CJCS

[redacted]

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

JCSM-237-68
19 April 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Operational Control of III MAF Aviation Assets (U)

1. [redacted] On 2 March 1968, CINCPAC approved, with minor changes, a proposal made by COMUSMACV to provide single management of fighter-bomber-reconnaissance air assets in I Corps Tactical Zone of South Vietnam. The system as approved by CINCPAC was in operation on 21 March 1968.

2. (U) The proposal made by COMUSMACV, and the reasoning behind his proposal, is provided at Appendix A.

3. [redacted] The Commandant of the Marine Corps has previously expressed concern over the proposal made by COMUSMACV regarding control of fighter-bomber-reconnaissance aircraft of the First Marine Air Wing by the Deputy COMUSMACV for Air. On 23 March 1968, the Commandant of the Marine Corps requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff advise CINCPAC that the COMUSMACV plan for single management of strike and reconnaissance aircraft assets in I Corps, as approved by CINCPAC, is not in consonance with previous decisions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and that these changes should not be implemented. The views of the Commandant of the Marine Corps are provided at Appendix B.

4. (U) The Chief of Staff, US Army, and the Chief of Naval Operations support the position of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Their views are provided in Appendix C.

5. (U) The Chief of Staff, US Air Force, supports the proposal made by COMUSMACV and the approval action taken by CINCPAC.

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T.S. No. 94-TS-041
Document No. 46

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Declassified by Joint Staff
Date 31 Oct 94
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6. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff are unable to agree on the change of control of the air assets of the III MAF by COMUSMACV and CINCPAC and, therefore, submit the matter to you for your decision.

7. (U) The views and recommendation of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, are provided in Appendix D.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachments

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APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL OF COMUSMACV ON OPERATIONAL CONTROL III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE AVIATION ASSETS (U)

1. [redacted] On 14 February 1966, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a proposal by COMUSMACV, and concurred in by CINCPAC, to designate III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) a separate uni-Service command with MACV; that it be assigned to Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force Pacific (Hq, FMFPAC), under command, less operational control of CG, FMFPAC; and that it be under the operational control of COMUSMACV.

2. [redacted] Until 21 March 1968, all air assets of the First Marine Aircraft Wing, as a component part of the III MAF, have been under the operational control of CG,III MAF.

3. [redacted] During late summer 1967, the enemy began to move major concentration of forces into the I Corps area. In reaction, COMUSMACV initiated deployment of additional forces to this area. By February 1968, US and Army of Vietnam (ARVN) force levels were equivalent to field army in size. As the scope of operations subsequently increased, it was the view of COMUSMACV that the command and control procedures previously used were no longer responsive to his requirements. In particular, fixed-wing air operations were of such magnitude as to require the major portion of 7th Air Force, Vietnam Air Force (VNAF), carrier-based, and Thai-based forces. The problems of coordination and direction of the diversified air elements now operating in support of the ground forces were, in COMUSMACV's judgment, beyond the capability of then existing command and control systems. Based on these developments and the fact that Marine fixed-wing assets now provided only a relatively small number of the total air support sorties required, COMUSMACV prepared a proposal to CINCPAC assigning the responsibility for single management of all MACV fighter-bomber/reconnaissance assets to MACV, Deputy for Air. A Provisional Corps had already been established

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and the necessary adjustments to existing command and control arrangements were made to support the single manager concept of operations. COMUSMACV reports that his proposal provided the following:

a. Maintained the Marine air/ground team intact except when the tactical situation dictated otherwise.

b. Established a procedure for central control and direction of air effort available in support of I Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) forces.

c. Permitted CG, III MAF, to determine where air effort should be applied in his area.

d. Provided a single airman responsible for coordination of all air effort.

e. There was no change in Service doctrine or roles and missions.

4. [redacted] The COMUSMACV plan, as approved by CINCPAC on 2 March 1968, contained instructions for the organization of forces in I Corps Tactical Zone and described air control and coordination arrangements. The COMUSMACV directive to the CG III MAF, which transmitted the approved plan, includes the following:

"1. (S) Because of the increased deployment of Army forces to I Corps area, the concentration of air effort in support of all ground forces being deployed, and the overriding requirement to maintain the flexibility to concentrate this effort as directed by the enemy threat, I have concluded that it is of paramount importance to achieve a single manager for control of tactical air resources. Consequently, I have decided to charge my Deputy Commander for Air Operations with the responsibility for coordinating and directing the air effort throughout Vietnam, to include I Corps and the extended battle area. He is responsible for seeing to it that the air effort is applied in the most effective manner in furtherance of the MACV mission."

