mission required ground alert HH-43 and HH-3/53 helicopters and aircraft, as well as airborne, air refuelable HH-3/53 helicopters. In addition, HC-130Ps were maintained in orbit as a rescue coordination center and a refueling tanker for the airborne helicopters. Rescue Escort (RESCORT) Forces were required to suppress hostile fire in many rescues. This support was provided by the A-1Es, although use of faster and more survivable aircraft was being investigated in late 1969. On occasion, Rescue Combat Air Patrol (RESCAP) was also needed if there were a possible MIG threat during a SAR effort.

The strides made in Search and Rescue since the beginning of the Vietnam conflict have been outstanding. From a limited capability of HH-43 helicopters, HU-16s, and HC-54s, the effort has grown to the operation just described. The force's accomplishments have been impressive also. From 1 December 1964 through 30 September 1969, 2,747 successful rescues were made. While the majority of these saves were downed flyers, Army units, and seriously ill troops, even civilians have been rescued by the 3d ARRG.

The magnitude of some SAR efforts can be illustrated by one that took place in Laos on 5-7 December 1969. In that successful three-day effort to save one airman, a total of 332 sorties were flown, 21 different types of ordnance were used, and 10 helicopters and 5 A-1Es sustained battle damage. There were 1,463 bombs and antipersonnel weapons dispensed, not counting cannon and mini-gun fire.
Two areas of improvement in SAR forces were evident at the end of 1969. First, the need for a replacement helicopter for the HH-43. That light, short-range aircraft had served well in a base level SAR role but was unable to function in any sustained effort because of its short range and limited lifting power. Second, was the need to continue to perfect the night SAR capability. In many cases the AAA threat was lower at night but terrain and visibility made SAR attempts impossible. Consequently, it was standard procedure to discontinue a rescue attempt at last light until first light the following day. In late 1969, a Xenon floodlight, Low-Light-Level Television, and a Direct Viewing Device were being installed on the HH-53B helicopters at Udorn to provide some night SAR capability.
CHAPTER V
VIETNAMIZATION OF AIR WAR AND OUTLOOK

Introduction

After a meeting with President Nguyen Van Thieu on Midway Island in June 1969, President Richard M. Nixon announced that 25,000 American soldiers in RVN were to be redeployed by August. At the end of 1969, the President reiterated to the people of the United States, his determination to scale down American participation in the war. The Paris peace talks had accomplished nothing substantive, while the enemy's ground actions in RVN had sputtered along at an unusually low level for 18 months. The administration did not commit itself to a fixed date for a total withdrawal of U.S. forces but proceeded with an incremental reduction of combat troops. On several occasions, the President and the Secretary of Defense reaffirmed U.S. willingness to continue a combat advisory role to the GVN, but insisted that the combat burden itself must henceforth be borne in a larger measure by the Vietnamese. Vietnamization was the order of the day. The risks were apparent to everyone concerned, but the U.S. Government was clearly willing to assume the risks involved. The Commander, 7AF, placed renewed emphasis on the matter as 1969 ended: "Vietnamization, through enhancement of the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (I&M) Program, is a task equal in priority and importance to the 7AF combat mission."

Specific accomplishments to which the VNAF could point during the period included an intensive training program for helicopter pilots concurrent with the conversion of four of the five helicopter squadrons
to the UH-1. This conversion greatly enhanced the capability of the VNAF to provide air mobility for ground combat troops. Of the three C-47 transport squadrons, one had been converted to C-119s in March 1968 and another had begun its modification to AC-47s in the summer of 1968. In fighter planes as well, the modernization phase progressed, and three fighter squadrons were equipped with A-37s during 1968 and 1969. VNAF involvement in the Tactical Air Control System was constantly and greatly increased, particularly during 1969. By the end of 1969, the conversion from USAF to VNAF in Aircraft Control and Warning (ACW) systems was well under way, with VNAF possessing an operational capability of 70 percent and full self-sufficiency predicted by the end of 1971.

