Chapter 34

ARC LIGHT - MARKET TIME - GAME WARDEN
1966

In response to the heightened intensity of ground combat in RVN during 1966, the United States increased the scale of its supporting operations, particularly air support. Operations aimed at cutting down enemy infiltration into RVN continued and new measures were begun.

ARC LIGHT

Opportunities to take advantage of the tremendous firepower of the B-52 arose frequently in 1966. More profitable B-52 targets became available as the enemy reacted to the increased aggressiveness of COMUSMACV's forces by massing more frequently, infiltrating troops at greater rates, and building new supply areas and routes. During the year General Westmoreland relied more and more upon ARC LIGHT bombers for close support, for attacks upon enemy logistics and troop concentrations, and for "spoiling" attacks, particularly along border areas. The problems that had plagued the ARC LIGHT program from its beginning in June 1965--overly centralized control, slow reaction time, and lack of a planning base--were gradually alleviated and a marked improvement in the effectiveness of the B-52 operations occurred.

Decentralization of Control

Because the approving authority for B-52 operations in RVN was retained in Washington, field commanders had complained during 1965 that much of the potential effectiveness of ARC LIGHT was being lost. On 22 January, as a result of their review of ARC LIGHT which the Secretary of Defense had directed on 18 December, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary that the current ARC LIGHT procedures were not sufficiently responsive or flexible. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended to the Secretary that they be granted execution authority for all B-52 strikes in RVN. They proposed to delegate this authority, if granted, to CINCPAC and CINCSAC.
Although the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the White House, would be kept completely informed of B-52 operations being planned, all operational details would be handled by the operational commanders.¹

The Deputy Secretary of Defense granted the authority sought by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 3 March, stipulating, however, that any strike which risked border violation or noncombatant casualties must be submitted for State Department concurrence. On 15 March, the Joint Chiefs of Staff delegated approval authority to CINCPAC and CINCSAC jointly.²

Decreasing Reaction Time

General Westmoreland, on 11 May, suggested the possible use of the mobile radar (MSQ-77) to divert ARC LIGHT planes in flight to lucrative targets of opportunity. He also asked that a force of six B-52s be kept on alert on Guam in order to achieve a reaction time of ten hours from the time a strike was requested until planes were over the target. As a result of his recommendations a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was established on Guam on 1 July, with six planes on continuous alert. All were equipped with MSQ-77 radar systems to allow inflight diversion. Later in the year, steps were taken to reduce the ten-hour reaction time.³

Additional Efforts to Enhance ARC LIGHT

The United States took additional actions during 1966 to improve the reaction time, operational status, and planning for employment of ARC LIGHT forces. The first of these measures was forward basing, which had the advantage of reducing the cost per sortie and the physical strain on pilots, crews, and aircraft. Closely related to forward basing was the matter of establishing monthly sortie rates that would enable sounder planning, more equitable distribution of effort, and more positive logistic support of the ARC LIGHT program.

¹. (TS) JCSM-51-66 to SecDef, 22 Jan 66 (derived from JCS 2343/663-6) JMF 9155.3 (16 Aug 65).
². (TS-GP 3) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 3 Mar 66, Encl to JCS 2343/663-8, 7 Mar 66, JMF 9155.3 (16 Aug 65). (S-GP 3) Msg, JCS 6125 to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 15 Mar 66.
TOP SECRET

Forward Basing

At the beginning of the year the 30 B-52s being used in ARC LIGHT were all based on Andersen AFB, Guam, with the 45 supporting KC-135s flying out of Kadena AFB, Okinawa. Construction to support a total of 70 B-52s on Guam was scheduled for completion in April 1965. In addition, plans had been made for additional modification of Andersen AFB to allow the basing of 70 B-52s by 1 August.4

The J-3 had reported to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower) on 17 December 1965, in connection with efforts being made to raise the support level for ARC LIGHT, that it would be desirable to have an operational capability to move at least 30 B-52s to a base forward of Guam. This would shorten reaction time, lessen tanker support requirements, cut down congestion at Andersen AFB, and provide a contingency and a weather evacuation location. He pointed out that Kadena AFB had a limited B-52 capability and, if modifications were made, would offer the earliest option to provide a forward base. This could not be accomplished, however, until other bases were made ready to accommodate the tankers, possibly in Thailand or Taiwan. The matter was under study by the Air Force. The tentative forward basing plan called for completing the modification of Andersen AFB to accommodate 70 B-52s and moving 30 of the 70 B-52s to Kadena AFB as soon as the KC-135s could be moved, initially, to Thailand.5

General Westmoreland had called in broad terms for possible forward basing of the B-52s in his message to CINCPAC on 11 May. He renewed this request in more specific terms three months later. In so doing he reviewed the accomplishments and potential of the ARC LIGHT program, giving it high marks.

