COMMAND and CONTROL
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CHECO Division

Prepared by: Kenneth Sams
S.E. Asia Team
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I. CONTROL OF OUT-COUNTRY OPERATIONS

The dramatic expansion of the air war in Southeast Asia in 1964 and 1965, including recce and interdiction missions in Laos, direct support for friendly Laotian forces, overt air attacks against North Vietnam, and the employment of hundreds of jet aircraft, including B-52 bombers, in South Vietnam, brought into focus the question of command and control of the air war. In May, 1964, when US Navy and USAF recce flights over Laos were begun under the YANKEE TEAM program and again in August, shortly after the retaliatory Tonkin Gulf strikes against NVN, the question of how these expanded air missions should be controlled was debated in SEA, Honolulu, and Washington.

It was apparent that the new complexion which the war had taken went well beyond the established system for control of air resources within the Republic of Vietnam. For one thing, the U.S. Navy was employing carrier-based aircraft, which were not under operational control of COMUSMACV, and the USAF had planes based in Thailand for use in strikes against NVN and Laos.

The 2d AD commander, as the Air Force Component Commander under COMUSMACV, had established a command post in May 1964 and shortly after brought in liaison officers from the 7th Fleet to handle the Yankee Team operation. General Moore, as the AFCC, was responsible for conducting
the recce flights over Laos and the retaliatory strikes on PL gun positions in June following the shooting down of two Navy aircraft.

The long-range objective of the Air Force was to establish CINCPACAF or his subordinates as the coordinating authority for all air operations in which USAF, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine, and U.S. Army air were involved. CINCPAC Instruction 003120.3, dated 6 June 1962, which was pointed at sub-unified command, Joint Task Force, or SEATO operations, appeared to provide the basis for later attainment of this authority.

When the U.S. became overtly engaged with NVN, the problems of political-military coordination were expected to become relatively simple, according to CINCPAC. U.S. forces would need to have full use of the bases available in Vietnam and permission would have to be granted for mounting strikes from Thai bases. If Thailand declared war on North Vietnam, her forces would be overtly engaged and, at that point, COMUSSEASIA would be activated as a subordinate unified commander under CINCPAC. In either case, the large U.S. naval and air forces involved would be controlled by CINCPAC Oplan 99-64.

The command and control arrangements for air strikes against North Vietnam called for CINCPAC to exercise control of air forces through CINCPACAF and 7th Fleet forces through CINCPACFLT. In this way, CINCPAC was able to use the expertise of these staffs and the extensive and efficient communications between Oahu and the many commanders afloat and ashore in the forward area. SAC participation would be coordinated with the forces
of PACAF and PACFLT by CINCPAC. COMUSMACV would control the VNAF/FARMGATE contribution to the strike effort. Since the Commander, 2AD, worked for both COMUSMACV and CINCPACAF, coordination of U.S. and VNAF forces would be done under COMUSMACV's supervision. Some of the Air Force squadrons in RVN and Thailand would be reserved for exclusive use of COMUSMACV/USSEASIA in support of the ground battle. Air strikes conducted by USAF aircraft, however, would be under CINCPACAF control.

The command and control of large U.S. forces in wartime, said CINCPAC, had two essential ingredients. First, there was a joint command headquarters and subordinate commanders each with staffs containing the talent necessary to plan and control the action. Second, there was an extensive and reliable communications system from the Joint Headquarters to Washington and another from Joint Headquarters to the forces in the field. The Joint Headquarters and the subordinate commanders were available in Honolulu, as were the necessary communications.

The COMUSMACV staff, CINCPAC pointed out, was designed to conduct an advisory and assistance program for the counterinsurgency in Vietnam. The Air Force Chief of Staff had expressed apprehension as to the amount of talent available to advise on air operations, particularly since the May reorganization of the MACV staff. Communications facilities in Saigon were not sufficient to control large and widespread U.S. forces, nor were they designed for such a contingency.

The thorny question of command and control took on new proportions following the early February strikes against NVN in reprisal for VC
attacks on Pleiku and Qui Nhon. The commander of the Military Assistance Command felt that he should control the air effort through his Air Force Component Commander, the 2AD commander. However, it was PACAF's opinion that the air effort outside the RVN counterinsurgency area should rightly be controlled by the Air Force commander in the Pacific.

In presenting its case to the USAF Chief of Staff, PACAF argued that the flexibility of air would be diminished if tied to limited geographic areas. Experience in the RVN had shown that a fragmented air effort would not work well either, there being many cases where tactical air was excluded in planning. There was a marked deficiency in air representation on the MACV staff and since COMUSMACV was his own Army Component Commander, that in effect, subordinated the Air Component Commander to the ground component.

PACAF said that the effective application of air power was a complex and sophisticated operation particularly when separate but related operations, different functions (i.e. defense, strike, recce, and airlift), different services and different nations were involved. PACAF had the only communications, TACS, and AC&W system to effectively control the overall air effort. Its airmen had spent their professional careers on the application of air power and, therefore, should have had the experience to provide the most effective results insofar as air matters were concerned. The other services had officers whose major efforts were devoted to other arts of war and who could not be expected to have the same high level of professionalism in air as Air Force officers. Further, PACAF noted that
the sub-unified commander should devote his whole time to the immediate
joint task in his local area and not be designated as the air coordinating
authority.

