Beginning in late December 1965, the relaxation of military pressures by the United States in favor of political efforts continued into the new year and afforded the enemy an unusual opportunity. US military leaders believed, although their first evidence was scanty, that Hanoi was using the period of respite, not to explore the sincerity and significance of the US peace initiative, but to enhance its own military position by repairing bomb damage and by sending troops and supplies southward into RVN at an increased rate. US military authorities sought to assess the impact of the enemy’s actions and fretted at the restrictions placed upon their own operations.1

At the expiration of the Christmas truce the United States had resumed military operations in RVN and Laos but continued its self-imposed pause in bombing NVN. The principal US means for keeping pressure on the North, ROLLING THUNDER, continued in suspension during January as the result of a Presidential decision to explore exhaustively the possibilities of peaceful settlement. In this period the President directed a series of coordinated political actions designed to bring the enemy to the conference table or, at the least, to determine his attitude toward negotiation. Some hope existed that the Soviet Union, or even Communist China, might be persuaded by US forebearance to counsel Hanoi in favor of negotiation.

The Peace Offensive

Despite its modest beginnings, the war in Vietnam had become costly to the United States. During 1965 the cost of the war had risen sharply in dollars and in casualties. By the end of the year it was clear that the continuing and accelerated fighting, especially the bombing in NVN, was also

costing the United States dearly in prestige and good will among neutral nations and even among its allies. Signs that segments of US domestic opinion were hardening against the national policy in Vietnam—demonstrations by activist groups and public statements against the war by prominent Americans—continued to grow. Moreover, closely limited US objectives in Vietnam did not include the destruction of NVN or the overthrow of its government. All of these factors seem to have weighed heavily in the President's decision to take advantage of the natural breaking point in hostilities at Christmas and Tet to initiate an active, and unique, quest for a peaceful solution to the war in Vietnam.

On 28 December President Johnson sent emissaries to key world capitals to present the US case and to spell out the details of the US position and desire for peaceful settlement. Vice President Humphrey visited Far Eastern capitals; Ambassador Harriman went to Warsaw, Belgrade, the Middle East, and Asia; McGeorge Bundy was sent to Ottawa, while Ambassador Goldberg visited the Vatican, Paris, and London. African capitals were covered by Assistant Secretary of State Williams; Ambassador Mann talked to Latin American leaders. At the same time the State Department provided US diplomatic officials throughout the world with a clear statement of the US position on Vietnam, instructing them to use it "in an effective manner." The nations concerned were informed that the United States held to the premise that "external aggressions" had caused and were sustaining the war in Vietnam. US troops sent to Vietnam to repel the aggressors would stay until aggression had ended. The United States had more at stake than Vietnam or Southeast Asia—it had to consider the integrity of its commitment and the importance of that commitment to the peace of the whole world. Reiterating the US desire for peace, the position statement presented fourteen points as a basis for peace negotiations in Vietnam.

These fourteen points, publicly announced on 28 December, were: 1) the United States accepted the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements as an adequate basis for peace; 2) the United States would welcome a conference on Southeast Asia or on any part of Southeast Asia; 3) the United States would welcome "negotiations without pre-conditions" as proposed by the 17 nonaligned nations; 4) the United States would welcome unconditional discussions as proposed by President Johnson; 5) a ceasefire could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions; 6) Hanoi's four points (announced in April 1965) could be discussed along with points that others might wish to propose;
7) the United States wanted no bases in Southeast Asia; 8) the United States did not want a continuing military presence in South Vietnam after peace was assured; 9) the United States supported free elections in South Vietnam; 10) the reunification of Vietnam should be determined by the free decision of the Vietnamese people; 11) the nations of Southeast Asia could be "non-aligned or neutral" if that was their choice; 12) the United States was prepared to contribute $1 billion to a regional development program for Vietnam, including North Vietnam; 13) the Viet Cong would have no difficulty in having their views represented at a conference after hostilities had ceased; 14) the United States "could stop the bombing of North Vietnam as a step toward peace although there has not been the slightest hint or suggestion from the other side as to what they would do if the bombing stopped." 2

Subsequently, in mid-January, Secretary of State Rusk and the Vice President, while in Delhi for the funeral of Mr. Shastri, talked with Soviet Premier Kosygin. Mr. Rusk also visited Saigon and Manila.