On 12 August General Westmoreland told CINCPAC that the B-52 bombing program gave the ground commander "an unprecedented advantage over the enemy." The VC/NVA feared B-52 strikes more than "anything else." Owing to terrain conditions and the lack of enough friendly troops, the B-52 was often the only weapon which could attack enemy formations building up for offensive operations. He attributed the enemy's failure to launch a "planned monsoon offensive" to the success of his own spoiling attacks, in which the B-52 bombing had played a

4. (TS-GP 4) J3M-1957-65 to ASD (M), 17 Dec 65, J-3 Files.
5. Ibid.

TOP SECRET

34-3
TOP SECRET

major role. Because of the success of ARC LIGHT operations, even under existing handicaps, he was the more anxious to enhance these operations, if possible, by moving the B-52 bases closer to the target areas. "Guam is barely adequate as a base from which to support the war in Vietnam," he noted. "Strike reaction time . . . is much too long, and many valuable targets are lost due to this delay." Although he recognized the political problems involved, said COMUSMACV, he recommended that the United States "press the search" for B-52 bases on Thailand, the Philippines, Okinawa, or Taiwan, and begin planning and negotiations as soon as possible.6

At the same time, General Westmoreland called for an increase in the number of B-52s available in Southeast Asia, for adequate stocks and production of bombs to support a sustained ARC LIGHT program, and for greatly reduced strike reaction times. Admiral Sharp fully supported COMUSMACV and, on the matter of forward basing of the B-52s, told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he favored the establishment of B-52 bases at Kadena AFB or at U Tapao, Thailand as offering the quickest solution.7

On 8 September the Chief of Staff, Air Force, in support of COMUSMACV's recommendations, asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to propose to the Secretary of Defense a reappraisal of the political risks of B-52 operations from Okinawa. He further recommended that the United States seek Thailand's approval for necessary construction at U Tapao and agreement in principle for ARC LIGHT operations from that base.8

On 29 September the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary of Defense that they had considered the possible basing of B-52s in Taiwan, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Thailand. They had compared in each case flying time to targets, construction requirements and costs, and political implications. They had rejected Taiwan and the Philippines because of political reasons and because of the substantial time required for construction of appropriate facilities. They believed that forward basing of B-52s at Kadena, and/or

6. (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV 27891 to CINCPAC, 12 Aug 65, JCS IN 45477.
8. (TS-GP 1) CSAFM-B-40-66 to JCS, 7 Sep 66, Encl to JCS 2343/903, 8 Sep 66, JMF 9155 (12 Aug 66).
U Tapao, would afford "the most timely solution" to the requirement for faster reaction times. They concluded that, in view of the estimated completion date of 1 April 1967 for B-52 facilities at Kadena, the State Department should re-appraise the political implications of operating ARC LIGHT B-52s from Okinawa and KC-135s from Taiwan; and that the United States should take immediate steps to obtain Thai approval for ARC LIGHT operations, with the requisite construction, from U Tapao. The Joint Chiefs of Staff requested that the Secretary of Defense take up these matters with the State Department.9

The Joint Chiefs of Staff received no immediate reply, but the matter of forward basing remained an active issue. During a visit to Andersen AFB in October, the Secretary of Defense directed that a plan be developed to base the maximum possible number of B-52s on Guam, and that a second plan be made for basing 15 B-52s in RVN by mid-February and not later than mid-April 1967.10

On 3 December the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary of Defense that a plan for deploying 70 B-52s to Andersen AFB already existed. They stated further that 70 was the maximum number that should be stationed on Guam because of consideration of safety, rapid launch and recovery requirements, storage areas, and personnel support.11

