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lessons learned from the evacuation of Phnom Penh. Operation FREQUENT WIND was conceived to replace Operation TALON VISE, the original Seventh Air Force Operations Plan. Of the four options provided under FREQUENT WIND, Option IV, the most difficult and dangerous, involved Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service forces. Option IV called for the evacuation of non-combatants from Saigon by helicopters of the United States Marine Corps and Air Force operating from the decks of Navy aircraft carriers in the South China Sea. The 3 ARRG personnel worked closely with the planning agencies of the United States Support Activities Group, Seventh Air Force (USSAG/7AF) to provide the best possible support and insure that rescue forces would be used to their optimum capabilities. They also joined with the 56th Special Operations Wing (56 SOW) to prepare a contingency plan to be implemented when Option IV was executed. Although the time frame involved was extremely short, the high state of competence and readiness attained during Operation EAGLE PULL served well to quickly attain this goal.

PREPARATION

As the imminence of FREQUENT WIND drew closer, aircraft, aircrews, and support personnel were identified and placed in a high state of readiness. Close coordination with the overall mission commander, the 56 SOW Director of Operations, allowed these personnel to be constantly aware of the ever changing situation in and around Saigon and Tan Son Nhut Airport. As the seriousness of the situation increased, aircrews and personnel were placed on six hour alert. Daily briefings were provided to update intelligence, weather, and mission requirements.

DEPLOYMENT

On 18 April 1975, the aircrews of the 21st Special Operations Squadron (21 SOS) and the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (40 ARRS) were directed to prepare to deploy to the USS Midway. On 19 April 1975, 3 ARRG personnel of the advanced echelon deployed to U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Base to make preparation for the final deployment to the aircraft carrier, on station off the coast of South Vietnam. Later on the 19th, seven HH-53C helicopters of the 40 ARRS, call sign JOLLY GREEN, and eight CH-53C helicopters of the 21 SOS, call sign KNIFE, arrived at U-Tapao from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base. All aircraft were immediately inspected, refueled, and prepared for final deployment. Maintenance personnel and supplies deployed with the helicopters.

On the morning of 20 April 1975, seven JOLLY GREEN and six KNIFE helicopters departed for the USS Midway, 500 miles away. Four JOLLY GREENs and six KNIFEs, with all the support personnel, maintenance

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equipment and supplies, continued on. The remaining JOLLY GREENs served as airborne spares to replace, inflight, any of the primary aircraft that aborted.

The Commander, 3 ARRG, deployed aboard the USS Midway as the designated rescue representative and helicopter liaison officer for carrier board operations. As the senior rescue officer, he was charged with overall responsibility for the safe and effective operation of MAC resources from the USS Midway. Accompanying the Commander was the 3 ARRG Chief of Plans who remained aboard during the entire deployment as Operations and Plans Officer. Daily changes to mission requirements were caused by the very fluid situation in the Republic of Vietnam. Mission planning factors were forced to follow these changes resulting in continuous detailed attention to such matters as tactics, ingress/egress routing, landing zone selections, crew briefings, intelligence updates, and aircraft configuration. The intensity of shipboard flight operations added difficult to an already demanding situation. Only through the extreme efforts of 3 ARRG and 40 ARRS aircrew members, operations staff, and maintenance support personnel was the subsequent success of the mission assured.

Two HC-130 aircraft of the 56th Aernspace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (56 ARRS) at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, call sign KING, intercepted the helicopters shortly after departing U-Tapao and escorted them to the carrier. The KINGs provided weather and route reconnaissance, communication coverage, and navigational assistance for the helicopter task force and air refueling for the JOLLY GREENs. After it was determined that all ten primary helicopters would be able to complete the demanding and hazardous overwater journey, the three airborne spares returned to U-Tapao. Although this was the first carrier landing for any JOLLY GREEN pilot, all aircraft and personnel safely arrived aboard the USS Midway at 1050, 20 April 1975.

Preparations were begun for immediate employment. Subsequently, a decision was made to replace two JOLLY GREENs with two KNIVES to increase search and rescue capabilities in Thailand. Early on the 22nd, two KINGs intercepted and escorted the two KNIVES from U-Tapao to the carrier. Three hours after the KNIVES departed, the two JOLLY GREENs lifted off the carrier. One of the KINGs had proceeded ahead and immediately intercepted and escorted the two JOLLY GREENs. The other KING continued with the KNIVES until they were safely aboard the USS Midway.

Shartly after the first of three scheduled air refuelings, some 300 miles from U-Tapao, both JOLLY GREENs developed mechanical problems. The lead JOLLY GREEN declared an emergency because of severe vibrations and had to descend and decrease airspeed. The second helicopter

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Developed fuel flow problems. The two alert search and rescue JOLLY GREEN helicopters at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base were immediately scrambled by the 3 ARRG Joint Rescue Coordination Center, call sign JOKER. JOKER directed the alert helicopters to an intercept point and also alerted Detachment 12, 40 ARRS, U-Tapao, that their HH-43s, call sign PEDRO, would be needed for close-in support of the helicopters in distress. En route to U-Tapao, both helicopters diverted to the Thai coast in case an emergency landing was necessary. The Ubon JOLLY GREENs remained airborne until the distressed helicopters were within range of the PEDROs and it was determined that neither aircraft would have to ditch or make a forced landing. The two KINGs remained close at hand throughout the emergency, immediately available if assistance was needed. Both JOLLY GREENs landed safely at U-Tapao and the KINGs returned to Korat. Both helicopters subsequently returned to Ubon to augment search and rescue forces there.

INTERIM OPERATIONS

For the next eight days, planning and preparations for FREQUENT WIND continued. The 40 ARRS helicopters at Nakhon Phanom provided valuable assistance to the Strategic Air Command in reconnaissance drone recovery, a mission vitally important in providing current intelligence information. They also assumed the role of base perimeter defense, a mission normally performed by the 21 SOS.

On the USS Midway, a constant state of readiness prevailed. Each morning, the helicopter aircrews received briefings on the current situation in Saigon, new enemy positions, troop movements, weather forecasts, and an updated review of the landing zones to be used during the evacuation. All aircraft were cocked awaiting the execution order.

On 28 April 1975, rescue attention shifted to a different part of South Vietnam. The SS American Challenger, a Military Sealift Command contract freighter, was offloading Vietnamese refugees at Phu Quoc Island, just south of Cambodia. A Marine, serving aboard the ship, had fallen through an open hatch and was severely injured. He had sustained a fractured pelvis with possible internal injuries and was partially paralyzed. The American Challenger requested emergency medical evacuation.

Immediately, JOKER began steps to accomplish this. Permission to fly the mission was requested from the USSAG/7AF Command Center. Due to the impending evacuation of Saigon, high level command approval was necessary. The 3 ARRG immediately began to plan the mission to be ready as soon as approval was received. Careful coordination between

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JOLLY GREEN and KING aircrews and JOKER developed task force requirements, route analysis, and techniques necessary to accomplish the life or death mission. Later that night, approval was given to begin the rescue of the injured man. Well before sunrise on 29 April, two JOLLY GREENs departed Nakhon Phanom on the 600 mile non-stop mercy mission to the American Challenger. They were joined en route near U-Tapao by two KINGs. The lead KING became the Airborne Mission Commander (AMC) and provided route reconnaissance while the second KING served as escort and provided inflight refueling for the helicopters.

The task force arrived over the ship four and one-half hours later. The lead helicopter attained a hover about 75 feet above the stern of the ship and skillfully lowered a pararescue man and doctor to the deck. After this was accomplished, the JOLLY GREEN joined with KING and was refueled. For an hour, medical treatment was given to the Marine. When it was finally determined that the injured man could be moved, he was placed in a Stokes litter and the helicopter was called back for the pickup. Hovering in the same position, the helicopter crew gently hoisted the patient aboard the aircraft. The two medical men were quickly brought aboard and the 230 mile life or death race began.

JOKER contacted the U-Tapao Hospital to insure the patient would be met immediately by an ambulance. The patient's condition was also passed in order that the hospital could make the necessary preparations. Both helicopters successfully refueled inflight and two hours later, the patient was delivered safely to U-Tapao. These actions were later credited with saving the Marine's life.

EMPLOYMENT

Simultaneously with the drama of the American Challenger, the evacuation of Saigon was begun. KING 21 was launched from Korat to an orbit southeast of Ubon to serve as search and rescue AMC.

In addition to deployed personnel, 3 APRG manned the vital rescue console position at 7 AF Tactical Air Control Center (BLUECHIP) with two officers during the entire evacuation phase. From this desk radio/telephone contact was maintained with KING and JOKER. The information received over this net proved to be the most timely and correct of the entire operation. Verbal relay to the Commander, 7 AF, was immediate; it was his basis for accurate and sound decisions throughout the duration of helicopter involvement. The JRCC was likewise augmented with additional officer and NCO controllers to handle a vastly increased workload of communications traffic, real time documentation and aircraft control, as well as to provide the

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capability to handle any aircraft inflight emergency. With distribution of rescue forces at every activity point - airborne into Saigon, aboard the Midway, at JOKER and BLUECHIP, on search and rescue orbit, and on alert at Thailand bases - their influence and contributions were felt and seen throughout the operation. Unmistakenly, these inputs were essential to mission success.

JOKER realigned its radio frequencies to monitor the primary HF frequency between the Evacuation Force Director (SFD) and Saigon. JOKER also directed KING 21 to monitor this frequency and relay all information received from the Ground Security Force (GSF) Commander in Saigon. Of particular interest were the numbers and locations of GSF, numbers of helicopters en route to and from Saigon landing zones, numbers of refugees removed, location and type of hostile ground fire positions, en route weather, and landing zone status. This essential real time information was relayed through JOKER to the USSAG/TAP Command Center, a method that had worked with great success during the evacuation of Phnom Penh.

All remaining helicopters of the 40 ARRS were deployed back to Ubon to join the two JOLLY GREENs already on search and rescue alert. The two KINGs returning from the medical evacuation were immediately refueled and placed on alert. PEDROs at Udorn and U-Tapao attained maximum alert to cover the vastly increased number of takeoffs and landings associated with tactical and support forces employed in the protection of the evacuation helicopters and refugees at Saigon.

Aboard the carriers off the coast of South Vietnam, aircrews of the 40 ARRS, 21 SOS, and United States Marine Corps maintained cockpit alert for four hours while awaiting the order to launch. Finally, at 1500, 29 April 1975, the first wave of helicopters lifted off and the evacuation of Saigon began. The two JOLLY GREENs departed 20 minutes after the first wave and began the 30 minute run-in to the landing zone. Dodging thunderstorms and under the constant threat of enemy ground fire, these helicopters made a total of seven separate missions into the besieged city.

As the operation progressed, the weather deteriorated and the threat of hostile fire increased. On several occasions the JOLLY GREENs received ground fire and twice returned it. Flares were deployed by one of the JOLLY GREENs when a surface to air missile was launched at it. The flares and drastic evasive actions prevented the missile from finding its mark.

More than half the missions were flown after dark and the lighting conditions at the landing zones made each landing an accomplishment in itself. Each ingress and egress was made increasingly more

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dangerous by the large numbers of South Vietnamese aircraft defecting from the falling country and attempting to land on the aircraft carriers. Under the constant threat of mid air collision and the possibility of having an aircraft crash into them on the carrier deck, the JOLLY GREENs flew 362 refugees to safety.

About halfway through the long and tiring night, the specially equipped JOLLY GREENs were removed from the evacuation flow to serve as night search and rescue helicopters. This also freed smaller Navy SH-3 helicopters to be used to remove evacuees from the roof of the American Embassy, the final retreat in the beleaguered capital. For the rest of the evacuation, these aircraft maintained cockpit alert on the USS Midway.

Over 80 helicopters flew during the evacuation of Saigon, and, in their short but dramatic participation, the two JOLLY GREENs alone accounted for 5 percent of the refugees saved.

Throughout the evacuation, the KINGs maintained airborne alert at Ubon, watching over the tactical aircraft en route to and from Saigon. KING 21, and later, KING 23 maintained orbit for over 20 consecutive hours.

At U-Tapao, Detachment 12 PEDROs flew numerous precautionary intercepts for defecting South Vietnamese aircraft that had declared emergencies because of low fuel.

When an F-4 en route to Udorn lost an engine, JOKER ordered two JOLLY GREENs to assume cockpit alert with rotors turning to be able to respond immediately in support of the emergency. When the inflight emergency was successfully terminated, the helicopter crews returned to their ten minute alert posture.

Just before 0800, 30 April 1975, the final helicopter departed the American Embassy with the last of the GSF. KING 23 was released from orbit and returned to Korat. FREQUENT WIND, the largest airborne evacuation attempted, was completed.

SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS

Aboard the Midway, the day was just beginning. As soon as the helicopter aircrews came out of crew rest, they began shuttling evacuees from the seriously overcrowded aircraft carrier to nearby Naval escort ships. The extremely delicate and hazardous mission required the big Air Force helicopters to land on the extremely small helopads of the escorts. The difficult landing conditions did not deter the aircrews. JOLLY GREEN and KNIFE helicopters transferred a

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casualties. Two rescue service choppers, the last two at Landing Zone Hotel, were hit by small arms fire, including the one that had the 12.7-mm round in its tail.⁴⁵

Before the evacuation began, Cambodian President Sokham Koy, who replaced Lon Nol on April 3, said, "The United States led Cambodia into this war, but when the war became difficult, the United States pulled out."⁴⁶ President Sokham Koy came out on a Marine helicopter. The war was over and for the rescue people in Thailand there was nothing left to do but accept the letters of congratulations for a job well done in Eagle Pull.⁴⁷

Even as Phnom Penh fell, Saigon's days were numbered. Not even the Politburo in Hanoi realized how short the time would be before North Vietnamese tanks would break down the gates of President Nguyen Van Thieu's palace.⁴⁸ The North Vietnamese mapped out their 1975 offensive to take the central highlands and, if possible, cut South Vietnam in two. On March 14, when they overran Ban Me Thuot, a key provincial capital in the highlands, President Thieu, realizing his army was spread too thinly, ordered it to draw back to defend the cities, especially Da Nang, Hue, and Saigon.⁴⁹ Within two weeks the Army of the Republic of Vietnam had collapsed as a cohesive fighting force. North Vietnamese forces moved east from their sanctuaries near Khe Sanh and south across the demilitarized zone. By the end of March they were poised at the outskirts of Da Nang.

The evacuation of Da Nang brought the dimensions of the debacle into focus. As the North Vietnamese closed in on the city, a number of Americans remained there. These included members of the U.S. consulate, U.S. Agency for International Development, Central Intelligence Agency operatives, journalists, teachers, private citizens working for the United States or South Vietnamese governments under contract, a handful of retired military men, and deserters who chose to live in the city. The U.S. Embassy in Saigon had a basic evacuation plan which included plans for each of the consulates. At Da Nang the plan called for evacuation by sea.⁵⁰ When, at the end of March, the Americans started to leave Da Nang, they had to fight their way aboard the ships, planes and helicopters sent to get them out. The American public, watching the horror unfold on the evening television news, saw South Vietnamese soldiers force their way onto the last plane from Da Nang, a World Airways 727, flown into the city to carry out women and children.⁵¹

The disaster at Da Nang demonstrated the need for more precise planning to get the five thousand or so remaining Americans out of Vietnam. Official U.S. policy was that the Republic of Vietnam would survive. Even when there had been a large number of U.S. troops in South Vietnam, there was no evacuation plan. During the North Vietnamese offensive of 1972, MACV headquarters ordered a planning board to convene to draw up such a plan. The planner soon decided that U.S. forces could not leave the country en masse if the enemy forces proved successful. They thought that if

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such a case arose, the South Vietnamese, upon whom the Americans depended to run the airports and harbors, would also be fleeing. Furthermore, the planners feared that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam might well turn on the withdrawing Americans. Therefore, a plan to evacuate large numbers of Americans, other than that which existed to get embassy, USAID, and Central Intelligence Agency personnel out, was never formulated.⁵²

In accordance with the development of evacuation plans for Phnom Penh and Vientiane, CONPLAN 5060V, "Talon Vise", was published on July 31, 1974. It had four options, three of them relying on fixed-wing aircraft or evacuation by sea under secure conditions. Option IV provided for the use of helicopters and a ground security force in a "worst case" situation.⁵³

Revision of CONPLAN 5060V began in January 1975. The Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service contributed eleven officers to the Joint Planning Force that met at Nakhon Phanom. These included four men from the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, six from the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, and one man from the 56th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.⁵⁴ In early April, planning for any evacuation of Vietnam assumed secondary importance in the face of the more immediate danger in Cambodia. There were not enough heavy lift helicopters, especially not enough rescue service choppers, to cover both contingencies. For example, as the North Vietnamese closed in on Da Nang, the CIA's station chief there reportedly sent an urgent message to USSAG/7AF at Nakhon Phanom requesting the dispatch of rescue helicopters to take his people out. Because these helicopters were standing by for Eagle Pull, none was provided for Da Nang.⁵⁵

After the fall of Da Nang, CINCPAC advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff that, because of the rapidly deteriorating conditions in Vietnam, helicopters would probably play the leading role in any evacuation, especially if the enemy closed Tan Son Nhut.⁵⁶ Accordingly, as the North Vietnamese offensive accelerated so did planning for a helicopter evacuation of Saigon. On April 5, headquarters at Nakhon Phanom refined CONPLAN 5060V by designating helicopter landing areas in Saigon. These included the Defense Attaché's Office in the old MACV compound near Tan Son Nhut, the grounds of the American Embassy, and a landing zone on a soccer field in a section of the city called "Newport" near the Saigon River.⁵⁷ Ten days later, after the evacuation of Phnom Penh, the code name for the operation was changed from Talon Vise to Frequent Wind. On April 18, USSAG/7AF published CONPLAN 5060V-7-75, a 135-page message detailing a helicopter evacuation. The 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group was charged with providing search and rescue forces in case an aircraft went down during the operation and with sending four HH-53s to the aircraft carrier *Midway* to participate in the evacuation.⁵⁸