While the majority of nations consulted, even some communist nations, including Yugoslavia, reacted favorably to the US peace offensive, the key countries of the communist bloc apparently dismissed it as a propaganda effort. The Soviet Union refused to take any positive action to bring about negotiations, while Communist China, which had not been consulted by US representatives, blasted US actions as a hoax and as a prelude to the expansion of the war.

Although US representatives made direct contact with NVN through diplomatic channels, the contact was fruitless. Hanoi termed the US effort "deceitful" and labelled the suspension of bombing a "trick." North Vietnam restated its four points as a basis for beginning negotiations, and refused to moderate its stand in any respect. Nevertheless the United States persisted in its course through the period of Tet.

Disagreement on US Policy

In 1966 United States policy toward Vietnam was influenced by the strong and differing opinions among the world

2. (C-GP 3) Msg, State Circ 1243 to All Posts, 30 Dec 65, JCS EN 30438.
community of nations and by dissension among the American people. The nature of the war and of US involvement gave rise to strong feelings and to expressions of those feelings within and outside the United States, among political and religious leaders and among the people. The vivid, detailed reporting of all aspects of the struggle by the world press, the on-the-spot coverage by TV, radio, and newsreel movies served to stimulate, catalyze, and deepen the disagreement. The communist bloc took full advantage of the opportunities thus offered to weaken the unity of the American people on prosecution of the war, to exploit the divisive effects on US allies, and to foster a deeper alienation between the United States and the uncommitted "neutral" nations.

The attitudes of other nations of the Free World toward US policy in Vietnam contrasted markedly with those that had been demonstrated during the Korean war. Some nations--Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines--stood openly with the United States and contributed forces to Vietnam. Other US allies who had supported the US-inspired fight against communist aggression in Korea fifteen years earlier could not now bring themselves to support the United States in Vietnam. Great Britain and Canada virtually dissociated themselves from US actions in Vietnam, while another Korean war ally, France, loudly criticized US policies and engaged in obstructive measures. This lack of unity on Vietnam among US allies was of great concern to the President, but more disheartening, and more serious, was the widespread lack of understanding among the American people of the real nature and purpose of the war.

The bombing of NVN, the fierce campaign of annihilation waged against the VC in RVN, the use of napalm, defoliants, and land mines, had been widely and colorfully described in the world press, and had aroused sympathy for the enemy among some Americans as well as in foreign populations. Nurtured by the communist bloc, an image of a United States bullying a tiny nation had gradually been projected. And each further step which the President took to achieve US objectives in Vietnam added cogency to that image. The terror tactics of the VC, their kidnapping, torture, and assassination of GVN officials and civilians, and their oppression of captive populations in the areas under their control, were discounted as US propaganda. Such manifestations were not unexpected in communist and "neutral" countries and to a degree even among some allies. Their appearance, however, among vociferous groups in the United States posed special problems for the Administration.
The problems began to arise in the fall of 1965 as deployment of US forces picked up momentum and the tide of combat began its slow turn against the enemy. In October a group known as the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam demonstrated near many military installations in the United States. In the same month a New York youth burned his draft card publicly, setting off a rash of similar incidents to protest US policy in Vietnam. In November two men set fire to themselves, one in front of the Pentagon, the other before UN headquarters. Other organized groups staged protest marches on the White House. The FBI reported communist influence in some of these groups.3