With regard to basing B-52s in RVN, both CINCPAC and the Secretary of the Air Force, in the course of studying the complex problems that would arise, developed strong objections to such basing. They called attention to the substantial construction effort that would be required, the additional personnel that would be needed and, particularly, the serious matter of maintaining the security of B-52 bases in RVN. Both officials came out strongly in favor of basing B-52s in Thailand as opposed to RVN. On 19 November the Secretary of the Air Force informed the Secretary of Defense that the earlier studies on B-52 basing in Southeast Asia had been reviewed and updated, and that there were compelling reasons for an early decision on the use of U Tapao.12

11. (S-GP 4) JCSM-743-66 to SecDef, 3 Dec 66 (derived from JCS 2343/932-1), JMF 9155 (17 Oct 66).
Nevertheless, a plan was prepared for the deployment of 15 B-52s to Tuy Hoa, RVN. On 8 December the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent this plan to the Secretary of Defense. In an accompanying memorandum, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed him that they did not favor deployment of B-52s to RVN. A study of the many problems associated with deployment of B-52s to RVN reinforced the rationale upon which their earlier recommendations for use of U Tapao has been based. They advised the Secretary that a CINCPAC plan showed that an austere forward basing for 15 B-52s at U Tapao could be prepared in four months, provided funds were made available before the "contractor horizontal construction capability" in Thailand was demobilized in December 1966.13

At almost the same time the Secretary of the Air Force had recommended to the Secretary of Defense early approval of establishment of a 30 B-52 capability at U Tapao, to be achieved in progressive increments starting with three B-52s in January 1967 and reaching full capacity by September 1967.14 Apparently some accord was reached between the State and Defense Departments in the first half of January 1967. On 17 January the Secretary of State instructed the US Ambassador in Thailand to approach the Thai Government to obtain its approval to use U Tapao for ARC LIGHT operations. These operations might begin as early as mid-February with as many as 15 B-52s at U Tapao by mid-April.15

The Sortie Rate

Because of the forward basing problems and shortages of air ordnance that came to light in April 1966, the establishment of ARC LIGHT monthly sortie rates at levels desired by the field commanders could not be accomplished readily. COMUSMACV had forecast in October 1965 that for the first quarter of 1966 he would need 450 ARC LIGHT sorties per month; for the second quarter, 600 sorties per month; and for the last half of the year, 800 sorties per month.16

14. (S-GP 4) Memo SecAF to SecDef, 6 Dec 66, Att to JCS 2353/93-17, JMF 9158 (24 May 66) sec 5.
16. (TS-GP 3) JCSM-667-66 to SecDef, 15 Oct 66 (derived from JCS 2343/897-1) JMF 9155 (1 Sep 66).

TOP SECRET

34-6
The attainment of 450 sorties per month was within the capability of CINCSAC. Raising the rate to 600 sorties for the second quarter could not be accomplished because of the ammunition shortage. On 24 April, in allocating air munitions among using agencies, CINCPAC was able to set aside for ARC LIGHT only sufficient bombs to support a sortie rate of 450 per month through October. In expectation of increased bomb production, he allocated for planning purposes enough ordnance to support 600 sorties per month from November through December. On 6 July the Secretary of Defense approved a sortie rate of 600 per month to become effective on 1 November 1966.17

General Westmoreland continued to insist on the advantages of establishing the ARC LIGHT sortie rate at 800 per month as soon as it was possible to do so. He was supported in this by CINCPAC. On 3 September the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved for planning purposes an 800-per-month sortie rate to begin on 1 January 1967. Because of production slippages in certain bombs, however, it was necessary to hold the rate at 600 per month until 1 February 1967. On 11 November the Secretary of Defense approved for planning purposes a sortie rate of 800 sorties per month effective 1 February 1967. At the end of December the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified CINCPAC that this rate had been finally approved and, at the same time, authorized CINCSAC to deploy forces during January to reach 800 sorties per month not later than 1 February 1967.18

Evaluation of ARC LIGHT

In mid-July 1966 the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, had asked the Joint Staff for an appraisal of ARC LIGHT operations. The Joint Staff reported that since the
beginning of ARC LIGHT in June 1965 through 15 July 1966, 427 ARC LIGHT missions comprising 4,065 sorties had been flown and almost 81,000 tons of bombs had been expended. Assessment of battle damage and strike effectiveness had mainly been based on aerial photo reconnaissance. Reconnaissance and ground follow-up of B-52 missions had been carried out in 58 instances, and these had not furnished conclusive proof of the effectiveness of strikes. Multi-layer jungle canopies limited visual and photographic inspection and ground follow-up operations seldom swept the entire impact area because of insufficient men or tactical requirements.19