Even prior to the early February strikes against NVN, the U.S.
Ambassador in Vientiane had agreed in principle with the advantages of
having a 2AD control unit at Udorn, with responsibility for air strikes in
Laos. He wanted to push for this gradually, however, fearing he might lose
whatever ground he had gained if he were placed in what he believed to be
a purely military struggle between commands. Ambassador Sullivan was
interested in moving the RF-101 package to Udorn, particularly if pilots
were not rotational but remained long enough to gain real familiarity with
the terrain. The Commander, 13th Air Force, Maj Gen Sam Maddux, had dis-
cussed these matters with Ambassador Sullivan on 5 February 1965 in concert
with General Moore. Both USAF generals strongly felt that all Laos opera-
tions should be run directly through the 2AD control unit at Udorn. This
would give these operations the advantages of centralized control, shorter
and more direct lines of communication, faster reaction to the needs of the
RLG and the Embassy, on-hand access to the latest intelligence, and im-
mediate use of and response to recce requests. They felt that insertion of
MACV into the chain merely added another echelon, slowing things down and
adding complications.

PACAF also felt that out-of-country strike and recce missions could
be much more effective if they were under the operational control of PACAF
rather than under the sub-unified commander, COMUSMACV. FLAMING DART (strikes
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on NVN) missions were under PACAF operational control while YANKEE TEAM and BARREL ROLL followed original YANKEE TEAM procedures which placed them under MACV control.

Part of the rationale for allowing control of Laos recce and strike missions to rest with COMUSMACV was the fact that a portion of the resources used were based in RVN. However, there was some doubt whether this constituted authority for operational control outside the borders of RVN. It was felt by the AF that MACV's authority should be limited primarily to the in-country war.

With the establishment of the Udorn ASOC as the focal point for the execution and control of missions conducted in Laos and with the move of the RF-101 RTF to Udorn, there was the possibility that control could be passed to PACAF.

PACAF views on the command structure necessary for a more effective footing for prosecuting the war were also directed to delegation of greater latitude to field commanders. The debilitating effect of political restraints imposed on military power, particularly air power, had limited its effectiveness and should be removed. The war should be placed in the hands of the professional military - from the fighting forces in Vietnam, straight through established military command channels to the JCS. Country Team efforts should be subordinate to, and in direct support of the military mission.

It was PACAF's belief that COMUSMACV should concentrate on COIN
operations within the borders of RVN, a task his command was designed to accomplish. Any diversion to external air operations should be eliminated. PACAF noted that CINCSAC had operational control of BOX TOP, BLUE SPRINGS and TROJAN HORSE, recce missions in North Vietnam. PACAF had ROLLING THUNDER, and BLUE TREE, strikes and recce of North Vietnam. Operational control arrangements for these missions did not detract from the COIN effort. While COMUSMACV had YANKEE TEAM, BARREL ROLL, COPPER COIN, and 34 A operations with some justification, CINCPACAF felt that COMUSMACV should be relieved of such control of air resources operating outside RVN.

PACAF said it should exercise operational control of all US Air Force assets in SEA, except SAC elements, making strikes in or out of RVN. An exception would be the operational control exercised by COMUSMACV through his AFCC (Cmdr 2d AD) over A-1E and C-123 air operations in RVN. When A-1E's were involved in out-of-country strikes, they should be under control of PACAF through Cmdr, 2d AD.

There should be a discontinuance of the connotation that there were three separate air operations being conducted in SEA, according to PACAF. These separate operations were the in-country effort, armed recce and interdiction of supply routes in Laos, and air strikes against NVN. These should all be interrelated, PACAF said, with the mutual objective of defeating the communists in Laos and RVN. PACAF had excellent relationships with the Vientiane Embassy in its recce and strike role in Laos and there was no need for COMUSMACV to be a middleman for these operations. Also, the relationship between PACAF (2d AD) and the Navy's Task Force 77
was effective and could be continued without interference from COMUSMACV.

PACAF believed MACV should be reorganized to provide for a three-star air deputy, thus releasing the 2AD to be the pure Air Component Commander. It should be given an Army Component, complete with Commander, to preclude the MACV staff from handling the details of ground operations. The MACV staff should be organized on a joint basis to provide adequate expertise in the operations of each service. The dual function of headquarters and component tends to filter air advice through a ground oriented staff.

MACV should also be responsible only for the RVN. This would, according to PACAF, provide a flexible organization for either future escalation or possible reduction/cessation of out-of-country activities without disturbing the in-country structure. In general, PACAF wanted to share operational control of all air operations in SEA with PACFLT, except where a specific unit was placed under MACV's operational control for in-country operations. The 2d AD commander, acting as COMUSMACV's AFCC, should continue the excellent relations established with the VNAF for in-country operations. While PACAF felt that air operations in SEA should support US political objectives, it did not believe political authorities should operate military forces de facto. US political authorities in SEA should be taken off of the military chain of command.

In the area of delegation of responsibilities, the air commander in SEA should be given broad military objectives and relative priorities instead of specific targets, times, and force composition, which tended to
develop unnatural military boundaries and sanctuaries and to inhibit the accomplishment of basic objectives. The air commanders should have authority and information at his disposal to determine the degree of destruction desired of each target using the entire spectrum from harassment to total destruction. He should also be authorized to employ the most effective weapons associated with the nature and degree of destruction desired and be able to recycle forces as necessary to accomplish this destruction.

In the recce area, the control of the air commander in SEA should include selection of reconnaissance objectives, determination of the frequency and type of coverage (oblique, vertical, low altitude, etc), and scheduling of route and time of flight, when required to support his tactical mission. With respect to reconnaissance accomplished in response to national and theater-level requirements, the following items relating to an objective must remain within the purview of the requestor (1) the objective, (2) frequency of coverage, (3) type of photography, (4) specific readout requirement, (5) objective validation time period, and (6) time of flight (the requestor may require night photo, early morning, or afternoon depending on the objective). Route scheduling would be the responsibility of the operational commander.