Early 1966 was marked by an increase in protests by citizens groups of various political or religious affiliation. Antiwar demonstrations were staged in such widely separated cities as New York and Atlanta, and student protest, including more burning of draft cards and refusals to register for the draft, increased. The protest groups could not be lightly dismissed by the President since they often included well-known citizens of good repute and in prominent positions. Sixteen Harvard University professors and 13 scientists, for example, released a public statement in January attacking the US use of defoliants in RVN. The Synagogue Council of America urged the President to refrain from escalating the war and called for negotiations, including NLF representation, through the United Nations. The National Emergency Committee of Clergy Concerned about Vietnam, formed in January, had among its chief members Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Their aim was to make the President aware of "a growing consensus across the country against the war and in support of his peace offensive." Other groups were less impressive, but no less active. The International Committee of Conscience on

Vietnam, also formed in January, was composed of Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant clergy and had been established under auspices of a pacifist organization. This group informed the President that "the horrors that your planes and massive fire power are inflicting on the people of Vietnam are beyond any moral or political justification." In Berkeley, California, the Medical Aid Committee for Vietnam claimed to have collected 1,000 dollars from students at the University of California to buy medical supplies for the VC.4

Nor did the Administration want for critics among respected political leaders and other prominent Americans. Mainly these critics were motivated by concern that the United States was involved, in the catch phrase of the Korean war period, "the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time." They did not share the President's view of the strategic importance of Southeast Asia, the moral significance of pledges by past Presidents to preserve the freedom of RVN or the political wisdom of halting the aggression by force. Apparently, however, they were moved to public opposition by the very real fear that US policy toward Vietnam would cause a full-scale war with Communist China, or even more serious, a war with the Soviet Union. A US Senate group headed by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, long a critic of US Vietnam policy, reported to the President in December that there was no immediate rapid solution to the war and that the "very slim" prospect of a negotiated settlement had, as an alternative, the prospect of continued fighting which might lead to a general war on the Asian mainland.5

Commenting on the military progress of the war the Senate group observed that: 1) the introduction of US forces had blunted but not turned back the VC; 2) despite the US force increases, the overall control of the RVN had not changed much from the beginning of 1965; 3) so long as NVN and its supporters were willing and able to meet increased force by increased force, the US was applying pressure against an "open ended" military situation; and 4) Laos was deeply "though unwillingly" involved in the hostilities. The group pointed out that the war was beginning to lap over into Cambodia, and that Thailand and all of Southeast Asia might

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5. Congressional Quarterly, 14 Jan 66, pp. 52-55.
become a battlefield. The group warned of the danger of Communist China becoming more deeply involved and of NVN becoming more and more dependent upon Chinese support and responsive to Chinese control.5

The legality of US involvement in RVN was challenged by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in late January when they subjected Secretary of State Rusk to almost four hours of questioning on Vietnam. Committee Chairman, Senator J.W. Fulbright, claimed that the United States had no legal basis to be in Vietnam, either under the terms of the Senate Resolution of 10 August 1964 or of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. Secretary of State Rusk stated to the Committee "It is a cause of great concern that the actions of a government over a period of years should surprise anyone when things get difficult. I reject any attempt to cast the United States in the role of gendarme of the universe or to attempt to impose a pax Americana on the whole world."7

Senator Fulbright was a particularly constant foe of Administration policy in Vietnam. He stated that Asian nations considered the war a civil war and not communist aggression. He did not believe that the war warranted escalation or that it involved the vital security of the United States even though it could trigger a world war. He charged publicly that unless the United States was prepared to fight a general war in Asia, it had no alternative but to "seek a general accommodation" with China for the "neutralization" of Southeast Asia. His version of "neutralization" included powerful US bases on the coast of Vietnam. "History . . .", Senator Fulbright said, "suggests that the military solution that seems so promising today is likely to result in disaster tomorrow, whereas the course of accommodation, which always seems so difficult, is the only course with demonstrated promise of being able to bring about a lasting and honorable peace."8

Another perennial dissenter from US policy toward Vietnam was Senator Wayne Morse. He called US policy misguided and alleged the President was losing support. He said that the American people would soon repudiate the war. On 29 January he proposed a resolution to direct the Senate Foreign Relations