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On April 19 the rescue portion of Frequent Wind began with the sending of seven HH-53s to Utapao. There Col. J.J. Anders, Jr., Director of Operations of the 56th Special Operations Wing, took charge of all Air Force helicopters as directed by the plan. The following day Anders sent four HH-53s and six 21st Special Operations Squadron CH-53s to the USS *Midway*. On April 22 two additional CH-53s flew to the *Midway* to replace two of the four HH-53s because the special operations helicopters, which were not filled with rescue equipment, could carry more people. Still, the presence of two HH-53s aboard the *Midway* meant that the evacuation forces would have two rescue choppers available in case they were needed during the operation. On the *Midway* the Air Force had eight CH-53s and two HH-53s. Maj. John F. Guilmartin, Jr. was the ranking Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service man aboard.⁶⁰

Throughout April, as the final outcome of the Vietnam war became more apparent, many Vietnamese and Americans fled Saigon on regularly scheduled airline flights. Others took ships. By the end of the month, as the outskirts of the city became the battlefield and Tan Son Nhut came under attack, Ambassador Graham Martin gave the order for Frequent Wind, Option IV. Rescue choppers were ready with one Jolly Green on alert at Nakhon Phanom, six at Ubon, and two aboard the *Midway*. The helicopters on alert in Thailand were to provide a rescue force in case any of the F-4s, A-7s, and AC-130s participating in the operation from Thai bases were shot down.⁶¹

On the afternoon of April 29 the evacuation of Saigon began. U.S. Marine Corps CH-46 helicopters, CH-53s, and Air Force choppers rose from the *Midway* and flew to Saigon. The two rescue service choppers, Jolly 12-1 and Jolly 12-2, were part of a three helicopter flight, the last of a twelve-ship formation.⁶² Major Guilmartin, commander of Jolly 12-1, knew that the next hours would be hectic. Already he had problems contacting a U.S. Marine combat control team at the Defense Attaché's office. The combat control team was using an FM field radio with limited range, and every Marine Corps, Air Force, and Air America chopper in the air was descending on downtown Saigon using the same FM frequency.⁶³

As the two HH-53s and the CH-53 crossed the coast, they were joined by a pair of Marine Cobra gunships. When the choppers reached the city, Guilmartin switched course and headed for the Defense Attaché's complex near Tan Son Nhut. As the sprawling airfield came into sight, he saw heavy artillery shells tossing up dirt and concrete as they hit the runway. His crewmen noticed muzzle flashes from small arms fire all around the city.⁶⁴

Opposition to the evacuation, if lacking in direction, was nonetheless real. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units, as well as disgruntled South Vietnamese troops, fired on the choppers with everything from small arms and antiaircraft guns to hand-held missiles. Guilmartin noticed his radar-warning gear picking up SA-2 Fansong indications thirteen minutes after

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leaving the *Midway*. The audio indications of Fansong tracking, a rattlesnake-like buzz, bothered him so much that he shut off his radar-warning gear. Meanwhile, an F-105, flying a surface-to-air missile suppression mission, locked on to the SA-2's radar and fired an antiradiation homing missile at it. That ended the Fansong activity for a while.⁶⁴

The three-ship formation wheeled in over the Defense Attaché's complex. After the CH-53 loaded up, the two rescue helicopters took on loads of refugees and returned to *Midway*. It was darker when they headed back across the South China Sea for their second trip to the complex. Shadows of buildings in Saigon reached to meet them as the sun settled ahead. It appeared to the crews of the rescue choppers that the entire North Vietnamese Army was firing into the sky. Their perception was no doubt heightened by the visibility of tracers against the darkening sky. The two Jolly Greens loaded up and headed for the *Midway*. As they slid over the rooftops of Saigon, a gunner on Jolly Green 12-1 spotted a number of figures firing at them from the roofs. He opened up with one of the miniguns. As these guns sometimes did, this one jammed. The parajumper cursed, picked up his AR-15 automatic rifle, and fired away at the figures until the chopper passed out of range.⁶⁵

It was dark when the choppers reached the *Midway* to unload their second haul of refugees. After refueling, the two Jolly Greens returned to Saigon. Opposition appeared to be more intense. All three miniguns were busy on the way to the Defense Attaché's complex. Before the action began, Guilmartin and Capt. Vernon L. Sheffield, Jr., commander of Jolly Green 12-2, told their crews to pack in as many Vietnamese as they could. They were not to count children. Above all, the parajumpers and flight mechanics were to maintain order. During loading they were instructed to allow boarding to one side of the ramp minigun only. This procedure was meant to facilitate counting and to help keep the people calm.⁶⁶ On this last trip, as soon as Jolly Green 12-1 touched down, Vietnamese refugees rushed up the ramp. The parajumpers and flight mechanics were engulfed in a rising tide of fear-crazed human beings. A young parajumper managed to restore a semblance of order and the flow of people started moving to the left of the minigun as ordered. One frightened woman tried to claw her way pass the parajumper on the opposite side of the gun. He jabbed her back into line with his rifle butt. Again she rushed forward, trying to climb over him. This time he swung the butt of his automatic rifle hard into her abdomen. She stumbled backwards grasping at anything she could grab. Her hands found the barrel of the minigun. It swung toward the crowd. The woman reached again, this time clutching the trigger. To the horror of the parajumper he heard the electric motor that drives the firing mechanism of the 2000-round-per-minute gun engage. He knew that a split second later the gun would begin spewing death into the mass of refugees. The first round chambered; then the gun jammed. Few, if any, of the refugees knew

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what had almost happened, and the loading continued.⁶⁷

Jolly Green 12-1 took on ninety-seven men, women, and children, twice its normal capacity. Jolly Green 12-2 picked up ninety. The last Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service choppers then headed out of Saigon. As the helicopters passed over the eastern suburbs a flight mechanic on Jolly Green 12-1 spotted an SA-7 heat seeking surface-to-air missile streaking toward them. He fired a flare pistol. The missile went for the flare, missing the chopper by less than sixty feet.⁶⁸

As the two rescue service helicopters neared the *Midway*, Jolly Green 12-2 developed a fire in its instrument panel. The copilot turned an extinguisher on the fire. In the darkness, Captain Sheffield landed the helicopter on the *Midway*. Because its instrument panel was burned out, Jolly Green 12-2 was out of action for the rest of the operation. Jolly Green 12-1 fared no better. In landing it broke a wheel strut. According to Major Guilmartin, in an emergency situation he could have flown the helicopter. However, the officer controlling the operation aboard the airborne command post ordered him to stay on the *Midway* because he wanted at least one rescue chopper available in case a helicopter or airplane was shot down. With that order, the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service had flown its last mission in Vietnam. In all, the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service had evacuated about four hundred people from Saigon.⁶⁹

Air Force CH-53s and Marine Corps helicopters continued the evacuation of Saigon. Thousands of Vietnamese surged around the American Embassy. Gunfire from small arms peppered the choppers, but no one knew who was doing the shooting. Earlier in the afternoon the American consul at Vung Tau, heading for the ships in the South China Sea in a commandeered boat, had been strafed by a South Vietnamese Air Force helicopter. The airborne command post, answering his plea for help, ordered an AC-130 gunship to "kill" the chopper. An electrical fire aboard the gunship forced it to break off the chase, but in the meantime the boat made it to safety. The incident confirmed the fear of Americans during the last days of Saigon that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, at least some of it, was trying to disrupt the evacuation.⁷⁰

At midnight the weather and visibility remained good, so the evacuation continued. At 1:45 in the morning the Joint Rescue Control Center reported that 6,619 people had been carried out. An hour later the control center transmitted a presidential order that Americans only were to be evacuated from that time on. This would include several hundred members of the Marine ground security force.⁷¹

As the sun came up there was panic among the thousands of Vietnamese swarming around the embassy walls. They climbed the barbed wire fence only to have U.S. Marines force them back with rifle butts.⁷² America's withdrawal from Vietnam came down to a rush to the top floors of the embassy. At 7:30 A.M. Marines slammed and barred the building's

1975

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ARRS personnel assisted in the recovery of bodies and equipment from the crash of a C-141 in the Olympic Mountains, Washington, on 21 March 1975.

12 Apr 75

Eagle Pull. Eight HH-53s and three HC-130s from the 40th and 56th ARR Squadrons, respectively, participated in Eagle Pull, the evacuation of United States personnel from Phnom Penh, Cambodia. One HH-53 inserted a combat control team prior to the evacuation and two HH-53s removed the last 15 military personnel from Phnom Penh following the completion of the evacuation. The Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) operated by the 3d ARR Group at Nakhon Phanom, exercised operational control of rescue forces. There were no ARRS injuries or casualties although two HH-53s incurred hits from small caliber ground fire.

29 Apr 75

Frequent Wind. Eight HH-53s and three HC-130s of the 40th and 56th Squadrons, respectively, participated in Frequent Wind, the evacuation of United States personnel from Saigon, Vietnam. Two of the HH-53s airlifted 362 evacuees from Saigon to the USS *Midway*. Both aircraft returned enemy ground fire. The HC-130s provided command and control communications and aerial refueling. The 3d ARR Group coordinated rescue operations. No ARRS personnel were injured.



Evacuees from Saigon aboard USS Midway.

13 May-
15 May 75

Mayaguez Incident and Assault on Koh Tang Island. In response to the capture of the SS *Mayaguez* and her crew at sea on 13 May, and after diplomatic measures had been ineffective, President Ford initiated military action. ARRS provided seven HH-53s and

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huge oak doors. One Marine shut off the elevators and then tossed tear gas grenades into the shaft. He then joined the others in a race up the stairs. At the fourth floor they turned to throw tear gas grenades down behind them. As they rushed the last steps to the rooftop helicopter pad, panic-gripped Vietnamese smashed through the doors below and surged through the gas into the embassy and up the stairwell. At the top of the stairs the Marines threw more gas and smoke grenades down the well, then they ran out onto the pad barring the small door behind them. They climbed aboard Swift 22, a waiting Marine CH-53. The turbines whined, the rotor blades moved around, picking up speed with each revolution. The ramp came up and the chopper lifted.⁷³

The log of the joint rescue coordination center summed it up:

APR

29/2325 SWIFT-22 AIRBORNE WITH 11 GSF [ground support forces], ALL EVAC [evacuees] EXTRACTED.
29/2357 KING-23 [airborne command aircraft] CLEARED TO RTB [return to base], ETA [estimated time of arrival] 0090.
29/2359 LOG CLOSED. FREQUENT WIND COMPLETED.⁷⁴

At dawn the rescue crews aboard the *Midway* repaired their damaged helicopters. Throughout the day they watched as forty-eight South Vietnamese Huey helicopters, three CH-47s and even a small, single-engine O-1 observation plane brought out more Vietnamese refugees. When a Vietnamese Air Force major in the O-1 contacted the carrier's air traffic controller to request landing instructions, the controller told him to ditch. The major agreed but added, "Please have a helo alongside, my wife and five children are with me." The ship's captain, who was in the control room, heard the plea. He told the major to land on deck. The Vietnamese, who had never landed on an aircraft carrier, brought the O-1 down successfully without the use of arresting cables or hooks.⁷⁵

Bad weather delayed the rescue crews departure from the *Midway* until May 2. When they arrived back at Nakhon Phanom the crews went through the usual round of debriefing followed by a party.⁷⁶

America's involvement in Vietnam spanned a generation. Throughout those years, the United States slipped into the conflicts in Southeast Asia. Most Americans thought that withdrawal from Southeast Asia, which began in 1969, ended in the frantic rush to the rooftop of the American Embassy in Saigon. However, the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service faced yet another challenge.

During the first week in May 1975 two merchant vessels bound for Thailand were accosted by Cambodian gunboats. A Korean ship was fired on but escaped. On May 4, the Cambodians seized a Panamanian registered vessel, held it for thirty-five hours, then released it.

On May 12, 1975, the American-registered cargo ship *Mayaguez* was

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HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF PACIFIC
OPERATIONS ANALYSIS GROUP
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OPERATIONS ANALYSIS GROUP
REPORT NO. 2-75

SUMMARY OF THE EVACUATION OF SAIGON,
SOUTH VIETNAM UNDER OPERATION FREQUENT WIND(U)

by

RICHARD D. JOHNSTON

Approved by
Roy E. Metcalf

16 May 1975

This working paper presents the findings of CINCPAC Operations Analysts. It does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Commander in Chief Pacific, nor should it be interpreted as an official finding.

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HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF PACIFIC
OPERATIONS ANALYSIS GROUP
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96610

OPERATIONS ANALYSIS GROUP
REPORT NO. 2-75

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE EVACUATION OF SAIGON,
SOUTH VIETNAM UNDER OPERATION FREQUENT WIND (U)

by

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HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE EVACUATION OF SAIGON, SOUTH
VIETNAM, UNDER OPERATION FREQUENT WIND

I. SUMMARY

1. On 29 April 1975, Operation FREQUENT WIND was executed and 1373 American citizens, 5595 Vietnamese and Third Country Nationals were successfully evacuated by helicopter from the American Embassy Saigon and the DAO compound.
2. The largest helicopter borne evacuation ever conducted was accomplished by a task force of U.S. Navy/Marine and Air Force units, under USSAG/7AF OPlan 5060V-2-75, Option IV.
3. The evacuation of personnel from Saigon took 17 hours and 590 USMC helicopter sorties, supported by 82 Air Force helicopters, were flown. Starting at 290706Z April 1975, the USMC Ground Security Force (GSF) touched down on the DAO compound landing zone and the last GSF was drawn from the American Embassy at 292346Z. The last USMC helicopter landed aboard Task Force 76 at 300025Z.
4. A total of 995 Marine GSF personnel were employed. Tactical air cover was accomplished by 288 F-4 and 12 F-7 aircraft. The U.S. Air Force supplied aircraft for command/control and refueling operations.
5. These operations were conducted under enemy fire from small weapons, AAA, and SA-7 missiles. Two U.S. Marine GSF members were killed by artillery fire at the DAO compound, and two USMC pilots were lost at sea. No munitions were expended by U.S. Navy/Marine forces. The Air Force expended 4 CBU's, 250 7.62mm, 1 AGM-45,

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and 4 flares. No aircraft was lost by the Air Force. Three aircraft were lost by the U.S. Navy/Marine forces.

6. During Operation FREQUENT WIND, U.S. Ambassador Martin and party were helolifted to the USS BLUE RIDGE, and 38 U.S. citizens boarded MSC ships at Saigon and Can Tho.

7. Many thousands of Vietnamese Nationals were evacuated by VN Navy vessels, tugs, barges, fishing boats, MSC ships, and other small craft, which joined Task Force 76 on station off Vung Tan.

8. MSC and friendly foreign ships assisted with the evacuation of Vietnamese refugees. Many ships were over-crowded and an inter-ship transfer was ordered by Task Force 76, while located in a holding area 100 miles southeast of Vung Tan. For example, the MSC ship Greenville contained over 10,000 refugees. After the inter-ship transfer, USN ships sailed to Subic Bay and the MSC ships departed for Guam and other destinations under escort.

9. Refugee centers were established at Guam, Wake Island, and CONUS to care for over 130,000 refugees evacuated from South Vietnam.

10. Prior to Operation FREQUENT WIND, formerly known as Talon Vise, chartered commercial and MAC aircraft were employed to effect a draw-down of non-essential (NEMVAC) personnel and evacuate over 2,000 orphans.

11. Results of Operation FREQUENT WIND attest to the outstanding ability of U.S. military operational forces to successfully effect plans directed by higher authorities.

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12. Many comprehensive and useful lessons learned, with recommendations, were forwarded to CINCPAC by operational forces and they have been included in Section VII of this report.

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II. INTRODUCTION

1. TALON VISE/FREQUENT WIND

a. The original CONPLAN for the evacuation of personnel from South Vietnam was planned under the Code name "TALON VISE". On 15 April 1975 the Code name was changed to "FREQUENT WIND".

2. Source of Information:

a. This summary of historical events of Operation FREQUENT WIND was excerpted from documents used by CINCPAC staff during the planning and operational phases. The documents are held by the CINCPAC Reference Library for future reference.

3. Geographical Location - Figure 1 is a map of South Vietnam which shows locations where evacuations were implemented:

a. AMEMBASSY and DAO helolift landing zones in Saigon under Frequent Wind operation, Option IV, on 29 April 1975.

b. Danang evacuation of ARVN troops and Vietnamese refugees by chartered merchant ships and commercial aircraft.