"2. (S) You will make available to my Deputy Commander for Air Operations the following air assets for mission direction:

"a. Strike aircraft.

"b. Reconnaissance aircraft.

"c. Tactical air control system as required."

"3. [redacted] My Deputy Commander for Air Operations will be responsible for fragging and operational direction of these air assets with all other available assets now under his control to meet the daily operational requirements of forces in I CTZ. Consistent with the tactical situation, Marine aircraft will be fragged through the appropriate DASC to support Marine ground units. In the joining together of the two tactical air control systems to insure continuity of control of air operations, the integrity of the Marine tactical control system shall be preserved. Marine helicopters and airlift assets will not be affected by this directive."

"3. [redacted] I expect you to provide my Deputy Commander for Air Operations with the following:

"a. G2 and G3 air representation in the MACV TASE to establish priority of effort between major commands. Also, personnel to augment the TACC and appropriate DASCs (total personnel involved should not exceed ten).

"b. Daily status report of availability of aircraft for fragging in accordance with your established priorities.

"c. Mission reports.

"d. Such officers as you see necessary for planning special allied or combined air operations."

"4. [redacted] The inclosure reflects the organization of forces in I CTZ and describes air control and coordination arrangements. Additionally, a description of the reporting procedures is included."

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APPENDIX B

VIEWS OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS ON OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE AVIATION ASSETS

1. [redacted] I have given further consideration to the COMUSMACV plan for single management of fighter/bomber/reconnaissance assets which has been approved by CINCPAC. I cannot concur with the plan for the following reasons, which are amplified in the succeeding paragraphs:

a. The single management plan effectively places the III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) strike and reconnaissance aircraft assets under the operational control of the 7th Air Force, thus removing them from control of the CG, III MAF.

b. The effect of placing these Marine air assets under operational control of the 7th Air Force is to fragment the III MAF air-ground team, thus reducing its combat effectiveness.

c. The single management system is not as responsive to either preplanned or immediate air support for Marines in I Corps as was the previous system.

d. The single management plan contravenes my responsibility as a Service Chief to organize the forces provided to a unified commander for his employment.

e. A change to the single management system is not required. The previous air support system met III MAF requirements, provided for coordination of air operations, and contained the flexibility required by COMUSMACV to apply total air support assets against emergency requirements.

f. The single management plan contravenes the provisions of the Unified Action Armed Forces relating to the exercise of command by a unified commander through his component commanders, and preserving, where practicable, the uni-Service character of the forces provided to insure their optimum effectiveness.

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g. Justification given for the single management system that it is required due to the high level of air activity in I Corps is counter to the principles approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 12 May 1965 which points out the difference between responsibility for air space control and control of weapons systems of the separate Services.

h. Removal of control of Marine air from the III MAF air-ground team impacts on basic roles and missions of the separate Services as stated in Department of Defense Directive 5100.1 and the National Security Act.

2. [redacted] In the single manager plan, COMUSMACV directs the CG, III MAF to:

> ". . . make available to my deputy commander for air operations the following air assets for mission direction: A. Strike Aircraft. B. Reconnaissance Aircraft. C. Tactical Air Control System as required. My deputy commander for air operations will be responsible for fragging and operational direction of these air assets . . ."

The plan continues with instructions that operational direction of tactical air support in I Corps will be accomplished by the 7th Air Force Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) in Saigon. The TACC will assign targets to appropriate units, establish ordnance loads and time over targets. The following includes assignment of tasks, designation of objectives, and the authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission, all of which are included in the function of operational control. Thus, the MACV plan has removed control of strike and reconnaissance assets from the III MAF air-ground team.