6. Ibid.
8. Ibid., pp. 62, 75-76.
Committee to conduct a full "and complete investigation of all aspects of United States policies in Vietnam." In a second resolution he proposed rescinding the 10 August 1964 Joint Congressional Resolution giving the President power to "take all necessary measures" to repel aggression in Southeast Asia. His first resolution was passed, the second defeated. Senator Robert F. Kennedy said in January that if the United States regarded bombing as the answer to the Vietnam war "we are heading straight for disaster." He called for a coalition government in RVN with NLF participation in that government as part of a negotiated settlement.9

Public hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee continued through the first half of February, attended with great publicity. Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler refused to testify at these open hearings on the grounds that their open testimony would be against the public interest. Several Senators objected but President Johnson solved the problem by announcing a conference on Southeast Asia to be held in Honolulu concurrently with the Senate hearings. During the Senate hearings the Administration's policies on Vietnam were brought under sharp attack by such respected and prominent Americans as Lieutenant General James M. Gavin and former Ambassadors George F. Kennan and John K. Galbraith. In testimony before the Committee these men expressed opposition to the US involvement, denigrated the strategic value of Vietnam to the United States, denied that the United States was making useful progress in the war, and expressed fear that continued US support would bring escalation. All seemed to agree that the United States could not with honor disengage, but all wanted the United States to tone down its military efforts and to "bargain" for some sort of compromise settlement with the communists. This dissent was destined to swell in the months that followed and to have a profound effect on the national policy.10

Meanwhile, in Vietnam the war continued. United States military leaders had generally opposed the December cessation of fighting in RVN and the extension into January of the recess on bombing of NVN. Their opposition had been inspired by concern that these suspensions would cut into the military advantage that the United States had gained slowly and at great cost in the last months of 1965. They were particularly concerned that, by exploiting the bombing pause, the enemy would greatly increase his strength in RVN, thus shifting the balance of military strength existing in the South. The combination of forces on the friendly side, RVNAF, US, and FWMAF, exceeded 750,000 men at the beginning of 1966, more than three times the number of communist soldiers in RVN. The RVNAF totalled 571,213, US forces 184,314 and FWMAF forces 22,404. Friendly forces had a combat strength of 193 maneuver battalions along with sizeable artillery forces.\footnote{11. (TS-NOFORN-GP 1) COMUSMACV Command History, 1966, p. 3. The figure of 184,314 differs from strengths reported by COMUSMACV as of 30 Dec 65 as listed in (TS-NOFORN-GP 1) Supplement to NMCC OPSUM 1-66, 3 Jan 66, which shows the following aggregate strengths for US forces in RVN: US Army, 109,611; USMC, 37,916; US Navy, 9,470; USAF, 21,520; Total, 178,821. \footnote{12. (TS-NOFORN-GP 1) Supplement to NMCC OPSUM 1-66, 3 Jan 66.}}

Under his overall command General Westmoreland had established a Corps-like subordinate command, Field Force, Vietnam, with headquarters at Nha Trang. A second such command, II Field Force, Vietnam, was to be activated at Bien Hoa on 15 March. In January, the major US Army maneuver units available to COMUSMACV were the 1st Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division (AM), 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and 173d Airborne Brigade. He had 13-1/3 US Marine Corps battalions in the III MAF. FWMAF forces maneuver battalions comprised 9 ROK and 1 Australian. There were also 22-1/3 US Engineer battalions, 24 field artillery battalions, four air defense artillery battalions and 46 helicopter companies/squadrons available to COMUSMACV. Army forces were deployed widely throughout RVN with major concentrations of troops at An Khe, Bien Hoa, Cam Ranh, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon and Tan Son Nhat. US Marine units, under CG, III MAF, were stationed principally around Da Nang and Chu Lai. United States Air Force units in RVN were concentrated at Bien Hoa, Cam Ranh Bay, Da Nang and Tan Son Nhat. US naval personnel in RVN were mainly located at Chu Lai and Da Nang.\footnote{12. (TS-NOFORN-GP 1) Supplement to NMCC OPSUM 1-66, 3 Jan 66.}
The Enemy Side