Significant advances were also evident in the amount and level of training. The size of the VNAF doubled during 1969, from approximately 17,500 at the start to about 35,500 at the end of the year.

A major test of the VNAF came during the 1968 Tet offensive when more than half of the VNAF personnel were on leave at the moment the enemy struck. Ninety percent were back on duty within 72 hours and the force flew long and well in support of Allied operations. During the 17-day period of intensive fighting which began on 30 January, the VNAF flew more than 1,300 strike sorties.

At the end of 1969, the major problems for the VNAF lay in the areas of training, the personnel reporting system, aircraft maintenance, and
aircraft availability. The training problem was complicated by the
great number of airmen involved, the precise technical knowledge
required to operate sophisticated aircraft equipment, the need to send
VNAF personnel to the U.S., and the lack of proper facilities. All
problems were compounded by the English language requirement. But the
thrust of the program was toward self-reliance, and the plans were
directed to that goal.

Phase II Accelerated I&M Plan

As early as June 1969, a directive from the Secretary of Defense
envisioned an expanded and self-sufficient ARVN and VNAF by 1974. The
instrument for achieving this goal for the VNAF was known as "The
VNAF Improvement and Modernization Plan," approved by Secretary Clark
McAdams Clifford in December 1968. By early 1969, the timetable was
moved up and the plan was revised into the Phase II Accelerated Plan.
Operating under its guidance, the VNAF doubled in size during 1969,
compressing the original time frame considerably.

Simultaneously, the modernization and upgrading of capability
proceeded in all areas in spite of the problems encountered in training--the most serious of the problem areas. During 1969, major USAF
operations ended at Nha Trang in October. The target date for complete
turnover at Binh Thuy was November 1970. At Pleiku, 7AF units were
already being phased out with the expectation that by late 1970, the
only remaining U.S. flying unit would be a small FAC detachment.
the end of 1970, the plan envisioned that three of the six shared air bases would be returned entirely to the hands of the VNAF. There were similar plans to transfer full control of the four Corps Tactical Zone DASC systems to VNAF at various points during 1970--IV DASC by the end of December.\footnote{17/} Coinciding with these moves was the plan to place major reliance for air base defense on the VNAF.\footnote{18/}

Organizationally, the VNAF plan called for a change from a wing level to a division level structure during 1970. The initial move in this direction was a redesignation and expansion of the 74th VNAF Wing (Binh Thuy) into the 4th Air Division, scheduled for April 1970.\footnote{19/}

Phase III

In December 1969, Seventh Air Force completed a study on how to further augment the VNAF size and capability. Not yet approved as the new year began, this plan envisioned 49 squadrons (as opposed to the Phase II goal of 40) and a VNAF of 1,283 aircraft and 43,700 personnel (as opposed to 930 and 35,000).\footnote{20/}

The proposed VNAF force structure under Phase III, if approved, would have the following aircraft:

Tactical Air Support

(a) FAC/VR (O-1, U-17) 218
(b) Gunships (AC-47, AC-119G) 36

84
Interdiction/Close Air Support
(F-5, A-1, A-37) 258

Reconnaissance
(a) Photo 10
(b) ARDF (U-6) 8

Tactical Mobility
(a) Fixed-Wing (C-47, C-119, C-123, C-7) 128
(b) Rotary Wing (UH-1, CH-47) 528

Psychological Operations (U-17, U-6) 38

Unconventional Warfare 31

Training and Administration (VC-47, UH-1, U-17, T-41) 28

1,283

The Commander, 7AF, predicted that the VNAF capability to support counterinsurgency operations would show a significant increase in the early 1970s.

Risks of Vietnamization

All predictions on the success of the Vietnamization program depended on a number of unknown factors. Most significant of these, of course, was the unpredictable level of enemy operations during the early 1970s. While the Phase II Accelerated Plan was directly geared to an assumed substantial decrease in enemy strength, the Phase III proposal acknowledged the principal risk:

"The subsequent phase down route to reach MAAG strength will affect risk during and after U.S. phase down. At the end of Phase III, VNAF will
have 52% of current combined USAF/VNAF fixed-wing capability. This capability would only be able to maintain current level of activity by increasing sortie rates 93%. Thus the conclusion must be that a higher level of risk in comparison with present security achieved by present forces against high enemy activity levels is inevitable in FY 73 and subsequent years."

