

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION
7 December 1971

REFER TO OSD

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL HAIG

FROM: ADMIRAL WELANDER *low*

SUBJECT: Level of US Activity in SEAsia

At the height of the press outcry over the "Cornell Report", the Chairman tasked the Joint Staff to come up with the facts to set the record straight.

The attached, which has been provided Secretary Laird, clearly depicts the downtrend in US activity and the extent to which the RVN has assumed the burden of their own defense. With regard to bomb tonnages, which figured so prominently in the "Cornell Report" allegations, the statistics reveal they too have decreased significantly.

While the "Cornell Report" seems to have slid from public view, the data in the attached may be useful for other purposes. I would assume that much of it could be declassified depending upon the context in which it is used.

OSD REVIEWED 28-Nov-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

Copy to:
Colonel Kennedy
John Negroponte

JCS REVIEWED 28-Sep-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

DOS REVIEWED 13 APR 2011 NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

PART I.
US ACTIVITY REDUCTION

Total US actual strengths in the RVN have been reduced by 361,050 from a May 69 peak of 543,482 to a 25 Nov 71 figure of 182,432.

Percent reduction in total strength from 30 Apr 69 to 25 Nov 71 is 66.

Service reductions (in authorized spaces):

- The US Army from a Jul 69 peak of 368,064 has been reduced 226,833 spaces (62%) to a projected 30 Nov 71 authorization of 141,231.

- The US Air Force from a Jul 69 peak of 61,621 has been reduced 28,458 spaces (46%) to a projected 30 Nov 71 authorization of 33,163.

- The US Navy from a Jul 69 peak of 37,454, has been reduced 28,376 spaces (76%) to a projected 30 Nov 71 authorization of 9,078.

- The US Marine Corps from a Jul 69 peak of 83,361, has been reduced 82,833 spaces (98%) to a projected 30 Nov 71 authorization of 528.

Tactical Air

- In SEAsia, US flown attack sorties have been reduced about 84% from about 35,000 in Aug 68 to about 5,600 in Oct 71.

- In the RVN, US flown attack sorties have been reduced about 95% from about 19,000 in Aug 68 to about 870 in Oct 71.

B-52 Activity

- In SEAsia, B-52 sorties have been reduced about 45% from 1,850 in May 68 to about 1,000 in Oct 71.

- In the RVN, B-52 sorties have been reduced about 90% from about 1,740 in Aug 68 to 186 in Oct 71.

Tactical Air Units

- US tactical fighter and attack squadrons in the RVN on 1 Jul 69 numbered 33 compared to a projected 4 on 30 Nov 71, an 88% reduction.
- US fixed wing attack aircraft in SEAsia in Aug 69, numbered 1,050. There were less than 400 in Sep 71, a 62% reduction.

MARKET TIME activities

- US Navy manned MARKET TIME stations have been reduced by 45 (about 87%) from 52 in Sep 68 to 7 in Sep 71.
- US Navy ships on patrol have, over the same period, been decreased about 92%.

Helicopters

- The number of US helicopter units has been reduced by about 40% from 100 in Jul 69 to 61 projected for 30 Nov 71. Total helicopters have been reduced from 3,542 to 2,370 (33% reduction).

Ground Combat Units

- US maneuver battalions have been reduced 83% from the Jul 69 high of 112 to 19 projected for 30 Nov 71.

US field artillery battalions have been reduced about 85% from 77 in Jul 69 to a projected 12 by 30 Nov 71.

US Combat Deaths

- From a high of 1216.0 per month in 1968, US combat deaths have been reduced for Aug, Sep and Oct 71 to a monthly average of 58, about a 95% reduction.

US Navy Reduction

- Since Jan 69, ship/craft deployments decreased from 600 to 18 in Jul 71 or 97% reduction.
- Naval gunfire declined by about 75% (Jun 69 to Sep 71).
- USN River Patrol Operations terminated by Dec 1970.
- USN River Assault Operations terminated by Apr 71.

- USN Minesweeping and Harbor Defense terminated in Dec 70.

- EOD terminated in May of 71.

US Ground Combat

- Turning over to the RVN the offensive ground combat responsibility against VC/NVA forces, is complete. American ground combat forces will remain in a security role to protect US forces.

MSTS Sealift and MAC Airlift

- Total Cargo manifested from CONUS to RVN reached a high in Aug 68 of 499,500 short tons. Most recent figures indicate a reduction of shipping by 80%. Only 98 short tons, were manifested in Jul 71.

4
TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

PART II.

RVNAF ASSUMPTIONS*

Total RVNAF strength has grown from 646.9 thousand in January 68 to 1052.4 thousand in August 71, a 62.7% increase.

Service increases

- ARVN (including RF/PF) strength has increased 30.7% from 1217.3 in January 69 to 1590.9 thousand in August 71.
- VNAF strength has increased 193.1% from 16,200 in January 68 to 47,479 in August 71.
- VNN strength has increased 161.7% from 16,400 in January 68 to 42,918 in September 71.
- The VNMCC has increased 80.0% from 7,600 in January 68 to 13,679 in September 71.

Tactical air

- In SEAsia, VNAF flown attack sorties have increased 80% from about 2,000 in January 69 to about 3,600 in September 71.
- In the RVN, VNAF flown attack sorties have increased 70% from about 2,000 in January 69 to 3,380 in September 71.

Tactical air units

- VNAF tactical fighter and attack squadrons in the RVN on 1 July 69 numbered 8, compared to 11 on 31 October 71 or a 37% increase.
- VNAF fixed wing attack aircraft in the RVN numbered 140 in July 69. This number increased to 240 by 1 October 71, an increase of 70%.

*Indicators are addressed in the same order as in Part I.

5

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

MARKET TIME activities

- MARKET TIME Stations - since mid-68, VNN has assumed 51 new stations for a total of 61. VNN now mans 90% of the stations as compared to 16% in mid-68.

- During the same period, the average number of VNN ships on patrol increased from 18 to 52, an increase of nearly 200%.

Helicopters

- The number of VNAF helicopter squadrons increased from 5 in July 69 to 14 on 31 October 71, a 180% increase.

- The number of VNAF helicopters increased from 115 to 461 between July 69 and September 71, an increase of 300%.

Ground combat units

- RVNAF maneuver battalions have increased 6% from a 1 July 69 level of 178 to the November 71 level of 189.

- RVNAF field artillery battalions have increased 23% from a July 69 level of 47 to a current level of 58.

RVNAF combat deaths

- RVNAF combat deaths in SEAsia have decreased from 2,027 per month (monthly average) in 1968 to 1,890 monthly average in 1971; although, RVNAF is sustaining most of the Allied combat deaths.

VNN activity

- Since beginning 69 VNN Major Operating Forces ships/craft have increased from a total of 550 to 1,125, an increase of over 100%.

Ground combat

- The RVNAF have assumed responsibility for offensive ground combat in the RVN and adjacent areas.

Expenditure of Air Munitions

- Peak year was 1968-1,437,370 tons
- Trend has been down each year since

1969 - 1,387,259

1970 - 977,446

1971 - 800,000 (Projected on 1st 9 mo CY71)

- 1970 expenditures were 32% lower than those in 1968.
- It appears that 1971 expenditures will be at least 40% lower than 1968.