3. (TS) By fragmenting the III MAF team, its combat effectiveness is reduced. Fundamental to the entire matter is the nature of the Marine Corps air-ground organizational structure. A careful balance has been struck in the numbers and types of the various

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supporting arms to enable the Marine commander to effectively fight his force. Air support, in particular, must be immediately responsive to the Marine ground commander. Marine combat structure is, accordingly, characterized by deliberately built-in organizational arrangements, compatible communications, and operational procedures at every level to integrate air support with the fire and maneuver of ground units. Because of the deliberately designed integration of air into the Marine combat formations, and dependence upon its immediate availability, Marine strike and reconnaissance aircraft must remain under operational control of the Marine air-ground team commander to effectively fill their roles. In this respect, Marine fixed-wing air support parallels the relationship of helicopter gunships and observation aircraft within the Army ground organization while having the additional capability to operate at longer ranges and carry heavier and more diversified ordnance. If the Marine air-ground team is deprived of responsiveness of its inherent fixed-wing assets, it has no other source of organic weapon support to compensate for this critical loss.

4. [redacted] The impact of the single manager plan is decreased responsiveness, lack of assurance of availability of close air support, and reduced capability to integrate fire support means. Examination of the plan for single management of strike and reconnaissance assets indicates that responsiveness provided by the plan would be considerably less than that previously provided in I Corps.

a. Preplanned air requests in the previously established system involved only three processing steps from the originating battalion or regiment to the III MAF TACC. Including lead time for processing, a cycle time of 18 hours was required from submission of the initial request to receipt of air support. In contrast, the single manager system has imposed intervening layers of processing agencies between I Corps units and the 7th

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Air Force TACC in Saigon. Now six steps are required to process air requests from 1st Marine Division units and seven steps for the 3rd Marine Division units in northern I Corps. The 7th Air Force frag order is executed in two phases: night radar missions and day radar/visual missions. The first phase of the frag is executed at 1900 on the day following arrival of the request at the MACV Tactical Air Support Element (TASE) and the second phase is executed at 0600 on the second day after arrival of the request at the MACV TASE. Adding in the lead time required for processing by intervening agencies prior to the request reaching the MACV TASE results in a cycle time of 38-50 hours for initial request to receipt of air support.

b. Immediate air requests were met under the previous III MAF system by essentially a three-step process from originator to his respective division Direct Air Support Center (DASC) to the III MAF TACC. The TACC then scrambled aircraft from a ready hot pad which was constituted with aircraft having various ordnance configurations. The hot pads were reconstituted automatically. In contrast, the single manager system stresses reliance upon diverting aircraft already assigned to other missions. This results not only in the original requestor being deprived of his support, but also in the questionable ability of the diverted aircraft to properly perform the immediate mission by reason of such variables as fuel status and type of ordnance load. In effect, the system actually nullifies most of the planning accomplished on the preplanned missions.

c. Further, the single manager plan provides that the TACC in Saigon will assign targets to appropriate units, establish ordnance loads and time over targets (TOT). This procedure serves

very well for strikes outside of South Vietnam on missions other than close air support of troops. However, I submit that it is the ground commander who is in the best position to determine the target, the ordnance required, and the time of strike, since air support must be coordinated with his scheme of maneuver and other supporting fire plans.

d. In further analysis, a comparison of the two systems indicates:

(1) The single management system is, in one sense, very simple. Anything that is not categorized as an immediate need is called preplanned, whether it is a strike in Laos or just a block of sorties put in the air and destined for support of a specific command or geographic area. What Marines call immediate close air support is provided, in the single management system, primarily by diverting these preplanned sorties, without respect to pilot briefing, ordnance load, or fuel state. Furthermore, the diverting is done by an Air Force watch officer, whose knowledge of the ground tactical situation is incomplete and who is not in a position to know the effect on the ground action of the mission diversion.

(2) The Marine system is quite different. From the viewpoint of the Marines on the ground, preplanned means preplanned. A battalion commander integrates close air support into his planned maneuver, like artillery or naval gunfire. He counts on it to be there at the right time and with a pilot who has already been briefed on the job. It is a cardinal element of his tactical plan and, if it is diverted to meet a need elsewhere, his operation is compromised. In any case, if there is a diversion undertaken under the Marine system, the decision of what has highest priority resides in the ground chain of authority.

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(3) There is a difference in basic philosophy. The single management system is producer oriented. The Marine system is consumer oriented.

My greatest concern over reduced responsiveness is that the ultimate result will be increased casualties.

5. (TS) Equal in impact to reduced responsiveness is reduced combat effectiveness by reason of the fact that the single management plan removes an organic component from a carefully structured and balanced air-ground team.

a. Within this balanced team, the mix of fire support means has been derived to place heavy reliance on close air support. I must justify to the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of Defense, and to Congress every element and every weapon of this force. It is my conviction that the resultant battle tested organization provided is a proper one not only for our primary mission of amphibious operations, but for the mission presently assigned in Vietnam as well.

b. The structure of this force is my responsibility as a Service Chief. My responsibility in this area is clearly defined in UNAAF 10103b, which states:

"Under the National Security Act, as amended, and as amplified by the Functions Paper, each of the Military Departments and Services, coordinating as appropriate with the others, has the responsibility for organizing, training, equipping, and providing forces to fulfill certain specific combatant functions and for administering and supporting such forces. This responsibility includes the formulation of tactical and technical doctrine for the combatant functions involved, the internal structure and composition of forces, the type of training to be given, and the types and quantities

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of equipment and supplies to be developed and procured. This undivided responsibility in a single Military Department and Service of preparing forces for a broad field of warfare insures that our combat forces are effective. It utilizes existing departmental and service facilities effectively."

I have made every effort to see that this assigned responsibility has been met fully and must oppose any action that detracts from the effectiveness of the Marine Corps forces provided under my authority as a Chief of Service.

6. [redacted] In my view, the MACV plan is not required. Although COMUSMACV has indicated that increased deployment of Army forces to I Corps and resultant intermingling of Army and Marine Corps units has resulted in the requirement for a control system which is flexible enough to concentrate the total air effort when required, this cannot be regarded as a new problem. The Air Force and Marine Corps systems have coexisted in I Corps over the past three years. The Air Force system was responsive to ARVN forces prior to deployment of the AMERICAL Division to I Corps, at which time it became additionally responsive to the Army forces. Throughout this same time frame, the Marine Corps system was responsive to Marine Corps forces (including ROK Marine Corps forces), and no problems existed. Provision for the coordination of airspace and coordination of air operations has been and is currently set forth in MACV directives which clearly state that the Commander, 7th Air Force, in has capacity as MACV Air Force Component Comamnder, acts as coordinating authority for all US/Free World military assistance forces air operations and Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) activities in the MACV area of responsibility. In my opinion, air support for increased forces

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in I Corps is not improved by removing control of organic strike and reconnaissance assets of one component and placing it 350 miles away in Saigon. There has been no specific evidence of deficiencies in the conduct of air operations in I Corps, and initial analysis produces no evidence that the single management system would provide any improvement. Previous arrangements have provided a good working basis for the emergency options General Westmoreland must have to support operations throughout the theater while preserving, for normal conditions, the tactical integrity of the various force packages that comprise the Free World military forces in the Republic of Vietnam. In support of this view, I would like to submit that:

a. During 1967, of over 80,000 Marine sorties flown, about 18,000 were voluntarily identified as excess to III MAF requirements and made available for fragging by the 7th Air Force.

b. While the CG, III MAF, could request assistance when required, provisions also existed for COMUSMACV to levy emergency sortie requirements on the Marines. A specific example of this latter provision is contained in CG, 7th Air Force message 131205Z February 1968, which is quoted in part:

"In accordance with instructions from COMUSMACV, Commander 7th Air Force is the responsible agent for management of the air support of Khe Sanh. To increase the emphasis in the Khe Sanh area the following tactical air sorties are tasked on a

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daily basis in direct support of Operation NIAGARA: 7th Air Force - 150 sorties; SAC - 48 ARC LIGHT sorties; Task Force 77 - 100 sorties; III MAF - 100 sorties plus whatever additional effort can be made available."

c. Further evidence to demonstrate the significant accomplishment of a coordinated joint effort which was realized prior to implementation of the single management system is found in the following statistics developed from Operation NIAGARA during the period 1 January to 5 March 1968.

Organization	Number of Sorties
7th Air Force	6,616
Strategic Air Command	1,596
III MAF	3,263
US Navy	3,618

d. The flexibility and ability of the previously established system to concentrate air support and effectively coordinate the efforts of all supporting arms was also demonstrated last fall at Con Thien. Three thousand six hundred eighteen air sorties were flown into this 20 square mile area in less than a month. Of this total, 2,436 were Marine, 699 were 7th Air Force, 412 were B-52 strikes, and 71 were flown by the Navy. In addition to the high rate of air sorties, 127,000 rounds of artillery and 6,100 rounds of naval gunfire were fired into this area during the same period.

e. The examples of Con Thien and NIAGARA demonstrate that the required air support was provided by coordination, not operational control of SAC B-52s, Navy and Marine aircraft. Additionally, the examples show noteworthy accomplishments in airspace control and fire support coordination effectiveness. Yet the justification for the single manager plan includes the statement that to gain flexibility and coordination, COMUSMACV needs operational control only of the Marine air assets and not the other participants.

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7. [redacted] The decision to implement the single manager plan is contrary to the specific directions on the methods of exercising command of a unified command as stated in UNAAF, pertinent sections of which are quoted as follows:

a. "30202.b. Within unified commands, operational command will be exercised through the Service component commanders subject to the exception addressed in paragraph 30215c(1) (f), or be exercised through the commanders of subordinate commands, when such commands are established by the unified commander in accordance with criteria and procedures set forth herein."

b. "30213.b. Maintenance of Uni-Service Integrity. The command organization should integrate components of two or more Services into efficient teams while, at the same time, preserving to each Service its uni-Service responsibilities. The commander of any force must give due consideration to these responsibilities. Furthermore, organizational integrity of Service components should be maintained insofar as practicable to exploit fully their inherent capabilities."

c. Paragraph 30215c(1)(f) is the exception mentioned in 30202.b. It provides that a unified commander may exercise command "Directly to specific operational forces which, due to the mission assigned and the urgency of the situation, must remain immediately responsive to the commander. Such specific forces must be identified by the commander and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense."

It can be noted that CINCPAC's decision is contrary to 30202.b and 30213.b; however, command is permissible under 30215c(1)(f) provided it is exercised directly and has been approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. This approval was neither requested nor obtained.

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8. Further, the single manager plan is contrary to the decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff which specifies the difference between command authority and coordination of the use of airspace. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, in their approval of a concept for air-space control, established principles which provide for:

a. Air space control defined as a service which coordinates, integrates, and regulates use of airspace over the combat zone.

b. The assignment of air space blocks or sectors of responsibility within which each Service can operate its own aerial vehicles in accordance with its own tactical concepts and under its own control.

c. The assignment of coordination authority to the Air Force component commander with respect to air space control - with such authority being:

> "considered as that degree of authority necessary to achieve effective, efficient and flexible use of air space without at the same time providing command authority."

And, finally, the concept of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was designed to ". . . alleviate the problems associated with one Service having a degree of authority over organic weapons systems of another Service."

9. The facts stated above demonstrate that the course of action as approved by CINCPAC, is contrary to agreed joint doctrine and to a specific decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. To propose that the Joint Chiefs of Staff not only permit this action, but concur in it, constitutes a major reversal of previous actions by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

10. To structure, equip, train, and maintain an effective force, a Service Chief must be able to depend upon agreed joint doctrine and have confidence in decisions made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Otherwise, he must initiate reconsideration of the

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Joint Strategic Objectives Plan, current program objectives, and revision of Unified Action Armed Forces and roles and missions contained in Department of Defense Directive 5100.1 and Title 10, US Code, "Armed Forces."

11. [redacted] I maintain that it is necessary to advise CINCPAC that he has approved actions that counter the principles and procedures for unified action of the Armed Forces. Since the Joint Chiefs of Staff have declined to reaffirm the doctrine promulgated in UNAAF and the specific concepts for airspace control which they approved on 12 May 1965, I have no other recourse than to request that the Secretary of Defense direct CINCPAC to restore the procedures for control of air operations as they existed prior to implementation of the single manager plan.

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APPENDIX C

VIEWS OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF, US ARMY, AND THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS ON OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE AVIATION ASSETS

1. ([redacted]I have reviewed the action taken by CINCPAC and COMUSMACV to place III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) attack and reconnaissance air assets under the virtual operational control of COMUSMACV Deputy for Air/CG 7th Air Force, and do not concur in it. I support the position* of the Commandant of the Marine Corps in this matter.

2. (S) This change in the control of air assets appears contrary to:

a. The intent of Title 10, US Code in providing the Marine Corps with organic air.

b. Title 10, US Code, as amplified by the Functions Paper, in charging each of the military departments and Services with the responsibility for organizing, training, equipping, and providing forces to fulfill certain specific combat functions and for administering and supporting these forces. This responsibility includes the formulation of tactical and technical doctrine for the combat functions involved and the internal structure and composition of the forces (para 10103.b, JCS Pub 2).

c. A 12 May 1965 decision by the Joint Chiefs of Staff which approved the basic concepts for control of air operations and airspace control over the combat zone, while avoiding one Service having a degree of authority over organic weapons systems of another.

3. [redacted] Particular problem areas were not cited as motivation for changing to the single management system. Significant improvement in the quality of support to the land forces and

* Appendix B, hereto

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in the efficiency of utilization of available air assets, if any, is not evident as a result of the change. This change, which deprives the Marine commander of control of his organic air and is in violation of the authorities and precedents cited in paragraph 2 above, is not justified. Treatment of organic air in this fashion would establish a precedent for centralized control which would invalidate the very precepts under which the various specialized air/land teams have been developed and proven to be so effective. Therefore, it is recommended that CINCPAC be directed to restore Marine air assets to the direct control of III MAF in accordance with previously established policies.

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APPENDIX D

VIEW OF THE CHAIRMAN, JCS, ON OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF III MAF AVIATION ASSETS

1. While I agree with some aspects of the views of my colleagues on this matter, I disagree substantially with major portions of their views and, in particular, with the conclusions they reach.

2. I consider it militarily unsound to dictate to responsible senior commanders of the level of COMUSMACV and his superior, CINCPAC, how to organize their forces and exercise command and control of them. Commanders of such rank, experience, and knowledge of the principles of war, who also have intimate knowledge of the specific situation facing them, are expected to utilize assigned forces and resources so as to maximize their combat effectiveness and minimize casualties sustained. If an officer bearing these responsibilities fails to utilize his resources properly to achieve these ends, a simple recourse is available.

3. General Westmoreland stated to me, and I communicated to my colleagues, that he recommended a change in the operational control of III MAF aviation assets to meet a tactical situation imposed by the enemy. In brief, the enemy massed sizeable forces in the Khe Sanh area and along and south of the DMZ; these hostile deployments necessitated the movement of two Army divisions (1st Cavalry Division and 101st Airborne Division) north of the Ai-Van Pass into what is now known as I Corps North. General Westmoreland established the Headquarters Provisional Corps, Vietnam, in I Corps North to command these two Army divisions and the 3rd Marine Division, which had heretofore been the senior tactical headquarters in I Corps North, and to operate in coordination with ARVN units in the same area. To provide coordinated air support to these diverse tactical elements, General Westmoreland considered it expedient to establish a single air support system rather than to maintain two air support systems, each of them supporting different

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ground combat elements. He stated to me that he regards the current arrangement as an expedient which will have served its purpose when the enemy threat in the area diminishes, and the Provisional Corps, Vietnam, together with a substantial portion of the Army element thereof, can be redeployed to the south. Further, General McConnell has expressed his judgment that from an air operational standpoint, the single air support arrangement optimizes the exploitation of air assets in support of the campaign in the I CTZ.

4. With regard to the argument that Marine Corps assets have been divorced from control and support of Marine Corps ground elements, three factors are pertinent: (a) General Westmoreland has deployed to I Corps, and placed under Marine Corps operational command, substantial Army combat and service support units; these forces are comprised of artillery, engineer, helicopter, and service support units furnished and intended to support Army combat units in Vietnam. (b) All US ground forces in I Corps are under the operational command of CG, III MAF. (c) General Westmoreland has, therefore, utilized his forces so as to maximize the combat effectiveness of his force as a whole.

5. I do not regard the organization of air assets recommended by General Westmoreland and approved by Admiral Sharp as setting a precedent governing the future assignment of Marine Corps air units or as affecting the Marine concept of the air/ground team. Rather, I regard the current air organization in South Vietnam as being an expedient adopted to meet a situation imposed by the enemy. When the situation changes, General Westmoreland can and should modify the organization of his forces in the light of that situation. Obviously, since the enemy has volition as to his deployments and combat operations, no forecast can be given or fixed time established when a change would be feasible.

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6. Therefore, I recommend that no action be taken to direct CINCPAC to modify the current procedures for the management and control of air operations. Instead, the Secretary of Defense should direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff to inform CINCPAC that: (a) the Joint Chiefs of Staff have noted his action regarding the arrangements for the management and control of air assets in I Corps; and (b) they expect that at such time as the tactical situation changes MACV will modify the organization of his forces, including the management and control of air assets in I Corps, in the light of that situation.

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