[redacted]

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

JCSM-468-67
24 August 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Replacement of USS FORRESTAL Air Operations Capability (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to:

a. CINCPAC message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 060020Z August 1967, JCS IN 95408, subject: "Forrestal Replacement (U)."

b. CM-2379-67, dated 29 May 1967, subject: "Marine Corps Tactical Air Support in Vietnam (U)."

c. JCSM-416-67, dated 20 July 1967, subject: "US Force Deployments Vietnam (U)."

d. Your memorandum, dated 10 August 1967, subject: "Marine Tactical Air Support in South Vietnam (U)."

2. ([redacted]) On 29 July 1967, fire in the USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) resulted in extensive damage to the carrier and the embarked air wing. CINCPAC has modified carrier schedules to limit the periods when strike capabilities are reduced below those planned. Additional actions are immediately necessary to compensate for the loss.

3. ([redacted]) It is of particular importance that the current tempo of air operations against North Vietnam (NVN) be maintained throughout the current period of good flying weather, which should extend through mid-October. It is also necessary to sustain the planned sortie effort during the remaining period (through 4 January 1968) when only four CVAs are in the Western Pacific. Further, the level of effort in NVN should be maintained without reduction of other essential missions in South Vietnam (SVN) or Laos.

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4. [redacted] By reference 1a, CINCPAC requested authority for the following additional actions:

a. Temporary deployment of the two Japan-based Marine squadrons of the CINCPAC amphibious reserve to Chu Lai; previously recommended for support of in-country operations by reference 1b. Reference 1d deferred approval of this recommendation. Immediate deployment of these squadrons would provide additional capability for in-country operations and operations in Laos and Route Package I. Thai-based resources made available by this action could concentrate on the northern route packages in NVN.

b. Deployment of Air Force F-100 and B-57 aircraft (probably 6 F-100s and 10 B-57s) and minimum support equipment and personnel from Clark Air Base to SVN for in-country augmentation on a temporary basis. This action would free additional F-4 capability for application in northern route packages of NVN. This is an immediately available resource for prompt application to take advantage of current good weather.

c. Deployment on an expedited basis, but not later than October 1967, of the F-4 squadron identified in reference 1c as maintained in ready status for deployment to SVN as directed.

5. [redacted] Temporary loss of the USS FORRESTAL has created a fluctuating sortie capability in Southeast Asia, increasing and diminishing as the number of CVAs at YANKEE STATION changes from three to two or vice versa. At the same time, requirements for air support to ground forces change independently in response to developing situations. Such fluctuations, in both capability and requirements, make it highly desirable that CINCPAC be authorized to insert into and withdraw from SVN, as necessary, his Japan- and Philippine-based reserve assets shown in subparagraphs 4a and 4b, above. If these forces can be so employed, they would provide a ready and flexible means of compensating for variations in sortie capabilities and requirements; and it should not become necessary to deploy the F-4D squadron from CONUS for this purpose, as requested by CINCPAC.

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6. [redacted] The Joint Chiefs of Staff request that you authorize deployment, as necessary, of tactical air assets from Japan and the Philippines to meet temporary and fluctuating sortie requirements in Southeast Asia.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Harold K. Johnson

HAROLD K. JOHNSON
Acting Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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