Other significant questions raised in the Phase III Plan included progress in pacification programs, risks to the economy of RVN, and decisions regarding levels of U.S. forces—all unknown factors for 7AF planners. The document raised the additional question of management and leadership in the VNAF:

"Perhaps the most crucial risk factor in the long term is the viability of institutions of management. This factor is not amenable to mathematical analysis because in RVN it is largely based on the personality of a leader rather than the institution. The capability of the RVNAF to assume prime responsibility for the war is as yet untested. So far, the U.S. structure has held the developing RVNAF together as it has expanded. As U.S. presence is reduced, the RVNAF structure and institutions will be increasingly challenged by assuming full responsibility for national security."

Examining the risks, the planners recommended flexibility in the application of the phase down. It was necessary to gear the rate of phase down to continuing and realistic assessments of VNAF capabilities. For the first part of the decade, the evaluation of the risks involved in USAF withdrawals appeared acceptable through FY 71.

As 1969 ended, MACV and 7AF planners moved to implement the President's policy of disengagement of U.S. combat forces. The VNAF was
meeting each challenge with good performance. COMUSMACV viewed the toughest and longest training job with Vietnamization as the one faced by the VNAF, but he noted with satisfaction that it was moving forward on schedule.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY

Three significant events shaped the course of the war in Vietnam during 1968 and 1969. The first was the 1968 Tet offensive in which the enemy drew heavily on its resources, only to be seriously hurt and weakened. The second event was the stepped up interdiction campaign against the North Vietnamese LOCs in NVN and Laos. The third event was the introduction late in 1968 of COMUSMACV's pacification campaign which sought with considerable success to eliminate the VC infrastructure from the main population centers. For air operations, each event meant the steady application of pressure on the enemy. The bombing halts in 1968 and the troop withdrawals in 1969 notwithstanding, the enemy was not able to repeat the scale of the 1968 Tet offensive, and subsequent offensives were progressively weaker. In the last half of 1969, a lull was apparent in enemy initiated activity.

The 1968 and 1969 period was a time of development in air tactics and techniques, and a time of innovation, as seen in the single management of air, weekly fragging, aircraft shelters, base defense, and the interdiction campaign. Significant pressure was applied with the creation of specified strike zones, defoliation, night and all-weather bombing, and with the creation of zones free of enemy rockets (rocket belts) around air bases. The increased use of sensors and the application of new weapons further denied surprise and sanctuary to the enemy. It was apparent that air attacks inflicted severe damage on an already
strained enemy, destroyed significant portions of his resources, and made the supply routes dangerous and expensive for him. Strike aircraft, along with reconnaissance, airlift, FACs, and air rescue, all played their part in the efficient and successful employment of USAF/VNAF air resources.

These factors, combined with the cumulative effects of several years of bombing, produced the lowered scale of action. The large enemy losses suffered in Tet 1968, the out-country interdiction campaigns, and the extension of GVN control throughout the countryside provided an increasingly favorable climate in which both U.S. and GVN forces could operate.
FOOTNOTES*

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* All extracts from TOP SECRET documents have a classification no higher than SECRET.

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(This page is UNCLASSIFIED.)
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14. (S) OCREA, Dec 69.

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Airpower has played a critical part in our whole effort in SEA. The enemy has two logistics systems, one in Laos and one in Cambodia. The one in Laos is direct. Supplies are shipped from NVN. With Cambodia, materiel from China, Russia, and Eastern Europe goes to Sihanoukville for offloading and re-transit.

The air effort in Laos during the dry season was to interdict. In 1968, the program was successful. We know this, because when the dry season was over, he didn't have enough supplies in SVN to meet his purposes during the wet season. He, of course, planned for a certain amount of losses, but I think his losses exceeded what he had planned for his operations in upper II Corps and I Corps.

