TOP SECRET [redacted]

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

JCSM-555-67
17 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Increased Pressures on North Vietnam (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to:

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

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

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

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

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

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4. (S) Military operations in Southeast Asia have been conducted within a framework of policy guidelines established to achieve US objectives without expanding the conflict. Principal among these policy guidelines are:

a. We seek to avoid widening the war into a conflict with Communist China or the USSR.

b. We have no present intention of invading NVN.

c. We do not seek the overthrow of the Government of NVN.

d. We are guided by the principles set forth in the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962.

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

a. The attacks on the enemy military targets have been on such a prolonged, graduated basis that the enemy has adjusted psychologically, economically, and militarily; e.g., inured themselves to the difficulties and hardships accompanying the war, dispersed their logistic support system, and developed alternate transport routes and a significant air defense system.

b. Areas of sanctuary, containing important military targets, have been afforded the enemy.

c. Covert operations in Cambodia and Laos have been restricted.

d. Major importation of supplies into NVN by sea has been permitted.

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

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

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

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

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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APPENDIX

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

SPECIFIC ACTIONS	ADVANTAGES	RISKS/IMPACT
e Haiphong and Hanoi prohibited areas. snoi and Haiphong restricted areas to ty proper. PR Buffer Zone to 10 miles. unrestricted attacks against LOC, rail roads up to five miles from CPR border. e CINCPAC strike and restrike prerogative l targets outside of redefined restricted CS to authorize strikes against targets in defined restricted areas on a case-by-case (to include Haiphong port).	Greater destruction of NVN war-supporting facilities. Increased destruction of air defenses including airfields. Reduce logistic support of NVN/VC. More efficient use of available forces. Favorable impact on reducing friendly casualties, particularly in critical I Corps/DMZ area. Permits timely reaction against targets of opportunity.	Charges of escalation. Increased use of CPR airfields for storage or training, but not for combat missions. Increased CPR AAA and Engineer support in NVN.
h, replenish as required, mine fields in ches and harbors at Haiphong, Hon Gai and a. Publish warning notice to mariners. /extend mine fields as necessary to t bypassing.	Reduce import of war-supporting materials.	Soviet Union may cancel existing negotiations with the US and initiate propaganda campaign. Possible Soviet actions to increase tensions in other parts of the world but major confrontations would be unlikely. CPR would strengthen defensive posture and may increase military aid to NVN; unlikely to initiate offensive air or surface actions.
ths of navigable NVN rivers. Mine navigable waterways throughout NVN to within 5 NM of rder (authority currently limited to those of 20° N).	Interdict internal waterway LOCs. Destroy waterborne logistic craft and block channels. Require great NVN sweeping effort. Reduce POL and other cargo distribution.	No specific military reaction from communists. Some increased propaganda against US action.
offensive naval surface force operations t NVN military/logistic watercraft and t suitable targets in NVN ashore north of latitude to the redefined buffer zone RAGON operations now limited to south of 20° N).	Interdict coastal water traffic. Reduce use of land LOCs by harassing gunfire.	Possible naval and air reaction by NVN in northern waters. CPR or Soviets might provide additional patrol craft.
based SAM missiles against NVN aircraft both ater and in airspace over NVN.	Increase destruction of enemy air forces. Inhibit enemy air operations.	NVN air and surface attack possible. USSR or CPR might provide NVN with coast defense missiles.
e bombing of Laotian waterways traffic (SEKONG). h special saturation bombing interdiction air- zones in Laos, e.g., northwest of DMZ, Nape Gia Passes.	Increased interdiction of LOCs and reduction of supplies to NVA/VC.	No immediate reaction other than propaganda. No Laos reaction.
ht of Laos, by day and night, by B-52s en route from targets in Vietnam or Laos. . bombing attacks on Laos. e requirement for cover strikes in SVN when g targets in Laos.	Greater operational efficiency and quicker reaction time for B-52s.	Possible political reactions.
: authorized size of exploitation force.	Disrupt sanctuaries. Increased efficiency of interdiction. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC.	Souvanna would probably not object if he could deny the actions and avoid publicity. Possible increased NVA forces and activities in Laos.
:urrent DANIEL BOONE reconnaissance program :ending the area of operations for the full ı of the SVN/Cambodia border; authorize use .icopters; remove limitations on number of ms. :e DANIEL BOONE forces to conduct limited ıge/destruction activity; authorize calling in :al airstrikes on enemy targets near the border.	Disrupt sanctuaries. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC. Improve intelligence. Discourage use of Cambodia as sanctuary for NVA/VC forces. Provide self-defense of US forces.	Cambodia would protest expansion of operations to Cambodian soil and might seek to defend its territory. Adverse political reaction.
:e actions to increase the credibility of a ıt notional resistance movement in NVN. : intelligence collection and covert physical ıction missions.	Harass NVN within country. Require NVN to divert resources to internal security.	NVN would accuse the United States of attempting to bring about downfall of Government of NVN.