Opposing friendly forces was an indeterminate but substantial number of VC/NVA troops. Estimates of enemy strengths and locations had traditionally been inexact and conflicting in the Vietnam war, testifying to the elusive qualities of the enemy, the difficulties posed by terrain and population factors, fluctuating infiltration, and the constant shifting of the battle. At the beginning of 1966, however, COMUSMACV estimated that the enemy strength confronting US/GVN and FWMAF forces in RVN totalled about 230,000 men, including VC main forces units, VC irregulars, and NVA troops. The enemy order of battle developed by COMUSMACV showed 8 confirmed and 2 possible NVA regiments and 13 confirmed VC regiments in RVN, with a possible overall total of as many as 129 battalions.13

The enemy's regular forces were well trained, skillfully led, and well armed. By 1966 the VC/NVA individual infantry weapons were among the world's best. An enemy unit armed with the new family of 7.62mm weapons and the K-50 submachine gun far surpassed in firepower an opposing friendly unit equipped with such semi-automatic weapons as the US M-1 rifle or the M-14 rifle. This new family consisted of a Soviet-designed assault rifle, carbine, and a light machine gun, all firing the same 7.62 cartridge. These were appearing in increasing numbers in RVN. Also in 1965 RVNAF and paramilitary units had lost 16,915 weapons to the enemy. And some weapons, particularly mines and grenades, were manufactured locally with explosives shipped in through Laos and Cambodia or by sea.

13. (TS-NOFORN) DIA Bulletin 28-66, 10 Feb 66. Other estimates of this period credit the VC main force units with 59,500 men, the VC irregular force with 100-120,000 men, and the NVA in RVN with 15,000 men, for a total of 174-194,500 exclusive of the "political cadre" and "support troops." (S-NOFORN) DIA Bulletins 21-66 and 37-66, 1 Feb and 24 Feb 66. Comparable figures are given in (U) "The Vietnam Conflict: The Substance and the Shadow," Report by S. Com on Foreign Relations, 6 Jan 66, 89th Cong, 2nd Sess (1966): Total VC/NVA, 230,000—including 14,000 NVA, 17,000 support troops, 40,000 political cadre, the remainder VC main force and irregular.
The Enemy Reaction

The VC/NVA reaction to increased aggressiveness by US/GVN/FWMA forces had been predictable. Having sustained considerable losses, the enemy continued to avoid action in early 1966 as he had in the last months of 1965. But he continued terrorism, sabotage, propaganda, and small hit-and-run attacks to intimidate the population and avoid losing ground to the GVN. Hanoi proclaimed confidence in ultimate victory in RVN, however, boasting that no matter how large the US buildup or how much modern equipment and weapons were sent into RVN, the VC would defeat the GVN. Backed by Communist China and the Soviet Union, NVN gave no indication of slackening its support of the insurgency; rather it gave the strong impression that it would use all its resources, plus those furnished by other communist powers, to keep the VC in the fight.

Continuing the pattern established in 1965, NVN sent more and more of its own regular forces into RVN as units rather than as cadre to bolster the VC. In spite of the increasing buildup rate of US forces in RVN during 1965, and in spite of the heavy casualties inflicted upon the enemy, the ratio of VC/NVA to friendly forces in RVN had remained about the same. Enemy forces were able to maintain a supply level adequate to their needs. This was attributable to the steady infiltration into RVN. COMUSMACV, basing his estimates on interrogation of prisoners and defectors, as well as on study of captured documents, reported that 13,953 VC and NVA infiltrators had been confirmed as entering RVN during 1965, with a possible 5,165 additional having entered. The majority of these infiltrators had been NVA regulars.

The VC had sufficient manpower resources from which to draw for its own units. COMUSMACV reported in early 1966 that the VC controlled nearly a quarter of the population of the RVN. Able-bodied males under VC control were vulnerable to coercion and induction into the VC when needed.