In 1968, the effort was also successful because of a good combination of pressure on the ground--finding the enemy's supply--and making him use it up, and the air interdiction in Laos. In Cambodia, we can't do anything until the materiel enters SVN.

Close Air Support

Basically, what we are doing is trying to run up enemy casualties with our firepower, and the biggest weight of firepower comes from tac air. And we also want to keep our losses down, again by tac air. This
also includes the B-52s which have been tremendous.

Of great importance for every phase of our operation is the integration of all-source intelligence for targeting, both pinpoint targeting and pattern targeting. Over this two-year period, all source targeting has been steadily and dramatically improved. Our goal is "steel on the target" and that takes good targeting. In the AF, this is especially important in the interdiction program.

Also, regarding CAS, you need an integrated all source intelligence on the ground and with it, you must have an integrated all-resource reaction to this intelligence, particularly with air, including tac air, gunships, and B-52s. These must be organized to strike so all of them can be applied and integrated. If so, it will be a terrifying and powerful blow over a short period of time. This, too, has improved significantly.

The air is really a powerful weapon. But to use this power effectively, you need both integrated all-source intelligence and an integrated all-resource reaction.

Fortunately, we've had centralized management of the air effort and this has been important to me personally. While air is powerful, it is also flexible. From this level, power can be moved with ease. For example, our arena includes BARREL ROLL, STEEL TIGER, and South Vietnam. Where the enemy puts the heat on, whether it's the Plain of Jars or
Duc Lap, it's only a matter of hours until tremendous shifts of power can be made. We realize it's not all that effortless on the part of the Air Force. You have to arrange for tankers and that sort of thing, but the whole system is geared to do precisely that, with no long warning to the enemy. It's done right away. The centralized control of the application of power is an important feature and a critical one for efficient use of power.

Airlift

You have the long-range airlift from MAC which is of importance in carrying high value cargo, passengers, medevac, etc. The airlift in-country, not only supplies, but of passengers and shifting of units, is also very important. For example, in late October 1968, on a Saturday evening at 1730 hours, we made the decision to move the 1st Air Cavalry from I Corps to northern III Corps. The move was to start on the following Monday and be done in 15 days. The first units moved were in contact on Monday afternoon in III Corps. This is amazing considering the proposal first came up on Saturday and the 1st Air Cav is a heavy outfit, with a lot of materiel, such as that required to support its 40U helicopters.

The support of the CIDG camps could not be maintained without airlift support. For example, Bu Prang and Dak Pek are almost entirely dependent on air. In those cases of emergency where airlanding is impractical, we are able to airdrop and this is extremely important.
Reconnaissance

We have both photo and VR reconnaissance. We need the photo reconnaissance. In intelligence, every aspect has its part to play, each makes its contribution to the total effort that can't be obtained somewhere else. Photography is critical to targeting, not only regular photo, but IR, color, camouflage, etc.

The FACs deserve a special word. In RVN and SL and BR, there are FACs flying all types of aircraft to match the environment and these are very important. For sensitive areas, such as the borders of Cambodia and Laos, you're not in the ball game unless a FAC is there. He makes sure you're doing what is authorized and not guessing. He takes the guess work out of an operation. They've made a real professional contribution, because they are seasoned professionals. FACs don't get lost.

Defoliation

The defoliation role is declining in importance as we are beginning to move into enemy areas and his logistical structure.

COMMANDO HUNT III

The enemy has been guided somewhat by his 1968 experience. He was in better shape to start this year, despite the very bad weather of last October. All of the North Vietnam logistical structure was in good shape. He had moved his supplies to the border in readiness, had his fuel storage areas ready, and had taken all necessary actions to get started when the roads opened. In 1968, the bombing halt had just gone into
effect and he was not in this position. He didn't have a running start.

Also, he is bringing in SAMs and 100-mm guns to reduce effectiveness of air interdiction. There is also the problem of BARREL ROLL which drew off some of our assets. We believe that the effort in the Plain of Jars is designed to pressure the Laotian Government to stop our interdiction of STEEL TIGER. We can't prove this, but we feel it, and have to act on it.