The problem of command control in Southeast Asia, particularly regarding the role of the Thai government in US plans, was pointed out by the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand in April with reference to a request by COMUSMACV to COMUSMACHTAI to obtain real estate in Korat for the proposed headquarters of COMUSSEASIA. Some 50 acres were required and COMUSMACHTAI
was asked to obtain written approval from the Thai Government for use of this property by the U.S. The Ambassador disapproved this action, saying that decisions on deployments would come from Washington and any actions taken with the Thai Government would have to be taken by the Embassy on the basis of such decisions. He said that major commands should understand the limits of their responsibilities in tasking subordinate units with requirements related to major deployments which were still in the planning stages. This was particularly true in Thailand where requirements had to be blended into the context of Thai national considerations and where U.S. measures had to be considered in terms of a mutual assessment of the threat. While he had no doubt that the Thai Government would agree to requests, the Ambassador said that all that could be taken for granted in dealing with the Thai Government was that government's desire to be as cooperative as possible.  

In April 65, CINCPAC reviewed the command structure in Southeast Asia for the JCS in view of a COMUSMACV proposal to establish a separate Army Component Command in South Vietnam. CINCPAC said it was essential to view the command structure as a whole and only make changes which contributed to an orderly transition from the existing situation into one of significantly increased magnitude. Current operations in SEA were characterized by an evolving situation in which the insurgency pressures in South Vietnam had to be reversed, while preparing for direct NVN/CHICOM intervention in Laos, Thailand, and South Vietnam. To do this, it was important to hold intact the command structure which allowed a smooth transition into either a unilateral contingency or SEATO plan and, concurrently, ensure
COMUSMACV the freedom of action he needed to meet immediate operations in South Vietnam. As long as combat operations were confined mainly to South Vietnam, there was no need to activate COMUSSEASIA. If a CHICOM/NVN invasion became imminent, then a shift would be necessary to the broad footing in which either COMUSSEASIA (or a comparable SEATO command) would be activated. In the interim, any internal command changes should be tailored to the ultimate command structure.

It was this line of thinking which was responsible for the separation of MACV/MACTHAI into two separate commands which CINCPAC submitted on 22 March. While recognizing the need for an overall coordinated effort in SEA, CINCPAC said it was necessary to consider actions which provided flexibility and strengthened the U.S. position in Thailand without undue emphasis on the implications of a command structure resembling an Oplan 32 IV situation.

CINCPAC said an expanded command and control base was necessary for wider-scale US operations in both Thailand and Laos, but up to a year and a half would be required before an integrated wide-band communications system for all SEA would be established. While thinking about the Thailand structure had been relegated second priority to the needs of COMUSMACV in South Vietnam, CINCPAC felt the time had come to move toward increased efforts in Thailand without dilution of the overriding objective in Vietnam. The Thais were adamantly opposed to having Thai-based US forces commanded from any place but Thailand, according to U.S. Ambassador Martin. If major US ground forces were moved into Thailand, then it would be neces-
sary to move toward an alternative headquarters necessary for progression to a future COMUSSEASIA situation. A separate COMUSMACTHAI, outwardly free of any direct responsibility for US military actions in South Vietnam, would create the atmosphere necessary to build an adequate base of operations. If it was necessary to move to Phase IV of OPLAN 32, General Westmoreland could then assume duties as COMUSSEASIA, with headquarters either in Korat or Saigon. He would exercise operational control over all US forces in mainland SEA. A Deputy COMUSMACV would stay in South Vietnam to carry out appropriate tasks and the full-functioning MACTHAI organization could either merge into the SEASIA structure or assume subordinate command status under COMUSSEASIA.

The main objective of any separation of MACV/MACTHAI was to induce political acceptance for putting US troops into Thailand with the least direct involvement in the current RVN situation. Actual air operations involving US forces based in South Vietnam and Thailand would continue to be controlled by the Commander, 2d Air Division, using operational control lines from either COMUSMACV or CINCPACAF, in accordance with the well tested and workable arrangements currently in use.

If COMUSSEASIA were activated, its commander would exercise control through a Naval Component Commander (CG III MEF), an Air Force Component Commander (Cmdr. 2d AD), and he would serve as his own Army Component Commander. He would exercise this latter responsibility through the Army Corps Commander in Thailand (CG IX Corps) and in Vietnam either through the CG, III Corps or his current deputy, who could become COMUSMACV. The Thais
would probably oppose any establishment of COMUSSEASIA prior to overt aggression, or a clear threat of it, against Thailand, South Vietnam or Laos and would insist on a clear statement of US objectives. They would also reaffirm their demands that such forces be commanded from Thailand.

Establishment of an Army Component Command under COMUSMACV would be a partial retrogression toward the command structure in MACV prior to the consolidation of the MACV/MAAG functions in May 1964. At that time, an organization somewhat similar to the one being proposed by MACV was disbanded. If advisors were under the Army Component Command for administration and under COMUSMACV for operational control, they would inevitably find themselves working for two superiors as was the case under the old MAAG arrangement. Further, the formation of an Army Component Command would remove COMUSMACV one level from direct supervision of the counter-insurgency mission.

CINCPAC, in opposing the establishment of an Army Component Command, also said that an increase in Navy and Air Force personnel on the MACV staff would be advantageous. Personnel adjustments should give joint staff balance to the entire organization, rather than to the J2 and J3 areas alone. Also, CINCPAC proposed early activation of the Army Logistics Command and the phase-out of the Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon.