16. (S-NOFORN) DIA IB, 30-66, 14 Feb 66.
The GVN and Its Problems - January 1966

The military dangers to the RVN continued to be heightened by its political problems. By the beginning of 1966 these problems were not so immediate as at some periods in its past, but they demanded close attention. A degree of stability prevailed, owing mainly to the National Leadership Committee, the military directorate which had been in power since mid-1965. Of its leaders, however, only General Nguyen Thi, CG of the I Corps, enjoyed significant civilian support. Although the GVN was hampered by religious differences, personalities, private interests, and other divisive factors at the turn of the year, consideration was given to some form of elections to form a representative government.

On 15 January, however, Premier Ky noted in a report to the nation that his government was unable to create a "favorable political climate" for such elections.

According to COMUSMACV, the disruptive influence of the two most powerful groups in RVN, the Buddhists and the Catholics, was not being exerted openly but neither were the two groups doing anything constructive to bring about increased political stability. The endemic problems—allegiance of the Montagnards, graft and corruption in the government, and the refusal of local officials to follow direction from the national authorities—had not improved.

Inflation represented one of the more serious problems facing the GVN. The amount of money in circulation in RVN had increased by 75 percent during 1965 and prices had jumped on average of 40 percent. In the six months before January 1966 the cost of living in the city of Hue, a stronghold of the Buddhists, had risen 100 percent. Budget deficits, military spending, and economic dislocation, not to mention the impact of spending by US forces, had originated and continued to aggravate this inflation. Despite the best programs US officials could devise to hold down the inflationary trend, the sources of inflation were strong and increasing.

In spite of the many pessimistic aspects of his country's situation, Premier Ky reported to his people that political stability and national solidarity had been achieved in the face of enemy attack and that the military tide had been turned in their favor. He cited progress in land reform, rural electrification, low-cost housing, health, social welfare, the Chieu Hoi program, and other civil improvements.

Under his initiative, funds had been released for a number of programs aimed at improving economic and social conditions in RVN, particularly in rural areas, and the outlook for the rural construction program seemed particularly good.

Within a week after Ky's speech, military operations in the RVN were again interrupted in observance of Tet, the traditional Vietnamese holiday season.

Tet

On 5 January the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed CINCPAC that Tet would be observed from 210001 to 232400 January 1966 (Saigon Time). During this period the United States and the GVN would conduct no military offensive operations in RVN with the following exceptions: 1) security patrols would be kept up, with ready reaction forces prepared to respond at once to any "VC/PAVN initiative"; 2) friendly forces would keep contact with the enemy unless he was trying to disengage or the operation was "over"; 3) no offensive air operations would be mounted in RVN unless necessary for security of friendly forces; COMUSMACV could authorize air or naval operations in support of ground forces if needed, and ARC LIGHT strikes could be requested in normal fashion; 4) intensive aerial reconnaissance would be conducted; 5) any operations conducted would avoid populated areas if possible.

The intent of the JCS instructions was 1) to put US/ARVN and, where feasible, the RVNAF, in a position to meet any enemy attacks during Tet with full capabilities and 2) to lessen the chances of the enemy exploiting the Tet stand-down to his military advantage. The Joint Chiefs of Staff warned CINCPAC that the enemy might concentrate his attacks on the US or ARVN, avoiding the RVNAF for psychological reasons. In an effort to keep the hands of US commanders as free as possible the Joint Chiefs of Staff included a permissive clause in their instructions. While it was US policy, they said, to fix the blame for any renewal of fighting during Tet on the enemy, "US commanders retain full responsibility for safety of their forces and full authority to act to protect..."