The enemy was getting more through this year than last year, especially in January and February. The results of air action are higher this year than last year, because the enemy has more trucks in the system and we have more gunships which are great truck killers. Again, the 7AF targeting, based on all-source intelligence, is improved over last year.

**Tet-Khe Sanh**

Tet and Khe Sanh were a high point for the enemy, but not for us. The whole enemy structure—Main Force, Local Force, laborers, intelligence, guides, communications, supplies—all this was at a high point of effectiveness and made it possible for him to commit his forces. However, in terms of manpower, the enemy did not get hurt too badly. But he did lose quality, lose some of his experienced people. In 1968 and 1969, after Tet, we started getting into that whole enemy system with ground and air attacks, working for the attrition of the system. Such things as police activities, small unit actions, ambushes, etc., allowed for a concerted effort against the enemy's system. This caused the subsequent high points
not to be met or to be reduced. Due to the effectiveness of our actions, the enemy logistical/management system was eroded.

**Vietnamization**

The VNAF has made each mark with good performance. The toughest and longest training job we have with Vietnamization is the one VNAF faces. It's a big job but it's on schedule. All the people in the system are moving along. There are some management problems. For example, you can't disregard the flying hour program. VNAF, with its advisors, have planned well, made a good analysis of the quality of its people. They have a basic plan to determine who will be the effective people. This will lessen the impact of the quality decline when it comes.

APPENDIX II
INTERVIEW WITH GEN. GEORGE S. BROWN, COMMANDER, 7AF

Q: What significant changes have taken place in the conduct of the air war in Southeast Asia since your arrival in mid-1968?

A: One primary change was a shift in the weight of effort; in mid-1968, we were flying 70% of our sorties in-country and 30% out-country. Now it's 55% out-country and 45% in-country. This change has only affected the strike sorties. Our allocation of airlift, recon, FAC aircraft has remained essentially unchanged.

The pace of the war in South Vietnam has slowed appreciably. In August 1968, there were four enemy divisions around Saigon—the 1st, 5th, 7th and 9th. General Abrams declared Saigon a "no-risk" area which meant that whatever was needed in this part of III Corps was provided and there were no questions asked. Since that time, the enemy divisions have been chewed up considerably and have been unable to work effectively. In the 1969 Tet offensive, the enemy couldn't get past Tay Ninh. They were pushed back and they suffered great casualties. Now they're up around An Loc and Song Be and back across the borders, although the 1st NVA Division has been moved to IV Corps.

As a result there was a marked difference in the allocation of the sorties provided to the out-country effort. From August to November 1968, we put the effort in Route Package I using everything that could
survive there. We used the slow-mover in STEEL TIGER, plus those aircraft which were diverted from NVN.

In November 1968, when we began COMMANDO HUNT I, we put the effort on the trail although we were under great pressure from Ambassador to Laos, William H. Sullivan, who was calling for more sorties in BARREL ROLL, but he could present us with no real targets to justify the amount requested. They still don't talk in terms of targets there, only round numbers of sorties required. And we get no expression of how those sorties are used and what results they get. Here in South Vietnam, when the Army needs air, they describe the target. Up there, it's a matter of 100 a day or 200 a day. Until the fall of Muong Soi in June 1969, we kept sorties around 35 a day. Then we knew we needed a major effort and went up to 200.