In summary, CINCPAC wanted changes designed for minimum dislocation to current command lines and smooth transition into any future activation of COMUSSEASIA. The activation of a separate Army Component Command in South Vietnam, said CINCPAC, presented a number of disadvantages which could not
be supported.

In April 65, the Thai Government granted permission to US aircraft on alert in Thailand bases to strike floating or transitory targets in Laos. This permission was given on the understanding that the aircraft would be controlled from the Udorn ASOC where Thai officers were stationed and could be kept informed. The US Ambassador wanted a 24-hour advance notice of strip alerts for F-105's for use against targets in Laos.

Several changes affecting the command and control of air operations in SEA came about during the period May - July 1965. The JCS, in Msg 002159, 142228Z May 1965, established the position of Deputy Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, for Air Operations. The 2d AD commander was assigned this position as an additional duty. General Westmoreland later in the year spelled out the role of General Moore in this position as "(1) providing timely advice and recommendations upon which I may form judgements and make decisions on matters relating to air operations, (2) synchronizing the air activities of forces under my command and insuring coordinating of these activities with the Vietnamese Air Force and United States military commands furnishing air support to MACV, and (3) promoting a high order of esprit, teamwork and efficiency among the air elements of the US services assigned to MACV."

A major reorganization of the Air Force command structure in Southeast Asia was proposed by CINCPACAF following a visit to SEA in June and discussions with General Moore and Maj Gen Sam Maddux, 13th AF commander. The objective of these changes was to provide simple, direct, clear-cut lines of authority which were necessary to prosecute the war effectively.
The best way to do this was to place 2d AD directly under PACAF, according to CINCPACAF. Direct links between 2d AD and Thirteenth AF would be severed and the two commands would each operate directly under PACAF on a parallel and mutually supporting basis.

Under the proposed reorganization, 2d AD would be responsible for all SEATO US unilateral plans and operations in SEA. The 2d would be responsible for a new mainland air defense region. It would have a Task Force (Provisional) at Udorn to carry out all 2d AD responsibilities in Thailand. Thirteenth AF would keep operational responsibility for the Philippines, Taiwan, FEAF (British), Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia/New Zealand. The WestPac - South Air Defense Region would be revised to accommodate the reduced area of responsibility of 13th AF. The 13th would also provide support to 2d AD as directed by CINCPACAF similar to the relationship of 5th AF and 315th AD to 2d AD.

Under the reorganization, a Wing would be established at Korat, Thailand, and the Tactical Groups at Bien Hoa and Da Nang would be upgraded to Wing status. Combat Support Groups would be established on other major bases. In Thailand, it was recommended that a tactical fighter wing headquarters be established at Takhli to supervise the two tactical fighter squadrons, the Recce Task Force, and the Combat Support Group on the base, plus the third fighter squadron scheduled to deploy there. A wing headquarters would also be established at Udorn to supervise the F4C squadron and the combat support group, plus the squadron scheduled for deployment there. A tactical fighter wing at Udorn would supervise the Recce Task
Force, the air defense alert pad, the Water Pump T-28/C-47 operation, the long range SAR (CH-3) and the combat support group. Udorn was also scheduled for an F4C squadron. In addition to the two wings proposed for Bien Hoa and Da Nang, in Vietnam, it was suggested that another Wing might be formed at Tan Son Nhut to supervise the fighter squadron deployed there, the fighter intercept and recce task force detachments and the combat support group.

A Tactical Air Support Group headquarters was proposed for Tan Son Nhut to supervise the extensive air control system throughout RVN, including responsibility for the four tactical air support squadrons which would have some 290 FAC's and ALO's distributed to battalion and province level throughout the country.

The major reorganization was made effective on 8 July 1965. The 2AD was placed directly under PACAF and the bases in Thailand were transferred to 13th Air Force. The Deputy Commander, 2d Air Division, at Udorn, continued to represent the Division Commander for USAF units operating from Thai bases.

The Deputy Commander position at Udorn was created as a single Air Force focal point for all Air Force activity in Thailand, to exercise operational control of all Air Force units in the country. It not only represented the Air Division Commander for air operations originating in Thailand but was responsible for providing close liaison with the U.S. Embassy, Vientiane, for air support in Laos.
The 8 July reorganization included the establishment of the 6234th Tactical Fighter Wing, at Korat, which would have control of all 13th AF combat support units in Thailand, including the one at Don Muang. Under the new arrangement, the 13th AF would have logistical responsibility for Thai operations while the 2AD would have operational control of Thai-based units.

An organization of Deputy Commander 2AD/13AF Thailand was established in November 1965. This was created as a single Air Force focal point for all Air Force activity in Thailand. The Deputy was directed to exercise operational control of all Air Force units in Thailand for Commander 2d Air Division, and exercise support responsibilities for all Air Force units in Thailand for Commander 13th AF. The organization was established at Udorn and is an extension of the function of the previous Deputy Commander 2AD Thailand. The organization will be moved to Korat as soon as adequate facilities and communications are established.

The organization has a Deputy for Operations (9 officers and 3 airmen) and a Deputy for Materiel (5 officers and 7 airmen). A Bangkok Liaison Office is being established, with two officers and one airman, to insure close liaison with COMUSMACTHAI, the Embassy and the Royal Thai Government activities in Bangkok. Headquarters 2d Air Division provides 11 officers and five airmen to this organization and Hq 13th AF provides seven officers and 14 airmen. Both 2d Air Division and 13th AF were, in November, reviewing the Manning requirements. In addition, a TACC with approximately 150 personnel will be established at Korat to exercise
During the November 1965 PACAF Commander's Conference, Thai-based USAF forces were discussed as follows: The forces, controlled by Commander 2AD through his Deputy in Thailand, will be controlled through a TACC at Udorn. The function of this TACC is to:

1. Control air operations originating in Thailand, and
2. Provide close air support in Laos.

It was pointed out that, later, the Udorn TACC responsibilities will be transferred to a Korat TACC, reducing Udorn to functioning as a Direct Air Support Center. Eventually the Korat TACC will control all out-of-country operations. The Thailand AC&W subsystem has been increased from six to ten radars.

The question of the activation of COMUSSEASIA was raised again in late 1965 with PACAF opposed to the idea. General Moore, in a message to PACAF in November, had provided his views on the pros and cons of the activation of COMUSSEASIA. On the plus side, it would streamline the command lines to theater forces, providing, for example, for direct control between the JCS and COMUSSEASIA. It would simplify communications and coordination, both military and State Department; it would provide a properly constituted joint staff as compared to the top-heavy MACV Army staff; it would balance staff positions, giving the USAF an advantage in protection of roles and missions; and it would establish army component commanders parallel with the Air Force Component Commander. General Moore cited the arguments against activation of COMUSSEASIA. If expansion of
the war into additional areas of the Pacific occurred, the existing command arrangements under CINCPAC would be a logical organization. The USAF would still be subordinate to Army/Navy command if COMUSSEASIA were formed. Logistic support would still come from outside SEA but within the CINCPAC area. General Moore proposed, as an alternative, the creation of numbered Air Force with two air divisions, one in SVN and one in Thailand as an Air Force Component Command under MACV and the establishment of an Army Component Command under MACV parallel to the AFCC with the MACV staff revised to provide more AF spaces in key positions.

CINCPACAF in December told the Chief of Staff, USAF, that he considered the activation of COMUSSEASIA to be ill-advised at the time. The proposal to do so did not consider the variety of conflicts in SEA, national sensitivities, and practical limits of command and control. CINCPAC had indicated his desire to continue directing strikes against NVN through his CINCPACAF and CINCPACFLT. The fighting in Laos, as far as the US was concerned, was almost entirely an air effort. Only the war in SVN was being conducted on a joint basis. Although there was a COMUSMACTHAI established, he had no operational responsibility for USAF operations other than the Air Force Advisory Group assigned to JUSMAGTHAI. The US Army responsibility in Thailand was negligible. The Thais had indicated their unwillingness to accept additional ground forces and this situation would not change. Furthermore, there was strong State Department sentiment against any comingling of action in Laos and Thailand with the action in South Vietnam.

The MACV staff, which would assume the COMUSSEASIA responsibility,
was still unbalanced in favor of the Army. In late 1965, the staff consisted of 1418 Army, 201 USAF, 132 USN, and 42 USMC personnel. In addition, the advisory force in the field was made up of 3707 Army, 347 USAF, 524 USN, and 74 USMC advisors.

CINCPACAF felt that, instead of the activation of COMUSSEASIA, a numbered air force be established in SEA with two divisions, one in SVN and one in Thailand. He also wanted establishment of a separate Army Component Command parallel to the AF Component Commander.

II. ORGANIZATION FOR CONDUCT OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM

In 1965, the US role in Vietnam was still considered an advisory one, based on the assumption that the war was a Vietnamese problem which had to be solved by the Vietnamese. The massive US build-up in 1965 and the extension of US military activity beyond the borders of South Vietnam were designed, in large part, to buttress the Vietnamese government and support it in its basic struggle. The lack of a consistent stable government and the existence of an armed and organized Viet Cong, supported by North Vietnam, made the task of pacification an extremely difficult one. The Ky Government, which took power in June 1965, showed signs of providing that essential government stability, but there were also clear indications toward the end of 1965 and early in 1966 that the government was headed for the same pattern of revolt and dissension which toppled other regimes since the November 1963 revolution.

The war in Vietnam was directed by the Saigon Government which
was located within a military geographic area called the Capitol Military District. The area was directly under the control of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff and was commanded by the Vietnamese Marine Brigade commander. Each of the 44 provinces in Vietnam was also a military sector and 42 of these were headed, not by civilian province chiefs, but by military sector commanders who commanded the Regional Forces assigned to their province. Each district in a province was also called a sub-sector, with the District Chief exercising control over Popular Forces assigned to the District. These were located at village and hamlet level.

Located throughout Vietnam, but outside control of the Province Chief, were ten ARVN divisions; two in I Corps, two in II Corps, and three each in III and IV Corps. These were backed-up by the US III Marine Amphibious Force in Da Nang and Chu Lai in I Corps, two brigades of 101st Airborne Division at the 1st Infantry Division, headquartered at Di An in III Corps, the 1st Air Cavalry Division at An Khe in II Corps, the Korean Tiger Division at Qui Nhon, and a reinforced Australian infantry battalion with a New Zealand artillery battery in III Corps. In early 1966, the 25th Infantry Division moved to Cu Chi in III Corps.

The Vietnamese Government conducted its operations under what was called the Rural Construction Plan, labelled the Pacification Plan in 1964 under the Minh and Khanh regimes. This plan called for clearing, securing, and developing enemy-controlled areas of Vietnam. The effort was not applied during 1965 due to government instability and determined VC efforts to destroy the ARVN. The VC offensive in 1965 succeeded in
driving the Vietnamese Army back into district and provincial towns to protect themselves and, consequently, pacification efforts came to a complete standstill. It was this critical situation which led to the dispatch of US and third country back-up forces.

The Vietnamese military effort was directed by the Joint General Staff, headed by Major General Co, who was named the Commissioner General for War. Under him was an Air Force component and a Navy component, but no Army component. The JGS was the Army component. While the regular army components participated in operations throughout their Corps area, the Regional and popular forces under the control of Province and District Chiefs rarely left their home province. Regional Forces were organized into squads and platoons. In addition, there were paramilitary forces, called Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG's) who were civilians recruited, trained and operated by Vietnamese Special Forces. US Army Special Forces worked closely with the CIDG, who were organized into companies and stationed in camps along the border or near VC infiltration routes and corridors. Their mission was to harass and interdict the VC crossing over from Laos, Cambodia and NVN, and to gain intelligence about VC bases so that regular forces could be brought to bear against them. The CIDG forces took heavy punishment in the VC attacks on Special Forces camps during 1965.

As a subordinate unified commander, COMUSMACV had operational control over assigned U.S. units. He passed operational control to the Senior Advisors in I, II, and III Corps. No U.S. forces were based in the IV Corps southern delta region. COMUSMACV also retained operational control over
his service components, the Air Force Component Commander and the Navy Component Commander. Like the Vietnamese JGS, he was his own Army Component Commander. The Commander U.S. Army Vietnam commanded Army elements in Vietnam but did not have operational control. COMUSMACV was both the commander of MACV and of U.S. Army Vietnam in order to keep all Army matters under a single commander. The 2AD (later 7AF) commander was the Air Force Component Commander, also responsible for the Air Force Advisory Group.

The Commander, Task Force 115, was Commander of the Naval Advisory Group in 1965. There was no hope for creation of a combined area headquarters, embracing U.S. Vietnamese, and third-country elements, and control was achieved through coordination with the Joint General Staff, the Australian Army Force Vietnam, the New Zealand Army Force Vietnam and the Republic of Korea Military Assistance Group Vietnam. On several occasions, Vietnamese commanders also agreed to establish temporary combined command posts to direct field operations.

Air support for ground forces continued to be furnished through the Tactical Air Control System. The Tactical Air Control Center, located at Tan Son Nhut, was jointly manned by USAF and VNAF personnel, with air assets provided by the VNAF, USAF, USMC, and off-shore carriers of the 7th Fleet. Direct Air Support Centers were operating at each Corps headquarters, Da Nang in I Corps, Pleiku in II Corps, Bien Hoa in III Corps, and Can Tho in IV Corps. In addition, a Direct Air Support Center (Alpha) was established at Nha Trang to handle air support of US and third-country units. Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP) were provided down the chain of command to battalion level, consisting of Air Liaison Officers, Forward Air Control-
lers, and communications equipment and personnel. Because of the nature of the conflict in Vietnam, four Tactical Air Support Squadrons were formed to provide an airborne forward air controller capability. The O-1 aircraft assigned to these squadrons (30 aircraft authorized per squadron) were based at 37 airfields throughout South Vietnam.

The concept of operations in South Vietnam was, first, to halt the VC offensive and, second, allow the Vietnamese forces to resume their offensive which was halted by political instability and VC growth in strength. The first task involved securing the major military bases, airfields and communications centers, defending major political and population centers, and conducting operations against major VC bases to divert and destroy VC main forces. This was expected to create an optimistic attitude in the Vietnamese mind so that the second objective could be realized. The ultimate hope for success in Vietnam was for the Vietnamese to vigorously pursue the objectives of pacification.

III. AIR SUPPORT FOR III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

Command relations following the landing of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Da Nang were spelled out by CINCPAC on 27 February. MACV would take operational control of the Brigade; its commander would become the Naval Component Commander under MACV. The commander, 2d Air Division, as the Air Force Component Commander would act a coordinating authority for matters pertaining to tactical air support and air traffic control in COMUSMACV area of responsibility.
The Marines would not be placed under command of the RVNAF. However, tactical operations required by the assigned mission would be coordinated with the I Corps Senior Advisor and the RVNAF Corps commander.

CINCPAC could direct fixed-wing aircraft to operational control of CINCPACFLT for retaliatory air strikes against NVN. The fixed-wing squadrons had four basic tasks: (1) assist in air defense, (2) conduct tactical air operations to include close air support and interdiction in support of US/RVNAF forces, (3) participate in SAR operations and (4) conduct aerial recce.

The 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade Headquarters and Battalion Landing Team 3/9 were scheduled to hit the beach at Da Nang airfield on 8 March. Their task was to occupy and defend critical terrain features in order to secure Da Nang Airfield and other U.S.-supported installations. After being firmly established ashore, operational control of the 9th MEB would pass to COMUSMACV at which time the Commanding General, 9th MEB would assume the function of Naval Component Commander under COMUSMACV.

Another Battalion Landing Team (BLT) was scheduled for surface and air movement to join the Brigade, bringing it up to two BLT strength. Initial instructions called for the Marines not to engage in day-to-day actions against the VC.

Also planned, as part of the Marine force, was a composite MAG (Marine Air Group) to include one A-4 squadron and one F-4 squadron, with required support elements.
With the first contingent of Marines from the III Marine Amphibious Force landed at Da Nang on 8 March, U.S. Navy liaison officers were ashore at the beach and at I ASOC headquarters in Da Nang to coordinate air support. Four A-1H's and CAP aircraft were requested for close air support to protect the landing forces. Shortly after the landing of the full Marine Expeditionary Brigade, the commander reported that a balanced air-ground team was needed.

The MEB had to defend the critical terrain features around Da Nang, which consisted mainly of the hill mass west of the field. An enemy force approaching this hill mass would have to do so from the west or southwest, thus being defiladed from artillery originating in the airfield area. What was needed was close air support, the Marine commander said, and until it was available the Da Nang defensive arrangements would be less than optimal. The Hawk missile system suffered limits in both range and altitude in providing air defense of the field and its environs. Fighter aircraft, closely integrated with the Hawk system, were needed. The Marine commander wanted deployment of a Marine F-4 squadron and an A-4 squadron to Da Nang.

It was important that the USAF keep two F-100 squadrons and twelve F-104's at Da Nang, as well as the six F-102's assigned there, according to PACAF. There was the danger, with the Marines planning to send in a full MAW, that the 2AD might be asked to move some of these aircraft.

Because of the potential MIG threat to Da Nang, MACV asked CINCPAC on 13 April to keep the F-104 squadron at Da Nang and delay the deployment
of the A-4's. CINCPAC, however, wanted an A-4 squadron at an early date for close support of the Marines. He asked MACV to take another look at Da Nang to see what could be moved to make room for the A-4 squadron.

Three squadrons of A-4's were to be operating from the temporary runway at Chu Lai by 26 May. The Marines planned to build two parallel, permanent, 10,000-foot runways at Chu Lai, with an estimated BOD of February 1966. Eventually, the Marines planned to have four squadrons at Da Nang and four at Chu Lai.

There was a clear requirement for a minimum of one F-4B squadron in the Da Nang area, CINCPAC told COMUSMACV on 12 June. This was necessary to ensure organic air support for 18,000 Marines in the area. He said that action should be taken, as soon as possible, to relocate all F-100's from Da Nang to Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa and replace them with one F-4B squadron and 28 B-57's.

On 27 June, COMUSMACV submitted to JCS a requirements forecast which included seven USMAC helicopter squadrons, three fighter squadrons and three attack squadrons. The JCS informed MACV on 29 June that the forces were on the way and would be in Vietnam by the end of July. Two A-4 squadrons of MAG-12 had moved into Chu Lai in late May and another was standing by at Cubi Point, Philippines, for deployment when the AM-2 matting runway was completed. PACAF, on 25 June, said it preferred to keep its two fighter squadrons at Da Nang, but was willing to take one squadron of F-4B's, preferably under the control of the Air Force Component Commander through the TACS. However, in late June, the F-100's were moved
from Da Nang to Bien Hoa and the B-57's were moved from Bien Hoa to Da Nang, clearing the way for the marine squadrons.

By October, there were 292 Marine rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft in RVN, averaging 4624 flying hours a month, primarily in support of Marine ground operations. The Marines had agreed to provide the TACS with fixed-wing aircraft support in excess of its own needs and these were being provided daily for employment under the TACS to air tasks other than support for Marine ground forces.

In a conversation with General Victor Krulak, CG, FMFPAC, in November, General Moore raised several points of concern over separate USMC and USAF air operations. He said that the Marines did not provide sorties remaining, after their own needs were filled, and that the number varied considerably from day-to-day, making it difficult to plan. General Krulak, in a later message, said that only about 15 percent of the sorties offered were subsequently scrapped and that these were due to weather, emergencies elsewhere, safety, an aircraft not checking out, or lack of an AF FAC. Referring to a point made by General Moore that Marine bomb loads were light, General Krulak said that the Marines tried to husband their bomb resources, as supplies were not unlimited, and that they did not drop bombs just for the sake of dropping them, citing several other reasons for the lightened bomb load. General Moore also said that the Marines had the habit of going to the ARVN and asking what they wanted hit rather than going through 2d Air Division. General Krulak said he was unable to find justification for this generalization but, since General Walt was advisor to both divisions
in I Corps, it was natural to discuss both escort and landing zone prepar-
ration.

General Krulak said that General Walt was willing to undertake the
total I Corps air support effort. Referring to a statement concerning
lack of cooperation from the Marines, General Krulak said this was possibly
the result of General McCutcheon, the MAW commander, objecting to 2AD
operational control of Marine aircraft for air defense and that this could
not be considered uncooperative. He said that on his visits to Vietnam he
received the converse story from Marine commanders, that the 2AD was in-
transigent and hard to deal with. He said he enjoined his Marines to cooper-
ate in every way they could and, above all, not to allow parochial convictions, however strongly held, to degrade the overall U.S. combatant capabi-

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Repeating to Gen. Krulak's letter, Gen. Moore said he did not in-
tend to enter a debate on the subject and that he had no complaints regard-
ing the Marine air wing. Repeating to a question regarding experience in
overall execution percentage of frag orders, he said, for the period September
through November, 2AD flew 91 percent of total fragged; 9 percent did not
fly for legitimate reasons. Gen. Moore said he recognized that the Marine
air wing was a part of an integrated air ground team and was required to
support Marine troops. Following this doctrine resulted in lack of air

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support for other than Marine forces in I Corps.

In reference to Gen. Krulak's comment that the 2AD was intransigent
and hard to deal with, Gen. Moore said that all other military services,
both U.S. and Vietnamese, had voluntarily praised cooperation received from 2AD. Since Marines were the only ones holding a contrary view, he would concentrate on developing better relations with Marine commanders in the field.

In December 1965, there was Congressional interest in the variations between the USMC technique of close air support and that used by the USAF. Congressman Otis G. Pike, heading the subcommittee on Tactical Air Support of the House Armed Services Committee, in his final report, indicated that the Air Force could learn from the Marine procedures. This was questioned by the Air Force. One particular operation in December - HARVEST MOON - indicated that there were advantages in the Air Force system. (This operation was covered in a separate CHECO study titled "HARVEST MOON".)

The 2d AD, in December, in compliance with directive from Gen. Westmoreland, was preparing justification and operating procedures to place the 1st Marine Air Wing under the operational control of 2AD when it was advised by CINCPACAF that this action was ill-advised at that time. He directed that it be held in abeyance until his visit on 13 Jan 66. This was because of JCS sensitivity to interservice bickering.

At a social gathering in Saigon at which Generals Westmoreland, Wheeler, Johnson, Heintges, Rosson and Meyers were present, a discussion of marine ground operations indicated that command arrangements were not operating satisfactorily. General Westmoreland said that Marine command echelons in Hawaii and Washington were still trying to command Marines,
which was evidenced by unilateral reports being submitted in great detail to respective headquarters. Gen. Johnson said the Marines apparently did not recognize the fact that service components were required to turn forces over to joint commands for employment. General Westmoreland asked General Meyers if the Air Force was required to submit unilateral reports and was told "No".

IV. AIR SUPPORT FOR 1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION

Another area where command and control difficulties arose was in air support for the 1st Air Cavalry Division, which arrived at Qui Nhon on 12 September. Equipped with 443 aircraft, the new airmobile division planned to provide for much of its own air support, both tactical and airlift. The first major test of the 1st Air Cavalry concept of operations came in late October when the division engaged enemy forces in the Ia Drang Valley of Pleiku Province in one of the fiercest engagements of the war. In this operation, the division tried to operate with its integral aircraft as much as possible.

The 1st Air Cav had 18 USAF ALO/FAC personnel assigned, most of whom had been with the organization for more than a year during its formative period. During the Ia Drang Valley engagement (Operation Silver Bayonet), these USAF personnel provided the ALO/FAC services within the division mode of operations. Several lessons were learned during the operation. Originally, the Commander, Field Force, Vietnam, directed that the 1st Cav employ its aircraft for all airlift. During the operations, the
Commander, 1st Air Cav reported that he could not do so and desired USAF to furnish airlift. Air Force strikes drew heavy enthusiasm from 1st Air Cav personnel and, as a result of this experience, COMUSMACV indicated his concern as to whether the 1st Cav, as constituted, had the necessary firepower and combat endurance to meet its requirements in the RVN.

During the first phase of the operation, from 25 October to 10 November, the 1st Cav attempted to maintain its air logistics with organic helicopters and an attached CV-2 company of 18 aircraft. On 25 October, they lifted 513 tons, flying around the clock. This was done at the expense of furnishing adequate lift aircraft to the maneuver battalions and caused their aircraft availability rate to decrease at a rapid rate. On 27 October, the Air Force was requested to furnish an ALOC. When the request was submitted, fuel supplies were down to 7000 gallons with 70,000 gallons being requested daily. The Air Force ALOC delivered 6,500,000 pounds of Class I, III and V from 27 October through 9 November.

The attempt to maintain an Army ALOC caused aircraft availability problems for the Army throughout the operation. In-commission rates for HU-1 helicopters were 50% and lower. During the second phase of the operation, 10 November through 20 November, the HU-1 availability averaged 21 - 28 aircraft daily, with 60 assigned. HC-47 aircraft availability was as low as seven aircraft out of 30 assigned. The average in-commission rate was 35%. During the second and third phase, a daily flying hour restriction was placed on Army air units, based on parts availability and time remaining for periodical inspections. The HC-47's were restricted to moving
artillery units and carrying 105mm howitzer ammunition and fuel.

From 25 October to 24 November, the USAF provided 15% of its total Vietnam airlift capability in support of the 1st Cav. It lifted an average of 192.7 tons per day, hauling 4,555 troops (weighing 200# per trooper), 296.6 tons of ammo, 3151.2 tons of fuel and general cargo weighing 1459.7 tons. All airlift support required through MACV by the 1st Cav was accomplished. From the operation, it was obvious that USAF airlift support would be required for future operations.

During the entire operation, a total of 753 tactical air sorties were flown, 350 of these in a seven-day period. These 350 sorties were in support of only two battalions in the field, equating to 23 sorties per committed battalion per day, a rate far in excess of the overall planning factor of five sorties per day per battalion.

The lessons learned during Silver Bayonet were applicable to other US Army divisions operating in Vietnam and several changes were made in the concept of air support for US Army ground operations.
GLOSSARY

AC&W - Aircraft Control and Warning
AD - Air Division
AFCC - Air Force Component Commander
ALO - Air Liaison Officer
ARVN - Army of the Republic of South Vietnam
ASOC - Air Support Operations Center
BLT - Battalion Landing Team (Marine)
CAP - Combat Air Patrol
CIDG - Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CINCPAC - Commander in Chief, Pacific Area
CINCPACAF - Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces
CINCPACFLT - Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
COIN - Counterinsurgency
COMUSMACV - Military Advisory Chief, South Vietnam
COMUSSEASIA - Commander, U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia
DASC - Direct Air Support Center
DIA - Defense Intelligence Agency
FAC - Forward Air Controller
FMFPAC - Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff
JGS - Joint General Staff (Vietnamese Army Component)

MAAG - Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACTHAI - See COMUSMACV
MACV - See COMUSMACV
MAG - Marine Air Group
MAW - Marine Air Wing
MEB - Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEF - Marine Expeditionary Force

NVN - North Vietnam

PACOM - Pacific Command
PL - Pathet Lao

RLG - Royal Laotian Government
RVN - Republic of South Vietnam (SVN)
RVNAF - South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF)

SAC - Strategic Air Command
SAR - Search and Rescue
SEA - Southeast Asia
SEATO - Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SVN - South Vietnam

TACC - Tactical Air Control Center
TACP - Tactical Air Control Party
TACS - Tactical Air Control System
USMAC - U.S. Marine Air Component

VC - Viet Cong

VNAF - South Vietnamese Air Force (RVNAF)
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