In the first year of ARC LIGHT operations 67 interdiction missions had been conducted, and 49 of these had struck at infiltration routes in Laos. Seventy-nine missions had been flown in direct support of ground operations, and 39 of these had some degree of follow-up. Only a few damage assessments had resulted from the ground follow-up, but the success of the ground operations indicated that ARC LIGHT support had been a contributing factor of some importance. Thirty-eight "spoiling" missions had been flown, with a limited number of reports indicating structural damage, secondary explosions, and disruption of the enemy's planned attacks. In the fourth category of mission, harassment and disruption, there were 243 strikes. Damage assessments reported the destruction of, among other things, fortifications, tunnels, structures, ammunition dumps, and storage. The number of comprehensive strike assessments was limited, owing to targets being remote and isolated.

The Joint Staff found that, although the total effects of the B-52 bombings could not be fully assessed, there had been significant psychological results. The bombings had helped to lower VC morale, increased VC desertion and defection, forced some changes in VC tactics, and disrupted to some extent the VC economy. US ground commanders whose operations had benefited from ARC LIGHT strikes had expressed recognition of a valuable contribution to the total military effort by the B-52 strikes.

COMUSMACV's insistence on the need for an 800-sortie rate had impelled the Deputy Secretary of Defense to ask the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an evaluation of nearly every aspect of the entire program since its inception. He was concerned over the high costs of ARC LIGHT, especially at the 800-sortie level, and the lack of data on the actual "sortie effectiveness" of the bombings. He noted that at the 800-sortie level the ordnance costs alone would be almost $500 million for CY 1967. Including other incremental costs, the total figure could reach $650-780 million per year.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Secretary of Defense in a memorandum on 15 October that the performance of the B-52 force had been "outstanding." By 30 September 1966 ARC LIGHT planes had flown 597 missions (5,181 sorties) against targets in SE Asia and had dropped 101,235 tons of bombs. The average number of sorties per mission had been 8.7. The force had responded to every approved mission and, of 5,266 sorties scheduled, 5,181 had arrived over target. Ninety-seven and six-tenths percent of the bombs scheduled had been released over the designated targets.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized the valuable, and unique, capability which ARC LIGHT provided. B-52s could attack the enemy regardless of time of day, weather, or location of the enemy, covering a large area in a short time with a heavy concentration of destructive firepower. The threat of B-52 strikes had deterred enemy concentrations and wrought havoc with the morale of his forces. It had proven itself in the past and would do so again, particularly if the forward basing of B-52s were put into effect.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff noted specifically that "B-52 bombing provides a military capability in Southeast Asia which cannot feasibly be provided by any other available weapon system and which is required by the operational commander in support of combat operations."

20. (S) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 1 Sep 66, Att to JCS 2343/897, 6 Sep 66, JMF 9155 (1 Sep 66).
21. (TS-GP 3) JCSS-667-86 to SecDef, 15 Oct 66 (derived from JCS 2343/897-1), JMF 9155 (1 Sep 66).
22. Ibid.

TOP SECRET
34-9
By the end of the year, when ARC LIGHT was suspended as a result of the Christmas and New Year's holiday truces, a total of 5,217 ARC LIGHT sorties had been flown; several hundred of these had been directed against targets in Laos, the DMZ, and NVN.  

MARKET TIME operations continued throughout 1966. As in 1965, these operations consisted of US Navy and VNN patrols and surveillance of RVN coastal waters to interdict the waterborne infiltration of men and material. MARKET TIME operations were conducted in the same manner and under the same rules of engagement as in 1965. In February 1966, eight additional Swifts (Patrol Craft, Fast-PCP) arrived and began operations, bringing the in-country total to 20. By the end of July this number had grown to 70, and at the year's end, the full programmed force of 84 Swifts was on station. As US MARKET TIME forces gradually increased during the year, there was an almost proportionate decline in participation by the VNN Coastal and Sea Forces.  

MARKET TIME operations in 1966 searched or contacted thousands of small junks, sampans, and other watercraft. In the course of these operations, 60 junks and 22 sampans were destroyed with 129 enemy killed and 54 captured. The effectiveness of MARKET TIME may be measured by the decline of sea infiltration after the commencement of the operations. In mid-1965, sea infiltration accounted for an estimated 70 percent of the total infiltration into RVN, but by August 1966, this figure had declined to 10 percent.  