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18. (TS-GP 3) Msg, JCS 9897 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 5 Jan 66.
Prime Minister Ky concurred in the US Tet policy and tacitly agreed that GVN forces would follow the same rules. 20

CINCPAC directed his field commanders to continue, during Tet, all security precautions and patrol activity, including MARKET TIME, and reconnaissance over NVN and the Tonkin Gulf. 21

In the second week of January indications that the Tet stand-down might be prolonged, in an effort to place the onus for resumption of fighting on the VC, aroused JCS opposition. General Wheeler learned at a White House meeting on 10 January that a draft message was being considered to inform Ambassador Lodge that the United States meant to return to "regular military operations as soon after expiration of VC-announced Tet cease-fire period . . . as we can consistent with the importance of establishing that VC initiated hostilities." The aim would be to show that the VC had failed to observe their own announced truce period and to present specific evidence that they had stepped up their activities immediately after Tet, requiring the US/GVN to respond. The draft message would ask the Ambassador to inform Washington as soon as possible if the VC appeared to be keeping the truce after the Tet period had terminated. The renewal of hostilities or the announcement of intention to do so would be delayed until Washington gave its approval. 22

On 21 January General Wheeler informed the Secretary of Defense that the Joint Chiefs of Staff opposed any extension of the truce. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believed, he said, that continuation could cause the United States to slip into a de facto cease-fire in place. An extended truce would give significant advantage to the enemy and would cause unnecessary actions suspended by these instructions." 19

19. Ibid.
20. (TS-GP 3) Msg, Saigon 2381 to State, 4 Jan 66, JCS IN 34221.
21. (TS-GP 3) Msg, CINCPAC to COMUSMACV et al., 060736Z Jan 66, JCS IN 37830. Recce programs over NVN were BLUE TREE, TROJAN HORSE and BLUE SPRINGS--over Tonkin Gulf were SILVER DAWN, BIG EYE and BIG LOOK. See CINCPAC Command History, 1966.
casualties to Free World forces. Experience with the Christmas stand-down had shown that there would be "no demonstrated off-setting gains" from an extension or from the conditions set for resumption of operations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff opposed sending the draft message. If additional guidance had to be given, they insisted that it not modify the instructions which they had sent to CINCPAC on 5 January.23

On 14 January the RVN Joint General Staff issued a Tet ceasefire directive covering the period 201200 to 231200 (Saigon time), a period 24 hours shorter--starting 12 hours later and ending 12 hours earlier--than the ceasefire period announced by the VC. COMUSMACV, following the lead of the GVN, issued similar instructions to his own forces. Concurrently, he reported to CINCPAC the capture of a document revealing VC plans to renew the fighting immediately after their ceasefire ended. General Westmoreland believed that if an effort were made at the end of the Tet ceasefire to prove that the VC had broken the ceasefire, a new approach to the GVN would be necessary. He recommended against such an effort, but stressed that if it were decided to do so, "at least 72 hours" would be needed to get the word out to all of his troops and to coordinate the necessary measures.24

Admiral Sharp notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the GVN Tet announcement, noting that the hours (201200-231200) Saigon time) were at variance with the JCS instructions of 5 January, (210001-232400 Saigon time). He joined COMUSMACV in recommending that military action should be resumed 12 hours before the expiration of the time set by the VC, that there should be no extension of the ceasefire beyond that period already announced, and that if any extension were considered he be notified "well in advance."25

On 19 January, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense and the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff changed the stand-down period for Tet to begin at the time announced by the GVN, 201200, but set the ending at 231800

23. (TS-GP 3) CM-1105-66 to SecDef, 12 Jan 66, JMF 9155.3 (14 Dec 65) sec 1.

TOP SECRET

29-15
(Saigon time), six hours later than the termination hour announced by the GVN.26

The Tet stand-down went into effect as scheduled but the enemy did not keep the peace completely. General Westmoreland reported at the conclusion of the period that the VC had initiated 106 incidents of violence of varying degree. Seventy-seven attacks against US/FWMAF and 29 against the RVNAF had resulted in 13 killed, 26 wounded, and one missing. Fifty-seven VC had been killed. Normal operations resumed on schedule in RVN but the stand-down on the bombing of NVN continued.27

27. (U) Msg, COMUSMACV to OASD(PA), 251029Z Jan 66, JCS IN 69852.