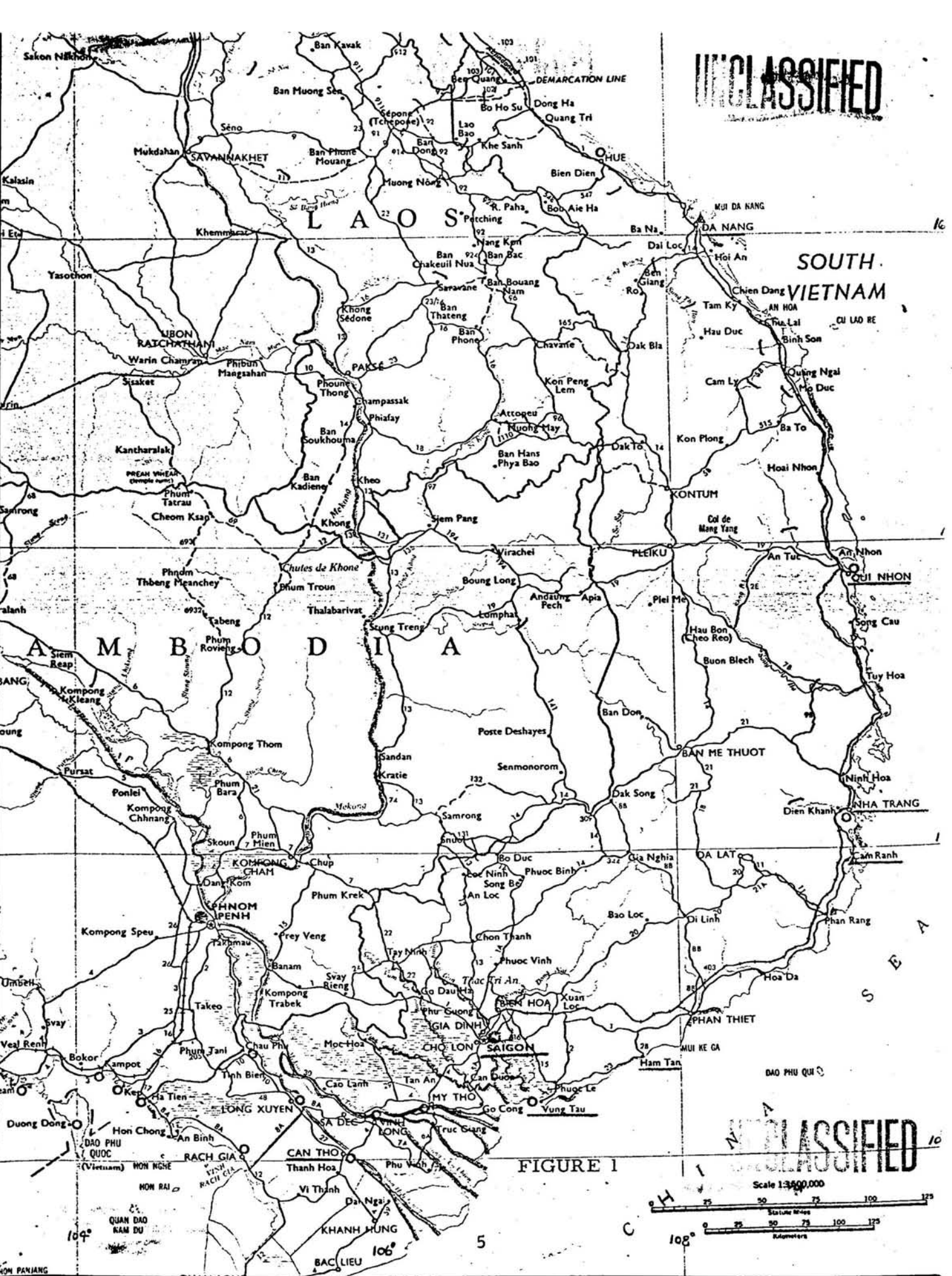
c. Evacuation of Vietnamese troops and refugees from Vung Tau, Cam Ranh, Nha Trang, Con Son, and Qui Nhon by MSC ships and commercial aircraft.

d. Off-shore rescue of Vietnamese troops and refugees by small craft and helos to U.S. Navy ships.

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III. STATUS OF EVENTS LEADING TO OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND"

1. COMIPAC message 080449Z MAY 75 gave the following comprehensive analysis of events leading to the downfall of South Vietnam and the need to implement operation Frequent Wind:

"With the surrender of Saigon on 30 April 1975, the 34-year war in South Vietnam ended. The final scene of this drama started last December, on a stage set since 28 January 1973.

The Test: Working feverishly after the ceasefire, the NVA massed their greatest military strength ever in the South. Tanks and heavy artillery were infiltrated by the hundreds, along with hundreds of thousands of troops. Cessation of American bombing allowed the NVA to develop a sophisticated logistical apparatus to support this new force.

Despite this strength, the NVA was unsure of its ability to completely conquer the south. COSVN's resolution for the 1975 campaign indicated total victory was not expected until 1976. Heavy combat in 1975 was to prepare the way for victory by weakening the RVNAF. The possibility of American bombing intervention was a major factor in moderating NVA objectives, and the attack on Phuoc Long province was geared to test American reaction to a major enemy offensive. The NVA saw American inaction as the green light for initiation of a heavy offensive. Even at this point, however, the NVA probably did not expect the stunning successes which were to follow.

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slowly along Route 7A. Military units were completely disorganized, and were incapable of defending the column. The NVA pursued to the coast, capturing tens of thousands of refugees and a vast amount of equipment. The precipitous abandonment of the highlands set a tone of panic and defeatism which was to spread infectiously in coming days. The NVA forces moved quickly to capitalize on this situation. A few ARVN units, notable the 22nd Division in Binh Dinh and the 3rd ABN Brigade in Khanh Hoa resisted the Communists, but otherwise the Communist drive down the coast met little opposition.

In MR-1, the GVN defense network broke before it was ever really subjected to heavy combat. Communists enjoyed some success during early March, but the heaviest blow against MR-1 defenses was the movement of the ARVN airborne division to Saigon on 12 March. This unit was widely regarded as essential for a strong defense, and its loss had a severe psychological impact.

Civilian and military morale was low after the withdrawal of the airborne unit, evacuation of the highlands, and a series of sharp but limited enemy attacks. But while strong threats had developed in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces the first area to break was Quang Tri. On 19 March, the province chief ordered its abandonment, adding to the feeling of panic in the region.

Nevertheless, the MR-1 commander planned to fight. These plans were disrupted by vacillation of Thieu, who gave a series of conflicting

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orders first to abandon Hue in the face of heavy attacks, then to defend it. Commanders found it impossible to reverse the movement of their units so quickly. Troops and equipment were stranded on roads already clogged by refugees, making command and control extremely difficult. At the same time, the Communists launched attacks near the city. Under these circumstances it was difficult to avoid panic. Efforts were made for orderly withdrawal of some units, but with only marginal success. By the time the attempt was made, Route 1 had been cut between Hue and Danang and Communist forces were attacking around the city.

By 24 March, Quang Ngai and Quang Tin were lost, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to the enclave around Danang. Fear-stricken RVNAF presented only token resistance to NVA forces. Massive desertions were reported as GVN troops fled to Danang with their families.

With Danang clearly indefensible, air/sea evacuation commenced. The air evacuation ended on 28 March, when uncontrollable mobs of people crowded onto runways, making air operations impossible. By 29 March, Danang was a scene of chaos. With no organized defense, the second largest city in the south fell to the Communists without a struggle. NVA forces walked into the city.

In the south, continuing Communist pressure caused a snowball effect, and by 3 April the NVA held all of MR-2 except Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces. Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, and Dalat had been abandoned.

Combat was light for the next few days, as the NVA hastily prepared for attacks in MR-3. The stunning successes in MR-1 and MR-2 were

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unexpected by the NVA, and a few days were needed to consolidate gains and reinforce. Improved command and control which had allowed the NVA to capitalize on the GVN's withdrawal now aided in the swift movement of forces. Divisions from North Vietnam, MR-1 and MR-2 moved south to MR-3, while Divisions from MR-4 were moved north and east to MR-3. Newly-captured equipment and roads aided this movement, which was accompanied by forward deployment of AAA cover.

Meanwhile, RVNAF made half-hearted efforts to organize its defenses without much effect. Some units were formed from the 18,000 ARVN soldiers evacuated from MR-s 1 and 2. But they proved to be only marginally effective when later committed to combat. Of 13 ARVN Divisions, six were rendered combat ineffective in MR-1 and MR-2. Having been routed once, it was unlikely they would perform well when remnants were reconstituted.

The Fall: Military activity in MR-3 began in Tay Ninh province, where a major combined arms attack eliminated all GVN presence west of the Vam Co Dung River, resulting in the loss of Tri Tam District, Binh Duong province. This was followed by the launching of heavy attacks in the eastern part of the region against GVN positions along Routes 1, 20, and 333. In the process, two district towns, Dinh Quan in Long Khanh province and Hoai Duc in Binh Tuy province were overrun. Heavy fighting subsequently shifted to Xuan Loc, capital of Long Khanh province, where ARVN forces withstood repeated thrusts by at least elements of

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four NVA Divisions. The withdrawal of the 18th ARVN Division from Xuan Loc on 21 April signaled the end of ARVN resistance in eastern MR-3 and opened the way for attacks against Saigon/Bien Hoa itself.

On 21 April, Thieu bowed to increasing pressure and resigned. He was succeeded by Vice President Tran Van Huong, who initially assumed a militant policy of continued resistance. After seven days in office, Huong turned over the presidency to former General Duong Van "Big" Minh, who immediately began implementing plans for negotiations with the Communists. The Communists, however, added a new prerequisite for negotiation, demanding the elimination of the war machine. In addition to the previous demands for departure of all U.S. agents and elimination of the Thieu clique.

On 26 April, the NVA launched the final assault, which they named the "Ho Chi Minh Campaign." Strikes were made against ARVN elements in the Long Thanh-Long Binh area. Phuoc Le, near Vung Tau, came under attack at the same time and fell quickly, isolating Vung Tau. The Bear Cat Armor School and Long Thanh District were also overrun. Direct attacks on Long Binh began and panic began to break down the defenses around Bien Hoa. On 28 April, Tan Son Nhut came under heavy rocket and artillery attacks, forcing its closure. Simultaneous ground attacks were conducted against the ARVN in CuChi, Lai Khe, and virtually all friendly positions around Saigon City. The NVA strategy apparently was to destroy remaining ARVN units outside the city and avoid a prolonged

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fight in Saigon itself. On 29 April, Vung Tau and Bien Hoa fell. Saigon was defenseless. Minh's last-ditch efforts for a ceasefire without outright surrender were rejected by the Communists and on the morning of 30 April, Minh announced the surrender of the GVN.

Volumes will be written about "why" the South Vietnamese and U.S. failed since the 1973 ceasefire. Briefly, the defeat was the culmination of a long series of military, political, economic, and psychological blows which undermined RVNAF's will and ability to fight. Although far from conclusive, the following represents some of the reasons "why."

U.S. logistical support for the RVNAF declined, while China and the USSR increased their support to the NVA. Communist Command and Control improved significantly, but RVNAF's Command and Control broke down and eventually was left leaderless.

On the political scene, U.S. war weariness, reflected by Congressional resistance to continued GVN support, increased drastically. In South Vietnam, cynicism about the ability and honesty of the Government grew among the population. Other than anti-Communism, a total lack of political ideology existed in the country.

Reduction in U.S. aid coupled with inflation crippled the GVN economy and demoralized its armed forces. The combination of these and other factors resulted in serious psychological problems for the GVN. A sense of isolation, defeat, and abandonment became widespread, especially after the defeat in Phuoc Long province and the Central Highlands. Likewise, the absence of massive air and artillery support, which the RVNAF

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had come to rely on as a result of U.S. training, added another significant psychological blow to GVN's will to resist. The NVA exploited the opportunity and hammered on the final epitaph of the Republic of Vietnam -- "All Fini."

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IV. PLANNING OF "FREQUENT WIND" OPERATION

1. AMEMBASSY message 252344Z MAR 75 indicated that we should initiate the contingency plan for U.S. Naval forces movement to a point off short of Danang to stand by for E&E immediately because NVA/VC units are within three kilometers of Danang City and NVA may close the door on us in the next few days.

2. SECSTATE message 272129Z MAR 75 to SECDEF stated that:

a. Evacuation of refugees generated in Regions 1 and 2 of RVN greatly exceeds capabilities of GVN and other available means of transportation.

b. Therefore, request you authorize that military sealift / command controlled ships be used to transport civilian refugees between RVN ports, as may be directed by the Chief, U.S. Mission, Vietnam or his designees.

c. Evacuation priorities. Surface craft will evacuate U.S. citizens and such other categories of civilian refugees as are designated by Chief, U.S. Diplomatic Mission or his designee, who will also determine evacuation priorities.

d. Chief, U.S. Mission or his designees in conjunction with Government of South Vietnam will coordinate movements including operation of civilian refugee screening, loading, disembarking and dispersing refugees.

e. Request initial lift be limited until further notice to four most readily available ships subject to immediate temporary control of

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Chief, U.S. Mission, for use for civilian refugee evacuation purposes.

f. With respect to the service of commercial vessels procured on behalf of A.I.D., it understood that A.I.D. will reimburse DOD for any additional war risk insurance premiums required, or in the event the United States Government has assumed war risk liability as self-insurer, A.I.D. will, subject to the availability of funds, reimburse DOD for any payment made, and expenses incurred, by DOD in reimbursing the owners of such vessels for any loss. It is also understood that A.I.D. will exert its best efforts to obtain such funds as may be required for such reimbursement.

g. Subject your approval, this agency prepared issue funding document to element of DOD you designate, covering costs of up to dollars one million for requested service. Appropriation 72-1151030 and allotment 530-50-730-00-67-51 will apply. Decontrol 3/27/76. Kissinger.

3. SECSTATE message 272130Z MAR 75 to SECDEF requested that:

a. DoD to obtain commercial all cargo aircraft to begin an airlift operation to evacuate civilian refugees from Danang and such other points in South Vietnam as may be specified by Chief, U.S. Diplomatic Mission, Saigon or his designee, to Cam Ranh or such places of safety in South Vietnam as the Chief of Mission or his designee may determine. This airlift is limited until further notice to charter of two World Airways 727 and two DC-6 type aircraft currently believed to be available in Saigon, Japan and Singapore.

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b. Evacuation priorities. Airlift will evacuate U.S. citizens and such other categories of civilian refugees as are designated by Chief, U.S. Diplomatic Mission or his designee, who will also determine evacuation priorities.

c. American Embassy/USAID Saigon in conjunction with Government of South Vietnam will coordinate movements including operation of refugee screening, loading, disembarking and dispersing refugees, dispatching aircraft, etc. Carriers should report to USAID logistics officer, Mr. Clifford Frink, C/O U.S. Embassy, Saigon, for briefing and operational control.

4. MAC message 272130Z MAR 75 to AMEMBASSY Saigon indicated commercial capability offered:

World Airways: 3 B-727 and 1 DC-8, 27/28 March

2 B-727 on 8 April

Overseas National: 1 DC-10, 2 DC-8 on 27/30 March

TIA, American & Saturn: 4 aircraft on 29 March - 11 April

5. CINCPAC message 280312Z MAR 75 to COMSCFE stated that:

a. MSC controlled vessels may enter Danang provided evacuation can be conducted peacefully under controlled conditions without significant danger to ships or crews. COMSCFE confirm that conditions in port are satisfactory prior authorizing entry of each vessel.

6. CINCPACFLT message 130422Z APR 75 to CINCPAC stated that

a. JCS message 121508Z APR 75 is an execute message authorizing CINCPAC, when called on and in coordination with U.S.

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Embassy Saigon, to evacuate U.S. citizens and such other categories of persons from RVN as may be designated. The reference further states that in order to reduce potential difficulties at possible safehavens, U.S. citizens should be evacuated on U.S. military airlift and U.S. flag carriers to the extent feasible.

b. In view of the above, it is not repeat not intended to embark USMC Security Force/Control detachments in MSC/charter shipping during the "thinning out" evacuation process.

7. SECSTATE TS SPECAT message 150649Z APR 75 to CINCPAC covered E&E planning:

a. Message contains mission views and relevant data on contingency E&E planning, including three possible evacuation modes (sealift, fixed-wing, and helicopter airlift). All three modes assume that adequate security forces would be available for their implementation. CINCPAC and USSAG/7AF continue to refine detailed planning for emergency evacuation under severely deteriorated situation. In order to have appropriate interface with that military planning process there will be meeting here with CINCPAC and USSAG planners in next few days.

b. Current evacuation of dependents and non-essential personnel is proceeding on voluntary basis; however, this may slow down markedly in next day or so because of problems discussed below. Utilization of commercial flights, military flights and orphan flights (escorts) have been and, with exception of latter, are being utilized. Regular (daily) status reports (Saigon 4406 et seq.) will provide information on departure rate.

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Following additional efforts are in train to speedup this process.

(1) DAO RIF and reduction in contractor personnel now in progress. DAO believes that this will not lead to markedly fewer American in country unless there is authority to order a civilian to leave.

(2) Strong encouragement to remaining military retirees in Saigon area to depart.

(3) Full encouragement to remaining dependents to depart country.

(4) AID personnel action now underway to identify and transfer on expedited basis now non-essential personnel.

(5) Continuing review of personnel in all mission elements.

(6) Effort is being made to increase PAA frequency. In addition we can utilize backhaul of military aircraft from Clark AFB bringing in military supplies.

(7) A principal problem area in the flow of people out of country, especially applicable to contractor personnel, is the question of proper documentation as required by Vietnamese law (Vietnamese passport and exit visa) for Vietnamese wives and children (some very recently acquired under pressure of present circumstances) which will enable the American sponsor to get his immediate family to the U.S. We are making every possible effort to get the GVN to speed up this process consistent with the requirements of GVN law. We must solve this problem in order to get down to an acceptable number of Americans in the context of some of the contingencies we might have to face.

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c. A phase-down is occurring in MR-3 and MR-4, where situation being monitored on continuing basis. If required, this process will be appropriately speeded up. Should situation deteriorate to point where out-of-country evacuation called for, personnel from MR-3 area will be moved through Saigon, whereas personnel from MR-4 would be moved directly to Thailand. There are no official Americans remaining in MR-2.

d. In attempting to size and categorize the Vietnamese evacuation problem, the mission has developed the following figures for Vietnamese to whom we have obligations and who would be most endangered under a Communist regime.

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>with families</u>
Immediate families of U.S. citizens eligible for visas under current laws		5,000
OSA list of key intelligence personalities (includes immediate family)		3,000
Vietnamese cabinet officers since 1963	150	1,200
Past and present legislators	500	4,000
Senior ARVN civil servants and police officials	1,000	8,000
Employees of the U.S. Government	14,000	112,000
Employees of non-appropriated fund activities	500	4,000
Employees of invited contractors	6,000	48,000
Senior non-governmental political, religious and social leaders	500	4,000

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Employees of western non-governmental organiza-	1,000	8,000
tions including the press and volags		

Subtotal		197,000
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Less 15 percent equals total		167,620
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e. For planning purposes a multiplier of 8 has been applied to each principal of the list above. This multiplier, which is necessarily somewhat arbitrary, is designed to account for family members of the principal without whom he would likely refuse to emigrate as well as to provide a margin for the inevitable gatecrashers.

f. At the present time, pressure from Vietnamese citizens seeking to leave the country is mounting. We cannot logically expect the GVN to be receptive to relaxing the current travel ban voluntarily across the board, as a real social hemorrhage would doubtless result. On the other hand, the mission expects to be successful in persuading the GVN to make limited exceptions to their blanket immigration ban, particularly insofar as immediate relatives of American citizens are concerned. In order to accommodate what they too will see to be our legitimate needs to reduce the number of Americans in-country. The GVN would probably also agree to release other categories of Vietnamese citizens on a selective basis as part of an overall package which would include guarantees of a ticket out for families of Vietnamese VIPs in the case of an emergency evacuation.

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g. A further inponderable in the equation is the number of potential evacuees from our list who would prefer on balance to remain behind in Vietnam under any circumstances. Many aged parents, for example, might elect to stay while sending off their sons and daughters. The entirely arbitrary figure of 15 percent has been arrived at to cover this number. Applying it to the totals on the above list, we arrive at the figure of 167,620 as the number of potential Vietnamese evacuees. Although this represents the missions's best estimate of those to whom we have a clear obligation, it hardly needs to be reemphasized that the figures are only an estimate. The multiplier of 8 may seem high, but the Danang experience indicates that in an evacuation situation "immediate family" quickly becomes a rather amorphous and elastic concept.

h. Furthermore, the estimated number of evacuees can be expanded almost at will, for example, by enlarging the scope of eligibility for relatives of U.S. citizens beyond the immediate family, and then moving on to such categories as professional people, servants and former employees of the U.S. Government or western firms, religious groups, and finally any individuals who might freely elect, under optimum circumstances, to flee the Communist takeover.

i. Needless to say, this larger scale evacuation, which would probably extend to several million people, is only conceivable in a post-GVN framework when safe passage for the evacuees would be provided by international or negotiated guarantees.

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j. Saigon PAA office has recommended an increase from two to three PAA flights per week, and expects to hear April 9. Should situation warrant, frequency could be further increased.

k. Sealift - Mission has arranged for four ships to be available in the general area of Newport for sealift evacuation. At least two are to be close enough at all times to respond to a quick reaction call. Depending on circumstances related to Vietnamese refugee evacuation, other two might also be in position to respond to quick reaction call. We will maintain continuing watch on this as situation develops, in order to have required assets appropriately positioned on timely basis. Each of the four ships could transport 4,000 Americans, or 6,000 Vietnamese. If two ships are allotted to U.S. and two to Vietnamese, 8,000 Americans and 12,000 Vietnamese could be carried for a total evacuation of 20,000 people. This arrangement is possible under the umbrella of the refugee evacuation operation, which could end shortly. There are questions as to feasibility of maintaining ship assets in required locations after refugee operation ends. Fixed wing airlift - we understand that CINCPAC has a plan that would enable the evacuation in one cycle of 7,300 people (which would more than cover the Americans currently remaining in Vietnam) given nine and one half hour's notice. As a complement to this, mission has recommended that sufficient fixed wing aircraft be available on a four-hour standby basis at Clark AFB, U-Tapao AFB, or other locations to accommodate in one cycle the remaining Americans. Helicopter airlift -

USSAG/7AF, at the direction of CINCPAC, has developed a plan

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(USSAG/7AF 050510Z APR 75 to CINCPAC, SECRET message, Subj: Talon Vise CONPLAN Option IV) for helicopter evacuation of U.S. non-combatants and designed aliens from the Saigon area. Prior to Eagle Pull, helo assets would accommodate approximately 1,100 evacuees per lift cycle. In view of security forces contemplated, this would permit only 300-400 non-security force personnel to be evacuated. After Eagle Pull, about 2,100 could be lifted per cycle. Again, in view of the security force, this would permit evacuation of about 1,300. Each cycle is planned to require approximately one hour and twenty minutes, which may be on the slow side. Forces available for the conduct of this operation are U.S. forces stationed in Thailand and U.S. Navy forces in the South China Sea. They will require 24-hours notification.

1. Adequate security is absolutely essential to carry out successfully any rapid emergency evacuation should one be required. Experience gained in Danang and Nha Trang underscore that security is sine qua non. In connection with the possible use of U.S. military assets and in order to render our planning effective if needed, it is absolutely essential that mission be prepared (and that there be appropriate advance authority available) to implement immediately and without hesitation on signal from here any or all of the following actions as they may be appropriate to evacuation modes generally described above.

(1) Introduction of military transport aircraft from bases in the Philippines and/or Thailand to Tan Son Nhut, and possibly Bien Hoa.

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(2) Introduction of military helo lift now with CTF 76 and additional helos now available or shortly due to arrive in the vicinity.

(3) Introduction of necessary forces to secure the airfield and/or helicopter LZs should this become necessary.

(4) The use of combat aircraft to suppress possible attempts to interfere with the evacuation by military force. Steps necessary in Washington to enable immediate implementation of the above should be taken now. Any hesitation at the time the actual need arises could have the gravest consequences. It is the missions's understanding that all of the measures outlined above are at present within the discretionary authority of the executive branch and advance clearance is essential to allow this mission to react in time to meet the needs of any situation that may develop.

m. As noted above, voluntary departure to date amount to accelerated movement out of dependents and non-essential personnel. We believe that this has had minimum adverse psychological and political effect on the GVN and the South Vietnamese generally. We believe that acceleration of dependent/non-essential personnel departures process must go forward, but that so long as it is conducted in low-key, low visibility manner it should not have effect of creating panic conditions. However, if we are to be in position to cope with some possible contingencies it is essential that all necessary authorities be delegated to mission to permit the departure process accelerate. For example, Department was

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insisting as late as six days ago that emergency travel orders for dependents be submitted to Department for case-by-case basis decision. Blanket authority to issue advance travel orders for State personnel was only received on 3 April and for AID on 7 April.

n. Description of organizational arrangements and brief summary of operational priorities contained in immediately following telegram: Martin quote Kissinger

8. USSAG/7AF message 181230Z APR 75 to CINCPAC issued OPLAN 5060V-2-75, Noncombatant emergency and evacuation (NEMVAC) plan for RVN (Option IV). This message contained 129 pages which delineated directions for helicopter airlift operations conducted to evacuate U.S. noncombatants and designated aliens from Saigon and vicinity. Preparation of the plan was directed by CINCPAC and supports CINCPAC CONPLAN 5060V

9. USSAG/7AF message 190630Z APR 75 provided the initial USSAG/7AF OPLAN 5060V-3-75, FREQUENT WIND, Option III. Option III is the military controlled sealift evacuation of U.S. noncombatants and designated non-U.S. personnel from RVN. This message addresses the sealift evacuation of 1500, 3000, and 6000 personnel. Evacuation exclusively by sealift is considered undesirable for the following reasons:

a. Concentration of all U.S. and other key designated evacuees aboard one or two ships requiring protection throughout a twelve hour voyage to international waters does not appear prudent.

b. The distance between the DAO compound and Newport may

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be very difficult to traverse under a nonpermissive environment. It is more probably that small numbers (less than 6000) LF evacuees will be airlifted out of Tan Son Nhut or by helicopter from the DAO compound, as they will probably be the last to leave and will have been assembled at those locations.

c. Free passage in the river may be denied by hostile GVN naval elements. (The ship or ships must traverse the Vietnamese navy base as it departs).

d. Areas of shoreline may be held by VC/NVA elements with weapons capable of interfering with ship passages which would unduly endanger the entire evacuee shipment.

e. The remaining pages covered details of the sealift evacuation.

10. CINCPAC message 192345Z APR 75 to JCS explained CONPLAN 5060V:

a. This plan is designed to evacuate 6000 people and can be scaled down to lesser numbers (1500-3000). Ground Security Forces remain constant. Aircraft and ships used can be sized to number of evacuees. Ship capability is oversized for 6000 level to enhance successful evacuation in event airlift becomes impossible. Should air and ship modes remain operable through entire evacuation, more than 6000 people can be evacuated. Transportation requirements will vary according to the number of evacuees. Plan follows:

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"CINCPAC CONPLAN 5060V - FREQUENT WIND (C)"

References: (A) CINCPAC CONPLAN 5060, 29 Nov 75.

(B) USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V, 28 Feb 75.

(C) USSAG/7AF 090435Z APR 75, OPLAN
5060V-2-75, (Option IV, Helicopter Evacuation)

(D) USSAG/7AF 171130Z APR 75, OPLAN
5060V-1-75 FREQUENT WIND (Option II,
Military airlift evacuation)

(E) USSAG 190630Z APR 75, OPLAN 5060V-3-75
(Option III, military sealift evacuation)

(F) JCS 172323Z APR 75 (Execute)

11. CINCPAC message 200309Z APR 75 to USSAG/7AF approved
USSAG/7AF OPLAN 5060V-3-75, Option III, Military Controlled Sealift
Evacuation, with 5 exceptions.

12. USSAG/7AF message 211310Z APR 75 to Navy and Air Force
Task Units, issued alerting frag orders and forwarded detailed planning
in anticipation of execution of USSAG/7AF OPLAN 5060V-2-75 (Option IV)
evacuation by helicopter. The message contained 43 pages.

13. USSAG/7AF message 220930Z APR 75 issued an updated and
approved OPLAN 5060V-1-75, FREQUENT WIND, Option II, (Airlift Option).
This plan delineated detail (91 pages) tasks and responsibilities of military
organizations directly subordinate to USSAG/7AF and others tasked by
CINCPAC to render the necessary support.

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14. USSAG/7AF message 241145Z APR 75 to CINCPAC, a draft OPLAN 5060V-4-75, per CINCPAC request:

a. USSAG/7AF OPLAN 5060V-4-75 provides for U.S. military direction of fixed wing airlift and sealift operations conducted to evacuate U.S. noncombatants and designated aliens from Saigon and vicinity. This plan was written in support of Option V (200,000 evacuees) of USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V, Frequent Wind (C), previously nicknamed Talon Vise. The plan delineates tasks and responsibilities of military organizations directly subordinate to COMUSSAG/7AF and other military organizations tasked by CINCPAC to render the necessary support. Preparation of the plan was directed by CINCPAC and supports CINCPAC CONPLAN 5060, noncombatant emergency and evacuation (NEMVAC) plan.

b. Details of the plan contained 66 pages.

15. JCS message 241804Z APR 75 to CINCPAC issued an execute order.

a. For CINCPAC: You are authorized to execute Options II, III, and/or IV USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V - Frequent Wind, when requested by U.S. Ambassador, Saigon. Restrictions on operations previously established, as well as the following, apply:

b. Force limited to that required to protect and secure evacuation of U.S. nationals, and to protect lift assets.

c. Force insertion limited to areas in and around Saigon.

d. Civilian casualties will be avoided and collateral damage limited consistent with mission accomplishment.

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e. Ground forces will not, repeat not, be used to secure Vung Tau without specific authority from JCS.

f. This message grants authority for such additional preparatory actions to position, only upon specific request of U.S. Ambassador, Saigon, such Air, Naval and Ground forces as may be required within the precepts of CONPLAN Frequent Wind to support noncombatant evacuation from Vietnam. Keep ALCON advised. Reporting procedures outlined in paragraphs 3, Annex N to USSAG CONPLAN Frequent Wind apply.

g. For CSAF: Task MAC to provide appropriate support to CINCPAC as required to implement COMUSSAG CONPLAN Frequent Wind. Required funding will be addressed during coordination with CINCPAC.

h. For CINCSAC: Provide appropriate support to CINCPAC as required to implement COMUSSAG/7AF CONPLAN Frequent Wind.

16. JCS message 271623Z APR 75 to CINCPAC noted the following:

a. Following is a clarification of conditions under which C-141 flights into Tan Son Nhut will terminate and conditions under which remaining DAO personnel will be expeditiously evacuated.

b. First attack by fire against Tan Son Nhut will terminate C-141 operations. All further fixed wing operations will utilize C-130 aircraft. The first attack by fire on TSN will not, however, automatically initiate evacuation of all DAO personnel. That decision will be made by DAO Saigon in conjunction with COMUSSAG at such time as it is determined

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that the scope and pattern of the attacks project a meaningful near term danger to further fixed wing operations.

17. Following is the helolift schedule for evacuation from the DAO and AMEMBASSY landing zones:

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CALL SIGN	DAO		EMB		TOTAL		REMARKS
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	
SPACE 2-1/2-2/2-3	G 105	150			105	150	One Helo PU Embassy
SPACE 1-1/1-2	G 105	100			210	250	
SPACE 4-2/4-3/2-2	G 105	158			315	408	
PINEAPPLE 6-1/6-3	G 105	130			420	538	
PINEAPPLE 5-1/5-2/5-3	G 105	170			525	708	
PINEAPPLE 8-1	G 105	195			630	903	
PINEAPPLE 9-1	G 105	186			735	1089	
PINEAPPLE 10-1	G 105	110			840	1199	
JOLLY GREEN 1-2/1-3	---	162			840	1361	
PINEAPPLE 7-0	---	200			840	1561	
PINEAPPLE 7-1	---	205			840	1766	
JOLLY GREEN 12-1	---	161			840	1927	
SPACE 2-1	---	50			840	1977	
LADY ACE 8	---	46			840	2023	
SPACE 1-3	---	---	---	52	840	2075	
SWIFT 2-1/2-2	---	135	---	---	840	2210	
SPACE 2-3	---	G 39	---	---	840	2249	
PINEAPPLE 7-1	---	250	---	---	840	2499	
LADY ACE 809	---	---	---	20	840	2519	
SPACE 4-1	---	180	---	---	840	2699	
SPACE 1-1	---	200	---	---	840	2899	
SPACE 3-2	---	173	---	---	840	3072	
SPACE 2-3/2-2	---	---	---	133	840	3205	
KNIFE 10	---	195	---	---	840	3400	
KNIFE 11	---	198	---	---	840	3598	

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CALL SIGN	DAO		EMB		TOTAL		REMARKS
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	
PINEAPPLE 81-/8-2/8-3	---	192	---	---	840	3790	
JOLLY GREEN 12-1	---	194	---	---	840	3984	
SPACE 3-6	---	51	---	---	840	4035	
SWIFT 23/30	---	35	---	---	840	4070	
JOLLY GREEN 1-1/1-2	---	76	---	---	840	4146	
SWIFT 3-1/2-5	---	---	---	37	840	4183	
LADY ACE 01	---	---	---	40	840	4223	
KNIFE 11-1/11-2	---	---	---	120	840	4343	
PINEAPPLE 5-3	---	---	---	59	840	4402	
JOLLY GREEN 12-3	---	---	---	60	840	4462	
SPACE 2-3	---	---	---	65	840	4527	
SWIFT 2-4	---	---	---	29	840	4556	
KNIFE 10-3	---	---	---	47	840	4603	
PINEAPPLE 61	---	---	---	75	840	4678	
SPACE 1-1	---	---	---	70	840	4748	
PINEAPPLE 8-1	---	---	---	49	840	4797	
SWIFT 2-1	---	---	---	21	840	4818	
SWIFT 33	---	---	---	23	840	4841	
LADY ACE 5-3	---	---	---	70	840	4911	
SWIFT 25	---	---	---	20	840	4931	
LADY ACE 814	G 39	---	---	25	879	4956	Inserted last wee
SPACE 2-3	---	G 33	---	---	879	4989	
JOLLY GREEN	---	G 40	---	---	879	5029	
SPACE 15-1	---	---	---	21	879	5050	
PINEAPPLE 61	---	G 21	---	---	879	5071	
SWIFT 30	---	---	---	22	879	5093	

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CALL SIGN	DAO		EMB		TOTAL		REMARKS
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	
KNIFE 10-2	---	G 50	---	---	879	5143	
SWIFT 2-3	---	---	---	20	879	5163	
LADY ACE 21	---	---	---	21	879	5184	
LADY ACE 10	---	---	---	42	879	5226	
SPACE 10-2	---	---	---	50	879	5276	
KNIFE 10-1	---	G 40	---	---	879	5316	
SPACE 13-3	---	---	---	35	879	5351	
PINEAPPLE 71	---	44	---	---	879	5395	
SWIFT 2-1	---	---	---	25	879	5420	
SWIFT 2-5	---	---	---	25	879	5445	
SWIFT 3-3	---	---	---	21	879	5466	
KNIFE 11-3	---	G 50	---	---	879	5516	
KNIFE 1-2	---	G 44	---	---	879	5560	
SPACE 4-1/4-2	---	G 76	---	---	879	5636	
SPACE 37	---	G 28	---	---	879	5664	
SWIFT 30	---	G 28	---	---	879	5692	
LADY ACE 13/10	---	---	---	52	879	5744	
LADY ACE 840	---	---	---	52	879	5796	
PINEAPPLE 61	---	---	---	68	879	5864	
SWIFT 3-3/2-1	---	---	---	47	879	5911	
LADY ACE 09/01	---	---	---	55	879	5966	
SPACE 10				50		6016	Presidential Begins
SPACE 25				25		6041	
SPACE 21				35		6076	