In addition to preventing innumerable small-scale infiltration attempts, MARKET TIME foiled two large-scale infiltration efforts in 1966. On 10 May, the USCG Cutter POINT GREY sighted an unidentified trawler (steel-hulled) off the southeast tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula. The trawler refused to identify itself, eventually went aground, and was abandoned by its crew. When POINT GREY personnel attempted to board the
TOP SECRET

trawler, they were repulsed by heavy ground fire from the beach. The POINT GREY called in air and naval support to shell the beach. The trawler was also fired upon and it broke in two as the result of a violent secondary explosion. Subsequent salvage operations recovered weapons, ammunition, and electronic material of Soviet and Chinese Communist manufacture.26

A similar incident occurred on 19 June 1966 when the USCG Cutter POINT LEAGUE contacted another steel-hulled trawler off the mouth of the Co Chien River. The trawler refused to stop or identify itself, and returned heavy fire when challenged by the POINT LEAGUE. With USN and VNN air and naval support, the trawler was boarded and captured. Six crewmen were killed and two captured. Cargo taken from the trawler included ammunition, mortars, automatic weapons, recoilless rifles, rocket launchers, machine guns and side arms.27

GAME WARDEN

Although US ground forces carried out no combat operations in the Mekong Delta in 1966, US Navy forces did engage in operations against the VC along the waterways which laced the Delta. Other operations by these naval forces were carried out along the river channel approaches by which all shipping reached Saigon, the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ).

During 1966 the GVN began large-scale operations to pacify VC-controlled areas in the Delta. Effective control of the rivers and waterways in this region was of paramount importance to the success of these operations. A concept for maintaining such control had been developed by COMUSMACV and CHNAVGP in early August 1965. This concept called for US Navy boat patrols and inshore surveillance to enforce curfews and prevent VC infiltration, movement, and supply along the Delta estuary coast and across the major rivers of the Delta and the RSSZ. On 18 December 1965 CTF 116, GAME WARDEN, was established to carry out this concept.28

TOP SECRET

During early 1966 the enemy increased his efforts to block the channel to Saigon by mining and by harassing the passing river traffic with mortar and gun fire. GVN counter-action, despite US support, was ineffective. In April two ten-boat sections of the GAME WARDEN force became operational, one section deploying to the area of Nha Be and the other to Vung Tau for patrols in the RSSZ. These River Patrol Boats (PBRs) were constructed of fiberglass, armored lightly at vulnerable points, and capable of 37 knots with water-jet propulsion. They were manned by US crews and carried twin .50-caliber machine guns fore and aft. Their operations included patrols, ambushes and combined operations in the RSSZ. Working in conjunction with armed helicopters flying in from shore bases or off a specially configured LST, the PBRs proved highly effective.

On 27 June the GVN submitted to the US Ambassador a formal request for US technical, material, and operational assistance in halting VC actions on the waterways of RVN. This note, forwarded to Washington on 1 July, constituted the legal basis and authority for US assistance in control of RVN waterways.29

By mid-September 1966 GAME WARDEN had 95 PBRs operating in the major rivers of the Mekong Delta, along with six armed helicopters. In addition, 12 minesweepers (MSBs) were carrying out operations in the river approaches to Saigon, and a SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) team detachment was conducting surveillance and raids in the Delta. By this time, GAME WARDEN operations had accounted for 50 VC killed and 23 captured; nine VC boats had been destroyed and 13 damaged. Also large quantities of enemy foodstuffs had been seized or destroyed and many VC documents captured.30

Because GAME WARDEN forces had been operating without specific rules of engagement, the Joint Chiefs of Staff requested CINCPAC to submit such rules. On 18 July CINCPAC forwarded proposed rules of engagement that had been concurred in by the US Ambassador. He also included operational guidance

30. Ibid.
for GAME WARDEN. The Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded proposed rules of engagement and operational guidance based on CINCPAC's recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on 17 August, asking for his approval. On 24 August, the Department of Defense sought State Department concurrence. This was not received until late October, and it was not until 8 November that the Secretary of Defense approved the final rules of engagement and operational guidance for GAME WARDEN.31

The rules of engagement for GAME WARDEN were based on the Rules of Engagement for Southeast Asia issued in April 1965. Slight modifications to meet the particular requirements of GAME WARDEN had been introduced. When GAME WARDEN forces operated in the MARKET TIME areas, they would observe the MARKET TIME rules. When operating near the Cambodian border, GAME WARDEN forces were not authorized immediate pursuit but could defend themselves from attackers located inside Cambodia. The operational guidance for GAME WARDEN directed that to the maximum extent feasible US vessels engaged in GAME WARDEN operations would have aboard GVN representatives who would be very conspicuous to all observers and would, if present, lead boarding parties. GVN representatives would recommend actions to be taken, i.e., detention or release of vessels, but the final decision would be the responsibility of the US commander. The Joint Chiefs of Staff sent these approved rules of engagement and the operational instructions to CINCPAC on 16 December.32

By this time GAME WARDEN had been underway almost a year and had contributed to the Revolutionary Development Program in the IV CTZ. Merchants and farmers in the area could move about much more freely and safely and VC tax collection and terrorist activities had been reduced. GAME WARDEN forces now included 120 patrol boats, 2 patrol air cushion vehicles, 11 MSBs, 8 helicopters and support craft.

31. (S-GP 3) JCSM-517-66 to SecDef, 17 Aug 66 (derived from JCS 2343/374); (S-GP 3) Ltr, ASD(A) to DepASecState for FE Affairs, 24 Aug 66, Att to JCS 2343/374-1, 6 Oct 66; (U) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 15 Oct 66, Att to JCS 2343/374-2, 31 Oct 66; (TS-GP 3) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 8 Nov 66, Att to JCS 2343/374-3, 10 Nov 66; JMF 9155.3 (16 Apr 66).

32. (S-GP 3) Msg, JCS 1627 to CINCPAC, 16 Dec 66. (C-GP 4) Msg, JCS 1629 to CINCPAC, 16 Dec 66.
TOP SECRET

Enemy killed by GAME WARDEN forces totaled 239 (body count) plus over 200 more possible. Enemy boats in the number of 352 had been destroyed, 75 damaged, and 37 captured. Friendly casualties included 8 killed, 80 wounded, and 3 missing in action. One MSB had been sunk by a VC mine and four helicopters lost to enemy action or accident.33

Naval Component Command for COMUSMACV

With the growth of MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN operations, there was a need for more efficient US Navy command arrangements in RVN. Until early 1966, the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force (CG III MAF), under the operational control of COMUSMACV, served as the naval component commander for MACV in addition to his responsibilities as a tactical commander and as the senior US advisor to CG, I CTZ (ARVN). At the same time, under COMUSMACV, there was the Chief, US Naval Advisory Group (CHNAVGP). He served as COMUSMACV's principal Navy advisor, but did not have a formal link to the naval component commander or to CINCPACFLT. He was responsible, however, for the Naval Advisory Group, MARKET TIME (TF 115), and GAME WARDEN (TF 116) activities.34

To provide a more responsive command organization, COMUSMACV and CINCPAC proposed in January 1966 the following changes in command arrangements for the MACV Naval Component Command: 1) that a major Navy command with assigned units be established in RVN, assigned to CINCPACFLT, but under the operational control of COMUSMACV; 2) that this command be titled US Naval Forces, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (NAVFORV), with headquarters in Saigon, commanded by a flag officer, and staffed to discharge naval component command functions; 3) that COMNAVFORV be designated the MACV naval component commander and perform all appropriate functions, including the exercise of operational control of TF 115 and TF 116; 4) that III MAF, with assigned units, be designated a separate uni-Service command directly subordinate to COMUSMACV, though continuing under CG FMFPAC in the Service chain of command.35

34. (S-GP 3) JCS 2343/767, 10 Feb 66, JMF 9155.3 (13 Jan 66).
35. (S-GP 4) Msg, COMUSMACV 1175 to CINCPAC, 13 Jan 66, JCS IN 48923; (C-GP 3) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 251120Z Jan 66, JCS IN 69133; same file.

TOP SECRET

34-14
The Joint Chiefs of Staff accepted the COMUSMACV/CINCPAC proposals, and with Secretary of Defense approval, they directed the Chief of Naval Operations and CINCPAC on 14 February to implement the changes in command arrangements. On 1 April 1966, Rear Admiral N.G. Ward assumed command of NAVFORV.36