There is a number beyond which you don't gain much with more air effort. That depends on the targets, and whether our strike aircraft can be controlled or not controlled. Most are controlled by FACs and they can handle only so many per hour--more sorties than that number would only be wasted. Just before the enemy hit in January and February 1970, we dropped the sorties to 80-90 a day. We're back again at about 200 around Long Tieng and I think we've turned the tide. Enemy forces have dwindled because of the constant pressure from air. I'm optimistic that we can hold the enemy until the rains come in six or seven weeks, and then he's going to have to fall back.
Another difference in our air effort concerns STEEL TIGER. Most people misunderstand what we're trying to do in STEEL TIGER. We know you can't completely stop the enemy with an interdiction program, but you can make it costly for him by bringing his total system under pressure, including his supplies, trucks, AA defenses, and his troops. Truck counts are not the only measure of how you're doing, nor are secondaries. It's the constant pressure that hurts him. We know he's got problems, though some people talk about 70%-80% trucks in commission rate. We can't even keep 80% of our own trucks going all the time with good roads and no enemy interruption. He's doing a fantastic job, though. Some of his materiel and people will get through no matter what we do. But you need that constant pressure from the air on his infiltration effort and a forced attrition of what he gets through by our ground forces, forcing him to fight or capturing his caches. For example, in I Corps last year, they were capturing something like 13 tons a day. Now it's being stockpiled on the border between Laos and SVN and being brought in by porters and bicycles. I've been talking with the CG, XXIV Corps, about getting out on the ground on this side of the border, especially around A Shau, and getting those caches of supplies that have gotten through. It's a two-ended task.

Q: What impact have air operations (both fixed-wing and rotary wing) had in the conduct of the war?

A: There is nothing done in this war which doesn't touch on the air effort in one way or another.
Q: How badly was the enemy hurt during Khe Sanh and the 1968 Tet offensive by air operations? Is his apparent decreased effectiveness today traceable to heavy losses during and since Tet?

A: Khe Sanh was the beginning of the end for the communists in their military operations in Vietnam. And there is no question that air was responsible for the enemy setback at Khe Sanh. During the Tet offensive, when the enemy got to Saigon and was not able to get the popular uprising he hoped for and the government didn't collapse, the result was an emotional and psychological strengthening of the government as well as a weakening of the enemy. We are seeing the benefits of this today.

Q: To what degree do you consider air attacks a substitute for the major ground search and clear operations conducted in the past?

A: Tactical air and helicopter gunships are no absolute substitute for ground operations. The enemy today stays in his bunkers and he's hard to locate. Even ground units sometimes move so fast that they "go right over" him, that is, they miss him when he's underground. Getting at the enemy requires both an air and ground effort. The Army operations now are reconnaissance operations. If they make contact, they call on air. If it looks like the enemy is definitely there and dug in, they'll move in after the airstrike. The result has been reduction in U.S. casualties which is of great importance. We are often accused of wasting airpower, particularly on suspected enemy locations. A lot of these suspected enemy targets that we're called upon to hit flush the enemy out,
keep him off balance, and let the Army go after him aggressively.

Q: What was the impact of the March and November 1968 bombing halts on the war in the Republic of Vietnam?

A: The March bombing halt was a serious mistake. There are only two big pressures that are felt by the enemy—our strikes against NVN and inflicting casualties on his forces in RVN. We removed one of these pressures when we stopped bombing. It permitted the enemy to step up the war in RVN and in Laos. All we got out of it were the Paris negotiations which are providing the enemy with a propaganda platform. He's in Paris but there is nothing to negotiate. It was a serious mistake and it prolonged the war in RVN, in my opinion.

The November halt had a lesser effect but nevertheless, it did have a direct effect on the war in the south. The terrain in Route Package I was more favorable to an air interdiction program since many of the routes were in the open and could not be bypassed as easily as in Laos. Now, very simply, the enemy has a free ride to the NVN border.

Q: What is your assessment of the role of USAF reconnaissance in support of our objectives in SEA?

A: Photo reconnaissance is, of course, a key to our out-country work and our targeting. It helps us assess enemy activities such as road and pipeline construction, to find his truck parks and storage areas, and
to learn whether we hurt him or not. VR by our FACs is also a very prime consideration in both the in-country and out-country operations. The FACs are the eyes of our operations. They do a valuable job.

Q: What were the reasons, from your point of view, for the preemption of the enemy's August offensive in 1968?

A: The enemy's August 1968 offensive was preempted to a large extent by our interdiction program in Route Package I. He had to withdraw forces from I Corps due to interdiction in Laos and pressure on the ground in RVN.