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CALL SIGN	DAO		EMB		TOTAL		REMARKS
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	
LADY ACE 13				21	879	6097	
SPACE 03				53	6150		
LADY ACE 09				20	6170		
LADY ACE 01				21	6191		
PINEAPPLE 61				61	6252		
KNIFE 11-2				60	6312		
SPACE 17				69	6381		
SWIFT 33				20	6401		
KNIFE 11-2				0	6401		BINGO FUEL
SPACE 05				65	6466		
PINEAPPLE 9-3				65	6531		
LADY ACE 14				20	6551		
PINEAPPLE 18 (SA7)				65	6616		GND FIRE NEWPORT AR 3 SA-7
LADY ACE 10				22	6638		
SPACE 10				75	6713		
SPACE 81				75	6788		
PINEAPPLE 17 (CH-53)				0	6788		LOW FUEL
LADY ACE 09				24	6812		W/TIGER FEET WET 292121Z MARTIN
LADY ACE 01			G	21	6833		
LADY ACE 13			G	16	6849		
LADY ACE 10			G	4	6853		
LADY ACE 14			G	21	6874		
SPACE 25				0	6874		DISORIENTED
SWIFT 33			G	20	6894		

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CALL SIGN	DAO		EMB		TOTAL		REMARKS
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	
LADY ACE 09			G	20		6914	
LADY ACE 01			G	22		6936	
LADY ACE 13			G	25		6961	
SWIFT 25			G	20		6981	
SWIFT 33			G	22		7003	
SWIFT 22			G	11		7014	
TOTAL	G 879	4395	---	2619	879	7014*	TOTAL PAX OUT 6135

*includes GSF

1. GSF in - Not broken down for DAO and EMB. All carried under DAO. (based on frag)
2. GSF out - TOTAL (total of all G --- entries) indicates 651. Remainder carried under PAX. Not all reports specified GSF or PAX.
3. DAO CLEAR 290612W April 1975
4. EMB CLEAR 291350W April 1975
5. LAST CHOPPER ABOARD CARRIER 291433W April 1975

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18. Following is a list of authorities used during Frequent Wind operations:

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INDEX

1. AIRLIFT SCHEDULE GUIDANCE
90/ JCS 6439/181911Z APR 75/Airlift
Schedule 20 Apr 75
2. ALIEN DEPENDENTS AMCITS GUIDANCE SECSTATE 150721Z APR 75/E and E and
Alien Dependents of U.S. Citizens
3. ALIENS, DIRECTED RESTRICT USE US SECSTATE 150234Z APR 75/(AMEMB SGN)
TRANSPORT Vietnamese Aliens
4. ARG ALPHA/ARG BRAVO PORT VISIT JCS 8504/121954Z APR 75/ARG ALPHA/ARG
CONCURRENCE BRAVO Scheduling
5. ASSETS MOVEMENT/DESTINATION VNAF & VNN JCS 2114/241953Z APR 75/VNAF & VNN
Assets
6. ARG BRAVO ORDERED RECONSTITUTED JCS 9052/040022Z APR 75/Support for
Emergency Evacuation
7. BABYLIFT AUTHORIZED USE MILITARY AIR JCS 9531/041210Z APR 75/Airlift of
Vietnamese Orphans
8. BABYLIFT REQUIREMENTS REQUESTED JCS 9781/041702Z APR 75 (DAO SGN)/
Vietnam Orphans
9. BABYLIFT SUSPENDED JCS 6277/191206Z APR 75/ Operation
Babylift
SECSTATE 182155Z APR 75/Operation
Babylift
JCS 3811/171439Z APR 75/Operation
Babylift
10. BABYLIFT SUSPENSION REMOVED SECSTATE 1796/190420Z APR 75 (AMEMB SG
Operation Babylift
11. BEACH SURVEY COORDINATION DIRECTED JCS 6532/192302Z APR 75/Frequent Wind
12. BEACH SURVEY DISAPPROVED JCS 9762/231759Z APR 75/Frequent Wind
13. BIRD AIR CONTRACT REINSTATE JCS 3294/251936Z APR 75 (CSAF)/Airlift
Support - Bird Air Contract
14. BIRD AIR USE AUTHORIZED (CAMBODIA) JCS 7917/030003Z APR 75/Cambodia
Situations
15. CHARTERS AUTHORIZED (MSC) JCS 8548/221749Z APR 75 (COMSC)/
Refugee Evacuation
16. CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES (VN) DOD SECDEF 9733/041622Z APR 75/Organizatio
DIRECTIVE for Military Assistance in VN

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17. CIVIL AIR SCHEDULES RESTRICTION LIFTED
SECSTATE 077760/052050Z APR 75/Lifting Restriction on Regularly Scheduled US Civil Air Carrier Operations in SVN
SECSTATE 077754/051951Z APR 75 (AMEMB SGN)/ FAA Order to Stop Commercial Flights
18. CIVILIAN SHIPS ASSISTANCE REFUSED
SECSTATE 077799/060710Z APR 75/ Evacuation of Vietnamese Refugees
SECDEF 1913/051627Z APR 75 (SECSTATE) Evacuation of Vietnamese Refugees
19. CONTROL OF EVACUATION MOVEMENT AUTHORIZED
JCS 3522/252215Z APR 75/Operation Newlife
20. C-130 FLIGHTS IF TSN ATTACKED 92/
JCS 8969/230004Z APR 75/VN Evacuation Operations
21. DAO SGN MANPOWER REDUCTIONS DIRECTED
JCS 8802/032040Z APR 75/Organization for Military Assistance in VN
22. DEPLOYMENT DIRECTIVE BLT TO OKINAWA 93/
JCS 6391/210118Z APR 75/Frequent Wind Planning
23. DEPLOYMENTS, 2 DE NOT AUTHORIZED
JCS 7916/030001Z APR 75/Contingency Support for Refugee Evacuation
24. EQUIPMENT, RELEASE OF AID
SECSTATE 094342/240225Z APR 75/Release of Equipment for Vietnamese Refugees
25. EVACUATION COMMANDER ON-SCENE DELETED
JCS 9909/150407Z APR 75/Refugee Operations
JCS 8794/131309Z APR 75/Vietnam Refugee Operations
26. EVACUATION DIRECTIVE AUTHORIZED 94/ Parole/High Risk
JCS 8394/121508Z APR 75/Evacuation from the Republic of VN
27. EVACUATION HELOS (USAF) MOVEMENT
JCS 5254/181753Z APR 75/Frequent Wind Forces
28. FLIGHT DEPARTURE FOR CLARK
SECSTATE 09616S/251902Z APR 75 (AMEMB SGN)/Orphan Airlift
29. FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR SEALIFT/AIRLIFT
JCS 8998/032327Z APR 75/Vietnam Refugee Evacuation

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30. GUAM DESIGNATED FIRST STAGING POINT <u>91/</u>	JCS 2014/221707Z APR 75/Safe Haven
31. GUAM DESIGNATED REFUGEE CAMP	JCS 9227/230606Z APR 75/Refugee Camp on Guam
	SECSTATE 0928290/230234Z APR 75/ E & E: Designation of Guam as a Staging Area for VN Refugees
32. GUAM SERIOUS PROBLEMS	SECSTATE 095769/250229Z APR 75 (AMEMB MANILA) Restaging Site Guam
33. GUAM STOP FLIGHTS	SECSTATE 095769/250229Z APR 75 (AMEMB MANILA) Restaging Site Guam
34. HOST GOVERNMENT APPROACHED FOR STAGING AREAS	SECSTATE 090485/190051Z APR 75/Staging Areas for Evacuation of Refugees from SVN
35. INDOCHINA SITUATION REQUIRES DOD ASSISTANCE	SECSTATE 11652/220236Z APR 75 (SECDEF Indochina Evacuees
36. INFORMATION <u>95/</u> Johnston Atoll	DIA 041406Z APR 75/Prevention US Evacuees Leaving TSN
37. LOGISTICS SUPPORT ESTIMATE SAFE HAVEN REQUEST	JCS 6736/201201Z APR 75/Evacuation Planning for VN
38. MAC CONTRACT AUTHORIZATION	JCS 8968/230002Z APR 75 (CSAF) Commercial Charter Airlift Evacuation Schedule
39. MAC CHARTER, BLANKET TRAVEL ORDERS DIRECTED	JCS 5823/190220Z APR 75 (CSAF/MAC) Use of MAC Charter for Evacuation
40. MSC SHIPS ADDITIONAL FUNDS PROVIDED	JCS 9611/041348Z APR 75/Refugee Evacuation
41. MSC SHIPS COST ESTIMATE REQUESTED	JCS 6218/101620Z APR 75/Refugee Operations
42. MAC CHARTER RESTRICTION EXPANDED	JCS 6676/200720Z APR 75 (CSAF/MAC) Use of MAC Charter Flight
43. MSC SHIPS SAIL ONLY WITH JCS APPROVAL	JCS 5912/190351Z APR 75/Vietnam Evacuation
	JCS 5691/190008Z APR 75/VN Evacuatio
44. OFFLOAD POINTS APPROVED	SECSTATE 075885/032243Z APR 75/NEMV/ Planning

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45. ONWARD TRANSPORT FOR EVACUEES	JCS 5276/181825Z APR 75/ONWARD Travel of US DOD Evacuees from Cambodia
46. PACFLT SHIPS RESTRICTION DIRECTED	JCS 3948/171716Z APR 75/VN Evacuation Operation
47. PLANNING DIRECTIVE	JCS 7754/220047Z APR 75/Evacuation Planning for RVN
48. PLANNING DIRECTIVE APPROVAL	JCS 7517/111915Z APR 75/Evacuation Planning Saigon
49. PLANNING DIRECTIVE, ASSESSMENT REQUESTED	JCS 7139/211256Z APR 75/Concept for Support of the Evacuation of RVN Refugees
50. PLANNING DIRECTIVE (INITIAL)	SECSTATE 150649Z APR 75/E & E Plannin JCS 142215Z PASEP DAO SGN 4527 JCS 142130Z PASEP SECSTATE 102337Z APR 75
51. PLANNING DIRECTIVE GUIDANCE VARIED NUMBERS	JCS 8824/131654Z APR 75/Evacuation Planning for VN
52. PLANNING DIRECTIVE JCS NON CONCURS USE CONUS/ROK HELOS	JCS 8995/032320Z APR 75/Vietnam Evacuation
53. PLANNING DIRECTIVE MEDICAL SUPPORT	JCS 6802/201801Z APR 75/Medical Support to RVN Refugees
54. PLANNING DIRECTIVE REQUESTED	SECSTATE 150601Z APR 75/ E & E Planni
55. PLANNING DIRECTIVE REQUEST EXPAND USSAG/7AF OPTION IV	JCS 4418/180005Z APR 75/Evacuation Planning for VN
56. PLANNING DIRECTIVE (EVACUEES) REQUEST RESOLVE LEGAL QUESTIONS	SECSTATE 150630Z APR 75 (POLAD) E AND E
57. PLANNING DIRECTIVE REQUEST STATUS	SECSTATE 088999/180413Z APR 75/VN Evacuation
58. PENETRATION OF RVN COAST UNAUTHORIZED	JCS 8967/222359Z APR 75/Amphibious Shipping for Evacuation of RVN
59. PENETRATION OF RVN TERRITORIAL WATERS BY HELOS (RESULTS)	JCS 8914/032156Z APR 75/Penetration of RVN Territorial Waters
60. PUBLIC AFFAIRS AUTHORIZED MEDIA RESPONSE	SECSTATE 200118Z APR 75/Embassy PA Assistance to Clark Evac Center

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61. RED CROSS AUTH ASSISTANCE AT GUAM	USMISSION GENEVA/231702Z/(SECSTATE) Designation of Guam as Staging Area for Vietnamese Refugees
62. RED CROSS INABILITY TO ASSIST	USMISSION GENEVA/241705Z APR 75 (SEC- STATE)/Staging of Vietnamese at Guam
63. RCA REQUEST UPDATE	JCS 6307/101810Z APR 75/ROE Evacuatio VN/Cambodia
64. REFUGEES LONG HAI - PHU QUOC	CINCPAC 251511Z APR 75/USDAO SGN 251400Z APR 75/Refugee Operations
65. ROE DIRECTIVE PHAN RANG/PHAN THIET	JCS 3237/170030Z APR 75/VN Evacuation Operation
66. ROE PHU QUOC OPERATIONS	JCS 2141/060452Z APR 75/Phu Quoc Evacuations Operations SECSTATE 077798/060400Z APR 75 Situation at Phu Quoc Island
67. SEA LORAN ALERTING DIRECTIVE	JCS 5453/182110Z APR 75/Sea Loran
68. SECURE VOICE CIRCUIT DIRECTIVE	JCS 5360/182003Z APR 75/Secure Voice Conferencing
69. SECURITY FORCES AUTHORIZED INITIAL SURVEY	JCS 2040/052347Z APR 75/Request for Security Forces
70. INFORMATION SECSTATE ASKS REASONS FOR NEGATIVE REPLY ON REQUESTED TEAM SECURITY FORCES DISAPPROVED	SECSTATE 4129/031052Z APR 75/E and E Planning JCS 7928/030016Z APR 75/Request for Security Forces
71. SECURITY GUARD AUTHORIZED DAO SGN	JCS 1844/241626Z/Internal Security
72. SECURITY GUARDS AUTHORIZED MSC SHIPS	JCS 7005/020155Z APR 75/Vietnam Evacuation Operations
73. SECURITY GUARDS AUTHORIZED EMBARK MSC SHIPS	JCS 3948/171715Z APR 75/VN Evacuatio Operations
74. SECURITY GUARDS MSC EMBARK AT SEA	JCS 5374/182011Z APR 75/Vietnam Evacuation
75. SECURITY GUARDS AUTHORIZED MSC SHIPS	JCS 5120/181536Z APR 75/Vietnam Evacuation

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76. SECURITY FOR DAO SGN DISAPPROVED
(RIFLE PLAT)

CINCPACFLT 130422Z APR 75/Evacuation
of the Republic of VN

JCS 1105/232239Z APR 75/Internal
Security

JCS 5429/182052Z APR 75/USDAO SGN
Compound Security Augmentation

JCS 6471/192007Z APR 75/USDAO SGN
Compound Security Augmentation

77. SHIPS SGN WATERS ORDERED TO SEA

JCS 9452/231218Z APR 75 (COMSC)/
Movement of Ships from SGN Waters

78. SITREP REQUIREMENT

JCS 6427/191854Z APR 75/VN
Evacuation Operations

79. SERVICE CONTROLLED SITES/FACILITIES
SURVEY REQUEST

CINCPAC 202316Z APR 75/Frequent Win

80. TSN AIRPORT SECURITY STATUS

SECSTATE 076258/040514Z APR 75/
Security at TSN Airport

81. TRANSFER OF REFUGEES
(LIMITATIONS, PROHIBITIONS)

JCS 5119/300310Z APR 75/Limitations
on US Refugee Evacuation Operations

82. VNAF AIRCRAFT MOVEMENT PLANNING
DIRECTIVE

SECSTATE 150532Z APR 75/Movement of
VNAF Aircraft Outside of RVN

83. WAKE ISLAND AUTHORIZED STAGING AREA

JCS3070/251613Z APR 75
JCS 2862/251156Z APR 75
CINCPAC 250522Z APR 75/Operation
Newlife

84. WAKE ISLAND AUTHORITY GRANTED TO
EVACUATE

SECSTATE 095916/251602Z APR 75/E and
from Vietnam

85. WAR POWERS REPORT (USS DURHAM)

JCS 1180/042327Z APR 75/War Powers
Reporting

86. WIND WEASEL GUIDANCE

JCS 6449/191936Z APR 75/Frequent Wir
Wild Weasel Deployment

87. WORLD AIRWAYS UNAUTHORIZED FLIGHT

SECSTATE 095078/242136Z APR 75 (JCS)
Orphan Airlift

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19. Communication Nets used for Frequent Wind:

- a. Figure 2 - Evacuation Communications
- b. Figure 3 - Evacuation Secure Conference
- c. Figure 4 - Command and Control Net (HF)

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EVACUATION COMMUNICATIONS

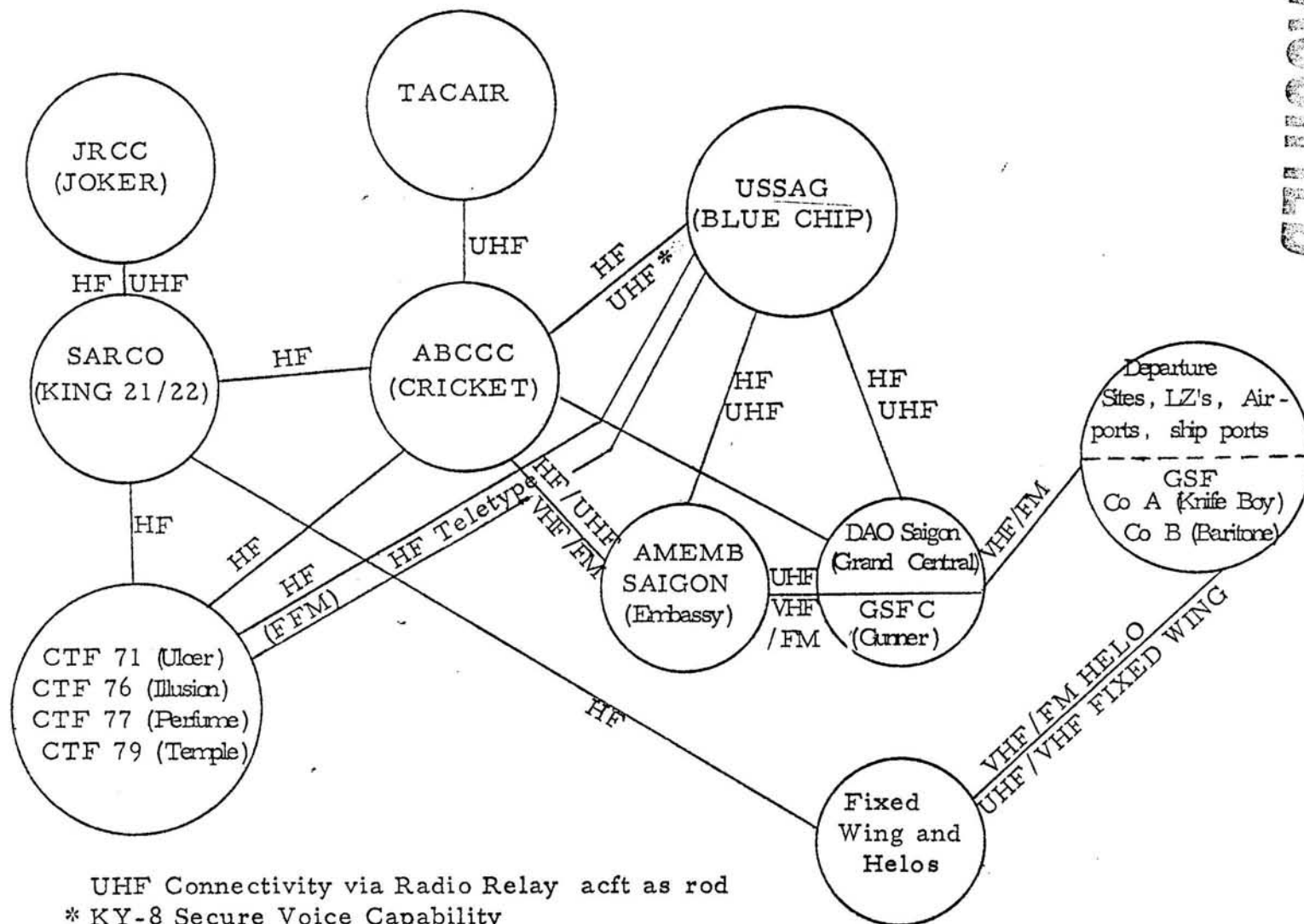


FIGURE 2

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EVACUATION SECURE CONFERENCE

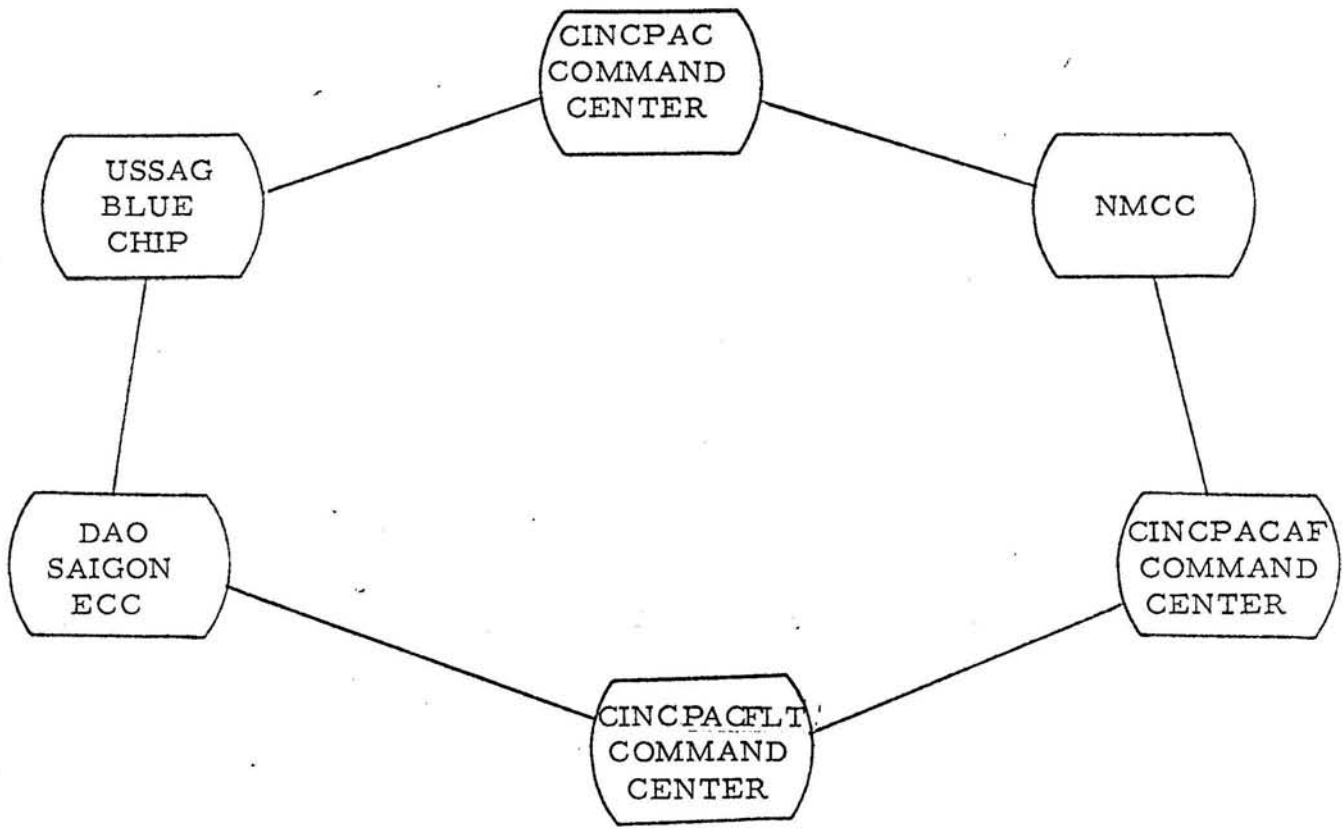


FIGURE 3

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COMMAND AND CONTROL NET (HF)

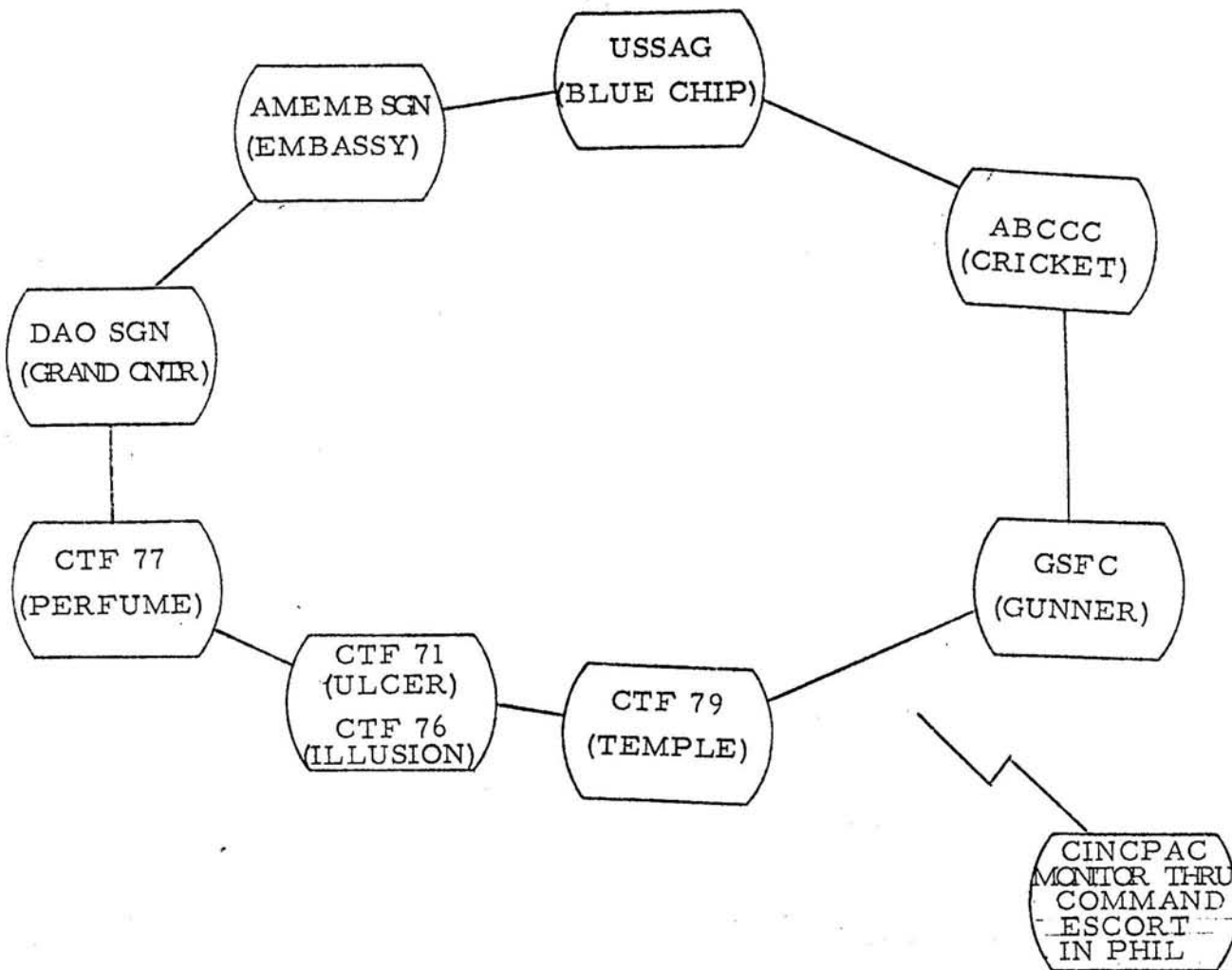


FIGURE 4

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V. ACTIVATION OF OPERATION FREQUENT WIND

1. Overall Assessment of the Operational Situation.

a. CINCPAC directed Frequent Wind option IV executed by message 290252Z APR 75.

b. The following data are provided as a final report for Operation Frequent Wind.

2. Evacuee Status

a. AMCIT evacuees:

(1) Number evacuated from DAO compound: 395.

(2) Number evacuated from Embassy Saigon: 978.

(3) Number of evacuees on MSC ships:

(a) From Saigon: 20.

(b) From Consulate Can Tho: 18.

b. VN evacuees:

(1) Number evacuated from DAO Compound: 4475.

(2) Number evacuated from Embassy Saigon: 1120.

3. Frequent Wind Operation Statistics:

a. Time of Execution: 290252Z APR 75.

b. Time of first helo touchdown, Saigon: 290706Z APR 75.

c. Number of GSF offloaded DAO Compound: 865.

d. Number of GSF offloaded Embassy Saigon: 130.

e. Time of last helo lift-off, Saigon: 292346Z APR 75.

f. Time of last helo recovery at sea: 300033Z APR 75.

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g. Number of sorties flown:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Navy/Marine</u>
CH-46	N/A	266
CH-53	68	290
HH-53	14	0
TACAIR	F-4 115	173
	A-7 12	
COBRA	0	24
AC-130	8	
Other	C-141 2	12 (Note: does not include USAF HH/CH-53)
	C-130 12	
	C-130 (ARCCC) 5	
	KC-135	44
	HC-130	2

h. Munitions Expended:

<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Navy/Marine</u>
2 CBU-58	None
2 CBU-71	
1 AGM-45	
250 7.62MM	
4 ALF-20 flares	

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i. Casualties to personnel:

(1) Air Force: None.

(2) Navy: Pilot of A-7E off USS Enterprise recovered after ejecting from aircraft which suffered engine failure at 291105Z

(3) Marine:

(a) Two crewmembers of CH-46 off USS Hancock recovered following crash at sea. Two other crewmembers missing, now assumed lost at sea, SAR terminated.

(b) Crew of AH-1J off USS Okinawa recovered after ditching at sea.

(c) Two marine GSF killed at DAO Compound by artillery fire.

j. Equipment Damage/Losses:

(1) Air Force: None.

(2) Navy: One A-7 lost.

(3) Marine: One CH-46 lost, one AH-1J lost.

k. VNAF aircraft evacuated to Thailand:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
F-5	27
C/AC-130	6
C-119	3
A-1	11
U-17	8

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<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
DC-3	1
A-37	8
C-7	3
C-47	17
Beech	1

1. VNAF aircraft located on USN ships:

UH-1 12

CH-47 1 (Note: Other VNAF helos continued to land)

m. Time operation terminated: 300033Z APR 75

4. Communications: Contact with Gia Dinh satellite search terminal ceased 291109Z. The terminal was destroyed by the departing GSF at approximately 291600Z.

5. USS Midway message 291526Z APR 75 reported that:

a. One previous evacuation run reported by CTU 76.0.9 at 291348Z APR 75. Third launch departed USS Midway 1057Z arrived LZ 37 1200Z. Embarked 58 evacuees. Vectors by Fairmont to Hancock recovering aboard 1245Z and debarked evacuees. Ground fire from 50 cal. or small arms received from within city grid square XS 8395. Silenced by 7.02mm from Jolly Green 12-2. 37mm AAA fired from north of NE end of TSN. Large convoys entering city across Newport Bridge. Appeared to be air engagement with guns NE of Nha Be.

b. Two previous runs reported by CTU 76.0.9, one this message and one DTG 281348Z APR 75. Third run departed USS Midway

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1057Z arrived LZ 32 1210Z, embarked 68 evacuees. Arrived USS Midway 1700Z. Only fire received came from north and west of TSN airfield. Appeared to be twin 40mm tracer rounds firing at high angle. Severe communication problems with single FM radio in NW area. SA-7 launches at helo from vicinity XS 9085. Two AN/ALE 20 flares dispensed and helo commenced evasive turns. No detonation observed. No damage to aircraft.

6. USSAG/7AF message 301000Z APR 75 sent the final Frequent Wind SITREP:

- a. Time of execution: 290251Z APR 75.
- b. Time of first helo touchdown Saigon: 290706Z APR 75.
- c. Time of last helo lift-off Saigon: 292346Z APR 75.
- d. Number of Air Force sorties flown:
 - (1) CH-53 - 68.
 - (2) HH-53 - 14.
 - (3) TACAIR
 - (a) F-4 - 115.
 - (b) A-7 - 12.
 - (4) Cobra - none (UH-1E)
 - (5) AC-130 - 8.
 - (6) Other
 - (a) C-141 - 2.
 - (b) C-130 - 12
 - (c) C-130 (ABCCC) - 5.
 - (d) KC-135 - 44.
 - (e) HC-130 - 2.

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e. Munitions expended:

- (1) 2 CBU-58.
- (2) 2 CBU-71.
- (3) 1 AGM-45.
- (4) 250 7.62mm.
- (5) 4 ALE-20 flares.

f. Number of GSF offloaded DAO compound: 865.

g. Number of GSF offloaded AMEMB Saigon: 130.

h. Casualties to personnel or equipment: none.

i. Number and type of VNAF aircraft evacuated to Thailand

as of 300353Z Apr 75.

- (1) A-37 8.
- (2) F-5 - 27.
- (3) A-1 - 11.
- (4) C-119 - 3.
- (5) U-17 - 8.
- (6) DC-3 - 1.
- (7) C-47 - 17.
- (8) Beech - 1.
- (9) C-7 - 3.
- (10) C/AC-130 - 6.

7. CINCPACFLT message 301927Z APR 75 reported that:

a. At 300130Z Apr 75 six UH-1 recovered aboard USS Midway

from Phu Hai airport on Con Son island and one UH-1 from Can Tho. 211

RVN personnel including crew were evacuated.

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b. Debrief reveals EST 1000 refugees on Con Son island with little food and water. No helos remain on the island. Following fixed wing located at Phu Hai:

- 2 C-130
- 3 C-47
- 3 C-119 (2 are down)
- 3 O-1
- 1 C-7
- 2 C-19
- 2 L-20

Fuel is available and intent was to fly C-130, C-47, C-119 to U-Tapao.

c. Two Americans were noted on Con Son on 29 April but were flown out by Air American. No Americans reported remaining on the island.

8. COMSEVENTHFLT message 300310Z APR 75 sent the final evacuation SITREP to CINCPAC:

- a. No. US evacuated - 1373/4.
 - (1) From DAO - 395/7.
 - (2) From AMEMB - 978/4.
- b. No. Vietnamese evacuated - 5595/4.
 - (1) From DAO - 4475/0.
 - (2) From AMEMB - 1120/4.

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c. No. /Type VNAF helos aboard USN ships:

- (1) UH-1E 12
- (2) CH-47 1

d. No. Navy/USMC missions flown:

- (1) CH-53 290
- (2) CH-48 266
- (3) HH-53 0
- (4) TACAIR 173
- (5) Cobra 24
- (6) Other 12

(Note; Above did not include 82 USAF HH/CH-53 sorties)

e. Munitions expended - none.

f. Casualties to personnel and equipment:

- (1) One A-7E lost at sea - pilot recovered.
- (2) One USMC CH-48 lost at sea - two recovered, 2 missing.
- (3) One USMC AH-1J lost at sea - crew recovered.

g. MSCOV sent:

- (1) No. of U.S. evacuees received on MSC ships:
 - (a) From Saigon - 20.
 - (b) From Can Tho - 18.
 - (c) Other - 0.

9. CINCPACFLT Message 011314Z MAY 75 summarized TF 77

12. TACAIR support:

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a. Direct support sorties: 178 TACAIR:

	<u>Enterprise</u>		<u>Coral Sea</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>
F-4	-	-	20	0	20	0
F-14	20	0	-	-	20	0
A-7	23	21	37	6	60	27
A-6	4	0	8	0	12	0
KA6	10	4	3	1	13	5
EA-6A	-	-	4	1		
EA-6B	4	3	-	-	4	3
F-1	-	-	3	0	3	0
F-2	3	3	-	-	3	3
Total	64	31	75	8	139	39

b. Other sorties: 20 SH-3 SAR/Plane guard. FORECAP, RESCAP and SURCAP were held in 5 min. deck alert.

c. Frequent Wind ordnance expenditure summary:

(1) Jettisoned at sea due to fuel/weight limitations:

MK-82	123
MK-20	124
5" Zuni	377

(2) Expended in SVN in direct support of NEMVAC

operations: none.

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VI. OTHER EVACUATION OPERATIONS

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1. Prior to Operation Frequent Wind and during the fall of Danang on 30 March 1975, chartered MSC ships and commercial aircraft evacuated South Vietnamese troops and citizens.
2. World Airways made the final flight from Danang to Saigon with 290 RVN troops and 7 women and children under conditions of extreme panic and armed harrassment.
3. Many thousands of South Vietnamese refugees fled southward to other coastal ports in an effort to be evacuated by ships or aircraft as North Vietnamese troops rapidly captured military regions 1 and 2.
4. MAC and commercial aircraft were used to evacuate U.S. and Vietnamese citizens from Saigon prior to Operation Frequent Wind. Mass movements of evacuees were airlifted from Saigon during 5 - 10 April 1975, totaling 2744 persons (1058 U.S., 432 RVN, 1254 TCN).
5. The "Baby Lift" operation had evacuated 1606 orphans by 10 April 1975. C-5A's were grounded by the U.S. Air Force after a crash took the lives of several children and caretakers. Reasons for the C-5A mishap is not known at the time of writing of this report.
6. Assets of the Vietnam Navy (LSM, LST, LCU, YOG) were used for evacuation of SVN troops and citizens from Vung Tan, Phu Quoc, Newport, Han Tan, and other ports. The refugees were eventually escorted to Subic Bay by Task Force 76.
7. Foreign vessels assisting in evacuation were: Republic of China, 4 LST's, debarked from Phu Quoc and Vung Tau; Philippine LST,

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debarked from Saigon; British, HMS Mermaid, off Han Tan; Republic of Korea, 3 LST's, debarked from Vung Tau; and German vessels, MS Reiland and Vogtlande.

8. During 5 through 10 April 1975, evacuation operations from Saigon moved 2744 evacuees (1058, U.S.; 432, RVN; 1254, TCN).

9. CINCPAC SITREP message 290818Z APR 75 to JCS stated that the total number of evacuees and locations as of 290200Z APR 75 were: Wake, 2,113; Guam, 25,300; Clark AB, 6,919; Subic, 4,892.

10. SVN President Thieu and party flew to Taipei, Taiwan after resigning on 21 April 1975.

11. Task Force 76, held area 100 miles southeast of Vung Tau on 1 May 1975 to complete inter-ship transfers from over-crowded MSC ships. For example, the Greenville Victory had over 10,000 refugees on board. MSC ship Green Forest evacuated over 1,500 persons from Con Son Island.

12. 125 VNAF aircraft were flown to Thailand by South Vietnamese pilots.

13. CINCPAC message 230139Z APR 75 directed CINCPACREP Guam to implement a Vietnamese refugee support at Guam under operation "New Life". Orte Point was converted to house 50,000 persons. An estimated 2800 general purpose tents were erected.

14. Former housing quarters of the defunct Federal Aviation Agency operation on Wake Island were used to house about 3000 refugees.

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14. Refugee centers in CONUS were activated at Camp Pendleton, California (25,000 capacity), Fort Chafee, Arkansas, and Eglin AFB, Florida.

16. On 6 May 1975, President Ford requested that the Legislative Branch should appropriate \$507 million for the resettlement of 130,000 South Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees.

17. 14 May 1975; the U.S. House voted to appropriate \$405 million for refugee resettlement, and the U.S. Senate was expected to approve the funding the next week.

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VII. LESSONS LEARNED

1. CINCPAC 010226Z MAY 75 to CINCPACFLT, CINCPACAF, USSAG/7AF, CINCSAC, CDRUSACSG, and COMUSMACTHAI requested lessons learned from operation "FREQUENT WIND" should be submitted to CINCPAC.

2. CINCSAC 022152Z MAY 75 to CINCPAC stated that "our first look at operation FREQUENT WIND indicates lead and planning time was sufficient. Tanker assets were more than adequate as only 142 AAR's were actually accomplished where the plan had fragged 226 TACAIR AAR's. The amount of fuel fragged for offload was 3,221,000 pounds versus the actual fuel offloaded of 1,251,000 pounds. 36 KC-135 sorties were flown. Six radio relay sorties were also flown to support the communications requirement. The extended time on-station flown by the first tankers prior to the arrival of receiver aircraft indicates an early execution of the tankers."

3. CDRUSACSG 030310Z MAY 75 to CINCPAC indicated that:

a. No Army HQ elements or Army forces participated directly in operation FREQUENT WIND. Elements of the 25th Infantry Division were identified for employment in selected planning options and the Division was prepared for those contingencies.

b. USACSG participated actively in CINCPAC planning process to develop various options to accomplish evacuation of Vietnam. Under

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guidance provided, this planning effort resulted in development of a number of options which called for large scale introduction of U. S. combat units into RVN; a plan which clearly was not acceptable to national authorities. JCS guidance at the outset constraining the range of options to those with reasonable chance of acceptance would have permitted more productive, orderly and meaningful planning.

c. Early decisions are required to designate Safe Havens for refugees in order to permit timely positioning of personnel and equipment and preparation of facilities. Early message traffic indicated State Department would provide timely Safe Haven information and as a result this became a basic assumption in FREQUENT WIND planning. Safe Havens were in fact designated immediately prior to actual evacuation, precipitating the hasty deployment of personnel and equipment in order to provide the facilities to accommodate and process refugees. While the reason State was late in providing Safe Haven information is not known, the delay was a costly "lesson learned" which has added to the considerable difficulties already faced by refugees. Future evacuation planning should focus carefully on this problem area.

4. CINCPACAF 040140Z MAY 75 to CINCPAC:

a. Analysis of FREQUENT WIND operation is incomplete.

However, following "lessons learned" are apparent at this time.

b. Planning:

(1) State Department published detailed information on

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potential evacuees; however, it was inaccurate and incomplete. The result was inability to accurately size the task for planning purposes, especially when the number exceeded estimates by a factor of ten or more. Recommend in future Washington and regional liaison groups take action to provide more accurate estimates of potential evacuees to military and State Department planners on a regular and timely basis. This inaccurate information persisted throughout the whole evacuation exercise making it next to impossible for the commander to properly manage lift resources.

(2) Extensive planning requirements were levied for FREQUENT WIND. Detailed planning is required for such operations, however, concepts and options should be defined as early as possible to avoid redundant planning at all levels and possible confusion.

(3) Location and distance of Safe Havens have significant impact on planning. Every effort should be made by State Department to identify Safe Havens as early as possible and effect diplomatic arrangements for their use.

c. Scheduling:

(1) During short duration high interest operations such as FREQUENT WIND, it is imperative that command channels be kept informed regarding latest OPlan/frag/schedule changes. Recommend a simplified system of reporting planning factors and essentials such as sorties, timing, aircraft on station, weapon loads, tanker requirements,

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etc., be established along with OPlan/frag publications. Each HHQ should establish an OPR to track planning actions at lower levels and respond to operational planning questions, thus reducing higher headquarters inquiries.

d. Execution:

(1) An apparent tendency exists to delay final evacuation beyond prudent limits. Since use of military force is likely to provoke corresponding reactions that could endanger lives of NEMVACs and jeopardize entire evacuation, it is essential, whenever possible, to execute NEMVAC plans prior to point when force will be required. Realizing that decision to evacuate remains with State Department/Embassy, it is imperative that military commanders and advisors at all levels keep their State Department counterparts fully advised of military situation and dangers of delaying evacuation. This military responsibility was obviously carried out purposefully and in detail for Cambodia and Vietnam but certainly bears reemphasis for future NEMVAC.

(2) FREQUENT WIND plan and existing military situation established the requirement to position TACAIR in the evacuation area prior to L-hour for continuous protection of evacuation forces, thereby enabling flexible and immediate response by C-130 and/or helo evacuation aircraft. Yet decision to withhold TACAIR during initiation of maximum C-130 airlift evacuation (prior to Option IV) could have unnecessarily

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exposed evacuation forces to hostile action or delayed the evacuation while TACAIR was enroute. Requirement for TACAIR (minimum posture of airborne alert) remains valid in similar situation.

(3) Recommend use of same time reference (Zulu time) by all forces to avoid confusion.

(4) Formating of execution messages for verbal as well as message transmission could expedite communications.

e. Command/Control/Communications:

(1) Fixed wing airlift evacuation, prior to OPlan execution, revealed need for ABCCC or similar aircraft on station to assure aircraft contact with controlling agencies at all times during operations in a hostile environment.

(2) MIJI reports submitted by SAR and other special mission aircraft reveal the need to assign discrete backup frequencies to complement international SAR frequencies.

(3) When military control conditions have been initiated the senior military NEMVAC commander on scene should have clear authority over State Department officials for evacuation of personnel IAW established NEMVAC priorities as the security situation dictates.

f. Intelligence Support:

(1) Rapidly changing tactical situation, including hostile air defense environment, generated additional SIGINT support requirements

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for FREQUENT WIND. Encourage early attention to SIGINT requirements for contingency plans to allow for planned SIGINT coverage and development of procedures for issuing threat alerts.

(2) Feasibility of COMBAT APPLE and VQ-1 aircraft maintaining contact with ABCCC on VHF/UHF secure communications should be investigated. This would provide mechanism for passing threat info directly to ABCCC.

(3) During crisis situations, IPAC, or other central agency should be designated single source to provide timely intelligence data on crisis area to units having peripheral requirement. Prohibition on direct communications with crisis area by other intelligence agencies should be implemented to prevent saturation.

g. Rules of Engagement:

(1) Initial ROE for WILD WEASEL were overly restrictive. Future planning for contingency operations should include ROE that allow operating flexibility based on the contingency situation.

h. Evacuee Reporting:

(1) Washington and regional liaison groups should develop complete personnel evacuation reporting requirements and procedures to be included in NEMVAC plans. Procedures should include frequency, content, format, and addressees with formatted message attached. Similar but separate reporting procedures are necessary to track status of evacuees at Safe Haven/onward movement sites with special emphasis to consolidate the requirements of all agencies.

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5. USSAG/7AF 050400Z MAY 75 sent the following initial

observations and lessons learned:

a. / Planning:

(1) During formulation of the OPlan, the changing situation in RVN necessitated constant revision of the concept and assumptions on which the CONPLAN was based. Planning based on the Saigon enclave scenario did not begin until 2 April 1975. Due to the uncertainty that existed as to the number of potential evacuees, an open ended plan was required. The time compression between initial planning and execution confirmed the essentiality of the joint planning group which was maintained through execution. In this case, the continuous presence of representatives from both the Fleet and the GSF, working in conjunction with USSAG planners, were essential to the speedy and complete development of a workable plan, the lack of even reasonably accurate estimates of the number of evacuees required planning for a lift flow capability with necessary support forces and the time to complete the operations to be determined when the numbers of evacuees was ascertained. This, coupled with the requirement to submit proposed plans to handle different "wags" on both the numbers and modes of evacuation overloaded the small planning staff. Changes in details of flow and integration were continuous and, under pressure of imminent execution, allowed minimum time for units to study and work out implementing details, the undetermined length

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of the operation required integration of supporting air forces to protect the helicopters, GSF and evacuees over a long period, assumed one full daylight period of approximately 12 hours. Takeoff of various support aircraft was varied but the first takeoff (a KC-135 tanker) had to occur three hours before the first helicopter reached the LZ if the complete support capability was to be available.

b. Evacuation:

(1) The decision to go to a military controlled evacuation was delayed until the situation at TSN denied use of the airfield to fixed wing aircraft and the movement of evacuees within the city to the planned pickup Landing Zone (LZ) was impeded and shortly thereafter halted. This late decision denied the use of a large part of the daylight hours which subsequently slowed evacuation progress by extending it into the hours of darkness.

(2) The plan required four hours (from one hour to launch posture) to generate the support package and move the helicopters to the LZ. At the urging of higher headquarters, instructions were issued to launch TACAIR ASAP and helicopters to arrive LZ 15 minutes later. This could have resulted in no WILD WEASEL support in an area of uncertainty with regard to SA-2's; however, the repositioning of the GSF to affect insertion precluded more rapid helicopter reaction. Some misunderstandings of the response posture of one hour to launch was evident from queries received from higher headquarters in the early period

of execution

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(3) Concern over the affect of the evacuation of selected U.S. and RVN personnel on the rest of the RVN population resulted in an over-cautious use of available airlift in the early days and delayed the decision by the Ambassador to request military evacuation. Failure to move evacuees to primary LZ's forced operation from the Embassy at a level not anticipated. From a planned one to two helicopter loads (if the Ambassador had not been relocated to the DAO compound) to an initially reported 500 to an eventually estimated 2500 resulted in greatly extended operation from the least capable LZ considered in the plan.

c. Command and Control:

(1) Forces were committed and operated in accordance with the plan. Distance and complexity of communications plan caused occasional difficulties in passing instructions and receiving information. This was exacerbated by the late requirement to provide detailed information on a real time basis to higher headquarters, which contributed to saturation of communications and control personnel.

(2) Estimates of remaining evacuees at the Embassy were constantly changed; apparently as a result of new arrivals being included. Several estimates of completion time made and evaluated in terms of follow-on support and crew rest of helicopter force. Inability to fix this number complicated the maintenance of continuous smooth flow of lift and support forces well beyond the planned limit of their capability.

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d. Communications: Communications adequate for command and control of the operation were available at all times. However, the difficulties already mentioned exacerbated any problems with command net. Occasional and brief lapses in the quality of communications on the HF primary command net was also periodically saturated by other agencies who did not follow the published communications plan. Further, the UHF back-up link which depended on airborne radio relay equipment was never firmly established. These difficulties emphasize the need for an interference free world-wide communications capability.

e. Observations: The chaotic departure of the VNAF with their aircraft, perhaps encouraged by the U.S. efforts to insure that the aircraft were brought to Thailand if and when they decided to leave, was a precipitous act which triggered increased panic and resulted in reduced mobility within the city and vicinity of TSN. A few/ more bus loads from the Embassy to DAO could have, theoretically at least, significantly shortened the evacuation. The effect of the ARVN take-over of the Air America Company which was triggered by the VNAF exodus is not precisely known but may have further limited the shuttle planned for the Embassy to the DAO compound.

6. CINCPACFLT 052041Z MAY 75 provided the following quick look lessons learned for planning, operational/deployment, communications and logistics:

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a. Planning Phase:

(1) Command relationships:

(a) Discussion: Initial USSAG/7AF plans contained command relationships which indicated operational control by COMUSSAF/7AF of naval units. Navy position was "to operate in support of" COMMUSSAG/7AF. The CINCPAC approved USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V contained command relationships which were acceptable to both.

(2) Embassy Plans:

(a) Discussion: The evacuation of over 2,000 persons from the Embassy LZ was not included in American Embassy Saigon emergency and evacuation plans nor addressed in any USSAG/7AF or supporting service plans. If, in fact, the Ambassador did intend to use the Embassy as a major evacuation site this was not communicated, nor is it known whether or not the Embassy was aware of the limitations of evacuation potential from the Embassy LZ. In the military plans, the Embassy LZ was to be used to evacuate the Ambassador, a small residual Embassy staff, and the Embassy marine detachment guard. Plans provided for the main evacuation sites to be the DAO compound and Newport. While it is recognized that plans must retain flexibility to meet situations existing at the time of execution, the extremely large number of evacuees at the Embassy to be extracted from limited LZ's required extending evacuation operations, with resultant increase in the risk of the operation.

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(b) Recommendation: Positive control of evacuee

location, loading and accountability must be maintained once NEMVAC operations commence at LZ's.

(3) Timing:

(a) Discussion. As happened in FREQUENT WIND, conditions including trying more attractive options may result in execution decision being delayed until a worse case situation has developed. This resulted in pressure for accelerated timing over that planned. Additionally, there appeared to be less than complete understanding of the events that had to be accomplished to commence the operation.

(b) Recommendation: Insure wide dissemination and understanding of requirements to execute each selected plan option. Do not attempt to change programmed timing by compression in events unless on-scene commander concurs as to feasibility.

(4) Planning Priorities:

(a) Discussion: Initial planning, including force insertion, number of evacuees, and method of evacuation should proceed from an analysis of the most demanding situation. Additional options should be developed to cope with situations requiring less than maximum effort as time permits.

(b) Recommendation: Planning guidance, especially when time is critical, should be based on a worst case situation and include only items which are absolutely necessary to accomplish the mission.

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(5) Evacuees:

(a) Discussion: In operation FREQUENT WIND some third country nationals were left behind. This was in part due to the lack of detailed information being provided by the Embassy prior to execution of the operation.

(b) Recommendation: Ensure identification of specific personnel to be evacuated to maximum extent feasible.

(6) Liaison and Coordination:

(a) Discussion: During the planning phase, problems surfaced due to differences in service procedures and practices; i.e., ordnance loads, mission clearance and control and communications.

(b) Recommendation: That on future joint operations, a liaison officer or team from other services be added to the MAB/GSF headquarters to assist in coordination between the components involved.

(7) Pre-execution Environment:

(a) Discussion: The Embassy/USDAO Saigon had no command structure designed to permit orderly planning and execution of any such operation as FREQUENT WIND.

(b) Recommendation: A staff designed or augmented to support and carry out NEMVAC operations should be formed at each Embassy and exercised regularly in all phases of such operations.

(8) MSC Representative Aboard TF Flagship:

(a) Discussion: A MSC representative was aboard the

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CTF 76 flagship as a result of the previously conducted VN refugee evacuation. His presence during both the deployment and execution phases was invaluable since he was knowledgeable of the status of MSC shipping in the area and ship's capabilities.

(b) Recommendation: Use flagship control for MSC operations. If the use of MSC shipping is envisioned, representative(s) from MSC should be embarked on the flagship as early in the planning/deployment phase as possible.

(9) Intelligence Support:

(a) Discussion: Although intelligence support in response to EEI's was timely during the latter days of the operation, the earlier stages of the operation were characterized by continual requests for photo coverage.

(b) Recommendation: Authorization for special photo recce be granted by higher authority soonest to provide support to committed forces.

(10) Command Post (Forward):

(a) Discussion: Based on authority from JCS, a five man GSF advance command element was posted to Saigon to assist in the planning and conduct of operation FREQUENT WIND. The group was comprised of the deputy commander, a communications-electronics officer, naval aviator, and explosive ordnance disposal personnel. This element was augmented prior to operation execution to include additional

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naval aviators, HLZ control teams, and communicators. This facilitated liaison with the Embassy, DAO, Emergency Control Center, marshalling teams, Air America and significantly enhanced the probability for a successful operation. Some major areas of coordination were: recommendation and preparation of helicopter landing zones and sites; selection, installation and testing of communications equipment; EOD efforts in support of DAO (no capability previously existed); liaison visits to CG, 9th MAB and staff aboard USS Blue Ridge; briefings for Embassy and DAO personnel; logistics and admin support of 9th MAB augmentation to Embassy security element; ensuring Embassy and DAO personnel slated for a role in NEMVAC operations; disposition of AN/TSC 54 emplaced at DAO; establishing a mobile command post; movement of vehicles out of DAO compound following implementation order; maintaining status of helo evacuees (American and other nations); improving communications between Saigon and USS Blue Ridge; advising on security measures required following orders to implement and prior to arrival of GSF (maximum security danger period); preparation of slides, photos and diagrams of ingress to and egress from DAO compound, Saigon for use by 9th MAB aviation elements; planning and survey of LZ's and approach (routes) to Newport and U.S. Embassy.

(b) Recommendation: In future evacuation operations provide similar advance, on site, representation by the command executing plan.

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(11) Summary:

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(a) Definition of command relationships by higher authority is required and should be provided to planners with the plans development tasking directive.

(b) Embassy plans and military plans must be coordinated and explicit as to evacuation site locations, and numbers of evacuees, key indigenous personnel, and third country nationals to be evacuated.

(c) Plans must be developed on a "worst case" basis, initially at least, when planning time is critically short.

(d) Liaison teams from other services should be utilized to assist on scene commander in coordination between the services involved.

(e) Embassy staff should be designed or augmented, if required, to carry out NEMVAC operations. Additionally, those staffs should be exercised regularly in all phases of such operations.

b. Operational/Deployment Phase:

(1) Evacuation Naval Force Holding Area:

(a) Discussion: During the deployment phase of this evacuation operation, a large naval force consisting of two carrier strike groups and three amphibious ready groups (ARG's) with various escort and logistic support units was positioned off the coast of RVN for over a week in various alert conditions. Furthermore, upon execution, the LPD/LSD's ship placement within these areas was designed to facilitate

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the transfer of evacuees from the helo deck of the recovery ships (LPH/LSD's) via the wet-well and amphibious small craft to the MSC ships.

(b) Recommendation: A careful balance must be struck in selection of the task force holding area to ensure optimum utilization of the diversity of ship types while maintaining maneuvering flexibility to enhance security in a hostile environment.

(2) Tactical spread loading of units in task force shipping:

(a) Discussion: Available task force shipping was assigned hastily to respond to JCS tasking to respond ASAP to the rapidly escalating contingency in South Vietnam. Some EAGLE PULL forces were in port for less than 24 hours before being sortied. As a result, troops and equipment were embarked on ships as available thus precluding embarkation as planned. To adjust from this posture, to one in which optimum unit integrity could be achieved prior to commitment to combat, required locating and redistribution of personnel prior to L-hour. This could not be done in advance of D-day due to the berthing/equipment stowage limitations aboard ships. Assembling of units required pre-hour helo lifts as an integral part of actions to be accomplished after receipt of an execute message.

(b) Recommendation: That in contingencies where proper spread loading of units has not been possible, L-hour be announced as far in advance as possible to permit personnel/equipment redistribution and aircraft preparation.

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c. Communications:

(1) Volume:

(a) Discussion: During the week preceeding execution for FREQUENT WIND, numerous high precedence lengthy sectionalized messages containing plans, some requiring readdressals to various afloat commands, were received. Such messages required implementation of extraordinary communication procedures to preclude saturation of terminations. COMSEVENTHFLT arranged with NAVCOMMSTA Guam to intercept these messages at the NAVCOMPARS computer for delivery via idle broadcast channels. Although termination saturation was reduced, this manual intercept procedure resulted in delaying delivery of the messages.

(b) Recommendation: Lengthy sectionalized messages promulgating plans be accomplished in advance, in lieu of being transmitted immediately before the execution phase of operations to avoid the delay of operational traffic directly affecting the execution.

(2) Message Changes:

(a) Discussion: In some instance entire plans were reissued by higher precedence messages, which only contained several changes. One 27 section message contained changes which could have been promulgated in a message of 2 or 3 sections.

(b) Recommendation: That lengthy messages not be completely repromulgated when a short message containing the changes will suffice.

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(3) Precedence:

(a) Discussion: During the seven day period 25 April through 1 May, almost 9000 messages were processed in the task force command ship; an increase of 40 percent over normal volume for an equal period. 13 percent of the messages were flash, 26 percent immediate, 38 percent priority, and 23 percent routine. Highlighting this imbalance were the 170 messages transmitted via FFN (W) on 29 April. All except 12 were assigned flash precedence. The abuse of the flash and immediate precedence is self defeating.

(b) Recommendation: That positive action be taken to control release authorities from excessively using the flash and immediate precedence.

(4) Secure Voice Communication Conference Circuit:

(a) Discussion: A secure voice communication conference circuit was established to provide a real time inter-change of information. This circuit enabled many levels of command to instantly monitor operations. During operation FREQUENT WIND some participants in the communication conference circuit did not possess the current listing of unit tactical air voice calls which generated queries at all levels, prompted flash precedence message traffic to obtain these call signs, and added to the confusion of the monitoring evolution.

(b) Recommendation: That all levels of command be made aware of the circuit monitoring capabilities. Participating units who utilize voice calls that are not readily available at higher echelons

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provide current listing of call signs prior to the execution of an operation of the magnitude of FREQUENT WIND.

(5) Summary:

(a) Continued command emphasis is required to ensure strict adherence to communication procedures, proper determination of message precedence, and minimize constraints be observed by ALCON.

d. Logistics/Refugee Processing/Medical:

(1) Logistical Support of MSC shipping:

(a) Discussion: Plans for the initial provisioning of MSC ships or the amount of follow-on logistic support required from U.S. Navy ships were not available. MSCOV Saigon, in conjunction with USAID, developed plans and completed the initial food provisioning of MSC ships, apparently without advising MSCFE Yokohama or any SEVENTHFTL commands.

(b) Recommendation: That plans for logistic support of MSC shipping be developed and promulgated early in the planning cycle and that ALCON be kept informed regarding logistic logistic support being provided to MSC ships.

(2) Amphibious Support Information System:

(a) Discussion: There is a requirement to prepare a by name list of the evacuees, especially U.S. and TCN personnel. ASIS with its input, sort and print capability, provided the means to handle this data quickly. Considering the numbers of evacuees and their

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many locations it would have been considerably more difficult to account for them in any other way. USS BLUE RIDGE is equipped with ASIS and this system was utilized to process evacuee census data.

(b) Recommendation: That ASIS or any other like computer system can be a valuable aid in preparing required census data and lists of evacuees.

(3) Processing of Evacuees:

(a) Discussion: No matter how fast evacuees are being handled they must be processed in such a manner as to ensure a thorough check for weapons, other contraband, large amounts of cash, gold, or other valuable items which will require safe keeping. This search must include all U.S. citizens including women and children.

(b) Recommendation: Ensure adequate personnel and facilities are available for thorough and expeditious processing of all refugees.

(4) CVA (helicopter configured) Use as a Mini-Hospital for Mass Casualty Evacuation.

(a) Discussion: Although the CVA (H) can be used as backup aid station with limited operating room capabilities, there is difficulty in lowering casualties to the sickbay through small hatches and around sharp corners which are located in small spaces. (There is limited elevator transportation available, and Stokes/Niel Robertson stretchers must be utilized). Additionally, the LCC (BLUE RIDGE) has basically the same problem. While the BLUE RIDGE does in fact have

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elevator capabilities from the flight deck to sickbay level, it cannot be utilized during helicopter operations. From physical inspection of all ships present it is apparent that the only type which is capable of being utilized as a mini-hospital for mass casualty evacuation is the LPH (Okinawa) which was designed for that purpose. It is recommended that in future operations of this nature an appropriate number of LPH's be assigned to the task force when available vice CVA type ships. A disadvantage of the LPH is the difficulty with which stretcher patients can be moved aboard from small surface craft, but this will be overcome when the LHA becomes available.

(b) Recommendation: A CVA configured for helicopters, although effective from a tactical standpoint, is rather ineffective in a medical sense in a mass casualty situation. A multitude of casualties can be evacuated to the carriers, but design and structure preclude any expeditious flow to sickbay. Shortage of operating room spaces compounds the problem. Deployment of tactical aircraft aboard further compounds the problem by minimizing space available. Activation of these aircraft would not only compromise safety of mass casualties but would impair efficiency of the tactical air effort.

(5) Summary: Logistic considerations must be completely addressed during the planning phase to ensure efficient handling of refugees after the evacuation is complete.

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7. USSAG/7AF message 030500Z JUN 75 to CINCPAC submitted the following lessons learned in addition to and in amplification of those discussed in USSAG/7AF message 050400Z MAY 75:

a. Time Reference.

(1) Discussion. There was occasional confusion between controlling agencies as a result of some using local time and some using zulu time.

(2) Lesson Learned. The reference time to be used by all agencies in the planning and execution of an operation should be IAW DOD/International Standards, i. e. , in zulu time.

b. Requirement for Detailed Information.

(1) Discussion. The late requirement to provide detailed information on a real time basis to higher headquarters complicated the command, control, and communications tasks. It is recognized that during a high - interest operation such as Frequent Wind many agencies require current information; but deviations from spot reporting procedures established for option IV and constant requests for ETA's, times of take-off and landing, breakouts of nationalities on board, etc. , contributed to occasional saturation of communications at all echelons.

(2) Lesson Learned. Agencies should agree during the planning phase on the frequency and content of reports to be required and adhere to the established requirements during the actual conduct of the operation.

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c. A flexible plan and decentralized command and control accommodated variations in the evacuation task.

(1) Discussion. Early NEMVAC contingency planning can accommodate many different estimates as to the numbers to be evacuated, the modes of transportation, the location of evacuees, etc. Fixed-wing airlift and sealift could handle any number of evacuees, given a suitable time frame and reasonably permissive environment. Although the helicopter option was envisioned as a 1st resort to be executed in the face of a rapidly deteriorating military situation, limited lift resources made it more sensitive to accurate estimates of numbers and locations of evacuees. During execution of Frequent Wind, inaccurate estimates changed force requirements and extended the operation near the limit of capability of available forces to operate on a continuous basis.

(2) Lesson Learned. Fix numbers and locations of potential evacuees as early as possible when evacuation is imminent so that final detailed planning can be accurate and execution can be smooth. This is especially critical in a non-permissive environment. Flexibility must be built into the plan; however, early recognition of the necessity to evacuate is required in order to preserve sufficient and adequate alternatives for conducting the operation with available forces.

d. Dual Channel of Command.

(1) Discussion: The directives to increase alert posture and to execute the operation came through CINCPAC to COMUSSAG/7AF

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and to CINCPACFLT. This dual channel of command was established and maintained throughout Frequent Wind. Such organization allowed the opportunity for unilateral interpretation of alert postures, making it more difficult to coordinate the joint forces in compressing the reaction time once the decision to execute became imminent.

(2) Lesson Learned. Authority for overall operational control of a joint operation should be centralized at the lowest possible joint command level.

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VIII. AFTER-ACTION REPORTS

1. USSAG/7AF message 030500Z JUN 75 to CINCPAC sent the following after-action report:

a. General. This after-action report is in response to the requirements of paragraph 5B of Annex N to CINCPAC CONPLAN 5060, Non-Combatant Emergency and Evacuation Plan and the CINCPAC termination message 300221Z APR 75. The report encompasses significant USSAG/7AF actions during the planning and execution phases of the emergency evacuation of the Republic of Vietnam. Command and control, and communications, were key factors to the success of the operation and are treated in separate sections. The report concludes with lessons learned. It should be noted that all dates and times referred to in this report are zulu times.

b. Planning.

(1) The planning process for the evacuation of noncombatants from the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) began on 10 April 1974 when COMUSSAG/7AF was tasked to develop a CONPLAN in support of CINCPAC CONPLAN 5060 Noncombatant Emergency and Evacuation (NEMVAC), Plan. A Planning schedule was established which provided for the submission of a draft CONPLAN to CINCPAC by 15 JUL 74, but the entire process was slowed because the American Embassy (AMEMB) Saigon emergency and evacuation (E&E) Plan was being revised. This E&E plan was to provide the basis upon which the evacuation plan would be built. Key personnel from the

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AMEMB, Saigon, visited Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, on 26-27 Jun 74 to coordinate the first draft of the proposed USSAG/7AF CONPLAN. The plan contained four options:

- (a) Ambassadorial control of the evacuation using either civilian, military, or a combination of those transportation assets;
- (b) Military control of the evacuation using fixed-wing airlift assets;
- (c) Military control of the evacuation using sealift assets; and
- (d) Military control of the evacuation using a combination of fixed-wing, sealift, and helicopter assets.

The conference ended with all attendees agreeing on the major issues. A second coordination conference was held in Saigon on 1-3 Jul 74. Attendees included representatives of AMEMB and the Defense Attache Office (DAO) Saigon, United States Army CINCPAC Support Group (USACSG, formerly USARPAC), Pacific Fleet (PACFLT), Fleet Coordinating Group (FLTCOORDGP), Military Airlift Command (MAC), Military Sealift Command (MSC), and USSAG/7AF. The attendees concluded the planning concept was feasible and agreed on all major issues, although the PACFLT representatives questioned the command relationships as stated in the draft plan. Additional follow-on coordination was accomplished with PACFLT through CHFLTCOORDFP. On 30 Jul 74 a draft of the USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V, Talons Vise, was forwarded to CINCPAC for approval and to participating units for planning purposes only, pending CINCPAC

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approval. The total number of potential evacuees planning for (provided by AMEMB Saigon) was approximately 10,000. CINCPAC subordinate units were directed to provide comments not later than 18 Sep 74.

(2) On 27 Aug 74, a conference was held in Saigon attended by representatives of AMEMB and USDAO, PACFLT, and USSAG/7AF to develop a plan for the evacuation of Military Region I. The result was a COMSEVENTHFLT detailed plan, which differed conceptually from USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V only in that it was not concerned with NEMVAC operations in all of RVN. This plan was nicknamed Fortress Journey.

(3) The USSAG/7AF point of contact at CINCPAC indicated in mid-September that early approval of CONPLAN 5060V could be expected. However, late in September he reported that coordination difficulties had arisen over certain command relationships and early approval no longer seemed likely. The AMEMB E&E plan was updated 5-9 Oct 74 with a USSAG/7AF representative present. On 12 Dec 74, CINCPAC directed that CINCPACFLT assume responsibility for the planning and implementation of NEMVAC plans for Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam not later than 1 Jun 75. Since USSAG/7AF was to retain responsibility until that time, a message was sent to CINCPAC on 17 Dec 74 requesting CONPLAN approval or guidance so that tasked units could prepare supporting plans. On 3 Jan 75 CINCPAC J-5 letter approved the CONPLAN, subject to directed changes which included the redefined command relationships. The revised

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and approved plan was mailed on 26 Mar 75, by Hq USSAG/7AF to all concerned.

(4) Due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in RVN, the pace of planning activities was accelerated. The following is a resume of significant events:

22 Mar 75 - USSAG/7AF began fixed-wing evacuation (Option II) planning.

2 Apr 75 - CINCPAC directed USSAG/7AF to develop a helicopter evacuation option (Option IV).

5 Apr 75 - Concept for Option IV submitted to CINCPAC.

6 Apr 75 - Option IV planning conference convened at Hq USSAG/7AF. Attendees represented SEVENTHFLT Third Marine Amphibious Force (3MAF), FLTCOORDGP, and USSAG/7AF.

7 Apr 75 - CINCPAC approved concept of Option IV.

9 Apr 75 - Draft Option IV Oplan submitted to CINCPAC.

10 Apr 75 - Meeting at USDAO between USSAG/GSF planners, DAO/EMB personnel and other interested parties, including BG Baughn, RADM Oberg, and RADM Benton.

11 Apr 75 - Draft Option IV Oplan approved by CINCPAC.

14 Apr 75 - CINCPAC directed development of detailed plans for evacuation of 1500, 3000, 6000, and 200,000 personnel.

15 Apr 75 - RADM Benton, CINCPACREP Saigon; RADM Oberg, CINCPACFLT Rep Saigon; Col McCurdy, USDAO Saigon; LTGEN Burns, COMUSSAG/7AF; MGEN Hunt, Dep COMMUSSAG; and MGEN Archer, CS, USSAG/7AF, met at Hq USSAG/7AF.

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15 Apr 75 - Nickname for RVN evacuation changed from Talon Vise to Frequent Wind.

17 Apr 75 - Option II forwarded to CINCPAC.

18 Apr 75 - Option V(200,000 evacuees) planning conference convened at Hq USSAG/7AF. Attendees represented SEVENTHFLT, 3MAF, FLT-COORDGP, and USSAG/7AF.

18 Apr 75 - Option IV transmitted to participating units.

19 Apr 75 - Option III (Sealift Option) submitted to CINCPAC.

20 Apr 75 - Option II approved by CINCPAC and transmitted to participating units.

21 Apr 75 - CINCPAC approved Option III.

22 Apr 75 - