to the bombing of North Vietnam continued. The focus of the criticism shifted from the streets to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions and the selection of presidential nominees. The Democrats, meeting in Miami Beach, chose Senator George S. McGovern (D, SD), an avowed opponent of the war, and he pledged, if elected, to withdraw all forces from Vietnam within 90 days of his inauguration. The Democratic platform included a plank calling for "immediate and complete" withdrawal of US forces from Indochina and termination of all military assistance to the Thieu government. A little over a month later, the Republicans gathered at Miami Beach. While thousands of antiwar protesters demonstrated outside the convention hall, the Republicans renominated Richard M. Nixon by a vote of 1,347 to 1 and endorsed his peace efforts. Republican speakers denounced McGovern's position on Vietnam as sabotaging the President's negotiation efforts.[93]

Attempts to legislate an end to the war continued during the summer of 1972. On 24 July, the Senate adopted an amendment to a foreign military aid bill requiring the withdrawal of all US troops from Vietnam within four months in exchange for the release of prisoners of war, but it quickly reversed itself, however, rejecting the entire bill. Efforts to attach a similar amendment to the House version of the bill failed on 10 August. Meantime, on 3 August, the Senate had approved an end-the-war amendment calling for US withdrawal from Vietnam within four months. Added to a military procurement bill, the provision did not survive the conference to reconcile the Senate and House bills. Congressional opponents of the war did not, however, rest. Attempts were made in both the House and the Senate during September to attach end-the-war amendments to other bills, but these efforts did not succeed. In early October, Senator William Proxmire (D, WI), made a final challenge, offering an amendment to the Defense appropriations bill to prohibit use of any funds for bombing in Indochina. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 55 to 26.[94]

Despite public and Congressional opposition, the United States maintained the air campaign against North Vietnam; US force augmentations to support the campaign

were extended from month to month throughout 1972. Because these forces were retained in Southeast Asia longer than anticipated, adjustments became necessary during the summer. On 15 July, the Secretary of Defense approved the redeployment of 13 KC–135 aircraft from Thailand to the United States by 10 October 1972. Since these tankers supported US F–4 aircraft stationed at Takhli, the Secretary endorsed a JCS concept to substitute F–111s, which did not require aerial refueling, for the F–4s. He approved Admiral Moorer's request to deploy 48 F–111s to Takhli and 72 A–7s to Korat and to redeploy 72 F–4s and an appropriate number of KC–135s from Thailand back to the United States.[95]

In further adjustments, the Secretary approved Moorer's 14 August request for the immediate return of six F–105 aircraft and nine aircrews to the United States. Movement of these planes to Southeast Asia in early April had left only six in the United States, causing the Air Force training program serious problems. Subsequently, with the easing of airlift requirements in Southeast Asia, Mr. Laird granted a request by Admiral Moorer for the return of two C–130E squadrons from WESTPAC to CONUS.[96]

Throughout the summer of 1972, the POCKET MONEY mining campaign prevented almost all resupply of North Vietnam by sea. On 30 June, CINCPAC requested authority to seed new minefield segments with MK–36/40 destructors. The Joint Chiefs authorized the use of these munitions in and around the entrances to ports, river mouths, islands, and other areas in the internal and claimed territorial waters of North Vietnam on 30 July, provided no third country shipping was present. They specifically prohibited the implanting of mines or destructors in the vicinity of the Chinese anchorages at Hon La and Hon Nieu, even if the Chinese ships temporarily vacated those areas. At this time, the JCS also restricted POCKET MONEY somewhat, directing that each seeding and reseeding operation be approved by the Chairman.[97]

On 1 August, Admiral Moorer notified the Secretary that two minefield segments (2111A and 2111B) in Haiphong harbor would be 50 percent sterile by 20 August and asked for authority to reseed them. A similar request had been denied earlier, but the Secretary approved and the reseeding took place on 11 August.[98] Some days later, CINCPACFLT reported a "Woosung" class minesweeper in Haiphong harbor. He had no explanation for how this vessel arrived behind the minefield, but there was speculation that a route through shallow coastal waters had been found to circumvent the deeper mined channel. Admiral Moorer suggested consideration of further mining to close possible routes. Thereafter, three tender-type craft capable of minesweeping were identified in Haiphong harbor. The nationality of these three tenders as well as the minesweeper could not be determined, but they were not attempting to sweep the minefields. Therefore, CINCPAC proposed continued surveillance of these ships to identify their nationality; however, should any of the four attempt mine countermeasures operations, he wanted immediate authority to reseed the Haiphong channel.[99]

Moorer told the Secretary of the presence of the minesweeper and the tenders in Haiphong harbor on 7 September. Since the identity of the four ships still had not been determined, the Chairman did not raise the sensitive question of action to meet mine countermeasures by a third country. But to insure the effectiveness of the Haiphong channel minefield against this newly discovered minesweeping threat, he proposed the following actions: (1) should the minesweeper prove to be North Vietnamese, every effort would be made to attack and destroy it within existing authorities; (2) if the craft flew a third country flag, or if it could not be identified, destructors would be reseeded within existing authorities and immediate permission would be requested to reseed the channel with mines. At the same time, Admiral Moorer asked CINCPAC to report any enemy attempts or suspected attempts at minesweeping in the Haiphong channel. Since the vessels made no effort to sweep the Haiphong waters, no action was taken against them.[100]

During the summer and fall of 1972, there were further allegations of US attack on civilian targets in North Vietnam. In July, North Vietnam charged the United States with bombing dikes on 20 different occasions and forwarded reputed evidence of the attacks to the UN Secretary General. The United States disclaimed any intentional bombing of dams or dikes though a Department of State spokesman did concede that there might have been accidental or inadvertent damage as the result of strikes on nearby military targets. On 27 July, President Nixon strongly defended the bombing in North Vietnam. It was not US policy to bomb the dikes. If it had been, he said, "we could take them out, the significant part of them out, in a week." Nixon went on to contrast the US efforts to avoid civilian targets in the north with the deliberate North Vietnamese shelling of cities in South Vietnam resulting in 45,000 civilian casualties since the beginning of the offensive in April.[101]

A bombing incident that caused international repercussions was an attack on the Gia Lam railroad repair shops in Hanoi on 11 October when the French diplomatic mission was hit and heavily damaged. The JCS immediately prohibited further air strikes within a 10 nautical mile radius of Hanoi until further notice and ordered an investigation of the incident. In a detailed report to the Secretary of Defense some days later, Admiral Moorer accounted for all 19 aircraft that had participated in the operation. None, he said, had reported malfunctions that might have caused the damage. He noted that the strike aircraft were subjected to intense AAA fire and that at least eight SAMs were observed. In such a hostile environment, it was not uncommon for aircrews to have difficulty keeping track of their exact positions. Since bomb fragments found at the French mission site were reported to be of US manufacture, Moorer could only conclude that US forces were responsible due to accidental release of weapons, inadvertent jettison, or late release of momentarily hung ordnance.[102]

In October a serious problem in operational security for B–52 flights developed and all sorties in Route Packages 2 and 3, the upper portion of the North Vietnam panhandle, were cancelled on 9 October. Intelligence had confirmed that the enemy

had accurate knowledge of the B–52 targets as well as planned times over targets. The Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to undertake "an immediate and determined effort" to tighten the operational security of the B–52 strikes. They saw no reason to disclose B–52 targets and timing outside of US secure channels. "The fact that such information has reached enemy hands prior to the strikes," they said, "should be a matter of grave concern to all of us."[103] When Secretary Laird learned of the matter, he asked for an investigation of "our entire chain of planning and execution of our B–52 strikes." Admiral Moorer replied on 17 October that the problem was a complicated one with a number of agencies and activities involved in the planning and execution. Each element in the process had been identified, he said, and a thorough investigation was underway. Preliminary results had not disclosed an apparent source of operational leaks.[104]

By early October there were growing indications that secret US-North Vietnamese negotiations might soon produce a peace settlement in Vietnam, and in an effort to enhance the chances for success, the United States cut back air attacks against North Vietnam.[105] On 14 October, the Secretary of Defense directed the gradual reduction of attack sorties in North Vietnam to about 150 per day by 19 October. The bulk of the remaining sorties were to be used in the area just above the Demilitarized Zone to give maximum support to the fighting in South Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs issued the necessary orders to CINCPAC, and the following day, the reduction of the US air campaign against North Vietnam was accelerated. The JCS told CINCPAC to hit the 150 daily rate by 17 October rather than 19 October as previously instructed.[106]

On 22 October, the United States restricted air operations against North Vietnam even further. At the instruction of higher authority, the JCS directed CINCPAC to cease all air operations, leaflet and psychological warfare operations, and naval gunfire in North Vietnam above 20° north effective 0700 Vietnam time, 23 October. Even though the peace settlement fell through on 26 October, the United States did not resume air operations in North Vietnam at the pre-October levels, and on the following day, the Joint Chiefs restricted the use of MK–36 destructors in the POCKET MONEY mining. They directed CINCPAC to cease using MK–36 MODS 1 and 1A altogether and to set other MK–36 destructors for either 30 or 45 day self-destruct times.[107]

On 27 October, the Acting Chairman, General John D. Ryan, USAF, asked the Secretary to clarify the restriction on US air operations in North Vietnam imposed five days earlier. General Ryan wanted authority for immediate pursuit of hostile forces throughout North Vietnam to within 20 nautical miles of the Chinese border, for conduct of defensive reaction and use of antiradiation missiles (air and surface launched) as necessary above 20° north, and for laser illuminator/optical delivery aircraft overflight of North Vietnam up to a distance of three nautical miles. Further, unless directed otherwise, General Ryan interpreted the 22 October restrictions to allow psychological operations below 20° north, but to prohibit both

POCKET MONEY seedings or reseedings above 20° north and action to counter North Vietnamese mine countermeasures activity. The Secretary approved these requests and clarifications with some modification. No air-to-surface or surface-to-surface ordnance was to impact above 20° north and "hot pursuit" was authorized only up to 20° 30' north.[108]

Shortly before the curtailment of the air operations against North Vietnam, Admiral Moorer gave the Secretary an assessment of both the LINEBACKER and POCKET MONEY campaigns. The mining, the Chairman told the Secretary on 12 October, had forced a fundamental revision in the basic method by which North Vietnam received supplies. Except for minor offshore activities near Hon La and Hon Nieu Islands, the North Vietnamese coast had been closed to foreign shipping which had forced North Vietnam to shift movement of supplies to rail and road networks—a method less efficient and more susceptible to air interdiction. The adjustment had lengthened enemy supply lines, causing delays as well as manpower and economic drains.

Despite the restrictions on attacks in the Chinese buffer zone and in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas, air interdiction had destroyed bridges on both the northeast and northwest railroads between Hanoi-Haiphong and the Chinese border that necessitated extensive shuttling from railcar to trucks and watercraft. With bridges out, the enemy used ferries and barges to cross rivers which had been countered by implanting destructors in inland waterways. Within the existing prohibitions, attacks had been conducted against the Hanoi-Haiphong area to destroy major distribution points and industrial complexes. While progress had been made, strike restrictions left significant targets. Below Hanoi and Haiphong, Moorer continued, air interdiction had placed maximum pressure on lines of communication before supplies moved into South Vietnam. Extensive daily tactical reconnaissance had identified supply points that were then attacked. In addition, major and minor bridges were destroyed and rail traffic had been greatly restricted below Hanoi.[109]

By October, the LINEBACKER campaign had inflicted heavy damage on North Vietnam, and together with POCKET MONEY, had caused serious logistical problems for the enemy. But the extent to which the damage and problems had influenced the enemy will and determination to continue the war in South Vietnam was a matter of some question. To date, the North Vietnamese had shown no inclination to end the fighting, and separate but concurring CIA and DIA reports to the NSC in September had concluded that North Vietnam could sustain the current level of fighting for the next two years, even with the heavy US bombing.[110]

In retrospect, the North Vietnamese viewed the 1972 offensive as a time of "enormous victories" during which "the nature of the war changed in many important ways." The enemy claimed to have enlarged his "liberated area" in South Vietnam. His main force troops held "secure footholds in the important strategic areas," and the "interspersion of areas under our control within areas controlled by the enemy" was "gradually changing the balance of forces in favor of our side."[111]

These claims notwithstanding, the enemy's strategic offensive had produced meager gains at best. By the time of the restriction of US air operations in October 1972, the South Vietnamese, with US assistance, had not only stopped the offensive but had pushed the enemy back nearly to positions existing before the campaign began. While the enemy still controlled areas of South Vietnam, it was claimed that only 400,000 people of the total population of 19 million remained under enemy control. Moreover, North Vietnamese casualties during the offensive were estimated at 100,000 killed or seriously wounded, and the CIA predicted that it would take 18 months for North Vietnam to resupply and refit its main forces.[112]

Whose Victory?

The spring offensive ended in a clear defeat for North Vietnam. There were those, then and later, who ascribed the outcome mainly to the courage and resilience of the South Vietnamese armed forces. Territory, they pointed out, can neither be held nor retaken from the air. Nonetheless, General Vogt convinced Admiral Moorer that American air power deserved the palm. On 6 June, Vogt gave the Chairman his blunt judgment that "Abrams . . . has been out here too long. The whole ground war is screwed up. If it was not for the air and carriers offshore, the whole ground war would have gone down the drain a long time ago. That is 100 percent truth."[113] A revealing series of exchanges took place in late October. Admiral Noel Gayler was the new CINCPAC, and General Fred Weyand had become COMUSMACV. Gayler told Weyand that he would be allocated, within South Vietnam, 275 tactical air sorties daily; a surge capability would be provided when required. Weyand strongly protested against the sortie ceiling to Gayler, Moorer, and then to Dr. Kissinger, who visited Saigon to explain the nearly consummated peace accords. A long telephone conversation between Moorer and Weyand left the Chairman feeling that COMUSMACV's position was "confusing and contradictory." Weyand very much resented the imposition of a ceiling that, to him, infringed upon the field commander's prerogative.

On 22 October, Weyand advised CINCPAC that he was planning 366 sorties daily for the next 12 days. As Moorer understood it, Weyand believed that South Vietnamese regular and territorial forces would not move into the jungle and engage the enemy unless he could "guarantee" air support for them in advance. Moorer telephoned Vogt on 24 October, reminding him that Seventh Air Force had flown more than 200 daily sorties only three times since August: "I think you got more sorties than you can use. What happens is, these guys spot a sniper up in a tree and they immediately dig a hole and call for four F–4s. . . . " Vogt replied:

> Unfortunately, this is the way Westmoreland taught them to fight and you can't change that overnight and I'm absolutely certain that if you want the villages

> and hamlets cleared [before a cease-fire in place takes effect] it's going to take a lot of air to do it. We just brought additional FACs in country and we've got the district chiefs and provincial chiefs busy requesting air . . . and are absorbing all the sorties Fred says he needs.[114]

Cutbacks in LINEBACKER freed air assets for the South. Early in November, COMUSMACV reported that the communists had been conducting widespread small-unit operations to maximize their presence in the countryside. The ARVN had dispersed for counteraction; MACV had redistributed FACs and increased air allocations within each Military Region. In mid-December, Weyand told Moorer that the South Vietnamese commander in MR 1 believed he could not hold Quang Tri or even Hue without US air power; in MR 2, likewise, Kontum, all the Ranger camps along the border, and probably Pleiku would be lost.[115] Evidently, General Weyand as well as General Vogt had come to see air power as indispensable in clearing and holding ground.

9

Force Withdrawals 1972

The January Announcement

As 1972 began, the United States pressed ahead with redeployment of troops from Vietnam, despite evidence of enemy preparations for a major attack. The approaching Presidential campaign, which would increase the already strong political pressure for disengagement in Vietnam, made it highly unlikely that President Nixon would attempt to slow the US withdrawal. Nixon had approved the removal of 45,000 additional US troops, Increment 10 (KEYSTONE MALLARD), during the period December 1971 through January 1972; this withdrawal was completed on schedule. On 1 February 1972, actual US strength stood at 136,505, well below the level of 139,000 authorized by the President.[1]

For the field commanders, the accelerating US redeployments during 1971 posed severe problems; at the end of the year the Joint Chiefs raised the issue with the Secretary of Defense. Both CINCPAC and COMUSMACV expressed concern over the difficulties with personnel turbulence, logistics, base closures, and force structure encountered in the ten withdrawal increments approved to date. To avoid similar problems, they had requested adequate warning before the next announcement. The impact of the problems became more serious, the JCS said, as US force levels declined, and affected the security, operational readiness, morale, and welfare of remaining forces in South Vietnam. For the next announcement, COMUSMACV and CINCPAC favored one increment covering the period 1 February to 1 July 1972 and lowering authorized strength from 139,000 to 60,000. Should an increment of shorter duration be selected, the commanders recommended removal of 55,000 US troops in the months February through April 1972, to a level of 84,000. The JCS supported these recommendations and asked Mr. Laird to bring

the impact of "short redeployment announcement and execution cycles" to the President's attention.[2]

Laird agreed that proper management of US forces was essential as the redeployment continued but gave no indication of any pause in the US withdrawals. Rather, he asked the Chiefs on 6 January 1972 for illustrative force structures assuming a 60,000-man US force in Vietnam on 15 May 1972, 30,000 by 1 July 1972, and 15,000 by 1 November 1972 together with assessments of the capabilities of each structure.[3]

Meantime, a Washington inter-agency task force chaired by a representative of the JCS was preparing an updated Vietnam assessment for the NSC Vietnam Special Studies Group that included an analysis of enemy and friendly strengths in South Vietnam.[4] In the completed appraisal, which the Chairman gave to the Secretary on 10 January 1972, the task force estimated enemy forces at 217 combat battalions at the beginning of December 1971 as compared with 233 friendly battalions (US, RVNAF, and ROK). On the basis of the projected enemy threat, and assuming a US force level of 60,000 by 30 June 1972 (a planning figure established by the Secretary of Defense), the group concluded that friendly troops remaining in South Vietnam by mid-1972 could meet the anticipated threat without major redistribution of forces by using the RVNAF reserve. After 1 July 1972, and with a US strength of 60,000 men, the threat could be met but only with increased risk. Task force members cautioned that this evaluation did not carry over into 1973 when US strength would be lower and when the enemy would have another dry season to infiltrate men and supplies.[5]

The President did not wait for Senior Review Group consideration of the updated assessment to make his decision on further redeployments. On 13 January 1972, he announced that 70,000 additional US troops would leave South Vietnam during the next three months, reaching a troop ceiling of 69,000 by 1 May 1972. Nixon said that this withdrawal had the approval of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Government of Vietnam. (It was, however, 15,000 more men than the redeployment proposed by the Joint Chiefs and the field commanders for the same period.) The President also promised another announcement on further withdrawals before 1 May 1972.[6]

Following the President's announcement, Secretary Laird held a press conference at the White House. For a troop ceiling of 69,000, he explained, there would be about 48,000 Army, 4,500 Navy, and 16,000 Air Force troops remaining in South Vietnam on 1 May 1972; withdrawal rates would average about 23,000 men a month. The same day, 13 January, Mr. Laird directed the Chiefs to redeploy US troops from South Vietnam in accordance with the President's announcement. A few days later, on 19 January, Laird told Admiral Moorer that he was personally concerned for the safety of the remaining US forces. "If ever there is a time," he said, "during which we must insure that each soldier and his commander are fully alert for unexpected

weaknesses in our defense, both day and night, it is during these remaining months of the Vietnamization program."[7]

Planning a Transitional Force

On 19 January, the JCS furnished the Secretary COMUSMACV's outline plan to attain the level of 69,000 US troops by May 1972 together with the field commander's assessments of the lower transitional forces of 60,000, 30,000, and 15,000 to be reached by 15 May, 1 July, and 1 November 1972. The plan for the 69,000 force contained 10,000 rollup spaces and retained "a modest force" for security of US personnel, an area the Joint Chiefs considered of "paramount importance." To carry out the plan by 1 May, the Chiefs said, would present a number of problems. They believed that there would be a degradation in intelligence collection and in helicopter support for the RVNAF. Moreover, there would be no room for significant tradeoffs of manpower spaces without jeopardizing the security of US forces. Other impacts of reducing to the 69,000 level included: port and processing backlogs that might be caused by the equipment accompanying the redeploying troops; the Military Equipment Delivery Team in Cambodia could not be supported by COMUSMACV after 1 March 1972 and the capability to train Cambodian forces might be reduced; Cam Ranh Bay Air Base might have to be closed earlier than scheduled; the Joint Personnel Recovery Task Force would have to be relocated in Thailand; and reduction of US helicopter and logistic support to the ROK troops in South Vietnam would require renegotiation of the US-ROK military working arrangement.

Considering the 60,000, 30,000 and 15,000 transitional force levels, the JCS found all three lacking in adequate security for remaining US personnel. Once the problems associated with the 69,000-man force had been resolved, commanders would examine the lower transition levels. In the meantime, the Joint Chiefs believed the following actions should be approved immediately: (1) give security of US forces primary consideration while recognizing that increasing reliance must be placed on the RVNAF as US withdrawals continued; (2) confirm authority to increase US manpower ceilings in Thailand to accommodate relocations from South Vietnam; (3) reduce the requirement for helicopter support for the RVNAF commensurate with capability of remaining US forces; (4) grant authority to renegotiate the military working agreement under which the United States provided helicopter and logistic support to the ROK forces in Vietnam.[8]

Secretary Laird appreciated the magnitude of the problems raised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and he realized that in the coming months COMUSMACV must not only insure the success of Vietnamization but also redeploy one half of his force, provide timely intelligence, retrograde large quantities of materiel, and accelerate the transfer of bases and facilities. Laird had full confidence that

the US commanders would continue their "admirable performance in these tasks despite the difficult problems" involved.

The Secretary believed that the security of US forces in South Vietnam could be accomplished by increased alertness, consolidation of activities at more secure installations, and close coordination with the RVNAF. He relaxed the requirement for helicopter support for the RVNAF and directed COMUSMACV to plan for a "transitional remaining force" of 30,000 by 1 July 1972 and "a more stable force" of 15,000 by 1 November 1972. These figures, he stressed, were for planning purposes; other contingencies should be considered. He also requested JCS' views on the issues of support for ROK forces, requirements for a US rollup force, the minimum US intelligence capability required in Vietnam after 1 July 1972, and US manpower space requirements in Thailand. He also wanted information on measures being taken to support the Cambodian armed forces.[9]

On 6 March, the Joint Chiefs gave Secretary Laird their views on some of the issues he had identified. Support of the ROK forces would begin to decrease when the US force level fell below 30,000, and none could be provided when US strength reached 15,000 men. They recommended early decisions on the issue of retaining ROK forces in South Vietnam, the size of these forces, and the level and duration of US support.[10] In addition, they requested authority for COMUSMACV to negotiate a new logistic support arrangement with the ROK forces in Vietnam and the GVN.

With respect to the rollup force, evaluation of COMUSMACV's troop reduction plan showed that a force of 9,117, rather than the 10,000 originally planned would suffice. This level, the JCS believed, would allow COMUSMACV to remove equipment along with the withdrawing units. Adjustments were required in the US manpower ceiling in Thailand to compensate for the force reductions in South Vietnam and to carry on programmed military activity, including the 4,800 monthly tactical air sortie level. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs recommended that the manpower ceiling in Thailand be raised to 33,250 spaces, an increase of 1,050.[11] Finally they considered that the Cambodian logistics and training support were progressing at a satisfactory rate and should not be impaired by the current redeployments.[12]

Nearly two weeks later, on 18 March 1972, the Chiefs furnished the Secretary their views on the US intelligence capability required in South Vietnam after 1 July 1972. The redeployment of US forces to the projected strength of 30,000 by 1 July 1972 would bring no equivalent reduction in intelligence requirements. They set out the minimum intelligence requirements for the period after 1 July 1972 and listed the intelligence capabilities that would be lost as US forces shrank. The JCS concluded that a minimum of 5,035 intelligence spaces would be needed in the 30,000 structure and 4,193 in the 15,000 level.[13]

Thus far in the consideration of transitional US force structures in Vietnam, the JCS had planned on retaining a small residual US force, but now the possibility of total US withdrawal was raised. On 25 January 1972, President Nixon had presented a new peace plan including an offer for complete US military withdrawal within

six months of an agreement.[14] Thereafter, on 8 March, Mr. Laird asked the Chiefs to examine ways to insure the self-sufficiency of the RVNAF in the event of a total removal of US troops from Vietnam. He wanted four options studied: (1) conversion of the US advisory effort to civilian contract supported by US resources; (2) direct US budgetary assistance to the GVN for contractual support in place of US advisers; (3) contracting for in-country assistance and agreements with other Asian countries for either in-country or offshore "backup rebuild facility with the United States providing financial support for both of these contractual ventures"; (4) the same as 3 except that the United States would supply support only for the in-country contract effort.[15]

The JCS replied to the Secretary on 3 April. While the attainment of total US withdrawal was a valid goal, they believed this objective should continue to be tied to the progress of Vietnamization. It was premature, they said, to assume that Vietnamization would be a complete success. The RVNAF would need "quality US advisory assistance and support" for some time to come in the areas of logistics, intelligence, communications, and training. The Joint Chiefs did not think any of the options suggested by the Secretary was likely to succeed if implemented in the near term. Recognizing, however, the need for contingency planning for total US military withdrawal from South Vietnam on short notice, they preferred the Secretary's first option for conversion of the US advisory effort to civilian contract. This approach, they thought, could be implemented more rapidly than the other three but still would require adequate lead-time for implementation. In addition, the first option provided the "highest degree of US control" over the contracts for which the United States would provide the funding. The Chiefs promised the Secretary a conceptual plan based on this option and asked that no further consideration be given the remaining options.[16]

Redeployment Increment 11, February–April 1972

While the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary were considering transitional force levels for the latter part of the year, redeployment of the 70,000 US forces during the period February through April 1972 proceeded. The field commanders prepared the necessary troop list for Increment 11 (KEYSTONE OWL) and the Chiefs approved and submitted it to Mr. Laird on 17 February 1972. It included 55,235 Army spaces, comprising one airborne division headquarters, a brigade headquarters, five infantry battalions, two armored cavalry squadrons, four air cavalry squadrons and three separate air cavalry troops, three field artillery battalions, and associated support elements. Navy spaces totaled 3,994, including two light helicopter attack squadrons, naval support personnel at Binh Thuy and Cam Ranh Bay, and reductions in the naval support activity at Saigon and in the Naval Advisory Group. The Air Force would withdraw three special operations squadrons, two C–7 tactical airlift squadrons, a C–130 tactical airlift

detachment, an air rescue and recovery squadron, and personnel from two tactical air support squadrons for a total of 10,590 spaces, while the Marine Corps would remove 181 advisory headquarters and support spaces. KEYSTONE OWL moved ahead using the approved list.[17]

The enemy offensive at the end of March caused considerable disruption in the Increment 11 redeployment. The United States continued withdrawals and reached the 69,000-man level by the end of April, but some spaces scheduled for redeployment in April 1972 were retained and approximately 1,600 additional or "augmentation" forces were deployed to South Vietnam. These forces consisted primarily of combat and combat support elements; the majority were Air Force. The Air Force retained troops associated with the 620th Tactical Control Squadron, 8th Special Operations Squadron, 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron, 374th Tactical Airlift Wing, and 7th Air Force Headquarters and redeployed a tactical fighter squadron from South Korea and a KC–119K gunship unit from Thailand. In addition, the C–130 Rotational Squadron at Tan Son Nhut was reinforced and an F–4 servicing site was established in MR 3. The Army retained two air cavalry troops, an aerial weapons company, a helicopter assault company, an aviation detachment, and various aviation maintenance spaces and redeployed an aerial delivery detachment from Okinawa to assist the RVNAF. The Marine Corps redeployed three fighter squadrons, two from Japan and one from Hawaii, and augmented other units. In all, 4,110 spaces were involved, including 2,525 retention and 1,585 augmentation spaces broken down as follows:

	Augmentation	*Retention*	*Total*
Army	77	1,411	1,839
Navy	6	0	6
Airforce	428	1,411	1,839
Marine Corps	1,074	0	1,074
Total	1,585	2,525	4,110

The Services and COMUSMACV made reductions in the Vietnam force to compensate for the forces retained and deployed to insure a US force level of 69,000 by the end of April. Cuts were made principally in logistics and rollup spaces and adjusted ceilings for Increment 11 redeployment were:

Service	*Old Ceiling*	*New Ceiling*	*Difference*
Army	49,278	46,417	- 2,861
Navy	3,067	3,029	- 38
Air Force	16,308	18,133	+ 1,825
Marine Corps	347	1,421	+ 1,074
Total	69,000	69,000	

Despite the enemy offensive and the associated retentions and augmentations, the United States did reduce its strength by 70,000 men in the months February through April 1972, reaching a level of 68,100 men on 30 April. Included in this increment as ultimately accomplished were 11 Army maneuver battalions, 3 field artillery battalions, and 4 Air Force tactical airlift squadrons. The US Navy withdrew the last of its combat troops and the remaining 5,000 land-based US Navy personnel were either advisers or headquarters staff.[18]

The April Announcement

In the January withdrawal announcement, President Nixon promised a decision on further redeployments before the beginning of May and planning proceeded for the succeeding redeployment increment. Anticipating a Presidential announcement, General Abrams set his staff to work on the continuing redeployment of US forces from South Vietnam to "the eventual attainment" of a US assistance group. He forwarded an advance summary of the resulting OPLAN J203 to CINCPAC and Admiral Moorer on 15 March 1972. Using the 69,000 US force level for 1 May 1972 as a point of departure, MACV prepared notional packages for a 30,000 force on 1 July 1972 and a 15,000 one for 1 November 1972. Since Abrams found these figures arbitrary, precluding retention of various desirable capabilities, he had developed alternative packages of 37,000 and 23,000 spaces to be achieved by the same dates. COMUSMACV considered a 15,000 US troop level the minimum appropriate for the US assistance group; further, he thought that such a group should not be established before 1 July 1973 to allow a smooth transition from the 1 May 1972 force level.

General Abrams considered it essential to keep command and control of air forces in South Vietnam so long as the United States participated in the air war. After careful study, he believed a US force of 23,000 the lowest possible level to assure command and control of the air forces as well as minimum support for the ROK forces and essential assistance to South Vietnam. To attain a 23,000 level by 1 November would require withdrawal of 46,000 troops in the period May through October 1972, and Abrams asked for authority to determine the pace of the redeployments and the composition of the remaining force within that overall figure. Should "overriding considerations at the national level" dictate a redeployment package to be completed by 1 July, the field commander preferred a 37,000-man structure.[19] CINCPAC found MACV's planning "excellent" and recommended its adoption to the Chiefs as "the best course to follow after 1 May 1972." The JCS agreed and passed the field commanders' recommendations to the Secretary on 24 March.[20]

On 1 April 1972, the Secretary of Defense directed review of the entire Vietnamization effort, including a report on the US force posture in Southeast Asia. On 5 April 1972, the Joint Chiefs of Staff responded on the specific matter of the US force structure. At that time, they affirmed their recommendations of a week and

a half earlier for a US troop level of 23,000 spaces on 1 November 1972 or one of 37,000 spaces on 1 July 1972 if a definite ceiling was required by the earlier date.[21]

Meantime, North Vietnam had launched its offensive, and on 15 April, the Secretary asked for General Abrams' latest views on future US redeployments. Admiral Moorer relayed these views as well as those of CINCPAC to Mr. Laird on 19 April. Abrams expected the current level of enemy activity to continue for several months and both he and CINCPAC recommended deferral of any decision on redeployments beyond the 1 May level of 69,000 until 1 July or later. The two commanders believed their earlier recommendation for a 37,000-man force for 1 July, if a ceiling was required for that date, was now "unrealistic" and urged retaining the maximum number of US troops in South Vietnam until 1 July 1972.

At this time, Moorer pointed out that recent force augmentations and retentions to meet the enemy invasion had necessitated substituting over 4,000 combat and combat support spaces in the existing US structure in place of essential logistics and rollup spaces. Consequently, the force structure of 69,000 on 1 May would be unbalanced and he was uncertain how long the augmentation forces could be sustained within the 69,000 level.[22]

Again President Nixon disregarded the advice of his military advisers on the issue of redeployments. In a televised address on the evening of 26 April, he reported to the nation that the South Vietnamese were "fighting courageously" and "inflicting very heavy casualties on the invading force." Moreover, General Abrams had predicted that the South Vietnamese, with continued US air and sea support, would stop the North Vietnamese offensive. On the basis of this assessment, and in consultation with President Thieu, Ambassador Bunker, and "my senior advisers in Washington," President Nixon had decided Vietnamization was progressing well enough to continue the withdrawal of US forces. In the next two months, he announced, 20,000 more US troops would depart South Vietnam, lowering the US military ceiling to 49,000 on 1 July 1972. The President then announced a new negotiating effort to end the war and renewed US air and naval attacks on North Vietnam.[23]

Redeployment Increment 12, May–June 1972

The Secretary of Defense directed the withdrawal of 20,000 US troops from South Vietnam during the period May through June 1972, and this redeployment, Increment 12 (KEYSTONE PHEASANT), proceeded. The field commanders readied the necessary plans and the Joint Chiefs submitted an approved troop list to the Secretary of Defense on 19 May 1972. The 20,000 spaces comprised: 12,084 US Army forces, including one infantry brigade less one battalion, one aerial weapons company, and two air cavalry troops; 537 US Navy advisers and support personnel; 6,297 Air Force troops consisting of four tactical fighter squadrons, a reconnaissance technical squadron, reductions in a tactical airlift squadron, a tactical electronics warfare

squadron, and a tactical air support squadron; and 1,082 US Marine Corps augmentation forces. In order to meet the 49,000 ceiling, COMUSMACV had to move tactical air forces still required in ongoing operations. Consequently, all but one of the redeploying tactical squadrons moved to Nam Phong and Takhli Air Bases in Thailand.[24]

In June COMUSMACV reviewed and modified the 49,000 US force structure to retain certain assets that contributed most directly to destroying the enemy, assisting the RVNAF, and accommodating the stepped up US materiel assistance to South Vietnam (Project ENHANCE).[25] As a result, General Abrams retained 3,004 spaces previously identified for withdrawal, trading a number of other spaces, principally security forces. The final US force levels of Increment 12 were as follows:

Army	9,616
Navy	548
Air Force	7,710
Marine Corps	2,126
Total	20,000

The redeployment moved forward and US strength in South Vietnam on 30 June 1970 stood at 48,000.[26]

Command Reorganization and Consolidation

By the spring of 1972, the continuing drawdown of US forces called for adjustment in the US command organization in South Vietnam. The COMUSMACV plan, prepared in February and March 1972, for the transition to a US military group in Vietnam included various organizational changes and consolidations in the MACV structure.[27] Chief among these were retention of command and control of the air war in South Vietnam; the merger of the MACV and 7th Air Force Headquarters with the Commander, 7th Air Force, becoming Deputy COMUSMACV; and the establishment of an Army advisory group using the assets of the MACV Training Directorate.[28]

Admiral McCain supported the COMUSMACV plan, and the Joint Chiefs presented it to the Secretary on 4 April. The plan would reduce manpower requirements for headquarters elements, continue COMUSMACV's capability to accomplish assigned missions, and provide for the orderly transition from a combat command to an assistance advisory group. The changes would not alter COMUSMACV's status as a subordinate unified commander under the operational command of CINCPAC.[29]

Secretary Laird asked several questions about the proposed organizational revisions. What changes were envisioned in the MACV mission? What would be the general and flag officer structure in the revised organization? And what about the possible need for single management of all aspects (civilian and military) of pacification and rural development? The Joint Chiefs responded on 22 April that no

revision in the current COMUSMACV mission would be required until US strength in Vietnam fell below 23,000 men. The general and flag officer requirements, they said, must await later determination in light of the specific mission given the final advisory group and of the changing military situation. Further, they assured Mr. Laird that current planning called for a single management MACV/CORDS-type organization as long as needed.

Early in May, just after the fall of Quang Tri, the White House proposed a drastic solution: create a Supreme Command for Southeast Asia, independent of CINCPAC. General Bruce Palmer, Jr., Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, would be Supreme Commander. President Nixon's dissatisfaction with General Abrams was the major reason for this proposal. Admiral Moorer saw no merit in such a solution. Since MACV's logistical support came from PACOM, B–52s flew from Guam and tankers from Okinawa, "it would be very difficult to draw a circle around Southeast Asia and give one man full control." The Joint Chiefs agreed that such a change would require a large expansion of staff machinery in Southeast Asia and would mean that command of forces required for the war would be split between CINCPAC and the new command. They recommended proceeding with the scheduled reorganization and phase-down of MACV. Nothing more came of the proposal.[30]

Mr. Laird discussed the MACV reorganization with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 15 May 1972. He did not oppose the merger of the MACV and 7th Air Force Headquarters but suggested assigning the ARVN advisory mission to the US Army, Vietnam (USARV), with the transfer of advisers from MACV to USARV in lieu of creating an Army advisory group. General Abrams objected to this proposal, believing that the advisory function was best kept separate from the mission of USARV, which was to provide support for the remaining US forces. The Joint Chiefs supported Abrams and the Secretary acceded to their wishes. But he delayed approving the organizational changes for Vietnam until 31 August 1972, when he approved designating the Commander, 7th Air Force as Deputy COMUSMACV, establishment of an Army Advisory Group using the resources of the Training Directorate of MACV, and maintenance of CORDS activities at the current level.[31]

Meantime, COMUSMACV had proceeded with the implementation of the changes in accord with its plan. In May 1972, the MACV Training Directorate was reorganized into the Army Advisory Group (AAG) with a strength of 792 military personnel and one civilian. Over a month later, on 29 June 1972, General Abrams left South Vietnam to return to Washington to be Chief of Staff of the Army. At that time, General Fred C. Weyand, USA, Deputy COMUSMACV, became the acting commander in Vietnam; he was not formally designated COMUSMACV until 12 October. Simultaneous with General Weyand's assumption of command on 29 June, General John W. Vogt, USAF, Commander of the 7th Air Force and Deputy COMUSMACV for Air, also became Deputy COMUSMACV with the three positions now consolidated into one. At that time, the headquarters of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and the 7th Air Force were merged.[32]

As the amalgamation of 7th Air Force's operations center into MACV headquarters neared completion, General Abrams suggested to Admiral McCain that the two route packages in North Vietnam covering the railroads from China be transferred to MACV. This would mean that mission tasking from CINCPAC for those route packages would come to 7th Air Force through Abrams' headquarters rather than through Pacific Air Forces. However, in view of General Abrams' frequent objections to strikes against North Vietnam, the President did not want Abrams to wield such control. Admiral Moorer agreed with the President and assured General Vogt that he would block any such change. The headquarters consolidation took place as scheduled, but air command arrangements for the northern route packages remained as they were. In the new organization, General Vogt was both Deputy COMUSMACV and Commander, 7th Air Force, and an Air Force general took charge of the combined MACV/7th Air Force Directorate of Operations.[33]

Further Redeployments, July–August 1972

The Joint Chiefs in April had recommended one redeployment announcement for the period 1 May through 1 November 1972 with the field commanders setting the pace of the withdrawals within the overall ceiling figure. The President, however, announced a 20,000 man withdrawal during May and June. The question of what would be the size and timing of future US redeployments remained.

On 16 June 1972, the Secretary of Defense asked for General Abrams' views on future redeployments, and the JCS gave both COMUSMACV and CINCPAC comments to Mr. Laird on 21 June 1972. The two commanders thought any reduction below the currently authorized 49,000 ceiling would result in "marginal capabilities" in one or more functional areas. Moreover, additional withdrawals would degrade the security of US forces and impair their ability to support the South Vietnamese. If it was imperative to continue redeployments, COMUSMACV believed it possible to redeploy another 10,000 US forces by 1 September. CINCPAC, on the other hand, favored a moratorium on withdrawals during July to allow an assessment of further redeployments in succeeding months. After presenting these positions, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Secretary that any substantial degradation of the US structure in South Vietnam at that "critical time" risked failure of US efforts in Southeast Asia. But, should "overriding considerations at the national level" require continuing US withdrawals, then the Joint Chiefs recommended the 10,000 figure proposed by COMUSMACV, reaching a ceiling of 39,000 by 1 September 1972.[34]

In this instance, the President heeded the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. On 28 June 1972, White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler announced the President's decision to continue US withdrawals from South Vietnam. After consulting with the Government of Vietnam and reviewing the military situation, the President had ordered a reduction of the US troop level to 39,000 by 1 September. This decision,

Mr. Ziegler explained, was based on the assessment that such redeployments could take place without jeopardizing Vietnamization or the safety of US forces remaining in South Vietnam. He went on to say that, effective immediately, draftees would no longer be assigned to duty in Vietnam unless they volunteered for service there.[35]

As in the previous redeployments, the Secretary of Defense directed the Joint Chiefs to carry out this redeployment and they approved the necessary troop list for Increment 13 (KEYSTONE WREN) reducing US strength to 39,000 by 1 September 1972. United States Navy spaces amounted to 55, Air Force to 1,354, and Marine Corps to 7, all of whom were advisers or support personnel. The Army would withdraw 8,584 spaces including one infantry battalion, one airmobile battalion, two aerial weapons companies, one aerial rocket artillery battalion, one support and three assault helicopter companies, and logistic support personnel. These withdrawals proceeded and the Army portion was completed on 23 August, marking the departure of the last major US ground combat units from South Vietnam. Increment 13 was completed on schedule on 31 August 1972, leaving US strength at 36,800.[36]

In planning Increment 13, COMUSMACV had notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he could no longer afford to set aside medical facilities to treat civilian war casualties. He proposed providing treatment for civilians only on a case-by-case basis where South Vietnamese medical facilities were insufficient; the JCS endorsed this proposal. Laird replied on 26 August; for reasons of domestic and international impact, he did not want to make a formal announcement of the end of US support of the "Civilian War Casualty Program." But, because of the reduced capabilities of the US forces, he authorized COMUSMACV to proceed as recommended by the Joint Chiefs.[37]

The Final Redeployment Increment

Throughout the spring and summer of 1972, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the field commanders repeatedly cautioned the Secretary of Defense against continuing US troop withdrawals, but facing reelection in November, President Nixon was determined to proceed with further reductions pending a cease-fire agreement. Following the pattern of previous increments, Secretary Laird on 15 August 1972 requested views on redeployments beyond 1 September from Admiral Moorer and General Weyand.[38] In response, the JCS recalled the COMUSMACV plan of the previous March providing for a 15,000-man force structure in South Vietnam by 1 November 1972. This plan and figure were no longer feasible, they said, because of the North Vietnamese invasion. General Weyand believed US air and naval power "decisive and vital" to the current counteroffensive, the Chiefs continued, and he would be "extremely hard pressed" to maintain this support with any further reduction in troop levels. The new commander viewed the removal of the remaining US ground combat units in the increment then in process a "risk," believing that the

impact of the reduction to a level of 39,000 by 1 September had not yet been properly assessed. Reluctantly, the field commander said a further 10,000-man withdrawal could be made by 1 November if required "at the highest level."

Both CINCPAC and the Joint Chiefs agreed with General Weyand, with the JCS recommending a US strength of "about 30,000" by 31 December 1972. Further, they urged that the field commander be free to determine the exact composition and timing of the approximate 9,000 spaces in this recommended redeployment.[39]

As the Increment 13 redeployment proceeded in July and August 1972, concern was voiced in the Washington Special Actions Group over military plans to relocate units from South Vietnam to Thailand. Consequently, the Secretary of Defense instructed Admiral Moorer that:

> Actual redeployment of personnel from Vietnam to Thailand as a result of the drawdown in Vietnam will be kept to a minimum, and spaces for the personnel should be identified within the basic 32,200 Thailand ceiling.

On 15 August, the Joint Chiefs assured Mr. Laird that they were limiting troop movement to Thailand to those essential to Southeast Asian operations. They would reduce the entry of new units by transferring missions wherever possible to forces already stationed in Thailand and obtain advance clearance from the Royal Thai Government for troops moved from South Vietnam to Thailand.[40]

On 29 August 1972, White House Press Secretary Ziegler read a statement in San Clemente, California, announcing the redeployment of an additional 12,000 US troops from South Vietnam by 30 November. This withdrawal, he said, would reduce the US ceiling in Vietnam to 27,000 men. At a press conference later in the day, President Nixon explained that the 27,000 figure did not represent a force "that is going to remain in South Vietnam indefinitely." Rather, once the US Presidential election was over and before the first of December, he planned a further assessment, though he did not pledge a further withdrawal at that time.[41]

Following established procedures, the Secretary of Defense authorized the withdrawal in accordance with the President's announcement and the Joint Chiefs approved the necessary troop list. Included in the 12,000 spaces of Increment 14 (KEYSTONE PELICAN) were: 7,282 Army security, adviser, and support personnel and 603 Navy advisers and support forces. The Air Force planned the removal of 3,208 troops, including three special operations squadrons, a tactical electronics warfare squadron, and various support personnel, and the 907 Marine Corps spaces consisted of two attack squadrons (A–4) and associated support. Later, in November 1972, COMUSMACV decided to retain the two Marine Corps squadrons and appropriate tradeoffs were made in the contingents of the other Services to accommodate the 865 spaces required.[42]

With the Increment 14 withdrawal underway, the Secretary of Defense on 14 September 1972 asked the Joint Chiefs for an analysis of necessary US force structure in Thailand assuming various US residual strengths in Vietnam and air

activity levels in Southeast Asia and for a "follow-on study" of options for "US force resurgence" in Southeast Asia to meet a contingency similar to the recent North Vietnamese offensive. The JCS supplied the Thailand force structure review on 18 October and a study of force resurgence options on 31 October. With regard to the latter, they concluded that US air forces could meet a contingency as described by the Secretary with augmentation from the Strategic, Readiness, Pacific, and Atlantic Commands. However, such a surge would limit the US capability to react quickly to contingencies in other areas of the world.[43]

The Increment 14 redeployment went without interruption, and on 30 November 1972, the US military strength in South Vietnam stood at 25,500 men, well below the authorized ceiling of 27,000. Two US Marine Corps A–4 squadrons were the only major combat units of any service remaining in South Vietnam at that time.[44]

During October 1972, a diplomatic settlement of the war appeared imminent, but then miscarried.[45] After the US Presidential election in November, the negotiations resumed, without success, and the question of additional redeployments again confronted the President and his advisers. On 28 November Admiral Moorer told the Secretary of Defense that further withdrawals at the time would not be "prudent." He based his position on the still uncertain state of the peace talks as well as the need for "full use of the 27,000 personnel authorized as of 1 December" for security and orderly retrograde of US equipment if an agreement was attained. Therefore he recommended that the US force level in Vietnam be held at 27,000.[46] Apparently because of the lack of progress in the negotiations, the President announced no further US redeployments at the beginning of December, and the authorized US ceiling in South Vietnam stood at 27,000 throughout the final weeks of 1972 and in early 1973.

Nevertheless, US forces continued to leave Vietnam. At the end of December 1972, US strength dropped to 24,069 and another 553 troops had departed by 27 January leaving 23,516 US troops there when the ceasefire went into effect. In all, 135,603 US troops redeployed from South Vietnam in the period 1 January 1972 through 27 January 1973.[47]

Consideration of ROK Force Withdrawals

President Nixon had recognized the Republic of Korea's desire to reduce its contingent in South Vietnam, deciding on 23 June 1971 to support two Korean divisions in South Vietnam through 1972. This decision, in effect, sanctioned the return of approximately 10,000 ROK troops from Vietnam to South Korea. Redeployment of the ROK 2^{d} Marine Brigade together with support and headquarters elements began in late 1971 and was complete by April 1972.[48]

Meantime, in January 1972, the United States had sought confirmation from President Park Chung-hee that the two ROK divisions would in fact remain in

South Vietnam through 1972. The South Korean President had publicly reserved his position but told the US Ambassador in Seoul privately that he was proceeding with plans to withdraw the two divisions beginning in June 1972. Subsequently, the South Koreans approached the United States for pledges of both political and military support in return for retaining the two divisions in South Vietnam. Specifically, the Koreans asked that at least two US combat brigades remain in Vietnam as long as any Korean forces were there. They also sought air and logistic support for the ROK forces in Vietnam.[49]

President Nixon requested the NSC Under Secretaries Committee to examine alternate courses available to the United States to assure the maximum ROK presence in South Vietnam. On 21 March 1972, the Committee replied that the Republic of Korea had requested US assurances to keep its forces in Vietnam, and the United States could provide acceptable military support, although not in the exact terms requested, as long as the US force level remained above 30,000 troops. Once the US strength fell below that level, US capability to support the Korean forces would decrease and none would be possible at a US level of 15,000 unless additional US personnel were retained in Vietnam specifically for that purpose. In any event, Committee members believed that the Koreans were open to compromise on the quid pro quo involved and set two alternative goals for negotiation with the Koreans. In the first, the United States would either give a pledge to keep its forces in South Korea for a stated period or increase military assistance to the Republic of Korea in return for retention of the two divisions in South Vietnam. The second provided for negotiation for a smaller ROK force in Vietnam if ROK demands for the full two divisions proved too high. A third alternative, not offered for the President's consideration, was not to oppose ROK troop withdrawals from Vietnam.[50] Shortly after sending this study to the President, the Under Secretaries Committee learned that the Republic of Korea had modified its position. The Koreans no longer insisted on the retention of two US combat brigades in South Vietnam if the Korean troops were to stay. Rather, the ROK Minister of Defense had stated that the presence of "some" US ground combat forces would suffice.[51]

President Nixon reviewed the question of keeping the two ROK divisions in Vietnam and, on 5 April 1972, decided on US actions to facilitate retention of those forces. The United States would provide air support for the ROK forces within overall priorities as had been the case in the past; it would be prepared to implement an alternative logistic support system for the ROK divisions; and it would be ready to plan a joint US/ROK evacuation airlift of the Korean forces. The President did not want to link the presence of US troops in Korea with the issue of the ROK divisions in Vietnam. Instead, the United States would assure the Republic of Korea that US forces would not be "totally" withdrawn from South Vietnam as long as ROK troops remained there. If these assurances proved acceptable to the Koreans, the President wanted to review the need for ROK forces in South Vietnam again later in the year and he wanted the Republic of Korea so informed.[52]

At the end of March 1972, just as the Republic of Korea was completing its planned redeployment of 10,000 forces from South Vietnam, North Vietnam launched its massive invasion across the Demilitarized Zone into South Vietnam. The Government of Vietnam immediately requested the assistance of the ROK forces in Vietnam in securing important coastal areas in MR 2 and large segments of National Highways 1 and 19, and the Republic of Korea suspended plans for further redeployments. Subsequently, on 25 May 1972, President Park agreed to retain the remaining two ROK divisions in South Vietnam throughout 1972. The United States conveyed assurances of continued support for those forces, but at the same time indicated its intention to review early in November 1972 the question of the presence of the ROK divisions in Vietnam beyond 1972.[53]

By late summer, the Republic of Korea resumed planning to remove its divisions from South Vietnam, calling for the withdrawal of its forces in the first half of 1973. American commanders, however, were anxious to keep the Korean troops in Vietnam for a longer period. General Weyand thought retention of at least one ROK division in MR 2 through 1973 was a necessity, and CINCPAC agreed with him. The Government of Vietnam asked the Republic of Korea to delay the withdrawals, and President Nixon directed another NSC review of the matter.[54]

The NSC Under Secretaries Committee prepared four alternatives to delay the redeployment of the two ROK divisions into late 1973 and 1974. In the end, however, the Under Secretaries' review and alternatives proved academic. The two ROK divisions remained in South Vietnam throughout the remainder of 1972 and for the first three weeks of 1973. Then, with the Vietnam agreement, all US and ROK forces began immediate withdrawal and, by the end of March 1973, all had departed Vietnam.[55]

Table 5
US Redeployments in 1972

Increment	*Period*	*Authorized Ceiling*	*Spaces Reduced*	*Combat Forces Mvr Bn / Arty Bn*	*ATK/FTR* Sqdns*
X (KEYSTONE MALLARD)	1 Dec 71–31 Jan 72	139,000	45,000**	6/5	2
XI (KEYSTONE OWL)	1 Feb–30 Apr 72	69,000	70,000	11/3	0
XII (KEYSTONE PHEASANT)	1 May–30 Jun 72	49,000	20,000	4/2	7
XIII (KEYSTONE WREN)	1 Ju1–31 Aug 72	39,000	10,000	3/0	0
XIV (KEYSTONE PELICAN)	1 Sep–30 Nov 72	27,000	12,000	0/0	0

* Includes both USAF and USMC squadrons.
** 25,000 spaces in December 1971 and 20,000 spaces in January 1972.
Source: COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72 - Mar 73, pp F-56 – F-60.

Table 6
Actual Strength of US Military Forces in Vietnam
January 1972–January 1973

31 January 1972	136,505
29 February 1972	119,606
31 March 1972	95,500
30 April 1972	68,100
31 May 1972	63,000
30 June 1972	48,000
31 July 1972	46,000
31 August 1972	36,800
30 September 1972	35,500
31 October 1972	32,200
30 November 1972	25,500
31 December 1972	24,000
31 January 1973	21,821

Source: COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73, pp. N-1 – N-7.

10

RVNAF Improvement, 1972

Throughout 1971, the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted the South Vietnamese trained and equipped to the fullest extent possible as they assumed increasing responsibility for the conduct of the war. American concern grew during the final 15 months of US military involvement in South Vietnam. With the enemy offensive in the spring and the prospect of an imminent political settlement during the latter months of 1972, President Nixon was particularly anxious that the South Vietnamese have every possible advantage to insure the survival of the Republic of Vietnam. Although the South Vietnamese force structure had already been expanded to prudent limits, the President directed several accelerated programs to supply added military equipment.

FY 1973 Force Structure Review

During the fall of 1971, the MACV staff and the Joint General Staff reviewed the Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program force structure for FY 1973 to ensure that the South Vietnamese would have the troops needed to replace withdrawing US and Free World Forces. Keeping within the approved 1.1 million-manpower ceiling, the two staffs addressed the RVNAF interdiction capability, reinforcement of Military Regions 1 and 2, and development of an air cavalry capability, medium helicopter assets, and self-propelled artillery units. They also considered faster activation of units, improvements in command, control, leadership and morale, logistics, and individual and unit training; and the availability of manpower resources to maintain the 1.1 million-man force level.

General Abrams submitted the results of this review to CINCPAC on 12 January 1972. The submission contained consolidated force structure changes approved since the FY 1972 review, which included: activation of the ARVN 3^{d} Infantry

Division and 20th Tank Squadron, VNAF acquisition of Phu Cat Air Base, VNN acquisition of two former US Coast Guard WHECs, and reduction of RF company strengths in MRs 3 and 4 from 123 to 119 personnel.[1] General Abrams also recommended further changes for FY 1973 that would reorganize, expand, or streamline existing units in accordance with "current experience factors and increased RVNAF assumption of combat and combat support responsibilities." The most important of these was an increase in forces for air and naval interdiction including maritime patrol aircraft, conversion of an air transport squadron to gun-ships (AC–119Ks), introduction of STOL aircraft, and provision of US Coast Guard WHECs capable of operating in deep water. For the territorial forces, accelerated US redeployment required addition of 131 RF companies.

Abrams estimated the cost of the force structure changes at $87.172 million for FY 1972 and $169.174 million in FY 1973 with nearly 80 percent of the increase stemming from efforts to improve interdiction. To facilitate the changes, he requested temporary authority to exceed the 1.1 million-strength ceiling by 17,000 spaces pending resolution of specific manpower tradeoffs in negotiation with the Joint General Staff. The South Vietnamese wished to support increases in the VNAF and elsewhere by eliminating Popular Force spaces. COMUSMACV hoped to accomplish the same increases by withdrawing at least some compensating spaces from the ARVN. In the COMUSMACV version, the RVNAF spaces would be allocated as follows:

	FY 1972 Adjusted Strengths	*FY 1973 Changes*	*FY 1973 Adjusted Strengths*
ARVN	448,925	-15,463	433,462
VNAF	49,196	+12,257	61,453
VNN	40,681	+ 250	40,931
VNMC	14,072	+ 173	14,245
RF	292,405	+14,702	307,107
PF	254,721	-11,919	242,802
Total	1,100,000	0	1,100,000

Admiral McCain studied the FY 1973 CRIMP force structure review and forwarded it to the Joint Chiefs on 1 January, recommending approval of all the changes as well as the temporary increase in the RVNAF manpower ceiling.[2]

At the time the Chiefs received the FY 1973 CRIMP review, they were preparing a report for the Secretary on measures to achieve an optimal RVNAF interdiction capability as Mr. Laird had directed the previous October.[3] They forwarded this report on 14 February 1972. Programs to provide the VNAF with a maritime air patrol capability and STOL aircraft (CREDIBLE CHASE) and modification of A–37 aircraft to assist the RVNAF in interdiction efforts were all undergoing evaluation. The RVNAF force structure review for FY 1973 would include manpower spaces

to allow provision of AC–119K aircraft to the South Vietnamese at a later date, and efforts were being made to update VNAF requirements for the CBU–55 (cluster bomblet munition). In addition, more deepwater ships were required by the VNN to impede sea infiltration. These programs would, of course, require revisions in the RVNAF force structure, causing impacts on current programs and requiring "difficult trade-offs." The COMUSMACV-JGS review had addressed this matter, and the required changes would be included in the FY 1973 RVNAF force structure review.[4]

A little over a week later, on 23 February, the Joint Chiefs submitted the RVNAF force structure review to Secretary Laird, endorsing General Abrams' recommendations. Major changes proposed for FY 1973 would provide for: (1) ARVN engineer augmentation, (2) adding 131 Regional Force companies, (3) upgrading Phan Rang Air Base to operational status, (4) acquisition of an additional airbase, (5) provision of five STOL squadrons (200 aircraft), (6) acquisition of an AC–119K gunship squadron, (7) addition of three WHECs for the VNN, (8) provision of a VNAF maritime air patrol capability, and (9) reduction in Regional Force company strengths in MRs 1, 2, and 3.[5] As some of these items, such as the provision of the STOL planes and additional WHECs, were under evaluation, the JCS warned that MACV's cost estimates were subject to change.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended approval of the proposed changes, which would enhance RVNAF capabilities, especially interdiction. Still to be resolved was the dispute between COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff regarding space trade-offs within the RVNAF needed to remain within the established personnel ceiling. The Joint Chiefs anticipated that this matter could be settled by 1 July 1972 and that the temporary space authorization would not be required beyond FY 1973. Accordingly, they sought approval for 17,000 spaces above the 1.1 million RVNAF force structure through FY 1973, but with the proviso that the United States not support RVNAF assigned strength in excess of 1.1 million men. They viewed this temporary increase as a management device to allow initiation of long-term programs without debilitating South Vietnamese combat power in the "crucial" months ahead. Moreover, they noted that the RVNAF had always been at least 39,000 men short of the authorized 1.1 million level. The changes proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff would provide the following RVNAF structure:[6]

	Strengths End FY 1972	*Proposed Changes*	*Proposed Adjusted FY 1973 Strengths*
ARVN	448,925	+ 1,442	450,367
VNAF	49,196	+ 12,257	61,453
VNN	40,681	+ 250	40,931
VNMC	14,072	+ 173	14,245
RF	292,405	+ 14,702	307,107
PF	254,721	- 11,919	242,802
Total	1,100,000	+16,905	1,116,905

On 16 March 1972, Secretary Laird approved the temporary increase in the RVNAF structure requested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He did not want new units created if they would divert manpower from front-line battalions, and stressed that the goal of 90 percent manning for combat and other key units remained unfulfilled.[7] Thereafter, on 29 March 1972, the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided the Secretary cost figures for the force structure changes recommended on 23 February. The FY 1972 programs required $18.36 million and the FY 1973 additions another $75.58 million. Tentative FY 1973 programs for major interdiction improvement (provision of additional aircraft and WHECs), which were subject to further evaluation, were priced a $160.05 million. Secretary Laird determined that these changes in the RVNAF could be accommodated in the FY 1973 budget without additional funding and approved them on 4 May 1972. At that time, he asked to be informed of actions to return RVNAF authorized strength to the 1.1 million level.[8]

In planning to return the RVNAF to a 1.1 million-man strength, the Joint General Staff would seek to eliminate territorial spaces because South Vietnamese military leaders consistently preferred regular over territorial forces. During an April conference in Saigon with Major General Alexander Haig, President Thieu raised the possibility of forming additional regular units by using Regional and Popular Force units that would be replaced by further recruitment. Commenting on this proposal, Admiral Moorer said that during the current offensive was "not the time to reorganize the ARVN force structure, particularly in light of the tempo of operations and the availability of manpower."[9] In the end, the Joint General Staff prevailed. On 19 June, COMUSMACV provided his recommendations to CINCPAC to return the RVNAF to the 1.1 million authorization, identifying 16,905 Popular Force spaces for elimination. He also proposed organizational changes in the VNN to support the three new high endurance cutters and other uses for 4,100 VNAF spaces previously designated for the STOL program now that the United States had decided to hold provision of the STOL to South Vietnam in abeyance pending test results.[10]

The Joint Chiefs accepted COMUSMACV'S recommendations and told Secretary Laird on 3 July 1972 that the divergences between the Joint General Staff and COMUSMACV on personnel space trade-offs to meet the FY 1973 force structure changes had been resolved. The 1.1 million ceiling would be met by the end of FY 1973 through inactivating 554 Popular Force platoons (16,905 PF spaces). At the same time, the JCS notified CINCPAC that the VNN changes proposed by COMUSMACV were approved and that the Popular Force and VNAF changes were approved for planning.[11] The RVNAF authorized strength for the end of FY 1973 was:[12]

	FY 1973 Adjusted Strengths
ARVN	450,760
VNAF	64,507
VNN	39,742
VNMC	14,402
Regional Force	324,561
Popular Force	206,028
	1,100,000

Project ENHANCE

The North Vietnamese offensive, breaking at the end of March 1972, dealt a staggering, if momentary, blow to the RVNAF improvement program and stimulated Project ENHANCE, the funneling of massive amounts of additional military equipment to the South Vietnamese forces. Even before the offensive, both the Secretary of Defense and the President had been anxious that improvement of the RVNAF proceed at the maximum possible pace. After review of the JCS report on measures to strengthen the RVNAF interdiction capability, Secretary Laird had expressed disappointment with progress and requested a review to identify actions to accelerate the effort.[13] A few days later, President Nixon directed a review of VNAF capabilities and related US assistance. He wanted the review to cover the period FY 1973–1975 and to address the possibility of providing the VNAF a broad range of capabilities for missions currently performed mainly by US forces. In addition to land and sea interdiction, areas mentioned by the President included: air defense, reconnaissance, intelligence collection, and out-of-country air support and interdiction. In essence, the President wanted to insure that the VNAF was prepared both for reduction and eventual withdrawal of US air support.[14]

To comply with the President's directive, the Secretary tasked the Joint Chiefs with a review of RVNAF improvement, VNAF capabilities, and air activities in Southeast Asia as well as US forces in Vietnam.[15] His earlier tasking for further enhancement of RVNAF interdiction was to be incorporated in this larger review, the scope of which would encompass "future US force posture in SEA, RVNAF structure, and the military outlook for the RVN during the period FY 73–FY 76."[16]

On 24 April, the Chiefs gave Mr. Laird an assessment of air activity in Southeast Asia during the period 1973–1976. They concluded that current programs for development of Southeast Asian air forces were progressing as rapidly as possible and that any significant changes should be avoided until the later part of the FY 1973–1976 period. In South Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs considered that "the VNAF has been developing for the past several years at the maximum feasible rate."

Major shortfalls in relation to the total threat were in air defense and interdiction in a high threat environment, neither of which could be corrected by "easily made changes in the VNAF structure."

The JCS believed that US air activity would be required in Southeast Asia, at least in the near term, to offset shortfalls in the capability of Southeast Asian air forces. They presented four options for attack sortie levels and recommended approval of the first option for FY 1973, supplying 8,000 tactical air, 1,000 B–52, and 750 gunship sorties per month, the level recommended by field commanders. Planning for sortie rates for FY 1974 and later years should wait further evaluation.[17]

Three days later, the JCS forwarded a review of RVNAF improvement and VNAF capabilities. The most valid measure of military balance in South Vietnam, they noted, would be the outcome of the current offensive. The ultimate success of the RVNAF would depend on South Vietnamese tenacity and will to win. So far, the Chiefs found the overall performance of the RVNAF "encouraging." After initial onslaughts by locally superior North Vietnamese forces, the South Vietnamese had regrouped, reinforced, and slowed the enemy offensive. Of particular significance was the fact that operations thus far appeared to justify the force structure of the 1.1 million-man RVNAF. The offensive was providing "a rigorous test" of US attempts to improve RVNAF leadership; many South Vietnamese combat leaders were on the battlefield for the first time without US advisers and, "by and large, the results have been encouraging." There appeared to be a continuous upward trend in the overall quality of RVNAF leadership, and US programs in this area would continue to stress improvement.

With respect to VNAF capabilities, the Joint Chiefs again stressed that the South Vietnamese Air Force was developing at "the maximum feasible rate." They described the shortfalls outlined in their submission three days earlier and noted that they could not be easily corrected. Although the current combat situation precluded a thorough assessment of the South Vietnamese interdiction effort, the JCS believed it was improving, but that it could not achieve the US level.

The Joint Chiefs concluded that: "The present program for the RVNAF force structure provides a capability to meet the assessed enemy threat and yet retains flexibility for changes or modifications as they may become necessary." They defended the RVNAF as "balanced, insofar as possible, taking full cognizance of the GVN capacity to provide leadership, skills, and manpower," and warned against introduction of additional complex equipment that the RVNAF could not absorb. The US effort for the near term "should be directed toward supplying resources already programmed, providing support capabilities not possessed by the RVNAF, providing advisory assistance, and monitoring essential programs until such time as it appears success is assured."[18]

President Nixon wanted to assure the South Vietnamese all the materiel support needed to meet the enemy invasion. He asked Dr. Kissinger about this matter several times during the early days of the offensive and at a WSAG meeting on 17

April, Kissinger asked Deputy Secretary of Defense Kenneth Rush to prepare a paper on equipment replacements for the RVNAF, and suggested a joint effort with Admiral Moorer.[19] The Chairman supplied Deputy Secretary Rush an inventory of what the South Vietnamese were authorized, what they had lost, and what they actually had. In addition, he advised Rush of the equipment losses the United States planned to replace and the sources for these replacements. Using this information Mr. Rush presented his paper to the WSAG on 18 April. Dr. Kissinger and General Haig, the latter just returned from Vietnam, discussed the South Vietnamese logistical situation with the President the following day. Nixon wanted RVNAF equipment kept at authorized levels so that should there be a settlement with a moratorium on the introduction of new equipment, the South Vietnamese would be in the strongest position possible.[20]

Replacement of RVNAF equipment losses within currently approved levels proceeded apace. On 17 May, after the debacle in Quang Tri, the WSAG members again took up this matter. Dr. Kissinger reported that the President wanted to get the maximum amount of equipment to South Vietnam as soon as possible as he was still concerned that the RVNAF be as well supplied as possible in the event of a political settlement. In the ensuing discussion, the Chairman observed that in no instance had the South Vietnamese lost a battle because of the lack of logistical support and voiced concern with the "tremendous cost" of additional equipment for the RVNAF. Nevertheless, the members did agree to have ready for the President by 19 May a list of equipment that could be sent to Vietnam on a priority basis.[21]

Mr. Rush prepared the list in the form of a proposed memorandum for the President. He observed that supplies for the South Vietnamese were adequate. At the outbreak of the offensive in early April, US deliveries under the CRIMP for FY 1973 were virtually complete. Since then a major effort had been made to replace all the materiel destroyed in the fighting, and the RVNAF supply posture at the beginning of the invasion had prevented equipment shortages from degrading the South Vietnamese combat ability. Rush cautioned that:

> Sufficiency in the combat capability of the RVNAF depends, more than on equipment, on RVN will and desire. We must be careful not to delude the GVN and RVNAF that hardware can in some way substitute for backbone.

Against this background, Mr. Rush presented three options for the RVNAF developed on a "building-block" concept. The first included only that equipment believed necessary to sustain the RVNAF in the current combat situation and consisted of two "suboptions" (A and B)—items considered militarily essential and those to enhance further RVNAF capability. A second option provided additional equipment for the RVNAF if the United States withdrew from Southeast Asia "for other than military reasons" in the next two to four months. Again the option was broken into two parts, that essential and that to give "even greater capability." The final option provided

additional materiel to demonstrate US resolve and determination to support the Republic of Vietnam. The equipment included in each option was as follows:

Option 1

A
- 32 UH–1 assault helicopters
- 30 STOL aircraft
- 850 60-mm mortars
- 30 TOW antitank weapons systems

B
- 5 F–5A aircraft
- 48 A–37 aircraft
- 70 TOW antitank weapons systems
- 4 PCF ships

Option 2

A
- Accelerated delivery of 14 RC–47 reconnaissance aircraft
- Accelerated delivery of 23 AC–119K fixed wing gunships
- Accelerated delivery of 23 EC–47 intelligence collection aircraft
- Accelerated delivery of 2 WHEC ships
- 12 C–119G maritime patrol aircraft
- 32 self-propelled twin 40-mm air defense guns
- 1 M–48 tank battalion
- 2 composite field artillery battalions (8-inch howitzers and 175-mm guns)

B
- Accelerate delivery of 28 C–7 transport aircraft
- Accelerated delivery of 1 additional WHEC ship
- 1 M–48 tank battalion
- 1 composite field artillery battalion (8-inch howitzers and 175-mm guns)
- 64 Vulcan 20-mm automatic antiaircraft weapons

Option 3
- 1 air cavalry troop for each MR of South Vietnam (144 Cobras, 160 LOHs, and 182 UH–lHs)
- 4 HAWK air defense battalions
- 56 A–4B aircraft
- 3 squadrons of F–4 aircraft

These options included some new weapon systems and Mr. Rush pointed out several constraining factors. South Vietnamese technical proficiency to operate and maintain the weapons they already possessed had been stretched thin by rapid expansion and lack of technical experience, and the RVNAF was at least three years away from maintenance self-sufficiency for currently programmed equipment. Moreover, because of the binding 1.1 million-man RVNAF ceiling, introduction of a new weapon required elimination of an existing one and a period of

retraining that might cause a temporary loss of combat effectiveness. Some sophisticated systems could not be supported by the RVNAF without extensive direct US military contractor support for a prolonged period. In addition, Mr. Rush observed that US forces everywhere would suffer further degradation in combat readiness as their weapons were given to the RVNAF.

Mr. Rush estimated the cost of the entire package at $730 million—$110 million for Option 1 in its entirety, $220 million for the full Option 2, and $400 million for Option 3. No funds were programmed for any of the equipment in these options and there was also an unfunded near-term requirement of $2.5 million for the current higher level of activity for US and RVN forces through 30 September 1972. Rush did not recommend for or against adoption of the first two options. The third, however, he recommended not be implemented because the equipment would not become useful to the RVNAF "for years, if at all," and because provision of the equipment would degrade US stocks and capabilities. He also pointed out that "our ability to deliver equipment will exceed the ability of the South Vietnamese to receive, secure and forward it."[22]

Rush presented his memorandum to the WSAG on 19 May and it was passed to President Nixon who acted that same day approving the full first two options. Undaunted by a certain degradation of US force readiness and an estimated cost of $330 million, he ordered immediate implementation of his decision with the specific understanding that the options were in addition to supply actions already in progress. Noting the large volume of materiel currently enroute to South Vietnam or scheduled for imminent shipment, he directed a review to see if further shipments could be expedited. In particular, he wanted "critical weapons and other high priority items" to arrive before 1 August. This program of equipment assistance for the RVNAF subsequently received the name Project ENHANCE.[23]

The following day, President Nixon departed for a trip to Europe and the Soviet Union. While away, he sent a message to President Thieu informing him of the "immediate delivery to your forces of a very considerable quantity of additional weapons and equipment," including aircraft, artillery, tanks, antitank weapons, and other items. In delivering this message, Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams were to stress:

> While these weapons will constitute a desirable addition to the strength of your forces, the effectiveness of these weapons must, in the final analysis, depend on the will and desire of your able and brave people. In the critical days ahead I urge you and your commanders to prosecute relentlessly and aggressively whatever counter actions can be conducted against enemy forces which have invaded your country.[24]

In approving Project ENHANCE, President Nixon directed a further study of possible changes in the organization and equipment of the RVNAF in the period FY 1973–1975. The objective was to assist the South Vietnamese in coping with

new enemy weapons and tactics used in the current offensive and to enable them to carry out essential missions in the absence of US combat support. Rush asked Admiral Moorer on 23 May to designate the chairman for a working group to provide the information for the President. The Assistant Secretaries of Defense for International Security Affairs, Systems Analysis, Comptroller, and Installations and Logistics (I&L), as well as Department of State personnel, were to participate. Admiral Moorer named Brigadier General William C. Burrows, USAF, Chief, Far East/South Asia Division, J–5, as the chairman of the group.[25]

Admiral Moorer forwarded the report of the working group to Mr. Rush on 2 June 1972. The group solidly supported existing programs for the RVNAF. In its view:

> the progress of the current fighting confirms the fundamental soundness of the Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program . . . and the process of modifying that program periodically to meet a changing enemy threat. Where failures on the battlefield have occurred, they have been principally failures of leadership rather than deficiencies in organization, equipment, or training.

The group was not optimistic that additional equipment beyond that already approved would benefit the RVNAF. More important were "leadership and a sense of national purpose, which only the South Vietnamese can provide." Further measures to improve the RVNAF must be approached cautiously to avoid reductions in combat effectiveness. The vast quantities of war materiel then flowing into South Vietnam and the technologically complex weapons to be furnished under Project ENHANCE would increase the need for already scarce leaders, managers, and trained technicians.

Nonetheless, the working group did identify "some actions" to enhance RVNAF combat ability and to "commence movement toward a force which the United States and the RVN can support during the coming years." It considered, but rejected, a proposal to activate an additional ARVN division within the established RVNAF ceiling. The working group did recommend equipment for two CH–47 helicopter squadrons, two 175-mm self-propelled artillery battalions, and two squadrons of F–5E aircraft, but with no organizational changes beyond those associated with this equipment. Personnel to support such equipment could be accommodated within the RVNAF ceiling of 1.1 million men, the group said, though additional funds would be needed. When Admiral Moorer forwarded the working group report, he pointed out that personnel requirements for both the above equipment as well as for the Project ENHANCE equipment were still incomplete and would be furnished by the JCS at a later date.[26]

The Secretary reviewed the working group study and used it as the basis for a report to the President. After his review, the Secretary also authorized various changes and additions to Project ENHANCE. He added the two squadrons of CH–47 helicopters and 11 M–88 tank recovery vehicles, substituted three 175-mm gun

battalions for three composite artillery battalions, and replaced ground mounted TOW antitank missile launchers with vehicular ones. He also wanted two F–5E squadrons previously authorized included in the CRIMP. President Nixon approved the Secretary's steps to accelerate and augment Project ENHANCE, and on 12 July 1972, Dr. Kissinger told Mr. Laird that the President appreciated the "high priority and excellent effort" of the Department of Defense in this project.[27]

The movement of the designated equipment to South Vietnam proceeded. By mid-October some 95 percent of the Project ENHANCE equipment had arrived or had been released for movement. Shipments thus far totaled 69,000 metric tons by sea and 20,000 short tons by air. The overall RVN supply posture was good, supply problems were not disrupting combat operations, and the rebuilding of stocks to pre-invasion levels was progressing satisfactorily.[28]

In the meantime, Secretary Laird had raised the question of additional aircraft for the VNAF. He asked the Secretary of the Air Force to prepare a study defining options for providing the VNAF a follow-on fighter-attack aircraft. In the study, the Secretary of the Air Force saw a gap in VNAF capabilities, especially in interdiction and close air support, as the United States withdrew. He presented alternatives ranging from maintaining current strength by replacing losses to providing as many as five squadrons of high-performance aircraft by FY 1974–1975.[29]

Upon receiving of the study, Mr. Laird asked Admiral Moorer to review it. The Chairman responded on 6 October, describing the Air Force submission as an excellent basis for evaluating the problem, but pointing out other areas for consideration before a final decision. The availability of aircraft, the impact of the proposed changes on the RVNAF force structure, and the precise military requirements for fighter-attack aircraft needed to be determined. Moorer recommended review of the Air Force study by the JCS and field commanders.[30]

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) had already requested the recommendations of the field commanders and the JCS on this issue, and they were provided on 11 October. The Joint Chiefs concluded that there was no quick way to increase the capability of the VNAF because of the time required to train pilots and maintenance personnel. In addition, they believed hasty insertion of a new weapon system into the VNAF at that time would exacerbate an already critical situation and degrade existing VNAF operational capability. If further air assets were to be supplied to South Vietnam, the Chiefs favored additional A–37 and F–5E squadrons, an alternative proposed by the Secretary of the Air Force, as they would cause the least logistical impact on the VNAF and would increase the capability for close air support and interdiction. But, before the Secretary of Defense acted on the JCS submission, the President ordered another massive equipment infusion for the RVNAF.[31]

Project ENHANCE PLUS

With the increasing likelihood of a negotiated settlement during October 1972, President Nixon became even more anxious to provide the South Vietnamese added materiel support before a cease-fire halted entry of further equipment into South Vietnam. He ordered expedited shipment of additional military equipment to South Vietnam to arrive "not later than 1 November 1972." As in the case of Project ENHANCE, the President took this action without formal recommendations from his military advisers.

The Secretary of Defense announced the President's decision to the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Admiral Moorer on 20 October. He gave the new program the highest priority "immediately behind the support of US and RVNAF forces engaged in combat in SEA." The list of equipment included:

ARMY

Tanks		
M48A3	72	
M41	30	
Guns		
Twin 40-mm	32	
Howitzer 105-mm	44	
Launcher grenade 40-mm	4,769	
60-mm mortar	700	(400 unserviceable)
175-mm gun	8	(orig)
155-mm howitzer M114	12	
M-16 rifle	6,476	
Multi-mount machine gun .50 cal	96	(all serviceable)
Vehicles		
Carrier personnel M113	117	
Truck cargo 5 ton	76	
Truck fuel 1,200 gal	35	
Truck utility ¼ ton M151	178	
Truck tractor 5 ton	21	
Truck cargo 2 ½ ton	1,302	
Truck dump 5 ton	424	(284 unserviceable)
Car armored M706	8	
Carrier cargo M548	5	
Radios		
AN/URC 46	48	
AN/GRC 125	9	
AN/URC 34	68	

AN/PRC 25	7,922
AN/URC 12	1,063
AN/URC 49	15
Generators	
1.5 KW AC	40
1.5 KW DC	80
Miscellaneous	
Teletype	85
Antenna	998
AIR FORCE	
Aircraft	
A–1	19
AC–119K	22
A–37B	90
C–130	32
F–5A	126
UH–1	177
Vehicles	855

Secretary Laird also requested the Secretary of State to begin negotiations with various foreign governments to secure the release of the US F–5A aircraft designated for the military assistance programs for those countries, the title transfer of ROK equipment in South Vietnam, and the expedited movement of equipment from Japan.[32]

The Joint Chiefs notified Admiral Noel Gayler, who succeeded Admiral McCain as CINCPAC on 1 September, of the new program, designating it ENHANCE PLUS. They embargoed retrograde of the listed items and directed title transfer of all equipment before 1 November 1972, even if it was still used by US troops.[33]

The President wanted the added materiel in the hands of the South Vietnamese before a peace settlement entered into force, and further instructions by Secretary Laird left no doubt about the importance of ENHANCE PLUS. There were few sources of equipment that could not be drawn upon to satisfy the requirements of the project, and the Secretary authorized his Assistant Secretary (Installations and Logistics) on 23 October to take equipment from US forces, active and reserve, from production, or from depots. Further, Mr. Laird ordered diversions from "international logistics customers." "Title transfer," he said, "of items required to be furnished the RVNAF will be accomplished as quickly as possible. This will result in title to equipment, both within and outside Vietnam and destined for Vietnam, including that in transit, resting in the RVNAF." Laird directed the turnover of all remaining US bases in Vietnam to the South Vietnamese. The Acting Chairman,

General Ryan, passed these instructions to CINCPAC and the Service Chiefs the same day, noting that all equipment shipped was to be in serviceable condition.[34]

The failure to achieve a negotiated settlement of the war in October 1972 removed the need to complete ENHANCE PLUS by 1 November, but the project was well on its way by that date. All of the Army and Air Force items in CONUS had been identified and offered for shipment. Secretary Laird had approved a ten-plane reduction in the number of F–5As, and the remaining 116 were to be obtained as follows: 32 from Iran, 48 from Taiwan, and 36 from Korea. In addition, 66 A–37s had been dismantled, crated, and shipped from Kelly Air Force Base and the M48A3 tanks were enroute to CONUS ports for shipment to Vietnam. By the end of October, 28,570 metric tons out of 82,797 required for ENHANCE PLUS were already in South Vietnam and the remainder was either in transit or in process for movement.[35]

Only two additions were made to the equipment provided the RVNAF after the initiation of ENHANCE PLUS. The first was amphibious craft for the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC). In August 1972, COMUSMACV had recommended these craft to provide an amphibious capability after the withdrawal of US forces. Action was deferred at that time because the preferred LVT–7 model was not yet available but, as the deadline for ENHANCE PLUS approached, it became clear that available LVT–5s were preferable to none at all. On 3 November the Commandant of the Marine Corps requested that LVT–5s be provided to the VNMC as an interim measure, and the Joint Chiefs, with ASD (I&L) approval, added 30 LVT–5s and one LVTR–1 to the Project ENHANCE PLUS list on 4 November.[36]

The second addition substituted O–2 aircraft in place of 35 O–1 aircraft for the VNAF because of their superior performance for forward air control and visual reconnaissance. Following the recommendations of the field commanders, the JCS supported this change, and after securing Secretary of Defense approval, Admiral Moorer authorized the replacement on 10 November 1972.[37]

Since the ENHANCE PLUS equipment no longer had to reach Vietnam by 1 November 1972, some of it was transported by sea. The arrival of the SS HOOD at Newport on 12 December completed Project ENHANCE PLUS. In all, over 105,000 major items were delivered; 195 airlift sorties moved 4,998 short tons of equipment and 34 vessels transported 99,351 measurement tons by sea.[38]

Further Studies

While the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were implementing the President's decisions for ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS, they also followed the progress of the South Vietnamese armed forces. On 16 June 1972, Secretary Laird expressed concern with "the poor status of the ARVN maneuver battalion strength" and asked Admiral Moorer for an appraisal of the strength and training of all RVNAF ground combat elements. He also wanted a "separate, systematic assessment . . . of the

performance of RVNAF leaders down to as low as a level as possible, to include coverage of both poor and good leadership," together with plans to correct deficiencies.[39]

The Joint Chiefs responded on 29 June with the encouraging information that the RVNAF then enjoyed the "highest overall assigned strength ever achieved." Maneuver battalion manning had increased from 66 percent of the authorized strength at the beginning of the offensive to 87 percent on 22 June. Under the current programs, which included reduction of the length of basic training, an amnesty for draft dodgers and deserters, declaration of martial law to tighten draft deferment, and induction of older men and 17-year olds, the Chiefs anticipated that over 550,000 men would be available for induction—a sufficient number to meet requirements for the rest of 1972. "The RVNAF personnel picture," they concluded, "appears to be more encouraging than it has ever been, and ongoing training programs, as well as those envisioned for the future, appear both sound and realistic." The RVNAF leadership, too, had shown improvement, though the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed more effort was needed in this area.[40]

The Secretary of Defense and his staff continued to monitor the status of the RVNAF. In a memorandum for Admiral Moorer on 6 July, Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Nutter noted the encouraging JCS report on the RVNAF and drew attention to the importance of the local forces and National Police. He asked for an assessment of the capabilities of these forces to regain control where pacification had been disrupted. He also requested an assessment of enemy capabilities in the coming months, including the possibility of another enemy "high point" in the fall. A week later, on 13 July, Secretary Laird observed the progress of the RVNAF, as evidenced by current battlefield success, and stressed the importance of continuing progress. He asked Moorer for a review of several areas relating to the morale, training, and overall combat effectiveness of the RVNAF.[41] The Joint Chiefs responded immediately to the question of enemy capabilities. Yes, they told the Secretary on 14 July, the enemy could initiate a major offensive in Military Region 1 as well as "a terror/sapper campaign" by October.[42]

With regard to the assessment of the RVNAF, the JCS replied to both the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary on 12 August. They reported "the status of personnel, morale, training, and unit readiness within RVNAF and local force units appears to be good." Moreover, efforts to improve problem areas promised further improvement. They found manpower resources adequate to meet personnel replacements and to support the authorized force structure and noted that training problems were being solved in a number of ways. Officer and NCO output had increased; mobile training teams had been used to re-equip and retrain several ARVN units; and new equipment training teams had rapidly introduced new weapons and capabilities into the RVNAF, though some problems remained in technical areas. Individual unit performance in the ARVN and VNMC varied widely, but most units performed well. Overall, the Joint Chiefs considered the RVNAF "a generally effective, combat-ready force" and thought the outlook

for continued improvement was good. They also reported that local forces and National Police could perform their missions although some limitations persisted. The JCS did express reservations about the effectiveness of interdiction in the Delta, but noted that US advisers were making extensive efforts to emphasize coordinated riverine operations.[43]

Meantime, on 12 July 1972, Dr. Kissinger, at the President's request, had asked for a reexamination of the need for more "nationally recruited mobile reserve units" in South Vietnam. Such units, Dr. Kissinger suggested, would be similar to the RVN Marine and airborne divisions and could be created by phasing out some existing units at a later date. "The eventual objective would be to increase the proportion of the mobile reserves in the RVNAF structure." Such a possibility had first been raised by the working group that had reviewed US military assistance for the RVNAF when the President approved Project ENHANCE.[44] The working group had reported that "the field commander" favored "continuing and expanding the concept of employing regular divisions outside their normal Corps areas" as a further means of enhancing South Vietnamese capabilities. Subsequently, Assistant Secretary Nutter requested Admiral Moorer's views on this matter raised by the President, suggesting the following possible "options": (1) activation of a new, nationally recruited mobile reserve division offset by deactivation of a territorially based one, (2) steps to upgrade one to three existing divisions to give them greater mobility, and (3) addition of one regiment to the Marine and airborne divisions.[45]

The Joint Chiefs replied on 26 July that there already was "a salutary trend toward more flexible and mobile mode of operations by the RVNAF within the existing structure as a direct result of the operational pressures generated by the recent enemy offensive." As for the possible options suggested by Mr. Nutter, they dismissed the first because of disruption to ongoing programs and cost. The third, although preferable to the first, also had significant disadvantages and the Joint Chiefs favored the second option as the most productive long-term approach. However, they told Secretary Laird: "the evolutionary process of upgrading RVNAF divisions is more desirable than any of the options considered." Rather than initiate "major organizational and structural changes," they preferred current programs to improve all the RVNAF divisions.[46]

Eventually, the President reviewed the question of additional national mobile reserves for the RVNAF and decided that this matter should be discussed with the South Vietnamese. He set forth a number of specific points to be raised in the discussions, but no final agreement on the issue had been reached by the time of the cease-fire agreement in January 1973.[47]

Secretary Laird was also interested in the role of the US advisers and the extent to which the South Vietnamese forces depended on them. "Our efforts in South Vietnam," he told the JCS on 26 August 1972, "cannot be considered successful until US advisers may leave without endangering the goals of Vietnamization." He wanted US advisers assigned only where necessary and to duties that could not

be performed by the South Vietnamese and asked for a review of the advisory situation with special attention to changes required by the North Vietnamese offensive and later events.[48]

The Joint Chiefs gave the Secretary their review on 6 October. In general, they found that the role of the US advisers with the RVNAF had not changed fundamentally since 30 March 1972 although emphasis had shifted temporarily to support of combat operations. They also observed that the delivery of Project ENHANCE equipment necessitated continuous adjustments to insure effective operation and maintenance of this materiel as US force levels declined. Further, the JCS continued, the RVNAF had performed well with "minimum advisory assistance" in insurgency type operations; in conventional warfare, however, the South Vietnamese, though improving, were not equal to the North Vietnamese. Therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that US advisers might be needed as long as the North Vietnamese invasion and insurgency continued at current levels. "The US advisory presence," they concluded, "represents relatively inexpensive insurance against the loss of substantial investment. This presence must be continued at an appropriate level for the foreseeable future."[49] In other words, the RVNAF could not stand on its own.

Further Force Structure Changes

The massive infusion of equipment to the South Vietnamese forces under ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS necessitated adjustments in the RVNAF structure. In early August 1972, COMUSMACV and the JGS began a review of the RVNAF structure for FY 1973–1974. Pending completion of the review, they identified additional spaces needed to support Project ENHANCE, and the Joint Chiefs relayed these requirements to the Secretary on 24 August 1972. Included were 5,489 new spaces:

ARVN	*Spaces*
Add three 175-mm artillery battalions	1,872
Add two M–48 tank battalions	1,374
Add two air defense artillery battalions	898
Provide 141 TOW weapon teams	630
(note: Only 100 under PROJECT ENHANCE)	
VNAF	
Add five F–5A aircraft	65
Add one CH–47 helicopter squadron	307

VNN	
Add three WHECs	462
Add four PCFs	0
Activate Third Flotilla Headquarters	16
Increase radar site spaces	225
(note: Not PROJECT ENHANCE)	
Total	5,849

To keep within the 1.1 million-man ceiling, they proposed inactivation of 177 Popular Force platoons and associated personnel (5,146 spaces); inactivation of one River Assault group and two River Interdiction divisions (430 spaces); and reduction of Viper craft personnel (273 spaces).[50]

Secretary Laird approved these new spaces and the accompanying trade-offs as "one optional course of action" on 3 September. He observed, however, that the need for territorial forces would be great because of the setbacks in pacification caused by the enemy offensive. Consequently, he authorized, as a second option, a temporary surge in RVNAF strength beyond 1.1 million rather than immediate reduction in the Popular Forces. He did not want RVNAF performance in the current heavy fighting or restoration of pacification losses to be impeded by "short-term" manpower shortages resulting from the long-term 1.1 million-man ceiling. Laird believed that the ongoing FY 1973–1974 RVNAF structure review might be the basis for important structural changes, and urged consideration of the manpower questions associated with improving the reserve deployment capability of ARVN divisions. The discontent at village level caused by upgrading Regional and Popular Forces, the political effects of GVN manpower policies, and the possibility of releasing some veteran RVNAF soldiers for the contributions they could make in the civilian sector should also be considered. The Secretary looked forward "to reviewing recommendations concerning RVNAF force structure with the expectation that implementation of these recommendations may be the final steps of the Vietnamization process." In relaying this decision to CINCPAC, the Joint Chiefs repeated the Secretary's instruction that the performance of the RVNAF not be impeded by short-term adherence to the 1.1 million ceiling—a level designed "for the longer term."[51]

Despite the emphasis on ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS equipment for the regular South Vietnamese forces, as well as accompanying force structure adjustments, the Secretary of Defense did not want to "lose sight of the proper position" of the local forces in South Vietnam. The Regional and Popular Forces had made "significant contributions in repulsing last year's invasion," he told Admiral Moorer on 11 January 1973, and their value to the pacification effort was well recognized. The Secretary asked Moorer to insure that the FY 1973–1974 RVNAF structure review maintained local forces "at an appropriate level with an adequate level of support."[52]

On 24 January 1973, the day following the announcement of an agreement to end the war, the Joint Chiefs told the Secretary that the equipment provided by Projects ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS could be incorporated into the RVNAF structure without exceeding the 1.1 million-man ceiling.[53] However, some adjustment was necessary. The most important changes stemmed from the 600 additional aircraft furnished to the VNAF under ENHANCE PLUS, increasing the VNAF from 56 to 66 squadrons. This increase included the addition of five fighter-attack squadrons, five helicopter squadrons, one maritime air patrol squadron, and one training squadron, coupled with a reduction of two airlift squadrons, resulting in the net increase of ten. Proposed force adjustments to support the added aircraft as well as other new equipment supplied by Projects ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS, while at the same time meeting the 1.1 million-man ceiling by the end of FY 1973, were as follows:

	Approved FY 1973 Strengths	*Proposed Changes*	*Proposed Adjusted FY 1973 End Strengths*
ARVN	450,367	-419	449,948
VNAF	61,453	+3,047	64,500
VNN	40,931	-816	40,115
VNMC	14,245	+110	14,355
RF	327,261	-1,922	325,339
PF	222,648	-16,905	205,743
	1,116,905	-16,905	1,100,000

With respect to the proper position of the local forces, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised Mr. Laird that the Joint General Staff and COMUSMACV had reviewed the mix of regular and territorial forces. They had examined the 5,146 space reduction in the Popular Forces approved by the Secretary as one course of action in September and determined that 5,146 miscellaneous low-priority spaces from non-combat RVNAF units could be substituted instead. Therefore, planned reduction in the local forces during FY 1973 would be limited to the 16,905 Popular Force spaces identified the previous July as a result of the FY 1973 RVNAF structure review, and 1,922 miscellaneous low-priority Regional Force spaces.[54] These actions would result in an adjusted FY 1973 territorial force strength of 531,082, and a net reduction of 16,044 over the previous fiscal year.[55]

Meantime, COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff had completed the FY 1974 RVNAF structure review. General Weyand submitted the results to CINCPAC on 27 January 1973, the day the Vietnam agreement was signed in Paris.[56] The Pacific commander, in turn, relayed them to the Joint Chiefs on 6 February 1973. COMUSMACV and the Joint General Staff recapitulated the RVNAF structure changes made or proposed for FY 1973, including those needed to incorporate the

Project ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS equipment into the RVNAF, and set forth changes for FY 1974. The latter were limited to adjustments to streamline support organizations and improve management capabilities.[57]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff requested the Secretary of Defense approve the proposed force structures for both fiscal years on 27 February 1973. The specific figures were as follows:

	FY 1973 Approved*	*FY 1973 Changes*	*FY 1973 Adjusted Strength*	*FY 1974 Changes*	*FY 1974 Adjusted Strength*
ARVN	450,367	- 1,414	448,953	+ 670	449,623
VNAF	61,453	+ 3,054	64,507	+ 402	64,909
VNN	40,931	- 1,189	39,742	+ 439	40,181
VNMC	14,245	+ 157	14,402	+ 36	14,438
RF	326,508	- 1,947	324,561	0	324,561
PF	223,401	-17,373	206,028	0	206,028
Awaiting Distribution		+ 1,807**	1,807**	-1,547	260
	1,116,905	-16,905	1,100,000	0	1,100,000

* Included temporary over-ceiling authorization of 16,905 spaces.

** 1,807 additional trade-off spaces were identified for distribution in FY 1974 and the future pending requirements.

These changes, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Secretary, "essentially constitute the final stages of Vietnamization and provide the Government of the RVN with a strong, well-balanced military force."[58]

With these recommendations by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (which the Secretary of Defense formally approved on 15 May 1973), the US program to improve the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam was, for all practical purposes, complete. It was with the forces recommended by the JCS in February 1973 that the Republic of Vietnam faced the uncertainties of the post-armistice period. The Vietnam agreement required withdrawal of all US military forces from Vietnam by 28 March 1973 except for a 50-man Defense Attaché Office and forbade the introduction of any additional military equipment into South Vietnam.[59] The Republic of Vietnam could replace all existing military equipment on a one-for-one basis, and the United States would continue military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam within the terms of the agreement. In addition, the United States would maintain a large civilian contractor advisory force in South Vietnam, but the great care and attention to RVNAF improvement would no longer be possible with the removal of the US military presence. The primary goal of the improvement program, since its initiation in 1968, had been the creation of a RVNAF capable of standing on its own, and the ultimate test was at hand.

Afterthought

Looking back, a question about ENHANCE and ENHANCE PLUS emerges. Senior officials in Saigon and Washington recognized that the RVNAF was crippled by shortcomings in leadership, not by shortages of equipment. Why, then, did President Nixon insist upon a massive influx of materiel? Perhaps, he hoped that Hanoi would interpret these huge deliveries as proof that the United States intended to stand by its ally.

Table 7
RVNAF Assigned Strengths, January 1972-January 1973

	ARVN	*VNN*	*VNAF*	*VNMC*	*RVNAF*
Jan 72	415,536	43,122	49,342	14,381	1,052,642
Feb 72	417,373	43,144	49,152	14,327	1,051,431
Mar 72	421,263	42,915	49,332	15,411	1,056,380
Apr 72	427,049	42,790	50,379	15,277	1,061,378
May 72	437,215	42,780	50,326	15,775	1,070,042
Jun 72	456,620	43,505	50,160	17,681	1,097,218
Jul 72	460,419	44,076	48,817	17,391	1,099,299
Aug 72	464,838	42,842	49,454	16,886	1,097,122
Sep 72	466,709	42,837	50,539	16,674	1,097,157
Oct 72	467,362	42,726	51,629	17,179	1,098,735
Nov 72	461,045	42,429	50,853	17,100	1,091,858
Dec 72	458,473	42,136	51,629	16,128	1,089,882
Jan 73	452,430	42,086	54,349	14,879	1,085,703

	Regional Force	*Popular Force*
1 Jan 72	283,974	246,314
1 Jul 72	300,646	227,950
1 Jan 73	300,865	218,908

Source: (TS-NOFORN-EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, pp. C-18 – C-22.

11

Pacification and Political Development, 1971–1972

The United States recognized early in its combat involvement in Vietnam that military support and assistance alone would not insure the survival of a free government in South Vietnam. It was apparent that the United States would also have to help the South Vietnamese develop political strength and economic stability. To that end, the United States began to assist the Republic of Vietnam in a variety of programs loosely grouped under the general title of "pacification."

During 1965–1966, US efforts in Vietnam focused on the military situation, and support of pacification was somewhat haphazard with responsibility for US programs divided between COMUSMACV and the US Ambassador in Saigon. It was not until May 1967 that President Johnson assigned COMUSMACV operational direction for all US support of South Vietnamese pacification efforts under the overall responsibility of the US Ambassador in Saigon. To carry out the mission, the President directed the establishment of the position of Deputy to COMUSMACV for Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) to be filled by a civilian with the rank of ambassador.

The improved combat situation after the defeat of the Vietcong's Tet offensive in 1968 allowed the Republic of Vietnam and the United States to devote increased attention to pacification. With US encouragement, the South Vietnamese launched a series of plans to integrate all pacification activities into a single campaign. These plans, prepared on an annual basis beginning in 1969, had eight major objectives: territorial security; protection of the people from terrorism; increased self-defense capabilities for the local population; improved local administration; greater national unity; a "brighter life" for war victims; an increased information effort; and improvement of the rural economy. Programs to improve local security included strengthening the Regional and Popular Forces to protect hamlets and the surrounding areas, creation

of the People's Self Defense Force to give the local population added protection, and a buildup of the South Vietnamese National Police. In addition, there were the Chieu Hoi Program to rally Viet Cong to the allegiance of the Republic of Vietnam and the Phoenix or Phung Hoang Program to identify and eliminate the Viet Cong infrastructure. To increase national unity, aid war victims, and build the rural economy, the Republic of Vietnam with US support pursued a variety of activities including refugee assistance and resettlement, compensation to veterans and the dependent family members of soldiers killed in combat, land reform, and social, educational, agricultural, and health improvement programs.

To assess the progress of pacification, the United States and the Republic of Vietnam relied on the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES), a method of estimating the security of all hamlets in South Vietnam, first introduced in 1967. Under the HES, US advisers rated the hamlets in their areas using 18 different indicators and then assigned each a security rating on a descending scale from Category A, completely secure, to Category E, Viet Cong-controlled. At the beginning of 1968, 67.2 percent of all South Vietnamese hamlets were rated "relatively secure" (Categories A, B, and C), but by December 1970 this figure had risen to 95.1 percent while 84.6 percent of the hamlet population lived in fully secure areas (Categories A and B), indicating significant success in the pacification effort.[1]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had little involvement in pacification. COMUSMACV directed overall US support for the program and reported through CINCPAC to the Joint Chiefs on matters of military policy and operations, but for his pacification responsibilities, COMUSMACV was under the supervision of the US Ambassador in Saigon. The majority of pacification activities involved economic, social, and political matters, areas beyond the purview of the JCS. In Washington, US participation in pacification efforts was handled by the Department of State, the US Agency for International Development, the US Information Agency, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency; the usual channel to COMUSMACV was through the US Ambassador in Saigon rather than the Chiefs. The Joint Staff was usually kept informed on pacification actions, and COMUSMACV furnished the Joint Chiefs with information copies of South Vietnamese pacification plans. With limited involvement, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, nevertheless, recognized the importance of the pacification effort and gave it their full support.

Planning for 1971

The beginning of the year 1971 found the Republic of Vietnam in the middle of a "Supplementary Pacification and Development Campaign" covering the four-month period November 1970 through February 1971. This special plan was a transitional device to shift pacification planning from a calendar year to the lunar year that was the basis of Vietnamese fiscal planning. The supplementary plan also pro-

vided impetus to complete 1970 goals and prepare for implementation of the 1971 plan, focusing attention on a nationwide effort against the Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI)—elimination of all Viet Cong-controlled hamlets in MR 4, a special information and retraining program, and stockpiling and allocation of resources to meet pacification needs throughout 1971.[2]

On 7 January 1971, COMUSMACV submitted the 1971 RVN pacification plan, covering the lunar year 1 March 1971 through 28 February 1972. Previous plans had been a joint MACV/CORDS/South Vietnamese effort, but the South Vietnamese had taken the lead in preparing the new plan. Moreover, they had dropped the word "pacification" from the title, believing that it meant wresting the people from enemy control, a process they considered virtually complete. Instead, they titled the new document the "1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan" (referred to hereafter as the 1971 Plan). It reflected a shift in emphasis from security operations to political and economic development. In the 1971 Plan, the South Vietnamese consolidated the eight objectives of the earlier plans under the broad areas of local self-defense, local self-government, and local self-development. All on-going pacification programs were grouped under these three objectives to emphasize the primary purpose of the entire effort. Local self-defense encompassed territorial security; improvement of the Regional and Popular Forces, the People's Self Defense Force, and the National Police; and the Chieu Hoi and Phung Hoang activities. Local self-government included existing information and youth programs as well as the new People's Administration Program to train and improve local government officials, and local self-development comprised programs dealing with refugees, veterans, land reform, agriculture and fishing improvement, education, health, and public works. Finally, the 1971 Plan had two special programs: one to treat the problems of the growing population in the cities; and another to insure that special attention was devoted to the particular needs of ethnic minorities.[3]

The organization to accomplish pacification tasks in 1971 had evolved over the previous years. On the South Vietnamese side, the Central Pacification and Development Council had final responsibility; President Thieu headed the Council and membership included the ministers and heads of involved South Vietnamese ministries and agencies. Below the Central Council were similar bodies in each Military Region, province, district, and village or hamlet. COMUSMACV's responsibility for all US pacification efforts was carried out by his Deputy for CORDS. In Saigon, the CORDS organization had eleven directorates staffed with military and civilian personnel who advised the South Vietnamese ministries and performed staff and administrative functions. CORDS had similar advisory organizations at the Military Region and provincial levels, composed of military and civilian personnel, to assist local South Vietnamese officials.[4]

Reduction of US Personnel

The continuing withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam as well as the increasing strictures on funds for the war began to affect US support for pacification in 1971. The number of US military advisers assigned to pacification duties peaked in mid-1970 at 6,465, but accelerated troop deployments in 1971 forced increased Vietnamization of the CORDS advisory effort. The number of US military CORDS advisers dropped to 4,924 by 30 June 1971 and to 2,671 by the end of the year. The task of the remaining military advisers shifted to training their Vietnamese counterparts. In addition, Vietnamization of the Hamlet Evaluation System began on 1 July 1971 when the South Vietnamese took over reporting from US advisers in 39 districts, and by the end of 1971, the South Vietnamese reported in 103 districts.[5]

The US civilian advisory role in pacification was also reduced. On 3 June 1971, Dr. Kissinger informed the Secretaries of State and Defense that the President wanted "a significant reduction" in the number of civilian employees of both the Department of Defense and the US Agency for International Development in South Vietnam. Specifically, he had asked for a study of ways to achieve a reduction of one-third by the end of FY 1972.[6]

Although the President had not asked that the study address personnel within the CORDS organization, this question quickly arose. On 4 June 1971, the US mission in Saigon proposed reducing the civilian CORDS strength from the current level of 823 to 662, a 19 percent reduction, by the end of FY 1972. Subsequently, the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam prepared a study on civilian reductions in South Vietnam that called for the reduction of 819 AID employees as well as 308 US civilian CORDS personnel by 30 June 1972. This proposal lowered the CORDS civilian personnel level from 823 to 515, a 37 percent reduction, almost double the figure suggested by the US mission in Saigon.[7]

Within the NSC system, representatives of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense opposed the CORDS civilian reductions proposed by the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam. Later, in discussions with Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Bunker proposed a compromise, lowering CORDS civilian strength from 823 to 590, a reduction of 28 percent, during FY 1972. General Abrams found this reduction acceptable, and the President approved it on 10 September 1971. The reduction of CORDS civilian advisers went ahead and CORDS civilian strength stood at 728 by the end of 1971.[8]

Meanwhile, the United States had started a review of the future organization of the CORDS program. This effort began when Dr. Kissinger discussed the matter, as well as the possible reduction of US civilian personnel involved, with US officials when visiting Saigon in the early summer of 1971. Later, the Chairman of the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam, Ambassador William H. Sullivan, and the Deputy US Ambassador to South Vietnam, Samuel D. Berger, agreed to have a task force

in Saigon review the organization and staffing of CORDS. An interagency group would visit Saigon in November to review the task force's findings and prepare recommendations on CORDS for the President.[9]

The interagency group from Washington, including a member from the Counterinsurgency Operations Division, J–3, Joint Staff, visited Saigon during the period 14–19 November 1971 and reviewed the study of the mission task force. The study recommended retention of the CORDS organization under COMUSMACV as the single-manager for all US support of pacification until the end of FY 1973 but with modified internal structure and reduced manning. The task force also proposed an assessment of the CORDS organization in May 1973. While there was some disagreement over the proposals for modification of the CORDS structure, the interagency group accepted the recommendation to retain CORDS in the present form. Available records do not reveal any recommendation to the President, apparently reflecting the consensus that no change was needed at that time.[10]

The only significant change in the CORDS organization during 1971 was the change of the Deputy COMUSMACV for CORDS position from a civilian to a military officer. Ambassador William E. Colby, who had served as the MACV Deputy for CORDS since November 1968, left Vietnam in the summer of 1971; General Abrams and Ambassador Bunker recommended that his replacement be General Fred Weyand, USA, the current Deputy COMUSMACV. As Abrams explained to Admiral Moorer, Weyand was "unusually effective" with the Vietnamese and could assume the CORDS function as an additional duty. CINCPAC endorsed the proposal, observing that as the US combat role in South Vietnam continued to decline, General Weyand's current responsibilities would decrease allowing him time for the CORDS mission.[11]

Admiral Moorer approached the Secretary informally on this matter, and Mr. Laird agreed. On 1 October 1971, he informed Admiral Moorer: "I accept your judgment that General Weyand should be able to assume the additional duty of Deputy COMUSMACV for Civil Operations and Rural Development Support. I therefore approve his appointment." Later that month, General Weyand assumed the duties of the Deputy for CORDS.[12]

In early January 1972, a further reduction of US AID personnel in the CORDS effort was dictated by budget constraints. Following discussions with Washington, Ambassador Bunker reluctantly accepted a reduction in the number of AID civilians for the FY 1972 ceiling to 540 rather than the 590 approved earlier by the President. General Abrams had objected to this reduction, and Ambassador Bunker promised to resist further cuts for FY 1972, 1973, or 1974.[13]

General Abrams told the Joint Chiefs of the reduction in AID civilian strength, stating that this action would cut staffing in the areas of war victims, public safety, and technical support. On 26 January 1972, Admiral Moorer brought the matter to the attention of the Secretary. The pacification effort was essential to Vietnamization and the key to a stable government in Vietnam, he said, and unilateral

reductions by the Agency for International Development endangered CORDS. The Chairman emphasized his concern that General Abrams receive the support necessary to build a stable government in South Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs were advising CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, Moorer told the Secretary, to continue to refer proposals to lower AID strength in CORDS to the US Ambassador for resolution. Admiral Moorer recommended that the Secretary continue efforts with the Department of State and US Agency for International Development to insure CORDS the funding needed to support "this critical program."[14]

Pacification in 1971

The 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan set a territorial security goal of providing A or B security (using HES ratings) for 95 percent of the total population of South Vietnam and eliminating all enemy-controlled hamlets. Although all organized forces of the Republic of Vietnam were charged with the task of keeping enemy forces away from the South Vietnamese people, the territorial forces—the Regional and Popular Forces, the People's Self-Defense Force and the National Police—had the principal responsibility for local security. During 1971, the regular RVN forces and remaining US forces moved away from local security operations, and regular force support of pacification consisted mainly of training the territorial forces, clearing operations in remaining Viet Cong strongholds and base areas, and interdiction of enemy supply routes. The performance of the territorial forces in 1971 showed mixed results. During the period March through December, Regional Force (RF) operations increased, but the percentage of operations with enemy contact declined; Popular Forces (PF) also had a low percentage of operations with enemy contact. By December 1971, only 84.3 percent of the population was rated in the A or B category as compared with the goal of 95 percent.[15] In reporting these statistics, COMUSMACV did not explain the failure to achieve the security objective in 1971, but he did note the reduction in enemy attacks-by-fire during the year. With only ten Viet Cong-controlled hamlets remaining, he expected that all Viet Cong hamlets would be eliminated by the end of February 1972.[16]

The People's Self Defense Force (PSDF), organized in 1968, was a volunteer militia made up of men and boys, either above or below draft age, and women. All served on a part-time unpaid basis and assisted in patrolling and guarding their own hamlets. The 1971 plan called for a PSDF of 4,000,000 members consisting of 1,500,000 combat members and 2,500,000 support members. These forces were to be trained, armed, and organized into teams in order to take a more active role in protection of their local villages and hamlets. The South Vietnamese National Assembly gave full financial support to the planned expansion, and strong recruitment and training programs were pursued. Consequently, the year saw significant

progress toward meeting the PSDF goals, and by December 1971, the status of the PSDF was:

	Goal	*Organized*	*Trained*
Combat PSDF	1,500,000	1,393,156	1,322,500
Support PSDF	2,500,000	3,035,980	2,508,101
Total	4,000,000	4,429,136	3,830,601
Teams	15,000	14,869	14,366

Together with the local forces (RF and PF) and the PSDF, the South Vietnamese National Police (NP) was the third force charged with the provision of territorial security. The NP had responsibility throughout South Vietnam for law enforcement; for maintenance of public order; for crime prevention, detection, investigation, and apprehension; and for disaster relief. The National Police, which had been established in 1962, had never proved an effective force. At the close of 1970, NP strength stood at approximately 88,000 and the 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan set a force goal of 122,000 with all personnel "well trained to include political education."

President Nixon was especially interested in the National Police and in early 1971 asked Sir Robert Thompson, the British expert on counterinsurgency, to go to South Vietnam and study the National Police.[17] Thompson visited during the January–March period and presented his report to the US Embassy in Saigon on 29 March 1971. He saw South Vietnam as in a transition between a destructive war and a working peace with a need to change emphasis toward restoration of the discipline and moral fiber of the nation. An effective police force was of considerable importance for rebuilding discipline and correction of the moral erosion caused by the long war. Thompson recommended, among other things: the independence of the National Police from political influence; the police station as the basic unit of the police force; improvement in the quality of the police personnel; and assignment of responsibility for internal security intelligence in South Vietnam to the National Police.

As a result of President Nixon's interest and Thompson's report, South Vietnam gave increased attention to the National Police during 1971. In March, the force was reorganized into a National Police Command, and in June, the Republic of Vietnam established a requirement for police operations centers at the national, regional, provincial, and district levels. Development of these centers was underway by September 1971. Throughout its short existence the National Police had been plagued by a lack of personnel primarily because available manpower was drafted into the RVN military forces. This situation was remedied briefly in early 1971 when the Republic of Vietnam allowed the National Police the opportunity, on a one-time basis, to recruit 34,000 men. This recruitment was cancelled in April 1971, but not before 28,000 personnel had joined the National Police.

Despite the emphasis placed on the NP, not all problems were removed. The quality of the recruits was generally low, leadership was weak at middle and lower levels of the organization, and training remained inadequate. The combination of these factors was reflected in the poor performance of the NP in remote areas of the country. Nonetheless, the National Police did build up its strength and organization during the year and assumed increased responsibility for local security. By the end of December 1971, the NP strength stood at 113,686.

In early 1971, the question of additional US support for the National Police had come to the attention of the Joint Chiefs. In December 1970, COMUSMACV's Deputy for CORDS had reviewed South Vietnamese internal security problems and recommended to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and others that the National Police be included in some of the special assistance programs currently provided to RVNAF personnel, such as food supplements and food allowances during training. No action was taken on this proposal, and on 13 February 1971, COMUSMACV urged CINCPAC that these recommendations be approved for funding for the National Police under the US AID/DOD Realignment Programs for FYs 1971, 1972, and 1973. CINCPAC concurred in the recommendation and passed it to the JCS a week later.[18]

On 23 April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the Secretary of Defense that the COMUSMACV proposal would have a positive effect on the performance of the National Police and would help advance local defense. But, whereas the field commanders favored full US support for the food support programs for FYs 1971 through 1973, the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not consider the proposal feasible in FY 1971, believing it too late to introduce it for that year. Rather, they recommended US support for FY 1972 through 1974 on a sliding scale of 100 percent for FY 1972, 70 percent in FY 1973, and 30 percent in FY 1974. Further, they recommended that the funding issue be resolved between the Departments of State and Defense.[19] Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard raised the matter with the Secretary of State on 10 June 1971, but the Department of State showed little enthusiasm for the proposal, and records reveal no further action on this question.[20]

Since 1963, the Chieu Hoi (open arms) program had sought to separate Viet Cong from the insurgency and rally them to the Republic of Vietnam. This effort made extensive use of psychological operations to induce the enemy to rally; the ralliers, known as Hoi Chanh, received six to eight weeks of rehabilitation training at fifty-one centers located throughout South Vietnam. The Chieu Hoi program had been one of the most successful of the entire pacification effort, and by the beginning of 1971, the Republic of Vietnam claimed over 195,000 Hoi Chanh. The 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan included an objective of 25,000 ralliers for the Chieu Hoi program, but it was soon obvious that this goal was too ambitious. At mid-year, the Republic of Vietnam lowered the objective to 20,000 ralliers, and the total number by the end of the year amounted to 20,357, a figure well below the 32,700 ralliers in 1970. According to COMUSMACV, the reason for

the decline was that, with the increased security of the population areas and the decline in the level of military contact, there was less opportunity for the enemy to rally. Moreover, the remaining VC were considered "hard core" and much less susceptible to inducement to change their loyalty.

The most controversial of all the pacification efforts in South Vietnam was the Phung Hoang Program, or the Phoenix Program as it was originally named when introduced in 1968. This program attempted to identify and eliminate the communist leadership apparatus, the Viet Cong infrastructure. The Phung Hoang Program called for the identification and verification of key VC members and their elimination or "neutralization," through several means, including efforts to rally them to the Republic of Vietnam through the Chieu Hoi approach, to apprehend and detain them for proper legal prosecution, and, only as a final resort, to kill them. However, the general public, both in South Vietnam and the United States, conceived of elimination only as killing and abuses within the program added to frequent public criticism of the activity as one of political assassination. Although US personnel advised and assisted the South Vietnamese in this effort, they did not participate in the actual Phung Hoang operations—the capturing or killing of the VCI. Moreover, COMUSMACV had consistently attempted, through US advisers, to discourage unlawful or inhumane conduct in the program.

The 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan established a monthly objective of 1,200 VCI neutralizations throughout South Vietnam for a total of 12,000 by the end of 1971 and 14,400 by the completion of the plan on 29 February 1972. Included in this objective was provision that 50 percent of all neutralizations be "sentenced" VC, i.e. captured and brought to trial. At the end of December 1971, the Republic of Vietnam reported 13,188 neutralizations, meeting the 1971 goal though the total was well below the previous year.

The CORDS staff evaluated the Phung Hoang effort during 1971 to determine areas for improvement. This study revealed that, from the national to the district level, there was no effective means of coordinating information on the VCI nor were there secure repositories for storing intelligence. Consequently, the local population was reluctant to give information to the Phung Hoang centers. The CORDS study also concluded that South Vietnamese personnel were, generally, poorly qualified and motivated and that responsibility for carrying out the program had not been clearly established. Both General Abrams and Ambassador Bunker approved these conclusions and in October 1971, the United States recommended: a phased transfer of responsibility for the anti-VCI mission from the Phung Hoang centers to the National Police Command during 1972 accompanied by the withdrawal of US military advisory support; improvement of the intelligence coordination system of the National Police Command; and increased emphasis on the anti-VCI responsibilities of the province and district chiefs.

On 2 December, the RVN Prime Minister issued a directive partially implementing the US recommendations. The Phung Hoang centers were retained, but the

National Police would assume overall responsibility for the program during 1972. The Prime Minister also placed special emphasis on the Phung Hoang Program at all echelons in South Vietnam and directed wide and active publicity for the effort so that its importance would be recognized.

The criticisms and accusations that had surrounded the Phung Hoang Program surfaced in hearings on US assistance programs in Vietnam held during July and August 1971 by a subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations. Ambassador William E. Colby, Deputy to COMUSMACV for CORDS, testified on pacification and received a number of questions about the Phung Hoang program. How did he explain the reports of abuse and torture? Did the program combat terror with terror? Was the program used by the Republic of Vietnam against its political opponents? Why had not the number of VCI decreased despite all the reported neutralizations? Ambassador Colby explained the Phung Hoang objective and operations to the Subcommittee. The program, he said, did not combat communist terrorism with terror. Rather, it identified members of the VCI for apprehension and detention according to Vietnamese law. In essence, he said, the program was as good as the people who carried it out and he recognized that there had been abuses. These were the fault of individuals, he continued, and not of the program itself. Moreover, such abuses had been investigated and stopped by Vietnamese authorities when discovered. Mr. Colby admitted that it might be possible for the Republic of Vietnam to use the program against its political enemies, but he doubted that such an eventuality would occur. He explained that the total number of VCI did not decrease since replacement constantly occurred within the communist apparatus.[21]

In the spring of 1971, the Secretary of Defense had inquired whether currently approved reward and informant programs, which might be profitably used in pacification efforts, required stimulation. The Director of the Joint Staff informed the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) that in the opinion of COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and the Joint Staff that these programs had been satisfactory. The Secretary of Defense, however, was not completely convinced. He told Admiral Moorer on 20 May:

> We must adjust our efforts to interdict the flow of men and materiel by all practical means. Interdiction can and should include more than flying air sorties, performing ground cross-border raids, and conducting surveillance of water routes. I consider the location and capture of caches and elimination of Viet Cong freedom of movement an integral and essential part of the overall interdiction effort. It is a facet of interdiction, which has the additional merit of being consistent with the longer-term capabilities of the Republic of Vietnam.[22]

After considering the views of COMUSMACV and CINCPAC, Admiral Moorer furnished the Secretary a detailed assessment of the various US-supported informant reward programs in South Vietnam. The Chairman believed implementation

of those programs had been satisfactory and that "adequate and propitious" stimulation of them was being "progressively achieved." Moorer pointed out to the Secretary that, at US suggestion, the Republic of Vietnam was considering initiation of high value rewards in both the Phung Hoang and Chieu Hoi efforts.[23]

The Republic of Vietnam did decide to implement such a program to improve Phung Hoang efficiency. Cash would be paid for the location of selected key VCI and greatly increased sums would go to units that captured targeted VCI. COMUSMACV planned to fund a pilot effort in four selected provinces beginning in November 1971. But unfavorable press stories, labeling the project a "bounty system," caused the United States to withdraw its financial support. High value rewards were not implemented for the Phung Hoang or Chieu Hoi programs.[24]

During 1971, the Republic of Vietnam moved ahead with efforts under the local self-government portion of the Community Defense and Local Development Plan. Country wide elections were held without incident for the Lower House of the National Assembly and for the presidency, and first-time elections took place in twelve villages and 203 hamlets that had been under Viet Cong control. A principal objective of the local self-government aspect of the 1971 plan was to train local leaders, and 13,632 village and hamlet officials received instruction at the National Cadre Training Center during the year. The institution of Province Mobile Assistance Teams was another hopeful development in 1971. The previous year, the province chief and the CORDS province team in An Giang Province in the Delta had initiated the practice of sending teams of province officials to visit and assist village and hamlet chiefs. This approach had proved so successful that the practice was extended to each Delta province and, in April 1971, the Republic of Vietnam directed the establishment of similar teams throughout the entire country.

Other aspects of local self-government included a youth program and the People's Information Program. The latter publicized the entire Community Defense and Local Development plan with emphasis on the PSDF, Phung Hoang and Chieu Hoi operations, land reform, and veteran and refugee programs. But the information effort was judged a failure in 1971 because of poor performance by hamlet cadre and "election diversions." The youth program sought to organize the young people at the local, district, and province levels, and develop them into useful citizens. Although goals were not completely accomplished, there were youth councils in 2,166 villages, 257 districts, and 47 provinces by the close of 1971.

The local self-development portion of the Community Defense and Local Development Plan comprised economic, social, and educational programs-areas almost entirely beyond the domain of the military. The US forces in South Vietnam did, however, support and assist these efforts. The Republic of Vietnam relied heavily on the Rural Development Cadre (RDC) to assist in carrying out the local self-development programs. The RDC, formed in 1965 and organized into paramilitary groups, was charged with motivating and organizing the local population to assume their own self-defense and to raise the living standards of the villages. With the

improved security in the rural areas attained by 1971, the Republic of Vietnam reorganized the RDC into smaller groups of ten persons and decreed that 50 percent of all the villages of South Vietnam would have such groups. Under the guidance of the village chief, these smaller groups assisted in local administration and development projects.

In a country at war for ten years, homeless persons were a constant problem, and refugee disposition was a major part of the pacification effort. At one time or another between 1964 and early 1971, some 25 to 30 percent of the 17,500,000 people of South Vietnam had been homeless. In more specific terms, approximately 5,300,000 South Vietnamese had been disrupted by the war. This figure included, three and a half million refugees who had been displaced from their homes; one and a half million "war victims" who had been temporarily displaced, but were able to return to their homes; and over 200,000 South Vietnamese who had fled from Cambodia when the war spread there in 1970. By the beginning of 1971, the Republic of Vietnam, with US assistance, had paid refugee benefits to roughly 5,900,000; some received benefits more than once.[25]

The refugee problem could never be completely solved as long as the war continued, for the fighting produced additional displaced persons. Although the decline in the intensity of the combat in 1969 and 1970 had brought some leveling off of the flow of refugees, the refugee program remained an important element of the 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan. Under the title "Brighter Life for War Victims," the 1971 plan ambitiously called for the permanent resettlement or return to their villages of the refugees remaining at the end of 1970 as well as those who became homeless during 1971—an estimated total of 430,000 persons. In addition, the Republic of Vietnam hoped to complete permanent resettlement of the remaining refugees from Cambodia.

During 1971, the Republic of Vietnam gave the refugee effort greatly increased emphasis, budgeting triple the amount of the previous year for this purpose. From 1 March to 31 December 1971, about 260,000 refugees received full "return-to-village" allowances while some 127,116 others, who were unable to return to their original homes, received RVN assistance in settling elsewhere. Despite this progress, displaced persons remained to be settled at the end of 1971 as new refugees were generated in the continuing fighting. Over 60,000 resulted from the U Minh Forest Operation in MR 4 during late 1970 and early 1971, and 65,000 persons, including 50,000 Montagnards, were relocated to safer areas in MR 2.

The "Brighter Life for War Victims" also included benefits for South Vietnamese veterans and their dependents. In 1970, the Republic of Vietnam had enacted a law providing extensive benefits for disabled veterans, retired veterans, and the widows, orphans, and parents of dead military personnel, and the 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan stressed effective implementation of this law. Efforts by the Republic of Vietnam during 1971 to improve the plight of veterans included: improvement of the system for paying pensions and special

compensatory allowances, processing of approximately 175,000 more benefit cases than in 1970, development of rehabilitation programs, and construction of 1,587 housing units for disabled soldiers.

South Vietnam was an agricultural country, and if it was to become truly independent and economically viable, effective land reform was essential. South Vietnam had proclaimed a series of ambitious land-reform programs, but the actual transfer of land had been minimal. In 1969, President Thieu had announced the "Land-to-the-Tiller" plan: a revolutionary proposal to distribute one million hectares of privately owned land free of charge to the tenants who currently worked it.[26] Tenants in the southern half of the country were to receive three hectares each and those in the northern half one, and the government would compensate the former landlords. This plan became law in March 1970 and the first transfer of land occurred the following August, but the reform had achieved little by the end of 1970.

The 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan called for the transfer of 400,000 hectares of land to the farmers. From March through December, titles for 312,345 hectares were distributed to farmers, and the Republic of Vietnam expected to come close to meeting the goal by the end of the plan in March 1972. During 1971, the Republic of Vietnam also undertook a program of land survey for the Montagnards to give them legal claim to the land they occupied and to prevent misappropriation of those lands. A third RVN land reform effort called for the redistribution of land to the people in resettlement camps, and the Republic of Vietnam distributed 11,027 plots totaling 8,567 hectares in the period March through December 1971.

Closely related to land reform was improvement of food production. The local self-development part of the 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan included an agricultural and fishery program designed to meet consumer requirements, export rice, and raise the rural standard of living. The plan called for self-sufficiency in rice production in 1971 through planting 750,000 hectares of miracle rice as well as development of corn and sorghum cultivation, expansion of pig and poultry raising, increased fishery production, and implementation of small irrigation projects. Rice production did increase throughout South Vietnam in 1971 with the Delta experiencing the most prosperous year in its history. Even so, only 588,873 hectares of rice were planted and South Vietnam did not become a rice exporter. Nor did the fishery projects develop as anticipated, though the other agricultural programs were largely successful.

The Republic of Vietnam made considerable progress in the areas of health, education, and public works during 1971. "Community cooperation" was the guiding principle of the public health program of the 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan, which included many projects for preventive medicine, environmental sanitation, health education, mother-child care, and disease eradication. Perhaps the most important health project was the Sanitary Hamlet Program, an attempt to attain such basic sanitation conditions in rural hamlets as potable water, suitable sanitary facilities, and 100 percent immunization against communicable diseases. By

the end of the year, the Republic of Vietnam claimed 133 such hamlets, only slightly short of the 150 goal. The Republic of Vietnam also conducted large-scale inoculations in 1971, with 2,643,657 people vaccinated against smallpox.

The Community Defense and Local Development Plan sought to increase secondary teachers from 16,270 to 19,300 by the end of the plan year and to admit a total of 62.5 percent of total primary students to secondary school through competitive examination. The percentage of students so admitted stood at 59.9 percent by the end of the year and the number of secondary teachers at 19,772. In addition, the Republic of Vietnam constructed 644 secondary classrooms during the year.

Despite the war, the Republic of Vietnam made steady progress in public works projects in 1971, increasing electrical capacity, adding miles of water distribution pipes, increasing postal and telecommunications capabilities, continuing road construction and repair, and increasing dredging. During 1971, the total installed electrical capacity throughout South Vietnam rose from 289 to 340 megawatts. In addition, 2,913 kilometers of road repair were completed in 1971, and the Republic of Vietnam built 50 kilometers of new rural roads, repaired 1,180 kilometers of rural roads, and constructed 3,980 meters of new bridges in this same period.

The two special programs of the 1971 Plan, Urban and Ethnic Minorities Development, sought to give special emphasis to the broad objectives of local self-defense, administration, and development for both the urban population and for the ethnic minorities in South Vietnam. The Urban Program recognized that the problems of the cities could be solved only on a long-term basis but did set out various priority tasks to improve administrative organization and living conditions of the cities. Some progress was made in 1971. Preventive medicine projects were launched; new schools built; and water supplies, refuse collection, and fire protection improved. With regard to the ethnic minorities, the Republic of Vietnam focused attention on training for the Montagnards, revising and expanding education and agriculture programs, and implemented other programs especially for the minorities including highland land reform, refugee support, and education. In June 1971, President Thieu appointed a new Minister for the Development of Ethnic Minorities, and he instituted a reorganization to insure greater cooperation among the RVN ministries on the problems of the minorities.

Political Developments in South Vietnam

The major political events in South Vietnam during 1971 were the countrywide elections for the Lower House of the National Assembly on 30 August followed by the presidential election on 3 October. Voting for the South Vietnamese Senate, the upper chamber of the National Assembly, had occurred in August 1970.[27]

In the summer of 1971, the political issue confronting South Vietnam was: "Who would be the contenders in the presidential election?" By the beginning of

June, there were three announced candidates: Nguyen Van Thieu, the incumbent seeking a second term; Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, the flamboyant Air Marshal and major rival of President Thieu; and General Duong Van Minh, known as "Big Minh" and one of the leaders in the coup that overthrew President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963, running as a peace candidate. President Thieu had won his first term as President four years earlier over ten other contestants, but had received only 35 percent of the total vote. This time, he wanted to win a majority and was particularly anxious to limit the number of entrants in the presidential race.[28]

Largely at President Thieu's urging, the South Vietnamese National Assembly passed a bill on 3 June sharply restricting the eligibility of candidates for the Presidency. The new bill, which President Thieu quickly approved, required each aspirant to have nomination papers signed by 40 Deputies and Senators of the National Assembly or by 100 members of the elected provincial councils. Since a majority of the Assembly members and many of the provincial councilmen supported President Thieu, the new law gave him a decided advantage.[29]

All three announced candidates pressed ahead with efforts to secure the necessary number of signatures. President Thieu easily surpassed the necessary quota, obtaining endorsement from 89 of the 159 Deputies of the Lower House of the National Assembly and 15 Senators as well as from 452 provincial councilmen. General Minh qualified with the backing of 44 members of the National Assembly. By 4 August, the deadline for submitting the required signatures, Vice President Ky had the endorsement of 102 provincial councilmen, but 40 of those had already signed for President Thieu. On the following day, the South Vietnamese Supreme Court rejected Ky's application for candidacy.[30]

Throughout June and July, General Minh had threatened to withdraw from the race should the Vice President be disqualified, and he lived up to his word. On 20 August, General Minh withdrew from the contest, stating: "I cannot lend a hand to a dirty farce which would only make the people more desperate and disillusioned with the democratic system." Minh's withdrawal left only one candidate for the October presidential election; this was a source of considerable embarrassment for the United States. How could US officials claim democracy and constitutional government were working in South Vietnam when there was only one candidate in the Presidential race? Ambassador Bunker had met with General Minh just prior to his announcement in an attempt to persuade the General not to withdraw. Following the announcement, a US Embassy spokesman in Saigon voiced regret over the development, and in the United States, the White House Press Secretary also voiced disappointment that "a major candidate" had removed himself from the election. A spokesman of the Department of State followed with a similar statement, adding that the United States favored "a fair, honest and contested election—one that would lead to a choice for the South Vietnamese people."[31]

The turn of events also embarrassed President Thieu. Apparently at his request, the South Vietnamese Supreme Court reconsidered the decision on Vice President

Ky's candidacy, and on 21 August reversed its previous ruling. The device used by the Court was to invalidate all the 452 signatures of provincial councilmen received by President Thieu. Since the President retained the endorsement of 104 members of the National Assembly, he still more than met the requirement of the election law, but now all the provincial council member signatures obtained by Ky could be counted, making him eligible for the contest. Ky, however, was no longer willing to participate in the election, and on 23 August, he held a press conference to announce his withdrawal. Once again President Thieu was left the sole contestant for the Presidency.[32]

The election for the Lower House of the South Vietnam National Assembly occurred without incident on 29 August 1971. Slightly more than 78 percent of the eligible voters turned out to select 159 deputies from among some 1,242 candidates in an election that, "with certain glaring exceptions," was judged fair and correct. Candidates opposing President Thieu and his policies scored impressive gains, but the President still commanded a majority in the new body.[33]

President Thieu proceeded with preparations for the presidential election on 3 October apparently reconciled to the fact that his would be the only name on the ballot. The election would, in fact, be a referendum indicating by the size of the vote the support for the President. Meantime, anti-Thieu and anti-US demonstrations occurred sporadically in South Vietnam. There were also reports of statements by Nguyen Cao Ky promising to stage a military coup if President Thieu went ahead with the election, but the Vice President never publicly voiced such a threat. On 16 September, the anti-Government An Quang Buddhist group called on all "freedom and democracy loving people" in South Vietnam to boycott the 3 October election, and several days later, the Senate of the South Vietnam National Assembly adopted a resolution asking President Thieu to postpone the election, but the President ignored the request.[34]

The United States had reconciled itself to the uncontested election in South Vietnam, and Secretary of State Rogers told a press conference on 3 September that he viewed the forthcoming vote as a test of public confidence in the Thieu administration. *The New York Times* reported some days later that "United States officials" had cautioned South Vietnamese generals against any coup against President Thieu in the present election crisis and that any such attempt would lead to an end of US support. The files of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, reveal no indication of such US action.[35]

The presidential election took place as scheduled on 3 October 1971. Despite enemy shelling of a dozen cities and hamlets, including Saigon and four provincial capitals, approximately 87 percent of the eligible seven million voters in South Vietnam went to the polls. This figure represented a slight increase over the 83 percent participation in the presidential election in 1967. Nguyen Van Thieu received 94 percent of the ballots cast with only 6 percent left blank or mutilated. Obviously,

the Buddhist call for a boycott went largely unheeded, and although Nguyen Cao Ky refused to vote, he took no action to disrupt the election.[36]

President Thieu took the oath of office for his second four-year term on 31 October in a ceremony held under tight security conditions. Speaking before a carefully selected audience, including US Secretary of the Treasury John Connally representing President Nixon, the South Vietnamese President proposed an immediate cease-fire and welcomed peace initiatives from "anywhere." In a more realistic vein, he reminded his fellow countrymen that they would soon be fighting alone and called for national attempts for self-sufficiency. He called upon the United States to continue military, economic, and social assistance to enable South Vietnam to continue to fight while rebuilding and moving toward self-reliance. In honor of the inauguration, the Republic of Vietnam began the release of approximately 3,000 Viet Cong prisoners to be completed over the next few days. The great majority of those released would undergo a Chieu Hoi indoctrination program and then would be set free; ironically, they would be subject to military service.[37]

Economic Matters

To attain the self-sufficiency called for in the inaugural address, President Thieu launched a program of economic reform to cut South Vietnam's reliance on US assistance and to combat chronic inflation in South Vietnam. Unveiling his plan in a speech before a joint session of the South Vietnamese National Assembly on 15 November 1971, he called for a devaluation of the piaster by almost 50 percent. This action, he anticipated, would make the piaster "more realistic," defeating the black market in dollars and attracting foreign investment. Other aspects of the program included: tariff reform, including higher levies on importation of non-essential items; a pay increase for both RVN civil servants and the RVNAF; and a new investment law to stimulate further foreign investment in the RVN economy.[38]

United States officials were also concerned about economic reform in South Vietnam. They realized that, if South Vietnam was to become truly independent, it must be self-sufficient economically as well as militarily. This would not be easy to accomplish. The large US military presence in South Vietnam accompanied by US economic assistance over the previous years had made the South Vietnamese economy largely dependent on the United States. In December 1971, it was estimated that US assistance accounted for over 60 percent of the total RVN national budget.[39] Although the United States did not contemplate either an immediate end or even a drastic reduction in its economic assistance to South Vietnam, President Nixon and his advisers recognized that South Vietnam must have help to become more economically independent.

Complete coverage of US economic programs for South Vietnam is beyond the scope of this volume, but Department of Defense involvement in this area should

be reviewed. Secretary of Defense Laird had long been aware of the economic problems caused by the US military presence in South Vietnam. In August 1970, he had told Admiral Moorer that the implications of the South Vietnamese economic situation necessitated full participation by his office and the Joint Chiefs in development of US economic policies to insure the success of Vietnamization. Laird suggested an economic adviser for COMUSMACV to work with other elements of the US mission in Saigon and, through the Joint Chiefs, with his office. Accordingly, COMUSMACV established the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Affairs on 4 September 1970, and Brigadier General William Watkin, USA, was appointed to the position. In reporting this action to the Secretary, the JCS noted that Department of Defense assistance for South Vietnamese economic problems was useful.[40]

Watkin's tour in Vietnam would end in October 1971; in June 1971, COMUSMACV urged continuing the position, explaining that:

> The experience of the past nine months has more than justified the decision to establish an economic affairs office in MACV. The office plays a dynamic and highly effective role by developing and guiding MACV programs which stimulate RVN economic development, by collaborating with the USEMB and USAID on measures designed to control inflation and to rationalize the GVN economic system and by providing DOD with an independent source of analysis, information, and advice concerning the RVN economy.

Abrams believed that the economic affairs office was an invaluable element of his headquarters, now and in the future. The JCS agreed and the position of Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Affairs was continued.[41]

To assist the South Vietnamese economy, the Deputy Secretary of Defense requested in July 1971 that COMUSMACV and the Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFACENGCOM), develop a program for the expansion of the South Vietnamese construction industry. General Abrams and the NAVFACENGCOM commander prepared the requested program and the Joint Chiefs sent it to the Secretary of Defense on 11 August as an "interim enhancement program" that could serve as the start for a long-term project.[42]

President Nixon followed the economic situation in South Vietnam, and on 26 July 1971, Dr. Kissinger informed various US officials, including the Under Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman, of the President's decision to establish a special economic development fund for South Vietnam. In effect, what the President wanted, as Dr. Kissinger pointed out, was "Vietnamization" of the South Vietnamese economy. The President planned to ask Congress for a five-year authorization of about $150 million per year to facilitate reduction of US economic assistance. Developmental elements in existing US programs would be brought together and funds would be supplied for machinery, spare parts, construction materials, equipment, and other investment goods. Dr. Kissinger request-

ed a study on this matter for Senior Review Group consideration by 15 August 1971.[43] A study was prepared with minimal involvement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Prior to completion of the study, a member of the Chairman's Staff Group advised Admiral Moorer that "The JCS will, of course, coordinate on the paper but in my view there is very little of substance we can contribute." Subsequently, the Senior Review Group held consideration of the paper in abeyance because of the "political climate" in both Washington and Saigon, and no further action was taken.[44]

Since the economic development fund did not prove feasible, the President and Dr. Kissinger turned to other ways of promoting the economic independence of South Vietnam. On 3 January 1972, Dr. Kissinger asked the Vietnam Special Studies Group for an evaluation of the economic support required by South Vietnam during the coming years as well as alternative ways of meeting that need. As the first phase, he wanted consideration of foreign exchange support for the Republic of Vietnam during 1972. As sources for such support, he mentioned such possibilities as diversion of money from US AID projects and certain Department of Defense projects that might slow the drain of South Vietnam's foreign exchange.[45]

The Vietnam Special Studies Group prepared the study, and after considering it, the President made his decision on 17 February 1972. He selected the second option presented by the Study Group, providing South Vietnam $680 million of US economic support in 1972 and requiring $385 million in FY 1972 supporting assistance funds. This assistance would be used to encourage the Republic of Vietnam to increase domestic taxes, improve government efficiency, adjust the exchange rate, and take other appropriate actions to reduce the level of US support needed in future years. The President directed the Secretary of Defense to review his 1973 budget to find ways of providing an additional $60 million for economic support of South Vietnam.[46]

After review, which included initial recommendations by COMUSMACV, the Secretary of Defense told Kissinger that there was no excess in the Department of Defense FY 1973 budget. He believed, however, that the additional $60 million requested by the President could be met through expansion of military construction in South Vietnam, increased in-country procurement, direct military budget support to the Republic of Vietnam, and other expedients, some involving the use of unobligated FY 1971 funds. At the same time, the Secretary of Defense informed the Service Secretaries, the Chairman, the Service Chiefs, and CINCPAC of his approval of these actions and asked for their "whole-hearted" support to meet the economic assistance levels established by the President.[47]

Subsequently, on 19 May 1972, Dr. Kissinger related to the Secretary of Defense that he and the President had discussed the Department of Defense proposed action for economic support for South Vietnam and that the President had approved those proposals. "Your support," Kissinger told Laird, "and that of the Department of Defense on this critical matter has been outstanding."[48]

Pacification in 1972

Pacification appeared to be succeeding at the beginning of 1972. Over the past several years, combat operations had pushed main-force enemy units back into the jungles and mountains while the RVN community defense and local development program had eroded Viet Cong control of essential resources in the populated areas of South Vietnam. But, late in 1971, growing indicators had appeared that the enemy, recognizing the RVN pacification success, planned counter efforts. In repeated instances, captured Viet Cong documents called "counter-pacification operations" the "pivotal" task at present. Exhorting the Viet Cong cadre members to return from their jungle hideouts to the villages, these documents emphasized the low profile tactics that had enabled the Viet Cong in the early 1960s to gain control over large areas of the countryside.[49]

Observing the success of pacification during 1971, both South Vietnamese and US officials saw no need to change either basic objectives or approaches, even with the indications of possible enemy counter efforts. Rather, what was required, they believed, was steady, continuous progress toward established goals. These officials did consider that the time had come when it was not only possible but necessary to plan pacification on a longer-term basis. As a result, the Republic of Vietnam published in early 1972 a new plan covering the four-year period from March 1972 through 1975. This Four Year Community Defense and Local Development Plan, 1972–1975 (hereafter referred to as the Four Year Plan) called for the completion of all pacification tasks resulting in a secure and stable South Vietnam. With the same basic goals as in the previous plans, it emphasized long-range programs to support national economic development. As in earlier plans, the new plan focused attention on: consolidation and maintenance of security for the entire country; elimination of communist guerrillas and terrorism; efficiency and integrity of government administration at all levels; and emphasis on social and economic progress.

The Four Year Plan continued to organize all programs under the three basic objectives of local self-defense, local self-government, and local self-development. All the programs of the 1971 plan were retained and five new ones were added. In the area of self-defense, the Four Year Plan called for full security (HES rating of A) for 100 percent of the hamlets of South Vietnam by 1975, for full manning of the Regional and Popular Forces at authorized levels, for a trained and effective National Police at the approved strength of 122,000 in 1972, and elimination of all forms of communist sabotage, terrorism, and subversion. The self-defense portion of the Four Year Plan continued the Chieu Hoi and Phung Hoang Programs and included a new effort—an Administrative Security Program to protect government officials, installations, and documents at all levels. Local self-government in the Four Year Plan encompassed the same objectives and activities as in the previous plan and added the new Local Revenue Development Program to enhance financial self-sufficiency of the provinces, cities, and villages. All the economic and social efforts fell under the local self-

development portion of the Four Year Plan. There was also one new aspect in this section, a program to improve the financial system and supply services for needed economic development. The special urban and ethnic programs of the 1971 plan were carried forward in the new plan and two more special ones were added: one to eradicate all "social evils" such as drug use, venereal disease, crime, and the like; and administrative reform to streamline governmental procedures and public services, eliminating corruption and reducing delays.[50]

The Republic of Vietnam launched the Four Year Community Defense and Local Development Plan on 1 March 1972 with high hopes for its success, but almost immediately the massive North Vietnamese offensive, beginning on 31 March 1972, dealt a severe blow to pacification. Large areas of South Vietnam fell under North Vietnamese control, lines of communication were interrupted, and tremendous numbers of new refugees were created. Not only were many pacification projects disrupted but both personnel and resources from others were diverted to meet emergency situations. By the end of August 1972, the offensive had been blunted and the Republic of Vietnam undertook recovery efforts to return the community defense and local development program to its original course. Special plans prepared in seventeen affected provinces identified actions to rebuild security, restore governmental services, and reconstruct damaged public facilities, and the Republic of Vietnam reprogrammed 848 million piasters for these projects. The United States supplied financial assistance for the recovery operations and CORDS advisers worked closely with the South Vietnamese on these efforts. As a result, by the end of 1972, the pacification effort was largely restored to the point where it had stood at the start of the year.[51]

When the Four Year Plan was launched, 82.7 percent of all hamlets were judged fully secure, a fact that seemed to place the 100 percent objective within reach. The enemy offensive, however, quickly changed the situation and statistics for territorial security more than any other indicator showed the disruption wrought by the offensive. The number of Viet Cong-controlled hamlets rose from seven in February to 1,164 in May, and the percentage of secure hamlets fell proportionally, dropping to 70.3 percent at the beginning of August 1972. Thereafter, the overall country rating began a gradual rise as the South Vietnamese forces reasserted control. By the end of December 1972, the figure for fully secure hamlets had reached 79.6 percent.

The North Vietnamese offensive tested the RVN territorial security forces, and the results were not encouraging. The performance of the Regional and Popular Forces, who retained responsibility for local defense and security under the Four Year Plan, varied from outstanding to poor. In Quang Tri and Binh Long Provinces, the Regional Forces took a determined stand against superior forces, but in Binh Dinh and Kontum, neither the Regional nor the Popular Forces made much effort to stop the enemy in the initial days of the offensive. The territorial forces were spread too thin in MR 4 during the early part of the offensive, and numerous bases were overrun or abandoned. The offensive caused a decline in the strength of both

forces in the first half of the year, though these strengths largely recovered by the end of the year.

Similarly, the performance of the People's Self Defense Force, with a few exceptions, proved marginal during the offensive. Weakness of the PSDF was a serious obstacle to hopes of effective security at the grass-roots level. The RVN attempted to strengthen the PSDF during the recovery period, and significant numbers of combat members attended refresher training to improve their combat performance.

The Four Year Plan called for further strengthening of the National Police within the approved 122,000-man ceiling and creation of an effective police presence throughout the countryside by deploying 30,000 National Police to the villages and establishing police stations in all secure villages. Although the enemy offensive prevented accomplishment of the latter objective, National Police performance was judged "adequate" during the offensive and was particularly effective in helping prosecute a special anti-VCI campaign. Despite the offensive, National Police training proceeded on schedule during 1972 and the National Police did assume responsibility for Phung Hoang operations from the province and district intelligence centers as planned.

Phung Hoang operations were one area of the pacification program that did not suffer from the enemy offensive. Phung Hoang neutralizations increased substantially during the period of the offensive in all Military Regions, except MR 3, primarily because the increased tempo of enemy activity made the VCI "more vulnerable." On the other hand, terrorism against the South Vietnamese increased sharply during the early stages of the offensive, but tapered off by the summer.

The Four Year Plan set an overall goal of 48,000 Hoi Chanh (ralliers) for the Chieu Hoi program with 14,000 in 1972. Again, the enemy invasion hampered this effort. The number of Hoi Chanh fell sharply in April 1972 and continued to decline, though at a slower rate, through May and June. In July the rate began to rise and in August it nearly equaled that of the previous March. The last three months of the year saw a decline in the ralliers, largely attributable to reduced military activity and uncertainty about the peace negotiations. Consequently by the end of the year, some 10,052 Hoi Chanh had rallied to the Republic of Vietnam, missing the established goal by almost 4,000.

The North Vietnamese offensive also dealt a considerable setback to local self-government programs. Combat operations in the period April–August 1972 disrupted 260 South Vietnamese villages although many of these villages continued to function in refugee locations. The Republic of Vietnam anticipated using Province Mobile Assistance Teams in 1972 to supervise and assist village officials, but the offensive forced abandonment of team visits in many areas. In other aspects of local self-government, however, some success was attained. The Four Year Plan introduced the Local Revenue Improvement Program to build fiscal self-sufficiency for villages and provinces, and the year 1972 saw considerable progress in that

effort. In addition, the Republic of Vietnam proceeded with administrative reforms to cut red tape and simplify government procedures for its citizens.

Because of the enemy offensive, the most important aspect of the community defense and local development effort in 1972 was the refugee program. Prior to April 1972, the Republic of Vietnam had made considerable progress in resettlement of its homeless citizens and elimination of the refugee problem seemed within reach. Then the offensive broke leaving nearly 1.3 million people homeless at some time during the next nine months. The Republic of Vietnam acted with dispatch to meet the challenge, initiating emergency assistance to provide shelter, medical care, and other necessities to the growing number of refugees. This emergency relief took precedence over all other programs with the exception of the conduct of the war itself. The United States assisted, providing more than 14 billion piasters ($31 million) for refugee relief as well as contributing an additional $1.26 million in direct dollar costs. The United States also supplied over 2,000 tents as temporary housing for refugees, and abandoned US military bases were used as refugee sites. By the close of 1972, the Republic of Vietnam had assisted over 400,000 refugees to return to their villages while about 790,000 were receiving assistance in some 150 refugee camps in 22 provinces.

Within the constraints necessitated by the North Vietnamese offensive, the Republic of Vietnam proceeded with the other economic and social programs of the local self-development portion of the Four Year Plan. In spite of the diversion of resources to meet emergency needs, the reconstruction of roads, railroads, and bridges progressed, and by the end of December 80 percent of the year's objectives in these areas had been completed. Distribution of land ceased in contested areas, but land reform moved ahead elsewhere. By December 1972, the Republic of Vietnam had approved 924,947 hectares for distribution and had actually redistributed 694,573 hectares, and expected to reach the goal of distributing one million hectares by 26 March 1973, the third anniversary of the land reform law. Despite the progress in land reform, the Republic of Vietnam did not become a rice exporter in 1972. The enemy offensive combined with bad weather precluded that eventuality and the Republic Vietnam would import rice in the coming year. Finally, veterans programs continued and education suffered no permanent set back in 1972. The offensive did destroy school buildings in many areas, forcing a shortened school year; but the Republic of Vietnam began school reconstruction in July and nearly all schools in South Vietnam were repaired, staffed, and ready when the fall term began in September. Moreover, school attendance in the fall of 1972 was at previous levels and there were no critical shortages of teachers, buildings, or supplies.

By the end of 1972, the civil defense and local development campaign had made a remarkable recovery from the disruptions of the enemy spring offensive. Consequently, at the start of 1973, the pacification picture in South Vietnam was much the same as it had been a year before. But, with all signs indicating an

imminent political settlement of the war, the question was: Could the fragile pacification gains be maintained and continued?

The United States and North Vietnam did reach a negotiated agreement on the war in January 1973. A ceasefire went into effect throughout South Vietnam on 27 January 1973, and the United States agreed to withdraw all of its military forces from South Vietnam within 60 days. This agreement, however, did not end the fighting in South Vietnam. In fact, the announcement of the settlement spurred heavy fighting as both sides attempted to increase their control of territory before the cease-fire came into force. As a result, during January 1973, the percentage of fully secure hamlets under RVN control fell by over three points from 79.6 to 76.1.[52]

With the signature of the agreement and the withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam, the United States dismantled its organization for military support of pacification efforts. The CORDS structure was disbanded and ceased to exist on 27 February 1973. Various functions and civilian personnel were transferred to US civilian agencies in South Vietnam. Advisory assistance for the Chieu Hoi program was shifted to the Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Field Operations; refugee support became the responsibility of the US AID office; and CORDS civilian personnel in the field were retained under newly established Directorates for Resettlement and Reconstruction under four consuls-general in Da Nang, Nha Trang, Bien Hoa, and Can Tho.[53]

Now, after many years of effort and great expense, US military support for pacification in South Vietnam ended. Reduced assistance, carried on by civilian personnel, would continue, but a crucial question remained. Would this reduced assistance be sufficient now that the Republic of Vietnam had to face the continuing enemy threat alone? If the peace settlement had brought an end to the fighting, perhaps the Republic of Vietnam could have built on the foundation laid by the pacification programs to become a truly viable nation. But since North Vietnam and the Viet Cong never intended to live up to the agreement, pacification could not prevent the fall of the Republic of Vietnam.

12

The Negotiations to End the War in 1971 and 1972

At the beginning of 1971, the Paris talks to end the war in Vietnam had been in progress for almost two years. President Johnson on 31 March 1968 had restricted the US bombing of North Vietnam to the area immediately above the DMZ in an effort to get talks started, and on 13 May 1968, US and North Vietnamese representatives began meetings in Paris to consider procedural matters preliminary to substantive negotiations. Finally on 31 October 1968, the United States ceased all bombing of North Vietnam in return for agreement to begin expanded talks, and on 25 January 1969, delegations of the United States, the Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the National Liberation Front, or Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam (as they renamed themselves in June 1969), met for the first time in plenary session in Paris at the old Majestic Hotel.[1]

Delegates of the four parties held 97 plenary sessions during 1969 and 1970, but reached no agreement on a settlement. The United States and the Republic of Vietnam sought a verified withdrawal of all external forces from South Vietnam, release of all prisoners, and a political solution decided by the South Vietnamese free of outside interference. North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, however, rejected all allied proposals insisting on unconditional removal of all non-Vietnamese forces but without provision for withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops in the south. They refused to discuss a political settlement in South Vietnam and demanded the overthrow of President Thieu and his government.[2]

The Mechanics

The US participation in the Vietnam negotiations in 1971 and 1972 followed a pattern developed early in 1969. The preparation for and conduct of the talks in Paris were carried out by the Department of State at the direction of the President. Despite the political nature of the negotiations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff participated though their involvement was not readily apparent.

In 1971 and 1972, the Joint Chiefs never took a formal position on the Vietnam negotiations, nor did they provide the Secretary of Defense any views or recommendations on this subject for submission to Dr. Kissinger, the Secretary of State, or the President. Undoubtedly, the Chiefs discussed the peace talks among themselves and with the Secretary, but no written record of such deliberations is available. The JCS did, nevertheless, have a voice in the negotiations. From the start of the Paris talks in 1968, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had provided a military adviser to the US Delegation. Although he had no independent voice in the delegation decisions, he was, in practice, a full participant in that body's discussions. He kept the delegation informed of the current military situation in Vietnam, evaluating such developments as combat high points and lulls and changes in infiltration levels. He also advised on the military significance of actions under consideration by the delegation and supported the Department of Defense and JCS positions in those considerations. In addition, the military adviser attended all plenary sessions of the Paris talks.[3]

Another vehicle of JCS influence on the negotiations was Joint Staff participation in the NSC interdepartmental bodies in Washington that dealt with the talks, the Indochina Ad Hoc Group (IAHG) and the Vietnam Special Studies Group. Officers of the Plans and Policy Directorate, J–5, were members of both, together with representatives of the NSC staff, the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs). The Indochina Ad Hoc Group was charged with coordination of guidance and direction for the plenary Paris talks. It reviewed and approved proposals from the US Delegation for presentation at the weekly sessions. The second body, the Vietnam Special Studies Group, was responsible for broad planning and development of overall negotiating strategy. Papers of both groups were usually reviewed by the Senior Review Group; as a member of the SRG, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had a voice in its deliberations. Certainly, he spoke for the Joint Chiefs in those meetings as well as at NSC meetings, and he must have reported back to the other Chiefs on the discussions and decisions reached in these meetings. But again no record of these reports has been found.[4]

Within the Joint Staff, the Southeast Asia Watch Group on a Negotiated Settlement (SEAWAGONS) monitored the negotiations and kept the Chairman abreast of current developments. Operating under the overall direction of the Director, J–5, the SEAWAGONS was under the immediate supervision of the Chief, Far East/

South Asia Division, J–5, and included one principal and alternate from each Directorate of the Joint Staff and from the Defense Intelligence Agency. The SEAWAGONS was the point of contact with the military advisers at the Paris talks.[5]

In addition to the plenary Paris peace negotiations, there were the much more important private talks between Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, which had begun in August 1969. These meetings were conducted in extreme secrecy and the Joint Chiefs had no input to or detailed knowledge of them. A J–5 briefing in the summer of 1972 on the current status of the negotiations stated that no information on the private talks was available. Even as late as October 1972, when the private talks had reached a critical state, the Joint Staff had "no information" on them.[6]

Developing a Cease-Fire Proposal

With President Nixon's inauguration in January 1969 and the initiation of the Paris peace talks, the United States had undertaken the development of a comprehensive position on the various issues to be considered in the pursuit of a peaceful settlement. During 1969, US officials in Washington working within the revamped NSC system had prepared a series of papers dealing with mutual withdrawal, verification, political settlement, and international guarantees of a settlement. In the first half of 1970, a cease-fire paper was prepared, and extant negotiating papers were refined and updated.[7]

On 7 October 1970, President Nixon publicly offered a new peace proposal that included, for the first time, "a cease-fire in-place."[8] Subsequently, the President asked for preparation of a US position on possible cease-fire negotiations, and Dr. Kissinger notified the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Chairman on 16 October 1970 of this requirement. The President wanted development of "specific and comprehensive" negotiating criteria on all aspects of enemy behavior under an in-place ceasefire. The President also asked for a thorough examination of verification and control, including such matters as ways of insuring South Vietnamese compliance, means of assessing enemy performance under a ceasefire, and possible supervisory bodies. Finally, the study was to include alternative US cease-fire negotiating postures, with consideration of probable enemy responses and initiatives, and possible cease-fire arrangements in Laos and Cambodia.[9]

The Working Group of the Vietnam Special Studies Group was assigned actual preparation of the study, and drafting was done by two panels: one on negotiations chaired by a Department of State representative and another on military arrangements in South Vietnam directed by a representative of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs). Members of the Joint Staff were on both panels. On 30 October 1970, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC and COMUSMACV

to furnish information to the Joint Staff as soon as possible to insure that the views of the field commanders were incorporated in the new cease-fire paper.[10]

Dr. Kissinger had asked for the study by 10 December 1970, but due undoubtedly to the lack of any progress in the negotiations, that deadline was not kept. The VSSG Working Group cease-fire paper went through two drafts during the spring of 1971 with the final version completed on 10 June 1971. In this paper, the Working Group treated a cease-fire as an "interim measure" to halt fighting and create an environment leading to a final settlement. The Working Group limited its assessment to in-place cease-fire alternatives designed to maintain the status quo by stopping or reducing military activity in a way that prevented either side from improving its military position after implementation of the cease-fire.

A principal concern of the Working Group was that the enemy would use his main forces to upset the status quo achieved in a cease-fire. He might employ them for overt military action (at a level too low to constitute a formal breach) or to provide support and encouragement for similar action by local forces. Or his main forces could be held in reserve and rebuilt to resume hostilities at a more favorable time. In order to develop realistic alternatives, the Working Group analyzed representative areas within South Vietnam to identify enemy main force activities and potential for violation that would need to be neutralized in a cease-fire. The Working Group then extended this analysis to the country as a whole and, as a result, presented two alternatives or "cease-fire terms" as it designated them.

The first term (Alternative I) provided for main forces of both sides to freeze in-place with locations and unit designations established on the ground by a joint military commission within negotiated agreements as to size of the areas. A variant of this term was identical except there would be no formal machinery for enforcement. The second term (Alternative II) would require main forces to remain in "sanctuary" areas identified by negotiation, which might not be entered by the military, administrative, or police forces of the other side.

Of the two terms, the Working Group favored Alternative II because it would provide an opportunity to remove enemy main forces from populated areas. Conversely, since Alternative I allowed location of enemy main forces near populated areas, it posed greater potential for changes in control of the population, encouraging greater activity by local forces and the VCI. Under either alternative, the Working Group predicted a buildup of enemy supplies and personnel since the communists were unlikely to give up voluntarily the option of strengthening their forces.

Since the nature of the war as well as the political situation in Laos and Cambodia was fundamentally different from South Vietnam, the Working Group supplied separate cease-fire terms for those two countries. In Laos, the Working Group considered that a cease-fire would offer benefits to both sides and, hence, should be followed by a period of "good observance and relative military stability." In Cambodia, however, the Working Group expected both sides to continue to

struggle for political control with any cease-fire directly related to the outcome in South Vietnam.[11]

The cease-fire paper was scheduled for consideration by the SRG on 20 July 1971, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) and the Director of the Joint Staff prepared a talking paper for use by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Chairman. The Assistant Secretary and the Director considered the methodology of the paper good and the work "very detailed," but noted that, except for specific data input, the final paper had not been coordinated with the military commands, the field agencies, or the Paris delegation. Moreover, they considered the paper to a great extent "judgmental" with outcomes that could be considered far from certain.

In consideration of cease-fire papers the previous year, the Department of Defense position had maintained that any cease-fire must be linked to withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam.[12] The President, however, had rejected that advice and his 7 October 1970 speech had called for a cease-fire in-place without mention of any condition for withdrawal. In accordance with the President's proposal, the 10 June 1971 VSSG Working Group paper included no provision for withdrawal; nor did the Assistant Secretary or the Director advocate a withdrawal alternative. As the Department position on the control aspect of the new study, they supported Alternative II provided it would be so applied as to leave the ARVN widely dispersed in battalion-sized sanctuaries while grouping enemy forces into a smaller number of larger (regimental-size) sanctuaries away from population centers. Should Alternative I be negotiated, the two officials urged great emphasis on agreement for an effective international supervisory body present at each main force location. With regard to enemy main force buildup and possible resumption of hostilities, the Assistant Secretary and the Director found neither alternative clearly preferable. To discourage a resumption of hostilities by the enemy, they believed that "a credible deterrent" based on the threat of retaliation would be necessary. Until the RVNAF could provide such a capability, they said, the threat of US retaliation must fill the deterrent gap. In conclusion, they considered the paper a first step and recommended that it be provided to the US Embassies in Saigon, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh and the US Delegation in Paris. A second phase study, to translate objectives into specific negotiating proposals, should be developed if needed.[13]

The SRG meeting was postponed until 22 July 1971 when all the principals—Dr. Henry Kissinger, Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard, Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms, and Admiral Thomas Moorer—gathered to consider the cease-fire paper. In discussion, Moorer commented upon the difficulty of negotiating enemy sanctuaries away from the population as compared with the ease of negotiating an in-place cessation. He also believed that it would be difficult to get the Government of Vietnam "to allocate its sovereign territory for use as NVA sanctuaries." Citing experience with the

1954 Indochina accords, Deputy Secretary Johnson confirmed that negotiation of sanctuaries was impractical. There was general agreement that the in-place provisions of Alternative I were the most practical approach. After some discussion of an appropriate international supervisory body, Dr. Kissinger ended the meeting by listing the actions still to be accomplished on the cease-fire terms: comments from the field; further work on the matter of a supervisory body; and preparation of a final paper for the President.[14]

The VSSG paper was sent to the field for comment. General Abrams found the scope of the study "a very narrow basis for developing a US position on cease-fire terms." Further, he observed that the study conclusions indicated a distinct disadvantage for the friendly governments of South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos under cease-fire terms in an insurgency environment. The enemy, he believed, accustomed to covert and clandestine methods, would be much less inhibited by the proposed supervisory mechanism than would the South Vietnamese. Consequently, he suggested an extension of the study in order to create an atmosphere "equally restrictive" to both sides during subsequent negotiations for settlement. Specifically, he urged inclusion of "a planned withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese combat forces" as another alternative cease-fire term and suggested that a more effective control mechanism would be needed. CINCPAC concurred in Abrams' position.[15]

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker in Saigon replied on 21 August that the scope of the study was so limited that it failed to provide an adequate basis for "cease-fire negotiating alternatives." Further he found the study unrealistic in the assumptions that it made about the kind of cease-fire terms the enemy was likely to accept. As a general observation, he emphasized the importance of viewing a cease-fire "not as an end in itself, but as a stage in an interlocked process intended ultimately to eliminate the causes of the fighting."[16]

In his reply, Ambassador Philip C. Habib, the interim head of the US Delegation to the peace talks in Paris, addressed the acceptability of a cease-fire to both sides. The study, he stated, seemed to be based on the supposition that North Vietnam was losing the war and that the allied side could impose the terms of a settlement. It was Ambassador Habib's best evidence that the North Vietnamese did not think they were losing the war nor were they prepared to enter into negotiations on a US-proposed cease-fire. Even if they should, the Ambassador doubted they would agree to the concessions required by the VSSG study. Habib found the study useful in defining an opening allied position, but considered its scenarios unrealistic.[17]

Upon receipt of the field comments, the VSSG Working Group prepared a new paper, "Alternative Sets of Cease-Fire Terms," which was completed on 23 August 1971. This paper went beyond the 10 June 1971 study in that it described the "general conceptual framework in which cease-fire terms might be considered," though without any attempt to relate the terms to the political and other issues of an overall settlement. The new paper gave additional attention to the problem of supervision of a cease-fire and provided additional cease-fire terms. The terms now included four alternatives; the

first provided for all forces, both main and local, to freeze in-place with supervision by the current International Control Commission (ICC). Alternative 2 would locate enemy main forces in sanctuaries while friendly main forces would be widespread with local forces free to conduct defensive operations. Supervision would be by "a new, large International Supervisory Body." Under both alternatives, military forces in Laos and Cambodia would be separated along a line reflecting current troop dispositions, and RVNAF forces would withdraw from Cambodia. Alternative 1, however, would allow certain adjustments in the line in favor of the enemy. Alternative 3 would freeze all main forces in-place with South Vietnamese forces free to conduct defensive operations. The supervision aspect would be as in Alternative 2. Alternative 4 was identical to Alternative 3 except supervision would be by the current International Control Commission rather than by the new International Supervisory Body.

In assessing these terms, the Working Group believed that Alternative 1 would prove attractive to North Vietnam and, hence, would be easier to negotiate than the other alternatives. Accordingly, the first alternative did not constitute an "attractive" negotiating position for the allied side, at least initially. Alternative 2, on the other hand, the Working Group stated, was the most favorable to "our side," but would probably be rejected "out of hand" by Hanoi. Alternative 3 offered a more favorable prospect for negotiation than the two preceding ones since it struck a degree of compromise on supervision and placed nearly equal restriction on both sides' main forces, calling for a "genuine" freeze in-place of all main forces. Moreover, it dropped any idea of relocating enemy main forces into sanctuaries. The fourth alternative would be less acceptable to the allied side due to the weak supervision provided by the International Control Commission.

In the 23 August paper, the Working Group also examined the possibility of a unilateral allied cease-fire as a tactic to draw the enemy into fruitful negotiations for a final settlement. Such a possibility would have strong political and psychological impact on the world community as well as placing the burden of response on the enemy. But it involved certain risks. The enemy might seize the opportunity to improve his military situation surreptitiously while giving the appearance of a favorable response, thus making it difficult for the allied side to justify a resumption of offensive operations. In an annex on verification and enforcement of a cease-fire, the Working Group considered the following international supervisory bodies in order of effectiveness: (1) a UN-sponsored body; (2) a new international organization; (3) an expanded and strengthened International Control Commission; (4) the current International Control Commission supplemented by observers.[18]

The SRG considered the new cease-fire paper on 1 October 1971; in anticipation of the meeting, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) and the Director of the Joint Staff again supplied the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Chairman a talking paper for the meeting. On the basis of expected declines in GVN control and continued enemy buildup under all four alternative terms, as well as the seeming dependence of a stable Cambodia on the outcome in

South Vietnam, the Assistant Secretary and the Director considered a cease-fire in-place prior to a final settlement undesirable. They believed that a cease-fire must be linked to a political agreement that would prevent a continued struggle for control. One goal for such a final solution should be a verified mutual withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces. Without such political linkages, the two officials considered the new cease-fire study an unrealistic approach to negotiation and recommended against referring it to the NSC.[19]

At the 1 October Senior Review Group meeting, there was a general consensus that Alternatives 1 and 4 of the cease-fire study were disadvantageous to the allied side and should not be considered. There was also agreement that Alternative 2 was the most favorable from "our viewpoint" though the participants recognized that its unacceptability to the North Vietnamese made it impractical. Consequently, Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard stated that Alternative 3 was the most "practical and realistic" approach and should be used as a point of departure. Lieutenant General Richard T. Knowles, USA, the Assistant to the Chairman, who represented Admiral Moorer at the meeting, suggested consideration of something between Alternatives 2 and 3 since the in-place cease-fire provision of Alternative 3 posed too many disadvantages for the allied side. No final action was taken on the paper, and in closing the meeting, Dr. Kissinger stated that three more things were needed to round out the cease-fire study: a paper on possible enemy actions prior to implementation of a cease-fire; evaluation and development of concepts to monitor infiltration and military violations during a cease-fire; and preparation of a "political framework" that should "surround" a cease-fire agreement based on Alternative 3.[20]

Subsequently, on 11 October 1971, President Nixon presented a private peace initiative to the North Vietnamese that included provision for a cease-fire. This proposal was not made public until the following January and, even then, few details were released.[21] The cease-fire offered, however, was not one of the type considered in the VSSG Working Group paper. Rather, the President proposed "a general cease-fire throughout Indochina" to begin when an agreement was signed, and, as set forth in the overall initiative, the agreement would include prisoner release, a political settlement in South Vietnam based on free elections, and respect for the 1954 Geneva Agreements. Nixon's offer became moot as the North Vietnamese made no positive response, and the matter proceeded no further.[22]

The three papers requested by Dr. Kissinger at the 1 October SRG meeting were prepared in late October and early November. The one on probable enemy actions prior to implementation of a cease-fire was expanded to include possible actions by the allied side as well. This paper predicted that both sides would undertake a series of major actions to expand their territorial control and political influence in an attempt to strengthen their respective strategic, tactical, and negotiating postures. The second paper examined not only problems of monitoring a cease-fire but also the manpower required. With respect to monitoring, it concluded that, in the twentieth century, cease-fires ending non-decisive combat were rarely effective

without international supervision. Moreover, the particularly non-decisive nature of the struggle in Indochina made the presence of an international supervisory body "a matter of greater than normal importance." Since the tasks of such a body in Indochina would be monumental, the paper proposed an "optimum practical size" for such a body of 8,500 to 12,000 personnel. A force of 17,200 to 22,000 would do a better job, but probably could not be attained, while one of less than 3,000 to 5,000 was considered too small. These first two papers were prepared by a NSC task force. The Indochina Ad Hoc Group supplied the remaining one, a detailed, step-by-step negotiating scenario, incorporating a cease-fire as contained in Alternative 3 of the VSSG Working Group paper.[23]

No action was taken on these three studies. Nor is there any evidence that the SRG considered the 23 August 1971 cease-fire paper further or that the paper was presented to the NSC and the President. Presumably, the lack of progress in either private negotiations or the Paris talks during 1971 removed the need for review of the negotiating position in late 1971.

The Paris Talks in 1971

At the first plenary session of the Paris talks in 1971, on 7 January, South Vietnamese delegate Phan Dang Lam reviewed the lack of talks and asked the other side to engage in serious discussions. United States representative David K. E. Bruce briefly recounted US proposals for a settlement. The most recent was the peace initiative set forth by President Nixon in his 7 October 1970 speech. In addition to provision for an in-place cease-fire throughout Indochina with effective international supervision, Nixon's proposal included: a peace conference to deal with the conflict in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; US readiness to negotiate an agreed timetable for complete withdrawal of its forces as part of an overall settlement; a political settlement that truly met the aspirations of all South Vietnamese; and immediate unconditional release of all prisoners of war.[24] Ambassador Bruce urged the other side to reconsider its approach and join in negotiating an early and honorable end to the war.[25]

Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, speaking for the PRG, charged the United States with a variety of crimes in Vietnam and repeated the PRG demands "in standard terms": total and unconditional withdrawal of US and other non-Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam by 30 June 1971 and a coalition government in South Vietnam that did not include President Thieu or Vice President Ky. Xuan Thuy, the leader of the North Vietnamese delegation, supported the PRG demands and charged the Nixon administration with intensifying the war. This meeting with its lack of any understanding or progress set a pattern for the months to follow.[26]

Throughout the year, the allied side would devote increasing attention in the negotiations to the issue of those held prisoner and missing. At the meeting on 14

January, Ambassador Bruce presented an updated list of US men currently missing in Southeast Asia and asked for information on those men. The other side refused to accept the list, and the US Ambassador and his deputy, Mr. Philip Habib, proceeded to read the 156 names not on previous lists into the record.[27]

At the same session, Ambassador Lam repeated an announcement made earlier in a December 1970 session that his government would repatriate a group of sick and wounded NVN prisoners during the Tet holiday period. It was hoped that North Vietnam would reciprocate with a similar action but none was forthcoming. Nevertheless, South Vietnam proceeded with its plan. On 24 January, thirty-four disabled NVN prisoners were placed in rubber life rafts and allowed to paddle across the Benhai River in the DMZ.[28]

After a six-week boycott of the talks to protest the LAM SON 719 incursion into Laos, Mme. Binh returned on 8 April only to attack President Nixon for failing to set a date for complete US withdrawal and to state that the United States must bear the responsibility for the impasse in the negotiations. Xuan Thuy rejoined the talks the following week, on 15 April, having indicated beforehand that he would bring a new proposal. But his new proposal turned out to be a reiteration that the United States agree to complete withdrawal by 30 June 1971 or by some other "reasonable" date and accept a peace government in Saigon without President Thieu. Ambassador Bruce dismissed the proposal on 22 April as the "same old unacceptable preconditions and unreasonable demands," and again set out the President's 7 October 1970 proposals as a basis for a settlement.[29]

The allied side continued to press the matter of prisoners. In response, the North Vietnamese suggested that the setting of a firm date for withdrawal of all US forces from Vietnam could lead to early repatriation of captives. When pressed for clarification of the relationship between these points, however, the North Vietnamese insisted that the setting of a date for US withdrawal had to be "unilateral and unconditional" and remained a precondition for discussion of all other questions.[30]

The deadlock continued for the rest of the year. On 24 June 1971, Le Duc Tho, a high-ranking NVN government member and Kissinger's opposite number in the secret talks, arrived in Paris to consult with the NVN delegation, giving rise to speculation that a new communist peace proposal might be forthcoming. This speculation proved accurate, and on 1 July, Mme. Binh announced that the communists were ready to release all war prisoners held in North and South Vietnam by the end of the year if all US troops were removed by that time. Her offer was part of a seven-point PRG proposal that included: (1) complete US withdrawal by the end of 1971 with release of prisoners occurring as the withdrawal was carried out; (2) a coalition government in South Vietnam and the removal of President Thieu; (3) settlement of the question of Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam by the Vietnamese parties concerned; (4) reunification of Vietnam on a step-by-step basis; (5) a foreign policy of neutrality for South Vietnam; (6) US reparations for damage in the two zones of Vietnam; (7) guarantees of respect for the agreement.[31]

The PRG proposal contained little that was new. The principal new element was the promise to release prisoners in exchange for an unconditional US withdrawal by 31 December 1971. Nothing in the proposal met the US condition that South Vietnam must be left with a reasonable chance to defend itself and to determine its own future. It was clear that the PRG had put forth the proposal to increase domestic dissent in the United States.[32]

At the end of July, Ambassador Bruce resigned as the US representative. The President named William J. Porter, currently the US Ambassador to South Korea and former Deputy Ambassador to South Vietnam, as Ambassador Bruce's replacement at the Paris talks.[33] The change in US representatives led to no progress in the negotiations, as the other side insisted on unconditional American acceptance of their seven-point plan. Although willing to discuss aspects of the plan, the Americans refused to accept it entirely. These positions continued unchanged until December, when the US cancelled the last three sessions in that month to indicate its impatience with the progress of the talks. Beginning on 26 December, the United States launched five days of air strikes against North Vietnam.[34] The Paris talks remained at an impasse.[35]

Consideration of Negotiating Positions in 1972

There were no formal reviews of US negotiating positions during 1972. On 25 January 1972, President Nixon made public a peace plan that he had offered privately the previous October.[36] As mentioned, this offer included provision for a ceasefire, but not the one considered by the VSSG Working Group in 1971.[37] The North Vietnamese and the PRG rejected Nixon's proposal.

During the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam in April 1972, US officials speculated that the enemy might propose an in-place cease-fire to take advantage of his territorial gains in South Vietnam. This possibility was discussed in the almost daily Washington Special Actions Group meetings that directed the US response to the North Vietnamese offensive and, on two occasions, 10 and 14 April, the Joint Staff prepared papers on this subject for the Chairman. In the judgment of the J-5, North Vietnam's long-range goals of unification of all of Vietnam under a communist regime and the extension of its hegemony throughout Indochina remained unchanged. Should North Vietnam make such an initiative, Joint Staff officers believed that it would be to gain major concessions on cease-fire terms while allowing a more favorable position to pursue political goals in Indochina after a cease-fire. They noted that the JCS had consistently opposed any form of cease-fire in-place. "The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the field commanders," they said, "have always opted for a final settlement which includes provisions for a verified mutual withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces from the RVN." Because of military, political, and psychological disadvantages of a possible enemy initiative,

the United States should not accept an immediate cease-fire in-place if the enemy held major population centers in South Vietnam.[38]

The issue of an enemy initiative for an in-place cease-fire was formally scheduled on the WSAG agenda for 28 April 1972, and the Director of the Joint Staff and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) provided the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Chairman a position paper for the meeting. The two men concluded that such a development would be clearly to enemy advantage, resulting in major territorial concessions throughout Indochina, threatening the security of US and South Vietnamese forces, and having significant psychological impact on friendly military forces and the civilian population of Indochina. Further, they believed that an enemy cease-fire in-place would permit continuation of covert communist political-military actions, cause political turmoil throughout Indochina, and undermine the credibility of the Nixon Doctrine "in the eyes of other Southeast Asian nations." This view reflected earlier Joint Staff assessments. "From a military viewpoint, the United States should not accept or support any proposal for an immediate cease-fire in-place without pre-conditions which are clearly to its advantage." They doubted, moreover, that the enemy would find such conditions acceptable.[39]

Following the 28 April meeting, Dr. Kissinger asked the Under Secretary of State to incorporate the Defense-JCS position, as presented at the meeting, into a new paper in which military views were balanced with political considerations. The resulting State-Defense paper was presented to the WSAG on 2 May 1972. The paper recommended that any decision on a cease-fire should not be addressed solely on military merits, but should include other considerations. An astute public North Vietnamese proposal that included prisoner release would be more difficult to cope with than a simple cease-fire offer. Additionally, neither Congressional nor public reaction to a US rejection of a cease-fire proposal could be overlooked in an election year. Finally, the ability of North Vietnam to continue a "rolling offensive" in various parts of South Vietnam during the next six months, even without the capture of significant additional territory, would create the impression of the military initiative being retained by Hanoi to the detriment of South Vietnam. Hence the Department of State considered it "imprudent," in advance and in the abstract, to attempt to formulate a precise reaction to an enemy cease-fire offer. Instead, the United States should be prepared to evaluate an offer in the context of the existing military, political, and psychological circumstances. Such preparation, State added, should include review of the matter "as objectively as possible" with President Thieu when there was indication such a proposal might be imminent.[40]

No enemy cease-fire offer was forthcoming and the necessity for US consideration of a response did not arise. Indeed, President Nixon's 8 May 1972 announcement of the mining of North Vietnamese ports dashed prospects for an immediate cease-fire offer by the enemy, and the WSAG pursued the matter no further.[41] The

expanded cease-fire paper presented on 2 May did remain in the WSAG "Vietnam Issues Book" until 14 June 1972.[42]

There was no further consideration of the cease-fire issue by US officials during the summer of 1972. In July, the Director did raise the possibility of "a fresh look" at international supervision of a cease-fire in Indochina to assure that the United States was not "caught short." But the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) saw "little profit" in further such planning, "at least at this time." Later, in early September 1972, in a discussion of the status of the Paris negotiations, the Deputy Director, J–5, referred to the 1971 VSSG study and its four alternatives, seeming to indicate that the study was still the current US position on the cease-fire question.[43]

The Negotiations in 1972

The absence of additional negotiating papers reflected the lack of progress in the talks. Until there was some movement at Paris, there was little need for such work. At the start of 1972, the negotiations were at a standstill. Almost three years of talks had brought the two sides no nearer to a settlement than when they began in January 1969. Facing re-election, President Nixon remained optimistic. In a televised interview on 2 January 1972, he foresaw "a possibility" for progress in the talks. Nixon cited the US offers for a cease-fire throughout Indochina, total US withdrawal, and prisoner exchange and called for serious consideration of these proposals when the Paris talks resumed the following week.[44]

The Paris talks reconvened on 6 January 1972 and continued regularly throughout the remainder of the month, but no progress resulted.[45] The United States and South Vietnam pressed for acceptance of their proposals, especially on matters relating to the prisoners, but the other side remained intransigent. The communist representatives maintained that the United States could have its prisoners back when it withdrew all its forces from Vietnam and stopped backing the Thieu regime.[46]

In late January 1972, President Nixon decided that action was needed to get the negotiations moving and, perhaps, at the same time, end some of the political divisiveness in the United States over a solution to the Vietnam conflict. In a television address on 25 January, he recounted that over the past three years, the United States had made a series of public offers to end the war, but these had been rejected. Now he thought "the purpose of peace" would best be served by revealing proposals that had been made privately. "Nothing is served by silence," the President said, "when the other side exploits our good faith to divide America and to avoid the conference table. Nothing is served by silence when it misleads some Americans into accusing their own government of failing to do what it has already done." Just as secret negotiations could sometimes break a public deadlock, the President hoped that public disclosure might break a secret deadlock.

Nixon revealed that, beginning on 4 August 1969, Dr. Kissinger had traveled to Paris on 12 occasions to hold secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese. He met seven times with Hanoi Politburo member Le Duc Tho and five times with Xuan Thuy, but no progress had resulted. In the private meetings, the US had offered repeatedly to set a date for the withdrawal of its forces in return for release of all prisoners and a cease fire. The North Vietnamese responded with a demand that the US agree to what amounted to the overthrow of the South Vietnamese government. In August 1971, the United States had offered a complete US withdrawal within nine months of an agreement on an overall settlement, suggesting a terminal date of 1 August 1972 if an agreement was signed by 1 November 1971. This offer was rejected by the North Vietnamese. In October 1971, Nixon had made another attempt to break the deadlock. After consultation with President Thieu, Mr. Nixon had sent the North Vietnamese a private communication on 11 October 1971 with a comprehensive new peace offer. There had been no response from North Vietnam, the President said, except increased troop infiltration into the south and military offensives in Laos and Cambodia.[47]

Now the President had decided to make public his 11 October 1971 offer. He presented the proposal on behalf of the United States and "the Government of South Vietnam, with the full knowledge and approval of President Thieu." It included the following eight points: (1) withdrawal of all US and allied forces from South Vietnam within six months of an agreement; (2) release of all prisoners; (3) acceptance of the principle that the political future of South Vietnam should be decided by the people of South Vietnam, provision for a free and democratic presidential election in South Vietnam within six months of an agreement, and the resignation of President Thieu and Vice President Huong one month before the election; (4) respect by both sides of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Indochina and those of 1962 on Laos; (5) settlement of problems among the Indochinese countries by the Indochinese parties on the basis of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in each other's affairs; (6) a general cease-fire throughout Indochina to begin when the agreement was signed; (7) international supervision of the military aspects of the agreement; (8) an international guarantee for the fundamental national rights of the Indochinese peoples. The President had instructed Ambassador Porter to present this plan at the next Paris plenary session.

President Nixon stated that the United States was ready to negotiate on this plan and to conclude a comprehensive agreement on all military and political issues. He considered the proposal "generous"; the only thing it did not include was the overthrow of "our ally," which "the United States of America will never do." Should the enemy reject this offer, the United States would continue to withdraw its remaining forces as South Vietnam developed the capability to defend itself. Should the enemy step up his attacks, President Nixon was fully prepared to "meet

my responsibility as Commander in Chief of our Armed Forces to protect our remaining troops." But he hoped that the negotiations would proceed.[48]

On the following day, both the North Vietnamese and the PRG delegations issued statements denouncing the President's plan as a "perfidious maneuver to deceive the American electorate in an election year" and as a scheme to maintain US puppet regimes in Indochina. On 27 January 1972, at the regular session of the Paris talks, the communist delegates again denounced the offer and attacked Nixon for disclosing the secret talks. They repeated their position that there could be no settlement until the United States set a specific withdrawal date and the present South Vietnamese government was ousted.[49]

During January and early February 1972, a hardening in the North Vietnamese position began to emerge from the various statements of its representatives in Paris. On 6 February 1972, Xuan Thuy made this change explicit in a television interview. He stated that North Vietnam would no longer consider separately the political and military issues of the war as it had been prepared to do during the previous summer. He made clear that the establishment of a date for the removal of all US forces from Vietnam would no longer be sufficient for a settlement. Now North Vietnam and the PRG insisted upon the immediate resignation of President Thieu as the principal condition for a rapid end to the war. President Nixon quickly responded to this new demand. "Under no circumstances," he told a press conference on 10 February, "are we going to negotiate with our enemy in a way that undercuts our ally."[50]

The Paris talks again settled into a deadlock that continued until 23 March. On that date, Ambassador Porter, citing the other side's intransigent attitude in the negotiations, questioned the usefulness of continuing the Paris discussions in their present form; he then suspended the meetings. The allied side, he said, would come back to the meetings when the other side showed some sign it was "disposed to engage in meaningful exchanges." President Nixon confirmed the suspension, stating that the United States was trying to break a three-year North Vietnam "filibuster" at the Paris talks.[51]

The massive North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam that began on 30 March 1972 (see chapter 8) and the retaliatory US air strikes against North Vietnam foreclosed an immediate resumption of the Paris talks. Some viewed the offensive as the last all out North Vietnamese military effort and a possible prelude to serious negotiation. In any event, on 20 April, the North Vietnamese and PRG proposed a resumption of the talks, indicating that they would meet whether or not the United States halted its bombing attack.[52]

On 26 April, President Nixon reviewed the Vietnam situation in a television address. On the basis of the current assessment of General Abrams, and after consultation with President Thieu, Ambassador Bunker, Ambassador Porter, and his senior advisers in Washington, the President announced three decisions: he had decided that Vietnamization had been proved sufficiently successful to allow the

United States to continue withdrawal of its forces despite the current offensive; he had directed Ambassador Porter to return to the Paris negotiating table the following day; and he had ordered continuation of the US air and naval attacks on military installations in North Vietnam until the North Vietnamese stopped their offensive in the south. In announcing the return to the talks, the President made no new offer. The United States was not resuming the Paris meetings, he said, simply to hear more "empty propaganda and bombast." Rather it was returning with "the firm expectation that productive talks leading to rapid progress will follow through all available channels." The first order of business would be to secure a halt to the enemy invasion and the return of US prisoners.[53]

On 27 April 1972, the allied and communist delegates, including Mme. Binh who had not attended the meetings since 12 August 1971, met around the conference table at the Majestic Hotel. The allied side requested an end to the invasion and a withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam, but received only criticism for prolonging the war. Neither the plenary sessions nor a private meeting between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho on 2 May produced any diplomatic movement. The North Vietnamese offensive continued.[54]

On 8 May 1972, President Nixon again addressed the nation to announce another decision with regard to Vietnam. He noted that the United States had responded to the massive North Vietnamese offensive by undertaking "wide-ranging new peace efforts" but had met only communist insistence on unacceptable terms. In the current situation, he saw three possible choices for the United States: immediate withdrawal; continued attempts at negotiation; or "decisive military action to end the war." The first choice was politically impossible for the President, and the second had proved unsuccessful despite repeated efforts during the past three years. Therefore, the President concluded: "It is plain then that what appears to be a choice among three courses of action for the United States is really no choice at all." He then proceeded to announce his decision to mine the entrances to the North Vietnamese ports and to continue air and naval strikes against military targets in North Vietnam in order to deprive that country of the weapons and supplies needed to continue its aggression.[55] These actions would cease, the President stated, when all US prisoners of war were returned and when there was an internationally supervised cease-fire throughout Indochina. At such time, the United States would also be prepared to withdraw all its forces from Vietnam within four months.[56]

During June 1972, indications began to appear that both sides were prepared to resume the Paris talks, which had been suspended during the latter part of May. On 12 June, Ambassador Porter returned to Paris, stating upon his arrival that President Nixon was "intensely" interested in arriving at a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. At the same time, Xuan Thuy, who was in Hanoi, said that he would return "soon" to Paris with new directives. Then, on 29 June, President Nixon announced that the United States and South Vietnam would return to the Paris sessions on 13 July 1972.[57]

Prospects Begin to Look Up

On 13 July 1972, the four parties resumed the weekly plenary sessions of the Paris talks, and these meetings continued throughout July and during August. Neither side budged from its established position, but there was a change in the tone of the meetings. Much of the invective and abusive language of earlier sessions was gone and a sense of restraint seemed to be discernible. Moreover, the North Vietnamese now appeared to be calling only for the United States to stop supporting President Thieu rather than demanding his removal.[58]

It was apparent, however, that any progress in the negotiations would come from the private talks rather than in the semi-open plenary sessions. Le Duc Tho returned to Paris on 15 July 1972, expressing readiness to resume his dialogue with Dr. Kissinger. The two men met privately on 19 July and again on 1 and 14 August. No details on their discussions were released, but following the 14 August meeting, Dr. Kissinger traveled to Saigon to talk with President Thieu and Le Duc Tho returned to Hanoi, giving rise to speculation that the private talks were progressing. Moreover, there seemed to be signs that the communist side might be modifying its position. Intelligence sources reported PRG notification to army, political, and bureaucratic cadres that a cease-fire might require a temporary acceptance of Nguyen Van Thieu as the leader of the South Vietnam regime.[59]

During September and in early October, the plenary sessions met in Paris week after week, but attention focused on the private meetings where events appeared to be building toward a climax. Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho continued their talks in Paris, meeting on 15 September and for a two-day session on 26 and 27 September. Again no details were released, but on 1 October, Major General Alexander M. Haig, USA, Dr. Kissinger's assistant, went to Vietnam to see President Thieu. Spokesmen indicated the discussions included developments in the Paris talks, adding to the growing rumors of an approaching Paris accord.[60]

At a news conference on 5 October, President Nixon was asked about the possibility of a negotiated settlement. He replied that one would come "just as soon as we can possibly get a settlement which is right—right for the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese and for us," one that would secure the return of US prisoners, and one that would not impose a communist regime on South Vietnam. He also indicated that the timing of a settlement would not be influenced by the approaching election in the United States. "If we can make the right kind of a settlement before the election," he said, "we will make it. If we cannot, we are not going to make the wrong kind of settlement."[61]

When Kissinger and Le Duc Tho met again in Paris on 8 October, a real breakthrough at last occurred. Le Duc Tho presented a draft agreement to end the war that, in Dr. Kissinger's words: "enabled us to accelerate the negotiations. Indeed, for the first time they made a proposal which made it possible to negotiate concretely at all." The North Vietnamese draft, by dropping the demand for a coalition

government in South Vietnam, allowed for the continuance of the Thieu regime, a point long insisted upon by the United States. The draft agreement provided for a cease-fire to be followed within 60 days by the return of prisoners and the removal of all US forces; thereafter "the two present administrations in South Vietnam" would settle internal questions between themselves. The mechanism to accomplish the internal settlement would be a "National Council of Reconciliation and Concord" composed of representatives of the Republic of Vietnam and the PRG as well as "neutral members." The draft agreement, however, contained no provision for withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the south since Le Duc Tho still maintained that none were there. Kissinger did not press Le Duc Tho on this point, and thereby the essential elements of the compromise were sealed. The North Vietnamese accepted continuation of the Thieu regime, and the US acquiesced in the continued presence of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam.[62]

On 12 October, Dr. Kissinger returned to Washington and reported to the President. Since Dr. Kissinger had promised some indication of the President's reaction within 48 hours, Mr. Nixon sent a message to the North Vietnamese in Paris the following day, 13 October. He accepted the North Vietnamese draft subject to several substantive changes and resolution of "some technical issues." Kissinger wrote later, "Hanoi had finally separated the military and political questions . . . . For nearly four years we had longed for this day. . . . " As a further indication of his reaction, President Nixon ordered a restriction of the bombing of North Vietnam. At no time during the consideration of the draft agreement in October were the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided a copy of it or afforded an opportunity to review it.[63]

With the fundamental compromise in place, Kissinger and the North Vietnamese rapidly concluded the draft agreement. On 21 October, the terms were set, and on the 22d the United States ceased all air and naval gunfire operations against North Vietnam in the area above 20° north effective 0700 Vietnam time, 23 October.[64]

The Aborted Settlement

The one remaining hurdle before the agreement could be implemented was the approval of President Thieu. He had indicated increasing apprehension with the progress of events, fearing a settlement that included a coalition government in South Vietnam. On 12 October, he had publicly declared his opposition to such an eventuality. History had proved, he said, that "coalition with the Communists meant death." For South Vietnam, he continued, the best answer was military victory. Subsequently, President Thieu summoned his representative at the Paris talks, Ambassador Phan Dang Lam, as well as the South Vietnamese Ambassadors in Washington and London for consultations on developments in the peace efforts.[65]

Dr. Kissinger and General Creighton Abrams, the new Army Chief of Staff and former COMUSMACV, arrived in Saigon on 18 October to present the agreement to

the South Vietnamese. Kissinger carried a letter from President Nixon, urging Nguyen Van Thieu that there was "no reasonable alternative but to accept this agreement," and assuring him that the United States would view any breach of faith by the North Vietnamese with utmost gravity. As a further inducement, President Nixon approved Project ENHANCE PLUS.[66] This project involved the infusion of large amounts of military supplies and equipment into South Vietnam before a cease-fire.[67]

Kissinger met with President Thieu and members of his government during the period 18–22 October. On 22 October, in the face of American persuasion and veiled threats to conclude a separate peace with North Vietnam, President Thieu rejected the entire agreement. Any settlement, he insisted to Dr. Kissinger, must provide for total withdrawal of the North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, absolute guarantees of the DMZ, and "total self-determination of South Vietnam." He also feared that the proposed "National Council of Reconciliation and Concord" was merely a disguised coalition government. Dr. Kissinger met with Thieu on 23 October in a final attempt to dissuade him from his opposition, but failed to do so.[68]

Thieu's rejection prevented conclusion of the agreement on 31 October, the date tentatively set by Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. In response to a request by President Nixon for another meeting to consider Thieu's objections, the North Vietnamese took the issue into the public forum. On the morning of 26 October 1972, Radio Hanoi announced that North Vietnam and the United States had agreed on a cease-fire in Vietnam, but that subsequently the United States had reneged, citing difficulties with the South Vietnamese. The broadcast outlined the terms of the agreement worked out between North Vietnam and the United States as well as the schedule for implementation with the anticipated signature of the final document on 31 October.[69]

At the weekly session of the Paris talks on the same day, Xuan Thuy put into the record the text of the nine-point agreement stating that the United States had accepted it on 22 October. This document filled in more detail of the settlement announced earlier by the Hanoi broadcast. Xuan Thuy proceeded to castigate the United States for accepting a settlement and then raising obstacles. All the while, he maintained, the United States was doing everything possible to convince public opinion of its efforts toward a peaceful settlement. Thus North Vietnam had no choice, Xuan Thuy said, but to reveal the actual status of the negotiations in order to set forth the "truth."[70]

Later on 26 October, Dr. Kissinger held a press conference to clarify the US position on a possible settlement. "We believe peace is at hand," he told the waiting reporters. He confirmed the substance of the agreement under consideration between the two countries as announced by the North Vietnamese. With regard to the schedule for completion of the agreement, Kissinger said that the United States had agreed to make a "major effort" to conclude the negotiations by 31 October. The US, however, "could not sign an agreement in which details remained to be worked out simply because in good faith we had said we would make an effort to

conclude it by a certain date." Further, "it was always clear that we would have to discuss anything that we negotiated first in Washington and then in Saigon." Dr. Kissinger acknowledged South Vietnamese reluctance to accept the agreement, stating that the South Vietnamese had "every right" to have their views heard. The United States would make its own decisions, he said, and Hanoi was mistaken to believe that the United States could impose a solution on South Vietnam.

Kissinger asserted that the greater difficulties in reaching a settlement had been overcome, and he described, in general terms, the obstacles still to be resolved. In addition to the question of South Vietnamese acceptance of the settlement, he enumerated the question of the actual form of the final document, precision of language dealing with cease-fire and the international supervisory body, and linguistic refinements to insure that both English and Vietnamese versions conveyed the same meanings. He did not mention, however, the major issues of the DMZ and removal of North Vietnamese troops raised by President Thieu. Kissinger was optimistic. The remaining questions, he said, could be settled in one more meeting, and the United States was willing to stay at that meeting for as long as needed to complete the agreement.[71]

The possible settlement in Vietnam fell into a state of suspended animation during the remainder of October. There was much speculation in the press, and officials in Washington, though unwilling to be quoted, were convinced that a settlement was imminent even if not by 31 October. But no announcement or further action followed, and there was no indication that North Vietnam had followed up Dr. Kissinger's call for a further meeting to complete the agreement. With the US Presidential election little more than a week away, North Vietnam wanted to cause Mr. Nixon as much domestic political embarrassment as possible over the aborted settlement. Nor did President Thieu abandon his objection to the proposed agreement.[72]

Tuesday, 31 October 1972, passed without a settlement. At the Paris meeting on 2 November, the communist side spent the entire session chiding the United States for failing to sign the agreement. This impasse notwithstanding, Richard M. Nixon was reelected President of the United States on 7 November 1972. In a statement on the night of his election victory, President Nixon renewed his pledge to seek "peace with honor" in Vietnam, and on the following day, he sent General Haig to Saigon to confer with President Thieu. The general expectation throughout the United States was that a settlement in Vietnam was near. Yet, almost three months, marked by continued fighting and a massive air campaign against North Vietnam, would pass before a final agreement was achieved.[73]

13

Peace in the Balance, October–December 1972

Post-Hostilities Contingency Planning

In the autumn of 1972, a peace agreement seemed imminent. On 23 October, after President Nixon suspended bombing north of the 20° line, Admiral Moorer reviewed matters with the Assistant to the Chairman, the Director of the Joint Staff, and the Director, J–3. All four men, Moorer recorded in his diary, felt that "we are right back to 1968 again. . . . None of us could figure out exactly what the rationale behind this [restriction] was." They correctly forecast that Hanoi would agree to a military armistice, return prisoners of war in exchange for a complete US withdrawal, and leave political issues for settlement later. Yet, they noted, "The White House has frequently said that one of the main reasons for us being there in the first place is the political problem that we should help [the South Vietnamese] determine their own government."[1]

Even though the anticipated cease-fire in October 1972 failed to materialize, US officials expected an early end to the war and began extensive preparations for that eventuality. Dr. Kissinger organized the effort through the Washington Special Actions Group. On 30 October 1972, he set up four interdepartmental working groups within the WSAG for the task. Working Group A dealt with the diplomatic aspects and was chaired by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William H. Sullivan. Working Group B, headed by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, was responsible for military matters and included a representative from the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) and two from the Joint Staff,

Major General John W. Pauly, USAF, of J–3 and Brigadier General Arthur P. Hanket, USA, of J–5. The other groups treated intelligence and economic matters.[2]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had already begun planning the military aspects of a cease-fire. The Director of the Joint Staff, Lieutenant General George M. Seignious, II, USA, and the Chairman's Assistant, Vice Admiral John P. Weinel, had already started "close-hold" discussions of troop withdrawal and command organization in Southeast Asia after a cease-fire. Following the North Vietnamese revelation of the terms of the aborted agreement and Dr. Kissinger's "peace is at hand" news conference on 26 October, Admiral Weinel cabled Admiral Moorer, who was attending a NATO Nuclear Planning Group meeting in London, suggesting that they "loosen up a bit" on the cease-fire planning. He proposed going ahead "in a coordinated way with the Services and CINC's."[3]

A little later that same day, 26 October, Weinel cabled Moorer again with the essential points of the cease-fire planning directives that the Secretary of Defense intended to issue to the Joint Chiefs. The instructions called for planning to implement a cease-fire and US force withdrawal to a level of a 50-man attaché office in South Vietnam within 60 days of the cease-fire, the period specified in the tentative US-North Vietnamese agreement. The reduction would also cover the Seventh Fleet and US tactical air and B–52 assets in Thailand. Revised rules of engagement and temporary augmentation authorities to protect US troops and other free world forces until completion of the withdrawal would also be needed along with command and control arrangements for US forces in Southeast Asia; intelligence support from out of country for US and South Vietnamese forces, and the composition, mission, and functions of the attaché office.[4]

The Secretary had apparently prepared these directives without consultation with or assistance from the Joint Chiefs. Indicative of the milieu in which the JCS were operating at that time was this report to the Chairman by Admiral Weinel on 26 October:

> Gen Abrams passed an unsigned MACV plan for reducing to 0 force levels in 60 days. It was passed on an extremely close-hold basis with none allowed to see it except a few Joint Staff people. The plan reportedly was prepared on direction from HAK [Henry A. Kissinger] to MACV. . . . CINCPAC hasn't seen it nor the Services.[5]

Based on the expected Secretary of Defense directive, the Joint Chiefs sent cease-fire planning instructions to CINCPAC and CINCSAC the following day. They requested development of plans in three major areas: withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam, command arrangements for US forces remaining in Southeast Asia after the withdrawal from South Vietnam, and continued US support for the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. The commanders were to be prepared to execute a cease-fire in South Vietnam and to end all military operations against North Vietnam, although US combat operations in support of the Laotian and Cambodian governments would continue "at

about current levels." The Joint Chiefs designated the date of the cease-fire as "X-Day" and directed the commanders to plan the removal of all US and free world forces as well as specified materiel from South Vietnam within 60 days (X+60) of the ceasefire. During this redeployment, CINCPAC was to insure the security of forces, materiel, and facilities and to establish a Defense Attaché Office (DAO). Establishment of this office was to be coordinated with the US Embassy in Saigon, it would consist of not more than 50 US military spaces and no other US military personnel would be authorized in South Vietnam except US Embassy security guards.[6]

The JCS also directed planning for command arrangements outside of South Vietnam for control of residual US missions and responsibilities in Southeast Asia that were currently assigned to COMUSMACV. Specifically, they stated that, when directed after X-Day, COMUSMACV would relinquish operational control of land-based combatant air forces in Southeast Asia concurrently with the establishment of a US military command in Thailand for air command and control. In addition, CINCPAC and CINCSAC were to plan the reduction of US forces in Thailand and US naval forces on station off Vietnam. Forces in Thailand were to be reduced to an interim level capable of 4,700 (with a surge capability to 6,700) tactical air and 1,000 B–52 combat sorties per month; the naval force level was to be reduced to one CVA with necessary escort and support ships on station with two additional CVAs prepared to arrive off Vietnam within 96 hours and one week, respectively.

In addition, the Joint Chiefs laid down guidance for residual support of the RVNAF after the US withdrawal in the areas of consumable supply (POL, ammunition, and spare parts), training, communications, and computer services. Moreover, CINCPAC was to plan JGS/RVNAF liaison with US forces in Thailand and the supply of critical intelligence support for the RVNAF and remaining US air operations in Southeast Asia from US assets pending greater assumption of this mission by the RVNAF. The Chiefs indicated that support of the RVNAF would be provided by means of DOD civilian and contract personnel. They did state that the US phase-down in South Vietnam would not include US civilian personnel or contractors, adding that authority and funds would be available for expanded and additional contracts. They cautioned that no US civilian personnel would be used in "a military, paramilitary, or police-type role or function." To allow additional support for the RVNAF, the JCS granted COMUSMACV authority to plan the transfer to the GVN, without formal authorization, of "transferable equipment" to meet currently stated requirements and to approve RVNAF force structure changes within the approved 1.1 million man ceiling.

The Joint Chiefs also provided post-hostilities planning guidance for: continued operation of long-range aid to navigation (LORAN) sites in South Vietnam with civilian contract personnel; transfer of the Joint Information Center (JIC), including the Joint Personnel Recovery Center and Joint Graves Registration Office, to Thailand; review of communications-electronic equipment to determine what could be turned over to the RVNAF and the retrograde of all remaining items; withdrawal

of communications security (COMSEC) equipment currently under US control; and retention of capability for air reconnaissance, both manned and tactical reconnaissance and drones, over South Vietnam. CINCPAC was to designate temporary staging bases in Thailand and elsewhere to expedite the orderly withdrawal of US forces and equipment from South Vietnam. They requested CINCPAC to provide plans to accomplish all the above tasks as well as to determine civilian requirements and organization in South Vietnam to manage and supervise support for the RVNAF.[7]

The WSAG met on 30 October to consider cease-fire planning, and it was at that meeting that Dr. Kissinger set up the four working groups already mentioned. Admiral Moorer was still absent from Washington, and Vice Admiral Weinel attended the meeting. He reported that the DOD Working Group was "to get going" on all the items that the Joint Chiefs had already finished or had underway. Weinel estimated that "we are about a week ahead of HAK [Kissinger]." He also related that the WSAG would meet once or twice a week to provide Kissinger reports on the planning. The WSAG did meet frequently in the succeeding weeks to hear progress reports, but Working Group B, responsible for the military aspects of a cease-fire did not meet since all the actions were already in progress.[8]

On 31 October, the Joint Chiefs told the Secretary of their actions to prepare for a cease-fire. Because of the 60-day limit contemplated between the cease-fire and the completion of the US withdrawal, the JCS believed it prudent to secure in advance the authorities needed to implement the cease-fire. Although recognizing that action on some authorities must await the terms of the final cease-fire agreement, they requested immediate approval to implement the following: establishment of a Defense Attaché Office in Saigon of not more than 50 military spaces, headed by a general or flag officer as the Defense Attaché; expansion of existing and establishment of additional civilian contracts to provide continued support for the RVNAF; hiring of US civilian personnel required to supervise this contractual support; transfer of title, as deemed appropriate, of in-country equipment not already identified in existing RVNAF improvement programs to the GVN without regard to formal authorization; and authority to approve RVNAF force structure changes necessary to support PROJECT ENHANCE PLUS while remaining within the approved 1.1 million manpower ceiling.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff set forth a second category of authorities and recommended their approval for implementation when execution of a cease-fire was ordered. These included: authority to exceed, temporarily, the current US force level and established ceiling in Thailand for certain specific functions, such as intelligence; introduction of temporary duty US personnel into South Vietnam to assist the withdrawal of US forces and equipment; operation of LORAN sites with civilians; redeployment of augmentation forces from Southeast Asia as appropriate; continuation of off-shore training programs for the RVNAF; and relocation of the Joint Information Center from South Vietnam to Thailand before completion of the US withdrawal from South Vietnam.

The Joint Chiefs also asked the Secretary to approve the following authorities for planning purposes: US overflight of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia after the US withdrawal from South Vietnam, to include manned and unmanned reconnaissance, logistical, and other non-tactical flights; RVNAF staff liaison in Thailand; off-shore US aerial surveillance to support the RVNAF; Joint Information Center operations in Southeast Asia to resolve the status of missing personnel; use of South Vietnamese air bases for emergency recovery of US military aircraft; permission for US naval combatant vessels to enter South Vietnamese territorial waters during the US withdrawal; US armed escort, both air and ground, to provide security to US and free world forces during the withdrawal; and operation of Military Airlift Command and PACOM transport and resupply flights into South Vietnam aerial ports after the withdrawal. Finally, the JCS requested supplemental funding or budget amendment to support the authorities.[9]

Without waiting for CINCPAC's cease-fire plans, the Joint Staff had developed two alternatives to carry out US military functions in Southeast Asia after the US withdrawal from South Vietnam. The first called for a USAF headquarters in Thailand for air operations and planning and a separate Support Activities Group in Thailand for advisory assistance functions. The second alternative would move a truncated MACV organization to Thailand as a subordinate unified command under CINCPAC. This latter organization would be designated US Joint Support Activities Command.[10]

Finally on 2 November 1972, the Secretary of Defense provided the Chairman the cease-fire planning directives that Vice Admiral Weinel had seen on 26 October. This formal guidance contained only one change from that reported by Weinel. The Secretary instructed the Chairman to be prepared to end combat operations under either of two conditions: a cease-fire throughout Indochina, including Cambodia and Laos; or in only North and South Vietnam. He wanted to be prepared to reduce the US military presence in South Vietnam to a 50-man attaché staff prior to X+60. Further he directed readiness either to continue operations in Cambodia and Laos at current levels or to reduce the US military presence in the two countries to small attaché staffs similar to that in South Vietnam. Upon implementation of the cease-fire on X-Day, the Secretary said, all US forces were to remain in place until otherwise instructed. Pertinent rules of engagement, operating authorities, and temporary augmentation authorities for all of Indochina or only North and South Vietnam, as appropriate, would be cancelled on X-Day. The Secretary also ordered provision of logistic support for the complete reduction of ROK and other free world forces in South Vietnam prior to X+60. Mr. Laird wanted plans to accomplish these tasks by 13 November 1972.[11]

On the same day, 2 November, CINCPAC submitted his views on the withdrawal planning. He favored "a sub-unified command" in Thailand with an Air Force commander and an Army deputy to conduct Southeast Asia land-based air and logistic operations. Admiral Gayler warned the Joint Chiefs that the enemy was rapidly re-supplying at that time in addition to preparing for a dry season push.

He believed that the enemy would be able to resume main force operations in MR 1 and major attacks in the other regions within two to three months.[12]

The US Ambassador in Thailand, Mr. Leonard Unger, was less certain about the cease-fire planning. He had "important" reservations with regard to creation of a US support command in Thailand. "The political ramifications of burdening the Thais, and US-Thai relations, in the final phases of the Indochina war with a major new US military activity that may make Thailand's sense of exposure more acute," the Ambassador said, "should be fully considered." He believed it in the "long-term interest" to trim US post cease-fire requirements in Thailand to "bare essentials."[13]

On 7 November the Secretary of Defense approved, with certain exceptions, the 31 October request for cease-fire planning authorities. He authorized, for planning purposes, the establishment of the Defense Attaché Office. He deferred action on authority to exceed the established US personnel ceiling in Thailand and to redeploy augmentation forces from Southeast Asia pending the review of the cease-fire plans he had ordered on 2 November. He did approve for planning the introduction of US temporary duty personnel into South Vietnam to assist in the withdrawal of US forces and equipment, but with the stipulation that all such personnel would be subject to approval by his office. He did not grant authority for the Joint Chiefs to approve RVNAF force structure changes; rather he preferred to retain that function to insure that US follow-up support was available. Finally, he decided that bases in South Vietnam could be used by US military aircraft after the US withdrawal only for approved logistic flights and for emergency landings when the lives of crew and passengers were at stake.[14]

The JCS proceeded with the preparation of implementing plans and, in the period 7–13 November 1972, submitted a series of plans and documents to the Secretary. On 7 November, the Chairman provided basic rules of engagement assuming a cease-fire either in all of Indochina or only in South Vietnam. As cast in the draft messages, these rules defined hostile aircraft, vessels, and forces and allowed for US attack as appropriate. The following day, Admiral Moorer gave the Secretary the operating authorities that would be needed in the event of a cease-fire throughout Indochina or only in South Vietnam. Again in the form of draft messages, these authorities set forth in considerable detail the type of US operations permitted after a cease-fire went into effect.[15]

Several days later, on 11 November, the Chairman addressed Secretary Laird on the matter of augmentation authorities. Initial planning indicated that the authorities presently in effect would need to be continued for the period immediately following the cease-fire. Moreover, additional augmentation, for such matters as mine clearance, might be required. The Chairman provided the Secretary a list of those augmentation authorities then in effect, requesting that they be continued until after X-Day. At that time, the Joint Chiefs would recommend cancellation of those authorities as appropriate on "a phased basis in accordance with overall phasedown planning."[16]

The Chiefs considered it essential to maintain US support of the RVNAF. To accomplish this objective without interruption during or after the US withdrawal, the JCS favored the immediate establishment of an organization to provide a continuing "supervision and surveillance" of the RVNAF in the areas of operations, logistics, communications-electronics, training, and intelligence. Accordingly, on 10 November, they recommended the creation of a Defense Resource Surveillance and Termination Office (DRSTO) as soon as possible. The DRSTO would function under COMUSMACV until his command was disestablished. At that point, the DRSTO would become part of the Defense Attaché Office, but would report to the commander of the new command planned in Thailand and, eventually, would report directly to CINCPAC. The DRSTO, as recommended by the Joint Chiefs, would, in fact, constitute the major element of the DAO and would consist of a large number of civilians and 44 of the 50 military personnel allowed in South Vietnam after the US withdrawal. The organization would be commanded by an Army major general with an Air Force brigadier as the deputy.[17]

At the same time, the Joint Chiefs also requested immediate authority to establish a Defense Attaché Element as a part of the Defense Attaché Office in Saigon. With the reduction of MACV operations accompanying the US troop withdrawal, the JCS foresaw a need to resume the traditional attaché functions in South Vietnam. The mission of the Saigon Element would be the traditional attaché mission as outlined in appropriate DOD directives, and the Chiefs proposed an Attaché Element with six US military personnel, eight US civilians, and seven foreign nationals.[18]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff also wanted to develop the best possible current intelligence with respect to North Vietnam prior to implementation of a cease-fire. Accordingly, on 11 November 1972, they directed CINCPAC, CINCSAC, and COMUSMACV to plan and execute "sustained maximum effort reconnaissance of North Vietnam" to establish a current photographic database. This effort, nicknamed Operation POST WATCH, was to supply high resolution photographic coverage of major ports and logistic complexes; lines of communication, including railroads, highways, and pipelines; major airfields; and POW camps.[19]

The JCS Present a Plan

Both COMUSMACV and CINCPAC submitted their comments and proposals in response to the JCS guidance of 27 October.[20] After review of the field submissions, the Joint Chiefs on 13 November 1972 presented the Secretary of Defense the results of their cease-fire planning, including plans for withdrawal of the remaining US and free world forces from South Vietnam, the movement of essential command and control functions from South Vietnam to Thailand, the phase-down of US air assets in Thailand and Seventh Fleet assets off Vietnam, and continued support for the RVNAF. They informed the Secretary of their readiness to terminate all combat operations in

all of Indochina or only in North and South Vietnam as soon as a ceasefire took effect. In addition they were prepared to carry out the phased withdrawal of all US and free world forces from South Vietnam during the 60-day period between X-Day and X+60 with the exception of those few military personnel permitted to remain. The majority of US and free world forces would be airlifted from South Vietnam prior to X+45, leaving a small roll-up force that would depart on or prior to X+60, and the bulk of the equipment would be transported out of Vietnam by sealift. Military functions remaining in South Vietnam after X+60 would be performed by the Defense Attaché Office which would include the Defense Attaché Element and the DRSTO and would consist of 50 US military personnel plus US Civil Service and contractor employees.

The JCS also provided for an orderly transfer of command and control functions from South Vietnam to Thailand. Their plans called for a multi-Service integrated headquarters in Thailand, designated the US Support Activities Group/7th Air Force (USSAG/7AF). This new body, organized along the lines of the existing MACV/7th Air Force pattern and located in Nakhon Phanom, would plan and be ready to conduct combat air operations as directed by CINCPAC and would control the DRSTO.

United States force levels in Thailand, the Joint Chiefs told the Secretary, could not be resolved until definite details of the cease-fire were known, particularly whether the agreement would extend to Cambodia and Laos. Current planning, however, called for US air assets in Thailand to phase down to 42 B–52s, 36 KC–135s, one tactical reconnaissance squadron, special reconnaissance forces, one gunship squadron, and various support units, a force capable of sustaining 4,700 USAF tactical air combat and 1,000 B–52 sorties per month, requiring an approximate US military strength in Thailand of 36,500. At the same time, US naval forces off South Vietnam would be reduced to one CVA on station, one in position to arrive off South Vietnam in 96 hours, and a third positioned to arrive within one week. This force could provide 2,200 tactical air combat sorties per month.

To maintain a US intelligence capability in Southeast Asia to support strategic and tactical requirements, the Chiefs planned to relocate US intelligence assets as necessary (leaving as many in South Vietnam as allowable under the settlement), to exploit assets in Laos and Cambodia, and to rely on the RVNAF for in-country intelligence collection, meanwhile accelerating the improvement of RVNAF intelligence capabilities. The JCS plan included provision for an intelligence staff element within Headquarters, USSAF/7AF and the DRSTO, DAO, Saigon.

Continued logistic support of the RVNAF, under JCS plans, would be the function of the DRSTO. With respect to communications-electronics matters, the Joint Chiefs believed that a substantial realignment of facilities and modification of procedures would be required by the withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam. The most significant would be associated with provision of adequate support for the USSAG/7AF. Residual US requirements in South Vietnam and out-of-country communications from Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos would be met by using

RVNAF facilities. Should it become necessary to end use of these RVNAF facilities, the Defense Communications Agency had alternative solutions under study. Finally, the Chiefs forwarded to the Secretary contingency plans for both Cambodia and Laos in the event of either continuing operations or cease-fire.[21]

On one cease-fire planning issue, the place of the USSAG/7AF in the US command structure, the Joint Chiefs of Staff could not agree. The Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Chairman would have the commander carry out assigned tasks under the direction of CINCPAC. Since such an arrangement would exclude control over both SAC and 7th Fleet air resources, the Chiefs of Staff of both Army and Air Force were opposed. They thought it essential that responsibility for the total effort in North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia be vested in a single commander. Hence they wanted the COMUSSAG/7AF to have authority to target and task all combat air forces, including the resources of SAC and the 7th Fleet, in the area. In a separate memorandum to Laird, Admiral Moorer reiterated his position on the matter. He opposed the Army and Air Force view as tantamount to the establishment of a new unified command in Southeast Asia, a move "in exactly the opposite direction" from the one in which the United States should be going at that time.[22]

Another problem that arose during cease-fire planning was continued support for the rear element of the US Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia (MEDTC-Rear). This organization was located in South Vietnam and was supported by COMUSMACV. General Weyand had already indicated that the continuing redeployment of US forces from South Vietnam made it impossible to support the MEDTC-Rear beyond 20 November 1972. Now the possibility of a cease-fire agreement with attendant denial of support for Cambodia through South Vietnam gave added impetus to shifting this support to Thailand. At JCS request, CINCPAC prepared a plan for support of Cambodia by relocating the MEDTC-Rear to Thailand. The JCS approved the plan on 13 November 1972, subject to negotiation with the Royal Thai Government and provision for a 90-day stock of ammunition to include possible out-of-country storage in the third phase of the plan.[23]

Meanwhile, the Joint Staff had developed an illustrative concept plan for the redeployment of US forces following a cease-fire in Southeast Asia, which the Joint Chiefs forwarded to CINCPAC and CINCSAC on 17 November 1972. It expanded the original guidance provided the commanders on 27 October and was designed to remove forces in increments, allowing maximum security for remaining US forces and a capability to react to possible contingencies. With regard to land-based tactical air forces, the concept would permit reestablishment of the CINCPAC strategic reserve, reconstitution of tactical air forces in CONUS and Europe, and resumption of normal unit readiness training. All US air forces in Thailand would remain in place initially after the cease-fire and, then, on dates to be determined, various units would withdraw. The remaining forces, as described in the discussion of the JCS cease-fire planning submission to the Secretary of Defense, would be capable of 4,700 tactical

and 1,000 B–52 sorties per month.[24] The concept plan also provided for incremental reduction of the 7th Fleet off Vietnam. If incremental withdrawal was not required, the JCS preferred simultaneous deployment. In either case, remaining naval assets could provide 2,200 sorties per month with one CVA on station off Vietnam and two more positioned to arrive within a week. Escorts and support ships would be provided as required for the CVA levels, and two amphibious ready groups would be available on conditions of readiness appropriate to existing contingencies.[25]

The Secretary Reaches a Decision

On 17 November, the Secretary of Defense notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff of his decision on cease-fire planning. He approved the JCS plan of 13 November for the withdrawal of US and free world forces from South Vietnam, and took similar action on the contingency plans for Thailand, in effect approving the majority JCS position for a US Support Activities Group/7th Air Force (USSAG/7AF) in Thailand under CINCPAC. He approved the following authorities for implementation when appropriate and subject to the proper diplomatic clearances: establishment of an advanced element of the USSAG (USSAG ADVON) at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, prior to X-Day; disestablishment of Headquarters, MACV before X+60; and establishment of USSAG/7AF at Nakhon Phanom before X+60.

The Secretary wanted the move of command headquarters from South Vietnam to Thailand to be simple with minimum disruption. Once the US withdrawal from South Vietnam was complete, the JCS were to examine the tasking and targeting of all US air assets to determine if a more efficient and effective command structure was possible. At that time, the Joint Chiefs should recommend retention, abolition, or modification of the USSAG/7AF Headquarters. Mr. Laird also noted that political understandings with the Royal Thai Government required the Commander of the USSAG/7AF to deal directly with the Chief of US Mission in Thailand.

Laird concurred in the JCS concept for US force reduction in Thailand, but added that longer range force structure objectives would be necessary after "the difficult transition period" following the cease-fire. He approved aircraft redeployment goals for Thailand and viewed the proposed US force level in Thailand of 36,500 as neither a ceiling nor a floor on US personnel in that country. The "longer range (post-transition period) force structure" objective for Thailand, he said, would be a 32,200-man structure concentrated at five bases, capable of providing 4,700 tactical air and 1,000 B–52 sorties monthly as well as residual Southeast Asia logistics, intelligence, and command and control functions. Mr. Laird also approved for planning purposes the JCS plans for reduction of US naval forces off Vietnam, for intelligence support for US and South Vietnamese forces, for continued logistic support for the RVNAF, and for communications-electronics realignment as well as the contingency plans for Cambodia and Laos.[26]

On the following day, the Secretary approved the immediate establishment of both the DRSTO and the Attaché Element of the DAO as recommended by the Joint Chiefs. He requested a more detailed organization and terms of reference for the DRSTO that clearly established it as an integral part of the Attaché Office and "not vice versa." He authorized direct coordination between the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Department of State concerning the establishment of the Attaché Element, instructing that the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) be kept informed throughout the process.[27]

That same day, 18 November, Secretary Laird approved the basic rules of engagement and the operating authorities proposed by the Joint Chiefs for operations following a cease-fire. He approved the operating authorities with the understanding that final approval would be contingent upon the provisions of the final cease-fire agreement. He also granted the JCS request for extension of the temporary Southeast Asia augmentation authorities then in effect with the continuing provision that they be reviewed monthly pending "achievement of a stabilized force level in Southeast Asia." Laird wanted to review the JCS plan for incremental phase-down of US forces in Southeast Asia as soon as possible after the cease-fire terms were known, and he expected to review all temporary augmentations by X+15. He anticipated that this review would provide for the immediate return of one CVA and associated escorts to CONUS followed by a phased reduction to three CVAs in WESTPAC as quickly as possible. In addition, the 36,500 force limit for Thailand would include cryptologic personnel withdrawn from South Vietnam.[28]

During the next few days, the Joint Chiefs issued instructions implementing the Secretary's decisions. On 18 November, they authorized COMUSMACV to activate the Defense Resource Surveillance and Termination Office; several days later, they changed the name of the organization to Defense Resources Support and Termination Office to avoid connotation of surveillance in the sense of aerial reconnaissance. At that time, the JCS instructed CINCPAC and COMUSMACV that the recently designated head of the Office, Major General John E. Murray, USA, would have the title of Defense Attaché and would also serve as Chief, DRSTO.[29]

The Chiefs told the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency on 20 November to plan the establishment of the Attaché Element of the DAO, coordinating directly with the Department of State, and keeping the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) informed. The next day, the JCS authorized CINCPAC to establish the 21-man Attaché Element, using in-country resources. They later advised CINCPAC that the terms of reference for the DRSTO must accord with any cease-fire as ultimately accepted and that the military and civilian members of the DAO were not to function as advisers.[30]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff also forwarded to CINCPAC and CINCSAC the rules of engagement and operating authorities for a cease-fire that had been approved for planning, stressing that both the authorities and rules could be significantly affected by the provisions of the final cease-fire agreement. They notified the

appropriate commanders that the current augmentation authorities for Southeast Asia were extended through 31 December 1972. Extension beyond that date would be reviewed before the end of the year.[31]

At the request of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs had considered the civilian strength of the proposed DAO and examined two possible strength figures: 1,600 and 900. The Director, Joint Staff, drew up a proposed table of organization for 1,600 that he sent to ISA, warning that such a figure did not include personnel for intelligence, for civil operations and rural development, or for other non-DOD activities. Should a ceiling of 900 civilian personnel be imposed, the Director said, it would be necessary to increase contractor support at the risk of reduced control and management of RVNAF activities. He promised the JCS views of the matter after review of COMUSMACV and CINCPAC proposals.[32]

President Nixon reviewed and approved the cease-fire planning assumptions developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. He must have done so before the implementation of the cease-fire, but it was only on 12 February 1973, more than two weeks after the Vietnam agreement entered into force, that the Secretary notified the JCS of the President's decision.[33]

In planning the US withdrawal from South Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs had envisioned use of US temporary duty personnel to assist in the process. Accordingly, they had asked the Secretary to approve this assumption for planning purposes, and he had done so with the proviso that introduction of such personnel into South Vietnam during the period X-Day through X+60 to be approved by his office.[34] Subsequently, CINCPAC requested authorization for COMUSMACV to employ temporary duty personnel through X+59 under existing procedures, which did not require OSD approval, so long as the number of accountable personnel did not exceed the X-Day ceiling, and the JCS relayed this request to the Secretary on 6 December 1972. They assumed that the US ceiling as of X-Day would continue in effect through X+59, and temporary duty personnel not exceeding the ceiling could be placed in South Vietnam without violating the cease-fire agreement.[35]

The Secretary approved the JCS proposal on 13 December with the following caveat:

> I fully appreciate the delays and administrative workload which could result from clearing each and every TDY requirement with my office. However, all personnel involved must realize that the eyes of the world will be on the progress achieved during the withdrawal phase. Furthermore, an excessive delay in showing a marked reduction of US in-country strength could delay release of US POWs. Therefore, TDY must be held to an absolute minimum and must not be allowed to hold US strength at or near the X-Day level until late in the 60-day period.[36]

Preparations for Mine Countermeasure Operations

Clearance of US mines in North Vietnamese waters would be a major task, and the Joint Chiefs were readying appropriate plans simultaneously with cease-fire preparations. In July 1972, CINCPACFLT had produced a mine clearance plan, named FORMATION SENTRY, which provided for clearance in the waters of Haiphong, Cam Pha, Hon Gai, Vinh, and Thanh Hoa. On 30 October 1972, with the initiation of the intensive cease-fire planning, the Joint Chiefs asked for revision of the FORMATION SENTRY plan to include the ports of Quang Khe and Dong Hoi as well as other bays, river mouths, and water approaches; CINCPACFLT submitted the expanded plan, designated FORMATION SENTRY II, on 12 November.[37]

Meantime, on 2 November, the Secretary of Defense had ordered the JCS to be ready to implement the first phase of FORMATION SENTRY by positioning mine countermeasure forces in South Vietnamese waters close to North Vietnam. Priority for clearance, the Secretary instructed, would be the Haiphong shipping channel and approaches and then the other main North Vietnamese ports, bays, rivers, and inland waterways. The JCS issued the necessary order, and CINCPAC began movement of Helicopter Minesweep Squadron 12 (HM–12) to the Philippines. But on 10 November, at the direction of the Secretary, the Joint Chiefs suspended positioning of mine clearance forces, allowing forces in transit to continue to the Philippines, and directed CINCPAC to be ready either to resume preparations for clearance operations or to retrograde of assembled equipment to the United States.[38]

In November and early December, preparations for mine clearance continued although no forces were moved beyond the Philippines. The Joint Chiefs ordered the movement of three minesweepers (MSOs) from the West Coast of the United States to Hawaii, and, subsequently, authorized the embarkation of a Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) with CH–53D helicopters aboard ships in Hawaii for possible movement to the Philippines. For the mine countermeasure forces in the Philippines, the Chiefs authorized the reassembly of the helicopters of HM–12 and local flight training to insure pilot and equipment readiness. At the request of the field commanders, the JCS secured Mr. Laird's approval for modification of USMC CH–53D helicopters for mine clearance operations. In taking these actions, the Joint Chiefs sought to avoid public notice, instructing CINCPAC not to announce or answer queries about the actions.[39]

The mine countermeasure forces gathered in the Philippines in early December 1972 to carry out training to assemble, test and tow airborne mine clearance equipment. Both CINCPACFLT and CINCPAC recommended the training and, on 11 December, Admiral Moorer told the Secretary that the inability to reassemble, test and tow sweep gear was having an adverse effect on the readiness of the mine countermeasure forces. Accordingly, he requested authority for training with the mine countermeasures equipment in Subic Bay with as little visibility as possible, but the Secretary denied the request. In notifying CINCPAC of the decision, the JCS

did give the field commander the authority needed to prevent deterioration of the sweep gear provided the equipment was not assembled, tested, or towed.[40]

The Joint Staff was reluctant to accept the Secretary's decision, and on 20 December, the Operations Directorate (J–3) proposed another request to the Secretary to reassemble, test, and tow the equipment at sea "over-the-horizon" and out of sight of populated areas. Air strikes and reseeding of mines had resumed against North Vietnam in the LINEBACKER II action, and the Assistant to the Chairman, Vice Admiral Weinel, did not advise pressing the request. He told Moorer:

> This does not seem the proper way to proceed at the moment.
>
> Conducting mine sweeping operations "over-the-horizon" will be known by every B-girl in Olongapo and consequently to NVN.
>
> It doesn't make sense to be sending a tough signal in NVN with our air effort and at the same time send a soft signal with mine sweeping.
>
> The message to the B-Girls should be "all mine sweeping is off!"

The Chairman agreed and no request went to the Secretary.[41]

Meanwhile, in the secret negotiations in Paris, North Vietnam presented the United States a draft protocol for mine clearance. Consisting of seven articles, the protocol required the United States to remove, deactivate permanently, or destroy all mines in "the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways of North Vietnam" with such action carried out "simultaneously in all the mined areas." The draft provided that North Vietnam and the United States agree on a priority order for each area and that the United States furnish its plan for mine clearance to North Vietnam. With regard to "waterways," the draft called for North Vietnam to join the United States in destroying or removing mines with the United States supplying the means of surveying, removal, and destruction. Finally, the proposal required the United States to respect the sovereignty of North Vietnam.[42]

At the request of the President, Admiral Moorer reviewed the draft protocol. Although further negotiation and various modifications were needed, the Chairman believed that the US obligation for clearing coastal waters could be fulfilled within 210 days of an execute order. Clearing inland waters would take an additional 130 days. The protocol should require only the "neutralization" or "destruction" of mines, since "removal" was unduly hazardous and constituted an "imprudent risk" to clearance crews. Because both personnel and equipment were limited, Moorer thought it impossible to clear all areas simultaneously. Concerning destruction of ordnance in "waterways," which the Chairman interpreted as meaning inland waterways, he urged that this task remain the responsibility of North Vietnam, with the United States supplying appropriate equipment and training. In addition, he found the language of the draft imprecise in its provision for US respect for the sovereignty of North Vietnam. He recommended revision to insure North Vietnamese guarantee the safety of all US personnel on or over North Vietnamese territory insofar as possible and the exemption of US personnel from North Vietnamese civil and criminal

jurisdiction. In return, the United States would pledge its forces to respect the laws of North Vietnam and to abstain from any activity inconsistent with the spirit of the agreement. Finally the Chairman recommended that a mine countermeasures expert be available to the negotiators when the protocol was considered again.[43]

Planning for the Four-Party Joint Military Commission

While the Joint Chiefs were considering the military aspects of a cease-fire, the Nixon administration discussed the establishment of the supervisory machinery provided for in the October cease-fire agreement with the South Vietnamese. On 30 October 1972, the Department of State informed Ambassador Bunker that planning should be undertaken in Saigon to have supervisory machinery in place as soon as a cease-fire went into effect. United States officials in Saigon were to plan for a two-party joint military commission, composed of the GVN and the PRG, and a four party commission that added the United States and North Vietnam. Anticipating difficulties in obtaining South Vietnamese agreement, the State Department told Ambassador Bunker to bring General Weyand into the planning. Weyand was to form a "very small" planning staff to work out the details of a four-party joint military commission (FPJMC).[44]

General Weyand chose two officers of his staff to work with him and his Chief of Staff, Major General G. H. Woodward, USA, and by 3 November 1972, this group had drafted an outline for the organization and operation of the four-party joint military commission. The planning group called for a Central Commission in Saigon, composed of a general officer representing each party, assisted by a secretary. Below the Central Commission were four Regional Control Groups, one for each of the four Military Regions of South Vietnam, which would be headed by a colonel from each party and would include small operations and administrative staffs. Each of the control groups would have five control teams, composed of a single representative of each party, to supervise activities in outlying areas.[45]

Ambassador Bunker forwarded the working group draft to Washington and received instructions requesting development of detailed working procedures and concepts to implement a cease-fire agreement. Weyand's group went to work again and, after consultations with General Cao Van Vien, Chief of the RVNAF Joint General Staff, prepared a draft military commander's agreement containing eighty-seven articles. The Joint Chiefs were not consulted during this process; General Weyand's contact with Washington was through the Ambassador and the Department of State. On 10 November 1972, however, General Weyand sent a copy of the draft commanders' agreement to Admiral Moorer.[46] On 10 November 1972, Major General Haig and several other NSC staff members arrived in Saigon and met with Weyand's group to revise and change the draft commanders' agreement.[47]

The State Department reviewed the documents produced in Saigon and prepared alternative drafts of the protocol for the four-party commission and the commanders' agreement. The Washington versions were brief and would do no more than establish the commission and provide a general description of its organization and mission, leaving the commission to arrange its working procedures. The Secretary of State asked Ambassador Bunker on 17 November to have General Weyand obtain the concurrence of General Vien in these revisions. The two generals did discuss the revised documents, and certain changes were made in them. The draft protocol and commanders' agreement were then tabled in a private negotiating session between Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho in Paris.[48]

On 1 December 1972, the Secretary of Defense noted the progress in planning for a four-party joint military commission. He believed it essential for the United States to be ready to field its element of the commission immediately following announcement of a cease-fire. Accordingly, he requested Admiral Moorer to supply detailed plans for the US element, including assignment by name of US personnel and a nomination for the senior US representative to the commission.[49]

Moorer replied to the Secretary on 7 December, furnishing the main features of the plan already developed by General Weyand. He nominated Major General Woodward to be the Chief of the US Delegation to the four-party joint military commission and Brigadier General John A. Wickham, USA, to be Deputy. He advised the Secretary that all US personnel for the commission could be in place within 24 hours of an implementing directive. Secretary Laird approved the plan and nominations on 22 December.[50]

Meantime, during private negotiating sessions in Paris in early December, Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho considered a cease-fire and the machinery to supervise it. They discussed this matter in light of the drafts prepared by General Weyand's working group and of an alternative draft submitted by the North Vietnamese, which combined into a single document provisions for both the two and four party commissions with an outline of the organization and functions. The US delegation in Paris forwarded the North Vietnamese protocol to Saigon on 12 December for review; General Weyand's planning group found it unacceptable. This group developed a revised proposal, but the breakdown of the negotiations and the resumption of bombing on 18 December precluded action on this matter.[51]

Negotiations Falter

On November 7, President Nixon was reelected together with a Democratic Congress that seemed ready to cut off funds for the war. Nixon felt that he had very little time in which to conclude an acceptable peace agreement. What was the most important military objective? Admiral Moorer believed that, if the cease-fire agreement was to be effective, military forces must not be allowed to improve their

positions. Each side would have to deliver a complete list of every unit, position and level of subsistence. The biggest problem, Moorer expected, would be verifying any changes. In this surveillance effort, the Chairman wanted the military aspects of the agreement kept separate from the civilian ones. At a WSAG meeting on 8 November, Dr. Kissinger directed that a maximum air effort against logistics movements into South Vietnam and Laos run until 25 November. Next day, Admiral Moorer reviewed plans for retaliating if North Vietnam violated a cease-fire. First priority would go to bombing railroad bridges and yards, then transshipment points; a second phase would strike at the center of Hanoi. This was no paper exercise. On 11 November, General Weyand advised the Chairman: "An overwhelming mass of evidence. . . indicates that Hanoi's objectives in Indochina remain unchanged. . . . Should a cease-fire ensue during the coming dry season, all available intelligence indicates that only the rules of engagement will change."[52]

Did the last obstacle to peace lie in Hanoi or in Saigon? Hanoi, Admiral Moorer believed. With the Paris talks about to resume, Moorer felt that the largest difficulty lay in having stopped US operations north of 20° without requiring North Vietnam to stop its operations south of 20°. According to Moorer, Kissinger "has spent the whole war advertising our punches to the North Vietnamese."[53]

On 14 November, President Nixon gave Thieu a letter conveying his "absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement it is my intention to take swift and severe retaliatory action." Nonetheless, four days later, Thieu proposed sixty-nine changes to the draft agreement. Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho resumed negotiations on 20 November. Five days later, according to Kissinger, the first round of talks "ended with twelve improvements . . . in the text, balanced against three or four demands by Hanoi for major changes in its favor."[54] Still, the outlook was promising enough for the White House to cut activity over North Vietnam to 100 tactical air and 30 B–52 sorties daily.

On 18 November, Admiral Moorer was finally allowed to see, but not keep, a copy of the draft agreement. Two days later, he briefed senior members of the Joint Staff from notes he had taken. Moorer observed that "the DMZ is not considered as a boundary and the North Vietnamese can call it one country. This will mean sovereignty but no border." At the White House, on the morning of 30 November, Nixon and Kissinger met with Secretary Laird and the Joint Chiefs. Nixon said that "for the past two years the administration has been one step ahead of the sheriff" in getting Congress to continue funding the war. If the American people knew that Hanoi had accepted our terms and more, he added, their support for the war would stop. Nixon "assured the Chiefs that he would respond positively if the Agreement is broken." He continued: "Everyone knows that an agreement with the communists is not worth a damn. What counts here is the [South Vietnamese] will to use the power they now have." Whether Hanoi resumed major action would depend upon the attitudes of Moscow and Peking. Détente with the Soviets and Chinese, he believed, had created "the kind of dialogue that exerts the real influence—the

International Control Group means nothing." Admiral Moorer saw a problem in the DMZ not being described as a boundary. Kissinger responded by citing requirements in the draft that the North Vietnamese stop infiltration and respect the DMZ. Nixon dismissed Thieu's claim that there was no legal basis for stopping infiltration as "nonsense. Things are different now than they were before when we were required to rely on such things as the SEATO Pact, Tonkin Gulf Resolution, etc. This time the U.S. is a party to the agreement and, consequently, has a legal right to take action if this agreement is broken." Kissinger commented that, after the Haiphong mining of 8 May, the North Vietnamese "now know that President Nixon will take action." Admiral Moorer was ordered to prepare contingency plans for (1) striking the North if negotiations failed and (2) carrying out punitive and retaliatory attacks if an agreement was subsequently violated.[55]

The Joint Staff, collaborating with Strategic Air Command, the Air Staff and Pacific Air Forces, prepared a plan designated PRIMING CHARGE. It listed fifty-eight targets throughout North Vietnam, in order of priority, to be attacked by B–52s and tactical aircraft; strikes would be complemented by naval gunfire and re-seeding mines in the main deep-water ports. PRIMING CHARGE concentrated against essential national assets, aiming for "mass shock effect in a psychological context." First, hit Radio Hanoi and all power plants in the Hanoi/Haiphong area, insuring that the major plant located at the base of a dike was struck. Second, bomb transportation targets in the Hanoi area. Third, reduce the buffer zone along the Chinese border from twenty-five to five miles, attacking key targets up to the five-mile limit. Admiral Moorer was attending a NATO meeting in Brussels when PRIMING CHARGE was written. General Ryan, as acting chairman, forwarded the plan to Secretary Laird on 7 December. He estimated that, given 48 hours notice, all targets could be destroyed in seven days, although the poor weather typical of December might impose a delay. As soon as Admiral Moorer returned to the Pentagon, at 1320 hours on 7 December, he reviewed the plan with Joint Staff officers and then with General John C. Meyer, CINCSAC. Later that afternoon, the Chairman went to Camp David and presented PRIMING CHARGE to President Nixon who, in Moorer's opinion, "seemed to be pleased with it." Subsequently, Dr. Kissinger asked how soon a plan could be readied for "a limited duration operation" hitting "military and high psychological impact targets" and emphasizing sites not hit before. Should there be a separate order to mine and must re-seeding be accompanied by diversionary bombing attacks? Answering on 13 December, Secretary Laird stated that re-seeding with Mk–52 destructors would require forty-eight hours notice, less time if Mk–36s were used. Laird favored a separate order for mining; he deemed diversionary bombing desirable but not essential. On 14 December, Admiral Moorer gave the Secretary more information about PRIMING CHARGE. All B–52s would carry maximum loads, and the effort would "surge" on the first day of the attack. In view of weather conditions, he recommended a three-day strike as "an absolute minimum."[56]

The next round of the talks in Paris produced only deadlock. Le Duc Tho seemed to settle issues, then insisted on renegotiating them. On 13 December, Dr. Kissinger cabled the President a pessimistic assessment:

> Hanoi is almost disdainful of us because we have no effective leverage left, while Saigon in its short-sighted devices to sabotage the agreement knocks out from under us our few remaining props. . . . We will soon have no means of leverage at all . . . [and] will neither get an agreement nor be able to preserve Saigon.
>
> We now have two essential strategic choices. The first one is to turn hard on Hanoi and increase pressure enormously through bombing and other means. . . . Concurrently, . . . pressures on Saigon would be essential. . . .
>
> The second course is to maintain present appearances by scheduling another meeting with Le Duc Tho in early January. This would test the extremely unlikely hypothesis that Tho might get new instructions.[57]

On the morning of 13 December, President Nixon decided to resume reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam and to re-seed the minefields. At noon, Major General Haig telephoned Admiral Moorer to inform him that talks were "getting nowhere." The North Vietnamese, Haig reported, wanted "to emasculate the principle of the DMZ and have carte blanche movement of their forces back and forth later on. They are not nitpicking considerations as Laird thinks, they are serious fundamental questions." Secretary Laird, Haig continued, had "sent a memorandum over here which [has] you and Rush totally on board for settling things now at any cost" because there was no possibility of continued congressional support. Moorer replied that he had told Laird "it would be much easier to get [congressional] support if we could get some sort of an agreement and then force a violation."[58]

At 1045 on 14 December, Admiral Moorer informed CINCSAC that major strikes against North Vietnam were "definitely on the front burner." There would be a maximum effort for two or three days against 25 to 30 targets, targeting Hanoi Radio and thermal power plants and railroad yards in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. All B–52s should stand down on the day before these attacks started, so that more than 100 sorties could be mounted on the first day. Moorer next called General Vogt, alerting him that these attacks would have priority over everything in South Vietnam, barring a crisis. Vogt agreed this was a good time, since activity in the South was low. At 1320, Major General Haig conveyed the following instructions to Secretary Laird's Military Assistant: Re-seed the Haiphong channel and resume tactical reconnaissance on Saturday, 16 December. Prepare to execute air strikes starting on Sunday, 17 December; these might continue beyond two or three days. The President, according to Haig, expected "massive resistance" from Laird's office.[59] Nixon was also "unhappy with the command relationships in Southeast Asia and the problems which have occurred since May." At 1415, the Chairman spoke by secure telephone with CINCPAC. Admiral Gayler said that he favored hitting airfields but not SAM sites. Moorer replied that "we are not going to talk about that"; CINCPAC would be given a list of targets. At 1830, Moorer went to the White

House with (1) proposed targets and weather assumptions and (2) an assessment of what could be done, how quickly and how massively. Next day, the President postponed reconnaissance, re-seeding and air strikes for 24 hours because he did not want B–52s flying over Hanoi on the Sunday before Christmas. General Meyer told the Chairman that SAC could mount 129 B–52 sorties on the first day and 93 on the second; adding more on the first day would reduce the sorties on the second and third days to 65 each day.[60]

On Sunday afternoon, 17 December, President Nixon telephoned the Chairman at Quarters Six to say that this was "the last chance for the Air Force and the Navy to put forth a maximum effort against North Vietnam." Nixon emphasized that "the strikes must come off"; he did not expect any excuses. Admiral Moorer replied that all-weather sorties including B–52s would proceed, followed by visual bombing when weather permitted. He added that the weather as well as the need to avoid civilian casualties when possible constrained the selection of targets and tactics. Simultaneously, Nixon sent President Thieu a letter that it was his "irrevocable" decision to conclude an agreement. Therefore, "you must now decide whether you desire to continue our alliance or whether you want me to seek a settlement with the enemy that serves U.S. interests alone."[61]

LINEBACKER II Is Launched

The climactic air campaign against North Vietnam, now designated LINEBACKER II, opened on 18 December with 123 B–52 sorties. Concentrating against the Hanoi-Haiphong area, the bombers came after dark in three waves; A–6s and FB–111s flew strike missions between them. Surface-to-air missiles brought down three B–52s; pilots tallied well over 200 SAM firings. That morning, Admiral Moorer reviewed matters with his principal staff officers. The Director, J–3, commented that PACOM Headquarters "will dissipate the effort if we don't control them from here" by retaining control over targeting. Moorer said he would check with the White House about when the Hanoi-Haiphong control circles and the China buffer zone might be reduced. Two hours later, Dr. Kissinger told him that strikes would be allowed within five miles of the Chinese border.[62]

On 19 December, all 93 B–52 sorties returned safely even though pilots reported over 180 SAM firings. Dr. Kissinger asked the Chairman why there had been no losses. Moorer replied that it took time to unpack and load more SAMs; he did not expect to lose a bomber on every wave. Meantime CINCPAC had asked that nine targets, to be hit by tactical air in case of bad weather, be added to the approved list. Admiral Moorer incorporated them into a list of 50 additional targets that he submitted to Secretary Laird. Of these, 43 were in Hanoi and Haiphong (26 inside and 17 outside the control areas) and 7 in the China buffer zone. Laird at once approved 39 targets and, immediately afterward, 5 more in the buffer zone. The

Chairman passed word to CINCPAC that LINEBACKER II would continue until further notice. Late in the afternoon, Dr. Kissinger told Moorer over the telephone that "we sure don't want to get into the syndrome of last summer when we were just dropping bombs. Now we have crossed the bridge let's brutalize them."[63]

For the Americans, the worst day of LINEBACKER II came on 20 December. The first wave of B–52s attacked the Gia Lam and Yen Vien railroad yards in Hanoi. Two bombers were downed by SAMs over their targets; a third was damaged and crashed in Thailand. General Meyer gave Admiral Moorer the news at 0949, adding that pilots said that the full moon and crystal-clear sky made it like daylight so that the North Vietnamese could track aircraft optically. F–4s were dropping corridors of chaff to blind the radars, but optical tracking would make the chaff useless. Meyer reported that General Vogt wanted to cancel the second wave. CINCSAC deemed it too late to do so, even though three or four B–52s might be lost. After talking together, Meyer and Moorer decided to divert two "cells" of three B–52s from the second wave that were slated to fly over downtown Hanoi. For the Chairman, this was an unusual intrusion into the details of operational decisions. At 1045, Moorer called General Vogt who recommended canceling the day's remaining B–52 missions "until we get a handle on this thing." Moorer wrote in his diary that this "would have been a disastrous move." Vogt and Ryan set their staffs to finding out whether optical tracking was really feasible. Three more B–52s were lost in the third wave, which again hit Gia Lam. Over 220 SAMs were fired during the day, mostly in salvos. At 1225, Dr. Kissinger called the Chairman to observe that B–52s were arriving over their targets at the same hour every day; Moorer replied that the enemy's big radar net made surprise impossible. Kissinger continued: "You make sure we have a high degree of pressure on the North. It is the only card we have left." In mid-afternoon the Chairman conferred with General Ryan who "had no doubts that we had to keep on going with the waves despite the losses." Moorer then took a call from Admiral Gayler; the Chairman told him that since the weather would be good for the next 48 hours, Navy planes should strike north of 20°, not down in the panhandle around Vinh. CINCPAC reported that his experts thought the North Vietnamese were tracking by radar rather than optically.[64] The underlying problem was that senior officers at SAC headquarters lacked the expertise to conduct a campaign resembling the repeated raids over Berlin during World War II.[65]

The level of B–52 sorties fell sharply on 22 December: 30 over the Hanoi/Haiphong area and 30 elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Two B–52s were downed over Hanoi. That morning, Admiral Moorer informed Joint Staff officers that there would probably be a Christmas cease-fire, even though he opposed it. Early in the afternoon, Colonel Richard T. Kennedy of the NSC Staff telephoned Admiral Moorer to tell the Chairman of the President's concern that only 60 sorties had been flown. Moorer replied that breaking routines and changing schedules, as had been done at the outset of LINEBACKER II, meant losing sorties later. He then called

CINCPAC, who voiced concern over B–52 losses and suggested that SAC vary the timing of the attacks.[66]

A New Command?

A crisis of confidence between President Nixon and military leaders broke on 22 December. Thirty B–52s bombed Haiphong; none was hit. Early in the morning, Admiral Moorer called General Vogt to say that, after the Christmas cease-fire, the President "wants to hit them with a roar immediately," using laser-guided bombs to knock out all of Hanoi's electrical power. Moorer also told Vogt that the White House was "not as nervous as you might think" about B–52 losses—eleven so far. Vogt reported that Thieu had given Major General Haig, who was flying back from Saigon, "four or five pages of baloney saying neither yes nor no" about peace terms. Vogt said that Thieu and General Vien "are just impossible . . . They think that they have got us and that we won't walk away."[67]

There was even worse trouble in Washington. At 1135, Dr. Kissinger called Admiral Moorer to warn that he had not seen the President so angry "since I got in this job." The reason: only sixty B–52 sorties had been flown in all Southeast Asia for two days in a row. Nixon wanted, in 48 hours, a plan for one theater commander, General Vogt, to do all the targeting in Southeast Asia. Moorer said that the command set-up did not affect the number of sorties. The early surge had disrupted what he described as SAC's regular production line or airline schedule; restoration would take time. The conversation became combative at both ends:

> Kissinger: "By the time you get that done we'll be out of the war and, again, the military will start screaming that restrictions were placed on them."
>
> Moorer: "I never said anything about restrictions…. He'll get anything he wants, of course. . . . We are going to surge ahead and isolate Hanoi from the rest of the country. . . . "
>
> Kissinger: "We have got to get the maximum shock effect now!"

When Kissinger noted that 120 B–52 sorties had been flown on the first day of LINEBACKER II, Moorer retorted that only a complete stand-down the day before had made this level possible. "We will be getting back to that," the Chairman promised. Kissinger was unimpressed: "When, after Congress cuts off our funds?" Kissinger spoke with the President, then informed Moorer that Nixon's anger had not abated; Major General Haig came to the Pentagon at 1800 to repeat the message.[68]

At 0805 on 23 December, the Chairman told General Ryan that the 75 B–52 sorties scheduled for that day might help "blot out" the problem with the President. Admiral Moorer then went to the White House and explained to Dr. Kissinger (1) the command set-up and (2) the general concept of operations for the coming week. Kissinger, appearing satisfied, asked for a written concept. Returning to the Pentagon, Moorer

drafted a general directive to field commanders, basing it upon many telephone conversations and stating "confirmation would follow." When bombing resumed on 26 December, after the Christmas cease-fire, major objectives would be (1) completing an achievable level of damage against targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong complex and the China buffer zone, (2) isolating Hanoi from the rest of North Vietnam, and (3) destroying the lines of communication in the northeast as first priority, those in the southeast as second priority. On 26 December, 90 to 115 B–52s would fly north of 20°; next day, 60 would fly there and 30 elsewhere in Southeast Asia; on 28 December, those numbers would be reversed. Moorer released the draft directive without getting Laird's approval because neither the Secretary nor his Executive Assistant could be easily located and "time was of the essence."[69]

December 23 was the second day on which no B–52s were downed or damaged. At 1307, Dr. Kissinger told the Chairman that he had given the President a strong recommendation against changing the command set-up. At 1415, the Chairman called CINCPAC to say that the White House was "pretty well pleased" with bomb damage assessments. Admiral Gayler reported that a conference on electronic countermeasures had just concluded. The North Vietnamese evidently waited to fire SAMs until B–52s had turned after dropping their bombs, when the planes made larger radar "signatures" and the jamming chaff was less effective. Therefore, Gayler felt that they should fly straight on without turning. He believed, and Moorer agreed, that B–52s soon would run out of targets around Hanoi and have to strike elsewhere.[70]

During the morning of 24 December, Admiral Moorer showed the draft directive he had released on 23 December to Secretary Laird, who said that he wanted concurrences from all the Service Chiefs before he would approve it. Moorer handcarried the directive to General Abrams, General Ryan, the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy), and the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans), Marine Corps; all concurred. That afternoon, Kissinger told the Chairman that he was sending Laird a message directing him to execute the concept of operations. Moorer considered the concept to be "more or less a 'think piece'." He suggested, and Kissinger agreed, that the White House simply approve the messages that Laird was sending over.[71]

On 24 December, SAC made some crucial changes in tactics. The entire bomber force's time over target was compressed into fifteen to twenty minutes.[72] That allowed chaff to be laid in an elliptical pattern blanketing the entire target area, instead of being dispensed in corridors along the bombers' entry and exit routes. Also, the North Vietnamese could fire fewer SAMs because bombers would be gone by the time launchers were reloaded. Thirty B–52s struck railroad yards without loss. Concurrently, Moorer sent Kissinger his analysis of command and control over the air war. According to the Chairman, Admiral Gayler functioned as the commander, setting priorities, allocating missions, and assigning tasks. Appointing a Commander, Southeast Asia Air Command, would give the appearance that one

man was in charge. Already, however, CINCPAC was that man. Creating a completely new organization would disrupt the waging of an intense air war. Therefore, unless there was an "overriding political or psychological reason," Moorer highly recommended retaining the current system. The President chose not to press the matter further. Later that day, Kissinger told the Chairman that Nixon had "decided to let [Moorer] run the operation."[73]

Success

When LINEBACKER II resumed on 26 December, 116 B–52s struck ten targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong area. One bomber was downed by SAMs; another was damaged and crashed in Thailand. General Meyer told the Chairman that B–52 cells had arrived from many directions at once, saturating the defenses. Moorer wrote: "it worked out beautifully. . . . I don't think anybody in the world could coordinate an operation as well as we did." Meyer believed, and Moorer agreed, that the North Vietnamese were running out of SAMs.[74]

Admiral Gayler requested clarification and guidance about strikes against air defenses. The Secretary's office drafted and Laird approved the following reply: "Should these sites be considered to pose a threat to a planned B–52 strike, plan to strike them with B–52s incident to the main strike with a weight of effort commensurate with the threat, provided they are otherwise suitable as B–52 targets and they are approved by the Secretary of Defense." Admiral Moorer told Laird's Executive Assistant that he strongly objected. "I will not order pilots to go in there if I don't get this authority," he recorded. "This message made me madder than any has in a long time." Laird agreed to rewrite it as follows: "Active or suspected as occupied/active sites may be struck by tactical air as required. . . . Requests for authorization to conduct B–52 strikes against a threat to a planned B–52 strike will be submitted to the Chairman, JCS for approval."[75]

Late on 27 December, Admiral Moorer, General Meyer, Admiral Gayler and General Vogt agreed to send 60 B–52s next day, as that apparently was the level at which enemy defense networks became saturated. They decided that daily sorties should average about 90, flying 120 one day and 60 the next to rest crews, allow maintenance, and keep the attack pattern unpredictable. On 28 December, their decision was vindicated. At 1258, Meyer informed the Chairman that 59 bombers had bombed their targets without loss: " . . . if we just keep pressing on . . . I would predict . . . that in another week . . . we could fly anywhere we want over North Vietnam with impunity." The Chairman relayed that prediction to Colonel Kennedy of the NSC Staff.[76]

Meanwhile, on 26 December Hanoi passed word that talks could resume as soon as the bombing ended and promised a "constantly serious negotiating attitude" in settling remaining questions. The US reply set a tight time limit on

concluding an agreement; bombing would stop within 36 hours of receiving final confirmation of this schedule.[77] Early in the evening of 28 December, Colonel Kennedy called Admiral Moorer to report that Hanoi was no longer "nibbling" but had "swallowed the hook." When would be the best time to stop bombing north of 20°? Between 1800 and 2400 Eastern Standard Time, the Chairman answered, which would be early Saigon time. Kennedy next told Moorer that bombing would stop at 1900 EST, or 0700 hours on 30 December Saigon time. The Chairman drafted a directive and took it to the White House. This, Moorer told Kennedy, was the third time he had faced the issue of a halt. The Chairman thought it "much better" to continue bombing until the North Vietnamese actually signed an agreement, and asked Kennedy to convey that view to Dr. Kissinger.

At 0815 on 29 December, Moorer met with Deputy Secretary Rush and Colonel Kennedy, who approved his message to CINCPAC that directed a bombing halt. Kennedy observed that public and congressional attitudes made it "very difficult" for the President to refuse to negotiate and keep bombing until an agreement was signed. He assured the Chairman that conditions for resuming the talks stipulated starting with positions agreed as of 23 October, before Hanoi and Saigon had begun backsliding, and that Hanoi had agreed to move rapidly toward a conclusion. Nevertheless, Moorer dictated the following comment for his diary:

> I am very apprehensive over the outcome of these new discussions since it is quite clear that the North Vietnamese are hurting badly and any stand-down gives them the opportunity to recuperate. They may simply use these talks to bring in more missiles and . . . influence public opinion to the point where the bombing cannot be resumed—I hope I am wrong.[78]

This time the Chairman was wrong.

The Joint Chiefs met at 1430 on 29 December. General Abrams said that he felt that the Chiefs had been bystanders during LINEBACKER II and consequently, he could not render any comment. Admiral Moorer fully agreed: "we were simply carrying out orders"; no one had asked the JCS whether to stop or continue the bombing. The Chairman emphasized to Abrams that he had warned Kissinger:

> It was apparent that they had run out of missiles and that it would be very difficult for us to start again from a morale and flight crew point of view and that it would be far better if we bombed while we were negotiating and stopped bombing when they signed.[79]

On 29 December, 60 B–52s struck 3 Hanoi/Haiphong targets without loss. Crews sighted only four MIGs and very few SAMs. Admiral Moorer told Deputy Secretary Rush, "I think we could go over there with impunity now." Next day, the White House announced that all bombing above the 20th parallel would be stopped "as long as serious negotiations are under way." During the 11 days of LINEBACKER II, 714 B–52 sorties dropped 15,000 tons of bombs on 34 targets in

the Hanoi/Haiphong area. Heavy defenses had been overcome, rail transportation thoroughly crippled, POL facilities damaged extensively, and power plants hard hit. The cost included 15 B–52s lost; 42 crewmen were killed and 24 captured.[80] What a similar scale of bombing might have accomplished in 1965, when air defenses were not nearly as strong, is intriguing to contemplate. By 1972 many options had been foreclosed, fatally weakening LINEBACKER II's long-term aim of deterring another invasion of South Vietnam.

A Paradox

LINEBACKER II clearly achieved its immediate objective. The North Vietnamese moved promptly toward an agreement and Thieu felt reassured enough to concur. Yet the bombing campaign had been conducted in ways that, accumulated experience seemed to suggest, would surely fail. Most military men were convinced that civilian micro-management was a major reason for ROLLING THUNDER's ineffectiveness. Nixon, however, intruded farther into the details of sortie rates and target selection than McNamara and Johnson had ever done. On 27 December, for example, six B–52s slated to hit SAM sites were diverted to strike the Lang Dong railroad yard because of the "desire of high national authorities to achieve a 'high' probability of destruction" there.[81] A crucial difference lay in LINEBACKER II's unrelenting intensity. As Admiral Moorer told CINCSAC on 28 December, "I think . . . what is really different is the fact that we have compressed this tremendous damage into a very short time span and this, in effect, saturates their capability to cope with it…."[82] Ironically, it was Nixon's insistence upon maintaining the fast pace of LINEBACKER II that led to the collision with Admiral Moorer. The Chairman probably could have prevented this confrontation by explaining to the President, at LINEBACKER II's outset, the technical reasons why a daily effort of 120 B–52 sorties could not be maintained indefinitely.[83] That, in turn, raises the question of how well military and diplomatic moves were coordinated. During ROLLING THUNDER, much interagency effort had been expended upon the calibration of bombing escalations and pauses, trying to ensure that exactly the right signals went to Hanoi. President Nixon, on the other hand, kept his own counsel and used force like a blunt instrument. As General Abrams observed, the Joint Chiefs were "bystanders"; Admiral Moorer's protest that LINEBACKER II was ending prematurely made no impression at the White House. Perhaps LINEBACKER II succeeded because it ignored conventional wisdom and so surprised everyone, the North Vietnamese most of all.

14

The Agreement

The Talks Resume

On 26 December 1972, the North Vietnamese suggested that Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho meet in Paris on 8 January. In reply, President Nixon proposed that technical talks begin on 2 January. He also offered to halt the air attacks above 20° north once arrangements for the meetings were complete. The North Vietnamese accepted the US proposal on 28 December. Accordingly, President Nixon restricted the bombing of North Vietnam on 29 December.[1] The following day, the United States publicly announced the resumption of the negotiations.[2]

US and North Vietnamese "technical experts" met in Paris on 2 January for discussions on enforcement of a cease-fire. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William H. Sullivan led a US team of five. The North Vietnamese delegation was headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach. The discussions continued for four days in suburban Paris, meeting alternately in a house chosen by North Vietnam and then one selected by the United States. No public statements were issued at the conclusion of the daily sessions and neither delegation commented on the progress of the talks.[3]

Meantime, on 4 January, the United States, the Governments of North and South Vietnam, and the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government reconvened their weekly plenary peace talks. Ambassador William J. Porter and Phan Dang Lam represented the United States and South Vietnam, but Xuan Thuy and Mme. Binh, chief delegates of North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government did not attend and were represented by their deputies. The allied side set forth its standard position calling for the withdrawal of all North Vietnamese forces from the south, restoration of the DMZ, and acknowledgment of the

existence of two sovereign states in Vietnam. The communist side responded by criticizing the December bombing and demanding the immediate signature of the October accord.[4]

South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu had greeted the resumed talks with restraint. In yet another attempt to persuade the South Vietnamese president to accept a possible agreement, President Nixon wrote to him on 5 January. He cautioned President Thieu that, if the two outstanding substantive issues relating to the DMZ and the method of signature of an agreement could be resolved, and if acceptable supervisory machinery could be arranged, the United States would proceed to conclude a settlement. President Nixon went on to warn:

> The gravest consequence would then ensue if your government chose to reject the agreement and split off from the United States. . . .
>
> As we enter this new round of talks, I hope that our countries will now show a united front. It is imperative for our common objectives that your government take no further actions that complicate our task and would make more difficult the acceptance of the settlement by all parties.

Once again, President Nixon promised further support if South Vietnam accepted the agreement, stating:

> You have my assurance of continued assistance in the post-settlement period and that we will respond with full force should the settlement be violated by North Vietnam.[5]

In anticipation of the renewed negotiations, the Chairman cautioned US field commanders against actions indicating preparation for a settlement in Vietnam. "Until a cease fire is actually signed," he told CINCPAC, COMUSMACV, and Deputy COMUSMACV on 6 January, "great care must be exercised that we do not give the wrong 'signal' to Hanoi." The commanders must guard against planning that, if known to North Vietnamese leaders, might convince them the United States had decided on a cease-fire regardless of the cost. Recognizing the necessity to proceed with certain planning, Moorer advised the commanders that "a fine sense of judgment" was required to avoid activities that could give the North Vietnamese the wrong impression. Specifically, he ordered holding in abeyance movement of advance parties of the US Support Activities Group/7th Air Force to Thailand or movement of elements of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center. In addition, any planning with third countries must be conducted with care.[6]

Dr. Kissinger arrived in Paris on 7 January for his scheduled meeting with Le Duc Tho. The next day the two negotiators met at a house in suburban Gif-sur-Yvette, a site selected by the North Vietnamese. The talks lasted four and a half hours and adjourned without public comment by either party. Meanwhile, the technical experts held a separate session on secondary aspects of a cease-fire.[7]

On the following day, 9 January, Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho met again. In accordance with prior agreement, the principals' meetings, like those of the technical experts, alternated between sites chosen by the two parties. Dr. Kissinger hosted the meeting on 9 January at a house in outlying St. Nom-la-Breteche.[8]

The two negotiators continued their meetings on 10 and 11 January. On 11 January, Dr. Kissinger cabled President Nixon: "We have finished the complete text of the agreement." Subsequently, Le Duc Tho and Dr. Kissinger held two more sessions, apparently to resolve remaining details, and then Dr. Kissinger left for the United States on the evening of 13 January.[9] Meantime, the technical experts had proceeded with their separate meetings. On 10 January, Major General G. H. Woodward, USA, the MACV Chief of Staff and a participant in the small MACV group studying control and supervision of a cease-fire, arrived in Paris to join the US team, and on 11 January, the technical experts met in joint session with the principals. Following Dr. Kissinger's departure for the United States, the US technical experts remained in Paris, meeting with their North Vietnamese counter-parts to resolve remaining technical problems.[10]

Dr. Kissinger flew directly from Paris to Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, arriving early in the morning of 14 January. He went immediately to Key Biscayne to confer with President Nixon at the Florida White House. Several hours later, the President sent General Alexander Haig, previously Dr. Kissinger's deputy and now the Army Vice Chief of Staff, to South Vietnam. White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said that General Haig would consult with President Thieu on the negotiations and would also visit Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. Admiral Moorer relayed to General Weyand a copy of the Department of State dispatch alerting the US Embassies concerned of the impending visit; the trip was "for the purpose of conferring with the leaders of the Republic of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and with key Embassy and military officials." Although the Department of State did not elaborate further, the Haig mission followed a procedure that had evolved the previous fall, when, after a significant development in the private negotiations, Dr. Kissinger returned to report to the President who then sent an envoy to Saigon to notify President Thieu.[11]

The President and Dr. Kissinger conferred throughout most of the day on 14 January. The following morning, White House Press Secretary Ziegler announced that because of the progress in the negotiations the President had directed a suspension of all bombing, shelling, and further mining of North Vietnam, effective 1000 Washington time. In the course of subsequent questioning, Mr. Ziegler explained that the suspension of mining applied to any additional mining; removal of seeded mines was a matter under negotiation. The Press Secretary added that Dr. Kissinger would return to Paris in "the relatively near future" but provided no details on further negotiations.[12]

As had been the case the preceding fall, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had no opportunity to review the draft agreement. They did, however, act at once to instruct

CINCPAC and CINCSAC late on 14 January to suspend all offensive operations against North Vietnam, including the Demilitarized Zone above the PMDL and within territorial waters claimed by North Vietnam, effective 151500Z January. This suspension encompassed air strikes, artillery fire, mining and seeding, and naval bombardment; psychological operations involving over-flight of North Vietnam or the Demilitarized Zone north of the PMDL were also prohibited. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did allow immediate pursuit into North Vietnamese territorial seas and airspace. In addition, reconnaissance operations over North Vietnam were allowed but limited to drone and SR–71 aircraft. Nothing in these restrictions, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told CINCPAC and CINCSAC, was to be construed as preventing any commander from defending his command. Moreover, ground, air, and naval operations in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as then authorized were not affected. Subsequently, on 18 January, the Joint Chiefs of Staff extended the restrictions on actions against North Vietnam to include special operations and leaflet and mini-radio operations regardless of method of delivery.[13]

Waiting for a Cease-Fire

General Haig arrived in Saigon on 16 January with the formidable task of convincing President Thieu to accept the just concluded agreement. Once again he carried a letter from Richard Nixon. The US President wrote that he had "irrevocably" decided to initial the agreement on 23 January and sign it five days later. If necessary, he continued, he would do so alone, but,

> in that case, I shall have to explain publicly that your government obstructs peace. The result will be an inevitable and immediate termination of U.S. economic and military assistance. . . .

President Nixon hoped, however, that such would not be the case and repeated the assurance he had previously conveyed:

> At the time of signing the agreement I will make emphatically clear that the United States recognizes your government as the only legal government of South Vietnam; that we do not recognize the right of any foreign troops to be present on South Vietnamese territory; and that we will react strongly in the event the agreement is violated. It is my firm intention to continue full economic and military aid.

President Thieu's initial reaction was negative but, after two days of discussions with General Haig and another letter from President Nixon, he reluctantly gave his assent.[14]

Meanwhile, in Paris, the technical experts had continued their long daily sessions, working out the precise wording and details of a cease-fire; as before,

neither side commented on what transpired at the meetings. On 18 January 1973, representatives of the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government held what turned out to be the last session of the formal Paris talks. Presentations by both sides were moderate and restrained, but no announcements were made or agreements reached. This final meeting typified the fruitless record of the four years of the plenary talks.[15]

The 18 January session of the plenary talks was completely eclipsed in the public's attention by a joint US-North Vietnamese announcement that same day that their negotiators would return to Paris on 23 January to complete the text of an agreement to end the war. In Washington, White House Press Secretary Ziegler read the text of the joint statement, and this announcement was the first official US acknowledgement of the existence of a draft agreement. In subsequent questioning, he added only that the objective of the agreement was to stop the fighting, restore peace, and end the war. He would not elaborate further and would not speculate on how long Dr. Kissinger might remain in Paris. In answer to a reporter's question, he said that Kissinger would have no public statement to make before his departure.[16]

Now all awaited the resumption of the negotiating sessions between Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho on 23 January. In Paris, the daily meetings of the US and North Vietnamese technical experts proceeded. In Washington, Richard M. Nixon was inaugurated President of the United States for a second term on 20 January 1973. In his inaugural address, he made no specific mention of Vietnam or a settlement there though he did refer in passing to the coming end of "America's longest and most difficult war." General Haig returned briefly to Saigon on 20 January for a final meeting with President Thieu and then flew home via Korea. He arrived in Washington the following day and met at once with the President and Dr. Kissinger.[17]

Military action in South Vietnam had been relatively light during the first half of January, but with the prospect of an approaching settlement, significant fighting erupted as both sides attempted to improve their positions before a cease-fire. In Military Region 1, RVN marines launched an attack on 17 January toward the Cua Viet River in Quang Tri Province, just below the Demilitarized Zone. This attack met strong resistance and heavy attacks by fire including an estimated 4,000 rounds of mortar and artillery fire on the initial day of the action. The marines renewed the attack on 20 January, but despite fierce fighting, no significant ground was taken. In Military Region 3, earlier in the month, South Vietnamese forces had launched an operation along the Saigon River corridor, northwest of the capital in Binh Duong, Binh Long, and Tay Ninh Provinces. The action had proceeded with little enemy resistance until the period 18–20 January. Then heavy contact with the enemy occurred in the area of an old Michelin rubber plantation, and artillery and tactical air strikes assisted the South Vietnamese ground forces. The enemy broke contact and the ARVN troops returned to populated areas to resume security duties. Elsewhere in the country, the RVNAF began shifting troops in anticipation of a cease-fire,

and the enemy increased hamlet infiltration, highway interdiction, stand-off attacks, and limited ground attacks against South Vietnamese territorial units.[18]

The Announcement

On 22 January, Admiral Moorer reviewed matters with the Director and Vice Admiral Weinel, then made the following diary entry: "It is ridiculous that we are operating in such a vacuum; the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese have a hell of a lot more information than we do right now. Secret negotiations are one thing, however, secret results are another." The next morning, Moorer received a copy of the agreement and protocols about ten minutes before they were released to the public.[19]

Dr. Kissinger returned to Paris on 22 January, and the following day, he and Le Duc Tho met in a private session at the International Conference Center in the old Majestic Hotel, the site of the plenary Paris peace talks. They emerged from the meeting without public comment but waved at newsmen and shook hands "enthusiastically" for the television cameras. Shortly thereafter, it was announced in Washington that the President would speak to the nation that evening.[20]

In a television address at 2200 on 23 January 1973, President Nixon announced that an agreement had been concluded to end the war and bring "peace with honor" in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. He read the following statement that was being issued simultaneously in Hanoi:

> At 12:30 Paris time today, January 23, 1973, the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam was initialed by Dr. Henry Kissinger on behalf of the United States, and Special Adviser Le Duc Tho on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
>
> The agreement will be formally signed by the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam on January 27, 1973, at the International Conference Center in Paris.
>
> The cease-fire will take effect at 2400 Greenwich Mean Time, January 27, 1973. The United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam express the hope that this agreement will insure stable peace in Vietnam and contribute to the preservation of lasting peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia.[21]

President Nixon then proceeded to characterize the agreement, the text of which, with accompanying protocols, would be released the next day. An internationally supervised cease-fire would begin at 1900 on 27 January, and within 60 days of that date all Americans held prisoner throughout Indochina would be released. During the same 60-day period, all US forces would withdraw from South Vietnam. Moreover, the President said: "the people of South Vietnam have been guaranteed the right to determine their own future, without outside interference."

The President told the American people that, throughout the years of negotiations, the United States had insisted on peace with honor. He believed that the agreement just concluded accomplished that purpose. The United States had been in "the closest consultation" with President Thieu and the Government of Vietnam and the settlement met the goals and had the "full support" of the South Vietnamese President and his government. President Nixon went on to announce that the United States would continue to recognize the Government of Vietnam as "the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam" and would continue to aid it within the terms of the agreement.

Finally, President Nixon recognized that the agreement was only the first step toward building peace. "All parties," he said, "must now see to it that this is a peace that lasts." The United States was ready to adhere scrupulously to the agreement and do everything required by its terms. The President expected similar action from the other parties and specifically called upon the people and government of North Vietnam as follows:

> As we have ended the war through negotiation, let us now build a peace of reconciliation. For our part, we are prepared to make a major effort to help achieve that goal. But just as reciprocity was needed to end the war, so too will it be needed to build and strengthen the peace.[22]

President Thieu announced the agreement on the morning of 24 January in Saigon but, actually, because of the time difference, his speech coincided with President Nixon's announcement in Washington. The South Vietnamese President claimed victory over North Vietnam, stating that "our people" had truly destroyed the communist troops from the north. "The Communists," he said, "have been forced to stop the conflict because they cannot beat us by force or by violence." He assured the South Vietnamese people that the communists had been forced to recognize two Vietnams and that North Vietnam would respect the sovereignty and independence of South Vietnam. He cautioned, however, that the accord was only "a cease-fire agreement," adding that whether there would be "real peace" must wait to be seen. Although he could not guarantee true peace, he pledged to "see to it that peace will come."[23]

Dr. Kissinger, who had returned to Washington, released the text of the agreement with its protocols on 24 January, indicating that the final documents would be signed in Paris on 27 January 1973 by the foreign ministers of the four parties involved. He then went over the agreement clause by clause, explaining and elaborating on each.[24] He stated that the agreement as finally accepted contained, at US insistence, substantial "adaptations" and "clarifications" of the text proposed in October 1972. He admitted that the settlement was not perfect in every respect and that whether it brought a lasting peace depended on the spirit in which it was implemented. He added:

> It will be our challenge in the future to move the controversies that could not be stilled by any one document from the level of military conflict to the level of positive human aspirations, and to absorb the enormous talents and dedication of the people of Indochina in the tasks of construction rather than in the tasks of destruction.[25]

On the same day, 24 January, Le Duc Tho held a news conference in Paris to discuss the agreement. He, too, claimed victory, a victory for the Vietnamese people and "the crowning of a valiant struggle waged in unity by the army and the people of Vietnam on all fronts. . . . " In contrast to what Dr. Kissinger said, Le Duc Tho maintained that the agreement just completed was "basically" the same as the one reached the previous October. Nor did the North Vietnamese negotiator give any indication of recognition of the sovereignty of South Vietnam. With the return of peace, he said, the struggle entered "a new period," indicating that unification of Vietnam remained a definite goal. "The Vietnamese people," he concluded, "has . . . every reason to believe in the victorious accomplishment of its tasks in the new period. No reactionary force will be able to slow down the march forward of the Vietnamese people."[26]

According to plan, Secretary of State William P. Rogers, South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam, North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, and Provisional Revolutionary Government Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Thi Binh signed the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring the Peace in Vietnam" with accompanying protocols at the International Conference Center in Paris on 27 January 1973. In the words of Henry Kissinger, the procedure was "somewhat convoluted," and two sets of documents were actually signed. In the morning the US Secretary of State and the three Vietnamese foreign ministers signed a four-party document that did not mention the parties by name except on the signature pages. The United States and South Vietnamese representatives signed on one page while those of North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government placed their signatures on a separate page. This format allowed both South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government to sign the Agreement even though each still refused to recognize the other. In the afternoon, Secretary Rogers and Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh signed a two-power document that was identical to the morning version except for the preamble and the concluding paragraph. Whereas the four-power document referred only to the "parties" participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam, the two-power one named the parties as the "United States, with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam," and the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with the concurrence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam."[27]

The Agreement

The "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam" comprised a basic document in nine chapters with four supporting protocols. Chapter 1 consisted of one short sentence: "The United States and all other countries respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam." Significantly absent was any language recognizing a separate South Vietnam, a point long deemed essential to any settlement by President Thieu and his government. The matters of South Vietnam's existence and the reunification of Vietnam were treated, however, in subsequent chapters that could be interpreted as recognition of a separate South Vietnam.

Chapter 2 called for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of troops. A cease-fire would take effect throughout South Vietnam at 2400 Greenwich Mean Time on 27 January 1973 (0800, 28 January, Saigon time), and the United States would stop all ground, air, and naval action against North Vietnam. In addition, the United States would end the mining of North Vietnamese waters and "remove, permanently deactivate, or destroy" all mines in such waters as soon as the agreement went into effect. Within 60 days of the signature of the agreement, all US forces, as well as the forces of those other foreign nations allied with the United States, would be withdrawn from South Vietnam. The second chapter also required the "dismantlement" of all US military bases in South Vietnam and forbade the introduction of military personnel and advisers, armaments, munitions, or "war material" into South Vietnam. But both "South Vietnamese parties" were permitted to replace military equipment in South Vietnam at the time of the agreement on a one-for-one basis under international supervision and control.

Chapter 3 dealt with prisoners of war, specifying the return of all captured military personnel and foreign civilians during the same 60-day period. Also, the parties were to help each other obtain information of missing personnel. The question of the return of Vietnamese civilians captured and detained in South Vietnam would be resolved by "the two South Vietnamese parties." In describing this aspect of the agreement on 24 January, Dr. Kissinger said that the United States had insisted upon separation of the question of US prisoners from that of the detention of Vietnamese civilian personnel.[28] The United States took this position because of the "enormous difficulties" in distinguishing Vietnamese civilians detained for reasons of civil war from those held for criminal activities. This matter, Dr. Kissinger said, proved "one of the thorniest issues" of the negotiations, but he believed it had been resolved to US satisfaction. The return of US prisoners was "unconditional," and Dr. Kissinger expected that they would be released at intervals of two weeks or 15 days in roughly equal installments. All would be turned over to US medical evacuation teams in Hanoi.

Chapters 4 and 5 implicitly recognized the existence of South Vietnam. In Chapter 4, the United States and North Vietnam pledged to respect the principles

of "self-determination" for the South Vietnamese people, including "free and democratic general elections under international supervision" to decide the political future of South Vietnam. Chapter 4 also called upon the two South Vietnamese parties to form a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord to promote a spirit of cooperation and to implement the agreement. Dr. Kissinger explained that the United States had consistently maintained that it would not impose any political solution on South Vietnam, and Chapter 4, he believed, met that obligation. The existing government in Saigon could remain in office; no political settlement was imposed on South Vietnam; and the political future of that country depended on agreement among the South Vietnamese parties concerned.

In Chapter 5, the parties agreed that reunification of Vietnam should be carried out "step by step through peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Vietnam, without coercion or annexation by either party, and without foreign interference." Pending reunification, the chapter continued, the military demarcation line between the "two zones" at the 17th parallel was "only provisional and not a political or territorial boundary." Here again, the agreement went counter to the position of President Thieu who had advocated recognition of the demarcation line as a national boundary. The next section of the chapter, however, did require both "North and South Vietnam" to respect the Demilitarized Zone on both sides of the Provisional Military Demarcation Line, a stipulation that President Thieu had insisted upon.

In discussing Chapter 5, Dr. Kissinger stated:

> it is obvious that there is no dispute in the agreement between the parties that there is an entity called South Vietnam, and that the future unity of Vietnam, as it comes about, will be decided by negotiation between North and South Vietnam, that it will not be achieved by military force, indeed, that the use of military force with respect to bringing about unification, or any other form of coercion, is impermissible according to the terms of this agreement.

He went on to state that the United States had insisted on respect for the Demilitarized Zone in order to restrict infiltration and enforce the restrictions of the agreement against the introduction of men and materiel into South Vietnam.

Chapter 6 provided for machinery to implement the agreement. Specifically included were: a Four-Party Joint Military Commission, composed of representatives of all four signatories, to insure compliance with the cease-fire, troop withdrawal, base dismantling, return of prisoners, and exchange of information on missing military personnel; a Two-Party Joint Military Commission, consisting of representatives of the two South Vietnamese parties, to carry out those provisions assigned to them in the agreement; and an International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS), made up of representatives of Canada, Hungary, Indonesia, and Poland, to oversee implementation of the agreement and report any violation. The Four-Party Commission was to begin operations immediately upon signature

of the agreement and cease its activities 60 days later, following the withdrawal of US forces; thereafter the Two-Party Commission would enforce the cease-fire throughout South Vietnam. The functions and organization of all three bodies were spelled out in detail in the protocols to the basic agreement.

In the final provision of Chapter 6, the parties agreed to convene an international conference within 30 days:

> to acknowledge the signed agreements; to guarantee the ending of the war, the maintenance of peace in Vietnam, the respect of the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination; and to contribute to and guarantee peace in Indochina.

The United States and North Vietnam, on behalf of the parties participating in the agreement, proposed attendance of the following states: the People's Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the four countries of the International Commission of Control and Supervision, and the Secretary General of the United Nations, together with the four parties to the agreement.

In Chapter 7, the parties pledged to respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos, recognizing the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of those two countries. Specifically, the parties agreed: to refrain from using the territory of either Laos or Cambodia to encroach on the sovereignty or security of one another or of other countries; to end all military activities in those two countries; and to withdraw totally and refrain from reintroducing troops, military advisers, armaments, and war material there. Additionally, the internal affairs of the two countries were to be settled by their own people free of foreign interference. Dr. Kissinger, in explanatory remarks, indicated his expectation of a formal cease-fire in Laos "within a short period of time" and a "de facto" cease-fire in Cambodia "over a period of time relevant to the execution of this agreement."

Chapter 8 anticipated an improvement of relations between North Vietnam and the United States based on mutual respect for each other's independence and sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Dr. Kissinger explained that:

> It is our firm intention in our relationship to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to move from hostility to normalization, and from normalization to conciliation and cooperation.

Under conditions of peace, he believed, the United States could and would contribute to a "realization of the humane aspirations" of all people throughout Indochina. The final Chapter, 9, contained the implementing and signature provisions of the agreement.[29]

The Protocols

Four protocols supplemented the basic agreement, setting out in greater detail the provisions with respect to prisoners of war, the International Commission of Control and Supervision, the cease-fire and the Joint Military Commissions, and the removal of mines from North Vietnamese waters. The first three protocols were signed by all four parties and went through the same elaborate procedure as the basic agreement, with two sets of documents signed at separate ceremonies. Only the United States and North Vietnam were parties to the mine removal protocol and it was signed only once at the afternoon ceremony.[30]

The prisoner of war protocol provided for the parties to exchange lists of all captured military personnel and foreign civilians on the day of signature. The return was to be accomplished without delay at places arranged by the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. It was to be completed within 60 days of the signature of the agreement "at a rate no slower than the rate of withdrawal from South Vietnam of United States forces and those of other foreign countries." The two South Vietnamese parties were to exchange lists of captured and detained Vietnamese civilians within 15 days of the cease-fire and to carry out the return of such personnel "in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord with a view to ending hatred and enmity in order to ease suffering and to reunite families." The protocol specified that all captured military personnel and captured foreign civilians were to be treated humanely and that two or more national Red Cross societies could visit the places where such personnel were held within 15 days of the cease-fire to contribute to improvement of living conditions there. The Joint Military Commissions were assigned responsibility to determine the "modalities" for implementing this protocol and the Four-Party Joint Military Commission was to ensure action for the exchange of information on missing personnel. When the Four-Party Joint Military Commission ceased to exist at the end of the specified 60-day period, a Four-Party Joint Military team was to carry on the task of resolving the status of military personnel missing in action. Finally, any matter on which the Four-Party Joint Military Commission could not reach agreement was to be referred to the International Commission of Control and Supervision for assistance.[31]

The second protocol established the International Commission of Control and Supervision in accordance with Chapter 6 of the agreement. The International Commission was to monitor implementation of the agreement by means of communications with the parties and "on-the-spot" observation. In addition, either at its own initiative or at the request of the Joint Military Commissions, the ICCS would investigate violations of the agreement. When serious violations were discovered and no remedy could be found, the International Commission would report the matter to the four parties to the agreement. Significantly, the protocol provided that such reports must be made with the "unanimous agreement" of all four members of

the Commission. When unanimity could not be reached, the differing views would be provided to the four parties to the agreement, but not as "reports" of the ICCS.

The matter of the International Commission of Control and Supervision, Dr. Kissinger indicated, was one area where US persistence in the negotiations paid off. The previous December, the North Vietnamese had proposed an international supervisory body with a membership of only 250 personnel, of whom more than half would be in Saigon, with no organized logistics or communication, and completely dependent for authority to move on the party it was investigating. The body provided in the final protocol consisted of more than 1,000 members from Canada, Hungary, Indonesia, and Poland and was authorized to receive from the signatory parties the "necessary means of communication and transport" or to purchase any equipment not thus forthcoming. The ICCS was to be organized as follows: (1) a headquarters in Saigon of 108 personnel; (2) seven regional teams of 20 members each; (3) a number of eight-member teams based in localities throughout South Vietnam, including 26 at places where forces were in contact or where violations of the cease-fire were considered most likely to occur, 12 at possible entry points (including the DMZ), 7 for assignment at other possible entry points to supervise replacement of military equipment in South Vietnam, and 7 to supervise the return of prisoners. The Headquarters was to be operational and in place within 24 hours after the cease-fire, all seven regional teams and three of the prisoner supervisory teams within 48 hours, and the remaining teams within 15 to 20 days. The protocol charged each of the four parties to cooperate and assist the International Commission, and the Joint Military Commissions and the International Commission were to maintain "regular and continuous liaison" and to "cooperate with and assist each other."[32]

The protocol on the cease-fire and Joint Military Commissions required the high commands of "the parties in South Vietnam" to issue prompt orders to all military forces—regular, irregular, and armed police—to end all hostilities throughout South Vietnam at 2400 hours Greenwich Mean Time, 27 January. As soon as the cease-fire came into force, and until the Joint Military Commissions issued regulations, all combat forces were to remain in place. These prohibitions were not to restrict: civilian supply or movement; use of military support elements to assist the civilian population; or normal military proficiency training. In areas where armed forces were in direct contact, the commanders of the opposing forces were to meet as soon as the cease-fire came into force "with a view to reaching an agreement on temporary measures to avert conflict and to ensure supply and medical care for these armed forces." The entry of replacement armaments, munitions, and war supplies into South Vietnam, as permitted in the basic agreement, was to take place under the supervision and control of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission and the ICCS and through entry points designated by the two South Vietnamese parties. All parties were to do their "utmost" to complete removal or deactivation of all "demolition objects, minefields, traps, obstacles, and other dangerous objects" within 15 days, and the United States was to inform the Four-Party Joint Military

Commission within 15 days of its "general plans for timing of complete troop withdrawals which shall take place in four phases of fifteen days each."

The third protocol also elaborated on the duties of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. Composed of representatives of the United States and the three Vietnamese parties, that body was responsible, in the 60-day period following the cease-fire, for ensuring joint action by the parties to carry out the agreements, i.e. implementation of the cease-fire, the withdrawal of US and other foreign troops from South Vietnam, the dismantling of US and foreign bases in South Vietnam, the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians, and the exchange of information on missing military personnel and foreign civilians. To that end, the Four-Party Commission would "coordinate, follow, and inspect" implementation of the pertinent provisions of the agreement. In addition, the commission was responsible for deterring and detecting violations, dealing with violations, and settling conflicts between parties; for dispatching joint teams to any part of South Vietnam to investigate alleged violations of the agreement and assist in preventing recurrence of similar cases; and for engaging in observation "at the places where this is necessary in the exercise of its functions."

The Four-Party Commission was organized with a central headquarters and subordinate regional and local bodies in much the same manner as the International Commission for Control and Supervision. There was to be a Central Joint Military Commission located in Saigon with a delegation of 59 persons, headed by a general officer, from each party. There would also be seven Regional Joint Military Commissions of 64 members, equally apportioned among the four parties, and located at the same sites as the ICCS regional teams. Below the Regional Commissions would be 26 joint military teams, co-located with the 26 ICCS local teams. The schedule for activation of the Four-Party Commission paralleled that of the ICCS—the central machinery to go into operation within 24 hours after the cease-fire, the regional commissions within 48 hours, and the teams within 15 days. Dr. Kissinger observed that the provisions for activation of both the Four-Party Commission and the International Commission met the long-held US objective to have effective and timely control machinery to enforce a cease-fire.

The protocol called for appropriate delegations of the two South Vietnamese parties to meet within 24 hours of the cease-fire to reach agreement on organization and operation of a Two-Party Joint Military Commission. Until it became operational, its tasks would be performed by the representatives of the two South Vietnamese parties to the Four-Party Commission at all levels. Should agreement not be reached on the two-party body by the time the Four-Party Commission ceased its operations at the end of the allotted 60 days, then the delegations of the South Vietnamese parties to the latter group were to continue to work temporarily as a provisional two-party group. In application of the principle of unanimity, the Joint Military Commissions would have no chairmen and any representative could request a meeting.[33]

In the final protocol, the United States agreed to clear all the mines it had placed in "the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways" of North Vietnam. This action was to be accomplished "by rendering the mines harmless through removal, permanent deactivation, or destruction." When considering a draft mine clearance protocol in December,[34] Admiral Moorer had suggested deletion of the specific term "removal," but in this instance his advice was not followed. As stated in the protocol, the mine clearance operations were to begin simultaneously with the entry of the cease-fire into effect, and North Vietnam and the United States were to consult immediately "on relevant factors" and agree on the earliest possible completion date. Provisions for the planning and actual operations followed the language of the December draft. Representatives of the two parties would meet and plan implementation; the United States would provide a plan for the operations; and North Vietnam would supply all available maps and hydrographic charts and indicate mined areas. The United States was charged with mine clearance in "inland waterways" of North Vietnam, even though Admiral Moorer had opposed acceptance of such a responsibility. North Vietnam was to participate in this aspect of the clearance "to the full extent of its capabilities," with the United States supplying the means of survey, removal, and destruction and technical advice.

In the conduct of the clearance operations, the United States pledged its personnel to respect the sovereignty of North Vietnam and the terms of the agreement. In return, US personnel would be immune from North Vietnamese jurisdiction for the duration of the operations and North Vietnam would insure the safety of US personnel while in its territory. These provisions closely resembled those that Admiral Moorer had recommended for inclusion in a mine clearance protocol.[35]

After over seven years of fighting and almost as many years of effort to reach a negotiated settlement, the United States had obtained a peace agreement in Vietnam. How successful it would prove, however, was still far from certain. The agreement was not, as Dr. Kissinger candidly admitted, completely satisfactory, nor did it meet all the concerns of President Thieu. Yet it did provide for a cease-fire in South Vietnam and the return of US prisoners. The first and most immediate test was implementation of the agreement.

15

Winding Down the War

The intensive negotiations during the first three weeks of January 1973 to end the Vietnam War were the province of Dr. Kissinger and the President with little, if any, participation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But once the settlement was reached, the Joint Chiefs had the major task of implementing actions to carry out the US military commitments of the peace agreement.

Immediate Implementing Actions

Late in the evening of 23 January, following the President's televised announcement of the agreement, the Joint Chiefs issued this directive to field commanders:

> Effective 272359z Jan 73, an internationally supervised ceasefire in SVN and the DMZ will be instituted. At that time, discontinue all acts of force initiated by US forces in NVN and SVN and the DMZ. All air strikes, artillery fire, and naval bombardment, as well as other fire or munitions expenditure including mines/destructors will be terminated. PSYOP targeted against NVN and SVN and the DMZ are prohibited.

The JCS emphasized to all concerned the significance of this cease-fire directive:

> The importance of compliance at the effective time of execution cannot be overstressed. It is incumbent upon all commanders that these instructions reach all affected subordinate units prior to the time of execution.[1]

The Chiefs directed the withdrawal of all naval surface forces in the Gulf of Tonkin to waters below 16° 50' north except ships required for Positive Identification Radar Advisory Zone (PIRAZ), search and rescue, and notification line opera-

tions. Vessels engaged in those tasks might operate in international waters of the Gulf as required for search and rescue and for implementation of minefield notification procedures. No naval gunfire was permitted in the cease-fire area against North Vietnamese ships or watercraft, except in the case of self-defense. Appropriate operating authorities and rules of engagement would be forthcoming; in the interim, ground, air, and naval operations in Laos and Cambodia were not affected, but US forces based in or operating from South Vietnam would not be employed in support of actions in either neighboring country.

The Joint Chiefs authorized both over-flight and reconnaissance, manned and unmanned, over South Vietnam, but strictly forbade any over-flight of North Vietnam or the Demilitarized Zone above the PMDL by military aircraft, including drones and SR–71s. In addition, US naval and air forces would respect the claimed territorial waters and airspace of North Vietnam. The over-flight authorities were modified slightly the following day to allow escort and barrier combat air patrol/MIG operations over international waters to protect US aircraft carrying out reconnaissance and intelligence collection over the Gulf of Tonkin. Such flights would avoid both North Vietnamese land areas and territorial seas, with the only exception being immediate pursuit of attacking aircraft.[2]

Nothing in these instructions was to be construed to prevent any commander from taking necessary action to defend his forces. In any attack of US forces or installations, the "minimum force" necessary for protection was authorized. Normal training to maintain unit readiness was allowed, but "no ordnance other than that normally regarded as self-defensive in nature" would be carried by US planes conducting training missions in the vicinity of North or South Vietnam.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not address the withdrawal of US troops in this initial directive, indicating that the matter would be handled separately. They did state that priorities for withdrawal of personnel and equipment would be assigned, based on a MACV program and cease-fire requirements. Moreover, airlift requirements for personnel would be arranged between the Services and the Military Airlift Command. Finally, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the continuation of all logistic operations then in progress and planned through X+60. The next day, however, they revised this latter direction to conform to the Vietnam agreement, stating that the introduction of additional military armaments, munitions, and war materiel ("major end items") would cease when the cease-fire came into force at 272359Z January 1973. The only exception would be on "a one-for-one" replacement basis. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs directed action to redistribute assets available in-theater to bring stocks in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to currently prescribed levels. Later, on 27 January, just a few hours before the institution of the cease-fire, the Chairman reminded the Service Chiefs that equipment inventory located in South Vietnam as of 272359Z January 1973 would be the base level for the RVNAF after the cease-fire. He requested "extraordinary efforts" to return any out-of-country RVNAF-owned equipment to South Vietnam prior to effective time of the cease-fire.[3]

Although the cease-fire would end all US air operations in North and South Vietnam, the United States decided to increase its air activity in neighboring Laos, and on 25 January, the Chairman relayed the necessary instruction to CINCPAC and CINCSAC. When the cease-fire went into effect in South Vietnam, the Chairman told the two commanders, they should increase B–52 and tactical air sortie levels in Laos "with primary emphasis on the land battle area while maintaining pressure on the established resupply routes such as the Ho Chi Minh Trail." Accordingly, Admiral Moorer directed an increase in the air activity levels in Laos to 15 B–52 and 200 tactical air sorties per day. Carrier aircraft over-flight of South Vietnam and Laos was allowed with "extreme precautions" to preclude inadvertent penetration of North Vietnamese air space. Shortly before the cease-fire went into effect on 27 January, the Chiefs raised the level of daily B–52 sorties in Laos to 30 and, on 1 February 1973, nearly four days after the cease-fire entered into force, they raised the level again to 50.[4]

Following the initial authorization on 25 January for increased air action in Laos, Admiral Moorer cautioned CINCPAC and CINCSAC:

> During the next sixty days the most important single event will be the return of our prisoners of war. Parenthetically I would also add that possession of our POW's is the only leverage the NVN have. Therefore, it is absolutely mandatory that we conduct our air operations in such a manner that there will be no cause to over-fly NVN territory or deliver ordnance against targets in NVN.

Moorer had resisted imposition of a buffer zone in Laos along the Vietnam border. Consequently, he wanted US pilots to understand the situation and conduct themselves accordingly. "We cannot permit advertent or inadvertent violations of the NVN border which might slow down the return of POWs." Air operations in Laos near the Vietnam border were to be planned so as to preclude over-flight or the necessity for protective reaction. "We simply cannot afford any mistakes," he concluded.[5]

Late on 25 January 1973, the Joint Chiefs issued the directive for the withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam. They ordered CINCPAC to redeploy all US military personnel from South Vietnam during the period X-Day through X+60. The only US military personnel allowed in South Vietnam thereafter would be the 50 assigned to the Defense Attaché Office, Saigon, and those US forces required for the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. United States forces were to be removed from South Vietnam in four approximately equal increments in accord with the provisions of the protocol on the joint military commissions.[6] Although not specifically stated, these four increments would correspond with the release of US prisoners, which was also to occur in four stages. The Chiefs supplied the following numbers for the first two withdrawal increments: 6,000 to 6,500 personnel (including USMC A–4 squadrons) during X-Day to X+15 and another 4,000 to 4,500 from X+16 to X+30. The size of the final two increments would be determined later based on the performance of the

other side in releasing US prisoners. The JCS also directed redeployment of ROK forces in South Vietnam in accordance with COMUSMACV plans.[7]

During their cease-fire planning in November 1972, the Joint Chiefs, with Secretary Laird's approval, had sent to the appropriate commanders for planning purposes operating authorities and rules of engagement for Southeast Asia in the event of an end to hostilities there. Now, with the conclusion of the final agreement with North Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs of Staff revised these authorities and rules in accordance with the terms of the actual agreement and dispatched approved versions to CINCPAC on 27 January. These documents spelled out in considerable detail both the allowed and prohibited actions in Southeast Asia, the broad outlines of which had already been provided in the JCS cease-fire directive of 23 January.

In North Vietnam, the operating authorities prohibited "military operations of all types" except for mine countermeasure operations, search and rescue of US personnel, crash and grave site inspections, immediate pursuit to repel attacks on US forces, and defensive response. In South Vietnam, operations employing tactical air, B–52s, rotary wing gun-ships, artillery, naval bombardment, and other fire expenditures or ordnance expenditures were allowed against hostile forces only in direct support of US forces under attack and only until completion of the US withdrawal. In case of such attack, a response appropriate to the magnitude of the attack was authorized, but the Joint Chiefs reiterated that US forces operating from bases in South Vietnam would not take part in operations in Laos and Cambodia. Confirming the 23 January directive, over-flight and both manned and unmanned reconnaissance of South Vietnam were permitted, as were immediate pursuit of attacking forces into South Vietnamese territorial seas and air space and defensive response to protect US forces, when all other alternatives had failed. United States forces might conduct search and rescue operations, inspect crash and grave sites, and recover US aircraft crews in South Vietnam; with the completion of the US withdrawal, South Vietnamese air bases might be used as emergency recovery bases for US military aircraft conducting approved operations in Southeast Asia. During the withdrawal, US forces might provide armed escort for US force movements within South Vietnam and conduct normal training to maintain readiness. In that same period, US naval combatant vessels and logistics craft were permitted to operate in South Vietnamese territorial waters, but thereafter, US combatant vessels would enter South Vietnamese waters only with specific GVN approval. During and after withdrawal, air and surface logistic operations related to replenishment of consumable supplies (petroleum, ammunition, and spare parts) and maintenance support were authorized within the terms of the basic agreement. In addition, the Joint Chiefs authorized surveillance activities, similar to MARKET TIME, in and over the South Vietnamese territorial waters to furnish early warning to the RVNAF; after the completion of the US withdrawal such operations would require appropriate clearance by the Government of Vietnam. Finally, the Chiefs specified an RVN Positive Control Area, a five-nautical mile strip in Laos and Cam-

bodia along the South Vietnam border where all air strikes, except for B–52, would be conducted under a forward air controller, and set out detailed authorities for US action in both Laos and Cambodia.[8]

In the rules of engagement for Southeast Asia also dispatched on 27 January 1973, to be effective 272359Z January 1973, the Joint Chiefs carefully defined the terms: Southeast Asia, territorial seas, internal waters, territorial airspace, friendly and hostile forces, hostile aircraft and vessels, attacks, and immediate pursuit. They then proceeded to authorize US forces operating in Southeast Asia to attack and destroy any hostile aircraft or vessel and hostile ground forces attacking US personnel in South Vietnam or US and friendly forces, facilities, materiel, or population centers in Laos or Cambodia. They also authorized immediate pursuit should US forces be attacked in South Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, North Vietnam, or Southeast Asian international waters or airspace. United States forces conducting such pursuit into unfriendly territory were not allowed to attack other unfriendly forces or installations encountered unless attacked first by those forces, and then only to the extent necessary for self-defense. No immediate pursuit was permitted into the People's Republic of China. The rules of engagement concluded with the usual caveat that nothing therein modified "the requirement of a military commander to defend his unit against armed attack with all means at his disposal."[9]

During the North Vietnamese offensive into South Vietnam in April 1972, the JCS had secured Secretary of Defense approval for authority to deploy various US air and naval augmentation forces in Southeast Asia, and these authorities were extended on a month-to-month basis thereafter. Each extension required a specific JCS request and the Secretary's approval. The current augmentation authorities were scheduled to expire on 31 January 1973, and Admiral Moorer approached the Secretary on this matter on 27 January 1973. He realized that the rationale previously used to support the continued augmentation no longer applied with the conclusion of the cease-fire agreement. Nevertheless, he requested extension of those authorities through 28 February 1973, pending final resolution of withdrawal and redeployment plans. Elliot Richardson, who became Secretary of Defense on 30 January, approved the extension that same day, adding that he wished to review the JCS plan for incremental phase-down of US forces in Southeast Asia not later than X+15, 12 February 1973.[10]

Officials in Washington were keenly interested in the implementation of the Vietnam agreement and any violation of the cease-fire. On 23 January 1973, Admiral Moorer addressed a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense discussing the possibility of enemy violations and the range of US responses available. On the basis of limited experience of holiday cease-fires in previous years, Moorer anticipated deliberate infractions of the cease-fire. Such occurrences, he observed, could range from minor harassment activities to a massive invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnamese forces. The precise character of the US response could not be fully determined without knowledge of the actual situation, but he believed that

sufficient US forces would be available in Southeast Asia to allow a wide range of reaction should North Vietnam abrogate the agreement. These forces would have the capability to lay mines, give close air support, interdict lines of communication, furnish naval gunfire support, bomb, re-supply indigenous forces, and conduct psychological warfare. "A central point," the Admiral continued, was that the US "threshold of response" would change drastically when the US withdrawal was complete. Prior to that date, US reaction to violations threatening the safety of US forces would have to be timely and deliberate; thereafter the "threshold of provocation" would undoubtedly rise considerably. How high, he said, would depend on the economic, political, and military stability of South Vietnam.[11]

On 24 January, following announcement of the agreement, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to report immediately cease-fire violations of "a serious nature." All attacks on US or free world forces were considered serious violations, and this category also included armed conflict that endangered local government agencies in South Vietnam and that, if continued, would endanger the central government and any other "gross violation" by North Vietnamese land, sea, or air forces.[12]

The President wanted to be kept informed and requested a daily report on the implementation of the Vietnam agreement, including the topics of prisoner return, US and ROK force withdrawals, cease-fire violations, mine clearance operations, and assistance to South Vietnam. Dr. Kissinger relayed this request to the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on 28 January 1973, and Admiral Moorer tasked CINCPAC to provide information for military aspects of this report. Within the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Military Command Center was charged with compilation of a daily JCS post-cease-fire report.[13]

In an attempt to enhance North Vietnamese acceptance of a cease-fire, a high-level interagency committee, the psychological operation (PSYOP) Pressure Operations Group, had requested the US Ambassador in Saigon and CINCPAC in late 1972 to plan an intensive leaflet and mini-radio campaign throughout South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in the brief interim between the initialing and effective date of an agreement. The thrust of the effort was to emphasize the cease-fire theme and to pressure North Vietnamese forces to return home. The plan was readied with a supply of leaflets pre-stocked in Thailand and over 30,000 radios disseminated in anticipation of implementation of the operation, nicknamed TEMPO SURGE. On 24 January, the PSYOP Pressure Operations Group directed execution. Between that time and termination of TEMPO SURGE at 270133Z January 1973, US C–130s in 13 sorties delivered 160 million leaflets and two B–52 sorties dropped an additional seven million leaflets into South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.[14]

The US Withdrawal Begins

At 272400Z (0800 Saigon time) January 1973, the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring the Peace in Vietnam with its attendant cease-fire in South Vietnam entered into force. That event, however, did not end the fighting. As described in the previous chapter, both sides launched concerted efforts in the days preceding the announcement and signature of the agreement to increase the territory and population under their control, and this intensified combat continued in the period immediately following the cease-fire.[15] In MR 1, major activity centered in Quang Tri and Quang Ngai Provinces where NVA and PRG forces attempted to expand their control into population centers by seizing hamlets and isolating defending troops. In the other three military regions, the communist forces also pressed efforts against populated areas, interdicting lines of communication and occupying or infiltrating government-controlled hamlets. The level of activity dropped during February, but never, throughout the 60-day period of the US withdrawal, did the fighting in South Vietnam cease completely.[16]

Despite the lack of a true cease-fire in South Vietnam, the United States began the withdrawal of its remaining forces from South Vietnam on 28 January 1973, X-Day as it was designated in the military planning and operations. General Weyand had prepared tentative plans in accordance with the JCS guidance supplied the previous November, and with the agreement on a final settlement, he carried out those plans in accordance with the JCS troop withdrawal directive of 25 January.[17] On 28 January 1973, 23,335 US military personnel, 35,396 ROK forces, and 113 others from Thailand, the Philippines, and the Republic of China waited removal from South Vietnam. As specified by the Joint Chiefs, 6,000 to 6,500 US servicemen were to leave in increment one, the period X-Day to X+15 (28 January–11 February). The actual redeployment, Operation COUNT DOWN, got under way slowly, but by the end of 11 February, 6,145 US troops had departed South Vietnam, leaving a total of 17,190 still to be moved.[18] During this same period, 8,929 ROK forces redeployed.[19]

The US withdrawal was tied directly to the return of US prisoners. This was in accord with the Vietnam agreement and the accompanying protocol on prisoners, which provided for the return to proceed and be completed simultaneously with the US withdrawal.[20] It was also decided in an oral agreement at the Paris conference that North Vietnam and the PRG would release the US prisoners in 15-day increments paralleling the US redeployments. Further negotiations and actual exchange arrangements for the return were conducted in the Four-Party Joint Military Commission in Saigon, and COMUSMACV set up a Prisoner of War Liaison Division as part of the US Delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission to insure implementation of the protocol concerning the return of captured personnel. In Washington, planning and arrangements for the return of the US prisoners was handled by a special Department of Defense Task Force for Prisoners-of-War/Missing-in-Action located in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

which dealt directly with the Services and CINCPAC; the JCS were not involved in these activities.[21]

North Vietnam and the PRG presented US officials in Paris on 27 January with lists of names of personnel that they had captured. The combined lists totaled 717 men, including 555 US military, 22 US civilians, and 140 others comprised of foreign nationals, previously released prisoners, and deceased. With the completion of the first increment of the US withdrawal from South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese released the first group of 116 US military prisoners at Gia Lam Airfield in Hanoi on 12 February. On the same day, the PRG released 19 military and 8 civilian prisoners at Loc Ninh in South Vietnam, and the freed men were flown to Clark Air Base in the Philippines for medical examination and reporting before returning to the United States. The prisoner return was named Operation HOMECOMING.[22]

Organizational Changes

Upon implementation of the cease-fire in South Vietnam, the various organizational changes planned by the Joint Chiefs for that eventuality began to come into effect. The previous November, the JCS had recommended and the Secretary of Defense had approved, the establishment of a Defense Attaché Office, Saigon, composed of a Defense Attaché Element and a Defense Resource Support and Termination Office. Limited to 50 US military personnel, augmented by a large number of Department of Defense civilian and contract personnel, this organization would carry out US residual military functions in South Vietnam after the cease-fire and US withdrawal and would be the only US military presence in the country.[23]

Shortly before the final agreement was completed on 15 January 1973, the Joint Chiefs supplied the Secretary of Defense interim terms of reference and detailed organizational information for the DAO. In late December 1972, the Secretary had requested that the US residual defense organization in South Vietnam include a capability to support various on-going US economic support programs in South Vietnam, and the JCS included that function in the interim terms of reference. Command relations, as outlined in the terms of reference, provided for a Defense Attaché to head the Office, who would also be Chief, DRSTO, and serve as the senior US military representative to the US Diplomatic Mission in Saigon. For intelligence matters, the Defense Attaché would be responsible to the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; as Chief, DRSTO, he would be under the command of COMUSMACV until the disestablishment of MACV, then under the Commander, US Support Activities Group/7th Air Force, and ultimately under CINCPAC when USSAG/7AF was eliminated. For all security assistance planning and coordination, the Defense Attaché/Chief, DRSTO, would report directly to CINCPAC. The Joint Chiefs advised the Secretary that any further changes required in the terms of reference to accord with "any future cease-fire agreement" would be supplied within 15 days (X+15) of

the date the agreement went into force. On the same day, the JCS forwarded these interim terms of reference to CINCPAC, stating that they were approved, pending changes required by the final agreement. They authorized CINCPAC to hire 234 US civilians for the organization.[24]

On 25 January 1973, after the final agreement was completed, the Joint Chiefs sent the US personnel ceilings in South Vietnam. For the Defense Attaché Office, 50 US military, 1,200 DOD civilians, and 5,500 contractor personnel were authorized, however, all DOD civilians must depart South Vietnam within one year of the cease-fire date; there was no limit on the number of third-country nationals employed. Subsequently, CINCPAC requested authority to recruit and fill the DAO ceilings and the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the request on 27 January. On the next day, the Defense Attaché Office, Saigon, was activated under the operational command of COMUSMACV with an initial staff of 190 permanent DOD employees and 46 temporary duty personnel. On 2 February 1973, the Secretary of Defense confirmed the DAO personnel ceilings issued by the Joint Chiefs on 27 January. Exempted from the 50 US military limit in South Vietnam were US members of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and DOD personnel sponsored by the Department of State.[25]

In the cease-fire preparations in November 1972, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had provided for a joint headquarters, the US Support Activities Group/7th Air Force (USSAG/7AF), located in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, to plan and be ready to conduct combat air operations in Southeast Asia. The Secretary of Defense sanctioned this organization, approving deployment of an advance element prior to X-Day and establishment of the entire organization before X+60.[26]

Deployment of the advanced element of the USSAG/7AF was delayed because of difficulties in securing diplomatic clearance, and it was not until 24 January 1973 that the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to move a leading element of 20 officers to Nakhon Phanom after coordination with the US Embassy in Bangkok. The advance element moved to Thailand on 29 January and the Headquarters, USSAG/7AF, was activated on 10 February 1973 under the command of General John W. Vogt, USAF, and staffed largely with former MACV personnel. The headquarters became operational five days later when it took over control of air assets from MACV, and the phased movement of aircraft from Vietnam was completed on 18 February 1973. Remaining headquarters and support unit personnel arrived from Vietnam during the next several weeks as their duties there ended. On 23 February 1973, CINCPAC recommended dropping 7th Air Force from the title of the new organization, designating it the US Support Activities Group, but the Chiefs did not approve the recommendation.[27]

The JCS planning for postwar command control arrangements in Southeast Asia made no provision for the role of the Deputy Commander 7/13AF and his staff, located at Udorn, Thailand. This element provided an "operational interface" between the 7th and 13th Air Forces and was the organization through which the 13AF exercised its command, administrative, and logistical support functions in Thailand. Earlier, on 13 January 1973, the Secretary of Defense had asked about the

role of the Deputy Commander 7/13AF and his staff when the cease-fire was implemented. Admiral Moorer replied that this organization at Udorn was the means by which the 13AF would conduct training to maintain combat readiness in the cease-fire situation. Once the 7AF Headquarters moved to Thailand, however, the responsibilities of the Deputy Commander 7/13AF would be reduced. But, because of the uncertainties surrounding the cease-fire, Admiral Moorer recommended retention of this headquarters until the US withdrawal was completed. Consideration would then be given its disposition.[28]

With the establishment of the USSAG/7AF at Nakhon Phanom, the Deputy Commander 7/13AF ceased to perform the combat operations control function on behalf of the Commander 7AF. He did, however, continue to carry out command and support functions for the Commander 13AF. Accordingly, CINCPACAF redesignated the organization at Udorn the 13AF ADVON, responsible for such functions as command, administration, logistics, facilities management, training, and operational control of non-combat sorties. In the process the strength of the headquarters was reduced from 97 to 63 personnel. Subsequently, in April 1973, CINCPAC issued terms of reference for the USSAG/7AF. The Commander exercised operational control of Thailand-based USAF assets, except for SAC units and C–130 aircraft controlled by the PACOM Transportation Management Agency, when committed to him by CINCPAC for combat air operations; the Commander 13AF, at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, commanded the assigned USAF units when the aircraft were not committed to the USSAG/7AF.[29]

When the Vietnam agreement was reached, the United States had plans ready for its organization to support the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.[30] On 27 January 1973, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to establish the US Delegation to the Four-Party Commission to function in accordance with the agreement and the pertinent protocols. Control of this body would be exercised through COMUSMACV, and all instructions to the US Delegation would be coordinated with the US Ambassador in Saigon. Reporting channels for the US Delegation would be to COMUSMACV for transmission to CINCPAC and the JCS. Accounts of minor cease-fire violations would be included in daily COMUSMACV communications and serious violations would be reported immediately to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[31]

The Four-Party Joint Military Commission consisted of a Central Commission in Saigon, seven Regional Joint Military Commissions located near key province capitals, and twenty-six joint Military Teams. The Central Commission established three sub-commissions to assist in carrying out its responsibilities: one on Captured Military Personnel to arrange the release of US and Vietnamese prisoners of war and captured foreign nationals; another on Operational Procedures to deal with transportation, facilities, privileges and immunities, press relations, and fiscal arrangements; and a Subcommission on Military Affairs to implement the cease-fire. Each delegation to the Four-Party Commission was allowed 825 personnel, comprising 275 delegates and 550 support personnel. The United States sent representatives to all levels

of the Four-Party Commission organization and was anxious for the other parties to do likewise. To facilitate the Commission's functioning, the United States offered on 27 January 1973 to provide air transportation to bring North Vietnamese and PRG delegation members from Hanoi to Saigon. This offer was accepted and the airlift began on 29 January. By 8 February, the United States had transported 802 North Vietnamese and 49 PRG personnel from Hanoi to Saigon.[32]

The US, South Vietnamese, and North Vietnamese delegations to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission were at full strength by 8 February 1973, but the PRG had supplied only 152 members. To assist deployment of the remaining PRG contingent, the Central Commission set up an Ad Hoc Committee on PRG Movement, but that body was of little use. Under the pretexts of inadequate facilities, poor security, and lack of freedom of movement, the PRG delayed sending additional personnel, and when those excuses were removed, the PRG still did not provide its full complement. During the 60-day period following the cease-fire, the PRG sent representatives to only four regions and to no team sites, and the maximum number of PRG members to join the Four-Party Commission was 314. The North Vietnamese initially provided members for all seven Regional Commissions and five team sites. But then, alleging a lack of security, they withdrew from two Regional Commissions and refused to participate in "meaningful" activities in the other five regions. At the time of disestablishment of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, there were no North Vietnamese at the team sites.[33]

With the establishment of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, US military personnel had to deal with both North Vietnamese and PRG personnel, and the JCS issued guidance for such encounters on 27 January 1973. All US military personnel were instructed that contacts

> must be limited to those required for the transaction of necessary business and to those which cannot be avoided without breach of courtesy. When such contacts do occur all personnel should conduct themselves in a reserved but correct and courteous manner.

In dealings with the PRG members, the Joint Chiefs cautioned that the United States did not "in any way" regard the Provisional Revolutionary Government as "a governmental entity" and acts should be avoided that might suggest formal US relations with the PRG. All US military forces were reminded that the United States recognized "the GVN as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam and contacts with official representatives of the PRG/NLF should be avoided." In case of doubt, US military personnel in South Vietnam would seek instructions, through proper channels, from the US Ambassador or appropriate members of his staff. All meetings with representatives of North Vietnam or the PRG were to be reported to the US Embassy in Saigon.[34]

The JCS guidance concerning the PRG was later confirmed by the State Department. In a circular to all US diplomatic and consular posts on 2 March 1973,

the Secretary of State noted that recent events, including the signing of the Vietnam agreement by the "so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government" as well as its participation in the International Conference on Vietnam, had led some third countries "to look with more responsiveness upon the PRG's claims of enhanced legitimacy." But these events, the Secretary said, did nothing to strengthen PRG claims to represent the people of South Vietnam. He continued:

> Our policy, stated by the President on January 23, is to "continue to recognize the Government of the Republic of Vietnam as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam." Its claims notwithstanding, the PRG does not have a capital, controls . . . but a small percentage of the South Vietnamese population and has none of the outward manifestations commonly associated with any legitimate government.[35]

Problems Requiring Guidance

After the cease-fire came into force, questions arose that had not been anticipated in the planning process and, in response to requests from CINCPAC, the Joint Chiefs issued rulings on various issues. They decided that Delong piers were not war materiel and need not be withdrawn at all since they would be useful in loading other materiel aboard ship for withdrawal. With respect to cargoes en route to Vietnam by sea when the cease-fire became effective, the Chiefs said that such cargoes could proceed to South Vietnam and be unloaded. The only exception was ammunition, which under the terms of the agreement could be brought in only as a replacement; COMUSMACV must ensure that ammunition entering did not exceed the level on hand on 27 January. In addition, the JCS cautioned that introduction of all such cargoes must be coordinated closely with the FPJMC in order to avoid allegations of cease-fire violations. Some days later, the Chiefs amplified this guidance directing that en route ships might continue to unload cargoes in Vietnam even after X+60, but they could not engage in coastal traffic between South Vietnamese ports.[36]

The peace agreement provided that "armaments," "munitions," and "war material" in Vietnam could be replaced only "on the basis of piece-for-piece" and, during the withdrawal period, COMUSMACV became concerned about the possibility of conflicting interpretations of these terms. He developed definitions of the three terms as well as specific lists of items for each category, recommending that any other interpretations of these matters be referred to his headquarters prior to issuance. CINCPAC supported his recommendation, and the Joint Chiefs approved it on 14 March 1973.[37]

Even the most trivial administrative matters relating to Vietnam during the withdrawal period required the attention of Washington officials. For, on 17 February 1973, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Installations and Logistics) approved

a JCS recommendation that a military post office (APO/FPO) be continued in South Vietnam with the Department of the Navy administering it on behalf of the Department of Defense.[38]

Withdrawal of US Air and Naval Forces

With the cessation of all US military action in Vietnam, the United States began a reduction of air and naval assets located elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In earlier planning, the Joint Chiefs had prepared in November and the Secretary of Defense had approved an illustrative concept for redeployment of US air and naval forces in Southeast Asia outside of Vietnam following a cease-fire. This planning concept had provided for: a reduction of US tactical air forces in Thailand to nine tactical fighter squadrons, one tactical reconnaissance squadron, one gunship squadron, and appropriate support elements—a force able to supply 4,700 combat sorties per month; redeployment of B–52s from U Tapao to a level of 35 to 42 aircraft capable of providing 1,000 sorties per month; and incremental phase-down of US 7th Fleet assets off Vietnam to a force able to fly 2,200 sorties per month with one CVA stationed off Vietnam and two more able to arrive within a week. Timing of the withdrawals was to be determined after the cease-fire.[39]

On 29 January 1973, Admiral Moorer told the Director of the Joint Staff that, in discussions with "higher authority," broad guidelines had been reached on the reduction of US air assets in Southeast Asia. The United States would retain for "the time being" its land-based air assets, both Air Force and Marine, to provide a strong deterrent "as well as significant capability" should it be needed. "Higher authority" had also indicated "they" would consider proposals to reduce the US carrier posture in Southeast Asia. The Chairman tasked the Joint Staff to prepare a withdrawal program including the following: (1) a plan to drawdown to three CVAs in the 7th Fleet as soon as possible as well as a CVA posture for Southeast Asia for X-Day to X+60 and post X+60; (2) a plan to reduce US air assets in Thailand and Guam to a final force of nine tactical fighter squadrons, 42 B–52s, 36 KC–135s, one tactical reconnaissance squadron, and one gunship squadron.[40]

On 27 January 1973, the Joint Chiefs sought the views of both CINCPAC and CINCSAC on revision of the November 1972 illustrative concept. After reviewing their comments, the JCS told the two commanders on 5 February that "higher authority" had approved the withdrawal of certain forces from Southeast Asia and directed CINCPAC to:

> Cancel scheduled deployment of CORAL SEA. Outchop MIDWAY on 23 February 1973 without relief. Outchop AMERICA on 5 March 1973 without relief. Instructions concerning any further withdrawal of naval forces in SEA will be provided at a later date.

> Redeploy proportionate numbers of escort and support units with each CVA keeping in mind the requirements for END SWEEP [mine clearance operations].

These redeployments would reduce 7th Fleet carriers from six to four. In addition, CINCSAC was to redeploy 20 KC–135 aircraft with associated crews, support personnel, and equipment from Takhli to CONUS. Six hours after issuing this directive, the Joint Chiefs authorized CINCPAC to reduce the 7th Fleet on-line force to 3 CVAs with a fourth carrier available within 48 hours.[41]

The Secretary of Defense had requested a JCS plan for the incremental reduction of US forces in Southeast Asia not later than 12 February 1973, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded a plan for the withdrawal of US naval forces and one for removal of land-based air forces on 8 February. These plans followed the November 1972 concept and the Joint Chiefs told the Secretary that the plans insured an adequate force structure to protect remaining US troops in Southeast Asia as well as to react to contingencies. Moreover, the plans afforded flexibility in the event of North Vietnamese cease-fire violations, problems in the return of US prisoners of war, or other undetermined factors.

The plan for the withdrawal of US naval forces included the redeployment of the USS *Midway* on 23 February and the USS *America* on 5 March. Redeployment of a third attack carrier was planned in mid-March although the specific date had not been determined and a proportionate number of escort and supply ships would also be redeployed. The remaining Western Pacific naval force could provide 2,200 tactical air sorties per month while maintaining a posture of one CVA on-station off Vietnam, one positioned to arrive off Vietnam within 96 hours, and one to arrive within one week. Amphibious ships above those required for two amphibious ready groups (ARGs) would be withdrawn when contingencies permitted, and the two amphibious ready groups would be available on conditions of readiness appropriate to existing circumstances.

The JCS plan for withdrawal of land-based air assets provided for redeployment in three increments. Tactical air assets in Thailand would be reduced in accordance with the November 1972 concept to nine fighter squadrons, one reconnaissance squadron, and one gunship squadron; the residual force to provide 4,700 combat sorties per month. The plan also provided for a reduction of B–52s at U Tapao from 52 to 42 and in Guam from 155 to 10; KC–135s would be reduced in Thailand from 53 to 29, in Guam from six to zero, and at Kadena from 59 to 27. The remaining force in Thailand—42 B–52s and 29 KCD135s—could accomplish 1,000 B–52 sorties per month and provide tanker support for tactical air sorties. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not include the actual scheduling of the land-based aircraft other than the 20 KC–135s already ordered redeployed on 5 February. Timing of the rest of the withdrawals, they said, depended on political rather than military considerations.

The Joint Chiefs requested that the Secretary approve both plans as well as the immediate redeployment of the Marine Corps A–6 squadron from Thailand. The

Secretary, however, took no action. The naval withdrawal was carried out during the next several months, but none of the land-based air forces had been redeployed when the US forces withdrawal from South Vietnam was completed at the end of March 1973.[42]

On 10 February, CINCPAC requested authority to advance the date for the withdrawal of the USS *Midway* out of the Gulf of Tonkin from 23 to 18 February 1973, but the Joint Chiefs turned down the request "due to uncertainties of the current situation." A week later, CINCPAC proposed to reduce the on-line CVA posture of the 7th Fleet from three to two. The JCS advised CINCPAC that, until an effective cease-fire was attained in Laos, it was necessary to maintain adequate carrier support for air operations in Laos. Two carriers must be kept on-station for that purpose. The Chiefs did not object to reducing the online posture to two carriers "provided the requirements for the END SWEEP [mine clearance] support CVA can be fulfilled by other means." Following a cease-fire in Laos, they said, the carrier posture would be reassessed. Apparently, one carrier was considered necessary for mine clearance support and the on-station posture continued unchanged at three.[43]

On 5 March, over two weeks after the 21 February cease-fire in Laos, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed CINCPAC to adopt the following carrier posture off Southeast Asia: one carrier on-station on ready alert to provide rapid response for air operations as requested by the Commander, US Support Activities Group (COMUSSAG); a second carrier on-station to provide "logistic support" for mine clearance operations while at the same time remaining on four to six hour notice to supply additional contingency response; and at least one of the two carriers not on-station maintained on a 48-hour reaction time to respond to contingency requirements in Southeast Asia. Two days later, on 7 March, CINCPAC informed the JCS, based on the present tempo of activity in the Gulf of Tonkin, he believed one carrier on-station there could supply both ready alert contingency sortie requirements and logistic support for mine clearance forces. He requested authority to plan to reduce the 7th Fleet carrier level in mid-March from four to three in the following posture: one carrier on-station in the Gulf of Tonkin for possible contingencies and for mine clearance support; the second on 96-hour reaction to respond to contingencies in Southeast Asia; and the third in "upkeep status." The next day, Admiral Moorer replied that he understood the rationale for the proposed carrier reduction, but he believed that the "potentially volatile" situation required maintenance of the existing carrier levels and posture. It was not until 25 May 1973, well after the completion of the US withdrawal from South Vietnam, that the JCS authorized CINCPAC to adopt the carrier level and posture he had recommended on 7 March.[44]

At the same time that the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered reduction of air and naval assets in Southeast Asia, they also addressed the requirement for air surge capabilities for the same area. In response to a request from the Secretary of Defense for recommendations for assumptions on which to base short-term Service munitions procurement and distribution planning, the Joint Chiefs advised the Secretary

on 23 February 1973 that an immediate surge capability in Southeast Asia should be maintained at these monthly levels: 12,000 (10,000 USAF and 2,000 USMC) land-based tactical air sorties; 3,000 B–52 sorties; and 8,400 carrier-based tactical air sorties. Munitions support, the JCS continued, should be sufficient to maintain these levels indefinitely. The Chiefs also believed that the Southeast Asia air munitions support posture should provide for a resumption of Royal Laotian Air Force sorties to 3,000 per month, and they recommended that continued US air activity in Cambodia be included although they could not predict the level and duration of such activity. The Secretary had no immediate response for their proposals.[45]

COUNT DOWN Continues

With the successful completion of the first increment of the withdrawal of remaining US military forces from South Vietnam on 12 February 1973, the United States proceeded with the next of four redeployment increments.[46] As specified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 25 January, the second would occur during the period X+16 through X+30 (12–27 February) and consist of 4,000 to 4,500 US troops. On 17 February 1973, Admiral Moorer approved a second withdrawal of 5,600 spaces and directed planning for a third and fourth increment of approximately 5,800 each. Later, on 21 February, Moorer changed this guidance slightly, authorizing a third withdrawal of about 5,500 during X+31 to X+45 (28 February through 14 March) and a fourth of approximately 6,000 spaces in the period X+46 and X+60 (15 through 29 March). Meanwhile, increment two continued and by 27 February US military strength in South Vietnam had fallen to 12,065.[47]

The second North Vietnamese and PRG release of US prisoners was to occur on 27 February on completion of the second phase of the US withdrawal. During the earlier part of the period, all seemed to be going according to plan. In fact, on 18 February, North Vietnam freed 20 US prisoners ahead of schedule as a goodwill gesture following Dr. Kissinger's visit to Hanoi. But things began to bog down. North Vietnam and the PRG refused to furnish the United States with prisoner names and details of the next scheduled release, and on 27 February, North Vietnam announced that there would be no further release of American prisoners as long as the United States failed to carry out the Paris agreement. A North Vietnamese spokesman in the Four-Party Joint Military Commission accused the United States of encouraging Saigon to create difficulties and obstacles for the Joint Military Commission, claiming that the Thieu regime had conducted 20,000 military operations since the cease-fire began.[48]

The United States acted at once to meet this challenge. Further US troop withdrawals from South Vietnam and all mine clearance operations were suspended on 27 February. At the same time, President Nixon instructed Secretary of State Rogers, who was attending the international conference on Vietnam in Paris, "to

demand clarification" of the prisoner issue from the North Vietnamese delegation on an urgent basis, giving the matter "highest priority" before any other business of the conference.[49] The North Vietnamese delegation assured the Secretary that all prisoners would be released before the end of the 60-day period stipulated in the agreement but did not specify the timing of the next release, and the United States continued to suspend troop withdrawals from South Vietnam. On 1 March 1973, the North Vietnamese delivered in Saigon a list of 108 prisoners to be released in the next several days, and on 2 March North Vietnam informed the US delegation at the Four-Party Joint Military Commission of the definite release date of 4 March. On 2 March, the PRG announced its readiness to turn over 27 US military prisoners in the near future.[50]

Following the North Vietnamese provision of the release date, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to resume Operation COUNT DOWN on 4 March with the withdrawal rate adjusted as necessary to complete the third increment redeployment of 5,500 by X+45 (14 March). On 4 March, North Vietnam released 106 US military personnel and two Thais. The following day, the PRG freed 34 additional prisoners in Hanoi (27 US military, three US civilians, and four foreign nationals).[51]

The US withdrawal proceeded, but controversy developed between the two South Vietnamese parties over exchange of their prisoners. Fearing that this dispute might delay the further release of US prisoners, the White House Press Secretary in Washington stated that the return of US prisoners was tied "only to withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam." The US Delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission repeated that position, insisting that under the 27 January agreement release of US prisoners depended solely upon the withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam and was in no way tied to Vietnamese disputes.[52]

On 8 March, the two South Vietnamese parties resolved their differences on prisoners and began a round of exchanges, but these ended abruptly on 10 March when the PRG cancelled further releases, accusing GVN forces of attacking and occupying a prisoner turnover point. In an effort to prevent the Vietnamese impasse from halting further releases of US prisoners, and to put pressure on North Vietnam to free the remaining US detainees on schedule, the United States on 10 March stopped further increment 3 withdrawals.

Admiral Moorer instructed CINCPAC to halt the withdrawals immediately. The balance of the increment would be withdrawn on the day that North Vietnam freed the next group of US prisoners, tentatively planned for 14 March. Should the US prisoners be returned over a two-day period, then completion of increment 3 should take place over the same period. With regard to the fourth and final withdrawal increment, Admiral Moorer directed CINCPAC to hold all redeployments until receipt of the final POW release list from North Vietnam. Then the US withdrawal should be completed within 72 hours. Moorer requested announcement of this timing for the removal of the remaining US forces in the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.[53]

North Vietnam on 12 March provided the United States with a prisoner list for the next release and freed the men on the list in Hanoi on 14 March. The group included 107 US military personnel and one US civilian; the following day, the PRG released another 32 US prisoners, 27 military and five civilians, in Hanoi. The United States resumed increment 3 redeployment on 14 March and completed it two days later, lowering US military strength in South Vietnam to 6,289 personnel.[54]

Cease-Fire in Laos

In the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam," the United States and North Vietnam pledged to respect the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos and called upon foreign countries to end all military activities and withdraw all military personnel and armaments from that country. The Vietnam agreement further provided that the internal affairs of Laos should be settled by the Laotians free of foreign interference. In describing the Vietnam agreement on 24 January, Dr. Kissinger indicated his expectation of a formal cease-fire in Laos within a short time, and in fact, representatives of the opposing factions in Laos, the Royal Laotian Government and the communist Pathet Lao, had been meeting since October 1972 to achieve a peaceful settlement.[55]

The United States had no regular military ground forces in Laos, but it did carry out both B–52 and tactical air strikes there in support of the Royal Laotian Government as well as various special operations. The United States increased authorized air activity levels in Laos upon implementation of the cease-fire in Vietnam.[56] American air strikes in the country increased significantly during the last days of January and early February.[57]

By early February, there were growing reports of an imminent cease-fire in Laos and speculation on this matter was fueled when Dr. Kissinger stopped in Vientiane on 9 February on his way to Hanoi to discuss the progress of the Laotian peace negotiations. In a further indication of US interest, the White House Press Secretary stated on 14 February that the United States considered the Laotian situation "a matter of great urgency," and the following day, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and former US Ambassador to Laos, William H. Sullivan, arrived in Vientiane for a 24-hour visit.[58]

Violations Multiply; Retaliation Aborted

There could not be peace in Vietnam unless there was peace in Southeast Asia. Ending the fighting in Laos was the administration's next objective. On 25 January, before the Vietnam cease-fire took effect, Admiral Moorer instructed CINCPAC

and CINCSAC to increase activity in Laos to 15 B–52 and 200 tactical air sorties daily, "with primary emphasis on the land battle area while maintaining pressure on the established re-supply routes such as the Ho Chi Minh Trail." Late on 31 January, Dr. Kissinger ordered that B–52 sorties rise to 50 per day, provided that suitable targets were available. When Admiral Gayler objected that there were insufficient targets, the Chairman told him that the ceiling was not mandatory; stepped-up bombing was "part of the negotiating track." Ten days later, in fact, Kissinger raised the rate to 60 to help recapture a good part of the Bolovens Plateau before a cease-fire took effect.[59]

The reports of a truce in Laos proved accurate, for, on 21 February 1973, the Royal Laotian Government and the Pathet Lao signed a peace agreement ending their twenty-year struggle. A cease-fire would enter into effect on noon, local time (220500Z), on 22 February and the two sides would maintain control of the areas then held. The agreement provided for the withdrawal of foreign military forces within sixty days and for an exchange of captured personnel by the two Laotian sides during the same sixty-day period. Foreign countries were called upon to cease "completely and permanently" all bombing of Laotian territory and all military movements in Laos. The two parties would establish a military commission to implement the cease-fire and the International Control Commission established by the Geneva Agreements of 1962 would oversee the peace agreement.

The Laotian agreement called for the creation, within 30 days, of a National Provisional Coalition Government and a National Political Coalition Council, each composed of equal numbers of representatives from both sides, "to administer national tasks." "General and free democratic elections" for a national assembly and a permanent national coalition government were also called for, but no date was specified.[60]

The Joint Chiefs had anticipated the agreement in Laos, and on 10 February 1973 Admiral Moorer submitted revised rules of engagement. Upon announcement of the agreement, on 21 February, the JCS issued both revised rules of engagement and operating authorities for use following the cease-fire in Laos. They directed US forces to discontinue all acts of force in Laos, effective 220500Z February 1973. The only exception was B–52 and tactical air strikes in the event of Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese violations of the cease-fire agreement. Such strikes would be conducted only after a request by the Commander, USSAG; validation by the Ambassador in Laos; and approval by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[61]

The agreement in Laos did not end the fighting in that country. During the morning of 23 February, Prince Souvanna Phouma, the Premier of the Royal Laotian Government, charged the Pathet Lao with launching a general offensive throughout the country and asked for renewed US bombing. This request was passed through the designated channels to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Admiral Moorer approved the air strikes later the same day. Before the cease-fire was 24

hours old, 9 B–52s struck enemy sites on the Bolovens Plateau near Paksong in southern Laos.[62]

The Joint Chiefs were not optimistic about the chances for peace in Southeast Asia and, on 21 February, they directed preparation of contingency plans for possible resumption of US air and naval strikes against North Vietnam. They instructed CINCPAC to plan options for strikes against military targets in the northeast quadrant of North Vietnam and North Vietnam's panhandle. Both options were to provide for "massive sustained, all-weather, around-the-clock" air and naval strikes of a duration ranging from three days to continuous operations. The JCS also tasked CINCPAC to prepare and maintain plans for appropriate levels of US military action in Cambodia and Laos.[63]

On 23 February 1973, the Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, General Ryan, informed the Joint Chiefs of what he considered a "major" cease-fire violation by the North Vietnamese and PRG. Recent aerial photography had revealed two operational SAM sites in the Khe Sanh valley of South Vietnam. Since there was no evidence of enemy SAMs deployed in South Vietnam on the date of the cease-fire, and as the Vietnam agreement clearly forbade the introduction of such weapons, General Ryan proposed a US protest to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and, if that approach brought no response, to the International Commission for Control and Supervision.[64]

The Operations Deputies considered General Ryan's proposal the same day, but, perhaps because of the dismal record of both the Four-Party Commission and the International Commission for Control and Supervision, did not accept the recommendation. Rather, they agreed that the Chairman should handle the matter "in another manner."[65]

After the first 30 days of the cease-fire, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker prepared an appraisal of the situation in South Vietnam. He observed that the "level of violence" had declined since the initiation of the agreement. Violations had been flagrant, however, with both sides sharing responsibility. Most areas of South Vietnam lost to communist control in the fighting around the cease-fire date had now been recovered, Ambassador Bunker said, and the GVN felt fully justified in the use of force to regain this ground and, in some cases, even to attack areas traditionally held by the communists. The Ambassador confirmed that the Four-Party Joint Military Commission had failed to develop into an effective mechanism, due in part to the stalling and obstruction of North Vietnam and the PRG, but he added that the GVN also deserved some of the blame. It had systematically harassed and mistreated the North Vietnamese and PRG elements of the Joint Military Commission. As a partial explanation of the GVN attitude, Ambassador Bunker told of reliable intelligence reports revealing communist intentions not to honor the Vietnam agreement and to continue their military buildup in South Vietnam. Two steps were necessary, Ambassador Bunker believed, before the shooting stopped in South Vietnam: (1) "unambiguous commands" to all military units of both sides to cease all offen-

sive activities and remain in place; (2) the establishment of an effective two-party joint military commission, composed of GVN and PRG personnel, to work out the terms of the cease-fire and determine areas of control after completion of the US withdrawal. The Ambassador had pressed these points on President Thieu, but he questioned the confidence of the South Vietnamese president and his government to face up to the communists in a political struggle.[66]

Two days later, on 5 March, Admiral Moorer informed the Secretary of Defense of evidence confirming Ambassador Bunker's contention that North Vietnam and the PRG did not intend to honor the cease-fire. Recent intelligence indicated the movement of twelve 130mm field guns from Cambodia into South Vietnam as well as deployment of an armored unit with 20-25 tanks into MR 1. In addition, Admiral Moorer reported that increasing numbers of trucks carrying supplies were moving through the Demilitarized Zone, that shipments into the Laos panhandle were at the highest levels of the dry season, and that large quantities of military supplies were moving into South Vietnam from Laos and Cambodia. "These developments," he said, "are a direct manifestation of the efforts of the North Vietnamese to establish an improved military posture which can be used for major operations against the Republic of Vietnam."[67]

In mid-February, the Secretary of Defense had requested General Weyand's "personal assessment" of the RVNAF ability to meet the situation in South Vietnam, and the commander provided his views to Admiral Moorer on 7 March 1973. The Chairman gave the assessment to the Secretary, adding that it had not been formally addressed by the Joint Chiefs and should not be considered an expression of their views. In an "overview" of the situation, General Weyand predicted the North Vietnamese and PRG near-term objective in South Vietnam to be the extension of influence through political and "lower level" military activities. To achieve that end, the General believed that North Vietnam intended to keep forces in South Vietnam into the mid-term period (1974–1978) and that major areas of concern would be Quang Tri-Thua Thien and Binh Long-Tay Ninh, areas that could afford a base for a viable military option if objectives proved unattainable through the political process. Consequently, COMUSMACV felt that "rapid victory" for the GVN was not "in the offing," but neither did he think "decisive violation" of the cease-fire by North Vietnam and the PRG likely.

During a WSAG meeting on 5 March, at which Vice Admiral Weinel represented the Chairman, Dr. Kissinger said that the President "has no intention of letting North Vietnam take over South Vietnam militarily—particularly in 1973; two or three years from now is another matter." Kissinger's strategy, according to Weinel, was to "be kind with dollars but be brutal with military force in [the] face of continued violations." Kissinger directed the Defense Department to prepare a concept for South Vietnamese aircraft to strike supply lines in Laos. Next day, this was broadened to include US aircraft as well.[68]

With regard to the capabilities of the RVNAF, General Weyand considered the current force structure more than adequate to meet the foreseeable threat and the number and mix of weapons satisfactory. There were, however, a number of problems remaining, including: a lack of adequately trained military manpower; inadequate counter-battery capability; limited grasp of combined tank-infantry tactics; an ineffective border security and interdiction concept; a minimum maritime air patrol capability; a lack of air cavalry capability; and limited air defense capabilities. General Weyand did not favor any reduction of the current 1.1 million RVNAF force structure, stating that FY 1974 changes could be accomplished within that ceiling. He did believe that regular force divisions could be reduced beyond FY 1978 and that a 400,000-man reserve should be established at that time.[69]

Two days later, Dr. Kissinger telephoned Admiral Moorer to say that the President "almost certainly" would authorize a two-day strike on the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the following week, probably after the next group of POWs had been released. Moorer favored a surprise one-day attack with B–52s, tactical aircraft, and planes from three carriers. At a WSAG meeting Kissinger emphasized North Vietnam's repeated violations of the Paris agreement. Why was Hanoi doing this? Kissinger speculated that the North Vietnamese (1) thought they could not be bombed as long as they held American POWs, (2) had not decided whether to launch a major attack against South Vietnam, or (3) already had decided to resume major operations in the fall. He reiterated: "the only thing the North Vietnamese understand is force." Admiral Moorer recommended bombing the Trail first, next hitting the heavily infiltrated area between the Demilitarized Zone and the Cua Viet-Thac Hahn rivers, then finally going back to Hanoi. Moorer thought that the question was not whether to attack but when—immediately after return of the third POW increment or after release of the fourth, and final, one. On 15 March, Kissinger told Moorer to prepare to conduct air operations around the Trail on 21 March.[70]

When 21 March came, it proved to be a turning point for reasons that Admiral Moorer could not have known. That morning, in the Oval Office, Special Counsel John Dean warned that "a cancer" was growing on the Presidency. Convicted Watergate burglars were threatening to implicate Nixon's closest aides and demanding "hush money." From this point forward, the Watergate scandal loomed ever larger among the President's concerns. In the evening, Kissinger's deputy, Brigader General Brent Scowcroft, USAF, called Admiral Moorer to tell him that the President had decided to delay air strikes in Laos indefinitely.[71]

On 23 March, Judge Sirica imposed heavy sentences upon the Watergate burglars, adding that terms could be reduced if they told a grand jury everything they knew. On 28 March—the day after Hanoi released the last POWs, and the day before MACV went out of existence—Moorer and Weinel attended a WSAG meeting on Southeast Asia. Dr. Kissinger spoke as follows: "Why aren't we protesting violations? Everyone in this town is looking for an alibi. Violations without protest become acquiescence . . . . Nothing bad must happen in the next six months."

Speaking about Cambodia, he said, "Stop wringing our hands. Do something positive." Afterwards Moorer remarked to Weinel, "We are going to have to get irrational again to get [North Vietnam's] attention." The Chairman also telephoned General Haig, who had become Army Vice Chief of Staff, to say that he was "very disturbed about the meeting today, it is the worst I have ever been to." His own problem, Moorer continued, was that "we never know what private discussions [Kissinger] is having with the North Vietnamese. We just operate in a vacuum and it is difficult to recommend sound solutions to problems when you do not know what input has gone into them." The Chairman added, "Something else must be bothering Henry–he must have gotten sunburned–or something!"[72]

On the evening of 29 March, President Nixon told the nation: "For the first time in 12 years, no American military forces are in Vietnam. All of our American POWs are on their way home. . . . The provisions of the agreement . . . prohibiting infiltration from North Vietnam into South Vietnam have not been complied with. . . . But despite these difficulties, we . . . have achieved our goal of obtaining an agreement which provides peace with honor in Vietnam."[73] Simultaneously, though, headlines also reported that convicted burglars were implicating high officials in the Watergate break-in and in the subsequent cover-up.

The next day General Vogt advised Admiral Moorer that the war was turning our way in Cambodia and that if air strikes continued "for another thirty days all the heat will disappear." Vogt was less optimistic about South Vietnam. Advisers' final reports in Military Region IV were all "pretty dismal" and the general situation in MR III was deteriorating rather badly. The Chairman then reviewed matters with Vice Admiral Weinel. The North Vietnamese, Moorer noted, were building bridges and all-weather roads along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He suggested that re-mining the harbors would hurt Hanoi badly. Weinel observed that "we are under the POW syndrome" which deterred anything that might create more POWs. Aerial mining, of course, could be carried out with no losses. On 31 March, the Chairman instructed Vice Admiral Weinel and the Director, Joint Staff, to prepare a "worst case" response against a major offensive. "We must emphasize," Moorer declared, "that the solution to Cambodia, South Vietnam and Laos is right in Hanoi. We should not nickel and dime them to death, we would need a big effort." The Chairman continued: "The President has a need to have South Vietnam remain viable for a reasonable period of time, perhaps a year, then he could say we gave them everything and they could not handle it right. So sorry that it did not happen on my watch, so to speak."[74] This statement, together with Kissinger's remarks on 5 and 28 March, demonstrate that the highest officials wanted to assure a "decent interval" between the signing of a peace agreement and any collapse of South Vietnam. Presumably, with the opening to China and the arms agreement with the Soviet Union, President Nixon no longer saw Vietnam as a crucial part of the global equation.

April became the month for decision about using US air power to stop North Vietnamese violations. At the outset, the administration appeared ready to do so.

On 3 April, General Vogt told the Chairman that the North Vietnamese were preparing to attack the Laotian town of Tha-Vieng, south of the Plain of Jars, and asked Admiral Moorer to sound out the White House about providing air support. General Scowcroft told Moorer that, after a heavy attack had occurred, the President would look with favor upon a request from Souvanna Phouma for air support. One week later, when CINCPAC recommended reducing B–52 sorties over Cambodia, Admiral Moorer replied that the Vietnam experience should be the yardstick for measuring Cambodian operations. "We simply cannot risk losing Cambodia because of efforts withheld while we debated just precisely how remunerative certain target destruction might be, or whether or not this or that type of aircraft was available. . . . "[75]

On 15 April, after Tha-Vieng had been attacked, Souvanna Phouma asked for US air support, Admiral Moorer supported his request. Twenty B–52s and 23 FB–111s conducted strikes, based upon targets supplied by Ambassador Godley. Late on 15 April, Dr. Kissinger told the Secretary of Defense that Nixon was considering a 72-hour raid that would include the Ho Chi Minh Trail. General Vogt reported that aircraft were ready to attack at 0700 on 17 April.[76]

Early on 16 April, matters grew murky. Tactical aircraft and B–52s were hitting targets around Tha-Vieng. But Ambassador Godley told General Vogt that the situation there was confused, friendly forces were scattered, and he could not nominate any targets beyond those already scheduled. Godley also opposed any more strikes around the Plain of Jars and voiced "grave concern" about bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The Joint Chiefs, agreeing that a 48-hour campaign would be too brief, favored a maximum effort until Hanoi agreed to abide by the Paris accords. The North Vietnamese had installed SAM batteries around Khe Sanh that covered the area along Highway 9 leading to Tchepone in Laos, which was a major junction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A WSAG meeting was called for 1000 on 16 April. Prior to it, Admiral Moorer, the Secretary of Defense, and the Deputy Secretary concluded that air operations could not be conducted within the area covered by SAMs, and that the North Vietnamese could not be allowed a SAM sanctuary. At the WSAG meeting, Dr. Kissinger appeared very upset with Ambassador Godley, saying that the President could not expend his capitol for such small results. Moorer thought that the WSAG was on "dead center" waiting word from Godley. The basic problem, he believed, lay in determining a rationale for heavy strikes. Was it to help Souvanna but spare the Trail, to bomb the Trail in retaliation for violations, or to hit the SAM sites at Khe Sanh because they constituted a violation?[77]

When the WSAG reconvened at 1000 on 17 April, Dr. Kissinger ordered the Defense Department to prepare two plans. The first would direct the main weight against the Trail and a small effort against the SAMS at Khe Sanh. The second would strike Khe Sanh hard, also allowing some effort against key targets on the Trail. At 1749, Moorer called Kissinger to report that the plans were ready. In each case there would be 80 B–52 and 400 tactical air sorties daily for four days. In the first case, 75 percent of the effort would go against the Trail and 25 percent against

Khe Sanh. In the second case, 30 percent of the effort would go to the Laotian panhandle, 30 percent to Khe Sanh, and 40 percent elsewhere in South Vietnam. A third conceptual plan for mining had also been developed. Kissinger told Moorer to expand the targets beyond the DMZ as far as Dong Hoi in North Vietnam. Then came the crucial exchange:

> Kissinger: "We've decided to wait for the next provocation."
> Moorer: "On balance I think that'll be better."

Why the postponement? Ambassador Godley certainly helped inhibit action. Clearly, however, the main reason lay in the burgeoning Watergate scandal. A cascade of revelations had resulted, that very afternoon, in Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler acknowledging that previous denials of involvement by White House staff members were "inoperative."[78]

From this point forward the administration was immobilized. The President had responded to violations of the Laotian cease-fire. But, as Kissinger later wrote, "no action was taken against the North Vietnamese infiltration down the Ho Chi Minh Trail or against the illegal infiltration across the DMZ, and that after all was the heart of the matter." On 25 April Admiral Moorer and the Director, J–3, reviewed mining plans, which the Chairman considered the option most likely to be adopted. Next day, CINCPAC received orders to prepare to mine seven harbors upon four days notice. Matters moved no further. At the end of May, Moorer recorded, "This has been a slow month. It appears that the entire town is in neutral watching the [Senate] Watergate hearings on TV and waiting to see what happens."[79]

Congress was ready to stop funding the war, a step that President Nixon and Admiral Moorer had anticipated well before Watergate engulfed the White House. Early in June, Moorer and Deputy Secretary William P. Clements concluded that no one from the White House was lobbying Congress against a cutoff. The Chairman estimated that, if air support for Cambodia ended, the country would be overrun in one month. Moorer and Clements called upon seven key members of the House and Senate. "I fear we are going to lose this one," the Chairman recorded in his diary. He was right. On 1 July, the President reluctantly signed legislation prohibiting the use of any funds after 15 August to "support directly or indirectly combat activities in or over Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. . . . "[80]

Completion of HOMECOMING and COUNT DOWN

When North Vietnam released the third group of US prisoners on 14 March 1973, the United States moved to complete the corresponding increments of its troop withdrawal from South Vietnam, and the last of that body left Saigon on 16 March 1973. Now, only one group of US prisoners remained to be returned and

a final contingent of approximately 6,000 US military personnel awaited redeployment from South Vietnam. Originally, the United States had planned to remove these troops during the period 15 through 29 March, but following the difficulties experienced in the prisoner releases in late February and early March, the JCS had directed CINCPAC on 10 March to hold US redeployments in the fourth increment until the United States received the final prisoner list from North Vietnam.[81]

The US anticipation that the last prisoner release might be troublesome proved correct. The principal problem arose over the question of US prisoners held in Laos by the Pathet Lao. Although the Vietnam agreement included no provision for the return of US military or civilian personnel detained in Laos, the North Vietnamese had given Dr. Kissinger private assurances when the agreement was negotiated that US prisoners in Laos would be released no later than 60 days following the signature of the agreement. Kissinger had said in his 24 January 1973 press conference that US prisoners in Laos would be returned in Hanoi.[82]

At a FPJMC meeting on 19 March 1973, Major General Woodward asked for the list of the last group of US prisoners and inquired whether US prisoners held in Laos were to be returned in Hanoi with the other prisoners. The North Vietnamese delegate replied he had no authority to discuss the release of prisoners in Laos, and General Woodward asked Washington for clarification and guidance.[83]

On 21 March 1973, North Vietnam proposed to return all US prisoners held in Hanoi as well as those held by the PRG on 25 March on condition that all US and other free world forces in South Vietnam were removed by that date. The proposal, however, contained no provision for US prisoners held in Laos. Late on 21 March, Admiral Moorer told CINCPAC that the US position was as follows:

> The US will complete the withdrawal of its military forces from South Vietnam in accordance with the terms of the [Vietnam] agreement and coincident with the release of all, repeat all American prisoners held throughout Indochina.

Moorer specifically directed CINCPAC not to begin withdrawal of remaining US troops in South Vietnam until two conditions were met: (1) US receipt of "a complete list" of all US prisoners, including those held by the Pathet Lao, with times and places of release; (2) the actual transfer to US custody of the first contingent of the last group of US prisoners. Once those conditions were fulfilled, and assuming the first US prisoners were freed on 25 March, CINCPAC was authorized to begin carefully staged US deployments during the period 25 through 28 March. Should difficulties arise, all withdrawals would cease until further notice.[84]

The US Delegation presented this new position at a FPJMC meeting on 22 March 1973, asking for time and place of the release of US prisoners in Laos, and stating that withdrawal of the remaining US forces from South Vietnam would be delayed until the requested information was supplied. The North Vietnamese, however, rejected the US position, asserting that the question of prisoners in Laos was not part of the Vietnam agreement.[85]

Later, on 22 March 1973, Admiral Moorer instructed General Woodward to seek a private meeting with his North Vietnamese counterpart in the Joint Military Commission. "Our basic concern," the Admiral said, "is the release of the prisoners and we do not object to the PLF [Pathet Lao] playing the central role as long as the men are returned to us." The United States wanted precise information and understanding on the times and places of release of all prisoners. It must have assurances, the Chairman continued, either privately through the Four-Party Joint Military Commission or through other channels, that the US prisoners in Laos would be released by 28 March before it would guarantee completion of the US withdrawals.[86]

A complete impasse ensued for the next several days. North Vietnam refused additional information on the prisoner release and added a further demand that the US Marine security guards at the US Embassy compound in Saigon be included in the final withdrawal. The United States meanwhile continued the holdup of troop withdrawals, and on 25 March 1973, the White House Press Secretary released a Presidential statement that US forces would remain in South Vietnam until all prisoners of war were released.[87]

On 26 March 1973, General Woodward met privately with Major General Le Quang Hoa, the Chief of the North Vietnamese delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. General Woodward presented the US position as expressed by Admiral Moorer and the President. In response General Hoa insisted that the language of the Vietnam agreement did not justify linking troop withdrawals with the return of US prisoners held in Laos. He did, however, acknowledge the private US-North Vietnamese understanding on this matter and stated that North Vietnam was attempting to resolve the problem with the Pathet Lao.[88]

At General Hoa's request, he and General Woodward met again later on 26 March. The North Vietnamese delegate announced that the Pathet Lao had agreed to return the US prisoners. To maintain the appearance that the release resulted from US-Pathet Lao negotiations and was not part of the Vietnam agreement, the Four-Part Joint Military Commission would not participate in the release; rather, a Pathet Lao representative would turn over the prisoners to a US reception team in Hanoi. General Hoa added that North Vietnam and the PRG would free their remaining prisoners in groups on the successive days, 27, 28, and 29 March and that the North Vietnamese delegation to the Four-Party Commission would end its activities in South Vietnam and return to Hanoi on 29 March. In reply, General Woodward promised that all remaining US military personnel would be redeployed from South Vietnam within 72 hours of the resumption of the prisoner release. Presidential Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler immediately announced this agreement at the winter White House in Florida, stating that the President had instructed the Secretary of Defense to proceed with the withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam. "This does and will," Mr. Ziegler declared, "end US military presence in Vietnam."[89]

Accordingly, on 27 March 1973, the PRG freed the last increment of US prisoners in its custody, including 27 military personnel and five civilians; on the following day, 28

March 1973, the Pathet Lao released seven US military personnel, two US civilians, and one Canadian civilian in Hanoi, and North Vietnam turned over to the United States 40 military prisoners; and on 29 March 1973, North Vietnam freed the last remaining 67 US military prisoners. During this same period the People's Republic of China released three US prisoners, two military and one civilian, and on 1 April 1972 the PRG released a final US military prisoner in Vinh Binh Province of South Vietnam.[90]

As the first planeload of freed US prisoners took off from Gia Lam Airfield in Hanoi on 27 March 1973, the first planeload of the last increment of US military personnel in South Vietnam departed from Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon for the United States. Some 937 US troops redeployed from South Vietnam on 27 March, 1,745 on 28 March, and 2,578 on 29 March with the last plane lifting off Tan Son Nhut at 1735 local time. The long US military involvement in Vietnam had ended. The only US military forces remaining in South Vietnam were 583 US members of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, who would leave in the next several days; 159 US Marine Corps security guards at the US Embassy; and 50 military personnel who remained as part of the US Defense Attaché Office in Saigon.[91]

With the departure of the US military personnel from South Vietnam on 29 March 1973, the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was disestablished. General Weyand presided over the furling of the colors. "Our mission has been accomplished," he proclaimed. "I depart with a strong feeling of pride in what we have achieved, and in what our achievement represents." Admiral Moorer sent a message that was read at the ceremony. He expressed "gratitude" and "admiration" to all who had served in the armed forces in Vietnam and lauded the mission of the Command and the "courageous actions" of its members. At 291100Z March 1973, USMACV ended its eleven-year history.[92]

Upon the termination of USMACV, all residual US military responsibilities in South Vietnam were assumed by the Defense Attaché Office, Saigon. Activated on 28 January 1973, this office was charged with traditional attaché duties as well as supervision and coordination of US military assistance and advice to the RVNAF.[93] On 6 March 1973, the JCS had approved a final joint table of distribution for the Defense Attaché Office and provided the Secretary of Defense a summary of organizational changes in the Office since activation. This final structure remained within the personnel ceilings of 50 US military and 1,200 Department of Defense civilians approved by the Secretary. At that same time, the Joint Chiefs agreed that the term Defense Attaché Office would be used in lieu of the Defense Resource Support and Termination Office. Operational command of the Office, which had been under COMUSMACV since its creation, passed to COMUSSAG/7AF upon the MACV disestablishment.[94]

The remaining forces of the free world nations that had assisted the United States and the Republic of Vietnam also redeployed from South Vietnam in the 60-day period following signature of the Vietnam agreement. The Republic of Korea Forces, Vietnam, was the only free world element of any size still in Vietnam on

27 January 1973; withdrawal of those troops began on 30 January 1973. Removal of the ROK forces was not linked to prisoner exchange, and the redeployment proceeded uninterrupted. By 23 March 1973, when the withdrawal was completed, 35,396 ROK forces had departed South Vietnam. On 2 March 1973, both the Thai and Philippine elements (31 and 57 strong, respectively) redeployed from South Vietnam, and the departure of the Republic of China contingent (a total of 31 personnel) in two increments on 12 and 26 March 1973 completed the withdrawal of the free world military forces from South Vietnam.[95]

Extension of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission

As provided in the Vietnam agreement, the FPJMC was to end its activities within 60 days of the signature of the document and, in the interim, the two South Vietnamese parties were to establish a Two-Party Joint Military Commission to carry on necessary measures to guarantee the cease-fire in South Vietnam. But the Two-Party Commission had not come into being, and in mid-March, US officials considered the possibility of continuing the FPJMC, at least briefly, to oversee the cease-fire until the Two-Party Commission was functioning.

On 12 March 1973, officers of the Southeast Asia Branch of the Plans and Policy Directorate (J–5) of the Joint Staff asked Admiral Moorer to initiate action to extend the operations of the Four-Party Commission. Even though the overall effectiveness of the Commission in dealing with cease-fire violations had been poor, the J–5 officers believed that the Four-Party Commission in Saigon remained the only open forum for discussion among the participants and, as such, gave the United States a forum for protesting cease-fire violations. Moreover, extension of the Commission would continue the essential cease-fire mechanism until the Two-Party Commission was organized; would allow a legal US military presence throughout South Vietnam; would ensure more time to resolve the status of missing personnel; would give continued stability to the International Commission for Control and Supervision until it was fully staffed and operational; and would bolster wavering Canadian participation on the International Commission.[96]

Admiral Moorer sought the views of both CINCPAC and COMUSMACV on such an extension; neither was enthusiastic. General Weyand pointed out the ineffectiveness of the Four-Party Commission to date and stated that the advantages as compared with the disadvantages did not warrant any extension. CINCPAC concurred, generally, with General Weyand though he did wonder how matters of four-party interest would be addressed once the Commission was terminated.[97]

The Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), officials of the Department of State, and Dr. Kissinger, on the other hand, all favored extension of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. As Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Eagleburger explained to Secretary Richardson on 15

March, the impetus behind an extension centered on maintenance of a mechanism whereby the United States could "continue to nudge the other parties toward a more effective cease-fire." Mr. Eagleburger did admit that "a less institutionalized approach" might work although he favored extension of the Four-Party Commission as a better solution. But the mechanism itself was unimportant; the principal objective was to continue US pressure for "a controlled viable cease-fire."[98]

In the meantime, at Dr. Kissinger's direction, Admiral Moorer sent Lieutenant General George M. Seignious, USA, Director of the Joint Staff, to Vietnam on 16 March. The purpose of the trip was to discuss with Ambassador Bunker and Generals Weyand and Woodward the need for meticulous US and GVN observance of the cease-fire agreement as well as the possibility of continuing the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. General Seignious found all three US officials "lucidly" aware of "the larger perception of higher authority's resolve and the need for clean hands" concerning the cease-fire. With regard to extension of the Four-Party Commission, he identified three problem areas: (1) the failure of North Vietnam and the PRG, for political reasons, to deploy personnel for the Commission; (2) President Thieu's lack of support for the Commission, "again for political reasons," because he wanted to deny the North Vietnamese and the PRG access to the press; (3) President Thieu's policy of appointing "low caliber" senior RVNAF officers to the Commission with little authority to negotiate. General Seignious also reported that both Generals Weyand and Woodward were prepared to support extension of the Four-Party Commission for "a limited period" though they were not optimistic about its chances for future success.[99]

During this same period, Ambassador Bunker met several times with President Thieu to discuss possible extension of the Four-Party Commission. The South Vietnamese president, however, showed "no enthusiasm" for the proposal. Seeing little advantage for the allied side, he cited his belief that his government had been the "loser" thus far in the cease-fire. He pointed out the continuing communist infiltration of men and weapons into South Vietnam, the major violations by the other side, and the "ridiculously" small number of military and civilian Vietnamese "detainees" returned by the communists.[100]

On 27 March 1973, General Woodward informed COMUSMACV that North Vietnam had already redeployed 42 of its Four-Party Commission personnel to Hanoi and planned to withdraw 80 more during the next two days. Current plans called for a 29 March rollup of the US personnel with the Commission regional teams and redeployment to Saigon on 30 and 31 March for onward movement. General Woodward would have to begin action to implement these plans on 28 March and he intended to do so unless otherwise directed. The United States, apparently, still had not ruled out a continuation of the Four-Party Commission, for, later on 27 March, the JCS provided CINCPAC planning guidance in the event of an extension after the disestablishment of MACV. The next day, however, the United States abandoned efforts to extend the Commission. The Joint Chiefs told CINCPAC to redeploy the US Delegation; in the

period between the disestablishment of MACV and the final departure of the US Delegation personnel, the military chain of command for the Delegation would be directly through CINCPAC.[101]

Some members of the US Delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission did depart with the other US military personnel during 27–29 March 1973. As previously mentioned, 583 remained when the main US withdrawal was completed on 29 March; these personnel left on 30 and 31 March, and the US Delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission was disestablished at 1900, Saigon time, on 31 March 1973. Now all US military personnel had departed South Vietnam except for 50 with the Defense Attaché Office and the US Marine Corps security guards for the US Embassy. During the same two-day period, US aircraft flew the last elements of the North Vietnamese delegation to the Four-Party Commission back to Hanoi.[102]

As one of its last actions, the Four-Party Joint Military Commission agreed on 28 March 1973, in accordance with the Vietnam agreement, to establish a Four-Party Joint Military Team to resolve the status of missing personnel, to determine the location of grave sites, and to arrange repatriation of remains. Accordingly, on 31 March 1973, the Joint Chiefs authorized a US Delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Team under the Defense Attaché Office, Saigon; the Delegation, consisting of 14 US military personnel, became operational on 2 April 1973.[103]

Mine Clearance Operations

The final task for the United States in the implementation of the military aspects of the Vietnam agreement was clearance of US mines in North Vietnamese waters.[104] The United States had anticipated this responsibility. CINCPAC had prepared a mine countermeasures plan and the Joint Chiefs had ordered movement of three ocean minesweepers (MSOs) to Hawaii and had positioned Helicopter Minesweep Squadron 12 (HM–12) in Subic Bay, the Philippines. Until the agreement, however, these forces were not allowed to assemble, test, or tow their airborne sweeping gear.[105]

Once the final agreement was complete, Admiral Moorer asked Mr. Laird on 24 January 1973 for authority to move the three MSOs at Hawaii on to WESTPAC for employment in the mine clearance operations and to begin training with the airborne gear. The Secretary agreed that same day, and the JCS sent the necessary directives to CINCPAC, changing the name of the operation from FORMATION SENTRY II to END SWEEP. The following day, 25 January, the Joint Chiefs directed execution of END SWEEP effective 272359Z January 1973. They instructed CINCPAC to clear major North Vietnamese ports "to 99 percent level." Safety of mine countermeasure forces was "the paramount consideration" and all possible precautions were to be taken to avoid North Vietnamese civilian casualties.

United States forces, the Chiefs continued, were to initiate "no overt hostile action" although they should be "alert" and "prepared for hostile attack."[106]

The mine clearance protocol had a broad outline for the clearance operations, but many technical arrangements and details remained to be resolved. To that end, the protocol provided that US and North Vietnamese representatives should meet at "an early date" to agree on a program and plan of implementation, and technical talks began in Paris immediately after the final agreement on 23 January 1973. These talks were conducted by the mine experts, who had negotiated the clearance protocol, under the supervision of US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William H. Sullivan, the head of the US Delegation in Paris after Dr. Kissinger returned to Washington with the completed agreement, and North Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach. One of the technical experts was Commander B. B. Traweek of the J–3, Joint Staff.[107]

During the consultations in Paris, the United States supplied the North Vietnamese a sanitized version of the mine clearance operations plan and informed them that execution would begin on 27 January. The first US minesweepers should be in the Haiphong area to conduct "exploratory precursor" operations by 3 February and actual clearance in Haiphong waters was expected to begin within "30 days after 27 January." The US experts estimated that the Haiphong waters could be cleared for shipping within 70 days of the signature of the Vietnam agreement and that sweeping of all coastal areas would be finished within 180 days of that same date. A final date for completion of all sweeping as required by the Protocol could not be determined until various information on inland waters was supplied by North Vietnam. Finally, the United States gave the North Vietnamese charts showing the areas seeded with mines in both coastal and inland waters and the "general" characteristics of the magnetic mines and destructors used.[108]

By 27 January, Admiral Moorer was convinced that the technical talks in Paris had fulfilled their usefulness and should be moved closer to the scene of actual operations. With the concurrence of Dr. Kissinger, he proposed to Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan that the technical discussions be concluded in Paris as quickly as possible with arrangements to continue the meetings in Southeast Asia. The senior US representative at the relocated meetings would be Rear Admiral Brian McCauley, who would be responsible for the conduct of the actual clearing operations. Admiral McCauley would be empowered with full authority to make necessary decisions on division of responsibility for clearing inland waterways by segments, on allocation and delivery to North Vietnam of available technical equipment, on assignment of technical advisers, and on commencement and estimated completion dates. Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan presented this proposal in Paris, and it was accepted. Initial sessions in Vietnam were held in the Four-Party Joint Military Commission at Saigon, but almost immediately it was decided to meet alternately in Haiphong and on board a US Navy ship off Haiphong. In guidance for the US members of the Four-Party Commission while these arrangements

were being worked out, the Joint Chiefs directed: "We must keep pressing hard for agreement on commencement of these discussions. It is imperative that the record show that delays in starting have been occasioned solely by failure of DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietman] to respond to US initiatives." On 5 February, Admiral McCauley and a 14-man staff flew to North Vietnam for the discussions at the alternating sites. The meetings continued throughout the time the United States was carrying out mine clearing operations.[109]

On 30 January 1973, when the Joint Chiefs told CINCPAC of the decision to move the mine clearance discussions to Vietnam, they advised him the sweeping should begin as soon as feasible and no later than 9 February. They explained that, since North Vietnam had already been informed that the US minesweepers would arrive in the vicinity of Haiphong about 3 February, commencement of actual operations could not be delayed much beyond that date. The JCS also told CINCPAC that initial sweep operations should be in an area other than the Haiphong channel or its approaches, should provide "high visibility" to North Vietnam, and should show "some results (i.e., detonations) during sweeping." Subject to North Vietnamese concurrence, the Chiefs suggested minefield segment 2111D in the vicinity of Hon Gai as meeting the initial requirements. On 1 February, the JCS revised this guidance, directing CINCPAC to begin initial sweeping with ocean minesweepers off Haiphong to provide an operating area for US vessels engaged in the mine clearance. Such operations should not commence until establishment of mutually agreeable conditions with North Vietnam, but must start not later than 9 February 1973. Should sweeping of this operating area be completed before the arrival of airborne mine clearance units on about 27 February, authorization was granted for MSO check sweeping along the approaches to Haiphong channel though remaining well clear of the channel itself. Sweeping in the channel was tentatively scheduled to begin about 27 February and take approximately 40 days for completion in accordance with the estimate already given the North Vietnamese in Paris. The Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC not to reveal to the North Vietnamese progress or completion of the sweeping in the vicinity of Haiphong until authorized by the Chairman.[110]

On the following day, 2 February, the Joint Chiefs of Staff supplied CINCPAC with guidance for the discussions with North Vietnam on the clearance operations. They reiterated that the safety of US personnel, ships, and equipment was of primary importance and stated that US positions should be firmly adhered to even in the face of North Vietnamese threats to report US intransigence. Moreover, the JCS directed that under no circumstances would US personnel indicate 100 percent confidence in clearance of any minefield or area. With regard to the timing of the operations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reconfirmed the information previously provided North Vietnam during the Paris discussions: operations in Haiphong channel would begin on or about 27 February (X+30), and should be completed in 40 days (X+70), pending the release of all US prisoners; all clearance of coastal areas should be finished within 180 days of the signature of the Vietnam agreement; and

a target date for completion of all mine countermeasure operations would await "firm agreement" with North Vietnam on details or clearance of inland waters. Further, the Joint Chiefs instructed CINCPAC to ensure that North Vietnam was held to its commitment, as stated in the Protocol, to participate to the extent of its capabilities in the clearance of the inland waters.[111]

In the meantime, CINCPACFLT had requested authority to operate US ships and aircraft, including a CVA, in international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin above 16° 50' north for logistical support of the mine countermeasure operations. This was in contradiction to the Joint Chiefs of Staff general cease-fire directive that had ordered the withdrawal of all US Navy surface vessels to waters below 15° 50' north.[112] CINCPAC supported the request, but in submitting it to the Chairman, the Joint Staff was reluctant to recommend the movement of a carrier to the Gulf of Tonkin at that time. Admiral Moorer, however, granted approval on 2 February 1973. He understood the need to operate Navy ships and aircraft, including a CVA, off North Vietnam for logistical support of the mine clearance operations, adding that the mine countermeasures plan given to the North Vietnamese provided for such support. Before movement of the forces, including the carrier, into the Gulf of Tonkin, Admiral Moorer directed that North Vietnam be informed. Finally, the Chairman did not believe a CVA should be committed indefinitely to support activities. When arrangements could be made for use of support facilities and airfields in North Vietnam, he said, it might be " feasible and desirable" to withdraw the CVA.[113]

Now the US mine countermeasure forces began to assemble in the Gulf of Tonkin. Four ocean minesweepers arrived and began initial sweeping on 7 February in waters off Haiphong—to prepare an anchorage for the amphibious assault ships and amphibious transport docks of the END SWEEP force.[114] Subsequently, at the request of the Navy, the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved movement of two reserve ocean minesweepers to the active fleet to assist in the mine clearance off North Vietnam, and the Joint Chiefs ordered those ships to WESTPAC on 13 February 1973. Meantime, training of US air mine countermeasure forces progressed in the Subic Bay. Those forces began moving to the Gulf of Tonkin on 23 February; on that day, the JCS told CINCPAC of a message sent by "the White House" to North Vietnamese authorities advising of US readiness to conduct nearly simultaneous sweeping operations in the ports of Haiphong, Cam Pha, and Hon Gai. On the following day, 24 February 1973, CINCPACFLT reported that surface and airborne mine countermeasure forces were ready to execute END SWEEP. Those forces were designated Task Force 78 under the command of Rear Admiral Brian McCauley and included 20 ships as well as various escorts.[115]

On 27 February, Task Force 78 helicopters conducted the first airborne mission of Operation END SWEEP, making aerial sweeps of the main Haiphong channel. This action marked the first time the United States had employed airborne countermeasures against actual mines in an operational situation. However, the United States and North Vietnam reached an impasse on prisoner release that same day and

the United States suspended both troop withdrawals and mine clearance. Accordingly, the JCS instructed CINCPAC to recover all END SWEEP personnel ashore in Haiphong and, upon their recovery, to suspend all operations connected with END SWEEP. The US mine countermeasure forces were to get underway and remain approximately 100 miles from Haiphong.[116]

The prisoner snarl was quickly resolved and, late on 1 March 1973, the Joint Chiefs of Staff revoked the suspension of the mine clearance operations.[117] They directed the return of END SWEEP forces to previous positions in the Haiphong area in readiness to resume operations. The JCS directive to resume END SWEEP was issued on 3 March and actual sweeping in the main Haiphong channel began again on 6 March. Because the North Vietnamese wanted all forces to clear the Haiphong channel, there was some delay in initiating clearance in the waters of Cam Pha and Hon Gai and operations in those ports did not begin until two weeks after the resumption of the Haiphong sweeping. Thereafter, operations in the three ports proceeded apace, and by 2 April, when all US prisoners had been returned and all US military forces had departed from South Vietnam, the JCS relaxed their earlier restriction on release of information to the North Vietnamese on the progress of the clearance.[118]

Despite early progress, the END SWEEP operations did not proceed smoothly. Because of repeated North Vietnamese violations of the Vietnam agreement, the United States suspended mine clearance operations on 16 April 1973. Again, the Joint Chiefs directed recovery of all END SWEEP personnel from Haiphong and a halt to all mine clearance operations. A few days later, on 22 April, they authorized the return of Task Force 78 to Subic Bay, while maintaining sufficient forces to enable resumption of sweeping in North Vietnamese waters within 48 hours. Subsequently, on 11 May 1973, they relaxed this time requirement to 72 hours.[119]

In late May and early June 1973, Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho held a series of conversations in Paris to review the situation in Vietnam and consider measures to ensure more effective implementation of the Vietnam agreement. These talks culminated in a joint communiqué signed in Paris on 13 June 1973 by the United States and North Vietnam as well as the Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. In a procedure patterned after the one used for the 27 January 1973 Vietnam agreement, the communiqué was signed in two versions, one by the United States and North Vietnam and one by all four parties to the Vietnam dispute. With respect to mine clearance, the United States pledged in the communiqué to resume the operations within five days and to complete them 30 days thereafter. The United States was also to supply North Vietnam with means "which are agreed to be adequate and sufficient for sweeping mines in rivers" and to announce when all operations were finished.[120]

In accord with the communiqué, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed CINCPAC on 13 June to return the END SWEEP forces to the Gulf of Tonkin in readiness to resume operations not later than five days after receipt of their directive. Actual

resumption of the sweeping was dependent upon receipt of appropriate concurrence from North Vietnam. This clearance was obtained and sweeping began on 18 June 1973.[121]

When END SWEEP resumed on 18 June 1973, the great majority of US mines in North Vietnamese waters had already passed their self-destruct dates, and Task Force 78 personnel believed that any remaining would be inert and totally deactivated. As a result, all sweeping after 18 June was exploratory only, a much less time consuming process than full sweeping. When operations had been suspended in April, the clearance of Haiphong channel was complete except for final demonstration runs. These were now quickly carried out and North Vietnam was informed on 20 June 1973 that the Haiphong channel was open. Sweeps of the Hon Gai and Cam Pha channels were completed on 27 June, and Task Force 78 then moved south and, at North Vietnamese request, began sweeping Vinh, Quang Khe, and the Hon La coastal area. Clearance was finished by 5 July and only the major ports of Dong Hoi and Than Hoa and a number of small minefields remained to be swept in coastal waters. The United States sought North Vietnamese concurrence to proceed with operations in these remaining areas, but permission was refused. The North Vietnamese were concerned over the short time expended on clearance of the Vinh, Quang Khe, and Hon La waterways and questioned whether they were completely safe. To ensure a thorough job, they wanted those areas swept again. But the United States refused, stating that the areas were known to be safe, and explaining that the minefields had already sterilized in any event. A complete impasse ensued.[122]

On 14 July 1973, Admiral Moorer informed the Secretary of Defense of the deadlock in the mine clearance and pointed out that the time period allowed for these operations in the 13 June joint communiqué would elapse on 18 July. Therefore he proposed that the Commander of Task Force 78 deliver a statement to the North Vietnamese on 18 July indicating that the US mine clearance was complete and that US forces and vessels would be withdrawn. The Secretary of Defense approved, and on 17 July 1973 the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed execution of this course of action. Accordingly, Admiral McCauley informed the North Vietnamese orally on 18 July that the US mine clearance operations were complete and that the END SWEEP forces would leave North Vietnamese waters at 181130Z July. Simultaneously, a Department of Defense spokesman in Washington announced the end of the minesweeping, and the US forces departed the North Vietnamese waters. Two days later, on 20 July, the Joint Chiefs authorized CINCPAC to return all Task Force 78 assets to normal operational control.[123]

The Vietnam agreement, the accompanying mine clearance protocol, and the 13 June joint communiqué all included provisions for US assistance to North Vietnam in clearing mines in inland waters, but no such operations were conducted. Admiral McCauley conducted long and tedious negotiations with the North Vietnamese on this matter, but could not resolve the issue. The United States did supply some equipment (bulldozers,

trucks, and outboard motors) to North Vietnam for this purpose and trained 40 North Vietnamese in mine clearance methods in a special school set up near Haiphong. North Vietnam, however, did not want any US military personnel to participate in operations on the inland waterways but requested more US equipment. Consequently, the United States did not conduct or supervise any sweeping in the inland waters of North Vietnam, and the official US statement announcing the end of END SWEEP disclaimed any further responsibility for sweeping mines in North Vietnamese inland waterways or rivers.[124]

16

Finale

The Collapse of South Vietnam

On 29 March 1973, North Vietnam freed the final increment of US prisoners of war. Simultaneously, the last US combat troops departed South Vietnam. That evening, President Nixon addressed the American people:

> For the first time in 12 years, no American military forces are in Vietnam. All of our American POW's are on their way home. The 17 million people of South Vietnam have the right to choose their own government without outside interference, and because of our program of Vietnamization, they have the strength to defend that right. We have prevented the imposition of a Communist government by force on South Vietnam.[1]

The President admitted that problems remained. The most serious was the fighting that persisted in South Vietnam. The signing of the cease-fire agreement on 27 January 1973 had not brought peace, and fighting had continued throughout South Vietnam during the 60-day withdrawal of US forces. Completion of the US withdrawal did not bring any abatement in the level of conflict, and North Vietnam proceeded with the infiltration of men and war materiel into the south. By mid-April 1973, intelligence reports estimated that infiltration since the signing of the January agreement amounted to more than 400 tanks and armored vehicles, 300 artillery pieces, 27 tons of supplies, and 30,000 troops.[2]

It was soon apparent that even if President Nixon might wish to take military action against North Vietnam, the US Congress would not support him. Increasingly concerned over continuing US air strikes in Cambodia, Congress enacted legislation on 30 June cutting off funds, effective 15 August 1973, for all "combat activities

by United States military forces in or over or from off the shores of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia."[3] The President's options for retaliation against North Vietnamese violations of the peace agreement were even further restricted when Congress passed the "War Powers Resolution" on 7 November 1973. This measure required the President to consult with Congress before introducing any US armed forces into hostile situations abroad.[4]

Taking a different approach, President Nixon attempted to bring political pressure to bear on North Vietnam to ensure compliance with the peace agreement. Dr. Kissinger met in Paris with Le Duc Tho in May 1973 and again in June to discuss violations in the peace agreement. The result was a nine-point communiqué that called for a new ceasefire effective 141200Z June 1973 and compliance by all parties with the original agreement.[5]

The new cease-fire, however, proved no more effective than the original. Some 108 breaches were reported within the first 24 hours with each side charging the other with responsibility for violations. In the following months, fighting was continuous in South Vietnam. By the beginning of November, intelligence analysts estimated North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam since the previous January at more than 70,000 troops. Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho met again in Paris during December to discuss the situation, but reached no agreement.[6]

Meantime in October 1973, the North Vietnamese leaders had decided to pursue a "strategic offensive" against South Vietnam. Actual preparations for this offensive began in the spring of 1974 with plans for large scale attacks in 1975. In the interim, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong stepped up their activities throughout the south.[7]

As the communists expanded their fighting in 1974, the United States progressively reduced its support for South Vietnam. During FY 1973, the United States had contributed $2.27 billion for support of the RVNAF. For FY 1974, the Nixon administration sought another $1.6 billion, but Congress authorized only $1.1 billion. This reduction brought predictions of dire consequences. The US Defense Attaché in Saigon reported in March 1974 that the RVNAF faced "a fuel and supply famine" while CINCPAC foresaw an "ominous situation in South Vietnam in the immediate future." More money was needed, he said, if serious deterioration in the RVNAF was to be averted, and the Joint Chiefs advised the Secretary of Defense on 28 May 1974 that the one-for-one replacement of RVNAF equipment losses, allowed under the January 1973 agreement, was no longer possible under the currently programmed funds.[8]

Despite the pleas of the Nixon administration, Congress did not approve additional FY 1974 funds for South Vietnam. In fact, for the succeeding year, it reduced assistance to Vietnam even further, authorizing only $700 million for FY 1975 instead of the requested $1.0 billion.[9] To accommodate this reduction, stringent measures were implemented to reduce RVNAF operations and tighten its force structure. Numerous VNAF aircraft were deactivated and flying-hours cut by half,

and similar reductions were applied to the VNN. The United States also sought to achieve maximum advantage of the funds available. Ammunition support for the RVNAF was provided from stocks in Okinawa, Japan, and other nearby locations both to expedite delivery and reduce transportation and handling costs. To achieve further savings, the Secretary of Defense directed an examination to identify non-essential costs in the Vietnamese assistance effort and possible reprogramming to transfer some charges to other programs.[10]

The efforts of the South Vietnamese and the United States did little to halt the deteriorating military situation. By October 1974, the North Vietnamese had expelled the ARVN from northern Kontum Province and secured important roads in the Central Highlands. By December 1974, CINCPAC saw the enemy threat in South Vietnam as the most serious to date. Enemy troops in the south had increased by 91,000 since January 1973; combat battalions had risen from 344 to 565; and armor, artillery, and air defense had vastly improved. The enemy had also improved his logistics systems and CINCPAC estimated that communist ammunition stockpiles could support an offensive of greater intensity than the one in 1972.[11]

Aware of their improving military position in the south, the North Vietnamese Politburo and Central Committee met in October 1974 to consider future plans. At this meeting, it was decided to launch a "large-scale, widespread" offensive in the Central Highlands (MR 2) of South Vietnam during 1975. In the course of the meeting, the question of US reaction was discussed. The Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army, General Van Tien Dung, summed up the consensus as follows:

> The Watergate scandal had seriously affected the entire United States and precipitated the resignation of an extremely reactionary president—Nixon. The United States faced economic recession, mounting inflation, serious unemployment and an oil crisis. . . . U.S. aid to the Saigon puppet administration was decreasing. Having already withdrawn from the south, the United States could hardly jump back in. . . . [12]

In preparation for the 1975 offensive, the North Vietnamese opened a drive on Phuoc Binh, the capital of Phuoc Long Province on the last day of 1974. After a seven-day siege, Phuoc Binh fell on 7 January 1975, giving the communists control of all of the northernmost province of MR 3.[13] The military situation in South Vietnam had now become critical. The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency told the Secretary of Defense on 24 January 1975:

> The shift in the military balance that began about mid-1974 has already reached the point where the South Vietnamese military have had no choice but to move into an increasing defensive posture. This means abandoning many positions in contested territory in order to concentrate on the defense of vital population and rice-growing regions, and clamping rigorous constraints on the use of such critical items as ammunition and fuel. In essence, the strategic and tactical advantage has passed to the communists in South Vietnam.[14]

The United States immediately charged North Vietnam with flagrant violation of the 1973 agreement and stated that it was now free to break the cease-fire since the North Vietnamese were no longer observing it. Later in January, the RVNAF attempted to regain the offensive in the lower portion of South Vietnam, launching a drive to retake Ba Dien Mountain in Tay Ninh Province. But the effort to secure the heights controlling the northeastern approaches to Tay Ninh City, 55 miles northwest of Saigon, did not succeed.[15]

Following the seizure of Phuoc Binh, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong moved ahead with plans for the Central Highlands offensive. The initial attack targeted Ban Me Thuot, the capital of Darlac Province. Throughout the remainder of January and during February, the communists assembled supplies and readied forces. On 10 March the attack began and the following day the city fell to the North Vietnamese. The communists also cut Route 21, the link between Ban Me Thuot and Nha Trang on the coast, and Route 19, the road from Pleiku to the coast.[16]

In late January, President Gerald Ford had asked Congress for a $300 million supplemental FY 1975 appropriation for South Vietnam. This amount represented the difference between the original $1.0 billion request and the actual appropriation of $700 million. But, despite the worsening military situation, Congress was still unwilling to provide further assistance for South Vietnam, and on 12 March, the day after Ban Me Thuot surrendered, the House of Representatives rejected the supplemental request.[17]

The original North Vietnamese plan had called for large, widespread surprise attacks in 1975, preparing the way for a general offensive and uprising in 1976. But the speed and ease of the Ban Me Thuot victory encouraged the enemy to accelerate operations. Accordingly, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces began to push northward in the Central Highlands toward Pleiku, and the RVNAF continued to fall back. On 20 March 1975, President Thieu announced the decision of his government to abandon Kontum, Pleiku, Darlac, and Phu Bon Provinces in the Central Highlands as well as Quang Tri and most of Thua Thien in MR 1—an area totaling approximately 40 percent of the territory of South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese forces would, President Thieu said, defend the remaining coastal areas in the northern part of the country and MRs 3 and 4.[18]

The RVNAF, however, were unable to regroup and the enemy offensive rolled on. The South Vietnamese abandoned Hue on 25 March, giving the enemy complete control of Thua Thien Province. Thousands of refugees fled southward to Da Nang. But they found no haven there, as Da Nang was quickly isolated when the enemy captured the coastal cities of Tam Ky and Quang Ngai to the south. Da Nang surrendered with little resistance on 30 March and the North Vietnamese pushed down the coast, taking Qui Nhon on 2 April and Tuy Hoa the following day. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong now controlled two-thirds of South Vietnam and posed an increasing threat to Saigon.

An interagency intelligence report, circulated in Washington on 4 April, predicted the defeat of the Republic of Vietnam. The only question was one of timing. Would the Republic of Vietnam collapse or would it be overwhelmed by military action in a period of weeks or months? The RVNAF had already relinquished much territory, lost nearly half of their regular combat forces, and suffered great equipment and supply losses. In addition, the South Vietnamese military leadership was demoralized and the discipline of remaining troops was in doubt. Most of the US intelligence community was predicting an overwhelming North Vietnamese assault against Saigon in the "very near future."[19]

Well aware of both public and Congressional opposition to any military intervention in South Vietnam, and lacking funds for any such action, President Ford could do nothing. The Joint Chiefs of Staff watched the military disintegration of South Vietnam powerless to assist the RVNAF. As early as December 1974, they had reviewed "available" military options, including various combinations of US air and naval deployments to Thailand or waters off Vietnam, to signal US purpose and to discourage further expansion of the combat. They refined and expanded these options in January, but none of them was implemented.[20] Subsequently, in March 1975, the Joint Staff considered the possibility of the South Vietnamese mining Haiphong Harbor but dismissed such a venture as "extremely risky and suicidal."[21]

Indicative of the predicament of the Joint Chiefs was their action on 29 March. They disapproved a CINCPAC request to use US military transport aircraft to move supplies in South Vietnam and support the VNAF. Although concerned, they told CINCPAC that current operating authorities approved by "higher authority" precluded such movement.[22] The JCS did that same day authorize the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and CINCPAC to evacuate refugees from South Vietnam using "commercial air and sealift," and three days later they expanded this authority to include the use of US military amphibious ships, associated landing craft, and helicopters.[23] Then on 2 April 1975, apparently expecting the collapse of South Vietnam, they authorized CINCPAC to begin withdrawal of the personnel of the US Defense Attaché Office, reducing to the essential level as quickly as possible.[24]

In early April, President Ford had dispatched General Fred C. Weyand, US Army Chief of Staff and former COMUSMACV, to South Vietnam to examine the situation firsthand. On his return, General Weyand recommended immediate emergency assistance for the Republic of Vietnam. Thereupon, the President appealed to Congress on 10 April for almost a billion dollars ($722 million in military and $250 in "economic and humanitarian" aid) for South Vietnam. These funds, which he wanted by 19 April, would be used to prevent the military collapse of South Vietnam in order to allow efforts for negotiation of a political solution. Again, Congress refused.[25]

Now, without hope of further assistance, the South Vietnamese braced for the final enemy assault. The North Vietnamese conducted probing attacks around Saigon

and assaults throughout the Delta while the RVNAF regrouped for defense of Xuan Loc, the capital of Long Khanh Province, 38 miles east of Saigon.

The battle of Xuan Loc broke on 10 April and the South Vietnamese made a determined effort to stop the enemy advance. While the battle raged, the situation deteriorated elsewhere. The North Vietnamese captured Phan Rang on the coast on 16 April and, three days later, Phan Thiet, 60 miles south of Phan Rang and the last remaining South Vietnamese coastal enclave, fell. Despite a fierce RVNAF resistance, the North Vietnamese took Xuan Loc on 21 April, opening the way for a final drive on Saigon. Meantime, on 16 April, the communists had further consolidated their control in Indochina when the Lon Nol Government in Cambodia surrendered to the Khmer Rouge.

On the day Xuan Loc fell, President Thieu resigned, blaming the collapse of his government on the failure of the United States to come to his aid, and citing pledges of support from former President Nixon. President Thieu named his Vice President, Trang Van Huong, as his successor. He hoped his resignation would open the way for peace talks with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, but they refused any negotiations until a new regime, acceptable to them, was formed. The fighting now came closer to Saigon. General Duong Van Minh, prominent in South Vietnamese politics at the time of the fall of Ngo Dinh Diem and known as "Big Minh," succeeded to the presidency of the Republic of Vietnam on 28 April. General Minh was thought to be more acceptable to the Viet Cong, and he attempted to negotiate a truce and coalition government. These efforts were unsuccessful and, as North Vietnamese tanks entered Saigon on 30 April 1975, General Minh announced the unconditional surrender of the Republic of Vietnam.[26]

When the Republic of Vietnam collapsed on 30 April, all Americans had departed South Vietnam. In early April, the United States had begun the removal of its citizens as well as South Vietnamese who feared a communist takeover, and this withdrawal accelerated as the month's events unfolded. The United States also undertook a sealift during April to rescue fleeing South Vietnamese. Only on 15 April, however, did Secretary of State Kissinger publicly announce the decision to "reduce" the number of Americans remaining in South Vietnam and, until almost the final collapse, the United States avoided using the word "evacuation" in public statements. On 24 April, after considerable debate, Congress approved legislation authorizing the President to use US military forces to protect the evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese from Vietnam. But not until 0400 (Washington time) on 29 April, when the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were at the outskirts of Saigon, did President Ford order "emergency evacuation" of all Americans remaining in Vietnam. Then, with enemy fire making Tan Son Nhut Air Base unsafe, the United States resorted to a helicopter lift, picking up evacuees from the US Defense Attaché Office area and the US Embassy compound. This emergency evacuation required 18 hours and removed approximately 1,400 US citizens and 5,600 Vietnamese. The final flights from the Embassy roof took out US Ambassador Graham Martin, the last eleven US Marine

Embassy guards, and former VNAF Chief of Staff and RVN Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky. Four US servicemen were killed in the operation—two by enemy fire at Tan Son Nhut and two in the crash of an evacuation helicopter. In all, the United States evacuated 6,763 Americans and 45,125 "others" (mostly Vietnamese) from South Vietnam during April 1975.[27]

The fall of South Vietnam and Cambodia in April 1975, and the subsequent Pathet Lao takeover of Laos the following September, marked the complete and final failure of twenty-five years of American effort to prevent communist domination of the area.

When the United States withdrew its armed forces from South Vietnam in early 1973, the Republic of Vietnam controlled the majority of its territory and population and had adequately trained and equipped armed forces. With US support, it should have been able to withstand the continuing North Vietnamese aggression. But the United States had grown weary of the long and expensive involvement in Vietnam, and this weariness culminated in the Congressional decisions to reduce significantly assistance for South Vietnam. The cutback of US aid not only demoralized the South Vietnamese but also came at just the time when North Vietnam had decided to press all-out military action. Whether adequate US assistance would have prevented the ultimate North Vietnamese victory or only have delayed it is open to question. But certainly, the failure of the United States to supply additional help in late 1974 and early 1975 was the final coup de grace for the Republic of Vietnam.

Why Vietnamization Failed

The purposes of Vietnamization were (1) to withdraw American ground forces and (2) to make the RVNAF strong enough to insure the survival of an independent, noncommunist South Vietnam. Although these objectives did not seem mutually exclusive at the outset, they ultimately proved to be so. Did the JCS perceive a contradiction from the outset, come to realize it later, or always remain hopeful?

Most American troops had to be withdrawn at some point, but public disillusionment after Tet in 1968 forced the pace. As former Secretary of State Dean Acheson concluded in March 1968, "we can no longer do the job we set out to do in the time we have left and we must begin to take steps to disengage."[28] In 1969, President Nixon, the Joint Chiefs, and COMUSMACV agreed upon the concept of Vietnamization and the initial "cut and try" approach for US withdrawals. South Vietnamese performance in the Cambodian incursion seemed to vindicate the policy. But ARVN failure in LAM SON 719 prompted President Nixon and Admiral Moorer to intervene in matters that normally would have been left to the field commander. Thus in 1972, as Vietnamization neared its consummation, key operational decisions were being made in Washington and not in Saigon.

The goal of an independent, noncommunist South Vietnam, first promulgated in March 1964 through NSAM 288, remained formal US policy. But General Wheeler and then Admiral Moorer came to doubt whether this still reflected reality. During a JCS meeting in April 1968, the Commandant of the Marine Corps remarked that Washington's and Hanoi's objectives "run headlong into each other. Our objective is to provide a non-communist Republic of Vietnam." General Wheeler replied, "I wish I could believe our national objective is what you just stated . . . . Unfortunately, you don't even have an accepted objective within the Executive Branch of the government." With the objective in flux, how could the administration devise an appropriate strategy? In October 1972, Admiral Moorer observed that the White House was arranging a military armistice and leaving political issues for later settlement. Yet "one of the main reasons for our being there" was to help the South Vietnamese "determine their own government." By March 1973, Moorer concluded that the President only needed South Vietnam "to remain viable for perhaps a year, then he could say we gave them everything and they could not handle it."[29]

Vietnamization stood a chance of succeeding only if the pace of US withdrawals matched South Vietnamese progress toward self-sufficiency. LAM SON 719 destroyed any chance of keeping the two in tandem. President Nixon believed that the vital point lay in how the American public perceived LAM SON 719's outcome. Success might have persuaded Congress and the public to tolerate a somewhat longer US military involvement. Instead, widespread perceptions of a South Vietnamese defeat fuelled antiwar feeling. The argument that Vietnamization was making progress and only needed enough time and perseverance no longer rang true. As Admiral Moorer accurately forecast late in 1971, Congress would fund the war only for one more year.[30]

Although the Joint Chiefs submitted many appraisals about the impact of US withdrawals and ARVN performance, generalizations about their accuracy and utility are virtually impossible. The Chiefs never gave unconditional support to the withdrawals proposed by civilian leaders and always accented the risks that would be incurred, but when the time came for a final decision they never registered outright opposition. Likewise, their corporate assessments of the RVNAF mixed commendation with caution. This ambiguity continued to pervade their papers not only after LAM SON 719 but also after the 1972 spring offensive. In October 1972, for example, they reported that the performance of ARVN units without US advisers "ranged from very good to poor. . . . Although the RVNAF is improving, they are not thoroughly grounded in the tactical concepts of conventional warfare." Therefore, removing advisers before the ARVN "has achieved a reasonable assurance of success" would "jeopardize achievement of US objectives."[31] They also kept insisting that heavy US air support remained essential but did not proceed to draw the obvious inference about South Vietnamese capabilities. The Chiefs as a body never challenged upbeat appreciations by COMUSMACV, even though these often were proved wrong by events. Their reluctance to do so was in good part a legacy of the

McNamara years, when the JCS concluded that divisions among the military only encouraged civilian encroachments.

How deeply did the Joint Chiefs' advice influence President Nixon's decisions? Again, LAM SON 719 marked a "moment of truth." The White House soon concluded that optimistic reports from the field, which Admiral Moorer fully endorsed, bore little relation to reality. Dr. Kissinger, in his exchanges with the Chairman, provided more pessimistic appraisals which he had worked out with Brigadier General Haig and which were borne out by events. Thereafter, it seems evident that the President did not place great faith in appraisals from either Saigon or the Pentagon. Among Army officers, it appears the General Haig alone won his confidence. During the 1972 spring offensive and the Christmas bombing, Nixon determined strategy himself, looked to Admiral Moorer to see that his decisions were vigorously carried out, and frequently intruded into operational details to insure that this was the case.

To what extent did the President's increasing distrust of military advice appear justified by events? Nixon and Kissinger worked with the Chairman rather than the corporate JCS. General Westmoreland brought to bear his four years as COMUSMACV. He was the JCS member who most clearly perceived the RVNAF's weaknesses, but his reputation had been tarnished by the Tet offensive. Along with his years in Vietnam, time and distance apparently sharpened his vision, enabling him to realize at an early stage that LAM SON 719 was floundering. As COMUSMACV, he had considered several American divisions to be necessary for a drive into Laos along Route 9. If limited to using South Vietnamese forces, he had planned only for brigade- and division-size hit-and-run raids against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and in 1971 he suggested such operations as an alternative to the offensive actually carried out.[32] Reminiscent of his concerns before the 1968 Tet Offensive, later in 1971, Westmoreland highlighted the danger in Military Region I, which was where the crisis came in 1972. Unfortunately, the White House saw Westmoreland as damaged goods.[33] Admiral Moorer had not been impressed by Westmoreland's performance in the JCS forum and discounted his somber view.

In the aftermath of LAM SON 719, Moorer recognized that optimistic field reports had been unrealistic. Yet the Chairman never attempted an inquiry akin to what Central Intelligence would do in 1976, setting up "Team B" in response to claims that there was an institutional bias toward underestimating the Soviet threat. Army members of a comparable team, drawing guidance from General Westmoreland, might have illuminated matters. Instead, when the Chairman toured Southeast Asia in November 1971, he heard upbeat briefings and experienced a surge of optimism. Only in May 1972, when General Vogt impressed upon him that many ARVN soldiers would not stand and fight, did Moorer accept that American air power provided South Vietnam's sole chance of survival. Nixon, Kissinger, and Haig evidently had reached that conclusion in March 1971, when LAM SON 719 ended.

Relations between the Chairman and COMUSMACV became increasingly tenuous. General Wheeler had seen his task as basically one of supporting the field commander. In 1968, after the Tet offensive, Wheeler worried that General Westmoreland was underestimating the gravity of the situation but did not want to undercut him. Accordingly, the Chairman wrote to President Johnson as follows: "Without implying any derogation of General Westmoreland's analogy to the Battle of the Bulge [as the enemy's last gasp], I believe it is still too early to forecast with any great precision the extent to which the enemy can and will resume a heightened ground effort."[34] Admiral Moorer sided with General Abrams throughout LAM SON 719, in the face of President Nixon's clear displeasure, and defended him again during the first days of the 1972 Easter offensive. On 3 April, when the President complained that COMUSMACV's response lacked vigor and initiative, Moorer protested to Dr. Kissinger: "in all fairness to Abe, God knows he has requested authorities [to strike targets in North Vietnam] enough times."[35] Very soon, though, Moorer began to view COMUSMACV as the problem rather than the solution. "Abrams is playing dog in the manger," Moorer said to CINCPAC on 12 April, "he keeps saying he has got to have all the resources for the battlefield [in South Vietnam] but he is not beginning to utilize them properly."[36] On 26 April, COMUSMACV cabled an assessment that proved far too optimistic. On 1 May, as Quang Tri fell, he sent one that proved far too pessimistic. The Chairman bypassed Abrams and turned for advice to General Vogt. Even after General Weyand had succeeded Abrams, Moorer proved loath to support COMUSMACV's requests. In October, for example, Weyand protested that a daily allocation of 275 sorties was not sufficient. Moorer bluntly gave Vogt his opinion that whenever ARVNs "spot a sniper up a tree . . . they immediately dig a hole and call for F–4s." Vogt replied that, after all "this is the way Westmoreland taught them to fight. . . . " Moorer was not persuaded: "I have been through this too many times, you know how Abrams behaved and Weyand's just picking up the same thing."[37] Concurrently, Moorer observed to General Ryan: "the South Vietnamese are far too dependent on air power and must begin to operate along the same austere lines as the North Vietnamese."[38]

In this observation, Moorer seemingly overlooked a couple of important facts. By this point in the war, the North Vietnamese were no longer operating on an austere basis; they were waging conventional combat with extensive employment of armor and artillery. Furthermore, from the start of Vietnamization planning in 1968, MACV, with the support of the JCS and OSD, had rejected South Vietnamese requests for additional heavy ground force equipment. Doubting that Saigon's forces alone ever would be a match for the North Vietnamese army, MACV had prepared the South Vietnamese to take up the burden of the territorial security and light infantry war while assuming that American air power would be available to counter a more severe threat, as it had done in 1972.[39] The Paris Agreement and the actions of the Congress took away American support, including air power. It was too late for the drastic changes in forces and strategy that South Vietnam would

have needed to survive without the Americans, and it is doubtful whether Saigon's leaders could have conceived and executed such changes even given more time. Moreover, such drastic changes could not have been done without making COMUSMACV's performance a public issue and drastically undercutting South Vietnam's fragile self-confidence.

If one were to judge solely by COMUSMACV's messages and JCS corporate reports, the RVNAF usually fought well and the quality of its senior commanders steadily improved. Why did the flood of US advice and equipment never translate into battlefield victory? From the broadest perspective, Hanoi's appeal to nationalism proved more powerful than Saigon's and Washington's appeals to anti-communism. Nguyen Van Thieu could never really broaden his popular base. The 1971 presidential election proved farcical; the top ranks of the regime remained little more than a generals' clique. Consequently, Thieu had to make loyalty, rather than professional competence, his main criteria for flag officer appointments. When Thieu finally felt compelled to relieve Lieutenant General Lam, for example, he provided Lam with a sinecure in the Defense Ministry. Brigadier General Vu Van Giai, commander of the hapless 3d Division that lost Quang Tri, was court-martialed and imprisoned. The senior US Army adviser for Military Region I considered Giai a scapegoat and his trial a travesty.[40] The rank and file recognized how senior officials were selected, and their morale and motivation suffered. There were always some capable commanders and some good units, but they were not typical of the whole. Several times, the Joint Chiefs pointed to the lack of a mobile strategic reserve as a critical ARVN weakness. But no such reserve was created, mainly from worry that shifting territorially based divisions more than short distances would trigger large-scale desertions. The primary loyalty of many ARVN soldiers went to their families and villages, not to the government in Saigon or to the Republic of Vietnam. The leaders in Hanoi also had to cope with draft dodging and desertion; yet they were able to send hundreds of thousands of men down the Ho Chi Minh Trail—and that, ultimately decided the war's outcome.

The phrase "credibility gap" gained wide currency as the war wore on. Who was deceived, and by whom? General Abrams described the RVNAF's performance in LAM SON 719 and in the early stage of the 1972 spring offensive as creditable. In November 1971 and again late in April 1972, he rated Lieutenant General Lam, who had mishandled the Laotian incursion and soon would be overwhelmed at Quang Tri, as "outstanding."[41] In January 1973, Ambassador Bunker accepted General Weyand's assessment that the Military Region commanders were "the best they have been in a long time. . . . " In May 1974, the Defense Attaché in Saigon reported: "Tactically, . . . overall, RVNAF was triumphant. Ever improving . . . avenging . . . the debacle that signaled to the US in 1963—the ARVN could not go it alone."[42] None of these appraisals can withstand scrutiny, but there is no reason to believe that the men who made them were dishonest. Any apparent deception was more likely self-deception. Generals, no less than diplomats, succumbed to "clientitis," identi-

fying with their allies and finding excuses for their failures. It might almost be said that the longer a senior officer stayed in South Vietnam, the less able he became to step back and assess the situation dispassionately. Admiral Moorer lost virtually all confidence in the RVNAF but spoke candidly only within a tiny circle—principally President Nixon, Dr. Kissinger and General Vogt. This small group recognized that the promise of Hanoi being deterred by South Vietnam's strength had narrowed to the hope of Hanoi being deterred by the threat of B–52 strikes. The Chairman was wrong to believe that the Christmas bombing stopped too soon to complete a peace agreement, but he was right to suspect, six months later, that the bombing stopped too soon to save South Vietnam.

17

The Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: An Overview

Defeat, it is often said, can be a better teacher than victory. Vietnam, however, poses particularly difficult problems. Which conclusions are the correct ones? Controversy still surrounds every major decision. Did the Joint Chiefs accurately calculate and then make clear to their superiors the cost of trying to preserve an independent, noncommunist South Vietnam? Why did civilian leaders pursue, against JCS advice, a strategy of graduated pressure? Was the campaign of attrition shut down just when it was finally beginning to show results? The Joint Chiefs always argued that their strategies, if pursued vigorously and unrelentingly, would have succeeded. The challenge lies in determining whether their recommendations were right.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not doubt that waging the Vietnam War was necessary. They persisted in seeing the entire Pacific basin as a single entity requiring a single coordinated strategy and subscribed to the belief that defeat anywhere would have repercussions everywhere. In paper after paper, meeting after meeting, they insisted that defeat in South Vietnam would mean losing Southeast Asia, eroding US credibility, and damaging alliances worldwide. The Chiefs could not conceive of any acceptable outcome other than victory—not Hanoi's surrender but the Viet Cong ceasing to exist and North Vietnamese soldiers withdrawing. Their differences with civilian leaders came over how to fight the war, not whether to fight it. From the outset, the JCS stressed the danger of self-imposed limitations. In May 1961, when operations in Laos were being considered, the Chiefs prepared plans to meet possible Chinese intervention and faced the fact that China could not be defeated by using just conventional weapons. They argued that American intervention must be preceded by a firm decision to achieve success regardless of the consequences. Similarly, in January 1964, they advised that "we must prepare for whatever level of activity may be required" to save South Vietnam and then act "as

necessary to achieve our purposes surely and promptly."[1] President Eisenhower had relied on nuclear striking power, even for non-NATO contingencies, and ruled out committing US forces to a large-scale conventional conflict. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson turned instead to a "flexible response" that emphasized non-nuclear capabilities. The JCS were slow to appreciate that civilian leaders had become reluctant to take steps that risked reaching the nuclear threshold. Arguably, this change forfeited potential American advantages and maximized enemy strengths.

How difficult would achieving victory be? The Chiefs' appraisal of 13 January 1962 contains claims that, in retrospect, appear so sanguine that they need to be understood in a wider context. General Maxwell D. Taylor's Cuba Study Group had warned the President that "... we feel we are losing today on many fronts...." The JCS felt some uncertainties about their superiors' strength of purpose, and the 1962 appraisal may have been phrased more to encourage than to enlighten them. The Joint Chiefs identified three factors that would hold "the greatest importance" if US forces were committed to combat. First, "[a]ny war in the Southeast Asian Mainland will be a peninsula and island-type of campaign—a mode of warfare in which all elements of the Armed Forces of the United States have gained a wealth of experience and in which we have excelled both in World War II and Korea." So flawed that it cannot have exerted long-lasting influence, this appraisal seriously misread the problem. South Vietnam's open border with Laos and Cambodia provided the communists with vital infiltration routes and sanctuaries. Second, the Chiefs reported that enemy capabilities were limited by "natural logistics and transportation problems." The JCS might usefully have recalled how, in World War II, Asian labor built the tortuous Ledo-Burma Road and opened a land route to China. Third, they forecast that undertaking combat commitments in Southeast Asia would not require drawing on American forces in Europe "to an unacceptable degree." By 1968, many specialist personnel had been transferred from the European Command and the strategic reserve in CONUS had practically disappeared. Ironically, the Joint Chiefs proved more prescient in their appraisal of the political scene in Saigon in early 1962. Should President Ngo Dinh Diem be deposed by a military coup, they warned, the result could be "a condition of political chaos exploitable by the strongly led and well disciplined communists. If Diem goes, we can be sure of losing his strengths but we cannot be sure of remedying his weaknesses."[2]

During 1963, the Joint Chiefs did not accurately assess how the counterinsurgency campaign was faring. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge claimed that the war was being lost and that Diem had to be removed. The Chiefs countered that the war was going well and that Diem's regime could be reformed. The Chairman, General Taylor, unfailingly accepted optimistic battlefield assessments from COMUSMACV, General Paul D. Harkins, USA. After visiting Vietnam late in September 1963, Taylor and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara reported that the campaign had made great progress. In reaching this conclusion, Taylor and McNamara had "looked at" statistics but they "gave great weight to the evidence of the men on

the spot." Their distinction was illusory because US advisers on the scene usually relied upon false statistics given them by the South Vietnamese. As the dispute with Ambassador Lodge grew more intense, Taylor insisted that for "purely military matters" Harkins was "the source to whom we should turn for both professional judgment and fact."[3] But there were no "purely military matters" in South Vietnam; the campaign in the field could not progress when the political situation was swiftly deteriorating. Very soon after Diem's overthrow, which the JCS had not condoned, it became clear that the military situation was much worse than Taylor and Harkins had believed. And as the Chiefs had predicted, Saigon sank into "political chaos" from which a popular government never emerged.

Early in 1964, the Joint Chiefs concluded that the war could not be won unless Hanoi was forced to stop supporting the Viet Cong. Air power appeared to constitute a potentially decisive American advantage. Probably at no other point in the war was there an opportunity to employ air power so effectively. While the Saigon government had such grave weaknesses that its long-term survival was unlikely, intense bombing conceivably could have imposed a short-term settlement and made direct American involvement far less protracted and painful. From that perspective, the debate over "graduated pressure" versus a "fast, full squeeze" was the most important of the war. ROLLING THUNDER became everything that a bombing campaign should not be. Too little force was applied too slowly, leading Hanoi to see the war as a contest of wills in which it could outlast the United States. During the final round of debate before launching ROLLING THUNDER, the Joint Chiefs of Staff foresaw failure and accurately predicted the reasons for it. The reasons why the Joint Chiefs were unable to persuade their civilian superiors to accept the necessity of a fast, full squeeze deserve close examination.

At critical points in the debate, the Joint Chiefs did not present a solid front. General Taylor saw himself as the agent of his civilian superiors, tasked with crafting JCS recommendations that would harmonize with the civilians' conceptions. But his approach led some of the Service Chiefs to distrust General Taylor. Early in June 1964, the Service Chiefs pressed for "destructive" bombing of North Vietnam; Taylor still argued that too much coercion of Hanoi might be as bad as too little.[4] General Earle G. Wheeler, Taylor's successor as Chairman, saw himself as a corporate spokesman charged with representing the Joint Chiefs' views to civilians. In November 1964, the Chiefs united in advocating a fast, full squeeze that would take out 94 targets in one month. However, their memorandum also endorsed graduated pressure in the context of an "advance decision to continue military pressure, if necessary, to the full limits of what military actions can contribute toward US national objectives." Thus the Chiefs acknowledged that graduated pressure could work, provided that escalation proceeded far enough. President Johnson and Secretary McNamara, in effect, proceeded to take the acknowledgement without the accompanying proviso. The Joint Chiefs also let it be known that even a fast, full squeeze would allow pauses and negotiating probes.[5] As ROLLING THUNDER

went on, McNamara in particular came to see bombing more as the prelude to pauses and probes than as the means for destroying Hanoi's will and capability to support the insurgency.

Civilians in the Office of the Secretary of Defense designed graduated pressure to bring Hanoi to the bargaining table and to minimize the risk of Chinese intervention; the Joint Chiefs saw a fast, full squeeze as the surest way to make Hanoi stop supporting the insurgency. The debate between the JCS and the OSD revolved around which objective mattered more. These two approaches were, in fact, mutually exclusive; bombing to destroy Hanoi's will and capability required a campaign far different from bombing to limit hostilities and bolster a negotiating stance. Ambassador Taylor, back from Saigon on a visit late in November, came to a JCS meeting and claimed that "you can always shift" from graduated pressure to a fast, full squeeze and that a "fast" application of graduated pressure could move almost as rapidly as a "slow" application of their squeeze. Taylor admitted, however, that "if you are talking about six months" to apply graduated pressure it would be "no good."[6] ROLLING THUNDER began in March 1965. Yet, by September 1966, four of eleven major airfields and nine of twenty power plants in the list of 94 targets still had not been attacked. The port at Haiphong, which the Joint Chiefs regarded as particularly important, remained untouched. Johnson and McNamara did not adopt Taylor's view about the pace of ROLLING THUNDER but, in the crunch, they were able to count him on their side, facilitating the marginalization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The JCS maintained that a fast, full squeeze, by the very "boldness and resolution of its delivery," would discourage enemy escalation. Hanoi could stay in the game only by putting "a stack of blue chips" in the center of the table. Conversely, they observed, graduated pressure would allow Hanoi to stay in the game by advancing only "a few white chips" on every round. Secretary McNamara, however, had the most influence over the President, and he was heavily influenced by the apparent lesson of the Cuban Missile Crisis: Employing precisely the right amount of pressure could achieve a limited objective and minimize the risk of explosive escalation. So a strategy with disastrous consequences was set in motion. The results seem to bear out Field Marshal Helmut von Moltke's dictum that a mistake in the initial deployment cannot be made good during the whole course of a campaign. Henry Kissinger concluded, after the war, that boldness would have been the best course.[7] Flawed in its conception, ROLLING THUNDER was further hampered by mistakes and shortcomings in the field.[8]

Committing ground troops became the next watershed. It is illuminating to review Joint Chiefs of Staff projections made between January and July 1965. In January, a Marine Corps study done at JCS direction concluded that victory would require 700,000 troops. Concurrently, the Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, was thinking in terms of 500,000 men and five years. In February, the Army Staff calculated that five divisions would be needed in South Vietnam—one to hold the central highlands and coastal enclaves, four to stop infiltration. Late in March,

the Joint Chiefs recommended deploying three divisions: one Army, one Marine, and one South Korean. The record bears out H. R. McMaster's argument in *Dereliction of Duty* that the JCS worked with President Johnson and Secretary McNamara to conceal from the American public both the Chiefs' misgivings and the magnitude of the task ahead. It would be wrong, however, to think that the dimensions of the problem were grasped only by a small group within the Executive Branch. Early in June, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield warned the President that trying to "prevail everywhere south of the 17th parallel" could take "upwards of a million soldiers" many years. As for just maintaining the status quo, Mansfield wrote, "the 300,000 McNamara estimate is too low but something in the range of 500,000 might do it . . . . " In July, General Johnson gave congressmen an estimate that 250,000 troops were needed; the Commandant of the Marine Corps spoke to them of 500,000. There was no JCS consensus about the ultimate requirement, but the Chiefs were willing to support the President's compromise decision to stop losing by raising the troop level to 125,000 and sending more "as requested."[9]

The fact that the United States faced a formidable undertaking in South Vietnam was evident to the decision-makers. The deeper problem lay in determining whether a war-winning strategy could be successfully applied. Early in July, Secretary McNamara put the crucial question before a JCS Ad Hoc Study Group: "Can we win if we do everything we can?" The Group replied: "Within the bounds of reasonable assumptions . . . there appears to be no reason we cannot win if such is our will—and if that will is manifested in strategy and tactical operations." The Study Group listed three prohibitions: invading North Vietnam, using nuclear or chemical weapons, and resorting to mass population bombing. The restrictions under which ROLLING THUNDER was operating, and the confining assumptions that underlay graduated pressure, were not taken into account. What was the basic concept for winning? The Study Group defined it as "aggressive exploitation of superior military force, . . . progressively destroying the war-making power of North Vietnam, and pressing the fight against . . . main force units in South Vietnam to run them to ground and destroy them." Confidence that this would and could be done permeated advice that the Chiefs rendered during crucial White House discussions on 21–22 July. When President Johnson asked whether North Vietnam could match a US buildup man-for man, General Wheeler assured him that such an attempt "will allow us to cream them." Here the Chairman badly misjudged; jungles and safe havens allowed the North Vietnamese to increase infiltration and to decide when and where major engagements would occur. Ho Chi Minh, Wheeler continued, would be foolish to send one-quarter of his 250,000 man army south; doing so would "expose him too greatly" at home. Wheeler should have realized that Hanoi would come to recognize the absence of any preparations for invasion and feel free to send more units south. At all events, Wheeler did not doubt that national objectives could be achieved. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral David L. McDonald, agreed that "[s]ooner or later we'll force them to the conference table."

General Johnson discounted the danger of Chinese intervention. General John P. McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff, felt that increased efforts would "at least turn the tide." The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., believed that with 100,000 Marines "[t]he enclave concept will work."[10] The President could justifiably feel that a graduated buildup had JCS endorsement.

Since the incremental strategy being pursued for North and South Vietnam fell well short of what they had proposed, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were caught between their loyalty to the administration and their convictions. The Chairman, General Wheeler, more than the Service Chiefs, was willing to say that an incremental approach held the promise of success. Late in 1965, the Joint Chiefs described the basic mission in South Vietnam as "search and destroy." When the President's confidante, Clark Clifford, voiced doubts about fighting a jungle war, Wheeler responded: "we have got a real initiative. No one ever won a war by remaining on [the] defensive." In January 1966, Wheeler told the President that Viet Cong morale should break within two years. President Johnson asked General Johnson what he wanted most in order to win. The reply: "We need to double the number now [which was 197,000] and triple the number later," call up reserves, and declare a national emergency. General McConnell told the President that restrictions had rendered ROLLING THUNDER ineffective; lift them "and we would then get results."[11]

American strength in South Vietnam doubled during 1966 and some inhibitions on the air war eased. However, General Wheeler acknowledged at mid-year, the war had become a war of attrition. Bombing the petroleum storage facilities in Hanoi was decided upon within that context. Wheeler argued that destroying them would impose a "ceiling" on infiltration, without which attrition obviously could not succeed.[12] The sites were hit, but Wheeler's forecast proved wrong. Infiltration roughly doubled during 1966 and about doubled again during 1967.

Spring 1967 saw the last Joint Chiefs bid to put in place what they believed would be a war-winning strategy. General Westmoreland had been authorized 470,366 personnel; he requested 80,576 more as the "minimum" and 199,017 as the "optimum." The JCS proposed providing at least another 98,000 men. They also made clear to civilian leaders their frustration over the opportunities forfeited by incrementalism: "It is fundamental to the successful conduct of warfare that every reasonable measure be taken to widen the differential between the capabilities of the opposing forces." Again, they recommended greatly reducing restraints on ROLLING THUNDER and closing North Vietnam's deep-water ports. The Joint Chiefs were ready to widen the war by invading sanctuaries in the Laotian Panhandle and Cambodia, and to carry out limited ground action north of the Demilitarized Zone. If the Chinese intervened with major forces, targets in South China could be hit with nuclear weapons.[13]

Again, the President opted for limited war and incrementalism. He authorized 525,000 men for COMUSMACV; ROLLING THUNDER was expanded then cut back.

CINCPAC complained to the Chairman that "we always follow a period of telling effectiveness with periods when we put restraints on that give the enemy a chance to recover." But the Joint Chiefs, attempting to counter arguments from Secretary McNamara and others for de-escalation, claimed slow yet steady progress even as they pressed for much stronger actions. Testifying in August 1967 before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Wheeler argued against scaling back ROLLING THUNDER on grounds that "the air campaign is going well . . . achieving its objectives." The Chairman also assured Senators that "I have made a number of visits to Vietnam . . . and I can see substantial progress every time I go there; and . . . my judgment is substantiated by others in whom I have perhaps even more trust than I have in myself." Similarly, General McConnell rated the constrained air campaign as "highly effective," preventing North Vietnam from throwing "massive forces" into the conflict. Those statements, of course, undercut the Chief's case for intensified bombing and larger deployments.[14]

During 1968, American strategy lost any last trace of coherence and the Joint Chiefs lost a good deal of credibility. There had always been a large gap between what the Chiefs recommended and what the President approved. In the months following the Tet offensive, a gap in perception grew between the success claimed by the JCS and the stalemate that seemed evident to many others. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson is reported to have told the President that "the Joint Chiefs of Staff don't know what they are talking about."[15]

The reappraisal that followed Tet could have been the time to demonstrate the American capacity shown in previous wars to learn from mistakes, focus priorities, find better leaders, and improve operational performance. However, a distinguishing feature of the Vietnam War was the long tenure of senior American officers. General Wheeler served on the Joint Chiefs from 1962 to 1970, Admiral Moorer from 1967 to 1974. General Westmoreland was COMUSMACV from 1964 to 1968, then Army Chief of Staff until 1972; General Abrams was Deputy COMUSMACV in 1967–1968, then COMUSMACV until 1972 and Army Chief of Staff until 1974. Changing course at this point would have required these men to unsay much of what they said and undo much of what they had done.

On 29 January 1968, just before Tet, the Joint Chiefs told the President that "they were confident General Westmoreland and the troops there were prepared to cope with any contingency."[16] Two weeks later, the Chiefs were pressing for emergency deployments. Late in February, General Wheeler returned from Saigon with a recommendation for 206,000 reinforcements. The strategic reserve was almost totally depleted, and the Joint Chief's worst fear was another round of deployments without mobilization. But Wheeler's call for more men only crystallized antiwar feeling. The Chairman then tried to induce civilian leaders to stay the course by persuading the JCS to scale back their mobilization and reinforcement recommendations and by encouraging the Service Chiefs and field commanders to present upbeat assessments of the military situation. "The ARVN is doing well. . . .

Our basic strategy is sound," Wheeler told the President and the Senior Advisory Group known as "Wise Men" on 26 March. "I see no reason for the gloom and doom we see in the United States press." General Creighton Abrams, the Deputy COMUSMACV, told them that ARVN morale was high and "I would have to resign if I didn't believe" they could start carrying more of the burden. Not surprisingly, their words carried little weight. The Joint Chiefs learned about the President's decision to deescalate only one day before he announced it to the nation. At a JCS meeting on 3 April, General Wheeler accurately predicted that "North Vietnam would make no concessions, counting upon domestic and foreign pressures on the US." The Joint Chiefs recognized, as many civilian officials did not, that Hanoi would not settle for a power-sharing compromise. Wheeler and General Johnson concluded that ROLLING THUNDER's curtailment "was the first step to capitulation." They "agreed that the enemy was hurting badly but there was no one in the [US] government who recognized it because it was contrary to what they wanted to think."[17]

The next debate concerned the conditions under which ROLLING THUNDER could be totally suspended. Late in September 1968, General Wheeler warned the National Security Council: "We can't resume bombing easily once we stop it. . . . It is wrong militarily to stop pressure on the enemy who is increasingly weak." Two weeks later, Hanoi agreed to Saigon's participation in peace talks and implied that it would respect the DMZ and avoid indiscriminate attacks on cities. Wheeler then told the President that he supported a bombing halt: "If we haven't already won the war militarily we are well on the way to it. . . . If the enemy violates [the DMZ and attacks cities], we will resume our operations without limitations." The Service Chiefs concurred; General Westmoreland, now Army Chief of Staff, declared the enemy to be militarily "BANKRUPT." He was only partly right. While the ranks of the Viet Cong had been devastated, North Vietnam's manpower pool remained sufficient to fight the war. In December, CINCPAC warned that the enemy buildup in Laos and South Vietnam could create very soon "a direct and continuing threat of substantial proportions. . . ."[18]

The Chairman, in February, had recommended sending 206,000 reinforcements and warned that otherwise South Vietnam's two northern provinces might be lost. By October, even though MACV had received only a 24,500-man augmentation, he declared the war to be nearly won. Wheeler must have been wrong once, and he may well have been wrong both times—too pessimistic in February and too optimistic in October. Early in 1969, the communists launched attacks across the country that included rocket firings into cities. General Wheeler recommended mining Haiphong and resuming intensive sustained bombing. Instead, President Nixon ordered unannounced bombings of enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia.[19] With antiwar feeling running so strong at home, a new administration could not make heavy bombing of the North its first major act.

From March 1968 onward, the Joint Chiefs resorted to what might be called a strategy of incrementalism in reverse, making concessions to forestall what they

saw as a readiness by civilians in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the State Department to "give away the farm." They did count small successes over the balance of the year: a few reserves mobilized; preconditions for the Paris peace talks made a little stronger; and a total halt of the bombing of North Vietnam delayed until 1 November. Yet the Saigon government's weaknesses were so deep-rooted that winning a one or two-year respite did not suffice. Arguably, the Chiefs' version of incrementalism simply helped to insure that the war would be lost more slowly.

Driven by the deadline of the 1972 election, President Nixon proceeded to "Vietnamize" the war. Thus, in April 1970, he arbitrarily replaced small "cut and try" reductions with a 150,000-man withdrawal spread over twelve months. The Joint Chiefs articulated a strategy that, necessarily, revolved around the ability of the ARVN to operate successfully in Cambodia and Laos.[20] The outcome of LAM SON 719 destroyed any hope of that happening. In 1972, to borrow the analogy used by the JCS eight years earlier, Nixon recognized that air power constituted his "stack of blue chips" and put them all on the table. President Johnson is supposed to have complained that the Joint Chiefs never proposed anything, but bomb, bomb, bomb. President Nixon complained, with some justification, that the military balked when he finally ordered a fast, full squeeze against North Vietnam. COMUSMACV, convinced that the war would be won or lost in the South, objected to every major strike against North Vietnam; Strategic Air Command (SAC) was reluctant to risk losing B–52s. One week after the spring offensive started, Dr. Kissinger told the Chairman, Admiral Thomas Moorer, that the President "does not like the way we are using the air forces. He wants to make sure we hit lucrative targets and that we do not stay away from them to hit around [North Vietnam's panhandle.]" Moorer could only say, "Henry, that hurts me, to think that you would have to worry about that." In May, just after Haiphong Harbor had been mined and LINEBACKER I launched, Nixon again exhorted the Chairman: "Do not go to secondary targets. We are going to get rail lines, POL, cement plants, power plants and airfields, but there is no damn excuse now. You have got what the military claimed they never before got authority to do."[21] Moorer deflected the President's urge to create a Southeast Asia Command that would better carry out his wishes. But the command issue resurfaced during the Christmas bombing. A reduction in B–52 sorties, operationally unavoidable, but unexplained to the White House, prompted the President's anger. Ironically, his outburst came just when SAC was making the tactical changes that would turn LINEBACKER II into a success. On 29 December, as the bombing ended, the Army Chief of Staff noted that the President had relegated the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the role of "bystanders."[22] The record of the previous decade does not demonstrate that Nixon was wrong in doing so.

Looking back over 1962–72, it is clear that COMUSMACV and the Joint Chiefs were wrong about the progress of the strategic hamlet program, then about the progress of the attrition campaign, and finally about the success of Vietnamization. The early misjudgment may be explained more easily than the later ones. Prodded

by President Kennedy's pledge to "pay any price, bear any burden" and by the selection of South Vietnam as a showcase for counterinsurgency efforts, Generals Harkins and Taylor readily accepted statistical indications of success. After 1965, different considerations came into play. The Joint Chiefs of Staff claimed that, despite all the civilians' constraints, by the autumn of 1967 the war was being won. The US Air Force's reputation as the world's finest helped convince senior Air Force officers that ROLLING THUNDER despite all its flaws would still work. The US Army's memories of its achievements in World War II and Korea were bolstered when the Kennedy administration increased its budget and turned to "flexible response." The conviction that a small country could not defeat a superpower reinforced the Joint Chiefs' confidence. As the Ad Hoc Study Group put it, "there appears to be no reason we cannot win if such is our will. . . . "

According to Henry Kissinger, during 1969–70, "when the time came to present an alternative [General Wheeler] offered no more than marginal adjustments of the status quo." Certainly, that was not the way Wheeler saw his recommendation. He observed in 1969 that the Joint Chiefs had wanted a major mobilization to make the American people aware "that we were in a war and not . . . some two-penny military adventure."[23] But the Joint Chiefs acquiesced in confining the American war effort within the parameters of incrementalism. The only way to challenge incrementalism was to charge that the attrition campaign was either stalemated or failing. To do that, the Joint Chiefs of Staff feared, could cost enough public support to bring down the whole edifice. In March 1967, Wheeler cautioned COMUSMACV about revising upward the recorded number of battalion-size or larger enemy attacks: "If these figures should reach the public domain . . . [they] would, literally, blow the lid off Washington."[24]

The Joint Chiefs kept asserting that the US and its allies were taking the offensive, which was true only in a short-term, tactical sense; Hanoi held the long-term strategic initiative. North Vietnam waged what was for it total war. A few more targets struck or a few thousand more casualties inflicted did not shake Hanoi's resolve. Consequently, Hanoi's initiatives during rainy seasons undid a good part of our dry season gains. Thus, in October 1968, Generals Wheeler and Westmoreland mistook a battlefield lull for the verge of victory. Attrition gained temporary advantages but never came close to depleting North Vietnam's supply of conscripts. Washington would not, and Saigon could not, do what was necessary to win. Hanoi could and did. The Joint Chiefs of Staff failed to recognize that the critical comparison was not between the capabilities of the two sides but between their commitments.

Appendix 1

The Use of Herbicides in South Vietnam, 1962–1973

Herbicide Operations, 1962–1968

The United States employed herbicides in military operations for the first time during the Vietnam War. Chemical spraying was used to kill vegetation for two purposes: defoliation to reveal enemy infiltration routes and storage sites and to clear areas around friendly outposts and improve defenses, and crop destruction to deny food supplies in enemy-held areas. The ecological and environmental hazards involved necessitated careful control. Nonetheless, the use of herbicides aroused considerable controversy during the course of the US involvement in Vietnam.

The United States and South Vietnam tested herbicides for counterinsurgency measures in 1961, and President John F. Kennedy approved the first use by US forces in South Vietnam on 30 November 1961. At the recommendation of the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, he authorized "a selective and carefully controlled joint program of defoliant operations in Viet Nam starting with the clearance of key routes and proceeding thereafter to food denial only if the most careful basis of resettlement and alternative food supply had been created." President Kennedy also directed "careful prior consideration and authorization" by Washington before execution of any operation.[1]

Herbicide operations in South Vietnam, both defoliation and crop destruction, actually began early in 1962. Initially, every mission required approval by the Secretary of State but, in May 1962, limited authority was delegated to the field. The US Ambassador in Saigon and COMUSMACV could approve defoliation to clear roadsides, railroads, and other lines of communication as well as areas adjacent to airfields and other field installations. Crop destruction, which was far more sensitive politically, still required Washington approval.[2]

During the next several years, herbicide operations consisted of defoliation missions, nicknamed RANCH HAND, and limited crop destruction missions, known as FARM GATE. The former were flown with USAF aircraft while the latter originally used aircraft with VNAF markings and carrying a VNAF observer. Both COMUSMACV and the Ambassador in Saigon found the requirement for Wash-

ington approval of the FARM GATE operations time-consuming and cumbersome and sought appropriate delegation of authority to the field. Accordingly, in March 1964, authority for limited crop destruction was granted to COMUSMACV and the Ambassador and complete authority followed four months later.[3]

The United States gradually increased the use of herbicides in South Vietnam during the years 1962 through 1964; then with the commitment of US combat forces in 1965, these operations expanded markedly. The great majority (approximately 90 percent), as indicated in the figures below, consisted of defoliation missions with crop destruction still conducted on a much more limited scale.

Herbicide Operations, 1962–1968
(area in square kilometers)

Year	*Defoliation*	*Crop Destruction*	*Total*
1962	20	3	23
1963	100	1	101
1964	338	442	780
1965	632	272	904
1966	2,297	306	2,603
1967	5,087	656	5,743
1968	5,003	276	5,279[4]

The objectives of the herbicide program evolved to meet the changing needs. In the period 1962–1967, emphasis was given to GVN lines of communication in order to prevent ambushes, to defoliation around base areas, and to the destruction of food grown for the NVA/VC by conscripted villagers. By late 1967, with the increasing GVN control of lowland areas and movement of population from outlying regions into areas under GVN control, emphasis shifted to defoliation along the borders of Laos and Cambodia to make enemy infiltration routes and staging areas more vulnerable to air attack. Restricted buffer zones were established along the actual borders to preclude inadvertent defoliation outside of South Vietnam. The focus of crop destruction also shifted, concentrating on food grown by the NVA/VC for their own use.[5]

Three herbicides, given the names of the color markers of the containers they came in, were employed in Vietnam: (1) Orange, an oil-based agent effective against broadleaf vegetation, which achieved maximum results in four to six weeks, with a duration of approximately 12 months; (2) White, a water-based agent, which caused visible injury in approximately four weeks and full effect in six to eight weeks and with a duration of approximately 12 months; (3) Blue, a fast reacting water-based agent which showed visible results within 24 hours. All three were sold commercially in the United States.[6]

Almost from the start, the herbicide operations in South Vietnam had been the subject of questions and charges, and North Vietnam had repeatedly cited the

program for propaganda purposes. In 1968, the US Ambassador in Saigon, Ellsworth Bunker, set up a committee in Vietnam, including technical experts from the United States, to review every aspect of the operations. The committee found that the military benefits clearly outweighed the economic and psychological costs and recommended that the program continue. Consequently, no change resulted in the herbicide effort. Actual operations, however, did decline slightly in 1968 and the trend continued in 1969.[7]

Herbicide Operations in 1969 and 1970

Soon after entering office, President Nixon decided to review US policy, programs, and operational concepts for chemical and biological warfare agents, and Dr. Kissinger assigned this task to the NSC Interdepartmental Political-Military Group on 28 May 1969. The Group submitted its report on 15 October 1969 and, among other things, noted the use of herbicides in Vietnam for both crop destruction and defoliation. The latter type operations, the Group reported, were being conducted "on a considerable scale" and had proved effective in clearing the edges of roads, canals, and rivers around encampments. The Group agreed that "use of herbicides as a defoliant is not contrary to international law and is less likely to have international repercussions than use against crops." The Group did recognize that the question of the ecological effects of herbicides was both relevant and controversial, but found no serious short-term ecological damage. Present evidence, however, did not permit a definitive conclusion for the long term and the Group felt further research was needed in this regard.[8]

Subsequently President Nixon approved a US policy for both a "chemical warfare program" and a "biological research program" on 25 November 1969. The policy reaffirmed renunciation of first use of lethal chemical weapons and applied it to incapacitating weapons as well. But this renunciation did not apply to use of herbicides or riot control agents.[9]

In the meantime, CINCPAC had asked COMUSMACV in September 1969 about a possible reduction of herbicide operations in Vietnam to an objective of 25 percent of the current capability by 1 July 1970. General Abrams replied that the present capability, averaging "400 productive sorties per month," was the minimum necessary for priority targets in the CY 1969 program. While some reduction might be possible, he considered a phase-down of 75 percent "unrealistic"; one of 25 to 30 percent appeared more reasonable for the time frame involved. CINCPAC agreed, directing a phase-down to 70 percent of the current capability by 1 July 1970. Accordingly, COMUSMACV issued the necessary directives. Operations would continue at the 400 productive sorties per month rate until 1 November 1969 and the decline to a level of 280 sorties per month by 1 July 1970.[10]

During the latter part of 1969, mounting evidence began to appear of the danger of herbicide chemicals to both animals and humans. In October 1969, the Director of Defense Research and Engineering informed the Secretary of Defense of possible danger to humans as the result of exposure to herbicides. In anticipation of a DOD review of the continuation of herbicide operations, the Director of the Joint Staff told the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 29 October 1969 that the value of defoliation as a weapon had been clearly established. These operations had reduced ambushes, revealed enemy base camps and supply routes, and prevented countless US and RVNAF casualties. The Director also pointed out that current rules confined defoliation missions to areas remote from the population.[11]

On the same day that the Director forwarded his comments, the Deputy Secretary of Defense informed the Chairman of a National Institutes of Health report presenting evidence that 2, 4, 5–T, a chemical present in agent Orange, could cause stillbirths or malformation in offspring of mice. Pending a decision by the appropriate Government department on the issue of retaining Orange on the domestic market, Deputy Secretary Packard restricted missions employing Orange in South Vietnam to areas away from population centers. Normal use of agents White and Blue could continue, but Mr. Packard did not want large-scale substitution of Blue for Orange. The Joint Chiefs of Staff relayed this instruction to the field five days later.[12]

During 1969, there were also reports of indiscriminate spraying of defoliants causing damage in Cambodia. Specifically, the Royal Khmer Government claimed some 37,000 acres had been injured with damages estimated at $8.5 million. A team of US civilian experts from the Department of Agriculture and the Agency of International Development visited Cambodia and reported extensive damage. Fruit trees had been defoliated near the South Vietnamese border as the result of wind drift from spraying in Tay Ninh Province and, further north, rubber, fruit, and forest trees had been killed, probably the result of "a direct spray application by an unknown party." With regard to the latter charge, the Secretary of State denied that such a mission had been authorized although he did not rule out the possibility of an accidental over-flight. Subsequently, at the request of COMUSMACV, the Commander, 7th Air Force, investigated and reported that no US aircraft had dispensed herbicides within the territorial jurisdiction of Cambodia during the period in question.[13]

On 15 April 1970, the Secretaries of Health, Education, and Welfare; Interior; and Agriculture announced the suspension of uncontrolled domestic use of herbicides containing 2, 4, 5–T. That same day, the Deputy Secretary of Defense suspended temporarily all use of Orange in military operations pending a more thorough evaluation of the situation.[14]

The Joint Chiefs and CINCPAC took immediate issue with the Deputy Secretary's decision. The following day, 16 April, the Director of the Joint Staff told the Chairman that the suspension would have severe operational impacts. On-hand quantities of agent White, the most probable substitute for Agent Orange, were sufficient only for about 15 days of operations at present rates. Moreover, although

White was available commercially, from 35 to 120 days would be required for resupply once a procurement decision was made. A few days later, on 24 April 1970, CINCPAC requested that the temporary suspension of Orange be lifted as soon as possible. If that action was not possible, then he asked that production of Orange be stopped and production of a suitable substitute undertaken.[15]

On 14 May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, themselves, addressed the suspension of the use of Orange. As of 1 May 1970, they told the Secretary of Defense, slightly more than one million gallons of the agent were on hand in South Vietnam and another 865,000 gallons awaited shipment from the United States. These quantities represented approximately 15 months of supply at the current employment rate. Since the suspension of the use of Orange, herbicide operations had been continuing with agent White, but only 35,748 gallons (approximately 35 sorties) were on hand at the beginning of May. When the White was expended, all defoliation operations would cease.

To remedy this situation, the Joint Chiefs presented three alternatives: (1) terminate all defoliation; (2) procure more White or another suitable substitute; (3) rescind the suspension on the use of Orange. They dismissed the first altogether, explaining the importance of defoliation. These operations had helped eliminate enemy concealment along lines of communication and around base areas and airfields; had permitted reduction in the number of personnel needed for perimeter security; and had lowered the number of men necessary for combat operations, helping to save allied lives. For all these reasons, the Joint Chiefs wanted the defoliation program continued. Moreover, since agent White was less effective than Orange, they requested that the temporary suspension on the use of Orange be rescinded.[16]

When more than two weeks had passed without any decision, the Chairman reminded the Secretary of Defense of the urgency in this matter and requested a decision as soon as possible. Subsequently, on 15 June, the Deputy Secretary of Defense rejected the JCS request to rescind the suspension on the use of Orange in South Vietnam. Instead, he approved a plan prepared by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (I&L) for procurement and delivery of 330,000 gallons of White to South Vietnam. He also directed that employment of White be held to the "minimum." In advising CINCPAC of this decision, the JCS asked him to determine the amount of White needed in FY 1971 to meet minimum operational requirements.[17]

When President Nixon approved the US policy for chemical and biological warfare on 25 November 1969, he decided to submit the Geneva "Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare" to the Senate for advice and consent in anticipation of ratification.[18] This Protocol had been prepared in 1925 and signed by most countries. The United States, however, had never acceded to the protocol and was subjected to continuing criticism over the years for not doing so. Failure to sign the Geneva Protocol combined with the US employment of herbicides in Vietnam was being used by the Soviet Union and other nations for propaganda advantage in

the ongoing disarmament negotiations. Consequently, President Nixon wanted to submit the Geneva Protocol to the US Senate. Before taking this action, he desired an assessment of "the overall value of the United States anticrop chemical spraying program to our military effort in Southeast Asia."[19]

Dr. Kissinger relayed the President's request to the Secretary of Defense on 6 July 1970. Using information supplied by the Director of the Joint Staff, the Secretary replied to Dr. Kissinger on 18 July. He pointed out that the crop destruction program, which represented only five percent of the total herbicide effort in Vietnam, had contributed significantly to the reduction of VC/NVA logistic capability. He estimated the quantity of rice destroyed in the fields in VC/NVA-controlled areas by this means to be about seven times that found in caches during ground operations. Serious food shortages had often led to a curtailment of enemy military action primarily through the requirement to divert combat troops to food production, acquisition, or distribution tasks. Overall Secretary Laird concluded that anticrop operations "in carefully selected target areas" had proven an effective adjunct to the total US military effort in Southeast Asia.[20]

On 2 August 1970, President Nixon approved a general policy governing the use of both chemical herbicides and riot control agents by US forces in time of war. Use of herbicides for either defoliation or crop destruction required Presidential approval. This new policy did not, however, affect "the joint authority of COMUSMACV and the United States Ambassador, Saigon, to authorize support of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam requests for herbicide operations" and, in effect, brought no change in the herbicide effort in Vietnam.[21]

During 1969 and 1970, there was continuing public criticism of the US herbicide program in Vietnam, including a number of articles in scientific magazines and journals. In the summer of 1970, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) proposed to send a team of civilian scientists to South Vietnam to conduct an on-site investigation of the effects of herbicides on the land and people. Before the team left the United States, the JCS sought the views of CINCPAC. The field commander did not believe "an objective, scientifically valid study" of the sort proposed was feasible at that time. He pointed out to the Joint Chiefs on 23 July that herbicide operations had been conducted only in unpopulated or low-density population areas and generally in a hostile environment. Hence valid statistics to provide "a base line" for the study did not exist. Therefore any findings would be inconclusive, only fueling the controversy. Moreover, since the areas where herbicides had been used were ones where the enemy still operated, it would be difficult to insure the safety of the team. As an alternative, CINCPAC proposed a study in the United States of the genetic and ecological effects of herbicides. Since the same chemical compounds had been used at home for over 20 years in quantities four times greater than in Vietnam, he believed appropriate data should be more readily available for such a study.[22]

The alternative proposed by CINCPAC was not adopted and a four-man survey team of the AAAS, led by Dr. Matthew S. Meselson, a Harvard University biologist, visited Vietnam in August 1970. The team members collected soil samples, flew over recently sprayed crop targets, and interviewed Vietnamese villagers in areas where herbicide missions had occurred. They condemned the destruction of mangrove and hardwood forests, called the crop destruction effort a failure, and concluded that the spraying had caused serious harm to both the land and people. They also speculated that the spraying might have been responsible for a high number of stillbirths and birth defects among Vietnamese in 1967 and 1968, but cautioned that further study was needed to substantiate these charges. CINCPAC dismissed the team conclusions, stating that Dr. Meselson's position on crop destruction was "well known and consistent with his criticism of US/GVN policy."[23]

Consideration of a Herbicide Capability for South Vietnam

By mid-1970, Vietnamization, the US policy of improving and strengthening the RVNAF so that the South Vietnamese could take over combat operations from US forces, was well under way. At this point, however, the United States had no plans to transfer its herbicide capability to the RVNAF.[24] Then, on 2 September 1970, the Secretary of Defense asked about "political implications" and "military utility" of supporting the South Vietnamese with both herbicides and riot control agents after the removal of US combat forces. He requested his Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs to conduct an appropriate review, specifically including the views of the Chairman.[25]

The Director of the Joint Staff supplied the JCS input for the review on 15 September. He pointed out to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) the significant military benefits of the herbicide operations, including greatly increased ability to detect enemy infiltration, base areas, and preparations for offensive action. In addition, herbicide operations had reduced friendly casualties, complicated enemy logistic programs, and required the diversion of VC/NVA troops to food production missions. The Director doubted that the withdrawal of US combat forces from Vietnam would decrease the requirement for herbicides as long as active combat continued. To the contrary, redeployment of US forces would place greater emphasis on territorial surveillance and security. Following a cease-fire or other cessation of hostilities, defoliation of strips through the heavy jungle on the Cambodian and Laotian borders would provide an excellent means of detecting any new infiltration into the RVN and assist in identification of enemy preparation for attacks in violation of the cease-fire.

The Director observed that the RVNAF capability to disseminate herbicides was "marginal." Plans were in being to provide the South Vietnamese C–123 aircraft and those craft could be equipped with appropriate spraying apparatus. The Director added that neither herbicides nor riot control agents were significantly expensive when compared to other munitions and weapon systems in normal use and both were commercially available.[26]

After reviewing the JCS input and also that of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Systems Analysis), the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) told the Secretary on 28 October that both military and economic considerations clearly called for continued support of the South Vietnamese with herbicides and riot control agents. Further, he believed that "political liabilities of refusing to support the RVN with riot control agents and chemical herbicides after withdrawal of US combat forces appear at this time clearly to outweigh possible benefits that might accrue from such refusal." Therefore, the Assistant Secretary recommended continued support at a level determined by military and economic considerations.[27]

Over a month later, on 7 December 1970, Secretary Laird approved the recommendation of the Assistant Secretary. He cautioned that use of both herbicides and riot control agents in support of combat operations in Vietnam remained a contentious issue and directed that these chemicals and agents "be carefully controlled and employed with discrimination." He wanted the Joint Chiefs to monitor use and ensure "rigorous application of existing regulations and controls."[28]

Increasing Restriction on Use of Herbicides

Following the suspension of the use of Orange in April 1970, herbicide operations fell off drastically. Whereas 4,852 square kilometers of land in South Vietnam were sprayed with defoliants during 1969, only 892 were sprayed in 1970. Crop destruction missions dropped by half as well, the square kilometers treated declining from 263 in 1969 to 132 in 1970. The restriction on Orange influenced COMUSMACV's decision on 10 July 1970 to terminate defoliation by fixed-wing aircraft; all such operations thereafter employed helicopter or ground-based spray equipment.[29] The suspension of the use of Orange also presented COMUSMACV a further problem—the disposition of some 1,400,000 gallons of the agent then stocked in Vietnam.[30]

As the field commanders looked for ways to dispose of the stocks of Orange, another question arose. On 16 October 1970, the Deputy Secretary of Defense informed the Chairman of recent allegations that Orange had been used in the Americal Division area of operations in South Vietnam. He requested an appropriate investigation. At JCS direction, COMUSMACV conducted the investigation, and Admiral Moorer reported to the Deputy Secretary that Orange had, indeed, been dispensed in six instances following the suspension. The herbicide had been used

without the knowledge of the Americal Division commander or his chief of staff and had been used because stocks of White were "essentially depleted." Moorer assured Mr. Packard that COMUSMACV had reaffirmed to his subordinates the suspension of Orange and, to prevent reoccurrence of similar incidents, had made all stocks of Orange accountable, consolidating them at a central storage area to insure better control.[31]

Meantime, on 21 October 1970, CINCPAC had complained to Admiral Moorer about the maintenance of the large quantities of Orange in Vietnam. Not only was storage of the approximately 1,400,000 gallons of the agent costing an estimated $10 million, but the longer it remained static, the greater the risk of "adverse consequences." Therefore CINCPAC recommended either reinstitution of Orange for combat operations or encouragement of the GVN to continue its use for border control, maintenance of route security, and related purposes.[32]

CINCPAC's recommendation was not accepted and, in fact, further restrictions on herbicide operations were soon under consideration. On 20 November 1970, the President's Science Adviser, Dr. Edward E. David, Jr., wrote to Dr. Kissinger asking a reconsideration of US defoliation policy in Vietnam. Dr. David expected the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as a result of the visit of its mission to Vietnam during the summer, to present evidence to Congressional committees and the American public charging the United States with use of herbicides in Vietnam with impurities far greater than those allowed at home.[33] Other factors contributing to the need for reconsideration of the US defoliation policy, listed by Dr. David, included: the question of storage of Orange in Vietnam, the unauthorized use of Orange, and the possible harmful effects of the chemicals currently used in Vietnam as substitutes for Orange. He thought it might be desirable to use in Vietnam only those herbicide agents authorized for commercial use in the United States and only under the same conditions. Subsequently, on 10 December, Dr. Kissinger asked the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs for an appraisal of Dr. David's suggestion, including the nature and significance of any reduction in defoliation capability that might occur if such a policy was adopted.[34]

Even before Dr. Kissinger's request for appraisal of the David proposal, herbicide operations in Vietnam were restricted further. On 9 December 1970, Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams informed Washington of their decision to phase out the crop destruction portion of the program. General Abrams was taking action to stop further procurement or shipment of agents Blue and White to South Vietnam; "herbicide stocks on hand will support base perimeter defoliation and highly selective crop destruction operations until approximately May 1971." The Ambassador and the military commander planned no announcement of the suspension of crop destruction operations. Such a course, they said, would "permit a quiet, orderly, yet rapid phase-out of [the] program while preserving our option to reinstitute [the] program if necessary in [the] future."[35]

On 18 December, the JCS assessed the David proposal to limit employment of herbicides in Vietnam to the same restrictions observed in the United States. Again, they set out the military benefits of herbicide operations. They found no direct parallel between operations in Vietnam and the use of similar chemicals in the United States; the objectives of the two uses were "entirely different"—for weed control in the United States but for military advantages in Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs were not aware of any "reliable evidence" of ill effects from herbicides to human beings—the suspension of Orange had been based "on evidence from laboratory mice." Nor had simulated soil tests in the United States shown any harmful effects. Therefore the Chiefs did not favor Dr. David's proposal, nor did they find any factual basis for retaining the suspension of Orange in portions of Vietnam remote from populated areas. The option to continue herbicide operations, they said, must be maintained.[36]

After considering the JCS appraisal, the Secretary of Defense prepared a draft memorandum for the President. Among other things he planned to inform the President that the suspension of the use of Orange would be permanent and that any herbicides employed in Vietnam henceforth would be used only under the conditions applying in the United States. Admiral Moorer again expressed the JCS opposition to a permanent suspension of Orange. He listed briefly the JCS arguments set forth in their 18 December submission and explained the problem of disposing of existing stocks.[37]

On 22 December 1970, the Secretary forwarded a memorandum to the President. "The present ban on the use of the herbicide known as 'Orange,'" he told the President, "remains in effect." This statement reflected a slight concession to accommodate the views of the Joint Chiefs. The Secretary did not say the suspension was permanent, as he had proposed in the draft, and left open the possibility of its removal. Mr. Laird went on to relate that Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams were initiating action "to permit an orderly, yet rapid phase-out of other herbicides while preserving the option to reinstitute this program, if necessary, to assure the protection of American lives." The Secretary mentioned no specific date for completion of the phase out, but did state that, during the phase out, herbicides would be restricted to "remote, unpopulated areas or around fire bases and US installations in a manner currently authorized in CONUS." In short, Secretary Laird told the President, herbicides would be used only under conditions that applied in the United States.[38]

Six days later, Dr. Kissinger advised Secretary Laird that the President had noted the 22 December memorandum and the actions being taken to reduce use of herbicides in Vietnam, including initiation of a program to permit "an orderly, yet rapid" phase out of herbicide operations. The President did not, however, set any date for completion of the program. He also directed that any extension or approval of the current program or plans, if any, regarding Vietnamization of chemical herbicide capabilities be submitted for his approval. In issuing the necessary implementing order to the field, the JCS noted that defoliation by fixed-wing

aircraft had ceased on 10 July 1970 and that crop destruction was being phased out with termination by 1 May 1971. Therefore, after that date, herbicide operations would be limited to defoliation by either helicopter or ground-based spray. The Joint Chiefs reiterated the suspension of Orange; agents Blue and White were to be employed with "discrimination" and in conformity with policies governing the use of herbicides in the United States.[39]

Continuing Controversy over Herbicides in 1971

Still the question of the extent to which herbicides would be employed in Vietnam was not resolved. On 16 January 1971, the Deputy Secretary of Defense again stressed the need for caution in the use of these chemical agents and requested a JCS plan for disposition of the stock of Orange then in Vietnam. He also ordered the immediate termination of all crop destruction operations, accelerating the cutoff date of 1 May 1971 planned by COMUSMACV and the Ambassador. General Abrams and Ambassador Bunker announced on 20 February 1971 the termination of all crop destruction missions. Thereafter herbicide operations in Vietnam were restricted to limited defoliation with Blue and White around friendly fire support bases to preclude enemy use of ground cover. These operations relied on helicopter or ground based spray.[40]

In the meantime, on 2 February, the Secretary of State had notified Secretary Laird of his intention to ask the President to end all chemical herbicide operations in Vietnam immediately. Such action, Secretary Rogers believed, would assist in securing Senate advice and consent to ratification of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on chemical and biological agents then before the Senate. Secretary Laird did not agree, and did not concur with Secretary Roger's recommendation, he told the President on 19 February, because of the risk it might bring to US forces in Vietnam. Any additional action to speed up the phase out of herbicide operations before 1 May 1971, Mr. Laird believed, should be determined by General Abrams in relation to the military situation in the field rather than being dictated solely by the political situation in Washington. Should there be a requirement to expand herbicide usage in Vietnam or to extend operations beyond 1 May 1971, Secretary Laird would request appropriate approval.[41]

The President took no action to curtail herbicide operations further but, as the Joint Chiefs had told CINCPAC on 3 February, some agencies in Washington were interpreting the decision by Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams on 9 December to cease procurement of agents Blue and White, with anticipated exhaustion of stocks on hand by 1 May 1971, as a commitment to terminate herbicide operations by that date.[42] Accordingly, the JCS wanted an evaluation of the need to continue these operations beyond that date.[43]

The field commanders not only wanted to continue the operations but also to supply the South Vietnamese an herbicide capability. CINCPAC explained on 5 Feb-

ruary 1971 that procurement and shipment of White and Blue were suspended to prevent large accumulation of stocks in the face of reductions in usage. Since on-hand stocks of Blue and White were greater than those required to support helicopter and ground spraying on a continuing basis, the field commanders had planned to consume the excess by continuing crop destruction operations until May 1971. But the early termination of crop destruction, as directed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 16 January, would now mean that stocks of Blue and White available for helicopter and ground spraying would last well into FY 1972. Moreover, CINCPAC considered such spraying essential to preserve and enhance the security of US and allied bases and installations. Thus he requested authority, without any time limit, to spray for this purpose.[44]

Later, on 6 March, CINCPAC sent the JCS a plan to provide the RVNAF with a helicopter and ground spray capability to improve troop and installation security. Just over a week later, on 14 March, he proposed removal of the suspension of Orange. He wanted to dispose of the Orange in Vietnam by using it in military operations in areas remote from population and agriculture regions.[45]

The Joint Chiefs supported CINCPAC. On 9 April, they asked the Secretary of Defense to secure Presidential approval of a plan to provide the RVNAF "a limited herbicide capability" as well as Presidential sanction of continued US defoliation operations around bases and installations "beyond May 1971 until the RVNAF attains the required capability to provide this support." Such continued use, they believed, was essential to preserve and enhance the security of US and allied bases and installations. With regard to Orange, the JCS asked the Secretary on 23 April to remove the suspension to allow use as an option in military operations under the conditions set forth by CINCPAC. They also recommended that the stocks of Orange in South Vietnam remain in the custody of GVN "for selective use in military operations consistent with capabilities provided through the Vietnamization Program." Should the suspension not be removed, then the Joint Chiefs of Staff favored return of Orange to US custody for incineration "in a manner to be determined by detailed cost analysis." The latter recommendations were the JCS plan for disposition of Orange requested by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 16 January 1971.[46]

On 13 May, Secretary Laird informed the President of the JCS request to continue use of herbicides around fire support bases and installations. He supported the Joint Chiefs, telling the President that such use was "vital to the protection of US and allied forces" from enemy sapper and ambush tactics as US redeployments moved ahead. Mr. Laird also informed the President that he was evaluating a JCS plan to provide the RVNAF a limited herbicide capability. He intended to forward the plan to the President shortly. Until the RVNAF possessed a herbicide capability, or until 1 December 1971, whichever came first, the Secretary requested authority for US forces to continue to employ herbicides as needed around fire support bases and installations. He quickly added that current military objectives did not envision

any increased use of herbicides at that time and that existing stocks of Blue and White would be used.[47]

The Secretary of State told the President over a month later, on 24 June 1971, that his Department would, on political grounds, prefer no extension of herbicide use in Vietnam. If military reasons were telling, then Secretary Rogers reluctantly agreed to "a limited extension not beyond December 1, 1971 . . . under the definitive and restricted conditions outlined by Secretary Laird except that such use be restricted to 'perimeter of fire bases and US installations'"[48]

A Presidential decision was not immediately forthcoming and, on 6 August 1971, CINCPAC urgently requested continuing authority to employ agents Blue and White in Vietnam. Base security was being weakened by excessive vegetation growth, he said, and "at a time when redeployment of forces limits the number of personnel available to man perimeters," lives were being lost as the result of inadequate defoliation.[49]

A Presidential Decision

The President made his decision on 18 August 1971. He directed that "the planned phase-out of the herbicide operations in Vietnam and, as necessary, the introduction of alternate means for clearing perimeters be completed as rapidly as possible and not later than December 1, 1971." He granted Ambassador Bunker and COMUSMACV "joint authority to use herbicides around fire bases and US installations when considered essential for the protection of US and allied forces in those cases where other means are not possible or available." Such use would be restricted to perimeter areas and be conducted only by helicopter or ground based spray under the same restrictions applied in the United States. This authority extended only until 1 December 1971. The question of US assistance to South Vietnam in developing an herbicide capability, the President said, would be considered as a separate issue. Pending a decision, he wanted no statements or actions to encourage the South Vietnamese in any way to acquire or develop such a capability.[50]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff relayed the President's decision to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV the following day. They pointed out that the authority to employ herbicides applied only to existing stocks of Blue and White; the suspension of Orange continued.[51]

Several weeks later, on 13 September 1971, the Secretary of Defense ruled on the disposition of Orange. He did not approve use in remote areas of Vietnam as proposed by CINCPAC and the Joint Chiefs. Rather, he directed the return of all stocks to the United States "as quickly as practical"; those with unacceptable levels of impurities would be incinerated once returned. The JCS gave the Chief of Staff, US Air Force, the task of transporting the Orange to the United States. Subsequently, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) prepared a brief public statement, with follow-up questions and answers, concerning the disposition of

herbicides for use by COMUSMACV and CINCPAC. With regard to a possible query about the length of time it took to decide to return the stocks of Orange to the United States following the suspension in April 1970, the Assistant Secretary suggested a response along the lines that the original suspension was only temporary and did not become permanent until many months later.[52]

The President's 18 August 1971 decision authorized defoliation in Vietnam only until 1 December 1971. On 29 September, however, CINCPAC told the Joint Chiefs of the continuing requirement for vegetation control around firebases and US installations. Since no other method was as effective as herbicides, he requested permission for US forces to use agents White and Blue in Vietnam on a continuing basis.[53]

The Chiefs supported the field commander. They told the Secretary on 1 November 1971 of their awareness of the political implications of continued use of herbicides in Vietnam. On the other hand, lives were being lost as a "direct result" of inadequate defoliation around allied bases, and saving military lives, the Joint Chiefs believed, should take precedence over the political issues. Moreover, they pointed out that the termination date of 1 December 1971 had no military significance. United States forces and installations would still need protection beyond that date. Therefore, they asked Mr. Laird to obtain Presidential authority for continuing employment of herbicides in areas surrounding US fire support bases and installations for as long as US troops were "tactically committed in the RVN."[54]

The Acting Secretary of Defense, Mr. Packard, relayed the JCS request to the President on 3 November, and the President reached a decision on 26 November. After 1 December 1971, the US Ambassador in Saigon and COMUSMACV would continue to have "joint authority" to use herbicides around US bases and installations when "considered essential for the protection of US forces in those cases where other means are not available or satisfactory." Such use would still be limited to base and installation perimeter operations conducted by helicopter or ground-based spray equipment, under the same regulations applied in the United States. Further, the President directed that the United States not take the initiative in any plans for Vietnamization of herbicide capabilities or the provision of spray equipment, training, or technical assistance to the South Vietnamese.[55] In addition, he wanted no encouragement of the South Vietnamese to acquire or develop herbicide capabilities. Should they request such assistance, the United States would provide only such ground spray equipment as the Ambassador in Saigon and COMUSMACV determined necessary and was available in Vietnam and not required by US forces.[56]

A State-Defense Dispute

On 3 December, the Secretary of Defense appealed to the President to reconsider his decision with respect to assisting the South Vietnamese in attaining an

herbicide capability. Specifically, Secretary Laird asked the President to authorize the turnover of 15 US helicopter spray systems then in Vietnam to the South Vietnamese, the removal of the prohibition against any US initiative toward the development of a South Vietnamese herbicide capability, and expeditious approval of provision of herbicide stocks to the South Vietnamese in addition to those already in Vietnam.[57]

Once again the Secretary of State disagreed. He did not think a case had been made for providing the helicopter spray systems to the South Vietnamese, he told the President on 4 February 1972. Moreover, he believed that "it would be to our distinct advantage to phase out the program of providing additional herbicide stocks to the Vietnamese as quickly as possible without jeopardizing the RVNAF military posture." He did recognize the military value of herbicides to US and South Vietnamese forces for installation defense. Should the South Vietnamese wish to continue to employ herbicides for this purpose, the Secretary of State believed the GVN should move as rapidly as possible to direct procurement of stocks through commercial channels. To this end, he suggested to the President that Ambassador Bunker raise the problem with the GVN. No change would be required in the President's 26 November 1971 decision.[58]

On 14 February 1972, President Nixon ruled on the matter of providing South Vietnam an herbicide capability. The United States would not make an open-ended commitment to supply additional stocks of herbicides to the Government of Vietnam; rather it would encourage the South Vietnamese to establish alternative commercial supply channels. Until such sources could be established, the President authorized US forces to supply limited amounts of herbicides to the South Vietnamese for base and installation perimeter operations and LOC control. With regard to the supply of helicopter spray systems, the President granted COMUSMACV and Ambassador Bunker authority, "given a requirement from the GVN," to provide those systems presently possessed by US forces in South Vietnam. These systems would be furnished with the understanding that they would be used only for base and installation perimeter operations. The provision of ground spray equipment, as authorized on 26 November 1971, was not affected. The President still wanted no encouragement or stimulation of the GVN to acquire or develop an herbicide capability beyond that required for perimeter operations.[59]

The President's decision resolved the dispute between the Defense and State Departments, and the two Departments dispatched joint instructions to COMUSMACV and Ambassador Bunker. Thereafter, the United States proceeded to transfer the remaining in-country helicopter and ground spray equipment to the South Vietnamese for base perimeter defense and also requested the GVN to establish alternate, commercial supply channels for such herbicide stocks required in the future. Simultaneously, US forces continued limited helicopter and ground spray herbicide missions in South Vietnam to improve base security, using existing supplies of Blue and White. United States forces retained authority for these limited

herbicide operations throughout the remainder of their presence in South Vietnam. During 1972, the remaining stocks of Orange in South Vietnam, some 1,387,045 gallons, were moved to Johnston Island for temporary storage pending disposal in the United States.[60]

The End of US Herbicide Operations

The withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam during the period January–March 1973 ended all US herbicide activity in Southeast Asia. By that time, however, South Vietnam did possess a limited capability for herbicide operations supplied by the United States before its military departure.

Following the termination of all US herbicide operations in South Vietnam and the withdrawal of US military forces, there was one further event in the story of US herbicide activity in Vietnam. As a result of the continuing controversy over these operations, the Congress had enacted legislation in 1970 requiring the Secretary of Defense to have the National Academy of Sciences conduct a comprehensive investigation of the ecological and psychological effects of herbicide spraying in Vietnam, and this task was not completed until 1974.

The National Academy of Sciences presented its findings to the Congress and the Secretary of Defense on 15 February 1974. The investigation had been accomplished by a specially appointed committee of experts headed by Professor Anton Lang of Michigan State University, a "renowned" plant physiologist. Other members included several additional US scientists as well as ones from South Vietnam, Britain, Canada, and Sweden. This committee visited South Vietnam and had access to pertinent classified DOD information and records.[61]

The investigating committee found no indication of direct damage to human health from US herbicide activity in South Vietnam. Examination of hospital records provided no conclusive evidence of association between exposure to herbicides and human birth defects. The sociological, economic, and psychological effects on the South Vietnamese population were more difficult to assess. In fact, the psychological impact could not be measured at all, though the committee did state that the use of herbicides was "an emotionally charged symbol standing for many apprehensions and distresses." The committee did find that herbicide spraying had caused displacement of people from their homes and had contributed to the urbanization of South Vietnam. But the extent of the influence of herbicides in comparison with other military activities in producing population displacement could not be determined.

Chemical spraying had also damaged crops, the committee reported, but, generally, had not resulted in loss of production for longer than one growing season. With regard to damage to other vegetation, the committee reported mixed findings. Mangrove forests had been heavily damaged and the committee estimated more

than 100 years would be needed for reforestation. On the other hand, damage to inland forests, which had received three quarters of all the spraying in Vietnam, was not as readily apparent. The committee believed that most inland forest areas would recover if "large-scale rehabilitation" were undertaken. Further the committee found no permanent damage to the soil. On the basis of tests, it concluded that toxic residues of herbicides had disappeared within one year. Even where traces did persist, they did not seem to hinder the return of native vegetation.

In the end, the National Academy of Sciences' examination did not resolve the controversy over the US employment of herbicides in South Vietnam. The Academy's committee of experts did determine that herbicide spraying had caused ecological damage to the Vietnamese landscape. The committee did not answer, nor did it attempt to, the more difficult question of whether the herbicide damage was any worse than that caused by other types of military activity.

As a final footnote, it should be mentioned that after the US military involvement in Vietnam ended and the controversy over the use of herbicides there had quieted, the United States became a party to the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. The Senate gave its consent on 16 December 1974, and the President ratified the Protocol on 22 January 1975; it became effective for the United States on 23 March 1975, some 50 years after it was originally written.[62]

Appendix 2
US Redeployments in 1969–1972*

Increment	*Period*	*Authorized Ceiling*	*Spaces Reduced*	*Combat Forces Mvr Bn / Arty Bn*		*ATK/FTR* Sqdns*
I (KEYSTONE EAGLE)	1 Jul–31 Aug 69	524,500	25,000	9	6	1
II (KEYSTONE CARDINAL)	17 Sep–15 Dec 69	484,000	40,500	10	6	4
III (KEYSTONE BLUEJAY)	30 Dec 69–15 Apr 70	434,000	50,000	17	11	6
IV (KEYSTONE ROBIN ALPHA)	5 Jun–15 Oct 70	384,000	50,000	11	5	11
V (KEYSTONE ROBIN BRAVO)	16 Oct–31 Dec 70	344,000	40,000	14	8	0
VI (KEYSTONE (ROBIN CHARLIE)	1 Jan–30 Apr 71	284,000	60,000	15	8	0
VII (KEYSTONE ORIOLE ALPHA)	1 May–30 Jun 71	254,700	29,300	6	2	2

VIII (KEYSTONE ORIOLE BRAVO)	1 Jul–31 Aug 71	226,000	28,700	6	5	5
IX (KEYSTONE ORIOLE CHARLIE)	1 Sep–30 Nov 71	184,000	42,000	8	10	2
X (KEYSTONE MALLARD)	1 Dec 71–31 Jan 72	139,000	45,000	6	5	2
XI (KEYSTONE OWL)	1 Feb–30 Apr 72	69,000	70,000	11	3	0
XII (KEYSTONE PHEASANT)	1 May–30 Jun 72	49,000	20,000	4	2	7
XIII (KEYSTONE WREN)	1 Jul–31 Aug 72	39,000	10,000	3	0	0
XIV (KEYSTONE PELICAN)	1 Sep–30 Nov 72	27,000	12,000	0	0	0

* Includes both USAF and USMC squadrons

Source: COMUSMACV Command History, 1971, p. F-1-1; *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, pp. F-56 – F-60.

Appendix 3

TEXT OF THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT AND ACCOMPANYING PROTOCOLS
SIGNED BY
THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
AND
THE UNITED STATES
IN PARIS
ON 27 JANUARY 1973

AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETMAN

The Parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam,

With a view to ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam on the basis of respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, and to contributing to the consolidation of peace in Asia and the world,

Have agreed on the following provisions and undertake to respect and to implement them:

Chapter I

The Vietnamese People's Fundamental National Rights

Article I

The United States and all other countries respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.

Chapter II

Cessation of Hostilities—Withdrawal of Troops

Article 2

A cease-fire shall he observed throughout South Vietnam as of 2400 hours G.M.T., on January 27, 1973.

At the same hour, the United States will stop all its military activities against the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by ground, air and naval forces, wherever they may be based, and end the mining of the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The United States will remove, permanently deactivate or destroy all the mines in the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways of North Vietnam as soon as this Agreement goes into effect.

The complete cessation of hostilities mentioned in this Article shall be durable and without limit of time.

Article 3

The parties undertake to maintain the cease-fire and to ensure a lasting and stable peace.

As soon as the cease-fire goes into effect:

(a) The United States forces and those of the other foreign countries allied with the United States and the Republic of Vietnam shall remain in-place pending the implementation of the plan of troop withdrawal. The Four-Party Joint Military Commission described in Article 16 shall determine the modalities.

(b) The armed forces of the two South Vietnamese parties shall remain in-place. The Two-Party Joint Military Commission described in Article 17 shall determine the areas controlled by each party and the modalities of stationing.

(c) The regular forces of all services and arms and the irregular forces of the parties in South Vietnam shall stop all offensive activities against each other and shall strictly abide by the following stipulations:

—All acts of force on the ground, in the air, and on the sea shall be prohibited;

—All hostile acts, terrorism and reprisals by both sides will be banned.

Article 4

The United States will not continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Vietnam.

Article 5

Within sixty days of the signing of this Agreement, there will be a total withdrawal from South Vietnam of troops, military advisers, and military personnel, including technical military personnel and military personnel associated with the pacification program, armaments, munitions, and war material of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a). Advisers from the above-mentioned countries to all paramilitary organizations and the police force will also be withdrawn within the same period of time.

Article 6

The dismantlement of all military bases in South Vietnam of the United States and of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a) shall be completed within sixty days of the signing of this Agreement.

Article 7

From the enforcement of the cease-fire to the formation of the government provided for in Articles 9 (b) and 14 of this Agreement, the two South Vietnamese parties shall not accept the introduction of troops, military advisers, and military personnel including technical military personnel, armaments, munitions, and war material into South Vietnam.

The two South Vietnamese parties shall be permitted to make periodic replacement of armaments, munitions and war material which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cease-fire, on the basis of piece-for-piece, of the same characteristics and properties, under the supervision of the Joint Military Commission of the two South Vietnamese parties and of the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

Chapter III

THE RETURN OF CAPTURED MILITARY PERSONNEL
AND FOREIGN CIVILIANS, AND CAPTURED
AND DETAINED VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Article 8

(a) The return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties shall be carried out simultaneously with and completed not later than the same day as the troop withdrawal mentioned in Article 5. The parties shall exchange com-

plete lists of the above-mentioned captured military personnel and foreign civilians on the day of the signing of this Agreement.

(b) The parties shall help each other to get information about those military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties missing in action, to determine the location and take care of the graves of the dead so as to facilitate the exhumation and repatriation of the remains, and to take any such other measures as may be required to get information about those still considered missing in action.

(c) The question of the return of Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam will be resolved by the two South Vietnamese parties on the basis of the principles of Article 21 (b) of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam of July 20, 1954. The two South Vietnamese parties will do so in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, with a view to ending hatred and enmity, in order to ease suffering and to reunite families. The two South Vietnamese parties will do their utmost to resolve this question within ninety days after the cease-fire comes into effect.

Chapter IV

The Exercise of the South Vietnamese People's Right to Self-Determination

Article 9

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam undertake to respect the following principles for the exercise of the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination:

(a) The South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination is sacred, inalienable, and shall be respected by all countries.

(b) The South Vietnamese people shall decide themselves the political future of South Vietnam through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision.

(c) Foreign countries shall not impose any political tendency or personality on the South Vietnamese people.

Article 10

The two South Vietnamese parties undertake to respect the cease-fire and maintain peace in South Vietnam, settle all matters of contention through negotiations, and avoid all armed conflict.

Article 11

Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties will:

—achieve national reconciliation and concord, end hatred and enmity, prohibit all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other;

—ensure the democratic liberties of the people: personal freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of meeting, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of belief, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of work, right to property ownership, and right to free enterprise.

Article 12

(a) Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties shall hold consultations in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, mutual respect, and mutual non-elimination to set up a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord of three equal segments. The Council shall operate on the principle of unanimity. After the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord has assumed its functions, the two South Vietnamese parties will consult about the formation of councils at lower levels. The two South Vietnamese parties shall sign an agreement on the internal matters of South Vietnam as soon as possible and do their utmost to accomplish this within ninety days after the cease-fire comes into effect, in keeping with the South Vietnamese people's aspirations for peace, independence and democracy.

(b) The National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord shall have the task of promoting the two South Vietnamese parties' implementation of this Agreement, achievement of national reconciliation and concord and ensurance of democratic liberties. The National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord will organize the free and democratic general elections provided for in Article 9 (b) and decide the procedures and modalities of these general elections. The institutions for which the general elections are to be held will be agreed upon through consultations between the two South Vietnamese parties. The National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord will also decide the procedures and modalities of such local elections as the two South Vietnamese parties agree upon.

Article 13

The question of Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be settled by the two South Vietnamese parties in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, equality and mutual respect, without foreign interference, in accordance with the postwar situation. Among the questions to be discussed by the two South Vietnam-

ese parties are steps to reduce their military effectives and to demobilize the troops being reduced. The two South Vietnamese parties will accomplish this as soon as possible.

Article 14

South Vietnam will pursue a foreign policy of peace and independence. It will be prepared to establish relations with all countries irrespective of their political and social systems on the basis of mutual respect for independence and sovereignty and accept economic and technical aid from any country with no political conditions attached. The acceptance of military aid by South Vietnam in the future shall come under the authority of the government set up after the general elections in South Vietnam provided for in Article 9 (b).

Chapter V

THE REUNIFICATION OF VIETNAM AND
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM

Article 15

The reunification of Vietnam shall be carried out step by step through peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Vietnam, without coercion or annexation by either party, and without foreign interference. The time for reunification will be agreed upon by North and South Vietnam.

Pending reunification:

(a) The military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel is only provisional and not a political or territorial boundary, as provided for in paragraph 6 of the Final Declaration of the 1954 Geneva Conference.

(b) North and South Vietnam shall respect the Demilitarized Zone on either side of the Provisional Military Demarcation Line.

(c) North and South Vietnam shall promptly start negotiations with a view to reestablishing normal relations in various fields. Among the questions to be negotiated are the modalities of civilian movement across the Provisional Military Demarcation Line.

(d) North and South Vietnam shall not join any military alliance or military bloc and shall not allow foreign powers to maintain military bases, troops, military advisers, and military personnel on their respective territories, as stipulated in the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.

Chapter VI

The Joint Military Commissions, the International Commission of Control and Supervision, the International Conference

Article 16

(a) The Parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam shall immediately designate representatives to form a Four-Party Joint Military Commission with the task of ensuring joint action by the parties in implementing the following provisions of this Agreement:

—The first paragraph of Article 2, regarding the enforcement of the cease-fire throughout South Vietnam;

—Article 3 (a), regarding the cease-fire by U.S. forces and those of the other foreign countries referred to in that Article;

—Article 3 (c), regarding the cease-fire between all parties in South Vietnam;

—Article 5, regarding the withdrawal from South Vietnam of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a);

—Article 6, regarding the dismantlement of military bases in South Vietnam of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a);

—Article 8 (a), regarding the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties;

—Article 8 (b), regarding the mutual assistance of the parties in getting information about those military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties missing in action.

(b) The Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall operate in accordance with the principle of consultations and unanimity. Disagreements shall be referred to the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

(c) The Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall begin operating immediately after the signing of this Agreement and end its activities in sixty days, after the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a) and the completion of the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties.

(d) The four parties shall agree immediately on the organization, the working procedure, means of activity, and expenditures of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.

Article 17

(a) The two South Vietnamese parties shall immediately designate representatives to form a Two-Party Joint Military Commission with the task of ensuring joint action by the two South Vietnamese parties in implementing the following provisions of this Agreement:

—The first paragraph of Article 2, regarding the enforcement of the cease-fire throughout South Vietnam, when the Four-Party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities;

—Article 3 (b), regarding the cease-fire between the two South Vietnamese parties;

—Article 3 (c), regarding the cease-fire between all parties in South Vietnam, when the Four-Party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities;

—Article 7, regarding the prohibition of the introduction of troops into South Vietnam and all other provisions of this article;

—Article 8 (c), regarding the question of the return of Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam;

—Article 13, regarding the reduction of the military effectives of the two South Vietnamese parties and the demobilization of the troops being reduced.

(b) Disagreements shall be referred to the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

(c) After the signing of this Agreement, the Two-Party Joint Military Commission shall agree immediately on the measures and organization aimed at enforcing the cease-fire and preserving peace in South Vietnam.

Article 18

(a) After the signing of this Agreement, an International Commission of Control and Supervision shall be established immediately.

(b) Until the International Conference provided for in Article 19 makes definitive arrangements, the International Commission of Control and Supervision will report to the four parties on matters concerning the control and supervision of the implementation of the following provisions of this Agreement:

—The first paragraph of Article 2, regarding the enforcement of the cease-fire throughout South Vietnam;

—Article 3 (a), regarding the cease-fire by U.S. forces and those of the other foreign countries referred to in that Article;

—Article 3 (c), regarding the cease-fire between all the parties in South Vietnam;

—Article 5, regarding the withdrawal from Vietnam of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a);

—Article 6, regarding the dismantlement of military bases in South Vietnam of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a);

—Article 8 (a), regarding the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties.

The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall form control teams for carrying out its tasks. The four parties shall agree immediately on the location and operation of these teams. The parties will facilitate their operation.

(c) Until the International Conference makes definitive arrangements, the International Commission of Control and Supervision will report to the two South Vietnamese parties on matters concerning the control and supervision of the implementation of the following provisions of this Agreement:

—The first paragraph of Article 2, regarding the enforcement of the cease-fire throughout South Vietnam, when the Four-Party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities;

—Article 3 (b), regarding the cease-fire between the two South Vietnamese parties;

—Article 3 (c), regarding the cease-fire between all parties in South Vietnam, when the Four-Party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities;

—Article 7, regarding the prohibition of the introduction of troops into South Vietnam and all other provisions of this Article;

—Article 8 (c), regarding the question of the return of Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam;

—Article 9 (b), regarding the free and democratic general elections in South Vietnam;

—Article 13, regarding the reduction of the military effectives of the two South Vietnamese parties and the demobilization of the troops being reduced.

The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall form control teams for carrying out its tasks. The two South Vietnamese parties shall agree immediately on the location and operation of these teams. The two South Vietnamese parties will facilitate their operation.

(d) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall be composed of representatives of four countries: Canada, Hungary, Indonesia and Poland. The chairmanship of this Commission will rotate among the members for specific periods to be determined by the Commission.

(e) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall carry out its tasks in accordance with the principle of respect for the sovereignty of South Vietnam.

(f) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall operate in accordance with the principle of consultations and unanimity.

(g) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall begin operating when a ceasefire comes into force in Vietnam. As regards the provisions in Article 18 (b) concerning the four parties, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall end its activities when the Commission's tasks of control and supervision regarding these provisions have been fulfilled. As regards the provisions in Article 18 (c) concerning the two South Vietnamese parties, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall end its activities on the request of the government formed after the general elections in South Vietnam provided for in Article 9 (b).

(h) The four parties shall agree immediately on the organization, means of activity, and expenditures of the International Commission of Control and Supervision. The relationship between the International Commission and the International Conference will be agreed upon by the International Commission and the International Conference.

Article 19

The parties agree on the convening of an International Conference within thirty days of the signing of this Agreement to acknowledge the signed agreements; to guarantee the ending of the war, the maintenance of peace in Vietnam, the respect of the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination; and to contribute to and guarantee peace in Indochina.

The United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, on behalf of the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam, will propose to the following parties that they participate in this International Conference: the People's Republic of China, the Republic of France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the four countries of the International Commission of Control and Supervision, and the Secretary General of the United Nations, together with the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam.

Chapter VII

Regarding Cambodia and Laos

Article 20

(a) The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam shall strictly respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos, which recognized the Cambodian and the Lao peoples' fundamental national rights, i.e., the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of these countries. The parties shall respect the neutrality of Cambodia and Laos.

The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam undertake to refrain from using the territory of Cambodia and the territory of Laos to encroach on the sovereignty and security of one another and of other countries.

(b) Foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos, totally withdraw from and refrain from reintroducing into these two countries troops, military advisers and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war material.

(c) The internal affairs of Cambodia and Laos shall be settled by the people of each of these countries without foreign interference.

(d) The problems existing between the Indochinese countries shall be settled by the Indochinese parties on the basis of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Chapter VIII

The Relationship Between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

Article 21

The United States anticipates that this Agreement will usher in an era of reconciliation with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as with all the peoples of Indochina. In pursuance of its traditional policy, the United States will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to postwar reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and throughout Indochina.

Article 22

The ending of the war, the restoration of peace in Vietnam, and the strict implementation of this Agreement will create conditions for establishing a new, equal and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and the Democratic

Republic of Vietnam on the basis of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, and noninterference in each other's internal affairs. At the same time this will ensure stable peace in Vietnam and contribute to the preservation of lasting peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia.

Chapter IX

OTHER PROVISIONS

Article 23

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature by plenipotentiary representatives of the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam. All the parties concerned shall strictly implement this Agreement and its Protocols.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the Republic of Vietnam

TRAN VAN LAM
Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam

NGUYEN THI BINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM

The Government of the United States of America, with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with the concurrence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam,

With a view to ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam on the basis of respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, and to contributing to the consolidation of peace in Asia and the world,

Have agreed on the following provisions and undertake to respect and to implement them:

[Text of Agreement Chapters I–VIII Same As Above]

Chapter IX

OTHER PROVISIONS

Article 23

The Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam shall enter into force upon signature of this document by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and upon signature of a document in the same terms by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. The Agreement and the protocols to it shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

For the Government of the
United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Protocol on Prisoners and Detainees

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE RETURN OF CAPTURED MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FOREIGN CIVILIANS AND CAPTURED AND DETAINED VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL.

The Parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam,

In implementation of Article 8 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date providing for the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians, and captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel,

Have agreed as follows:

THE RETURN OF CAPTURED MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FOREIGN CIVILIANS

Article 1

The parties signatory to the Agreement shall return the captured military personnel of the parties mentioned in Article 8 (a) of the Agreement as follows:

—all captured military personnel of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a) of the Agreement shall be returned to United States authorities;

—all captured Vietnamese military personnel, whether belonging to regular or irregular armed forces, shall be returned to the two South Vietnamese parties; they shall be returned to that South Vietnamese party under whose command they served.

Article 2

All captured civilians who are nationals of the United States or of any other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a) of the Agreement shall be returned to United States authorities. All other captured foreign civilians shall be returned to the authorities of their country of nationality by any one of the parties willing and able to do so.

Article 3

The parties shall today exchange complete lists of captured persons mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 of this Protocol.

Article 4

(a) The return of all captured persons mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 of this Protocol shall be completed within sixty days of the signing of the Agreement at a rate no slower than the rate of withdrawal from South Vietnam of United States forces and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 5 of the Agreement.

(b) Persons who are seriously ill, wounded or maimed, old persons and women shall be returned first. The remainder shall be returned either by returning all from one detention place after another or in order of their dates of capture, beginning with those who have been held the longest.

Article 5

The return and reception of the persons mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 of this Protocol shall be carried out at places convenient to the concerned parties. Places of return shall be agreed upon by the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. The parties shall ensure the safety of personnel engaged in the return and reception of those persons.

Article 6

Each party shall return all captured persons mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 of this Protocol without delay and shall facilitate their return and reception. The detaining parties shall not deny or delay their return for any reason, including the fact that captured persons may, on any grounds, have been prosecuted or sentenced.

THE RETURN OF CAPTURED AND DETAINED VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Article 7

(a) The question of the return of Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam will be resolved by the two South Vietnamese parties on the basis of the principles of Article 21 (b) of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam of July 20, 1954, which reads as follows:

> "The term 'civilian internees' is understood to mean all persons who, having in any way contributed to the political and armed struggle between the two parties, have been arrested for that reason and have been kept in detention by either party during the period of hostilities."

(b) The two South Vietnamese parties will do so in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord with a view to ending hatred and enmity in order to ease suffering and to reunite families. The two South Vietnamese parties will do their utmost to resolve this question within ninety days after the cease-fire comes into effect.

(c) Within fifteen days after the cease-fire comes into effect, the two South Vietnamese parties shall exchange lists of the Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained by each party and lists of the places at which they are held.

TREATMENT OF CAPTURED PERSONS DURING DETENTION

Article 8

(a) All captured military personnel of the parties and captured foreign civilians of the parties shall be treated humanely at all times, and in accordance with international practice.

They shall be protected against all violence to life and person, in particular against murder in any form, mutilation, torture and cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity. These persons shall not be forced to join the armed forces of the detaining party.

They shall be given adequate food, clothing, shelter, and the medical attention required for their state of health. They shall be allowed to exchange post cards and letters with their families and receive parcels.

(b) All Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam shall be treated humanely at all times, and in accordance with international practice.

They shall be protected against all violence to life and person, in particular against murder in any form, mutilation, torture and cruel treatment, and outrages against personal dignity. The detaining parties shall not deny or delay their return for any reason, including the fact that captured persons may, on any grounds, have been prosecuted or sentenced. These persons shall not be forced to join the armed forces of the detaining party.

They shall be given adequate food, clothing, shelter, and the medical attention required for their state of health. They shall be allowed to exchange post cards and letters with their families and receive parcels.

Article 9

(a) To contribute to improving the living conditions of the captured military personnel of the parties and foreign civilians of the parties, the parties shall, within fifteen days after the cease-fire comes into effect, agree upon the designation of two or more national Red Cross societies to visit all places where captured military personnel and foreign civilians are held.

(b) To contribute to improving the living conditions of the captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel, the two South Vietnamese parties shall, within fifteen days after the cease-fire comes into effect, agree upon the designation of two or more national Red Cross societies to visit all places where the captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel are held.

WITH REGARD TO DEAD AND MISSING PERSONS

Article 10

(a) The Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall ensure joint action by the parties in implementing Article 8 (b) of the Agreement. When the Four-Party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities, a Four-Party Joint Military team shall be maintained to carry on this task.

(b) With regard to Vietnamese civilian personnel dead or missing in South Vietnam, the two South Vietnamese parties shall help each other to obtain information about missing persons, determine the location and take care of the graves of the dead, in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, in keeping with the people's aspirations.

OTHER PROVISIONS

Article 11

(a) The Four-Party and Two-Party Joint Military Commissions will have the responsibility of determining immediately the modalities of implementing the provisions of this Protocol consistent with their respective responsibilities under Articles 16 (a) and 17 (a) of the Agreement. In case the Joint Military Commissions, when carrying out their tasks, cannot reach agreement on a matter pertaining to the return of captured personnel they shall refer to the International Commission for its assistance.

(b) The Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall form, in addition to the teams established by the Protocol concerning the cease-fire in South Vietnam and the Joint Military Commissions, a subcommission on captured persons and, as required, joint military teams on captured persons to assist the Commission in its tasks.

(c) From the time the cease-fire comes into force to the time when the Two-Party Joint Military Commission becomes operational, the two South Vietnamese parties' delegations to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall form a provisional sub-commission and provisional joint military teams to carry out its tasks concerning captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel.

(d) The Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall send joint military teams to observe the return of the persons mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 of this Protocol

at each place in Vietnam where such persons are being returned, and at the last detention places from which these persons will be taken to the places of return. The Two-Party Joint Military Commission shall send joint military teams to observe the return of Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained at each place in South Vietnam where such persons are being returned, and at the last detention places from which these persons will be taken to the places of return.

Article 12

In implementation of Articles 18 (b) and 18 (c) of the Agreement, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall have the responsibility to control and supervise the observance of Articles 1 through 7 of this Protocol through observation of the return of captured military personnel, foreign civilians and captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel at each place in Vietnam where these persons are being returned, and at the last detention places from which these persons will be taken to the places of return, the examination of lists, and the investigation of violations of the provisions of the above-mentioned Articles.

Article 13

Within five days after signature of this Protocol, each party shall publish the text of the Protocol and communicate it to all the captured persons covered by the Protocol and being detained by that party.

Article 14

This Protocol shall come into force upon signature by plenipotentiary representatives of all the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam. It shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the
United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Republic of Vietnam

TRAN VAN LAM
Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam

NGUYEN THI BINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE RETURN OF CAPTURED MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FOREIGN CIVILIANS AND CAPTURED AND DETAINED VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

The Government of the United States of America, with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with the concurrence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam,

In implementation of Article 8 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date providing for the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians, and captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel,

Have agreed as follows:

[Text of Protocol Articles 1-13 same as above]

Article 14

The Protocol to the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam concerning the Return of Captured Military Personnel and Foreign Civilians and Captured and Detained Vietnamese Civilian Personnel shall enter into force upon signature of this document by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and upon signature of a document in the same terms by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. The Protocol shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

For the Government of the United States of America	For the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam
WILLIAM P. ROGERS *Secretary of State*	NGUYEN DUY TRINH *Minister for Foreign Affairs*

Protocol on the International Commission of Control and Supervision

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION

The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam,

In implementation of Article 18 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date providing for the formation of the International Commission of Control and Supervision,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The implementation of the Agreement is the responsibility of the parties signatory to the Agreement.

The functions of the International Commission are to control and supervise the implementation of the provisions mentioned in Article 18 of the Agreement. In carrying out these functions, the International Commission shall:

(a) Follow the implementation of the above mentioned provisions of the Agreement through communication with the parties and on-the-spot observation at the places where this is required;

(b) Investigate violations of the provisions which fall under the control and supervision of the Commission;

(c) When necessary, cooperate with the Joint Military Commissions in deterring and detecting violations of the above-mentioned provisions.

Article 2

The International Commission shall investigate violations of the provisions described in Article 18 of the Agreement on the request of the Four-Party Joint

Military Commission, or of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission, or of any party, or, with respect to Article 9 (b) of the Agreement on general elections, of the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, or in any case where the International Commission has other adequate grounds for considering that there has been a violation of those provisions. It is understood that, in carrying out this task, the International Commission shall function with the concerned parties' assistance and cooperation as required.

Article 3

(a) When the International Commission finds that there is a serious violation in the implementation of the Agreement or a threat to peace against which the Commission can find no appropriate measure, the Commission shall report this to the four parties to the Agreement so that they can hold consultations to find a solution.

(b) In accordance with Article 18 (f) of the Agreement, the International Commission's reports shall be made with the unanimous agreement of the representatives of all the four members. In case no unanimity is reached, the Commission shall forward the different views to the four parties in accordance with Article 18 (b) of the Agreement, or to the two South Vietnamese parties in accordance with Article 18 (c) of the Agreement, but these shall not be considered as reports of the Commission.

Article 4

(a) The headquarters of the International Commission shall be at Saigon.

(b) There shall be seven regional teams located in the regions shown on the annexed map and based at the following places:

Regions	*Places*
I	Hue
II	Danang
III	Pleiku
IV	Phan Thiet
V	Bien Hoa
VI	My Tho
VII	Can Tho

The International Commission shall designate three teams for the region of Saigon–Gia Dinh.

(c) There shall be twenty-six teams operating in the areas shown on the annexed map and based at the following places in South Vietnam:

Region I

Quang Tri
Phu Bai

Region II

Hoi An
Tam Ky
Chu Lai

Region III

Kontum
Hau Bon
Phu Cat
Tuy An
Ninh Hoa
Ban Me Thuot

Region IV

Da Lat
Bao Loc
Phan Rang

Region V

An Loc
Xuan Loc
Ben Cat
Cu Chi
Tan An

Region VI

Moc Hoa
Giong Trom

Region VII

Tri Ton

Vinh Long
Vi Thanh
Khanh Hung
Quan Long

(d) There shall be twelve teams located as shown on the annexed map and based at the following places:

Gio Linh (to cover the area south of the Provisional Military Demarcation Line)
Lao Bao
Ben Het
Duc Co
Chu Lai
Qui Nhon
Nha Trang
Vung Tau
Xa Mat
Bien Hoa Airfield
Hong Ngu
Can Tho

(e) There shall be seven teams, six of which shall be available for assignment to the points of entry which are not listed in paragraph (d) above and which the two South Vietnamese parties choose as points for legitimate entry to South Vietnam for replacement of armaments, munitions, and war material permitted by Article 7 of the Agreement. Any team or teams not needed for the above mentioned assignment shall be available for other tasks, in keeping with the Commission's responsibility for control and supervision.

(f) There shall be seven teams to control and supervise the return of captured and detained personnel of the parties.

Article 5

(a) To carry out its tasks concerning the return of the captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties as stipulated by Article 8 (a) of the Agreement, the International Commission shall, during the time of such return, send one control and supervision team to each place in Vietnam where the captured persons are being returned and to the last detention places from which these persons will be taken to the places of return.

(b) To carry out its tasks concerning the return of the Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam mentioned in Article 8 (c) of the Agreement, the International Commission shall, during the time of such return,

send one control and supervision team to each place in South Vietnam where the above-mentioned captured and detained persons are being returned, and to the last detention places from which these persons shall be taken to the places of return.

Article 6

To carry out its tasks regarding Article 9 (b) of the Agreement on the free and democratic general elections in South Vietnam, the International Commission shall organize additional teams, when necessary. The International Commission shall discuss this question in advance with the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord. If additional teams are necessary for this purpose, they shall be formed thirty days before the general elections.

Article 7

The International Commission shall continually keep under review its size, and shall reduce the number of its teams, its representatives or other personnel, or both, when those teams, representatives or personnel have accomplished the tasks assigned to them and are not required for other tasks. At the same time, the expenditures of the International Commission shall be reduced correspondingly.

Article 8

Each member of the International Commission shall make available at all times the following numbers of qualified personnel:

(a) One senior representative and twenty-six others for the headquarters staff.
(b) Five for each of the seven regional teams.
(c) Two for each of the other international control teams, except for the teams at Gio Linh and Vung Tau, each of which shall have three.
(d) One hundred sixteen for the purpose of providing support to the Commission Headquarters and its teams.

Article 9

(a) The International Commission, and each of its teams, shall act as a single body comprising representatives of all four members.
(b) Each member has the responsibility to ensure the presence of its representatives at all levels of the International Commission. In case a representative is absent, the member concerned shall immediately designate a replacement.

Article 10

(a) The parties shall afford full cooperation assistance, and protection to the International Commission.

(b) The parties shall at all times maintain regular and continuous liaison with the International Commission. During the existence of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, the delegations of the parties to that Commission shall also perform liaison functions with the International Commission. After the Four-Party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities, such liaison shall be maintained through the Two-Party Joint Military Commission, liaison missions, or other adequate means.

(c) The International Commission and the Joint Military Commissions shall closely cooperate with and assist each other in carrying out their respective functions.

(d) Wherever a team is stationed or operating, the concerned party shall designate a liaison officer to the team to cooperate with and assist it in carrying out without hindrance its task of control and supervision. When a team is carrying out an investigation, a liaison officer from each concerned party shall have the opportunity to accompany it, provided the investigation is not thereby delayed.

(e) Each party shall give the International Commission reasonable advance notice of all proposed actions concerning those provisions of the Agreement that are to be controlled and supervised by the International Commission.

(f) The International Commission, including its teams, is allowed such movement for observation as is reasonably required for the proper exercise of its functions as stipulated in the Agreement. In carrying out these functions, the International Commission, including its teams, shall enjoy all necessary assistance and cooperation from the parties concerned.

Article 11

In supervising the holding of the free and democratic general elections described in Articles 9 (b) and 12 (b) of the Agreement in accordance with modalities to be agreed upon between the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord and the International Commission, the latter shall receive full cooperation and assistance from the National Council.

Article 12

The International Commission and its personnel who have the nationality of a member state shall, while carrying out their tasks, enjoy privileges and immunities equivalent to those accorded diplomatic missions and diplomatic agents.

Article 13

The International Commission may use the means of communication and transport necessary to perform its functions. Each South Vietnamese party shall make available for rent to the International Commission appropriate office and accommodation facilities and shall assist it in obtaining such facilities. The International Commission may receive from the parties, on mutually agreeable terms, the necessary means of communication and transport and may purchase from any source necessary equipment and services not obtained from the parties. The International Commission shall possess these means.

Article 14

The expenses for the activities of the International Commission shall be borne by the parties and the members of the International Commission in accordance with the provisions of this Article:

(a) Each member country of the International Commission shall pay the salaries and allowances of its personnel.

(b) All other expenses incurred by the International Commission shall be met from a fund to which each of the four parties shall contribute twenty-three percent (23%) and to which each member of the International Commission shall contribute two percent (2%).

(c) Within thirty days of the date of entry into force of this Protocol, each of the four parties shall provide the International Commission with an initial sum equivalent to four million, five hundred thousand (4,500,000) French francs in convertible currency, which sum shall be credited against the amounts due from that party under the first budget.

(d) The International Commission shall prepare its own budgets. After the International Commission approves a budget, it shall transmit it to all parties signatory to the Agreement for their approval. Only after the budgets have been approved by the four parties to the Agreement shall they be obliged to make their contributions. However, in case the parties to the Agreement do not agree on a new budget, the International Commission shall temporarily base its expenditures on the previous budget, except for the extraordinary, one-time expenditures for installation or for the acquisition of equipment, and the parties shall continue to make their contributions on that basis until a new budget is approved.

Article 15

(a) The headquarters shall be operational and in place within twenty-four hours after the cease-fire.

(b) The regional teams shall be operational and in place, and three teams for supervision and control of the return of the captured and detained personnel shall be operational and ready for dispatch within forty-eight hours after the cease-fire.

(c) Other teams shall be operational and in place within fifteen to thirty days after the cease-fire.

Article 16

Meetings shall be convened at the call of the Chairman. The International Commission shall adopt other working procedures appropriate for the effective discharge of its functions and consistent with respect for the sovereignty of South Vietnam.

Article 17

The Members of the International Commission may accept the obligations of this Protocol by sending notes of acceptance to the four parties signatory to the Agreement. Should a member of the International Commission decide to withdraw from the International Commission, it may do so by giving three months notice by means of notes to the four parties to the Agreement, in which case those four parties shall consult among themselves for the purpose of agreeing upon a replacement member.

Article 18

This Protocol shall enter into force upon signature by plenipotentiary representatives of all the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam. It shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the
United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Republic of Vietnam

TRAN VAN LAM
Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam	For the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam
NGUYEN DUY TRINH *Minister for Foreign Affairs*	NGUYEN THI BINH *Minister for Foreign Affairs*

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION

The Government of the United States of America, with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with the concurrence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam,

In implementation of Article 18 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date providing for the formation of the International Commission of Control and Supervision,

Have agreed as follows:

[Text of Protocol Articles 1–17 same as above.]

Article 18

The Protocol to the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam concerning the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall enter into force upon signature of this document by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and upon signature of a document in the same terms by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. The Protocol shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

For the Government of the
United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Protocol on the Cease-Fire in South Viet-Nam and the Joint Military Commissions

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSIONS

The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam,

In implementation of the first paragraph of Article 2, Article 3, Article 5, Article 6, Article 16 and Article 17 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date which provide for the cease-fire in South Vietnam and the establishment of a Four-Party Joint Military Commission and a Two-Party Joint Military Commission,

Have agreed as follows:

CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Article 1

The High Commands of the parties in South Vietnam shall issue prompt and timely orders to all regular and irregular armed forces and the armed police under their command to completely end hostilities throughout South Vietnam, at the exact time stipulated in Article 2 of the Agreement and ensure that these armed forces and armed police comply with these orders and respect the cease-fire.

Article 2

(a) As soon as the cease-fire comes into force and until regulations are issued by the Joint Military Commissions, all ground, river, sea and air combat forces of the parties in South Vietnam shall remain in place; that is, in order to ensure a stable cease-fire, there shall be no major redeployments or movements that would extend each party's area of control or would result in contact between opposing armed forces and clashes which might take place.

(b) All regular and irregular armed forces and the armed police of the parties in South Vietnam shall observe the prohibition of the following acts:

(1) Armed patrols into areas controlled by opposing armed forces and flights by bomber and fighter aircraft of all types, except for unarmed flights for proficiency training and maintenance;

(2) Armed attacks against any person, either military or civilian, by any means whatsoever, including the use of small arms, mortars, artillery bombing and strafing by airplanes and any other type of weapon or explosive device;

(3) All combat operations on the ground, on rivers, on the sea and in the air;

(4) All hostile acts, terrorism or reprisals; and

(5) All acts endangering lives or public or private property.

Article 3

(a) The above-mentioned prohibitions shall not hamper or restrict:

(1) Civilian supply, freedom of movement, freedom to work, and freedom of the people to engage in trade, and civilian communication and transportation between and among all areas in South Vietnam;

(2) The use by each party in areas under its control of military support elements, such as engineer and transportation units, in repair and construction of public facilities and the transportation and supplying of the population;

(3) Normal military proficiency training conducted by the parties in the areas under their respective control with due regard for public safety.

(b) The Joint Military Commissions shall immediately agree on corridors, routes, and other regulations governing the movement of military transport aircraft, military transport vehicles, and military transport vessels of all types of one party going through areas under the control of other parties.

Article 4

In order to avert conflict and ensure normal conditions for those armed forces which are in direct contact, and pending regulation by the Joint Military Commissions, the commanders of the opposing armed forces at those places of direct contact shall meet as soon as the cease-fire comes into force with a view to reaching an agreement on temporary measures to avert conflict and to ensure supply and medical care for these armed forces.

Article 5

(a) Within fifteen days after the cease-fire comes into effect, each party shall do its utmost to complete the removal or deactivation of all demolition objects, mine-fields, traps, obstacles or other dangerous objects placed previously, so as not

to hamper the population's movement and work, in the first place on waterways, roads and railroads in South Vietnam. Those mines which cannot be removed or deactivated within that time shall be clearly marked and must be removed or deactivated as soon as possible.

(b) Emplacement of mines is prohibited, except as a defensive measure around the edges of military installations in places where they do not hamper the population's movement and work, and movement on waterways, roads and railroads. Mines and other obstacles already in place at the edges of military installations may remain in place if they are in places where they do not hamper the population's movement and work, and movement on waterways, roads and railroads.

Article 6

Civilian police and civilian security personnel of the parties in South Vietnam, who are responsible for the maintenance of law and order, shall strictly respect the prohibitions set forth in Article 2 of this Protocol. As required by their responsibilities, normally they shall be authorized to carry pistols, but when required by unusual circumstances, they shall be allowed to carry other small individual arms.

Article 7

(a) The entry into South Vietnam of replacement armaments, munitions, and war material permitted under Article 7 of the Agreement shall take place under the supervision and control of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission and of the International Commission of Control and Supervision and through such points of entry only as are designated by the two South Vietnamese parties. The two South Vietnamese parties shall agree on these points of entry within fifteen days after the entry into force of the cease-fire. The two South Vietnamese parties may select as many as six points of entry which are not included in the list of places where teams of the International Commission of Control and Supervision are to be based contained in Article 4 (d) of the Protocol concerning the International Commission. At the same time, the two South Vietnamese parties may also select points of entry from the list of places set forth in Article 4 (d) of that Protocol.

(b) Each of the designated points of entry shall be available only for that South Vietnamese party which is in control of that point. The two South Vietnamese parties shall have an equal number of points of entry.

Article 8

(a) In implementation of Article 5 of the Agreement, the United States and the other foreign countries referred to in Article 5 of the Agreement shall take with them all their armaments, munitions, and war material. Transfers of such items

which would leave them in South Vietnam shall not be made subsequent to the entry into force of the Agreement except for transfers of communications, transport, and other non-combat material to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission or the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

(b) Within five days after the entry into force of the cease-fire, the United States shall inform the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of Control and Supervision of the general plans for timing of complete troop withdrawals which shall take place in four phases of fifteen days each. It is anticipated that the numbers of troops withdrawn in each phase are not likely to be widely different, although it is not feasible to ensure equal numbers. The approximate numbers to be withdrawn in each phase shall be given to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of Control and Supervision sufficiently in advance of actual withdrawals so that they can properly carry out their tasks in relation thereto.

Article 9

(a) In implementation of Article 6 of the Agreement, the United States and the other foreign countries referred to in that Article shall dismantle and remove from South Vietnam or destroy all military bases in South Vietnam of the United States and of the other foreign countries referred to in that Article, including weapons, mines, and other military equipment at these bases, for the purpose of making them unusable for military purposes.

(b) The United States shall supply the Four Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of Control and Supervision with necessary information on plans for base dismantlement so that those Commissions can properly carry out their tasks in relation thereto.

THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSIONS

Article 10

(a) The implementation of the Agreement is the responsibility of the parties signatory to the Agreement.

The Four-Party Joint Military Commission has the task of ensuring joint action by the parties in implementing the Agreement by serving as a channel of communication among the parties, by drawing up plans and fixing the modalities to carry out, coordinate, follow and inspect the implementation of the provisions mentioned in Article 16 of the Agreement, and by negotiating and settling all matters concerning the implementation of those provisions.

(b) The concrete tasks of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission are:

(1) To coordinate, follow and inspect the implementation of the above-mentioned provisions of the Agreement by the four parties;

(2) To deter and detect violations, to deal with cases of violation, and to settle conflicts and matters of contention between the parties relating to the above-mentioned provisions;

(3) To dispatch without delay one or more joint teams, as required by specific cases, to any part of South Vietnam, to investigate alleged violations of the Agreement and to assist the parties in finding measures to prevent recurrence of similar cases;

(4) To engage in observation at the places where this is necessary in the exercise of its functions;

(5) To perform such additional tasks as it may, by unanimous decision, determine.

Article 11

(a) There shall be a Central Joint Military Commission located in Saigon. Each party shall designate immediately a military delegation of fifty-nine persons to represent it on the Central Commission. The senior officer designated by each party shall be a general officer, or equivalent.

(b) There shall be seven Regional Joint Military Commissions located in the regions shown on the annexed map and based at the following places:

Regions	Places
I	Hue
II	Danang
III	Pleiku
IV	Phan Thiet
V	Boen Hoa
VI	My Tho
VII	Can Tho

Each party shall designate a military delegation of sixteen persons to represent it on each Regional Commission. The senior officer designated by each party shall be an officer from the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to Colonel, or equivalent.

(c) There shall be a joint military team operating in each of the areas shown on the annexed map and based at each of the following places in South Vietnam:

Region I

Quang Tri
Phu Bai

Region II

Hoi An
Tam Ky
Chu Lai

Region III

Kontum
Hau Bon
Phu Cat
Tuy An
Ninh Hoa
Ban Me Thuot

Region IV

Da Lat
Bao Loc
Phan Rang

Region V

An Loc
Xuan Loc
Ben Cat
Cu Chi
Tan An

Region VI

Moc Hoa
Giong Trom

Region VII

Tri Ton
Vinh Long
Vi Thanh
Khanh Hung
Quan Long

Each party shall provide four qualified persons for each joint military team. The senior person designated by each party shall be an officer from the rank of Major to Lieutenant Colonel, or equivalent.

(d) The Regional Joint Military Commissions shall assist the Central Joint Military Commission in performing its tasks and shall supervise the operations of the joint military teams. The region of Saigon–Gia Dinh is placed under the responsibility of the Central Commission which shall designate joint military teams to operate in this region.

(e) Each party shall be authorized to provide support and guard personnel for its delegations to the Central Joint Military Commission and Regional Joint Military Commissions, and for its members of the joint military teams. The total number of support and guard personnel for each party shall not exceed five hundred and fifty.

(f) The Central Joint Military Commission may establish such joint sub-commissions, joint staffs and joint military teams as circumstances may require. The Central Commission shall determine the numbers of personnel required for any additional subcommissions, staffs or teams it establishes, provided that each party shall designate one-fourth of the number of personnel required and that the total number of personnel for the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, to include its staffs, teams, and support personnel, shall not exceed three thousand three hundred.

(g) The delegations of the two South Vietnamese parties may, by agreement, establish provisional sub-commissions and joint military teams to carry out the tasks specifically assigned to them by Article 17 of the Agreement. With respect to Article 7 of the Agreement, the two South Vietnamese parties' delegations to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall establish joint military teams at the points of entry into South Vietnam used for replacement of armaments, munitions and war material which are designated in accordance with Article 7 of this Protocol. From the time the cease-fire comes into force to the time when the Two-Party Joint Military Commission becomes operational, the two South Vietnamese parties' delegations to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall form a provisional sub-commission and provisional joint military teams to carry out its tasks concerning captured and detained Vietnamese civilian personnel. Where necessary for the above purposes, the two South Vietnamese parties may agree to assign personnel additional to those assigned to the two South Vietnamese delegations to the Four Party Joint Military Commission.

Article 12

(a) In accordance with Article 17 of the Agreement which stipulates that the two South Vietnamese parties shall immediately designate their respective representatives to form the Two-Party Joint Military Commission, twenty-four hours after the cease-fire comes into force, the two designated South Vietnamese parties' delegations to the Two-Party Joint Military Commission shall meet in Saigon so as

to reach an agreement as soon as possible on organization and operation of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission, as well as the measures and organization aimed at enforcing the cease-fire and preserving peace in South Vietnam.

(b) From the time the cease-fire comes into force to the time when the Two-Party Joint Military Commission becomes operational, the two South Vietnamese parties' delegations to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission at all levels shall simultaneously assume the tasks of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission at all levels, in addition to their functions as delegations to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.

(c) If, at the time the Four-Party Joint Military Commission ceases its operation in accordance with Article 16 of the Agreement, agreement has not been reached on organization of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission, the delegations of the two South Vietnamese parties serving with the Four-Party Joint Military Commission at all levels shall continue temporarily to work together as a provisional two-party joint military commission and to assume the tasks of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission at all levels until the Two-Party Joint Military Commission becomes operational.

Article 13

In application of the principle of unanimity, the Joint Military Commissions shall have no chairmen, and meetings shall be convened at the request of any representative. The Joint Military Commissions shall adopt working procedures appropriate for the effective discharge of their functions and responsibilities.

Article 14

The Joint Military Commissions and the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall closely cooperate with and assist each other in carrying out their respective functions. Each Joint Military Commission shall inform the International Commission about the implementation of those provisions of the Agreement for which that Joint Military Commission has responsibility and which are within the competence of the International Commission. Each Joint Military Commission may request the International Commission to carry out specific observation activities.

Article 15

The Central Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall begin operating twenty-four hours after the cease-fire comes into force. The Regional Four-Party Joint Military Commissions shall begin operating forty-eight hours after the ceasefire comes into force. The joint military teams based at the places listed in Article 11 (c) of this Protocol shall begin operating no later than fifteen days after the cease-

fire comes into force. The delegations of the two South Vietnamese parties shall simultaneously begin to assume the tasks of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission as provided in Article 12 of this Protocol.

Article 16

(a) The parties shall provide full protection and all necessary assistance and cooperation to the Joint Military Commissions at all levels, in the discharge of their tasks.

(b) The Joint Military Commissions and their personnel, while carrying out their tasks, shall enjoy privileges and immunities equivalent to those accorded diplomatic missions and diplomatic agents.

(c) The personnel of the Joint Military Commissions may carry pistols and wear special insignia decided upon by each Central Joint Military Commission. The personnel of each party while guarding Commission installations or equipment may be authorized to carry other individual small arms, as determined by each Central Joint Military Commission.

Article 17

(a) The delegation of each party to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the Two-Party Joint Military Commission shall have its own offices, communication, logistics and transportation means, including aircraft when necessary.

(b) Each party, in its areas of control shall provide appropriate office and accommodation facilities to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the Two-Party Joint Military Commission at all levels.

(c) The parties shall endeavor to provide to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the Two-Party Joint Military Commission, by means of loan, lease, or gift, the common means of operation, including equipment for communication, supply, and transport, including aircraft when necessary. The Joint Military Commissions may purchase from any source necessary facilities, equipment, and services which are not supplied by the parties. The Joint Military Commissions shall possess and use these facilities and this equipment.

(d) The facilities and the equipment for common use mentioned above shall be returned to the parties when the Joint Military Commissions have ended their activities.

Article 18

The common expenses of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission shall be borne equally by the four parties, and the common expenses of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission in South Vietnam shall be borne equally by these two parties.

Article 19

This Protocol shall enter into force upon signature by plenipotentiary representatives of all the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam. It shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the Republic of Vietnam

TRAN VAN LAM
Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Separate Numbered Page]

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam

NGUYEN THI BINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSIONS

The Government of the United States of America with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with the concurrence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam,

In implementation of the first paragraph of Article 2, Article 3, Article 5, Article 6, Article 16 and Article 17 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date which provide for the cease-fire in South Vietnam and the establishment of a Four-Party Joint Military Commission and a Two-Party Joint Military Commission,

Have agreed as follows:

[Text of Protocol Articles 1–18 same as above]

Article 19

The Protocol to the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam concerning the Cease-fire in South Vietnam and the Joint Military Commissions shall enter into force upon signature of this document by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and upon signature of a document in the same terms by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. The Protocol shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

DONE in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

For the Government of the
United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Protocol on Mine Clearing in North Viet-Nam

PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIETNAM CONCERNING THE REMOVAL, PERMANENT DEACTIVATION, OR DESTRUCTION OF MINES IN THE TERRITORIAL WATERS, PORTS, HARBORS, AND WATERWAYS OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

The Government of the United States of America,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam,

In implementation of the second paragraph of Article 2 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed on this date,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The United States shall clear all the mines it has placed in the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This mine clearing operation shall be accomplished by rendering the mines harmless through removal, permanent deactivation, or destruction.

Article 2

With a view to ensuring lasting safety for the movement of people and watercraft and the protection of important installations, mines shall, on the request of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, be removed or destroyed in the indicated areas; and whenever their removal or destruction is impossible mines shall be permanently deactivated and their emplacement clearly marked.

Article 3

The mine clearing operation shall begin at twenty-four hundred (2400) hours GMT on January 27, 1973. The representatives of the two parties shall consult immediately on relevant factors and agree upon the earliest possible target date for the completion of the work.

Article 4

The mine clearing operation shall be conducted in accordance with priorities and timing agreed upon by the two parties. For this purpose, representatives of the two parties shall meet at an early date to reach agreement on a program and a plan of implementation. To this end:

(a) The United States shall provide its plan for mine clearing operations, including maps of the minefields and information concerning the types numbers and properties of the mines;

(b) The Democratic Republic of Vietnam shall provide all available maps and hydrographic charts and indicate the mined places and all other potential hazards to the mine clearing operations that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is aware of;

(c) The two parties shall agree on the timing of implementation of each segment of the plan and provide timely notice to the public at least forty-eight hours in advance of the beginning of mine clearing operations for that segment.

Article 5

The United States shall be responsible for the mine clearance on inland waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam shall, to the full extent of its capabilities, actively participate in the mine clearance with the means of surveying, removal and destruction and technical advice supplied by the United States.

Article 6

With a view to ensuring the safe movement of people and watercraft on waterways and at sea, the United States shall in the mine clearing process supply timely information about the progress of mine clearing in each area, and about the remaining mines to be destroyed. The United States shall issue a communique when the operations have been concluded.

Article 7

In conducting mine clearing operations, the U.S. personnel engaged in these operations shall respect the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and shall engage in no activities inconsistent with the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam and this Protocol. The U.S. personnel engaged in the mine clearing operations shall be immune from the jurisdiction of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam for the duration of the mine clearing operations.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam shall ensure the safety of the U.S. personnel for the duration of their mine clearing activities on the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and shall provide this personnel with all possible assistance and the means needed in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that have been agreed upon by the two parties.

Article 8

This Protocol to the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam shall enter into force upon signature by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It shall be strictly implemented by the two parties.

DONE in, Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

For the Government of the
United States of America

WILLIAM P. ROGERS
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NGUYEN DUY TRINH
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAA	antiaircraft artillery
AAG	Army Advisory Group
ACTOVRAD	Coastal Surveillance Radar System
AID	Agency for International Development
ARG	amphibious ready group
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
CBU	cluster bomblet munition
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CICC	Combined Interdiction Coordinating Committee
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
CINCPACAF	Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Force
CINCREDCOM	Commander in Chief, Readiness Command
COMNAVFORV	Commander, US Naval Forces, Vietnam
COMSEC	communications security
COMUSMACV	Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
COMUSSAG	Commander, US Support Activities Group
CONPLAN	Contingency Plan
CONUS	Continental United States
CORDS	Civil Operations and Rural Development Support
COSVN	Central Office for South Vietnam
CRIMP	Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program
CVA	Attack Carrier
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DRSTO	Defense Resource Surveillance and Termination Office
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
ECM	electonic countermeasures
ELINT	electronic intelligence
FANK	Forces Armees Nationales Khmeres
FPJMC	four-party joint military commission
FPJMT	four-party joint military team

FSB	fire support base
FWMAF	Free World Military Assistance Forces
GCI	ground controlled intercept
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HES	Hamlet Evaluation System
I&L	Installations and Logistics
IAHG	Indochina Ad Hoc Group
ICC	International Control Commission
ICCS	International Commission of Control and Supervision
ISA	International Security Affairs
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JGS	Joint General Staff
JIC	Joint Information Center
JUSMAG	Joint US Military Advisor Group
JUSMAGTHAI	Joint US Military Assistance Group, Thailand
LCM	landing craft, mechanized
LOC	lines of communication
LORAN	long-range aid to navigation
LVT	landing vehicle, tracked
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACEA	Military Assistance Command for Economic Affairs
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MEDT	Military Equipment Delivery Team
MEDTC-Rear	Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia
MIG aircraft	Mikoyan-Gurevich (Soviet-Russian aircraft)
MR	Military Region
MRTTH	Military Region Tri Thien Hue
MSO	ocean minesweeper
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVFACENGCOM	Naval Facilities Engineering Command
NLF	National Liberation Front
NP	National Police
NSC	National Security Council
NSDM	National Security Decision Memorandum
NVA	North Vietnamese Army

NVN	North Vietnamese
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
PCF	patrol craft fast
PF	Popular Forces
PIRAZ	Positive Identification Radar Advisory Zone
PLF	Pathet Lao
PMDL	Provisional Military Demarcation Line
POL	petroleum, oils and lubricants
PPBS	planning, programming, and budgeting system
PRG	Provisional Revolutionary Government
PSDF	People's Self Defense Force
PSYOP	Psychological Operation
PTF	patrol torpedo fast
RDC	Rural Development Cadre
RF	Regional Force
RLAF	Royal Laotian Air Force
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKFV	Republic of Korea Forces in Vietnam
RTAF	Royal Thailand Air Force
RTAVF	Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SAMs	surface-to-air missiles
SEA LORDS	Southeast Asia Lake-Ocean-River-Delta Strategy
SEAWAGONS	Southeast Asia Watch Group on a Negotiated Settlement
SGU	Special Guerrilla Unit
SIOP	Single Integrated Operational Plan
SRG	Senior Review Group
STOL	short takeoff and landing
SVNLA	South Vietnam Liberation Army
TFS	Tactical Fighter Squadron
TOR	terms of reference
TOW	tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided
USARV	US Army, Vietnam

USSAG	US Support Activities Group
VC	Viet Cong
VCI	Viet Cong infrastructure
VNAF	Vietnam Air Force
VNMC	Vietnamese Marine Corps
VNN	Vietnamese Navy
VSSG	Vietnam Special Studies Group
WESTPAC	Western Pacific
WHEC	high-endurance cutters (Coast Guard)
WSAG	Washington Special Actions Group
YRBM	repair, berthing, messing barge (Coast Guard)

Principal Civilian and Military Officers

President and Commander in Chief	
Richard M. Nixon	20 Jan 69–09 Aug 74
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs	
Henry A. Kissinger	20 Jan 69–Sep 73
Secretary of State	
William P. Rogers	22 Jan 69–03 Sep 73
Henry A. Kissinger	Sep 73–Jan 77
Secretary of Defense	
Melvin R. Laird	22 Jan 69–29 Jan 73
Deputy Secretary of Defense	
David Packard	24 Jan 69–23 Feb 72
Kenneth Rush	23 Feb 72–29 Jan 73
Elliot L. Richardson	Jan 73–May73
Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)	
G. Warren Nutter	04 Mar 69–30 Jan 73
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Systems Analysis)	
Ivan Selin (Acting)	31 Jan 69–30 Jan 70
Gardiner L. Tucker	30 Jan 70–30 Mar 73
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff	
General Earle G. Wheeler, USA	03 Jul 64–02 Jul 70
Admiral Thomas H. Moorer	02 Jul 70–01 Jul 74
Chief of Staff, US Army	
General William C. Westmoreland	03 Jul 68–30 Jun 72
General Bruce Palmer, Jr. (Acting)	01 Jul 72–11 Oct 72
General Creighton W. Abrams	12 Oct 72–04 Sep 74

Chief of Naval Operations	
Admiral Thomas H. Moorer	01 Aug 67–01 Jul 70
Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.	01 Jul 70–01 Jul 74
Chief of Staff, US Air Force	
General John P. McConnell	01 Feb 65–01 Aug 69
General John D. Ryan	01 Aug 69–31 Jul 73
Commandant, US Marine Corps	
General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.	01 Jan 68–31 Dec 71
General Robert E. Cushman, Jr.	01 Jan 72–30 Jun 75
Director, Joint Staff	
Vice Admiral Nels C. Johnson	01 Aug 68–19 Jul 70
Lieutenant General John W. Vogt, USAF	20 Jul 70–07 Apr 72
Rear Admiral Mason B. Freeman (Acting)	08 Apr 72–11 Jun 72
Lieutenant General George M. Seignious, II, USA	12 Jun 72–31 May 74
Commander in Chief, Atlantic	
Admiral Ephraim P. Holmes	17 Jun 67–30 Sep 70
Admiral Charles K. Duncan	30 Sep 70–31 Oct 72
Admiral Isaac C. Kidd	31 Oct 72–30 May 75
Commander in Chief, US European Command	
General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, USA	01 Nov 62–05 May 69
General Andrew J. Goodpaster, USA	05 May 69–01 Nov 74
Commander in Chief, Pacific	
Admiral John S. McCain, Jr.	31 Jul 68–01 Sep 72
Admiral Noel Gayler	01 Sep 72–30 Aug 76
Commander in Chief, US Readiness Command	
(Established 1 Jan 72, replacing US Strike Command)	
General John L. Throckmorton, USA	01 Jan 72–01 Feb 73
Commander in Chief, US Southern Command	
General George R. Mather, USA	18 Feb 69–20 Sep 71
General George V. Underwood, Jr., USA	20 Sep 71–17 Jan 73
Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command	
General Bruce K. Holloway, USAF	01 Aug 68–01 May 72
General John C. Meyer, USAF	01 May 72–01 Aug 74

Commander in Chief, US Strike Command
(Also served as Commander in Chief, Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (CINCMEAFSA); USSTRICOM was disestablished on 30 Dec 71 and replaced by the US Readiness Command; MEAFSA responsibilities were assigned elsewhere on 31 Dec 71)

General Theodore J. Conway, USA	01 Nov 66–01 Aug 69
General John L. Throckmorton, USA	01 Aug 69–31 Dec 71

Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

General Creighton W. Abrams, USA	02 Jul 68–29 Jun 72
General Fred C. Weyand, USA	29 Jun 72–29 Mar 73

Notes

Chapter 1. LAM SON 719—The Moment of Truth

1. Msg, COMUSMACV 9125 to CINCPAC, 3013344Z Jan 71, S. *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, pp. III-105, III-214 through 227, S.

2. MFR by LTG Richard T. Knowles, USA, "JCS Meeting with Amb. Bunker, 1440, 18 November," 23 Nov 70, TS; Diary of Admiral Thomas H. Moorer.

3. Msg, CJCS 15006 to CINCPAC, 071926Z Nov 70, TS; Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 100556Z Nov 70, TS.

4. MemCon by RADM R. C. Robinson, "Southeast Asia Contingency Plans," 5 Dec 70, TS, Moorer Diary.

5. Msg, COMUSMACV 15808 to CINCPAC, 120925Z Dec 70, TS; Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 150236Z Dec 70, TS.

6. Entries for 0930, 15 Dec 70, and 0815 and 0922, 18 Dec 70, TS, Moorer Diary.

7. MFR by RADM Robinson, "Haig's Assessment of the Situation in Southeast Asia," 17 Dec 70, TS; CJCS Memo M–218–70, "Conference with President Nixon," 23 Dec 70, TS, Moorer Diary. This was the first time that Laird had been brought formally into the planning process and briefed fully about the operation.

8. CM–488–71 to SecDef, 4 Jan 71, TS, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia. Entries for 9 Jan 71 and 2030, 10 Jan 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

9. CJCS Memo M–5–71, "WSAG Meeting, Tuesday, January 19, 1971," 23 Jan 71, TS; Entry for 1200, 23 Jan 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Memo, USec State to Dr. Kissinger, "ARVN Operations with Tchepone," 22 Jan 71, TS, CJCS 091 File Laos.

10. Entry for 1850, 25 Jan 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Msg, JCS 2075 to CINCPAC, 262240Z Jan 71, TS.

11. ADM Moorer recorded: "It appears that after eighteen months of measured, unemotional, and statesmanlike responses to the endless questions from Washington, Abrams' one intemperate message has caused him to lose Kissinger's confidence." Entries for 1122, 29 Jan 71, and 1422, 27 Jan 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Msg, JCS 2225 to CINCPAC & COMUSMACV, 280125Z Jan 71, TS. Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston; Little, Brown & Co., 1979), pp. 999–1000; also describes the 27 January meeting at which Secretary of State William Rogers set forth detailed objections to a thrust into Laos.

12. CMs 544–71 and 549–71 to SecDef, 29 and 31 Jan 71, TS, CJCS File 091 Laos. Entry for 1107, 3 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Relations with the media, revolving around a news embargo that lasted from 29 January until 4 February, are described in William M. Hammond, *The Military and the Media: 1968–1973* (Washington; GPO, 1996), pp. 401–422.

13. Entries for 1050 and 1430, 4 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Laird said later that he chose 5 April because President Thieu had told him, in January, that the operation would last about eight weeks. Entry for 0806, 9 Mar 71, Moorer Diary.

14. Lam Son was the birthplace of a Vietnamese hero, Le Loi, who defeated Chinese invaders in 1427.

15. Entries for 0845, 10 Feb 71, and 1220, 12 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

16. Enemy preparations and objectives are described in The Military History Institute of Vietnam, *Victory in Vietnam: The Official History of the People's Army of Vietnam, 1954–1975*, trans. Merle L. Pribbenow (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2002), pp. 272–275.

17. The course of combat is described from the ARVN perspective in MajGen Nguyen Duy Hinh, *LAM SON 719* (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1979), chap. 4. The North Vietnamese view is in *Victory in Vietnam*, pp. 274–276.

18. Msg, COMUSMACV 9301 to CJCS, 141435Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, COMUSMACV 9287 to CINCPAC, 130843Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, COMUSMACV 9323 to CJCS and CINCPAC, 161140Z Feb 71, TS. Entry for 1005, 17 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary. On 18 February, Admiral Moorer asked the Chief of Staff, Pacific Command, to send a piece of pipeline. Lt. Gen. Vogt showed the pipe during a press conference and allowed reporters to assume that it was a trophy of LAM SON 719. The media soon learned, however, that US and ARVN raiders had brought it back from a clandestine intelligence-gathering operation six months earlier. Hammond, *Military and the Media*, p. 461–462.

19. Msg, JCS 3830 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 112059Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, COMUSMACV to Vientiane and CINCPAC, 171107Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, Vientiane to COMUSMACV, 180504Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, COMUSMACV 9352 to CJCS and CINCPAC, 190400Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 191000Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, JCS 4455 to Vientiane, 192352Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 201762Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, COMUSMACV 3971 to CINCPAC, 201215Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 202335Z Feb 71, TS. Msg, JCS 4503 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 211625Z Feb 71, U.

20. Entries for 1023 and 1032, 19 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

21. Msg, COMUSMACV 9407 to CJCS and CINCPAC, 221355Z Feb 71, TS. Entries for 1700 and 1945 with transcript of 1945 TelCon, 22 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

22. Kissinger chose a time when Westmoreland would be Acting Chairman in Moorer's absence. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1004.

23. Entries for 0825 and 1210, 23 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1004–1005.

24. MFR by Lieutenant General Knowles, "JCS Meeting, 1430, Wednesday, 24 February," 24 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

25. Entry for 0820, 25 Feb 71, TS; Msg, COMUSMACV to CJCS and CINCPAC, 251200Z Feb 71, TS; Moorer Diary.

26. Entry for 1200, 25 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

27. CM–648–71 to SecDef, 26 Feb 71, TS. Entry for 1817, 26 Feb 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

28. See, as an example, TelCon, CJCS with CNO, 1220, 16 Dec 70, Moorer Diary.

29. Entry for 0910, 1 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1006–1007.

30. Entry for 0812, 4 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. *Public Papers of the Presidents: Nixon, 1971* (Washington; GPO, 1972), p. 387.

31. Entries for 0806, 0830, 1840 and 1955, 9 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Hammond, *Military and the Media*, pp. 466–467.

32. Entry for 1137, 11 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Hammond, *Military and the Media*, p. 469.

33. Late in June, Gen. Vien came to Washington and gave the JCS his appraisal of LAM SON 719. He said in part: "General Lam used his fire support base tactics, and the situation became difficult. This was the first time the enemy used long-range guns against us. . . . Several times within a 15-minute period they fired thousands of rounds at one of our positions. . . . I talked to the President, and then I sent a memorandum to General Lam to . . . organize mobile forces and to stop using his fire support base tactics. He didn't exactly comply. He only changed his tactics in part." MFR by Lieutenant General Knowles, "JCS Meeting with General Vien, 1400, Wednesday, 30 June (Part I. . .)," 1 Jul 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

34. Entries for 0930, 15 Mar 71, and 0858 and 1845, 16 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

35. Msg, COMUSMACV 9259 to CINCPAC, 171045Z Mar 71, TS. Entries for 1108 and 1800, 17 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Msg, JCS 6505 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 172317Z Mar 71, TS.

36. Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *How America Changed the World* (NY, Time Warner, 1992), pp. 275–276. Entry for 0847, 18 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Soon afterward, South Vietnamese newspapers reported about 10,000 casualties, roughly half the force committed.

37. Entries for 0908 and 1020, 18 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

38. Msg, COMUSMACV 9294 to CJCS and CINCPAC, 191325Z Mar 71, TS. Entries for 0805 and 0853, 19 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

39. Entry for 1110, 19 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Haig also concluded that Lieutenant General Sutherland was not up to the task of keeping LAM SON 719 on track.

40. A US Marine officer said later, "The VNMC artillery, which had grown lax under the benign shooting conditions of the Delta, was incapable of mastering the intricacies of computing map data, high-angle fire, etc." Graham A. Cosmas and Lt. Col. Terrence P. Murray, *U. S. Marines in Vietnam, 1970–1971* (Washington, GPO, 1986), p. 199.

41. Entry for 0944, 23 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

42. Msg, COMUSMACV 9346 to CJCS and CINCPAC, 221044Z Mar 71, TS. Msg, JCS 6820 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 211823Z Mar 71, TS. Entry for 1415, 29 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. Msgs, COMUSMACV 9459 and 9465 to CJCS and CINCPAC, 010227Z and 010715Z Apr 71, TS.

43. Entries for 1014, 20 Mar 71, and 1517, 25 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. On 8 April, General Weyand told Admiral McCain that he believed Lieutenant General Minh was "doing all right" and that if Lieutenant General Tri had lived he would be in the same position as Minh now found himself. Entry for 1605, 8 Apr 71, Moorer Diary.

44. *Victory in Vietnam*, p. 278.

45. *Public Papers, Nixon, 1971*, pp. 523–524. Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 131115Z Apr 71, U. Memo, RADM Robinson to CJCS, "LAM SON 719," 23 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary. The memo says "credible performance" but "creditable" seems more plausible. Presumably, Kissinger knew that whatever he told his staff soon would be leaked to the media.

46. *Life*, 2 Apr 71, p. 24. *NY Times*, 28 Mar 71, pp. 1, 14.

47. Hammond, *Military and the Media*, p. 492. "Note for the Diary," 10 Apr 71, TS; Entries for 1715, 14 Apr 71 and 1607, 21 Apr 71, TS, Moorer Diary. In Laos, between 30 January and 7 April, US Army helicopters flew 45,828 sorties of all types; 102 helicopters were lost to enemy action. *COMUSMACV Command History: 1971*, Vol. II, pp. E-38–E-39, C.

48. Quotations are from MFR by Phil Odeen, "Vietnamization Meeting with Secretary Laird," 25 Mar 71; see also MFRs of 9 Mar 71 and 15 Jun 71, Folder 77, Thomas Thayer Papers, US Army Center of Military History.

49. "Note for the Diary," 24 Jun 71, U, Moorer Diary.

Chapter 2. Policy and Strategy, 1971–Early 1972

1. Richard Nixon, "Second Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy," 25 Feb 71, *Public Papers, Nixon, 1971*, pp. 219–345.

2. *Public Papers, Nixon, 1971*, pp. 522–527.

3. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS et al., 21 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2458/780, 23 Apr 71, JMF 555 (21 Apr 71) sec 1.

4. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2339/342, 14 Apr 71, JMF 907/520 (12 Apr 71).

5. The RVNAF improvement aspects of the Vietnam assessment are covered in chapter 7.

6. The JCS did not participate in the preparation of the economic and political papers nor did any action result from them; consideration of them has not been included. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, DCI, and CJCS, 15 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2472/739, 16 Apr 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 1.

7. (S) CIA Intelligence Memorandum, "Hanoi's Options and Probable Strategy Choices During the Period from April 1971 through December 1972," 26 Apr 71, Encl to Att to (TS–GP 3) JCS 2472/739–2, 30 Apr 71; (TS–GP 1) J–5 Memo for Record, "NSC Senior Review Group Meeting on 27 April 1971 Concerning Vietnam Assessment (U)," 29 Apr 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/739–1, 3 May 71, same file.

8. (TS–GP 1) J–5 Memo for Record, "NSC Senior Review Group Meeting on 27 April 1971 Concerning 'Vietnam Assessment' (U)," 29 Apr 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/739–1, same file.

9. (TS) JCS RVN Assessment, May 1971, Encl to Att to (TS–GP 3) JCS 2472/739–6, 27 May 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 2. The record indicates that the assessment was prepared by the Joint Staff and submitted directly to the Chairman, without being formally considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There is no indication of how the assessment was transmitted to the Senior Review Group.

10. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, DCI, and CJCS, 26 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–4, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 1.

11. (TS–GP 1) Memo, Actg ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 27 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–7, 27 May 71; (TS–GP 3) DJSM 1023–71 to ASD(ISA), 2 Jun 71, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/739–7, 21 Jun 71; JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 2. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Dr. Kissinger et al., 8 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–11, 10 Jun 71, same file, sec 3.

12. (TS) Memo, Director, Program Analysis, NSC Staff to members of VSSG, 8 Jun 71, Encl to Att to (TS–GP 1) JCS 2472/739–12, 14 Jun 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 3.

13. (TS–GP 1) Memo for Record by BG Adrian St. John, Chief, Strategic Plans and Policy Div., J–5, "NSC Senior Review Group Meeting on 9 June 1971 Concerning 'Vietnam Assessment' (U)," 11 Jun 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/739–15, 14 Jun 71; (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to DepSecDef, USecState, CJCS, and DCI, 15 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–17, 16 Jun 71; JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 4.

14. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–270–71 to SecDef, 10 Jun 71 (derived from JCS 2472/739–8), JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 2.

15. Memo, SecDef to USecState, CJCS, DCI, and Dr. Kissinger, 22 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–20, 23 Jun 71, same file, sec 4.

16. See pp. 24–25.

17. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–269–71 to SecDef, 10 Jun 71, Encl A to JCS 2339/342–1, 5 Jun 71, JMF 907/520 (12 Apr 71).

18. OSD files indicated that JCSM–269–71 was referred to the ASD(ISA) who determined that no further action was required.

19. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Dr. Kissinger, CJCS, USecState, and DCI, 18 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–19, 21 Jun 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 4.

20. (TS–GP 1) CM–995–71 to SecDef, 23 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Actions Which Would Reduce the Risks to MRs 1 and 2, RVN (TS)," 29 Jun 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 71.

21. (S–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 118, 3 Jul 71, JMF 001 (CY 1971) NSDMs. For implementation of the President's decision for improvement of the RVNAF, see chapter 7.

22. (TS) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to Secs State and Def, "Assessment of Military Situation in Cambodia," 8 Apr 71, JMP 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 1.

23. The representatives were an officer from the Plans and Policy Directorate, J–5, of the Joint Staff; a military officer and a civilian from the Office of the ASD(ISA). (TS) JCS 1730 to CINCPAC, 182245Z Apr 71.

24. (TS) Report of Assessment Team, "A Department of Defense Assessment of the Military Situation in Cambodia, 18 April 1971–15 May 1971," n.d., Att to memo of transmittal to SecDef, 14 May 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 1.

25. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, and CJCS, 11 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2366/54, 14 Jun 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 1. (TS–GP 3) ASD(ISA) Memo for Record, "SRG Mtg on Cambodian Assessment," n.d., Att to JCS 2366/54–1, 15 Jun 71, same file, sec 2. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 10 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2366/52–1, 11 Jun 71, JMF 880 (CY 1971).

26. (TS–GP 1) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 23 May 71, Att to JCS 2366/51, 26 May 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 1.

27. Willard J. Webb, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970* (Washington, DC, 2002) pp. 193–194.

28. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–311–71 to SecDef, 30 Jun 71, Encl to JCS 2366/54–3, 30 Jun 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 2.

29. (S–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 15 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2366/54–4, 16 Jul 71, same file, sec 2A.

30. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–392–71 to SecDef, 30 Aug 71, Encl to JCS 2366/54–6, 23 Aug 71, same file, sec 3.

31. (S–GP 4) Ltr, SecDef to SecState, 16 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2366/54–8, 19 Oct 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 4.

32. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SpecAsst to Pres for NSA (signed by BG Haig) to USecState, DepSecDef, DCI, and Admin. AID, 20 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2366/54–10, 22 Oct 71; (TS–GP 4) Memo for Record by Dir East Asia and Pacific Region, ASD(ISA), "Senior Review Group Meeting—Cambodian MAP and Supporting Assistance," 20 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2366/54–11, 20 Oct 71; (TS–GP 3) Memo for Record by Chief Far East-Southeast Asia Div, J–5, "NSC SRG Meeting on Cambodia," 19 Oct 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/54–12, 22 Oct 71; JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 4.

33. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to Dr. Kissinger, 20 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2366/54–13, 1 Nov 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 4.

34. (TS–GP 3) Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 1 Dec 71, Att to JCS 2366/54–14, 6 Dec 71, same file. (S) ASD(ISA), International Security Assistance Program, Military Assistance Program, Congressional Presentation FY 1972, 9 Mar 71; (S) ASD(ISA) Security Assistance Program, Military Assistance Program and Foreign Military Sales, Congressional Presentation FY 1972, 18 Mar 72; OASD(ISA) Files. (U) Mr. F. X. Nelson, Defense Security Assistance Agency, OASD(ISA), interviewed by Mr. Willard J. Webb, 16 Jul 75.

35. *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and The War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 195–196.

36. (TS) Msg, Joint State-Def Msg (State 3780) to Phnom Penh, Saigon, and CINCPAC, 8 Jan 71, JCS IN 32557.

37. (TS–GP 1) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 27 Jan 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–2, 1 Feb 71, JMF 880/495 (25 Jul 70) sec 1.

38. (S) Msg, Phnom Penh 286 to CINCPAC, 23 Jan 71, JCS IN 57899. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to Phnom Penh, 242142Z Jan 71, JCS IN 60137. (TS–GP 1) Msg, Phnom Penh 337 to CINCPAC 26 Jan 71, JCS IN 62906. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to Phnom Penh, 270351Z Jan 71, JCS IN 64495.

39. (S–GP 4) JCSM–31–71 to SecDef, 23 Feb 71, Encl A to JCS 2366/44–3, 16 Feb 71, JMF 880/495 (25 Jul 70) sec 1.

40. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 16 Mar 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–4, 17 Mar 71, same file, sec 2. The SecDef ltr to SecState was not found, but it is discussed in the above SecDef memo to CJCS and in (TS–GP 3) Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 23 Mar 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–5, 24 Mar 71, same file.

41. (S–GP 3) Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 23 Mar 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–5, 24 Mar 71, JMF 880/495 (25 Jul 70) sec 1.

42. (S–GP 4) Ltr, SecDef to SecState, 9 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–6, 28 Apr 71, same file.

43. (S–GP 4) Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 25 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–6, 28 Apr 71; Ltr, SecDef to SecState, 27 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–7, 29 Apr 71; Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 19 May 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–8, 21 May 71; JMF 880/495 (25 Jul 70) sec 2.

44. (S–GP 1) CM–919–71 to SecDef, 22 May 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–9, 25 May 71, same file.

45. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, DCI, and CJCS, 11 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2366/54, 14 Jun 71, JMF 880 (8 Apr 71) sec 1.

46. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to Pres, "Administration and Supervision of the Military Assistance Program for Cambodia," 21 Jun 71, CJCS File 091 Cambodia, Jul–Dec 71.

47. (S–GP 1) Memo, SecState to Pres, 28 Jun 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2366/44–10, 1 Jul 71, JMF 880/495 (25 Jul 70) sec 2.

48. (TS–SP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to Secys of State and Def, 1 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2366/44–11, 6 Jul 71, same file.

49. (S–GP 1) CM-792–71 to MG Frank B. Clay, 8 Apr 71, JMF 895 (7 Apr 71) sec 1. (TS–GP 1) Interagency Ad Hoc Cmte Study, "US Support for Military Activities in Laos (S)," 19 Apr 71, JMF 880/495 (25 Jul 70), sec 1A.

50. (TS–GP 1) Interagency Ad Hoc Cmte Study, "US Support for Military Activities in Laos (S)," 19 Apr 71, JMF 895 (7 Apr 71) sec 1A.

51. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–190–71 to SecDef, 3 May 71, Encl to JCS 2344/177, 3 May 71, JMF 895 (7 Apr 71) sec 1.

52. (TS–GP 4) Msg, SecDef (DEF 3860) to CINCPAC, 081700Z Jun 71; (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 24 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2344/177–2, 29 Jun 71; (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 120855Z Jul 71, JCS IN 25767; (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 5541 to CINCPAC, 20 Aug 71; JMF 895 (7 Apr 71). (TS–GP 4) JCS 2478/607, 6 Nov 71; (TS–GP 4) Msg, JCS 3872 to CINCPAC, 5 Feb 72; (TS–GP 4) Msg, JCS 3886 to CSA, 5 Feb 72; (S–GP 4) JCSM–138–72 to SecDef, 4 Apr 72, App B to JCS 2478/607–1, 14 Mar 72; (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 7308 to CINCPAC, 4 Apr 72; JMF 895/037 (6 Nov 71).

53. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to SecState, Att Gen, CJCS, DCI, and Dr. Kissinger, "U.S. Support for Military Activities in Laos (S)," 8 Jun 71, JMF 895 (7 Apr 71) sec 1.

In February the JCS had provided the Secretary an assessment of the requirement for additional T–28s for Southeast Asian allies. They had told him that there was "no acceptable close air support off-the-shelf replacement" for the T–28 aircraft that met the basic need for a cheap, effective, and easy to maintain weapon system. Consequently, on 8 April 1971, the Secretary of Defense approved a T–28D inventory of 18 for Cambodia, 86 for Laos, and 60 for Thailand. At that time he asked the Secretary of the Air Force to review available aircraft to determine if better and cheaper alternative planes might be provided the Southeast Asian allies. On 13 October 1971, the Secretary of the Air Force reported that no one aircraft among available alternatives was "clearly superior from an operational standpoint" and recommended modification of USAF T–28As to fulfill near-term MAP requirements. (S–GP 4) JCSM–65–71 to SecDef, 11 Feb 71, Encl to JCS 2339/337, 8 Feb 71; (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to SecArmy, SecAF, and CJCS, 8 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2339/337–1, 12 Apr 71; JMF 907/460 (8 Feb 71) sec 1. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecAF to SecDef, 13 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2339/337–4, 26 Oct 71, same file, sec 3.

54. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 8 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2344/177–1, 9 Jun 71; (S–GP 1) 1st N/H of JCS 2344/177–1, 19 Jan 72; JMF 895 (7 Apr 71) sec 1. (S–GP 4) CM–1301–71 to SecDef, 8 Nov 71, Att to JCS 2344/185, 14 Jan 72, JMF 895 (8 Nov 71).

55. See above pp. 22–23.

56. (S–GP 3) Memo, Dir of Program Analysis, NSC Staff to VSSG, 16 Dec 71, Att to JCS 2472/790, 28 Dec 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–1440–71 to SecDef, 10 Jan 72; JMF 911 (16 Dec 71).

57. (TS–GP 3) Updated RVN Assessment, 10 Jan 72, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/790–1, 19 Jan 72, JMF 911 (16 Dec 71).

58. (S) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, and DCI, "Vietnam Assessment," 19 Jan 72; (TS–GP 3) TP for Actg DepSecDef and CJCS for SRG Mtg on 17 Jan 72, n.d., Att to JCS 2472/790–1, 19 Jan 72; JMF 911 (16 Dec 71). (TS–GP 3) CM–1479–72 to SecDef, 24 Jan 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 72.

59. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS et al. 22 Jan 72, Att to JCS 2339/351, 24 Jan 72, JMF 907/520 (22 Jan 72).

60. (S–GP 4) JCSM–50–72 to SecDef, 9 Feb 72, Encl to JCS 2339/351–1, 5 Feb 72, same file.

61. (S–GP 4) CM–1542–72 to SecDef, 15 Feb 72, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Jun 72.

62. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS, et al., 9 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2458/824, 13 Mar 72, JMF 555 (9 Mar 72).

63. (TS–GP 4) Ltr, CINCPAC to JCS, 16 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2339/355, 22 Mar 72; (U) Msg, JCS 6328 to CINCPAC, 20 Apr 72; JMF 907/300 (6 Mar 72).

Chapter 3. United States and Free World Troop Withdrawals in 1971.

1. For the planning and accomplishment of US redeployments during 1969 and 1970, see Webb, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, chapters 4 and 10.

2. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) C*OMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. F–4, F–6—F–9, J–16.

3. See Webb, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 243–250.

4. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 24 Dec 70, Att to JCS 2339/333–2, 6 Jan 71, JMF 907/323 (7 Nov 70). (TS–GP 3) JCS 2472/695–1 (p. 44), 27 Jan 71, JMF 907/372 (14 Dec 70).

5. (TS) Memo of Conversation, 11 Jan 71, Att to Memo, MilAsst to SecDef to CJCS, 19 Jan 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 71.

6. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–59–71 to SecDef, 16 Feb 71, Encl to JCS 2472/695–1, 27 Jan 71, JMF 907/372 (14 Dec 70).

7. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS, et al., 10 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2458/769, 12 Feb 71; (TS–GP 3) JCSM–95–71 to SecDef 3 Mar 71, Encl A to JCS 2458/769–1, 26 Feb 71; JMF 550 (10 Feb 71). (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 23 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2472/695–2, 26 Feb 71, JMF 907/372 (14 Dec 70).

8. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, p. 309.

9. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 18 Nov 70, Att to JCS 2472/688, 19 Nov 70, JMF 911/374 (18 Nov 70).

10. The MAAG supplement would provide intelligence, communications, and other support functions not organic to the MAAG.

11. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–570–70 to SecDef, 12 Dec 70, Encl to JCS 2472/688–1, 9 Dec 70, JMF 911/374 (18 Nov 70).

12. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 30 Dec 70, Att to JCS 2472/688–2, 31 Dec 70, JMF 911/374 (18 Nov 70).

13. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–43–71 to SecDef, 30 Jan 71, Encl to JCS 2472/688–3, 27 Jan 71; (TS–GP 3) JCSM–78–71 to SecDef, 19 Feb 71 (derived from JCS 2472/688–4); JMF 911/374 (18 Nov 70).

14. COMUSMACV CONPLAN 208 is not found in JCS Files, but it is discussed in: (TS) CM–722–71 to DJS, 19 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71; and (TS–GP 3) JCSM–145–71 to SecDef, 26 Mar 71, Encl to JCS 2472/725–1, 25 Mar 71, JMF 907/374 (17 Mar 71).

15. (TS–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info CJCS), 181020Z Mar 71, JCS IN 79909, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

16. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CJCS 6729 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 19 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

17. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 17 Mar 71, Att to JCS 2472/725, 17 Mar 71, JMF 907/374 (17 Mar 71).

18. See above, p. 47.

19. (TS–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS 232342Z Mar 71, JCS IN 91002; (TS–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 220310Z Mar 71, readdressed as CINCPAC 232341Z Mar 71, (info CJCS), JCS IN 91011; CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

20. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–145–71 to SecDef, 26 Mar 71, Encl to JCS 2472/725–1, 25 Mar 71, JMF 907/374 (17 Mar 71).

21. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 7576 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 31 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 71. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 7525 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 30 Mar 71, CJCS msg files.

22. (TS–GP 1) CM–766–71 to SecDef, 1 Apr 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Apr–Jun 71.

23. Entry for 0810, 8 Apr 71, Moorer Diary.

24. President's Address to the Nation, "Report on the Situation in Southeast Asia," 7 Apr 71, *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1971* (1972), pp. 522–527.

25. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 9 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2472/725–2, 12 Apr 71, JMF 907/374 (17 Mar 71). (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2339/342, 14 Apr 71, JMF 907/520 (12 Apr 71).

26. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (C) pp. F–9—F–11.

27. Ibid., (C) p. F–11.

28. (TS–GP 3) MJCS–274–71 to SecDef, 11 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/725–6, 14 Sep 71; (TS–GP 4) J5M 1690–71 to Secy, JCS, 15 Oct 71; JMF 907/374 (17 Mar 71). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (C) pp. F–11—F–13. (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 1359 to CINCPAC, 6 Oct 71 (derived from JCS 2339/345–9), JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 2.

29. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (C) p. J–37.

30. See chapter 5, pp. 88–90, for a discussion of the changed mission for US forces in Vietnam.

31. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (U) p. I–5; (S) p. IV–10. (U) *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1971*, p. 1103. (U) Statement by SecDef Melvin R. Laird Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on FY 1972–1976 Defense Program and the 1972 Defense Budget, 15 Mar 71, p. 31.

32. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, et al., 21 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2458/780, 23 Apr 71, JMF 555 (21 Apr 71) sec 1.

33. (TS–GP 1) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, DCI, and CJCS, 15 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2472/739, 16 Apr 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 1. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Dr. Kissinger et al., 18 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–19, 21 Jun 71, same file, sec 4. (S–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 118, 3 Jul 71, JMF 001 (CY 1971) NSDMs.

34. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 6 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2472/773, 9 Aug 71, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 1.

35. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–383–71 to SecDef, 20 Aug 71, Encl to JCS 2472/773–1, 18 Aug 71, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 1.

36. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 26 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2472/773–2, 27 Aug 71, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 1.

37. The plan itself addressed a force level of 62,000, but COMUSMACV in his forwarding letter consistently cited a 60,000 level.

38. (TS–GP 1) COMUSMACV OPLAN J208, 25 Aug 71, Encl with (TS) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 28 Aug 71, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71).

39. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3020 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 27 Aug 71. (TS–GP 4) Msg, JCS 6054 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 31 Aug 71. (TS–GP 4) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, "Future Force Planning (U)," 7 Sep 71; (TS–GP 1) COMUSMACV OPLAN J208A, 4 Oct 71; (TS) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 5 Oct 71; (TS–GP 4) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 8 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2472/773–3, 10 Oct 71; JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 1.

40. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–471–71 to SecDef, 22 Oct 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/773–4, 16 Oct 71, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71).

41. For discussion of the secret negotiations, see chapter 12, p. 257.

42. (C–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (U) p. J–36. Dept of State *Bulletin*, 22 Nov 71, p. 579.

43. (S–GP 4) JCSM–497–71 to SecDef, 9 Nov 71, Encl to JCS 2472/784–1, 8 Nov 71; (S–GP 4) J–1 Briefing Sheet for CJCS on JCS 2472/784–1, 8 Nov 71; JMF 911/105 (1 Nov 71). (S–GP 4) CM–928–71 to SecDef, 31 May 71, Att to N/H of JCS 2472/740, 1 Jun 71, JMF 911/105 (16 Apr 71).

44. *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1971*, pp. 1101–1105.

45. Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 15 Nov 71, Att to JCS 2472/786, 16 Nov 71, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71).

46. Msg, JCS 2990 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 19 Nov 71 (derived from JCS 2472/786–1), JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71).

47. (TS–GP 4) MJCS–355–71 to SecDef, 26 Nov 71, Att to JCS 2472/786–2, 2 Dec 71, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. F–13—F–15.

48. US strength in South Vietnam on 31 December 1971, midway through KEYSTONE MALLARD, was 158,119. (S–NOFORNGP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. J–39.

49. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. F–15, F–1–1.

50. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (S) p. G–1, (C) pp. IV–31—IV–38. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *CINCPAC Command History, 1971*, pp. 128–131. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 252309Z Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan–Feb 71.

51. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. G–8—G–15.

52. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (U) p. J–2.

53. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 3 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2472/706, 3 Feb 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

54. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 262309Z Feb 71, JCS IN 43286, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 71.

55. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–118–71 to SecDef, 12 Mar 71, Encl to JCS 2472/706–1, 10 Mar 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

56. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS, et al., 26 Mar 71, Att to JCS 2472/706–2, 29 Mar 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

57. (U) Final Communique, Vietnam Troop Contributing Conference, 23 Apr 71, Dept of State *Bulletin*, 17 May 71, pp. 635–638. (TS) NSC Ad Hoc Group Study, "Republic of Korea Forces in Vietnam (ROKFV)," p. 14, n.d., Att to (TS–GP 3) JCS 2472/706–3, 27 May 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

58. (TS) NSC Ad Hoc Group Study, "Republic of Korea Forces in Vietnam (ROKFV), n.d., Att to (TS–GP 3) JCS 2472/706–3, 27 May 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

59. For discussion of the Vietnam assessment, see chapter 2, p. 22.

60. (TS–GP 3) Joint TP for DepSecDef and CJCS for 24 May 71 SRG Mtg, n.d., Att to JCS 2472/706–3, 27 May 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

61. (TS–GP 1) Memo, CSA to CJCS, 16 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/765, 21 Jul 71, JMF 911 (2 Jun 71). (S–NOFORN) NMCC OPSUM, 24 May 71. (TS) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState et al., "Vietnam Assessment," 26 May 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 71.

62. (TS) NSC Study, "Republic of Korea Forces in Viet-Nam (ROKFV)," n.d., Att to Memo, NSC Staff Secy to USecState et al., 18 Jun 71, Att to (TS–GP 1) JCS 2472/706–4, 22 Jun 71, JMF 911/535 (27 Jan 71).

63. Ibid.

64. (TS–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 113, 23 Jun 71, JMF 001 (CY 1971) NSDMs.

65. (TS–GP 1) Memo, CSA to CJCS, 16 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/765, 21 Jul 71, JMF 911 (2 Jun 71).

66. (TS–GP 4) Encl B, JCS 2472/775, 27 Aug 71, JMF 911 (14 Aug 71). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, Top Secret Supplement, p. TSS–12. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *CINCPAC Command History, 1971*, p. 143.

67. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. G–9. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. N–1—N–2.

68. (TS–GP 4) JCS 2472/775, 26 Aug 71, JMF 911 (14 Aug 71). (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *CINCPAC Command History, 1971*, (S) p. 359.

69. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–397–71 to SecDef, 27 Aug 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/775, 26 Aug 71, JMF 911 (14 Aug 71).

70. (TS–GP 4) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 2 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/775–1, 3 Sep 71, JMF 911 (14 Aug 71).

71. (S–GP 4) Memo, Army OpsDep to DJS, 14 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/775–2, 16 Sep 71; (TS–GP 4) DJSM–1810–71 to ASD(ISA), 29 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/775–3, 1 Oct 71; JMF 911 (14 Aug 71).

72. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–483–71 to SecDef, 30 Oct 71, Encl to JCS 2472/775–5, 29 Oct 71, JMF 911 (14 Aug 71).

73. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSKOREA*, *Annual Historical Report*, *1971*, (C) p. 95. (C–GP 4) Ltr, DepSecDef to ROK Min of Nat'l Defense, 2 Nov 71, Att to JCS 2472/775–6, 4 Nov 71, JMF 911 (14 Aug 71).

74. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *CINCPAC Command History*, *1970*, Vol II, pp. 129–130. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (U) p. G–17.

75. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (U) pp. G–17—G–18.

76. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *CINCPAC Command History*, *1971*, (S) pp. 440–441.

77. (S–GP 1) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 23 Aug 71; (S–GP 1) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 5 Oct 71; Atts to JCS 2353/194, 13 Oct 71, JMF 910/535 (23 Aug 71).

78. See above, p. 59.

79. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (U) pp. G–15, J–12.

80. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (C) p. F–15, (U) pp. G–12—G–13, J–13, J–29, J–36, J–38. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. N–1. Stanley R. Larsen and James L. Collins, *Allied Participation in Vietnam*, *1975*, pp. 103–104.

81. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *1971*, (U) p. G–15.

82. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History*, *1972*, (S) p. 131.

Chapter 4. Determining US Air Support Levels for Southeast Asia in 1971.

1. Entry for 1710, 4 Oct 71, U, Moorer Diary.

2. Entry for 1055, 5 May 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

3. See chapter 3 for discussion of the force levels question.

4. For discussion of air activity levels in 1970 see *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam*, *1969–1970*, pp. 212–214.

5. MFR by RADM Robinson, "Budget Planning," 27 Nov 70, Moorer Diary.

6. (TS–GP 3) CM–489–71 to SecDef, 21 Jan 71, Att to JCS 2339/333–3, 22 Jan 71, JMF 907/323 (7 Nov 70). (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 9 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2339/338, 15 Feb 71, JMF 907/323 (9 Feb 71).

7. For the JCS recommendations on US force levels, see chapter 3.

8. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–59–71 to SecDef, 16 Feb 71, Encl to JCS 2472/695–1, 27 Jan 71, JMF 907/372 (14 Dec 70).

9. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 23 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2472/695–2, 26 Feb 71, JMF 907/372 (14 Dec 70). (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS et al., 10 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2458/770, 12 Feb 71; (TS–GP 3) JCSM–95–71 to SecDef, 3 Mar 71, Encl A to JCS 2458/769–1, 26 Feb 71; JMF 550 (10 Feb 71).

10. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–97–71 to SecDef, 5 Mar 71 (derived from JCS 2339/338–1), JMF 907/323 (9 Feb 71).

11. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–145–71 to SecDef, 26 Mar 71, Encl to JCS 2472/725–1, 25 Mar 71, JMF 907/374 (17 Mar 71).

12. (TS–GP 1) CM–766–71 to SecDef, 1 Apr 71, CJCS File 091 SEA, Apr–Jun 71. (TS–GP 1) CM–780–71 to SecDef, 3 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2147/527–1, 8 Apr 71, JMF 378 (1 Apr 71). (TS–GP 1) JCSM–165–71 to SecDef, 6 Apr 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/736, 6 Apr 71, JMF 911/535 (30 Mar 71).

13. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS, et al., 21 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2458/780, 23 Apr 71, JMF 555 (21 Apr 71) sec 1.

14. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, 7 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2147/527–1, 8 Apr 71; (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to SecAF and CJCS, 13 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2147/527–2, 14 Apr 71; JMF 378 (1 Apr 71).

15. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecAF to SecDef, 23 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2147/527–5, 27 Apr 71, JMF 378 (1 Apr 71).

16. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecNav to SecDef, 21 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2147/527–4, 22 Apr 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecArmy to SecDef, 27 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2147/527–6, 28 Apr 71; JMF 378 (1 Apr 71).

17. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–199–71 to SecDef, 26 Apr 71, Encl to JCS 2147/527–3, 21 Apr 71, JMF 378 (1 Apr 71).

18. See chapter 2, p. 22.

19. See p. 74.

20. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState et al., 28 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–3, 4 May 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 1. (TS–GP 1) CNOM–135–71 to JCS, n.d., Att to JCS 2147/527–7, 6 May 71, JMF 378 (1 Apr 71).

21. (TS–GP 1) Briefing Sheet for CJCS on JCS 2147/527–5, 7 May 71; (TS) J–5 BP 39–71, 17 May 71; JMF 378 (1 Apr 71). (TS–GP 1) CM–915–71 to SecDef, 20 May 71, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 70–Jun 71.

22. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 11 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2339/345, 11 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to SecNav, 2 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2339/345–4, 3 Aug 71; JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 1.

23. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–306–71 to SecDef, 28 Jun 71, Encl A to JCS 2339/345–1, 24 Jun 71, JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 1.

24. See p. 74.

25. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 1 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2339/345–2, 2 Jul 71, JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 1.

26. Ibid.

27. See above, p. 73.

28. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–353–71 to SecDef, 29 Jul 71, Encl to JCS 2339/345–3, 23 Jul 71, JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 1.

29. (S–GP 3) CSAFM 280–71 to JCS, 21 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/768, 21 Jul 71; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 7656 to CINCPAC, 2 Aug 71; JMF 907/323 (21 Jul 71). (TS–GP 1) CM–894–71 to SecDef, 14 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/749, 14 May 71, JMF 895/323 (24 Apr 71). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (TS) p. TSS–1, (S) pp. VI–11—VI–13.

30. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 7656 to CINCPAC (info CINCSAC and COMUSMACV), 2 Aug 71, JMF 907/323 (21 Jul 71).

31. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2339/345–5, 12 Aug 71; (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts and CJCS, 28 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2339/345–10, 29 Sep 71; JMF 907/323 (11 Jul 71) sec 2.

32. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–391–71 to SecDef, 25 Aug 71, Encl A to JCS 2339/345–7, 25 Aug 71, JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 2.

33. (S–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, 20 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2339/345–8, 21 Sep 71, JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 2.

34. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts and CJCS, 28 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2339/345–10, 29 Sep 71, JMF 907/323 (11 Jun 71) sec 2.

35. Entries for 1422, 1616, and 1735, 7 Oct 71 and 1056, 1806 and 1915, 12 Oct 71, TS, Moorer Diary. General Ryan cautioned the Chairman that the JCS were counting only ordnance delivery sorties, but OSD also counted support sorties that totaled 1,400 monthly. Ryan calculated that the nine squadrons slated for FY 1973 could not carry out 4,700 ordnance and 1,400 support sorties per month. Entry for 0936, 14 Oct 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

Chapter 5. The Conduct of the War in South Vietnam, 1971–Early 1972

1. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 205–207.

2. All information in this section, unless otherwise stated, is from (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, pp. III–1—III–35.

3. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, pp. III–9, IV–12. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, (S) p. III–73.

4. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History 1971*, (C) pp. IV–12, J–1, J–39.

5. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. X–69—X–70.

6. (C) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Non-Hostile Deaths in Southeast Asia," 8 Feb 71, JMF 907/175 (8 Feb 71).

7. (U) CM–633–71 to SecDef, 25 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2339/340, 25 Feb 71, JMF 907/175 (8 Feb 71). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. X–70.

8. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. I–11, J–1, J–39.

9. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. G–5–G–9. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, (C) p. IV–33.

10. See chapter 3, p. 59.

11. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. G–20–G–22.

12. (S) RVNAF JGS–FWMAF Combined Campaign Plan, 1971, AB 146, 31 Oct 70, JMF 911/350 (30 Oct 70). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. IV–5.

13. (S) Msg, COMUSMACV to CJCS, 081135Z Mar 71, cited in (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History 1971*, pp. TSS–9–TSS–10.

14. (TS–GP 1) CM–855–71 to SecDef, 27 Apr 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 21 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2472/742, 22 Apr 71; JMF 907/374 (21 Apr 71).

15. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "US Redeployments from Southeast Asia," 10 May 71, JMF 907/374 (21 Apr 71).

16. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–232–71 to SecDef, 14 May 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/742–1, 13 May 71, JMF 907/374 (21 May 71).

17. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 1619 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 5 Jun 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Apr–Jun 71.

18. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. IV–10. (S–GP 1) DJSM–1017–71 to CJCS, 1 Jun 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Apr–Jun 71.

19. All information in this section, unless otherwise stated, is from (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, pp. IV–11—IV–37.

20. See chapter 1.

21. (TS–GP 1) CM–892–71 to SecDef, 12 May 71; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 8598 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 14 May 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 71. (TS–GP 1) CM–976–71 to SecDef, 14 Jun 71; (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "US Support for RVNAF Cross-Border Operations (C)," 17 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 5200 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 18 Jun 71; same file, Jun 71.

22. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) NMCC OPSUM 72–71, 29 Mar 71. (C–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC and CJCS 290235Z Mar 71 (transmitting a 28 Mar 71 msg from CG, 23d Inf Div, to COMUSMACV), CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 71. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. J–11.

23. (C–GP 4) CM–873–71 to SecDef, 4 May 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 71.

24. (C) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Interim Report of Attack on FSB MARY ANN, 7 May 71; (C–GP 4) CM–883–71 to SecDef, 12 May 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 71. *Washington Post*, 24 Nov 71, 3.

25. (TS–GP 1) CM–691–71 to SecDef, 10 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 71. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Operational Authorities (U)," 17 Mar 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1.

26. (TS–GP 1) CM–750–71 to SecDef, 27 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 71.

27. (TS–GP 1) CM–756–71 to SecDef, 29 Mar 71, same file.

28. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Vietnam Demilitarized Zone (U)," 31 Mar 71, same file. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Strikes Against Artillery Positions," 7 Apr 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1.

29. (TS–GP 1) CM–1012–71 to SecDef, 27 Jun 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 71.

30. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "DMZ Authorities," 1 Jul 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 2.

31. (TS–GP 1) CM–1033–71 to SecDef, 8 Jul 71; (TS–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC and CJCS, 041000Z Jul 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 71.

32. (TS–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info JCS), 111020Z Jul 71, JCS IN 24815; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 1342 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 15 Jul; same file.

33. (TS–GP 1) CM–1060–71 to SecDef, 19 Jul 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 71.

34. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Bombing Campaign, DMZ North (TS)," 24 Jul 71, same file.

35. (S–GP 3) Memo, Actg ASD(ISA) to CJCS, "Possible Military Actions Against Route 103 Extension in Quanq Tri Province," 12 Aug 71; (S–GP 4) CM–1137–71 to SecDef, 17 Aug 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Aug 71.

36. (TS) CM–1308–71 to SecDef, 13 Nov 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Request for Authorities, Base Areas 701/702 Operations (TS)," 15 Nov 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 71.

37. (TS–GP 1) CM–1386–71 to SecDef, 17 Dec 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 20 Dec 71; same file, Dec 71. (TS–GP 1) CM–1443–71 to SecDef, 13 Jan 72, same file, Jan 72. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. IV–31.

38. (S–NOFORN GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. E–5. (TS) CM–481–71 to SecDef, 4 Jan 71, CJCS File 091 Cambodia, Jan 71. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 9395 to CINCPAC (info COMUS MACV), 6 Jan 71.

39. All information on the operational details of TOAN THANG 01/71 is from (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, pp. E–5—E–11.

40. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Operation TOAN THANG 01/71 NB," 5 May 71, CJCS File 091 Cambodia, May 71.

41. (TS–GP 1) CM–912–71 to SecDef, 19 May 71, same file.

42. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Operation TOAN THANG 01/71," 11 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–1010–71 to SecDef, 25 Jun 71; (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "U.S. Support for Operation TOAN THANG 01/71," 30 Jun 71; CJCS File 091 Cambodia, Jun 71.

43. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) NMCC OPSUMs 22–71, 28 Jan 71; 108–71, 10 May 71; 298–71, 27 Dec 71; and 1–72, 3 Jan 72.

44. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. I–7, V–32.

45. Ibid., (S) p. V–37.

46. Ibid., (S) V–32—V–34.

47. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 18 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/759, 21 Jun 71, JMF 911/329 (18 May 71).

48. (S–GP 4) CM–980–71 to SecDef, 14 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/759, 21 Jun 71, same file.

49. For coverage of the FY 1972 Combined Interdiction Campaign Plan, see chapter 7, pp. 144–147.

50. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS et al., 2 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–4, 9 Jul 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 3. (TS–GP 1) Annex C, MARKET TIME Operations, to Outline Combined Interdiction Campaign Plan for FY 1972, App to JCSM–384–71, 23 Aug 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/747–7, 18 Aug 71, same file, sec 4.

51. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, V–11, V–15—V–19.

52. (C) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Naval Gunfire Support," 6 Apr 71; (C–GP 4) CM–851–71 to SecDef, 29 Apr 71; Atts to JCS 2472/746, 3 May 71, JMF 911/325 (6 Apr 71).

53. (C–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 11 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/746–1, 4 Jun 71; (C–GP 4) CM–941–71 to SecDef, 31 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/746–1, 4 Jun 71; JMF 911/325 (6 Apr 71).

54. MFR by LTG Knowles, "JCS Meeting, 1400 Friday, 26 March," 26 Mar 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

55. Entry for 0940, 5 Jun 71, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, JCS 4437 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 052250Z Jun 70, TS; Entry for 1810, 23 Jun 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

56. Neither the J–3 nor the MACV briefings are in JCS records. However, the MFR of the JCS meeting states that J–3's briefing described the consequences of losing Camp Carroll just below the DMZ. In the spring of 1972, the ARVN regiment that was holding Camp Carroll surrendered on the third day of the North Vietnamese offensive.

57. MFR by LTG Knowles, "JCS Meeting, 1430, 12 July," 13 Jul 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

58. Entry for 4 Nov 71, TS Moorer Diary.

59. Entries for 5, 6 and 8 Nov 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

60. Entries for 6 and 15 Nov 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

61. Entry for 8 Nov 71, TS, Moorer Diary; CM–1320–71 For Record, 18 Nov 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

Chapter 6. Air Operations in Southeast Asia, 1971–Early 1972.

1. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (U) p. VI–1.

2. All information in this section on air operations, unless otherwise stated, is from (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, pp. VI–1—VI–33.

3. For planning in 1971 for future air activity levels, see chapter 4.

4. For planning for the improvement of VNAF, see chapter 7.

5. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1969* (S), pp. V–215, V–220.

6. (TS) DOD Paper, "Air Operations in Southeast Asia," n.d., Att to Memo, DepSecDef to Dr. Kissinger, CJCS, USecState, and DCI, "FY 72–73 Air Operations in Southeast Asia (U)," 28 Jun 71, Att to (TS–GP 3) JCS 2472/739–21, 29 Jun 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 5. For JCS consideration of the CREDIBLE CHASE Program, see chapter 7, pp. 150–152.

7. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 5220 to CINCPAC, 5 Nov 70.

8. See pp. 109–117, for Joint Chiefs of Staff efforts to expand air operating authorities in North Vietnam during 1971.

9. (TS–GP 1) CM–830–71 to SecDef, 16 Apr 71, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Operations, Jul 70–Jun 71. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Southeast Asia Air Operating Authorities," 29 Apr 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1. (TS) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, same subj, 22 Oct 71, 12 Nov 71, 29 Dec 71, same file, sec 2. (TS) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, same subj, 29 Jan and 26 Feb 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Jun 72. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 27 Nov 71, same subj, CJCS SecDef Memo File.

10. (S–GP 3) CSAFM 112–71 to JCS, 2 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2339/341, 6 Apr 71, JMF 907/323 (2 Apr 71).

11. (S–GP 4) JCSM–299–71 to SecDef, 28 Jun 71, Encl to JCS 2339/341–2, 15 Jun 71, JMF 907/323 (2 Apr 71).

12. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 20 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2339/341–3, 21 Jul 71, same file.

13. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 220, 224.

14. Ibid., pp. 225–226.

15. (TS–GP 1) CM–523–71 to SecDef, 20 Jan 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, SAM Sites in NVN.

16. (TS–GP 1) CM–513–71 to SecDef, 21 Jan 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 71. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "North Vietnam Contingency Plans," 23 Jan 71, JMF 912/340 (23 Jan 71).

17. (TS–GP 1) CM–532–71 to SecDef, 29 Jan 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, SAM Sites in NVN. SecDef approval is indicated in handwritten notation on draft msg attached to CM–532–71. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3254 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 4 Feb 71.

18. (TS–GP 1) CM–583–71 to SecDef, 11 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, SAM Sites in NVN. (TS–GP 1) CM–582–71 to SecDef, 10 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 71.

19. Handwritten DepSecDef approval on draft msg attached to CM–583–71. (TS–GP 1) CM–606–71 to SecDef, 18 Feb 71; (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Authority to Strike SAM Sites in NVN (TS)," 18 Feb 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, SAM Sites in NVN. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. VI–34. *NY Times*, 24 Feb 71, 1; 2 Mar 71, 1.

20. (TS–GP 1) CM–642–71 to SecDef, 25 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 71.

21. (TS–GP 1) CM–628–71 to SecDef, 4 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, SAM Sites in NVN.

22. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 5579 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 5 Mar 71. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Protective Reaction Strikes Against North Vietnam," 6 Mar 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1.

23. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 6661 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV) 19 Mar 71. (TS–GP 3) Damage Assessment Fact Sheet, Att to CM–782–71 to SecDef, 5 Apr 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Apr 71. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. VI–34. *NY Times*, 22 Mar 71, 1; 23 Mar 71, 1; 24 Mar 71, 5.

24. (TS–GP 1) CM–723–71 to SecDef, 19 Mar 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 71.

25. (TS–GP 1) CM–505–71 to SecDef, 14 Jan 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 71. (TS–GP 1) CM–814–71 to SecDef, 14 Apr 71, same file, Apr 71.

26. (TS–GP 1) CM–830–71 to SecDef, 16 Apr 71, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 70–Jun 71.

27. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "NVN MIG Activity," 26 Apr 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Protective Reaction Against North Vietnam," 28 Apr 71; (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Southeast Asia Air Operating Authorities," 29 Apr 71; JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1.

28. (TS–GP 1) CM–854–71 to SecDef, 29 Apr 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–860–71 to SecDef, 29 Apr 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Apr 71. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Air Operating Authorities," 7 May 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1.

29. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 010540Z May 71, JCS IN 79929. (TS–GP 1) DJSM–833–71 to CJCS, 3 May 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–893–71 to SecDef, 12 May 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–907–71 to SecDef, 16 May 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–975–71 to SecDef, 14 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–1047–71 to SecDef, 11 Jul 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, SAM Sites in NVN. (TS–GP 1) CM–902–71 to SecDef, 19 May 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 71. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Authority to Strike SAM Installations in North Vietnam, 15 May 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, same subj, 19 May 71; (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "NVN SAM Firing," 17 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "NVN MIG Threat," 22 May 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef, "NVN SAM Firing," 17 Jul 71; JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 2.

30. *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. VI–34, S; msgs. JCS 3334 and 4828 to CINCPAC, 17 and 20 Sep, 71, S; entries for 1145 and 1150, 17 Sep 71, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, CINCPACFLT to CNO, 010825Z Oct 71, TS, filed under 17 Sep 71, Moorer Diary; entry for 4 Oct 71, Moorer Diary

31. (TS) CM–1275–71 to SecDef, 20 Oct 71 (not available because it contained SI information, but its contents are summarized in (TS–GP 1) CM–1281–71 to SecDef, 29 Oct 71, CJCS File 091 Laos, B–52 Strikes, Jan–Dec 71). (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Requests for Strikes," 21 Oct 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 2.

32. (TS–GP 1) CM–1272–71 to SecDef, 21 Oct 71, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72.

33. (TS) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, "Southeast Asia Operating Authorities," 22 Oct 71, 12 Nov 71, and 29 Dec 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 2. (TS) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, same subj, 29 Jan 72 and 26 Feb 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Jun 72. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 27 Nov 71, same subj, CJCS SecDef Memo File.

34. (TS–GP 1) CM–1281–71 to SecDef, 29 Oct 71, CJCS File 091 Laos, B–52 Strikes, Jan–Dec 71.

35. Entry for 7 Nov 71, Moorer Diary.

36. (TS) CM–1309–71 to SecDef, 13 Nov 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 71.

37. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Air Strikes Against North Vietnam Air Defenses (S)," 15 Nov 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 2. (TS–GP 1) CM–1340–71 to SecDef, 24 Nov 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 71.

38. Entries for 0915 and 1427, 1 Dec 71, TS, Moorer Diary; MFRs by Col. R. M. Lucy, USMC, "Summary of Testimony of Gen. Lavelle before SASC on 11 & 12 September 1972," 12 and 13 Sep 72, U, JHO; Admiral Moorer remarked that "trolling" had been used in 1965 when he was CINCPACFLT. Entry for 1427, 1 Dec 71, TS, Moorer Diary.

39. Entries for 1811 and 1813, 17 Nov 71, 1606, 18 Nov 71, 0845 and 0900, 19 Nov 71, 1545, 22 Nov 71, 1210, 29 Nov 71, 2030 and 2300, 30 Nov 71, 0816 and 0900, 1 Dec 71, TS, Moorer Diary; CM–1345–71 to SecDef, 30 Nov 71, TS, CJCS 091 Vietnam.

40. Entries for 1427, 1 Dec 71, 1615 and 1803, 18 Dec 71, 1317, 20 Dec 71, and 1430 Dec 71, TS, Moorer Diary; Msgs, JCS 6784, 3591, and 5984 to CINCPAC, 19, 26 and 29 Dec 71, TS. Concurrently Operation HAI CANG TUDO II was carried out. Patrol boats with South Vietnamese crews, using captured 122-mm rockets, fired against port and logistic facilities at Quang Khe.

41. (TS–GP 1) CM–412–70 to SecDef, 5 Dec 70, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

42. The PTF boats involved were assigned to the MACV Studies and Observation Group. The previous October, the Joint Chiefs had wanted to return these craft to the US Navy for deactivation as a means of easing budget pressures. The Secretary had agreed, but Dr. Kissinger had delayed this deactivation, citing the President's interest in maintaining these boats for possible covert use against North Vietnam. The scheduled reduction of US forces to a level of 69,000 men during the spring of 1972 precluded retention of the PTF boat detachment in South Vietnam, and on 27 March 1972, the Secretary authorized the return of the boats to US Navy control. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–482–70 to SecDef, 14 Oct 70, Encl to JCS 2472/552–41, 22 Sep 70, JMF 911/535 (10 Nov 69) sec 10. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Nov 70, Att to JCS 2472/552–42, 13 Nov 70, same file, sec 11. (TS–GP 1) CM–1311–71 to SecDef, n.d. [ca. 13 Nov 71] and not sent, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 71. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Patrol Torpedo Fast Boats (PTF)," 27 Mar 72, same file, Feb 72.

43. (TS) CM–467–71 to SecDef, 4 Jan 71; (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Contingency Options for Southeast Asia," 9 Dec 71; CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

44. (TS–GP 1) CM–537–71 to SecDef, 28 Jan 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–547–71 to SecDef, 30 Jan 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–548–71 to SecDef, 30 Jan 71; (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Contingency Options for Southeast Asia," 3 Feb 71; CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

45. (TS) CM–567–71 to SecDef, 5 Feb 71; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3418 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 7 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

46. (TS–GP 1) CM–598–71 to SecDef, 15 Feb 71; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 4144 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 16 Feb 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–619–71 to SecDef, 20 Feb 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–654–71 to SecDef, 27 Feb 71; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 71. (TS–GP 1) Unconventional Operations Summary No. 4, 1 Apr 71, Att to DJSM 641–71 to SecDef, 5 Apr 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 71. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Hai Cang Tudo Operations (U)," 9 Apr 71, JMF 907/323 (CY 1971) sec 1.

47. (TS) CM–565–71 to SecDef, 4 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 71.

48. SecDef approval of the original plan is contained in a handwritten notation on a draft msg attached to (TS) CM–565–71 to SecDef, 4 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 71. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3318 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 5 Feb 71, same file. (TS–GP 1) CM–656–71 to SecDef, 2 Mar 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Amphibious Deception Plan (U)," 3 Mar 71; same file, Mar 71. (TS–GP 1) DJSM–451–71 to Dir DIA, 11 Mar 71, JMF 912/378 (CY 1971).

49. (TS–GP 1) CM–604–71 to SecDef, 17 Feb 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71.

50. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Contingency Options for Southeast Asia," 20 Feb 71; (TS–GP 1) CM–699–71 to SecDef, 15 Mar 71; CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Mar 71. (TS) Ltr, SecDef to SecState, 4 May 71, same file, Apr–Jun 71.

51. (TS) Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 21 May 71, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Apr–Jun 71. (TS) Ltr, SecDef to SecState, 16 Jun 71, CJCS SecDef Memo File.

52. (TS–GP 1) CM–1355–71 to the 40 Cmte, 6 Dec 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Dec 71.

53. (TS) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, "Cover and Deception Operations for North Vietnam (S)," 15 Feb 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 72.

54. (TS–GP 1) CM–1571–72 to SecDef, 23 Feb 72; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Cover and Deception Options," 8 Mar 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 72. For a survey of this topic, see Richard H. Schultz, Jr., *The Secret War Against Hanoi* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).

55. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) pp. 9, 11.

56. (TS–GP 1) CM–1370–71 to SecDef, 10 Dec 71, CJCS 091 Southeast Asia, Jul–Dec 71. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Request for Authority to Strike Vietnamese EW/GCI Sites," 8 Jan 72, CJCS File 091 Laos, B–52 Strikes, Jan 72 - .

57. (TS) CM–1439–72 to SecDef, 10 Jan 72; (TS–GP 1) CM–1464–72 to SecDef, 20 Jan 72; CJCS File 091 Laos, B–52 Strikes, Jan 72 - .

58. (TS–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info CJCS), 11 Jan 72, JCS IN 59093. (TS–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info CJCS), 20 Jan 72, JCS IN 76221.

59. (TS–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info CJCS), 20 Jan 72, JCS IN 76221. (TS–GP 1) Msg CINCPAC to CJCS, 210149Z Jan 72, JCS IN 77806. (TS–GP 1) CM–1468–72 to SecDef, 20 Jan 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 72.

60. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–26–72 to SecDef, 21 Jan 72, JMF 907 (21 Jan 72).

61. Handwritten note by COL Hansen, J–5, NSC Affairs Office, "SRG Meeting on Vietnam Assessment," 24 Jan 72, J–5 Files. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 2002 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 26 Jan 72.

62. (TS–GP 1) CM–1485–72 to SecDef, 25 Jan 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 72.

63. (TS–GP 1) CM–1521–72 to SecDef, 7 Feb 72, CJCS CM Chron File.

64. (TS–GP 1) CM–1510–72 to SecDef, 2 Feb 72, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Jun 72.

65. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Temporary Augmentation of SEA TACAIR Forces," 4 Feb 72; (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3274 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 5 Feb 72; CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jan 72. (TS–GP 1) CM–1581–72 to SecDef, 28 Feb 72; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Temporary Augmentation of SEA Forces," 3 Mar 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 72.

66. (TS–GP 1) CM–1439–72 to SecDef, 10 Jan 72, CJCS File 091 Laos, B–52 Strikes, Jan 72 thru –. (TS–GP 1) DJSM 67–72 to CJCS, 13 Jan 72; (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "TALOS/TERRIER Employment," 18 Jan 72; (TS–GP 1) CM–1540–72 to SecDef, 14 Feb 72; CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Jun 72.

67. (TS) CM–1534–72 to SecDef, 14 Feb 72; (TS) CM–1551–72 to SecDef, 18 Feb 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 72.

68. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 011458Z Mar 72, JCS IN 57991. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3133 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 3 Mar 72.

69. (TS–GP 1) CM–1593–72 to SecDef, 2 Mar 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 72.

70. (TS–GP 1) CM–1625–72 to SecDef, 9 Mar 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72.

71. (TS–GP 1) CM–1568–72 to SecDef, 11 Mar 72, same file.

72. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "TACAIR Augmentation, Southeast Asia," 15 Mar 72, CJCS File 091 Southeast Asia, Jan–Jun 72. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Request for Operating Authorities to Counter the North Vietnamese Threat," 22 Mar 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72.

73. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1101.

74. "Unauthorized Bombing of Military Targets in North Vietnam," Report by Investigating Subcom. of H. Com. on Armed Services, 15 Dec 72, 92d Cong, 2d sess, pp. 1–12 (hereinafter cited as "Unauthorized Bombing," H. Com. on Armed Services, 15 Dec 72).

75. Ibid., p. 1.

76. "Unauthorized Bombing," H. Com. on Armed Services, 15 Dec 72. For a more detailed account of the Lavelle affair, see Wayne Thompson, *To Hanoi and Back* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), pp. 199–210.

77. Ibid., pp. 2–8, 18–24. *NY Times*, 11 Jun 72, 1; 12 Jun 72, 4; 13 Jun 72, 1.

78. Hearings, Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain, S. Com. on Armed Services, 92d Cong, 2d sess. *NY Times*, 29 Jun 72, 12; 30 Aug 72, 7; 14 Sep 72, 1; 16 Sep 72, 1; 19 Sep 72, 1; 7 Oct 72, 1; 13 Oct 72, 9.

79. "Unauthorized Bombing," H. Com on Armed Services, 15 Dec 72, pp. 7–12.

80. Ltr, SecDef to Senator John Stennis, 18 Oct 72, OSD Files.

Chapter 7. Expansion and Improvement of the RVNAF, 1971

1. This is the figure given in *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. VIII–5. Individual component figures given on pp. VIII–7, 15, 18, and 22 of the same source total 1,047,410. Page J–1 gives a figure of 1,074,410; this is probably a typographical error for 1,047,410.

2. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, chapters 6 and 10.

3. (C) Memo, RVN Ministry of Defense to SecDef, "Requirements for the Plan of Developing and Modernizing the RVNAF," 11 Jan 71; (S–GP 4) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 6 Feb 71, and (S–GP 4) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 17 Feb 71, both Atts to JCS 2472/714, 23 Feb 71; JMF 911/535 (30 Jan 71).

4. (C–GP 4) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 5 Feb 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/721, 4 Mar 71; (C–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 4 Mar 71, JCS IN 61150; JMF 911/535 (5 Feb 71).

5. (C–GP 4) Ltr, CINCPAC to JCS, 25 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2472/721, 4 Mar 71, JMF 911/535 (5 Feb 71).

6. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts and CJCS, 10 Feb 71, Att to JCS 2472/715, 23 Feb 71, JMF 911/309 (19 Feb 71).

7. The memorandum has not been located in either JCS or OSD files. The OSD Deputy Historian stated that it probably was an informational memorandum that the Secretary took to the White House meeting, rather than a formal memorandum addressed to the President.

8. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 1 Apr 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/735, 8 Apr 71, JMF 911/535 (8 Apr 71).

9. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 8 Apr 71, Att to JCS 2472/735, 8 Apr 71, JMF 911/535 (8 Apr 71).

10. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–165–71 to SecDef, 6 Apr 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/736, 6 Apr 71, JMF 911/535 (30 Mar 71). (C–GP 4) JCSM–174–71 to SecDef, 7 Apr 71, Encl to JCS 2472/721–1, 30 Mar 71, JMF 911/535 (5 Feb 71).

11. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–180–71 to SecDef, 19 Apr 71, Encl to JCS 2472/714–1, 12 Apr 71, JMF 911/535 (30 Jan 71).

12. See above, pp. 130–133.

13. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–182–71 to SecDef, 19 Apr 71, Encl to JCS 2472/715–1, 7 Apr 71, JMF 911/309 (19 Feb 71).

14. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–192–71 to SecDef, 23 Apr 71, Encl 2472/735–1, 21 Apr 71, JMF 911/535 (8 Apr 71).

15. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 3 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/714–4, 4 Jun 71, JMF 911/535 (30 Jan 71).

16. The NSC assessment is treated in chapter 2, p. 21.

17. See above, pp. 132–133.

18. (TS–GP 3) Memo, ASD(ISA) to Dr. Kissinger, USec State, DCI, and CJCS, 19 May 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/739–5, 27 May 71, JMF 911 (15 Apr 71) sec 1.

19. Ibid.

20. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Dr. Kissinger, USecState, DCI, and CJCS, 18 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/739–19, 21 Jun 71, same file, sec 4.

21. Memo, RADM Welander to CJCS, "HAK Concern with Rate of Withdrawal from SVN," 8 Jun 71, TS, Moorer Diary. For resolution of Republic of Korea force levels in South Vietnam, see chapter 3.

22. (TS–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 113, 23 Jun 71; (TS–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 118, 3 Jul 71; JMF 001 (CY 1971) NSDMs.

23. (TS) Msg, JCS 4739 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 8 Jul 71. (TS) DJSM–1298–71 to ASD(ISA), 15 Jul 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 20 Jul 71; Atts to JCS 2472/769, 21 Jul 71, JMF 911/535 (23 Jun 71).

24. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 20 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/769, 21 Jul 71; (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 23 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/769–1, 13 Aug 71; JMF 911/535 (23 Jun 71).

25. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–379–71 to SecDef, 17 Aug 71, Encl to JCS 2472/769–2, 13 Aug 71, JMF 911/535 (23 Jun 71).

26. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 4 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/769–3, 7 Sep 71, JMF 911/535 (23 Jun 71). The deadline of 15 October was subsequently extended to 15 November by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) when he informed the Chairman on 28 September of a Presidential directive for a follow-up report on RVNAF improvement by 1 December 1971. (TS–GP 1) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 28 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/769–4, 29 Sep 71, same file.

27. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–493–71 to SecDef, 9 Nov 71, Encl to JCS 2472/769–5, 2 Nov 71, JMF 911/535 (23 Jun 71).

28. Jeffrey J. Clarke argues that the desertion problem received undue attention. During the American Civil War, for example, desertion rates in the Union Army were about as high as in the ARVN. *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965–1973*, (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1988), p. 518.

29. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–493–71 to SecDef, 9 Nov 71, Encl to JCS 2472/769–5, 2 Nov 71, JMF 911/535 (23 Jun 71). The COMUSMACV assessment of RVNAF leaders is contained in (S–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 090944Z Oct 71, JCS IN 98143, same file.

30. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 24 Sep 71, Att to JCS 2472/781, 27 Sep 71; (S–GP 3) JCSM–514–71 to SecDef, 26 Nov 71, Encl to JCS 2472/781–1, 15 Nov 71; JMF 911/145 (24 Sep 71).

31. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, pp. VIII–7—VIII–9, VIII–33.

32. On 15 August 1970, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had authorized COMUSMACV to make field refinements to manpower space ceilings of individual RVNAF components up to 5 percent so long as the total RVNAF strength was not exceeded and new units were not created without prior JCS approval. (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 749S to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 15 Aug 70. On 29 March 1971, the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized COMUSMACV to create additional RVNAF units within the approved force structure without prior JCS approval provided individual component strength ceilings did not exceed 5 percent of the field adjustments authorized by COMUSMACV, the total RVNAF strength ceiling was not exceeded, Service approval

was obtained for additional equipment, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were informed of the changes. (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 7422 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 29 Mar 71.

33. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–75–72 to SecDef, 23 Feb 72, Encl to JCS 2472/796–1, 18 Feb 72, JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

34. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. VIII–7, VIII–15, VIII–18, VIII–21, and VIII–22.

35. (S–GP 3) Memo, DepSecDef to Secys of MilDepts, Dir DSPG, 10 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/747, 11 May 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 1.

36. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 17 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/751, 18 May 71, JMF 911/535 (17 May 71).

37. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–274–71 to SecDef, 15 Jun 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/751–1, 9 Jun 71, JMF 911/535 (17 May 71).

38. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 18 May 71; (S–GP 4) CM–980–71 to SecDef, 14 Jun 71; Atts to JCS 2472/759, 21 Jun 71, JMF 911/329 (18 May 71). See chapter 5, pp. 98–99, for coverage of MARKET TIME operations in 1971.

39. (S–GP 3) Memo, Dir DSPG to DepSecDef, 9 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–1, 11 Jun 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 1. (TS–GP 1) Memo, Actg SecAF to SecDef, 10 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–2, 14 Jun 71, same file, sec 2. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecArmy to DepSecDef, 28 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–3, 30 Jun 71, same file, sec 3.

40. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS, and Dir DSPG, 2 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/727–4, 9 Jul 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 3.

41. (TS–GP 1) DJSM–1260–71 to DIA et al., 12 Jul 71, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/747–4, 14 Jul 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 3. (TS–GP 1) DJSM 1417–71 to CJCS, 3 Aug 71, same file, sec 4.

42. (TS–GP 1) Memo for Record, BG John W. Pauly, USAF, DepDir for Ops (J–3), 29 Jul 71, Att to DJSM–1417–71 to CJCS, 3 Aug 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 4.

43. (TS–GP 1) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 5 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–6, 10 Aug 71; (TS–GP 3) J–3 Briefing Sheet for CJCS, "JCS 2472/747–7—RVN Armed Forces Interdiction Alternatives (U)," 19 Aug 71; JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 4. (TS–GP 1) CINCPAC OPLAN ISLAND TREE, 5 Aug 71, JMF 346 (5 Aug 71) sec 1A.

44. (TS–GP 1) JCSM–384–71 to SecDef, 23 Aug 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/747–7, 18 Aug 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 4.

45. (S–GP 1) Msg, JCS 4586 to CINCPAC, 30 Aug 71.

46. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–369–71 to SecDef, 23 Aug 71, Encl to JCS 2472/747–5, 4 Aug 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 3.

47. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 8 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–8, 12 Oct 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 5. To manage implementation of the actions directed by the Secretary, Admiral Moorer requested that the Director of the Joint Staff on 14 October 1971 establish "a high level Joint Staff Steering Group with appropriate Service representatives." The Director decided to use the existing Joint Vietnamization Coordinating Group, which included both Joint Staff and Service members, to meet this requirement. (S–GP 4) CM–1265–71 to DJS, 14 Oct 71; (S–GP 4) DJSM–1914–71 to CJCS, 16 Oct 71; same file.

48. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–500–71 to SecDef, 12 Nov 71, Encl to JCS 2472/747–9, 8 Nov 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 5.

49. (TS–GP 4) CM–1318–71 to SecDef, 18 Nov 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–10, 18 Nov 71, same file.

50. (S–GP 3) Memo, DepSecDef to SecAF et al., 10 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/747, 11 May 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 1. (TS–GP 1) Memo, Actg SecAF to SecDef, 10 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–2, 14 Jun 71, same file, sec 2.

51. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–369–71 to SecDef, 23 Aug 71, Encl to JCS 2472/747–5, 4 Aug 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 3.

52. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. VI–15. As constituted at the end of 1971, the task force consisted of 108 VNAF and 278 US personnel.

53. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–500–71 to SecDef, 12 Nov 71, Encl to JCS 2472/747–9, 8 Nov 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 5.

54. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 29 Nov 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–11, 30 Nov 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6.

55. (TS–GP 1) CM–1359–71 to SecDef, 3 Dec 71, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/747–11, 7 Dec 71; (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 6 Dec 71, Att to JCS 2472/747–13, 7 Dec 71; same file. (Emphasis is the Secretary's).

56. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–547–71 to SecDef, 10 Dec 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/747–12, 1 Dec 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6. Although the JCSM is dated 10 December 1971, it was not finally approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff until 11 December. See (C) Dec On, "JCS 2472/747–12, 'CREDIBLE CHASE Program (U),'" 11 Dec 71, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6.

57. (TS–GP 4) Memo, CNO to CJCS, 17 Jan 72, Att to JCS 2472/747–14, 19 Jan 72, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6.

58. (TS–GP 4) CM–1478–72 to CNO, 26 Jan 72, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/747–14, 3 Feb 72, JMF 9; 1/309 (10 May 71) sec 6. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–24–72 to SecDef, 19 Jan 72, Encl to JCS 2472/786–6, 19 Jan 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71).

59. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–43–72 to SecDef, 5 Feb 72, Encl to JCS 2472/747–15, 5 Feb 72; (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts and CJCS, 16 Feb 72, Att to JCS 2472/747–17, 17 Feb 72; JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6.

60. (TS–GP 4) Msg, JCS 6026 to CINCPAC, 172109Z Feb 72. (TS–GP 4) Memo, CSAF to CJCS, "CREDIBLE CHASE Evaluation," 3 Mar 72, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Pres, 19 May 72, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/818, 22 May 72, JMF 911/495 (19 May 72). (TS–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 168, 19 May 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) NSDMs.

61. (TS) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS et al., 7 Jun 72, Att to JCS 2472/821, 8 Jun 72; (TS) J5SM–1129–72 to Secy, JCS, 27 Dec 72; JMF 911/460 (7 Jun 72). (C) TACCOM, TAC Project 71A–211T, TAWC Project 1142, Final Rpt, "CREDIBLE CHASE/AU–23A (U)," Aug 72, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 4B.

Chapter 8. The North Vietnamese Offensive

1. For indications of enemy preparations for the offensive, see chapter 6, pp. 120–122.

2. All information on the operational aspects of the North Vietnamese offensive and South Vietnamese counteractions is from (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, chapters 2 and 3 and annexes B, J, K, and L, unless otherwise stated.

3. The Military History Institute of Vietnam, *Victory in Vietnam: The Official History of the People's Army of Vietnam, 1954–1975*. Trans by Merle L. Pribbenow (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), p. 289.

4. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), pp. 480–482, 495–504; Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), p. 90. On 3 April 1972, Nixon ordered that all reports from COMUSMACV be sent immediately to the White House for his personal review and that Laird send him a complete situation report daily at 0600, 1200, and 1800 hours. CJCS Memo M–18–72, 3 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

5. Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC, 7393, 041443Z Apr 72; 7438, 041530 Z Apr 72; 9004, 052241Z Apr 72; 9069, 052353Z Apr 72; and 9073, 0532357Z Apr 72; Memo, M–19–72 by CJCS, 4 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

6. Memo M–18–72 by CJCS, 3 Apr 72, TS; Phonecons, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger and MG Haig, 1826 and 1902, 3 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

7. Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC; 7393, 041443Z Apr 72, TS; 7438, 041530Z Apr 72, TS; 9004, 052241Z Apr 72, TS; 9069, 052357Z Apr 72, TS; Memo, M–19–72 by CJCS, 4 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

8. Memo M–20–72 by CJCS, 5 Apr 72, TS; Phonecons, CJCS with CINCPAC, 1330 and 1605, 5 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

9. These messages have not been located.

10. Phonecons, CJCS with CINCPAC, 1355, 8 Apr 72; CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1426, 8 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, JCS 3492 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 082308Z, Apr 72, TS; Msgs, JCS 2864 and 3476 to CINCLANT and CINCPAC, 080443Z and 082335Z Apr 72, TS; Msg, JCS 3485 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 082253Z Apr 72, TS; Msg, JCS 4008 to CINCPAC, 100056Z Apr 72, TS; Msg, JCS 4390 to CINCLANT, 101330Z Apr 72, TS; Msg, JCS 4922 to USCINCEUR, 102334Z Apr 72, TS. On 10 April, authority was given to attack "any military aircraft," such as helicopters and transports, below 20° north latitude. Four days later, the area for naval gunfire attack was widened from 19° to 20° north latitude. CM–1724–72 to SecDef, 10 Apr 72, TS, CJCS 091 SEA Air Ops; Msgs, JCS 4689 and 4940 to CINCPAC, 101915Z and 110006Z Apr 72, TS; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "US Naval Activity in the Gulf of Tonkin," 14 Apr 72, TS, CJCS 091 Vietnam; Msg, JCS 9317 to CINCPAC, 141739Z Apr 72, TS.

11. *Victory in Vietnam*, pp. 291–292.

12. (TS–GP 1) CM–1735–72 to SecDef, 11 Apr 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Apr 72.

13. Phonecons, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 0925, 12 Apr 72 and CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1935, 12 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

14. On 5 April, CINCPAC had urged "a one-time maximum effort air strike" against the Haiphong area. Secretary Laird asked the Chairman about existing plans for a 24-hour attack and voiced particular concern about hitting foreign shipping in the harbor. The Chairman assured him that the risk would be no greater than during 1967–68. On 10 April, the JCS directed CINCPAC and CINCSAC to proceed with planning for a one-day strike. Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 050521Z Apr 72, TS; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Contingency Plans for Operations Against North Vietnam," 6 Apr 72, TS; CM–1722–72 to SecDef, 7 Apr 72, TS, CJCS file 091 Vietnam; Msg, JCS 4413 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 101416Z Apr 72, TS.

15. M–23–72 by CJCS, 14 Apr 72, TS; M–24–72 by CJCS, 15 Apr 72, TS; Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 150205Z Apr 72, TS; Phonecon, CJCS with CINCPAC, 1414, 15 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary. During the Hanoi-Haiphong strike, at JCS direction, CINCPAC sent a cruiser north of 20° to bombard gun positions on the Do Son peninsula. Msg, JCS 1580 to CINCPAC, 161138Z Apr 72, TS.

16. Phonecons, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 0901, and MG Haig, 1543, 19 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, JCS 5651 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 192327Z Apr 72, TS; Msg, JCS 5676 to CINCPAC, 200002Z Apr 72, TS. On 25 April, the boundary for naval gunfire and tactical air strikes was pushed northward to 20° mainly because the mountainous terrain between 19° and 20° created a natural bottleneck for roads and railroads, making lucrative targets. CM–1757–72 to SecDef, 17 Apr 72, TS, CJCS 091 SEA Air Ops; Msgs, JCS 2309 and 2313 to CINCPAC, 251459Z and 251504Z Apr 72, TS; CM–1755–72 to SecDef, 18 Apr 72, TS, CJCS 091 SEA Air Ops; Msg, JCS 2657 to CSAF et al., 252058Z Apr 72, TS; CM–1787–72 to SecDef, 26 Apr 72, TS; Msgs, JCS 3765 and 6393 to CINCPAC, 262224Z and 290041Z Apr 72, TS; CMs 1783 and 1818 to SecDef, 25 and 6 May 72, TS; Memos, SecDef to CJCS, "Manned Tactical Reconnaissance," 24 and 29 Apr 72, TS. The Secretary also authorized use of riot control agents for aircrew recovery in North Vietnam and Cambodia, and for RVNAF ground intelligence and reconnaissance operations in Cambodia and Laos. CM–1750–72 to SecDef, 14 Apr 72, TS, CJCS 091 SEA Air Ops; Msg, JCS 1477 to CINCPAC, 151842Z Apr 72, TS; Memo, "Use of Riot Control Agents in SE Asia," 26 Apr 72, TS, CJCS 091 SEA.

17. Hammond, *Military and the Media*, pp. 557–558; Msgs, COMUSMACV 3757 and 3810 to SecDef, 241111Z and 260857Z Apr 72, TS; *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 550–554.

18. Phonecons, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 1916, and CINCPAC, 1936, 28 Apr 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, JCS 6416 to CINCPAC, 290047Z Apr 72, TS. Enemy preparations are described in *Victory in Vietnam*, p. 292.

19. Msg, COMUSMACV 4021 to SecDef, 011601Z Apr 72,TS. The 3rd ARVN Division had borne the brunt of the attack in MR 1. By late April, its Commanding General was exercising

operational control over the division's two remaining regiments (the third had surrendered at Camp Carroll), two Marine brigades, three Ranger groups, two armored cavalry squadrons, one tank brigade and Regional forces and Popular forces—eleven units plus divisional artillery and support commands, but without any augmentation for the division signal battalion. There was also feuding among the ARVN commanders.

20. Phonecons, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 1016, 1 May 72, and 0843, 4 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, AFSSO 7 AF to AFSSO USAF, 061045Z May 72, TS, Gen. Vogt's Read File, Air Force History Support Office.

21 At this time, ADM Moorer was concerned about GEN Abrams' frame of mind. See: Phonecons, CJCS with GEN Abrams, 0912, 5 May 72, TS; CJCS with MG Haig, 0921, 5 May 72, TS; CJCS with CINCPACFLT, 1933, 11 May 72, TS; CJCS with VADM C. S. Minter, 1721, 12 May 72, TS; Moorer Diary. Concurrently, at Laird's urging, the President nominated GEN Abrams to be the Army Chief of Staff. In 1969, Nixon had given Laird freedom to choose military and civilian appointees for the Department of Defense. Laird asked Nixon to respect the promise and the President did. Melvin R. Laird interviewed by W. S. Poole, 15 July 1998, JHO.

22. Entry for 0800, 21 Oct 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

23. *Victory in Vietnam*, p. 298.

24. Msg, AFSSOI 7 AF to AFSSO USAF, 091030Z May 72, TS, Gen. Vogt's Read File.

25. Msgs, JCS 9692 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 022232Z May 72, TS; COMUSMACV to JCS, 040425Z May 72, TS; JCS 2869 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 041738 May 72, TS.

26. Phonecon, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1652, 4 May 72, TS; Entries for 1714 and 1850, 4 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Msgs, CINCPAC to CJCS, 050522Z and 230750Z Apr 72, TS.

27. Entry for 0800 5 May 72, TS; Phonecons, CJCS with CNO, 1209, 5 May 72, TS; CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1601, 5 May 72, TS; Entry for 0830, 6 May 72, TS; Phonecons, CJCS with CNO, 1739, 8 May 72, TS; CJCS with SecDef, 1745, 8 May 72, TS; Entry for 1753, 8 May 72, TS, all in the Moorer Diary

28. *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1972*, p. 585; Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC: 6992, 081839Z May 72, TS; 7453, 090325Z May 72, TS; 090247Z May 72, TS; 7315, 090053Z May 72, TS.

29. USN Mine Warfare Project Office, *The Mining of North Vietnam*, *8 May 1972 to 14 January 1973*, pp. 3–3 through 3–19. Just after the President's address, the Chairman and CINCPAC spoke by secure telephone: ADM Moorer: "Strongest speech I've ever heard!" ADM McCain: "Since the days of the Revolution!" Phonecon, CJCS with CINCPAC, 2257, 8 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

30. Phonecon, CJCS with President, 1255, 9 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

31. Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Foreign Shipping in North Vietnamese Waters," 10 May 72, TS, CJCS 091 Vietnam; CM–1834–72 and 1870–72 to SecDef, 11 and 20 May 72, TS; Msgs, JCS 9511 to CINPAC, 101703Z May 72, TS; JCS 2233 to CINCPAC, 120009Z May 72, TS; JCS 2237 to CINCPAC, 120010Z May 72, TS.

32. Phonecon, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 0843, 4 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Msg, AFSSO 7 AF to AFSSO USAF, 061045Z May 72, TS, Gen. Vogt's Read File; Msg, COMUSMACV to CJCS and CINCPAC, 051010Z May 72, TS; CM–1816–72 to SecDef, 6 May 72, TS, CJCS 091 Vietnam; Msg, JCS 6267 to CINCPAC, 080108Z May 72, TS.

33. (TS–GP 1) Msgs, JCS 8619 to CINCPAC, 092356Z May 72; JCS 8627 to CINCPAC, 100111Z May 72. (TS–GP 1) CM–1778–72 to SecDef, 9 May 72; CM–1848–72 to SecDef, 15 May 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 72.

34. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History*, *Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) pp. B–8—B–9.

35. (TS) Msgs, JCS 6177 to CINCPAC, 152340Z May 72; JCS 7006 to CINCPAC, 161617Z May 72; JCS 7011 to CINCPAC, 161625Z May 72; JCS 6029 to CINCPAC, 232017Z May 72. (TS–GP 4) Memo, Vice CNO to CJCS, "NVN Interdiction Planning (U)," 12 May 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 72.

36. Msgs, Abrams SPECAT to McCain info Moorer, 9 May 72 and 6 Jun 72, U, Abrams Microfilm MHI. Percentages are in Memo, Laird to the President, "Assessment of Campaign against North Vietnam," Box 096, Nixon Papers, NARA. Wayne Thompson, *To Hanoi and Back: The U. S. Air Force and North Vietnam, 1966–1973* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), pp. 229–236.

37. Kappman, *South Vietnam*, pp. 84–86.

38. Kappman, *South Vietnam*, pp. 89–91. *NY Times*, 10 May 72, 22; 11 May 72, 1 and 7; 12 May 72, 21.

39. Kappman, *South Vietnam*, pp. 98–99. *NY Times*, 20 May 72, 1; 25 May 72, 20.

40. See above p. 165.

41. *NY Times*, 9 May 72, 1; 10 May 72, 19; and 17 May 72, 16.

42. Kappman, *South Vietnam*, pp. 103, 108, 111. *NY Times*, 14 June 72, 1; 28 June 72, 1.

43. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) p. B–9. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 8685 to CINCPAC, 260019Z May 72.

44. (TS–GP 1) CM–1879–72 to SecDef, 26 May 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72.

45. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Southeast Asia Operating Authorities," 1 Jun 72, JMF 907/323 (CY 1972). (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 6450 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 011705Z Jun 72.

46. (TS–GP 1) CM–1811–72 to SecDef, 3 May 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Additional USAF F–4 Deployments," 3 May 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Jun 72. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 1956 to USCINCEUR, USCINCRED, CINCPAC, CINCSAC, and CSAF, 032346Z May 72.

47. (S–GP 4) CM–1824–72 to SecDef, 10 May 72, CJCS CM Chron File. (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 2142 to USCINCRED, CINCPAC and CSAF, 112216Z May 72.

48. (TS–GP 4) Msg, JCS 6206 to CINCPAC, 160022Z May 72.

49. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 3423 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 210004Z May 72.

50. Entries for 1224, 1251, 1725, and 2001, 19 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary; phonecon, Moorer with Kissinger, 2001, 19 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

51. (S–GP 1) CM–1872–72 to SecDef, 22 May 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 5677 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 231422Z May 72.

52. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 24 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/813–6, 24 May 72, JMF 907/374 (26 Apr 72) sec 2.

53. (TS–GP 1) CM–1883–72 to SecDef, 27 May 72 (SecDef approval indicated on draft msg attached to CM), CJCS File 323.3 CINCPAC. (S–GP 1) Msgs, JCS 1873 to CINCPAC, 271630Z May 72; JCS 1878 to CINCLANT, 271634Z May 72. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History 1972*, p. 195.

54. (TS–GP 1) CM–1874–72 to SecDef, 24 May 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 1837 to CINCPAC, CINCSAC, CINCLANT, and USCINCRED, 271556Z May 72.

55. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef, to CJCS, 26 Apr 72, Att to JCS 2472/813, 26 Apr 72, JMF 907/374 (26 Apr 72) sec 1.

56. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 3 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/813–3, 4 May 72, JMF 907/374 (26 Apr 72) sec 1.

57. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–221–72 to SecDef, 10 May 72, Encl to JCS 2472/813–5, 9 May 72, JMF 907/374 (26 Apr 72) sec 2.

58. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–225–72 to SecDef, 15 May 72, Encl to JCS 2472/813–4, 9 May 72, JMF 907/374 (26 Apr 72) sec 1.

59. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 24 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/813–6, 24 May 72; (TS–GP 1) CM–1882–72 to SecDef, 26 May 72, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/813–6, 26 May 72; (TS–GP 4) JCSM–256–72 to SecDef, 31 May 72, Encl to JCS 2472/813–7, 30 May 72; JMF 907/374 (26 Apr 72) sec 2.

60. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Augmented B–52 Force in SEA," 7 Jun 72; (TS) JCSM–279–72 to SecDef, 19 Jun 72, Encl to JCS 2472/822, 12 Jun 72; JMF 907/327 (7 Jun 72).

61. (TS–EX) CM–1967–72 to SecDef, 23 Jun 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Jun 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 5109 to CINCPAC, CINCLANT, USCINCRED, 261614Z Jun 72. (TS–EX) CM–2042–72, 21 Jul 72; CM–2137–72, 28 Aug 72; CM–2205–72, 27 Sep 72; CM–2267–72, 25 Oct 72; CM–2293–72, 11 Nov 72; CM–2389–72, 21 Dec 72; all to SecDef, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72. (TS) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, "Temporary Augmentation Authorities," 25 Jul 72, 31 Aug 72, 29 Sep 72, 18 Nov 72, and 23 Dec 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72.

62. (TS–GP 1) CM–1813–72 to SecDef, 4 May 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 72.

63. *Victory in Vietnam*, pp. 303–304.

64. (TS–EX) JCSM–265–72 to SecDef, 6 June 72, filed in CJCS CM Chron File in place of CM–1901–72.

65. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "LINEBACKER Target Validation," 12 Jun 72; (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Targeting in North Vietnam," 2 Jun 72; JMF 907/323 (CY 1972).

66. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 3293 to CINCPAC, 152100Z Jun 72. (TS–EX) CM–1932–72 to SecDef, 21 Jun 72, CJCS CM Chron File. (TS–EX) CM–1964–72 to SecDef, 26 Jun 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 72. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 30 Jun 72, JMF 907/323 (CY 1972).

67. (TS) CM–1951–72 to SecDef, 15 Jun 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 72.

68. (TS–EX) CM–1920–72 to SecDef, 10 Jun 72, CJCS CM Chron File. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "LINEBACKER Tactical Reconnaissance," 30 June 72, JMF 907/323 (CY 1972).

69. (TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to CJCS, 182218Z and 182220Z Jun 72, JCS IN 89557 and 89569. (TS–EX) CM–1954–72 to SecDef, 19 Jun 72; (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "POCKET MONEY," 26 Jun 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 72.

70. (TS–EX) CM–1927–72 to SecDef, 10 Jun 72; CM–1979–72 to SecDef, 29 Jun 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 72.

71. See above p. 162.

72. (TS–EX) CM–1966–72 to SecDef, 23 Jun 72, CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul 71–Jun 72. For SecDef approval, see handwritten notation on draft msg attached to CM–1966–72. For subsequent extensions, see (TS–EX) CM–2057–72, 27 Jul 72 (SecDef approval on attached draft msg); CM–2133–72, 28 Aug 72 (SecDef approval on attached draft msg); CM–2270–72, 24 Oct 72; CM–2315–72, 22 Nov 72; CM–2414–72, 30 Dec 72 (SecDef approval on attached draft msg); all in CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72, except CM–2270–72, 24 Oct 72 which is in CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops, Jul–Dec 72. (TS–EX) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, "Operating Authorities," 29 Sep 72; "Southeast Asia Operating Authorities," 30 Oct 72; JMF 907/323 (CY 1972). (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Temporary SEAsia Operating Authorities," 29 Nov 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72.

73. (TS–EX) CM–1905–72 to SecDef, 6 Jun 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 4446 to CINCPAC, 081243Z Jun 72.

74. *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1972*, p. 708. Knappman, *South Vietnam*, p. 147.

75. (TS–EX) CM–1943–72 to SecDef, 15 Jun 72, CJCS CM Chron File.

76. (TS–EX) DIA Document, "Assessment of Campaign Against North Vietnam," n.d., Att to CM–2014–72 to SecDef, 11 Jul 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 72.

77. *Victory in Vietnam*, p. 300.

78. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 8243 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 202221Z Jun 72.

79. (TS–EX) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info CJCS), 211145Z Jun 72, JCS IN 94951. (TS–EX) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 220430Z Jun 72, JCS IN 96570.

80. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1255 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 221223Z Jun 72 (derived from JCS 2472/826), JMF 911/300 (10 Jun 72).

81. (TS) WSAG Mtg. Minutes, 4 Aug 72, NCS Files.

82. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73,* (U) p. 70.

83. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) pp. B–8—B–10.

84. (TS–EX) CM–2030–72 to SecDef, 18 Jul 72; CM–2038–72 to SecDef, 20 Jul 72; CM–2053–72 to SecDef, 26 Jul 72; Memos, SecDef to CJCS, "LINEBACKER Target Validations," 20 and 25 Jul 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 72.

85. (TS–EX) CM–2086–72 to SecDef, 9 Aug 72; CM–2118–72 to SecDef, 16 Aug 72; CM–2135–72 to SecDef, 30 Aug 72; CJCS File 091, Aug 72. (TS–EX) CM–2160–72 to SecDef, 5 Sep 72; CM–2200–72 to SecDef, 27 Sep 72; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Linebacker Target Authorization," 30 Sep 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Sep 72.

86. (TS–EX) CM–2008–72 to SecDef, 10 Jul 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 72. (TS–EX) CM–2009–72 to SecDef, 10 Jul 72, CJCS CM Chron File.

87. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1264 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 112047Z Jul 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1386 to CINCUSNAVEUR, 112257Z Jul 72.

88. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 2537 to CINCUSNAVEUR, 122304Z Jul 72. (TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to CJCS, 140356Z and 180315Z Jul 72, JCS IN 47180 and 53605.

89. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Chinese Buffer Zone Reconnaissance," 14 Jul 72, JMF 907/323 (CY 1972). (TS–EX) CM–2033–72 to SecDef, 19 Jul 72; CM–2052–72 to SecDef, 24 Jul 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 72.

90. (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 9482 to CINCPAC, 012110Z Aug 72; JCS 6691 to CINCPAC, 172240Z Aug 72. (TS–EX) CM–2158–72 to SecDef, 27 Aug 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Aug 72. (TS–EX) CM–2198–72 to SecDef, 21 Sep 72, same file, Sep 72. (Draft msgs attached to both CMs have notations of SecDef approval.)

91. (TS–EX) CM–2057–72 to SecDef, 27 Jul 72 (for SecDef approval, see handwritten notation on draft msg attached to CM–2057–72); CM–2085–72 to SecDef, 7 Aug 72; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "SEAsia Operating Authorities," 15 Aug 72; CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72.

92. (TS–EX) CM–2157–72 to SecDef, 2 Sep 72; CM–2168–72 to SecDef, 21 Sep 72; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "LINE BACKER Reconnaissance," 26 Sep 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Sep 72. (TS–EX) CM–2228–72 to SecDef, 10 Oct 72, same file, Oct 72.

93. *NY Times*, 13 Jul 72, 1; 14 Jul 72, 11; 21 Aug 72, 1; 23 Aug 72, 1; 24 Aug 72, 47.

94. *NY Times*, 25 July 72, 1; 3 Aug 72, 1; 11 Aug 72, 1: 15 Sep 72, 7; 27 Sep 72, 1; and 3 Oct 72, 1.

95. (S) CM–1995–72 to SecDef, 7 Jul 72; CM–2166–72 to SecDef, 8 Sep 72; CJCS CM Chron File. (TS) CM–2088–72 to SecDef, 12 Aug 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72. (S) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, 15 Jul and 20 Sep 72, CJCS SecDef Memo file.

96. (TS) CM–2082–72 to SecDef, 5 Aug 72; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "F–105G Augmentation," 14 Aug 72; CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72. (S) CM–2109–72 to SecDef, 15 Aug 72, CJCS CM Chron File. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 29 Aug 72, CJCS SecDef Memo File.

97. (TS–EX) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 010245Z Jul 72, JCS IN 25042. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7623 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 301946Z Jul 72.

98. (TS–EX) CM–2040–72 to SecDef, 1 Aug 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Aug 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 5666 to CINCPAC, 071653Z Aug 72. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1972*, p. 191.

99. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1909 to CINCPAC, 221648Z Aug 72; (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CINCPACFLT (info CJCS), 232222Z Aug 72, JCS IN 32994. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 290318Z Aug 72, JCS IN 42154.

100. (TS–EX) CM–2162–72 to SecDef, 7 Sep 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Sep 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 5196 to CINCPAC, 071722Z Sep 72.

101. Knappman, *South Vietnam*, p. 150. *Public Papers, Nixon, 1972*, pp. 744–746, 752.

102. *NY Times*, 12 Oct 72, 1. (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 1472 and 1946 to CINCPAC, 111453Z and 1122252 Oct 72. (TS–EX) CM–2258–72 to SecDef, 19 Oct 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

103. (TS) DJSM–1923–72 to CJCS, 10 Oct 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72. (TS) Msg, JCS 1369 to CINCPAC, 111227Z Oct 72.

104. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Enemy Knowledge of B–2 Strikes in NVN," 10 Oct 72; CM–2255–72 to SecDef, 17 Oct 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

105. See chapter 12 for a description of these developments.

106. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Attack Sorties in North Vietnam," 14 Oct 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72. (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 1401 and 1823 to CINCPAC, 150044Z and 152155Z Oct 72. According to Richard Nixon's account, he ordered an intermediate reduction to 200 attack sorties on 13 October and then subsequently further restricted the bombing of North Vietnam to 150 attack sorties. See *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (1978), pp. 693–694. No record has been found, however, of an order for or implementation of the intermediate reduction to 200 sorties.

107. (TS) Msg, JCS 7521 to CINCPAC, 221956Z Oct 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 4296 to CINCPAC, 271341Z Oct 72.

108. (TS–EX) CM–2273–72 to SecDef, 27 Oct 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "SEAsia Operating Authorities," 2 Nov 72, JMF 907/323 (CY 1972).

109. (TS–EX) CM–2241–72 to SecDef, 12 Oct 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

110. *NY Times*, 13 Sep 72, 1.

111. *Victory in Vietnam*, p. 311.

112. (TS) WSAG Mtg. Minutes, 28 Sep 72, NSC Files.

113. Phonecon, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 0751, 6 Jun 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

114. Msgs, CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 130010Z and 210650Z Oct 72, TS; Phonecon, CJCS with GEN Weyand, 1206, 19 Oct 72, TS; Msg, COMUSMACV to CJCS, 201253Z Oct 72, TS; Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 220517Z Oct 72, TS; Phonecon, CJCS with CINCPAC, 1327, 3 Nov 72, TS; Phonecon, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 0811, 24 Oct 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

115. Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 031025Z Nov 72, TS, Moorer Diary. The Chairman's irritation with what he saw as COMUSMACV's continuing intractability and reserve is spelled out in Msg, CJCS to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 040039Z Nov 72, TS, Moorer Diary. Phonecon, CJCS with COMUSMACV, 0853, 16 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

Chapter 9. Force Withdrawals 1972

1. For approval and execution of this redeployment increment, see chapter 3, p. 58.

2. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–577–71 to SecDef, 30 Dec 71, Encl to JCS 2472/786–3, 28 Dec 71, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71).

3. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 6 Jan 72, Att to JCS 2472/786–4, 6 Jan 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71).

4. For detailed coverage of this assessment, see chapter 2, pp. 39–44.

5. (TS–GP 3) "Updated RVN Assessment," 10 Jan 72, pp. 18–20, Encl to JCS 2472/790–1, 19 Jan 72, JMF 911 (16 Dec 71).

6. *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1972*, p. 30.

7. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *17 Jan 72*, p. 50. (TS–GP 1) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 13 Jan 72, Att to JCS 2472/786–5, 14 Jan 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71). (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 19 Jan 72, Att to JCS 2472/795, 20 Jan 72, JMF 911/374 (19 Jan 72).

8. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–24–72 to SecDef, 19 Jan 72, Encl to JCS 2472/786–6, 19 Jan 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71).

9. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 24 Feb 72, Att to JCS 2472/773–5, 25 Feb 72, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

10. For further consideration of the ROK force issue, see pp. 204–206.

11. The Secretary of Defense disapproved an increase in the US force level in Thailand, though this decision did not preclude movement of USAF units from Vietnam to Thailand within the authorized ceiling, and he told ADM Moorer on 31 March 1972 that he wanted the Air Force to plan for 4,800 tactical air sorties per month during FY 1973. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 31 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/773–11, 3 Apr 72, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

12. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–98–72 to SecDef, 6 Mar 72, Encl to JCS 2472/773–6, 2 Mar 72, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

13. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–112–72 to SecDef, 18 Mar 72, Encl to JCS 2472/773–8, 11 Mar 72, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

14. See chapter 12, p. 265.

15. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 8 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/773–7, 9 Mar 72, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

16. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–142–72 to SecDef, 3 Apr 72, Encl A to JCS 2472/773–10, 29 Mar 72, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

17. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–57–72 to SecDef, 17 Feb 72, Att to JCS 2472/786–8, 22 Feb 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Nov 71). (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. F–56.

18. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. F–56 —F–57; (U) p. N–3.

19. (TS–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC (info CJCS), 150255Z Mar 72, JCS IN 81704, JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

20. (TS–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 162121Z Mar 72, JCS IN 85516; (TS–GP 3) JCSM–130–72 to SecDef, 24 Mar 72, Encl to JCS 2472/773–9, 22 Mar 72; JMF 911 (6 Aug 71) sec 2.

21. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 1 Apr 72, Att to JCS 2472/810, 1 Apr 72; (TS–GP 4) JCSM–149–72 to SecDef, 5 Apr 72, Encl to JCS 2472/810–2, 4 Apr 72; JMF 907/301 (1 Apr 72).

22. (TS) CM–1768–72 to SecDef, 19 Apr 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam Force Planning.

23. *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 551–552.

24. Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 4 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/814, 5 May 72; (S–GP 4) MJCS–169–72 to SecDef, 19 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/814–1, 24 May 72; JMF 911/374 (4 May 72). (TS–GP 1) CM–1796–72 to SecDef, 1 May 72, CJCS Chron CM File. (S–NOFORN) *COMUSMACTHAI Command History, 1972*, (C) pp. 12–13, 18.

25. See chapter 10, p. 213–219.

26. (TS) CM–1936–72 to SecDef, 14 Jun 72, CJCS Chron CM File. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. F–57—F–58.

27. See above, p. 193.

28. (TS–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 120725Z Feb 72, JCS IN 26695, JMF 045 (12 Feb 72).

29. (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 180356Z Mar 72, JCS IN 88557; (TS–GP 3) JCSM–137–72 to SecDef, 4 Apr 72, Encl B to JCS 2472/808, 27 Mar 72; JMF 045 (12 Feb 72).

30. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Apr 72, Att to JCS 2472/808–1, 12 Apr 72; (TS–GP 4) JCSM–182–72 to SecDef, 22 Apr 72, Encl to JCS 2472/808–2, 19 Apr 72; JMF 045 (12 Feb 72). (TS–GP 3) JCSM–214–72 to SecDef, 8 May 72, Encl to JCS 2472/815, 7 May 72, JMF 907/045 (7 May 72). (S) CM–1820–72 to SecDef, 8 May 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Jun 72.

31. (TS–GP 4) JCS 2472/808–4, 17 May 72; (TS–GP 4) JCSM–237–72 to SecDef, 22 May 72 (derived from JCS 2472/808–4); (C) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 31 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/808–5, 1 Sep 72; JMF 045 (12 Feb 72).

32. (C–GP 4) JCSM–244–72 to SecDef, 26 May 72, JMF 045 (26 May 72). (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) pp. v, 37, M–1, M–3, N–3–N–4.

33. Phonecons, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 0840, 3 Jun 72 and 0751, 6 Jun 72; CJCS with CSAF, 6 Jun 72; CJCS with CINCPAC 1350, 6 Jun 72, TS, Moorer Diary. *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, vol. 1, p. 37 and annex C; vol. 2, annexes I and M.

34. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 16 Jun 72, Encl B to JCS 2472/824, 20 Jun 72; (TS) JCSM–288–72 to SecDef, 21 Jun 72, Encl A to JCS 2472/824, 20 Jun 72; JMF 911/374 (16 Jun 72).

35. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 3 Jul 1972*, p. 1110.

36. (U) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 1 Jul 72, Att to JCS 2472/828, 3 Jul 72; (TS) JCSM–258–72 to SecDef, 3 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/828–1, 7 Aug 72; JMF 911/374 (1 Jul 72). (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. F–58.

37. (TS) JCSM–258–72 to SecDef, 3 Aug 72 JCS 2472/828–1, 7 Aug 72; (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 26 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/828–2, 28 Aug 72; JMF 911/374 (1 Jul 72).

38. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 15 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/834, 16 Aug 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Aug 72).

39. (TS) JCSM–383–72 to SecDef, 19 Aug 72, App to JCS 2472/834–1, 18 Aug 72, JMF 911/374 (15 Aug 72).

40. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 7 Jul 72, Att to JCS 2353/198, 8 Jul 72; (TS) JCSM–370–72 to SecDef, 15 Aug 72 (derived from JCS 2353/198–1); JMF 922/374 (7 Jul 72).

41. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 4 Sep 1972*, p. 1306. *Public Papers, Nixon, 1972*, p. 830.

42. (U) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 5 Sep 72, Att to JCS 2472/834–2, 5 Sep 72; (TS) JCSM–341–72 to SecDef, 17 Oct 72, Att to JCS 2472/834–3, 18 Oct 72; JMF 911/374 (15 Aug 72). (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. F–59.

43. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 14 5ep 72, JCS 2353/198–2, 15 Sep 72; (TS) JCSM–451–72 to SecDef, 18 Oct 72, Encl to JCS 2353/198–3, 16 Oct 72; (TS) JCSM–460–72 to SecDef, 31 Oct 72, Encl to JCS 2353/198–4, 27 Oct 72; JMF 922/374 (7 Jul 72).

44. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. F–59 —F–61, (U) p. N–6.

45. For developments in the negotiations, see chapter 12.

46. (TS) CM–2325–72 to SecDef, 28 Nov 72, CJCS CM Chron File.

47. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. F–60—F–61. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. J–39.

48. See chapter 3, pp. 61–66.

49. (TS–GP 1) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to President, 21 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–2, 28 Mar 72, JMF 911/497 (16 Feb 72).

50. (TS–GP 1) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to President, 21 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–2, 28 Mar 72, JMF 911/497 (16 Feb 72).

51. (TS–GP 1) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to President, 27 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–3, 31 Mar 72, JMF 911/497 (16 Feb 72).

52. (TS–EX) Extracts of NSDM 161, 5 Apr 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) NSDMs, sec 1.

53. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. C–85, (TS–EX) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to DepSecDef et al., 22 Sep 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–5, 25 Sep 72, JMF 911/497 (16 Feb 72).

54. (S) DJSM–1823–72 to CJCS, 22 Sep 72; (TS–EX) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to DepSecDef et al., 30 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–4, 6 Sep 72; (TS–EX) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to DepSecDef et al., 22 Sep 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–5, 25 Sep 72; JMF 911/497 (16 Feb 72).

55. (TS–EX) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to DepSecDef et al., 22 Sep 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–5, 25 Sep 72; (TS–EX) Memo, NSC Under Secys Cmte to DepSecDef et al., 5 Oct 72, Att to JCS 2472/800–7, 11 Oct 72; JMF 911/497 (16 Feb 72). (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. C–85. For withdrawal of the ROK forces from South Vietnam, see chapter 14.

Chapter 10. RVNAF Improvement 1972

1. See chapter 7, pp. 141–142.

2. (TS–GP 4) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 12 Jan 72; Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 21 Jan 72; Atts to JCS 2472/796, 25 Jan 72 JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72). (TS–NOFORN EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (TS) p. C–12.

3. See chapter 7, pp. 148–149.

4. (TS–GP 3) JCSM–54–72 to SecDef, 14 Feb 72, Encl to JCS 2472/747–16, 10 Feb 72, JMF 911/309 (10 May 71) sec 6.

5. Apparently, the three WHECs represented only one in addition to the two already approved and one less than the two additional recommended by COMUSMACV.

6. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–75–72 to SecDef, 23 Feb 72, Encl to JCS 2472/796–1, 18 Feb 72, JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

7. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 16 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/796–2, 17 Mar 72, JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

8. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–131–72 to SecDef, 29 Mar 72, Encl to JCS 2472/796–3, 22 Mar 72; Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 4 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/796–4, 5 May 72; JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

9. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 1489 to CINCPAC, 242139Z Apr 72.

10. (TS–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 190007Z Jun 72, JCS IN 90240. For the US decision on the STOL program, see chapter 7, pp. 150–152.

11. (TS) JCSM–302–72 to SecDef, 3 Jul 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 2998 to CINCPAC, 031725Z Jul 72; (both derived from JCS 2472/796–5), JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

12. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) p. C–16.

13. See above, pp. 210–211.

14. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 10 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2339/354, 13 Mar 72, JMF 907/535 (10 Mar 72). (TS–GP 3) NSSM 151 to SecDef, 15 Mar 72, Att to JCS 2472/804, 18 Mar 72, JMF 911/496 (15 Mar 72).

15. For this latter aspect of the review, see chapter 9, pp. 193–195.

16. (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 1 Apr 72, Att to JCS 2472/810, 1 Apr 72, JMF 907/301 (1 Apr 72). Admiral Moorer wanted to hold this review in abeyance pending the outcome of the ongoing enemy offensive, but Secretary Laird asked for the studies by late that month. See (TS–GP 4) CM–1740–72 to SecDef, 13 Apr 72, Att to JCS 2472/810–3, 14 Apr 72; (TS–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 22 Apr 72, Att to JCS 2472/810–6, 24 Apr 72; JMF 907/301 (1 Apr 72).

17. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–184–72 to SecDef, 24 Apr 72, Encl A to JCS 2472/810–5, 20 Apr 72, JMF 907/301 (1 Apr 72).

18. (TS–GP 4) JCSM–192–72 to SecDef, 27 Apr 72, Encl to JCS 2472/810–7, 24 Apr 72, JMF 907/301 (1 Apr 72).

19. (TS) WSAG Mtg. Minutes, 17 Apr 72, NSC Files.

20. (TS) WSAG Mtg. Minutes, 18 and 20 Apr 72, NSC Files.

21. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) p. E–1. (TS) WSAG Mtg. Minutes, 17 May 72.

22. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Pres, 19 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/818, 22 May 72, JMF 911/495 (19 May 72). Subsequently, the President accepted Mr. Rush's submission as fulfilling the requirements of NSSM 151 (see above pp. 215–217). (TS–GP 3) Memo, NSC Staff Secy to SecState, SecDef, and DCI, 24 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/804–1, 26 May 72, JMF 911/496 (15 Mar 72).

23. (TS–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to Pres, 19 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/818, 22 May 72, JMF 911/495 (19 May 72). (TS) WSAG Mtg. Minutes, 19 May 72, NSC files. (TS–EX) Extracts of NSDM 168, 19 May 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) NSDMs.

24. (S) Msg, JCS 686Z to CINCPAC, 241524Z May 72, retransmitting Msg, State 5304 to Saigon, 232211Z May 72.

25. (TS–EX) Extracts of NSDM 168, 19 May 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) NSDMs. (TS–GP 3) Memo, DepSecDef to Secys of MilDepts et al., 23 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/819, 24 May 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 1. (S–GP 4) CM–1887–72 to SecDef, 27 May 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, May 72.

26. (TS) CM–1900–72 to DepSecDef, 2 Jun 72, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/819, 2 Jun 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 1.

27. (TS) OSD Report, "Military Assistance to the RVN," n.d., Att to JCS 2472/819–1, 19 Jun 72; Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts and CJCS, 16 Jun 72, Att to JCS 2472/819–2, 27 Jun 72; JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 2. (S) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 12 Jul 72, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/819–7, 19 Jul 72, same file, sec 3.

28. (TS) Point Paper for CJCS and JCS for Use in Discussions with SecDef on 16 Oct 72, "Materiel Status of the RVNAF (U)," n.d., CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

29. (TS) SecAF Study, "Aircraft for the VNAF," n.d., JMF 911/460 (12 Sep 72) sec 1A.

30. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS et al., "Aircraft for VNAF," 12 Sep 72; CM–2224–72 to SecDef, 6 Oct 72, Att to JCS 2472/839–1, 6 Oct 72; JMF 911/460 (12 Sep 72).

31. (TS) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 4 Oct 72, Att to JCS 2472/839, 4 Oct 72; (TS) JCSM–449–72 to SecDef, 11 Oct 72, App to JCS 2472/839–2, 10 Oct 72; JMF 911/460 (12 Sep 72).

32. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 20 Oct 72; Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, 20 Oct 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

33. (TS) Msg, JCS 2801 to CINCPAC et al., 210251Z Oct 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

34. (TS) Memo, SecDef to ASD(I&L), 25 Oct 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 2513 to CINCPAC et al., 260208Z Oct 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72.

35. (TS) Msg, JCS 4487 to USCINCEUR, USCINCRED, and USCINCSO, 271716Z Oct 72. (TS) Fact Sheet, "Project ENHANCE PLUS," 1 Nov 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 72.

36. (S) JCS 2472/841, 26 Oct 72, JMF 911/496 (27 Oct 72). (TS) Msg, JCS 4541 to CMC, 042124Z Nov 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 72. Later, on 17 November 1972, the Joint Chiefs of Staff requested Secretary of Defense approval to replace the approved LVT–5s with LVT–7s in FY 1974 since no spare parts, tools, or follow–on maintenance was available for the LVT–5s. (S) JCSM–487–72 to SecDef, 17 Nov 72, Encl to JCS 2472/841, 26 Oct 72, JMF 911/496 (26 Oct 72).

37. (TS) DJSM–2123–72 to CJCS, 9 Nov 72; (S) Memo, SecDef to SecAF and CJCS, "Project ENHANCE PLUS," 10 Nov 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 2398 to CSAF, 102306Z Nov 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 72.

38. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. E–46.

39. (TS) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts and CJCS, 16 Jun 72, Att to JCS 2472/819–2, 27 Jun 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 2.

40. (S–EX) JCSM–303–72 to SecDef, 29 Jun 72, Encl to JCS 2472/819–3, 29 Jun 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 2.

41. (S) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 6 Jul 72, Att to JCS 2472/819–4, 7 Jul 72; (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 13 Jul 72, Att to JCS 2472/819–6, 14 Jul 72; JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 3.

42. (TS) JCSM–327–72 to SecDef, 14 Jul 72, App to JCS 2472/819–5, 21 Jul 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 3.

43. (S–EX) JCSM–363–72 to SecDef, 12 Aug 72, Encl to JCS 2472/819–10, 9 Aug 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 3.

44. See pp. 217–218.

45. (S) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 12 Jul 72; (S) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 19 Jul 72; both Atts to JCS 2472/819–7, 19 Jul 72, JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 3. For the workinq group's consideration of this matter, see p. F–2 of Att to (TS) CM–1900–72 to SecDef, 2 Jun 72, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2472/819, 2 Jun 72, same file, sec 1.

46. (S) JCSM–343–72 to SecDef, 26 Jul 72 (derived from JCS 2472/819–8), JMF 911/495 (5 May 72) sec 3.

47. (S) Extracts of NSDM 193, 24 Oct 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) NSDMs, sec 2.

48. Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 26 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/837, 29 Aug 72, JMF 911/145 (26 Aug 72).

49. (S) JCSM–445–72 to SecDef, 6 Oct 72, Encl to JCS 2472/837–1, 13 Sep 72, JMF 911/145 (26 Aug 72).

50. (TS) MJCS–283–72 to SecDef, 24 Aug 72, Att to JCS 2472/796–6, 25 Aug 72, JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

51. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 8 Sep 72, Att to JCS 2472/796–7, 11 Sep 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 6840 to CINCPAC, 201139Z Sep 72; JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

52. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 11 Jan 73, Att to JCS 2472/796–8, 13 Jan 73, JMF 911/535 (12 Jan 72).

53. See chapter 14, pp. 306–307.

54. See above, pp. 225–226.

55. (S) JCSM–39–72 to SecDef, 24 Jan 73, Encl to JCS 2472/852, 23 Jan 73, JMF 911/372 (3 Jan 73) sec 1.

56. See chapter 14, p. 308.

57. (TS) Ltr, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 27 Jan 73; (TS) Ltr, CINCPAC to CJCS, 6 Feb 73; Atts to JCS 2472/852–1, 9 Feb 73, JMF 911/372 (3 Jan 73) sec 1.

58. (TS) JCSM–76–73 to SecDef, 27 Feb 73, Encl to JCS 2472/852–2, 23 Feb 73, JMF 911/372 (3 Jan 73) sec 2.

59. For the terms of the Vietnam Agreement and the resulting US military structure in South Vietnam, see chapter 14.

Chapter 11. Pacification and Political Developments, 1971–1972

1. For a more detailed account of the pacification in South Vietnam for the period 1965–1970, see *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960–1968*, Chapters 27, 38, 46, and 52 and *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970* (Washington, DC, 2002), Chapter 11.

2. (TS–GP 1) (C) Plans and Analysis Div, J–3, PADVSUM 1–71, "A Periodic Summary of Progress Toward Vietnamizing the War," 24 Mar 71, JCS Hist Div files. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, p. VII–6.

3. (C) Ltr, COMUSMACV to JCS et al., 7 Jan 71; (C) RVN Community Defense and Local Development Plan, 1971, n.d.; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb–Mar 71 (Bulky).

4. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. VII–1—VII–3. Hearings, "US Assistance Programs in Vietnam," Subcom of H. Com on Gov't Operations, 92d Cong, 1st sess, pp. 129, 179.

5. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. VII–3—VII–5.

6. (C–GP 4) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to Secys State and Def, 3 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/755, 4 Jun 71, JMF 911/101 (3 Jun 71).

7. (TS–GP 1) Briefing Book, CJCS WESTPAC Trip, 2–14 Nov 72, (C) "Future Organization for Pacification," J–5 Files.

8. Ibid. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. VII–5.

9. (C–GP 4) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, "Study of Future CORDS Advisory Program," 13 Jul 71; (C) DJSM–1728–71 to CJCS, 15 Sep 71; JMF 911/319 (1 Jul 71).

10. (C) Report by Spec Interagency Task Force to the Mission Council, "The Future of CORDS in Vietnam," 1 Nov 71, CJCS File 323.3 MACV, Nov 70–Dec 72 (separate section). (C–GP 4) DJSM–2187–71 to CJCS, 3 Dec 71, JMF 911/319 (1 Jul 71).

11. (S–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV 08819 to CINCPAC and CJCS, 131201Z Sep 71; (S–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 142004Z Sep 71; CJCS File 323.3 MACV, Nov 70–Dec 72.

12. (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 1 Oct 71, CJCS File 323.3 MACV, Nov 70–Dec 72. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (U) p. A–1.

13. (C–GP 4) CM–1477–72 to SecDef, 26 Jan 72, CJCS File 323.3 MACV, Nov 70–Dec 72.

14. Ibid. (C–GP 4) Msg, JCS 2693 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 26 Jan 72.

15. In his 1971 history, COMUSMACV reported the AB population at 84.3 percent by the end of 1971 compared with 73.9 percent in January 1971. In his 1970 history, however, COMUSMACV had reported the percentage of AB population in December 1970 at 84.6. If one uses this latter figure, there was actually a slight decrease in the territorial security during 1971. See (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. VII–11, and (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, (U) p. VII–22.

16. All information on pacification goals in 1971 is from (C) RVN Community Defense and Local Development Plan, 1971, n.d., CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb–Mar 71 (Bulky). All information on the conduct of pacification in 1971, except as otherwise stated, is from (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) pp. VII–10—VII–48 and H–1—H–16.

17. For a previous mission of Sir Robert Thompson to Vietnam at the request of President Nixon, see *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970* (Washington, DC, 2002), pp. 108–109.

18. (S–GP 4) JCS 2472/737, 13 Apr 71, JMF 911/147 (3 Feb 71). (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 20 Feb 71, JCS IN 31778.

19. (S–GP 4) JCSM–189–71 to SecDef, 23 Apr 71, Encl A to JCS 2472/737, 13 Apr 71, JMF 911/147 (3 Feb 71).

20. (S–GP 4) Ltr, DepSecDef to SecState, 10 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/737–1, 16 Jul 71; (C–GP 4) Ltr, USecState to DepSecDef, 22 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/737–2, 26 Jul 71; JMF 911/147 (3 Feb 71).

21. Hearings, "US Assistance Programs in Vietnam" Subcmte of H. Cmte on Gov't Operations, 92d Cong, 1 sess, pp. 176–226.

22. (S) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, "Informant Programs in the Republic of Vietnam," 10 Apr 71; (S–GP 4) DJSM–865–71 to ASD(ISA), 7 May 71; (S–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, same subj, 20 May 71; JMF 911/211 (10 Apr 71).

23. (S–GP 4) CM–986–71 to SecDef, 17 Jun 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jun 71.

24. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (C) p. VII–23.

25. Hearings, War-Related Civilian Problems in Indochina, Pt I, Vietnam, Refugee Subcom of S. Com on the Judiciary, 92d Cong, 1st sess, pp. 5–59. Hearings, "US Assistance Programs in Vietnam," Subcom of H. Com on Gov't Operations, 92d Cong, 1st sess, pp. 2–6, 176–237.

26. One hectare equals 2.47 acres.

27. *NY Times*, 31 Aug 70, 1; 30 Aug 71, 1; 31 Aug 71, 1; 4 Oct 71, 1.

28. *NY Times*, 31 May 71, 3; 3 Jun 71, 1; 6 Aug 71, 1; 20 Aug 71, 1.

29. *NY Times*, 3 Jun 71, 1.

30. *NY Times*, 6 Aug 71, 1; 20 Aug 71, 1.

31. *NY Times*, 20 Aug 71, 1; 21 Aug 71, 4.

32. *NY Times*, 21 Aug 71, 1; 23 Aug 71, 1.

33. (TS) Briefing Book CJCS WESTPAC Trip, 2–14 Nov 71, (S) Item #12, J–5 Files. *NY Times*, 30 Aug 71, 1; 31 Aug 71, 1.

34. *NY Times*, 2 Sep 71, 1; 4 Sep 71, 1; 17 Sep 71, 1; 23 Sep 71, 1; 24 Sep 71, 10.

35. *NY Times*, 4 Sep 71, 1; 24 Sep 71, 1.

36. (TS) Briefing Book, CJCS WESTPAC Trip, 2–14 Nov 71, (S) Item #12, J–5 Files. *NY Times*, 3 Oct 71, 1; 4 Oct 71, 1.

37. *NY Times*, 31 Oct 71, 1; 1 Nov 71, 1.

38. *NY Times*, 15 Nov 71, 1. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (U) pp. VIII–88—VIII–89.

39. *NY Times*, 4 Dec 71, 2.

40. (C–GP 4) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 21 Aug 70, Att to JCS 2472/660, 24 Aug 70; (C–GP 4) JCSM–457–70 to SecDef, 23 Sep 70, Encl A to JCS 2472/660–1, 15 Sep 70; JMF 911/145 (21 Aug 70). (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, (C) pp. IX–117, A–1.

41. (S–GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC and CJCS, 7 Jun 71, JCS IN 55664. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (U) p. A–2.

42. (S–GP 1) Memo, DepSecDef to SecNav and CJCS, 7 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/762, 9 Jul 71; (C–GP 4) JCSM–370–71 to SecDef, 11 Aug 71 (derived from JCS 2472/762–1); JMF 911/534 (2 Jul 71).

43. (C–GP 4) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState, DepSecDef, CJCS et al., 26 Jul 71, Att to JCS 2472/772, 27 Jul 71, JMF 911/534 (26 Jul 71).

44. (C) Reg. of Personnel Handling Class. Doc., "Economic Development Fund for Vietnam," 27 Jul 71, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul 71. (TS) Briefing Book, CJCS WESTPAC Trip, 2–14 Nov 71, (C) Item #37, J–5 Files.

45. (S–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to USecState and DepSecDef, 3 Jan 72, Att to JCS 2472/793, 7 Jan 72, JMF 911/534 (3 Jan 72).

46. (C–GP 1) Extracts of NSDM 154, 17 Feb 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) NSDMs. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. D–4.

47. (C) Memo, SecDef to Dr. Kissinger, 2 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/793–1, 25 May 72, JMF 911/534 (3 Jan 72). (C–GP 4) Msg, SecDef 9407 to SecArmy et al., 2 May 72.

48. (C–GP 4) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 19 May 72, Att to JCS 2472/793–1, 25 May 72, JMF 911/534 (3 Jan 72).

49. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) Dept of State, Research Study, REAS–44, "South Vietnam: Revolutionary War Back to Phase One?" 17 Dec 71, Hist. Div. Files.

50. (C–EX) RVN, Four Year Community Defense and Local Development Plan, 1972–1975, n.d.; (C) Ltr, COMUSMACV to JCS et al., n.d. (received in JCS on 18 Apr 72); JMF 911/350 (Jan 72).

51. All information on pacification goals in 1972 is from (C–EX) RVN Four Year Community Defense and Local Development Plan, 1972–1975, n.d., JMF 911/350 (Jan 72). All information on the conduct of pacification in 1972, except as otherwise stated, is from (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, Annex D. Also see (C) Dept of State, Intelligence Note, REAN–55, "South Vietnam: The Communists Strike at Pacification," 2 Aug 72, Hist. Div. Files.

52. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. 116, 125–126, 129–139, D–32.

53 Ibid., pp. D–43—D–44.

Chapter 12. The Negotiations to End the War in 1971 and 1972.

1. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 284–285.

2. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 315–316.

3. (TS) J–5 Briefing for DJS, "Briefing on Negotiations for Peace in Indochina," 25 Aug 72, J–5 Files.

4. (TS) J–5 Briefing, "The Current Status of Negotiations," n.d. (summer 1972); J–5 Briefing for LTG Seignious, n.d., J–5 Files.

5. (TS) J–5 Briefing for DJS, "Briefing on Negotiations for Peace in Indochina," 25 Aug 72, J–5 Files.

6. (TS) J–5 Briefing, "The Current Status of Negotiations," n.d. (summer 1972), J–5 files. (S–NOFORN) Agenda for SEAWAGONS, 12 Oct 72, J–5 Action Officer Files (SEAWAGONS Agendas).

7. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 281–306, 485–496).

8. *Public Papers: Richard Nixon, 1970*, pp. 825–828.

9. (S–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to Secys State and Defense, DCI, and CJCS, 16 Oct 70, Att to JCS 2472/679, 24 Oct 70, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 2.

10. Ibid. (S–GP 3) DJSM–1615–70 to CJCS, 30 Oct 70; (S–GP 3) Msg, JCS 14650 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 30 Oct 70; J–5 Files.

11. (TS–GP 1) VSSG Paper, "Indo-China Cease-Fire Terms," 10 Jun 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/770, 26 Jul 71, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 2.

12. See *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970*, pp. 299–307.

13. (TS–GP 1) Joint TP for DepSecDef and CJCS for SRG Mtq on 20 Jul 71, "Indo-China Cease-fire Paper," n.d., Att to JCS 2472/770, 26 Jul 71, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 2.

14. (TS) Memo for Record by BG W. C. Burrows, USAF, Chief Far East Div., J–5, "NSC Senior Review Group Meeting on 22 July 1971, concerning the VSSG Indo-China Cease-fire Terms Paper (C)," 23 Jul 71, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/770–1, 28 Jul 71, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 2.

15. (TS–GP 1) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 300720Z Jul 71, JCS IN 67169. (TS–GP 1) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 060315Z Aug 71, JCS IN 66841.

16. (TS) Msg, Saigon 13455 to State, 21 Aug 71, JCS IN 98419.

17. (TS) Ltr, Amb Habib to DepAsstSecState for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 6 Aug 71, J–5 Files.

18. (TS–GP 1) VSSG Paper, "Alternative Sets of Cease-Fire Terms," 23 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2472/770–2, 29 Sep 71, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 3.

19. (TS–GP 1) Joint TP for DepSecDef and CJCS for SRG Meeting on 1 Oct 71, "VSSG Alternative Sets of Cease-Fire Terms Paper," n.d., Att to JCS 2472/770–4, 12 Oct 71, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 3.

20. (TS–GP 3) Memo for Record by BG W. C. Burrows, USAF, Chief, Far East Div, J–5, "NSC Senior Review Group Meeting on Alternative Sets of Cease-Fire Terms (U)," 4 Oct 71, Att to JCS 2472/770–3, 6 Oct 71, JMF 911/305 (25 May 70) sec 3.

21. See below, pp. 268–269.

22. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 103–106.

23. (TS–GP 3) Memo, Dir, Vietnam Task Group to Dir, Program Analysis, NSC, 26 Oct 71; (S) Memo, DepAsstSecState for East Asian and Pacific Affairs to Chm, SRG, 4 Nov 71; J–5 Files.

24. See above, p. 257.

25. (C) Msg, US Del France 291 to State, 7 Jan 71, JCS IN 29585. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 825–829.

26. (C) Msg, US Del France 291 to State, 7 Jan 71, JCS IN 29585.

27. (C) Msgs, US Del France 641 and 645 to State, 14 Jan 71, JCS IN 41948 and 42103.

28. (C) Msgs, US Del France 641 and 645 to State, 14 Jan 71, JCS IN 41948 and 42103. *NY Times*, 25 Jan 71, 3.

29. (C) Msgs, US Del France 5624 and 5645 to State, 8 Apr 71, JCS IN 34696 and 34788. (C) Msg, US Del France, 6011 to State, 15 Apr 71, JCS IN 48220. (C) Msg, US Del France 6388 to State, 22 Apr 71, JCS IN 62130. *NY Times*, 16 Apr 71, 2.

30. (C) Msg, US Del France 7348 to State, 6 May 71, JCS IN 88616.

31. Msg, US Del France 11378 to State, 1 Jul 71, JCS IN 99047. *NY Times*, 25 Jun 71, 1; 2 Jul 71, 1.

32. Msg, US Del France 11378 to State, 1 Jul 71, JCS IN 99047. *NY Times*, 2 Jul 71, 1.

33. (C) Msgs, US Del France 12135, 12607, 13004, and 13008 to State; 15 Jul, 22 Jul, 29 Jul, and 29 Jul 71; JCS IN 31795, 43144, 54277, and 54419. *NY Times*, 29 Jul 71, 12; 30 Jul 71, 3. *Dept of State Bulletin*, *16 Aug 71*, p. 181.

34. See chapter 6, pp. 116–117.

35. (C) Msgs, US Del France 20472 and 21017 to State, 2 and 9 Dec 71, JCS IN 85186 and 97692. (S–GP 3) Msg, US Del France 22217 to State, 30 Dec 71, JCS IN 43142. *NY Times*, 16 Dec 711 5; 29 Dec 71, 3.

36. For detailed coverage of the offer, see below, pp. 268–269.

37. See above, p. 257.

38. (TS) J–5 TP for CJCS, "An Analysis of the Advantages and Disadvantages of the US/GVN Accepting a DRV/PRG Initiative for an Immediate Cease-Fire In-Place (U)," 10 Apr 72, J–5 Files. (TS) J–5 paper for CJCS for use at WSAG Mtg, "Enemy Initiative for Cease-Fire In-Place," 14 May 72, J–5 WSAG Files.

39. (TS) ASD(ISA)/DJS TP for DepSecDef and CJCS for WSAG Mtg of 28 Apr 72, "A Military Assessment of an Immediate Cease-fire In-place (U)," n.d., J–5 WSAG Files.

40. (S) State-Defense Paper, "Possible North Vietnamese Cease-Fire Offer," 2 May 72, J–5 WSAG Files.

41. See chapter 8, p. 162.

42. WSAG Vietnam Issues Books, May–Jun 72, J–5 WSAG Files.

43. (U) J5M 1081–72 to DJS, 19 Jul 72; (TS) Memo, DepDir, J–5 to LTG Stillwell, USA, Army OpDep, 8 Sep 72; J–5 Files.

44. *Public Papers: Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 3–5.

45. See above, pp. 263–265.

46. (C) Msgs, US Del France 326 and 338 to State, 6 Jan 72, JCS IN 52406 and 52604; (S–GP 3) Msg, US Del France 455 to State, 10 Jan 72, JCS IN 58397. (S) Msg, State 4910 to US Del France, 11 Jan 72, JCS IN 60115. (C) Msgs, US Del France 752 and 803 to State, 13 Jan 72, JCS IN 64026 and 64422. (C) Msgs, US Del France 1261 and 1294 to State, 20 Jan 72, JCS IN 76862 and 77186. *NY Times*, 7 Jan 72, 1.

47. On 1 February 1972, the White House Press Secretary acknowledged that the United States had turned down on 20 November 1971 a North Vietnamese proposal for a private meeting with Xuan Thuy. The Press Secretary stated that the negotiations could not be productive unless conducted by a member of Hanoi's political leadership. Thus it appeared that North Vietnam cut off the secret negotiations at the Politburo level while the United States declined to continue them at a working level. *NY Times*, 2 Feb 72, 3.

48. *Public Papers: Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 100–106. *NY Times*, 26 Jan 72, 1.

49. *NY Times*, 27 Jan 72, 1 and 15; 28 Jan 72, 1. (C) Msgs, US Del France 1714 and 1722 to State, 27 Jan 72, JCS IN 89423 and 89663. (LOU) Final Transcript, Paris Meetings on Vietnam, 142d Plenary Sess, 27 Jan 72, J–5 Negotiations Files (in RAIR).

50. *NY Times*, 7 Feb 72, 1. *Public Papers: Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 351–352.

51. (S–GP 3) Msg, US Del France 3458 to State, 24 Feb 72, JCS IN 46082. (S–GP 3) Msgs, US Del France 5091 and 5137 to State, 16 Mar 72, JCS IN 85056 and 85372. (C) Msgs, US Del France 5606 and 5682 to State, 23 Mar 72, JCS IN 98668 and 99598. *NY Times*, 8 Mar 72, 2; 17 Mar 72, 9; 24 Mar 72, 1. *Public Papers: Nixon*, *1972*, p. 488.

52. *NY Times*, 9 Apr 72, 1; 21 Apr 72, 1; 26 Apr 72, 1.

53. *Public Papers: Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 550–554.

54. (C) Msgs, US Del France 8073 and 8126 to State; 27 Apr 72, JCS IN 76182 and 76564.

55. See chapter 8, pp. 161–162.

56. *Public Papers: Nixon*, *1972*, pp. 583–587.

57. *NY Times*, 13 Jun 72, 1. *Public Papers*, *Nixon*, *1972*, p. 706.

58. Final Transcripts, Paris Meetings on Vietnam, 150th Plenary Sess, 13 Jul 72, and 152d Plenary Sess, 27 Jul 72, J–5 Negotiations Files (in RAIR). (C) Msgs, US Del France 13955 and 13975 to State, 20 Jul 72, JCS IN 60296 and 59705; US Del France 14867 and 14891 to State, 3 Aug 72, JCS IN 85227 and 85602; US Del France 15312 to State, 10 Aug 72, JCS IN 98929; US Del France 15621 and 15660 to State, 17 Aug 72, JCS IN 21270 and 21501; US Del France 16096 and 16098 to State, 24 Aug 72, JCS IN 34684 and 34946; US Del France 16514 and 16544 to State, 31 Aug 72, JCS IN 47589 and 48000. (C) *Dept of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Intelligence Note*, "Communist Shift in Paris?" 18 Jul 72, J–5 Files.

59. *NY Times*, 16 Jul 72, 4; 20 Jul 72, 1 and 4; 2 Aug 72, 1; 15 Aug 72, 1; 16 Aug 72, 1; 18 Aug 72, 1.

60. *NY Times*, 16 Sep 72, 3; 27 Sep 72, 1; 28 Sep 72, 1; 5 Oct 72, 4.

61. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, p. 953.

62. The official documents dealing with the secret peace negotiations between the United States and North Vietnam during 1972, including reports by Dr. Kissinger to President Nixon and message exchanges between President Nixon and the North Vietnamese, were not available when this account was written. The sequence of events in October 1972 related in this chapter was pieced together from statements subsequently issued by the North Vietnamese and Dr. Kissinger on 26 October (printed in the *NY Times*, 27 Oct 72, 18 and 19) and the account by Richard Nixon in *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (1978), pp. 687–707. For the substance of the draft agreement presented on 8 October, see the NVN and Kissinger statements and Nixon, *Memoirs*, pp. 691–692.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 693. Admiral Thomas H. Moorer interviewed by Dr. Robert J. Watson, 16 May 79. For coverage of the bombing restriction, see chapter 8, pp. 186–187.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 695. For coverage of the bombing restriction, see chapter 8, pp. 186–187.

65. *NY Times*, 13 Oct 72, 1 and 4; 16 Oct 72, 1.

66. See chapter 10, pp. 220–222.

67. Nixon, *Memoirs*, pp. 696–697.

68. Nixon, *Memoirs*, pp. 702–703.

69. *NY Times*, 27 Oct 72, 1 and 19.

70. (C) Msgs, US Del France 20448 and 20483 to State, 26 Oct 72, JCS IN 64382 and 64889. Final Transcript, Paris Meetings on Vietnam, 164th Plenary Sess, 26 Oct 72, J–5 Negotiations Files (in RAIR).

71. News Conference by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, 26 Oct 72, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 30 Oct 72*, pp. 1565–1571. *NY Times*, 27 Oct 72, 1 and 18.

72. *NY Times*, 28 Oct 72, 1; 30 Oct 72, 1; 31 Oct 72, 1.

73. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 1140–1142. *NY* Times, 9 Nov 72, 1.

Chapter 13. Peace in the Balance, October–December 1972

1. Entry for 0935 hours, 23 Oct 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

2. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7237 to AmEmb Bonn (ADM Weinel to CJCS), 302137Z Oct 72. (S) Data from J–5 Ceasefire Documents Book, "Organization for Implementation of Agreement," n.d., J–5 Action Officer Files.

3. (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 2374 and 3624 to CINCUSNAVEUR (VADM Weinel to CJCS), 252209Z and 262252Z Oct 72.

4. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 3627 to CINCUSNAVEUR (VADM Weinel to CJCS), 262256Z Oct 72.

5. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 3624 to CINCUSNAVEUR (VADM Weinel to CJCS), 262252Z Oct 72.

6. On 2 November, the Joint Chiefs of Staff instructed CINCPAC that, if US military personnel were planned as embassy guards in South Vietnam, they must be included in the 50 allowable military billets. But after clarification with "higher authority," they reversed that decision later the same day, advising that any US military assigned as embassy guards

would not be included or counted against the 50-man DAO. (S) Msgs, JCS 1994 and 2143 to CINCPAC, 022021Z and 022248Z Nov 72.

7. (TS) Msg, JCS 4907 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC (info COMUSMACV, COMUSMACTHAI, CINCUSARPAC, CINCPACFLT, CINCPACAF, and CGFMFPAC), 272238Z Oct 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

8. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7237 to AmEmb Bonn (VADM Weinel to CJCS), 302137Z Oct 72. (S) Data from J–5 Cease-fire Documents Book, "Organization for Implementation of Agreement," n.d., J–5 Action Officer Files. (C) J–5 Calendar of NSC Group Meetings, Oct–Dec 72, J–5 NSC Files.

9. (TS) JCSM–462–72 to SecDef, 31 Oct 72, Encl to JCS 2339/360–1, 31 Oct 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

10. (TS) J–5 Point Paper for CJCS (for info), "Posthostility Organizational Arrangements for Southeast Asia (U)," 1 Nov 72, J–5 Action Officer Files.

11. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 2 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–2, 3 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

12. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 022345Z Nov 72, JCS IN 78934.

13. (TS) Msg, Bangkok 15706 to State, 6 Nov 72, JCS IN 85303.

14. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 7 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–3, 7 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

15. (TS–EX) CM–2286–72 to SecDef, 7 Nov 72; (TS–EX) CM–2289–72 to SecDef, 8 Nov 72; JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

16. (TS) CM–2293–72 to SecDef, 11 Nov 72, same file.

17. (TS) JCSM–475–72 to SecDef, 10 Nov 72, Encl to JCS 2339/360–8, 10 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2.

18. (TS) JCSM–476–72 to SecDef, 10 Nov 72, Encl A to JCS 2028/65, 10 Nov 72, JMF 245 (10 Nov 72).

19. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 3285 to CINCSAC, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACV, 111652Z Nov 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 72.

20. (TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, 020100Z and 050001Z Nov 72, JCS IN 77479 and 83414.

21. (TS) JCSM–480–72 to SecDef, 13 Nov 72, Encl A to JCS 2339/360–6, 12 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

22. (TS) JCSM–480–72 to SecDef, 13 Nov 72; CM–2297–72 to SecDef, 13 Nov 72; Encls A and B, respectively, to JCS 2339/360–6, 12 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1.

23. (S) JCS 2339/360–7, 12 Nov 72; (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 030403Z Nov 72, JCS IN 79675; (S) Msg, JCS 5039 to CINCPAC, 140048Z Nov 72 (derived from JCS 2339/360–7); JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2.

24. See p. 277.

25. (TS) Msg, JCS 1192 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 172315Z Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2.

26. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 17 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–10, 18 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2.

27. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 18 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–11, 18 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 18 Nov 72, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2028/65, 20 Nov 72, JMF 245 (10 Nov 72).

28. (TS) Memos, SecDef to CJCS, "Changes in Existing Military Procedures in Southeast Asia" (there are two memos of this subject and date) and "Temporary Augmentation Authorities," 18 Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 1. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 18 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–12, 20 Nov 72, same file, sec 2.

29. (S) Msg, JCS 2132 to CSA, CNO, CSAF, CMC, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACV, 182317Z Nov 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 4825 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV, CINCSAC et al.), 220021Z Nov 72; JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2. (TS) Msgs, JCS 4774 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV and

COMUSMACTHAI), 212338Z Nov 72; JCS 5943 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 222136Z Nov 72; CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72.

30. (TS) SM–577–72 to Dir, DIA, 20 Nov 72, Encl B to JCS 2028/65, 19 Nov 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 4580 to CINCPAC, 212036Z Nov 72 (derived from JCS 2028/65–1); JMF 245 (10 Nov 72). (TS) Msg, JCS 4825 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV, CINCSAC et al.), 220021Z Nov 72, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2.

31. (TS) Msgs; JCS 6101, 6123, 6131, 6133, and 6136 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC; 230012Z, 230051Z, 230105Z, 230112Z, and 230121Z Nov 72. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 8680 to CINCPAC, CINCSAC, CINCLANT, and USCINCRED, 25 Nov 72, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jul–Dec 72. The substance of the rules of engagement and the operating authorities is not discussed since these were not the final approved versions. For coverage of both the rules and authorities as issued, see chapter 15.

32. (TS) Memo, Actg ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 17 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–9, 17 Nov 72; Note to Control Division, "JCS 2339/369–13, DOD Civilian Personnel in the RVN, 22 Nov 72," 22 Nov 72; DJSM–2209–72 to ASD–(ISA), 22 Nov 72, Att to JCS 2339/360–15, 28 Nov 72; JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2.

33. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Feb 73, Att to JCS 2339/369–20, 13 Feb 73, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

34. See above, p. 280.

35. (TS) JCSM–515–72 to SecDef, 6 Dec 72 (derived from JCS 2472/846), JMF 911/374 (4 Dec 72).

36. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 13 Dec 72, Att to JCS 2472/846–1, 14 Dec 72, same file.

37. (TS) OCJCS Summary Sheet for CJCS, "FORMATION SENTRY (U)," 30 Oct 72; (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 6968 to CINCPAC (info CINCPACFLT), 301713Z Oct 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 72. (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 120405Z Nov 72, JCS IN 98302, same file, Nov 72.

38. (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Mine Countermeasures Operations (Formation sentry)," 2 Nov 72; (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 3689 and 2404 to CINCPAC, 040204Z and 102313Z Nov 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 72.

39. (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 1960, 2006, and 5959 to CINCPAC, 181656Z, 181805Z, and 222158Z Nov 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Nov 72. (TS–EX) CM–320–72 to SecDef, 23 Nov 72; (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "FORMATION SENTRY II," 29 Nov 72; (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 4883 to CINCPAC, 301919Z Nov 72; same file.

40. (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 060655Z Dec 72, JCS IN 54479; (U) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 062236Z Dec 72, JCS IN 55089; (TS) Msg, JCS 7460 to CINCPAC 102015Z Dec 72; (TS–EX) CM–2356–72 to SecDef, 11 Dec 72; (TS) Msg, JCS 3232 to CINCPAC, 142326Z Dec 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Dec 72. SecDef action is indicated by a handwritten notation on CM–2356–72.

41. (TS–EX) Draft CM–2391–72 to SecDef, n.d., attached to OCJCS Summary Sheet, 20 Dec 72, same file. Handwritten note on Register of Personnel Handling Classified Document (attached to draft CM–2391–72), "Readiness of FORMATION SENTRY II Mine Countermeasures (MCM) Forces (U)," 21 Dec 72, same file. Handwritten note indicated no action was taken.

42. NVN Draft Protocol on Removal, Permanent Deactivation or Destruction of Mines in Territorial Waters, Ports, Harbors and Waterways of North Vietnam, n.d., Att to (TS) Ltr, DepAsst to President for NSA to MilAsst to SecDef, 15 Dec 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Dec 72.

43. (TS) Memo, Dep Asst to Pres for NSA to MilAsst to SecDef, 15 Dec 72; (TS) CM–2382–72 to SecDef, 20 Dec 72; (TS) Memo, MilAsst to SecDef to Dep Asst to Pres for NSA, 20 Dec 72; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Dec 72. In the final version of the protocol, ADM Moorer's comments were only partially reflected; see chapter 14, pp. 312–315.

44. (TS–EX) Final Rpt, US Del, Four-Party Joint Military Commission (Tab K), n.d., Att to JCS 2472/873, 20 Jun 72, JMF 911/533 (20 Jul 73) (hereinafter referred to as Final Rpt, FPJMC). (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, p. G–13.

45. (TS–EX) Final Rpt, US Del, FPJMC.

46. The Final Report, US Del, FPJMC (Tab K, p. 7), specifically stated: "There was no reaction or exchange of ideas between the Joint Chiefs and General Weyand during this period. . . . "

47. (TS–EX) Final Rpt, US Del, FPJMC.

48. Ibid. (S–EX) Msg, State 209476 to Saigon, 170039Z Nov 72, CJCS File 323.3 MACV (Nov 70–Dec 72).

49. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Four-Party Joint Military Commission," 1 Dec 72, JMF 800 (1 Dec 72).

50. (S) CM–2343–72 to SecDef, 7 Dec 72; (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Four-Party Joint Military Commission," 22 Dec 72; JMF 800 (1 Dec 72).

51. (TS–EX) Final Rpt, US Del FPJMC.

52. CJCS M–62–72 For Record, 8 Nov 72; Notes by VADM Weinel, "WSAG–8 Nov," 8 Nov 72, TS; Entry for 1818, 9 Nov 72; Msg, COMUSMACV 10736 to CJCS, 111032Z Nov 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

53. Entry for 1731, 14 Nov 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

54. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1412–1413, 1422.

55. CJCS M–68–72 for Record, 1 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. Nixon also related that GEN Westmoreland had written him from retirement to warn that failure to require a withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the South would cause problems with Thieu. Admiral Moorer recorded in M–68–72 his own feeling that "this is a typical 'Westy.' He always had a solution after the fact."

56. Entry for 1405, 7 Dec 72; Paper by VADM Weinel, no date or title, Moorer Diary. CM–2344–72 to SecDef, 7 Dec 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam. Memo, SecDef to Dr. Kissinger, "Southeast Asia Air Operations," 13 Dec 72. CJCS File 091 SEA Air Ops. CM–2371–72 to SecDef, 14 Dec 72, CJCS File 091 Vietnam.

57. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1445.

58. Entry for 1155, 13 Dec 72; Phonecon, CJCS with MG Haig, 1155, 13 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

59. Laird had said in 1969 that he would not serve more than four years; he was preparing to leave his post in January.

60. Entries for 1045, 1105, 1415, and 1818, 14 Dec 72, TS; Memo, "Ken" [CAPT A. K. Knoizen, Exec Asst to the CJCS] to CJCS, "TelCon from Al Haig, 1320 this date," 14 Dec 72, TS; Entries for 1138 and 1630, 15 Dec 72, TS; Msg JCS 3348 to CINCSAC, 151047 Z Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

61. CJCS M–73–72 for Record, 17 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary; Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1459–1460.

62. Msg, JCS 5384 to CINCPAC et al., 170010Z Dec 72, TS; Entries for 0905 and 1120, 18 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. SAC History Office, *History of Strategic Air Command, FY 1973*, TS, p. 108.

63. Phonecons, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1005, CINCPAC, 1508, RADM Daniel J. Murphy, 1628, and Dr. Kissinger, 1749, 19 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. *SAC History, FY 1973*, TS, p. 109. Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 180808Z Dec 72, CM–2383–72 to SecDef, 19 Dec 72, TS; Msgs, JCS 7656 and 7850 to CINCPAC et al., 192058Z and 200021Z Dec 72, TS, (SecDef approval handwritten on draft messages), CJCS 091 Vietnam. Gen. Vogt, in 1996, recalled that by September all targets of strategic value outside the prohibited areas had been destroyed.

64. Phonecons, CJCS with CINCSAC, 0949, with Gen. Vogt, 1045, and with Dr. Kissinger, 1225; Entries for 1045, 1516, 1558, 20 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. *SAC History, FY 1973*, TS, pp. 110–112.

65. The fullest account of LINEBACKER II appears in Marshall L. Michel III, *The 11 Days of Christmas* (San Francisco, CA; Encounter Books, 2002). Michel assigns responsibility for the early losses mainly to the poor planning and inflexible tactics promulgated by SAC Headquarters in Omaha. Michel ascribes particular responsibility to the Commander in Chief, Gen. J. C. Meyer.

66. Entries for 1000, 1333 and 1410, 21 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. *SAC History, FY 1973*, p. 112.

67. Entry for 0826, 22 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

68. Entries for 1135, 1207, and 1800, 22 Dec 72; Phonecon, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1135, 22 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. The new Congress would convene on 3 January; Nixon wanted to announce a resumption of negotiations before then.

69. CJCS Memo M–74–72 for Record, 27 Dec 72, TS; Msg, JCS 3580 to CINCPAC, 232247Z Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

70. Entries for 1307 and 1415, 23 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

71. CJCS Memo M–74–72 for record, 27 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

72. Prior to LINEBACKER II, a B–52 strike consisted of only one three-plane cell. Senior SAC officers worried that having many cells approach from different directions and fly over the target area in a short time would result in mid-air collisions. They now decided to accept that risk. The sharp post-target turn, adopted for dropping nuclear bombs, hindered efforts to jam radar and was changed to a gentle dogleg. See Thompson, *To Hanoi and Back*, pp. 296–297. Michel, *The 11 Days of Christmas*, pp. 162–163, assigns most credit for the change in tactics to Brig. Gen. Glenn R. Sullivan, Commander, Seventeenth Air Division at U-Tapao, Thailand.

73. *SAC History: FY 1973*, p. 116, TS. Rpt, CJCS to Dr. Kissinger, "Command and Control of Air War in Southeast Asia," 24 Dec 72, U; CJCS Memo M–74–72 for Record, 27 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

74. Entry for 1146 and Phonecon, CJCS with CINCSAC, 1146, 26 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary. Anticipating an energetic campaign after the Christmas truce, ADM Moorer had asked for validation of additional targets. On 23 December, he asked for twelve additional targets; Laird approved three. On 25 December Moorer requested and Laird validated seven. On 26 December, the Chairman asked approval to strike two railroad yards and Gia Lam airfield outside Hanoi; Laird approved only the rail targets. To make the target validation process more manageable, Moorer on 26 December proposed the following procedure: (1) validated targets would be struck and re-struck to attain the desired level of destruction; (2) new targets within the Hanoi/Haiphong control circle and the China buffer zone would be submitted for Laird's approval; (3) the Chairman could authorize on a case-by-case basis targets approved for LINEBACKER I and outside the control circles and buffer zone; (4) all new B–52 targets would require the Secretary's validation; and (5) selected armed reconnaissance would be conducted in the control circles and buffer zone, particularly along the northeast LOC, including high value fleeting targets outside the circles and zone. Laird concurred next day, also approving an additional B–52 target. CM–2399–72 to SecDef, 23 Dec 72. Msg, JCS 4010 to CINCPAC, 241739Z Dec 72. CM–2405 to SecDef, 25 Dec 72. Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "LINEBACKER II Strike Authorization Request," 26 Dec 72. Msg, JCS 4829 to CINCPAC, 26 Dec 72. CMs 2402 and 2403 to SecDef, 26 Dec 72. Msg, JCS 5911 to CINCPAC, 27 Dec 72. CM–2406 to SecDef, 26 Dec 72, with notation of SecDef concurrence. CM–2407 to SecDef, 27 Dec 72. Msg, JCS 6320 to CINCPAC, 27 Dec 72. All TS in Chairman's File 091 Vietnam.

75. Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 242057Z Dec 72, S; Draft Msg, Entry for 1225, 27 Dec 72, TS; Msg, JCS 6515 to CINCPAC et al., 280334Z Dec 72, S, Moorer Diary.

76. Entries for 0824, 1258 and 1511, 28 Dec 72; Phonecon, CJCS with CINCSAC, 1258, 28 Dec 72; S, Moorer Diary.

77. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1457–1458.

78. Entries for 1735, 28 Dec 72 and 0815, 29 Dec 72, S; CJCS Memo M–75–72 for Record, 29 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

79. CJCS Memo M–75–72 for Record, 29 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

80. Entry for 1222, 29 Dec 72; Msg, JCS 7826 to CINCPAC, 291407Z Dec 72, S, Moorer Diary. *SAC History, FY 1973*, pp. 123–125. *NY Times*, 31 Dec 72, p. 3.

81. *SAC History, FY 1973*, p. 120.

82. Phonecon, CJCS with CINCSAC, 1258, 28 Dec 72, S, Moorer Diary.

83. The average interval between landing and launch time, for example, was 18 hours. Ltr, CINCSAC to CJCS, n. d., filed under 22 Dec 72, U, Moorer Diary.

Chapter 14. The Agreement

1. See Ch. 13, pp. 299–300.

2. Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, (1978), p. 741. *NY Times*, 31 Dec 72, 3.

3. *NY Times*, 3 Jan 73, 1; 4 Jan 73, 3; 5 Jan 73, 3; 6 Jan 73, 2; 9 Jan 73, 12.

4. (C) Msgs, US Del France 198 and 260 to State, 4 Jan 73, JCS IN 13922 and 14400.

5. Ltr, Pres Nixon to Pres Thieu, 5 Jan 73, released in Washington on 30 Apr 75 by a former minister of the Thieu government, printed in *NY Times*, 1 May 75, 16.

6. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 6357 to CINCPAC, COMUSMACV, Dep COMUSMACV, 060609Z Jan 73.

7. *NY Times*, 8 Jan 73, 1; 9 Jan 73, 1.

8. *Ibid.*, 10 Jan 73, 3.

9. Nixon, *Memoirs*, p. 749. *NY Times*, 9 Jan 73, 1; 10 Jan 73, 3; 11 Jan 73, 1; 12 Jan 73, 1, 14 Jan 73, 1.

10. *NY Times*, 9 Jan 73, 1; 10 Jan 73, 3; 11 Jan 73, 1; 12 Jan 73, 1; 13 Jan 73, 1; 14 Jan 73, 1. (TS–EX) Final Report, US Del., FPJMC, n.d., Att to JCS 2472/813, 20 Jun 73, JMF 911/533 (20 Jun 73).

11. *NY Times*, 15 Jan 73, 1. (S) Msg, JCS 5482 to COMUSMACV and COMUSMACTHAI, 142027Z Jan 73.

12. *NY Times*, 16 Jan 73, 12.

13. ADM Thomas H. Moorer interviewed by Dr. Robert J. Watson, 16 May 79. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 5597 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 150356Z Jan 73 (draft of this message has handwritten approval of CJCS and SecDef); (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 9015 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 180014Z Jan 73; (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 9017 to CINCPAC, 180014Z Jan 73; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 73.

14. Nixon, *Memoirs*, pp. 749–751. *NY Times*, 16 Jan 73, 12; 17 Jan 73, 1 and 10; 18 Jan 73, 1.

15. *NY Times*, 17 Jan 73, 10. (C) Msgs, US Del France 1292 and 1338 to State, 18 Jan 73, JCS IN 40148 and 40599.

16. *NY Times*, 19 Jan 73, 3.

17. *Ibid.*, 20 Jan 73, 1; 21 Jan 73, 1; 22 Jan 73, 1. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1973*, pp. 12–15.

18. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. 116, 125–126, 129–130.

19. Entries for 0857, 22 Jan 73, and 0911, 23 Jan 73, TS, Moorer Diary.

20. *NY Times*, 24 Jan 73, 1 and 16.

21. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1973*, p. 18.

22. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1973*, pp. 18–20.

23. *NY Times*, 24 Jan 73, 1 and 16.

24. Dr. Kissinger's comments on specific aspects of the agreement, as appropriate, are included in the description of the substance of the agreement, below, pp. 309–311.

25. News Conference of Dr. Kissinger, 24 Jan 73, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 64–74.

26. *NY Times*, 25 Jan 73, 22.

27. "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam" (two versions), 17 Jan 73, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 45–64. For the text of the Agreement and the accompanying protocols, see Appendix 3.

28. All reference to Dr. Kissinger's explanation and amplification of the agreement are from his news conference of 24 January 1973, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 64–74.

29. "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam," signed 27 Jan 73; News Conference of Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, 24 Jan 73; *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 45–51, 64–74.

30. Protocols to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam Concerning: The Return of Captured Military Personnel and Foreign Civilians and Captured and Detained Vietnamese Civilian Personnel; The International Commission of Control and Supervision; The Cease-fire in South Vietnam and the Joint Military Commissions; and The Removal, Permanent Deactivation, or Destruction of Mines in the Territorial Waters, Ports, Harbors, and Waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 51–64.

31. Protocol to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam Concerning the Return of Captured Military Personnel and Foreign Civilians and Captured and Detained Vietnamese Civilian Personnel, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 51–54.

32. Protocol to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam Concerning the International Commission of Control and Supervision, 27 Jan 73; News Conference of Dr. Kissinger, 24 Jan 73; *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 54–57, 64–74.

33. Protocol to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam Concerning the Ceasefire in South Vietnam and the Joint Military Commissions, 27 Jan 73; (U) News Conference by Dr. Kissinger, 24 Jan 73; *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 58–62, 64–74.

34. For the December consideration of the draft mine clearance protocol and ADM Moorer's comments, see Chapter 13, pp. 287–289.

35. Protocol to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in South Vietnam Concerning the Removal, Permanent Deactivation, or Destruction of Mines in the Territorial Waters, Ports, Harbors, and Waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, 27 Jan 73, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, *29 Jan 73*, pp. 63–64.

Chapter 15. Winding Down the War

1. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 6408 to ZEN/AIG 7076, 240456Z Jan 73, Att to JCS 2472/853–1, 24 Jan 73, JMF 911/305 (24 Jan 73).

2. For the supplemental instruction, see (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7516 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 250020Z Jan 73.

3. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 6408 to ZEN/AIG 7076, 240456Z Jan 73, Att to JCS 2472/853–1, 24 Jan 73, JMF 911/305 (24 Jan 73). The supplemental instructions are contained in: (S) Msg, JCS 7531 to CINCPAC, 250038Z Jan 73; (S) Msg, JCS 1331 to CSA, CNO, CSAF, and CMC, 271643Z Jan 73.

4. (TS) Msg, JCS 8315 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 251734Z Jan 73. (TS) Msg, JCS 1446 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 272058Z Jan 73. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 6266 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 012332Z Feb 73.

5. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 9125 to CINCPAC (info CINCSAC), 261722Z Jan 73.

6. See chapter 13, pp. 280–284.

7. (S) Msg, JCS 8465 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 260029Z Jan 73.

8. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 9906 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC (info COMUSMACV), 270657Z Jan 73. This JCS directive superseded plans that were begun, shortly before the final agreement, to amend the existing operating authorities. See (TS–EX) CM–2442–73 to SecDef, 21 Jan 73 and CM–2443–73 to SecDef, 22 Jan 73, both in CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73).

9. (TS) Msg, JCS 9912 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 270703Z Jan 73. Draft of this msg had handwritten notation of SecDef approval, dated 26 Jan 73, see CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73. This directive superseded efforts initiated earlier in January to revise existing rules of engagement. See (TS) CM–2452–73 to SecDef, 25 Jan 73, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73.

10. (TS–EX) CM–2462–73 to SecDef, 27 Jan 73; (TS–EX) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Temporary Augmentation Authorities (U)," 30 Jan 73; (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 4010 to CINCPAC, CINCSAC, CINCLANT, and USCINCRED, 310025Z Jan 73; CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73.

11. (TS–EX) Memo, CJCS to SecDef, "SEAsia Cease-fire Violations," 23 Jan 73, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73.

12. (S) Msg, JCS 7526 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 250029Z Jan 73.

13. (TS) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to Secys State and Def and DCI, "Post Ceasefire Reporting," 28 Jan 73; (U) OPS 59–73, Memo, DepDir for Ops (NMCC), "JCS Post Cease-fire Daily Report," 1 Feb 73; J–5 Action Officer Files. (S) Msg, JCS 3963 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 302333Z Jan 73.

14. (S) DJSM–83–73 to CJCS, 12 Jan 73, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 73. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, pp. 171–172.

15. See chapter 14, pp. 305–306.

16. For a description of the military activities in South Vietnam during the period 28 January–29 March 1973 see (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) pp. 141–149.

17. See chapter 13, pp. 283–284.

18. In initial planning the operation was nicknamed THUNDER BOLT. For the change in name see (C) Msg, JCS–6913 to CINCPAC, 241522Z Jan 73.

19. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) pp. H–2–H–3. (TS) NMCC OPSUM 35–73, 13 Feb 73.

20. See Appendix 3, pp. 412–413.

21. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (U) p. 600.

22. (S–NOFORN) NMCC OPSUMs 22–73, 29 Jan 73; 35–73, 13 Feb 73. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (U) p. 600. The name originally was EGRESS RECAP, but it was changed by the Secretary of Defense to HOMECOMING on 8 January 1973. See (U) Memo, SecDef to Secys of MilDepts, CJCS, et al., 8 Jan 73, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 73.

23. See chapter 13, pp. 281 and 285.

24. (TS) JCSM–25–73 to SecDef, 15 Jan 73, Encl A to JCS 2339/360D17, 10 Jan 73; (C) Msg, JCS 5977 to CINCPAC, 15 Jan 73; JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

25. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 8209 to CINCPAC, 251719Z Jan 73. (S) Msg, JCS 1341 to CINCPAC, 271659Z Jan 73. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, pp. G–4—G–11. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Personnel Ceiling for Defense Attaché Office, Saigon (U)," 2 Feb 73, Att to JCS 2339/360–19, 9 Feb 73, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

26. See chapter 13, p. 284.

27. (TS) Msg, JCS 7270 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 242032Z Jan 73. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, pp. G–4—G–5, H–2. (C) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 230244Z Feb 73, JCS IN 17865; (C) Msg, JCS 9859 to CINCPAC, 6 Mar 73 (derived from JCS 2339/360–23); JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

28. (TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 13 Jan 73, Att to JCS 2339/360–18–16 Jan 73; (TS) CM–2473–73 to SecDef, 31 Jan 73, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 2339/360–13, 2 Feb 73; JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

29. (S) Memo, DepUSecAF to ASD(ISA), 27 Mar 73, Encl to Att to 2d N/H of JCS 2339/360–18, 28 Mar 73, JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 2. (C) Memo, Hilbert (OASD/ISA) to ASD(ISA), "13AF ADVON, Udorn, Thailand," 24 Apr 73, J–5 Action Officer Files. (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to CINCPAC, 240400Z Mar 73, JCS IN 48460. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, p. 49.

30. See chapter 13, p. 289–290.

31. (S) Msgs, JCS 1325 and 1505 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 271632Z and 272325Z Jan 73.

32. (S) Msgs, JCS 9924 and 1555 to US Del Paris, 270713Z Jan 73 and 280113Z Jan 73. (S–EX) Final Rpt of US Del, Four-Party Joint Military Commission, n.d., Att to JCS 2472/873, 20 Jun 73, JMF 911/533 (20 Jun 73).

33. (S–EX) Final Rpt, US Del, Four-Party Joint Military Commission, n.d., Att to JCS 2472/873, 20 Jun 73, JMF 911/533 (20 Jun 73).

34. (S) Msg, JCS 1508 to CINCPAC, CSA, CNO, CSAP, and CMC (info COMUSMACV), 272329Z Jan 73.

35. (S) Msg, State 51556 to All Dipl. and Consular Posts, 21 Mar 73, JCS IN 73178.

36. (C) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS 310549Z Jan 73, JCS IN 63304; (C) Msg, JCS 8896 to CINCPAC, 6 Feb 73 (derived from JCS 2472/855); JMF 911/448 (31 Jan 73). (C) JCS 2472/854, 3 Feb 73; (S) Msg, JCS 9559 to CINCPAC and MSC, 6 Feb 73; JMF 911/448 (2 Feb 73). (U) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 170230Z Feb 73, JCS IN 31879; (U) Msg, JCS 6571 to CINCPAC, 23 Mar 73 (derived from JCS 2472/863); JMF 911/448 (17 Feb 73).

37. (S) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 120813Z Feb 73, JCS IN 85448; (S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 142243Z Feb 73, JCS IN 91472; (S) Msg, JCS 5379 to CINCPAC, CSA, CNO, CSAF, and CMC, 14 Mar 73 (derived from JCS 2472/858); JMF 911/495 (12 Feb 73).

38. (S) JCSM–56–73 to SecDef, 12 Feb 73, Encl A to JCS 2472/850, 19 Jan 73; JMF 911/066 (4 Dec 72). Memo, ActgASD(I&L) to DJS, 17 Feb 73, Att to JCS 2472/850–1, 21 Feb 73; Memo, ActgASD(I&L) to SecNav, 17 Feb 73, Encl to Att to JCS 2472/850–1, 21 Feb 73; Msg, JCS 9495 to CINCPAC, 17 Feb 73; same file.

39. See chapter 13, pp. 277, 282, 284.

40. (S) CM–2464–73 to DJS, 29 Jan 73, JMF 911/374 (5 Feb 73).

41. (TS) Msg, JCS 1406 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 271905Z Jan 73. (TS) Msg, CINCSAC to JCS, 302110Z Jan 73, JCS IN 66676. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 312334Z Jan 73, JCS IN 65086. (TS) Msg, JCS 8374 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 051456Z Feb 73. (TS) Msg, JCS 8688 to CINCPAC, 052139Z Feb 73. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, p. 226.

42. (TS) JCSM–51–73 to SecDef, 8 Feb 73, Encl A to JCS 2472/856, 5 Feb 73; (TS) JCSM–263–73 to SecDef, 14 Jun 73, Encl to JCS 2472/856–1, 13 Jun 73; JMF 911/374 (5 Feb 73).

43. (S) Msgs, JCS 6308 and 4919 to CINCPAC, 111738Z and 182048Z Feb 73.

44. (TS) Msg, JCS 8735 to CINCPAC, 051745Z Mar 73. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 070325Z Mar 73, JCS IN 39642. (TS) Msg, JCS 2600 to CINCPAC, 080027Z Mar 73. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 2807 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 252154Z May 73.

45. (S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 12 Feb 73, Att to JCS 2339/360–20, 13 Feb 73; (TS) JCSM–69–73 to SecDef, 23 Feb 73, Encl to JCS 2339/360–21, 22 Feb 73; JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

46. See p. 323.

47. (S) Msgs, JCS 3870 and 7299 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 170449Z and 211443Z Feb 73. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. H–3.

48. *NY Times*, 14 Feb 73, 1; 19 Feb 73, 1; 26 Feb 73, 1; 27 Feb 73, 1. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) pp. G–23–G–24.

49. See below, pp. 341–345.

50. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 3889 to CINCPAC, 271859Z Feb 73. Statement by White House Press Secretary, 27 Feb 73, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 5 Mar 73*, p. 193. *NY Times*, 28 Feb 73, 1; 1 Mar 73, 1; 2 Mar 73, 3; 3 Mar 73, 1. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. G–24.

51. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7839 to CINCPAC, 031746Z Mar 73. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. H–3. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (U) p. 601. *NY Times*, 4 Mar 73, 1; 5 Mar 73, 1 and 15.

52. *NY Times*, 6 Mar 73, 1; 11 Mar 73, 14.

53. *NY Times*, 8 Mar 73, 5; 9 Mar 73, 14. (TS) Msg, JCS 7596 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 101731Z Mar 73. (S) Msg, JCS 7952 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV and MAC), 102319Z Mar 73.

54. *NY Times*, 13 Mar 73, 14; 14 Mar 73, 3; 16 Mar 73, 4. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. H–3. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (U) pp. 601–602.

55. See chapter 14, p. 311. *NY Times*, 12 Feb 73, 1.

56. See p. 319.

57. (TS-NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (S), p. 637.

58. *NY Times*, 10 Feb 73, 3.

59. Msg, JCS 8315 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 251734Z Jan 73, S. MSG, JCS 6266 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 012332Z Feb 73, S. ADM Moorer had to spend more than three hours redrafting and clearing the latter message. He recorded in his diary, "I hope the next war will be different." CJCS M–6–73 for Record, 1 Feb 73, U, Moorer Diary. Entries for 0938 and 0945, 10 Feb 73; CJCS M–8–73 for Record, 10 Feb 73, S, Moorer Diary.

60. *NY Times*, 21 Feb 73, 1. Unofficial text of Cease-fire Agreement signed by Laotian Government and Pathet Lao, 21 Feb 73, reproduced in *NY Times*, 22 Feb 73, 17.

61. (TS–EX) CM–2495–73 to SecDef, 10 Feb 73, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73. (TS) Msg, JCS 7805 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 212332Z Feb 73. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7811 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 212337Z Feb 73. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 8066 to AIG 7076, 212330Z Feb 73.

62. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 8944 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 222124Z Feb 73. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, p. 637. *NY Times*, 23 Feb 73, 1; 24 Feb 73, 1; 25 Feb 73, 5.

63. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 6647 to CINCPAC, 210058Z Feb 73; JCS 2339/364, 21 Feb 73; JMF 907/300 (21 Feb 73).

64. (S) CSAFM 22–73 to JCS, "A Major Cease-Fire Violation," 23 Feb 73, JMF 911/305 (CY 1973).

65. (S) Note to Control Division, "CSAFM 'A Major Cease Fire Violation,'" 23 Feb 73, JMF 911/305 (CY 1973).

66. (S) Msg, Saigon 8157 to State, 3 Mar 73, J–5 Action Officer Files.

67. (TS–EX) CM–2533–73 to SecDef, 5 Mar 73, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 73.

68. CJCS M–24–73 for record, 15 Mar 73, S, Moorer Diary.

69. (C) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Assessment of RVNAF (U)," 17 Feb 73; (C) CM–2555–73 to SecDef, 12 Mar 73; JMF 911/292 (20 Mar 73). The COMUSMACV assessment was contained in MACV Msg 070930Z Mar 73. That msg has not been located, but a detailed summary of the assessment is contained in (TS) Memo, COL True (CJCS Staff Grp) to CJCS, "Assessment of RVNAF," 9 Mar 73, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Mar 73.

70. CJCS M–22 and 24–73 for Record, 13 and 15 Mar 73, S, Moorer Diary.

71. MFR by VADM Weinel, "WSAG Meeting on 28 Mar 73; Subject: NVN/Cambodia," 2 Apr 73, TS; Entries for 1645 and 1910, 28 Mar 73, U; Telcon, CJCS with GEN Haig, 1910, 28 Mar 73, U, Moorer Diary.

72. MFR by VADM Weinel, "WSAG Meeting on 28 Mar 73; Subject: NVN/Cambodia," 2 Apr 73, TS; Entries for 1645 and 1910, 28 Mar 73, U; Telcon, CJCS with GEN Haig, 1910, 28 Mar 73, U, Moorer Diary.

73. *Public Papers: Nixon, 1973* (Washington: GPO, 1974), p. 234.

74. Phonecon, CJCS with Gen. Vogt, 0941, 30 Mar 73, TS; entries for 1015, 30 Mar 73 and 0950, 31 Mar 73, S, Moorer Diary.

75. CJCS M–30–73 for Record, 4 Apr 73, S; Entries for 0927 and 1416, 10 Apr 73, U; Msg, CJCS 3559 to CINCPAC, 10 Apr 73, TS, Moorer Diary.

76. CJCS M–39–73 for Record, 16 Apr 73, TS, Moorer Diary.

77. CJCS M–39–73 and M–40–73 for Record, 16 Apr 73, S, Moorer Diary.

78. MFR by CJCS, "WSAG Meeting, 1000, 17 Apr 73; Subj: SEAsia," 17 Apr 73, TS; Entry and Phonecon, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1749, 17 Apr 73, S; CJCS M–42–73 to Dr. Kissinger, 18 Apr 73, TS, Moorer Diary. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 323–327. Kissinger's account (p. 325) implies that the military did not want to act and inflated the task as a way to avoid renewed bombing. Moorer's diary gives no indication of such reluctance.

79. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 325. Entry for 1100, 25 Apr 73, S; Msg, JCS 3361 to CINCPAC, 261948Z Apr 73, TS; "Resume" for May 73, Moorer Diary.

80. CJCS M–54–73 for Record, 12 Jun 73, U, Moorer Diary. The Members contacted were: Representatives Carl Albert (Speaker of the House), George Mahon (Chairman, Appropriations Committee), Gerald Ford (Minority Leader), and Leslie Arends (Minority Whip), and Senators Hugh Scott (Minority Leader), John Tower and John McClellan (Armed Services Committee). Public Law 93–52, 1 Jul 73.

81. See above, pp. 332–334.

82. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (C) p. G–24. News Conference of Dr. Kissinger, 24 Jan 73, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 29 Jan 73*, p. 65.

83. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–25.

84. Ibid. *NY Times*, 22 Mar 73, 13. (TS) Msg, JCS 4319 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 220036 Mar 73.

85. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–25. *NY Times*, 22 Mar 73, 13; 23 Mar 73, 1.

86. (S) Msg, JCS 5706 to Ch, US Del, FPJMC, 230459Z Mar 73.

87. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–25. *NY Times*, 23 Mar 73, 1; 24 Mar 73, 1; 25 Mar 73, 1; 26 Mar 73, 1.

88. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–25.

89. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) pp. G–25, H–3. *NY Times*, 27 Mar 73, 1.

90. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (C) pp. 602–603. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–25.

91. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, (C) pp. 602–603. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) pp. G–25, H–3. (S–NOFORN) NMCC OPSUMs 71–73, 28 Mar 73; 72–73, 29 Mar 73; and 73–73, 30 Mar 73. *NY Times*, 28 Mar 73, 1; 29 Mar 73, 1; 30 Mar 73, 1.

92. Msg, COMUSMACV to JCS and CINCPAC, 290915Z Mar 73, JCS IN 89925. (C) Msg, JCS 1002 to COMUSMACV, 280014Z Mar 73. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. H–1. *NY Times*, 30 Mar 73, p. 1.

93. See pp. 324–325.

94. (S) JCSM–93–73 to SecDef, 6 Mar 73, Encl A to JCS 2339/360–22, 2 Mar 73; (C) Msg, JCS 1298 to SecDef et al., 070205Z Mar 73 (derived from JCS 2339/360–22); JMF 907/305 (27 Oct 72) sec 3.

95. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. H–5–H–6.

96. (S) J5M 358–73 to CJCS, 12 Mar 73, J–5 Action Officer Files.

97. (TS) Msg, JCS 3656 to COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and Ch USDel, FPJMC, 132319Z Mar 73. (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to CJCS, 141000Z Mar 73, JCS IN 57407. (C) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 160200Z Mar 73, JCS IN 63083.

98. (S) Memo, ASD(ISA) to SecDef, "Extension of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission (U)," 15 Mar 73, OSD Files.

99. (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV (LTG Seignious) to CJCS, 190903Z Mar 73, JCS IN 68847. (TS–EX) Memo for Record by LTG Seignious, "Discussions in Saigon on the Continuance of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission (Four-Party JMC) After X+60 (S)," 21 Mar 73; (TS) J–5 Point Paper for DJS for a Trip to SEA (16–22 Mar 73), "Cease-fire and FPJMC (U)," n.d.; J–5 Action Officer Misc Files.

100. (S) Msg, Saigon 8342 to State, 191111Z Mar 73, JCS IN 69998. (S) Msgs, Saigon 4463 to State, 211251Z Mar 73; Saigon 4836 to State, 230943Z Mar 73; J–5 Action Officer Files. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–25.

101. Msg, Ch US Del, FPJMC, to COMUSMACV, 270845Z Mar 73, JCS IN 85228. (S) Msg, JCS 9875 to CINCPAC, 272206Z Mar 73. Msg, JCS 1680 to CINCPAC, 281444Z Mar 73.

102. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) pp. G–25—G–28, H–3.

103. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (U) p. G–26. (C) Msg, JCS 5617 to CINCPAC, 311812Z Mar 73. Msg, Ch US Del, FPJMT, to DAO Saigon, 020320Z Apr 73, JCS IN 96452. (S–NOFORN) NMCC OPSUM 75–73, 2 Apr 73. (S–EX) Final Rpt of US Del, Four-Party Joint Military Commission, n.d., Att to JCS 2472/873, 20 Jun 73, JMF 911/533 (20 Jun 73).

104. Protocol to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in South Vietnam Concerning the Removal, Permanent Deactivation, or Destruction of Mines in the Territorial Waters, Ports, Harbors, and Waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, 27 Jan 73, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 29 Jan 73*, pp 63–64. (Hereafter cited as Protocol on Mine Clearance.)

105. See chapter 12, pp. 287–288.

106. (TS) CM–2456–73 to SecDef, 24 Jan 73; (TS) CM–2457–73 to SecDef, 24 Jan 73 (handwritten notation of SecDef approval is contained on draft msgs attached to both CMs); CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jan 73. (C) Msg, JCS 6913 to CINCPAC, 241522Z Jan 73. (TS) Msgs, JCS 7572 and 7579 to CINCPAC, 250110Z and 250115Z Jan 73. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 8280 to CINCPAC, 271705Z Jan 73.

107. Protocol on Mine Clearance. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1400 to US Del France (CJCS to DepAsst SecState Sullivan) (info CINCPAC), 271853Z Jan 73. RADM Brian McCauley, USN, "Operation END SWEEP," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 21.

108. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1562 to CINCPAC, 280126Z Jan 73. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1567 to COMUSMACV (for MG Woodward), 280139Z Jan 73. (C–EX) Msg, JCS 5932 to CINCPAC, 011755Z Feb 73.

109. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 1400 to US Del France (CJCS for DepAsst SecState Sullivan) (info CINCPAC), 271853Z Jan 73. (S–EX) Msg, US Del France 2080 (DepAsst SecState Sullivan) to JCS, 272200Z Jan 73, JCS IN 57933. (S) Msg, JCS 3538 to CINCPAC, 301519Z Jan 73. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 7373 to CINCPAC, 022044Z Feb 73. McCauley, "Operation END SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 21.

110. (S) Msg, JCS 3538 to CINCPAC, 301519Z Jan 73. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 5927 to CINCPAC, 011751Z Feb 73.

111. (S–EX) Msg, JCS 7007 to CINCPAC, 021454Z Feb 73.

112. See above, pp. 317–318.

113. (S) J3M 215–73 to CJCS, 31 Jan 73, CJCS File 091 SEA, Jan–Apr 73. (S) Msg, JCS 7385 to CINCPAC, 022050Z Feb 73.

114. According to RADM McCauley, the sweeping began on 6 February. McCauley, "Operation END SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 21.

115. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, pp. 230–231. McCauley, "Operation END SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 73, pp. 21–22. (TS) Memo, DepSecDef to SecNavy, "Use of Reserve Minesweepers (U)," 27 Jan 73, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 73. (TS) Msg, JCS 8364 to CINCPAC, 132005Z Feb 73. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 1299 to CINCPAC, 232355Z Feb 73.

Task Force 78 consisted of two amphibious assault ships (LPH), three amphibious transport docks (LPD), ten MSOs, one salvage ship (ARS), two fleet ocean tugs (ARF), one tank landing ship (LST), one submarine rescue ship (ASR), six explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) detachments, one underwater demolition team (UDT) detachment, two tactical air control squadron (TACRON) detachments, and four air mine countermeasures (AMCM) units. See (C) J3M–253–73 to CJCS, 5 Feb 73, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Feb 73.

116. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 3889 to CINCPAC, 271859Z Feb 73. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1973*, pp. 230–231, 234. McCauley, "Operation END SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 22.

117. See above pp. 332–333.

118. (TS–EX) Msgs, JCS 9698 and JCS 6670 to CINCPAC, 020307Z and 021912Z Mar 73. (S) Msg, JCS 7881 to CINCPAC, 031842Z Mar 73. (S) Msg, JCS 6574 to CINCPAC, 021456Z Apr 73. For operational aspects of END SWEEP, see (S) Ctr for Naval Analysis Study CRC 277, "Operation END SWEEP," Feb 75, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center.

119. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 2636 to CINCPAC, 161952Z Apr 73. (S) Msg, JCS 8490 to CINCPAC, 221413Z Apr 73. (S) Msg, JCS 7713 to CINCPAC, 111202Z May 73. *NY Times*, 20 Apr 73, 1.

120. Text of Joint Communiqué of 13 June 73, reproduced in *NY Times*, 14 June 73, 18. *NY Times*, 14 Jun 73, 1.

121. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7782 to CINCPAC, 131515Z Jan 73. McCauley, "Operation End SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 22.

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123. McCauley, "Operation END SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 22. (TS–EX) CM–2799–73 to SecDef, 14 Jul 73; (TS) Fact Sheet, "US Obligations . . . for Concluding Mine Clearing Operations in the Waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (U)," 18 Jul 73; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Jul–Sep 73. (S) Msg, JCS 7483 to CINCPAC, 180302Z Jul 73; (TS) Msg, JCS 9948 to CINCPAC, 201405Z Jul 73. *NY Times*, 19 Jul 73, 3. ASD(PA) Briefing, 18 Jul 73, OASD(PA) Files.

124. McCauley, "Operation END SWEEP," *Proceedings*, Mar 74, p. 22. (S) CNA Study CRC 277, "Operation END SWEEP," p. 17. (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 7604 to CINCPAC, 101739Z Mar 73. *NY Times*, 19 Jul 73, 3. ASD(PA) Briefing, 18 Jul 73, OASD(PA) Files.

Chapter 16. Finale

1. *Public Papers: Richard Nixon, 1973*, (1975), p. 234.

2. See US note of protest to North Vietnam, 24 Apr 73, printed in *NY Times*, 25 Apr 73, 10.

3. Public Law 93–52, 1 Jul 73.

4. Public Law 93–148, 7 Nov 73.

5. Four Party Joint Communiqué, 13 Jun 73, printed in *Dept of State Bulletin, 9 Jul 73*, pp. 50–53.

6. *Facts on File, 1973*, pp. 482, 506–507, 556, 633, 662, 673–674, 781, 862, 882, 901, 920, 984, 1003, 1029, and 1072.

7. General Van Tien Dung, "Great Spring Offensive," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report, Asia and Pacific, 7 Jun 76* (Supp 38), pp. 1–47.

8. (S) Msg, Joint State/Defense (State 029839) to US Emb and DAO, Saigon, 132251Z Feb 74, JCS IN 56343. (S) Msg, USDAO, Saigon to CINCPAC (info JCS), 030725Z Mar 74, JCS IN 80947. (S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 120015Z Mar 74, JCS IN 92948. (S) JCSM–184–74 to SecDef, 28 May 74, Encl A to JCS 2472/884–2, 3 May 74, JMF 911/495 (6 Feb 74).

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13. *Facts on File, 1975*, p. 4.

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17. (TS–NOFORN) *CINCPAC Command History, 1975*, (U) p. 470. *NY Times*, 13 Mar 75, 1.

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19. CM–3994–69 to SecDef, 14 Mar 69; CMs 4000–69 and 4006–69 to SecDef, 13 Mar 69, Chairman's File 091 Vietnam.

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21. Telcon, CJCS with Dr. Kissinger, 1426, 8 Apr 72; Telcon, CJCS with President Nixon, 1255, 9 May 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

22. CJCS Memo M–75–72 for Record, 29 Dec 72, TS, Moorer Diary.

23. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 35. General Wheeler, interview by Dorothy P. McSweeney, 21 Aug 69, pp. 18–19, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

24. John Prados, *The Hidden History of the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1995), p. 124.

Appendix 1. The Use of Herbicides in South Vietnam, 1962–1973

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3. Ibid., (S) pp. VII–15.

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5. (S–GP 3) JCSM–575–70 to SecDef, 18 Dec 70, App to JCS 2472/693–2, 15 Dec 70, JMF 911/313 (20 Nov 70). (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1969*, (S) p. VII–19.

6. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1969*, (U) p. VII–17.

7. Ibid., (S) pp. VII–18—VII–19.

8. (S–GP 3) NSSM 59, 28 May 69, Att to JCS 1837/229, 29 May 69; (TS) Memo, Chm NSC Interdepartmental Political-Military Group to Dr. Kissinger, 15 Oct 69, Att to JCS 1837/229–5, 17 Oct 69; JMF 313 (28 May 69) sec 1.

9. (S) NSDM 35, 25 Nov 69, JMF 001 (CY 1969) NSDMs.

10. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1969*, (S) pp. VII–23–VII–26.

11. (S–GP 4) DJSM–1675–69 to DepSecDef, 29 Oct 69, JMF 313 (29 Oct 69).

12. Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 29 Oct 69, Att to JCS 1837/234, 30 Oct 69; (U) Msg, JCS 3986 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 4 Nov 69; JMF 313 (29 Oct 69).

13. (TS–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1969*, (S) pp. VII–22—VII–23.

14. Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 15 Apr 70, Att to JCS 1837/251, 16 Apr 70, JMF 313 (15 Apr 70) sec 1.

15. (S–GP 1) DJSM–555–70 to CJCS, 16 Apr 70; (C–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS 240335Z Apr 70; JMF 313 (15 Apr 70) sec 1.

16. (S–GP 3) JCSM–232–70 to SecDef, 14 May 70, Encl to JCS 1837/252, 8 May 70, JMF 313 (15 Apr 70) sec 1.

17. (C–GP 4) CM–5245 to SecDef, 2 Jun 70, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 1837/252, 4 Jun 70; Memo, ASD(I&L) to DepSecDef, 11 Jun 70, Att to JCS 1837/252–1, 17 Jun 70; Handwritten

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18. See above, p. 379.

19. (C) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 6 Jul 70, CJCS 091 Vietnam, Jul 70.

20. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to Dr. Kissinger, 18 Jul 70, Att to JCS 2472/649, 24 Jul 70, JMF 911/313 (13 Jul 70).

21. (S–GP 1) NSDM 78, 11 Aug 70, JMF 001 (CY 1970) NSDMs, sec 2.

22. LTG John H. Hay, Jr., *Tactical and Material Innovations*, Washington, Dept of the Army, 1974, p. 94. (C–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 230408Z Jul 70, JCS IN 29869. Legislative Reference Service, Library of Congress, "A Technology Assessment of the Vietnam Defoliant Matter, a Case History," Report to Subcom on Science, Research and Development of H. Com on Science and Astronautics, 8 Aug 69, 91st Cong, 2d sess.

23. (C) Joint State/DOD/AID Msg (State 119797) to Saigon (info CINCPAC), 250113Z Jul 70, JCS IN 33213. (C–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 052210Z Jul 70 (retransmitting MAC 12013/041138Z Sep 70). (C–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 052208 Sep 70; CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Sep 70. Hay, *Tactical and Material Innovations*, p. 94.

24. See response given to Senator Gaylord Nelson during a briefing on the herbicide program. (C) DJSM–1163–70 to CJCS, 14 Aug 70, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Aug 70.

25. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to ASD(ISA), 2 Sep 70, Att to JCS 2472/668, 4 Sep 70, JMF 911/313 (2 Sep 70).

26. (S–GP 3) DJSM–1360–70 to ASD(ISA), 15 Sep 70 (derived from JCS 2472/668–2), JMF 911/313 (2 Sep 70). (DJSM 1360–70 was approved by the JCS.)

27. (S–GP 3) Memo, ASD(ISA) to SecDef, 8 Oct 70, Encl to JCS 2472/668–3, 9 Dec 70, JMF 911/313 (2 Sep 70).

28. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to SecArmy and CJCS, 7 Dec 70, Att to JCS 2472/668–3, 9 Dec 70, JMF 911/313 (2 Sep 70).

29. This decision was also based in part on the decision to deactivate the 12th Special Operations Squadron as a result of the critical need for space to accommodate the expanding VNAF. See (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, p. XIV–10.

30. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1970*, pp. XIV–5—XIV–10. (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 1726 to CINCPAC, 22 Jan 71.

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32. (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to CJCS, 210132Z Oct 70, CJCS File 091 Vietnam, Oct 70.

33. See above, pp. 382–383.

34. (C–GP 4) Memo, Presidential Science Adviser to Dr. Kissinger, 20 Nov 70; Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 10 Dec 70; Atts to JCS 2472/693, 11 Dec 70, JMF 911/313 (20 Nov 70).

35. Msg, Joint Saigon/MACV (Saigon 19374) to State, 9 Dec 70, JCS IN 76317.

36. JCSM–575–70 to SecDef, 18 Dec 70, App to JCS 2472/693–2, 15 Dec 70, JMF 911/313 (20 Nov 70).

37. (C) Draft Memo, SecDef to Pres, n.d.; (S–GP 3) CM–451–70 to SecDef, 21 Dec 70, Att to JCS 2472/693–3, 22 Dec 70, JMF 911/313 (20 Nov 70).

38. (C) Memo, SecDef to President, 22 Dec 70, quoted in toto in Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 7 Jan 71, Att to JCS 2472/693–5, 8 Jan 71, JMF 911/313 (20 Nov 70).

39. (C–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecDef, 28 Dec 70, Att to JCS 2472/693–4, 4 Jan 71; (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 1726 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 22 Jan 71; JMF 911/313 (20 Nov 70).

40. (C) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 16 Jan 71, Att to JCS 1837/261–1, 10 Mar 71, JMF 313 (15 Apr 70) sec 1. (S–NOFORN–GP 1) *COMUSMACV Command History, 1971*, (U) p. VI–20.

41. (TS–GP 1) Draft Ltr, SecState to Pres, n.d., Encl to Ltr, SecState to SecDef, 2 Feb 71, Att to JCS 1837/266, 3 Feb 71; JMF 313 (2 Feb 71). (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to Pres, 19 Feb 71; Ltr SecDef to SecState, 19 Feb 71; Atts to JCS 1837/266–1, 22 Feb 71, same file.

42. See above pp. 385–386.

43. (S–GP 3) Msg JCS 3215 to CINCPAC, 032307Z Feb 71.

44. (S–GP 3) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 051734Z Feb 71, JCS IN 91957.

45. (S–GP 3) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 140401Z Mar 71, JCS IN 71987. (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS 060407Z Mar 71, JCS IN 57537.

46. (S–GP 4) JCSM–173–71 to SecDef, 9 Apr 71, Encl to JCS 2472/728, 29 Mar 71, JMF 911/313 (6 Mar 71). (S–GP 4) JCSM–191–71 to SecDef, 23 Apr 71, Encl to JCS 1837/261–3, 16 Apr 71, JMF 313 (15 Apr 71) sec 1.

47. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to Pres, 13 May 71, Att to JCS 2472/728–1, 1 Jul 71, JMF 911/313 (6 Mar 71).

48. (TS–GP 3) Memo, SecState to Pres, 24 Jun 71, Att to JCS 2472/728–1, 1 Jul 71, JMF 911/313 (6 Mar 71).

49. (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 062149Z Aug 71, JCS IN 68404.

50. (S–GP 3) Memo, Dr. Kissinger to SecState and SecDef, 18 Aug 71, Att to JCS 2472/728–2, 18 Aug 71, JMF 911/313 (6 Mar 71).

51. (S–GP 4) Msg, JCS 4025 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 19 Aug 71.

52. (S–GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 13 Sep 71, Att to JCS 1837/261–4, 15 Sep 71; (S–GP 4) MJCS–290–71 to CSA, CNO, and CSAF, 27 Sep 71, Att to 1st N/H of JCS 1837/261–4, 27 Sep 71; JMF 313 (15 Apr 70) sec 1. (C–GP 4) Msg, SecDef 2297 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 8 Nov 71, same file, sec 2.

53. (S–GP 4) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 291124Z Sep 71, JMF 911/313 (6 Mar 71).

54. (S–GP 4) JCSM–478–71 to SecDef, 1 Nov 71 (derived from JCS 2472/728–3), JMF 911/313 (6 Mar 71).

55. On 9 August 1971, the Secretary of Defense had provided the President a proposal to supply a herbicide capability to the South Vietnamese, and on 30 September, the Secretary of State commented on this proposal. The President referred to both communications in his decision memorandum on 26 November, but neither the Secretary of Defense nor the Secretary of State memorandums are in the files of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Office of the Secretary of Defense was unable to locate these documents.

56. (S) Extracts of NSDM 141, 26 Nov 71, JMF 001 (CY 1971) sec 2.

57. Memo, SecDef to Pres, 3 Dec 71, cited in (S) Memo, SecState to Pres, 4 Feb 72, Att to JCS 1837/274, 23 Feb 74, JMF 911/313 (4 Feb 72).

58. (S) Memo, SecState to Pres, 4 Feb 72, Att to JCS 1837/274, 23 Feb 72, same file.

59. (S) Extracts of NSDM 152, 14 Feb 72, JMF 001 (CY 1972) sec 1.

60. (TS–NOFORN–EX) *COMUSMACV Command History, Jan 72–Mar 73*, (S) p. 36. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 6432 to CINCPAC (info COMUSMACV), 24 Mar 72. (TS–GP 1) Msg, JCS 6393 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, 29 Apr 72; (TS–EX) Msg, JCS 6895 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC (info COMUSMACV), 30 Oct 72. (TS) Rpt, NSC Interdepartmental Political-Military Group, "Annual Review of US Chemical Warfare and Biological Research Programs as of July 1, 1972," 26 Oct 72 (pp. 24–28), Encl to Att to JCS 1837/279, 18 Nov 72, JMF 313 (15 Nov 72). (U) Memo, SecAF to SecDef, 31 May 72, Att to JCS 1837/261–7, 6 Jun 72, JMF 313 (15 Apr 70) sec 2.

61. All information about the National Academy investigation and report is from (U) National Academy of Sciences, *The Effects of Herbicides in South Vietnam*, Washington, 1974.

62. *Washington Post*, 23 Jan 75, 15.

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