Q: To what degree is the enemy increasing or decreasing his infiltration effort through Cambodia in relation to interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail?

A: I haven't seen any change in infiltration in STEEL TIGER as a result of events in Cambodia. In recent weeks, the resupply through Cambodia has been shut off. He may have to revert to getting in supplies by sea, using trawlers and ocean-going junks. Back in 1967 or 1968, Gen. William C. Westmoreland told me there was considerable truck movement on Route 110 in the Tri-Border area, probably coming up through Cambodia. We do not see that now nor did we last year.

Q: How do you view the requirement for furnishing air support in BARREL ROLL as compared to interdiction in STEEL TIGER and air support in RVN?
A: Ger. Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., and I agree that requirements for air in the RVN must get first priority because we have U.S. troops fighting here. Second (and first at this time due to reduced enemy activity in RVN) is the STEEL TIGER effort which has a direct impact on the fighting in-country. Third is BARREL ROLL, but we can up the sorties there when required. Of course, operations in all areas tend to ebb and flow with the monsoons.

Q: Do you think the enemy increases pressures in Northern Laos to dilute the air effort in the Republic of Vietnam?

A: Ambassador to Laos, G. McMurtrie Godley, and General Abrams agree that the enemy effort in Northern Laos is directed toward forcing the GOL to have us suspend our air effort in STEEL TIGER. The five-point program presented by the Pathet Lao shows this. Its demand is an end to bombing of the Trail network, however, it was flatly rejected by the GOL.

Q: What is your assessment of the contribution of herbicide operations in RVN?

A: The only people who can determine effectiveness of the herbicide effort are the people on the ground who get the advantage of defoliation, who can see better and move easier. It's a difficult operation to assess when you consider fighter escort. Before we dropped the herbicide effort from 24 to 12 aircraft, it was taking a full fighter squadron a day to provide escort. It's an expensive operation and it won't win the war; it
does make life more difficult for the enemy. I would rather drop bombs than defoliants. It's the same with dropping leaflets. Tactically, the psywar program makes sense. You might get individual enemy soldiers to come over to the government. But to drop millions and millions of leaflets is overdoing it.

Q: How do you view the role of tactical airlift in operations in the Republic of Vietnam?

A: Tactical airlift is critical to everything that goes on in this war. Its value is indicated by the screams we get when we try to reduce it—and we need to cut it back. We already have reduced it since I got here. In September 1968, we had 76 to 80 C-130s flying airlift in-country and now we're down to about 55. This has been due to more efficiency in using our airlift and the fact that there are less troops in-country. Airlift is absolutely essential to the support of the CIDG, to each of the four corps, to the movement of ammo, POL, and people.

Q: Are there any areas where air forces have not been able to handle assigned tasks in SEA?

A: We are still not as effective in putting ordnance on target in weather conditions as we should be. We have improved somewhat with LORAN on the F-4s which gives us a better capability than MSQ, but we have only one squadron. We plan to equip another one. The problem at night is not as serious as during bad weather, particularly because of our gunship
capability. Our gunships are now experimenting with a beacon from which they can offset their firing. It is effective about 200 meters out. We need better flares and there is a SEAOR on it.

Q: What is your assessment of the Vietnamization program in terms of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF)?

A: There is no doubt that we will meet the training schedules, the activation of squadrons, and the equipping schedules of VNAF. With the VNAF and ARVN, there's a problem of leadership. When that is done, we'll have improved the Vietnamese Armed Forces, but their capability will be considerably less than what we have today. So our second task is to trim the internal security problem to a scale that the Vietnamese can handle. In the time we have left, however long that is, we must make pacification work. We must improve territorial security, strengthen the police, find and liquidate the communist infrastructure, and expand political, economic, and social development. We're making some progress. The communist recruiting has fallen extensively. As the Main Forces are being pushed back to the borders and into the jungle, the police and the territorial forces (the RF and PF) can come in to take firmer hold. We want to leave a security situation which the Vietnamese can handle. The CORDS people at MACV believe if elections were held today, the communists could get only four out of the 44 provinces in Vietnam. So time is not on their side. Getting those last provinces won't be easy. But in a secure situation, the VC don't pose any real political threat.
Q: To what extent, if any, has the air war in SEA affected fundamental AF Doctrine?

A: In regards to this war's influencing doctrine, we must be careful that we don't draw lessons from here that are out of context. We must realize that the enemy has no air capability outside of North Vietnam. This gives us some extra freedom to operate, letting us, for example, fly our tankers and ABCCCs with relative ease. This may not be the case in another war. If we had air opposition, the war would be far different in many ways. Actually, our existing doctrine has been strengthened by this war.

Q: How has the Single Manager for Air concept worked out in SEA?

A: The Single Manager concept has been a great success and the man who realizes this most is General Abrams. It is essential when the chips are down, as at Khe Sanh. The Marines are still not fully "with it," but we don't make an issue of it. Specifically, they report that so many sorties are available, when in fact that is about half of what are actually flown. But I have no doubt that when the chips are down, they would participate fully.

Q: How do you assess the accomplishments of the in-country interdiction program?

A: There's been a drop in the in-country interdiction. Our in-country interdiction program on the border of I and II Corps forces the enemy to resort mainly to the use of porters and bicycles.
Q: What is the relative effectiveness of preplanned in-country strikes versus immediates?

A: With the low level of enemy activity today, we aren't doing more with our preplans than keeping the system oiled. The immediates are more important than preplans because they are generally real time situations. Sometimes the Army will call for immediates when they can't get the preplans, so they can carry out some special operation like preparing an LZ. We are under heavy pressure from Washington to cut sorties and ammunition, but this must be done with caution. We would take more casualties if our troops had to go after all suspected enemy locations they now call air in to hit.

Q: What are your views on the command and control set-up in BARREL ROLL?

A: Command and control in the BR is weak. The Ravens are our best FACs, but they don't give a damn about paperwork and reporting and we don't know what's happening with our strikes. Sometimes they're using them on targets remote from the main action where they are needed. The nuts and bolts of command and control are the same in BARREL ROLL as in the rest of the theater. But it's not as tight there. In STEEL TIGER, we know what's there and what is being done, and operations are coordinated and carefully watched. That's not the case in BARREL ROLL.

Q: Has it been possible to provide Gen. Vang Pao with the sorties he believed he needed?
A: We think we're providing enough sorties but Vang Pao doesn't always think so. When I talked with Vang Pao last October, he said, "Americans like KBA. Buddhists no like. American pilots like KBA and we like American pilots." It's a great comfort for them to have radio contact with a pilot overhead and they think the way to get more air is by inflating KBA. We had nothing like the fantastic KBA that was reported last fall. The figures were badly inflated. Sometimes they ask us for 200 sorties a day. We ask them to give us firm targets which they can't always do. And they can't control all the sorties they get. The Ravens can handle only so many. Our most effective sorties are in STEEL TIGER. But right now, we're getting some good results at Long Tieng in support of Vang Pao's troops there. I'm optimistic and I think we'll be able to turn the tide there. The enemy troops are out at the end of a long logistics system. And we're hitting it at both ends.

In-country, our strikes are marginally effective between major battles and campaigns, for example, between a Ben Het and a Dak To. But when these major battles come, air is critically effective.

Our big problem in BR when Vang Pao was driven from the Pdj was weather. We could only work about six hours a day and usually there was haze that reduced visibility. Also, Vang Pao's troops didn't put up enough resistance when the enemy launched his attack this year, so as to force him to concentrate and create usable targets for airstrikes.
SECRET

There has been good rapport between Ambassador Godley and Maj. Gen. Robert L. Petit, Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF, and the Ambassador relied heavily on General Petit in matters of air support in BARREL ROLL.

SOURCE: Gen. G. S. Brown interviewed by Kenneth Sams and Lt Col Richard Kott, 30 Mar 70 (Rev. 2 Apr 70).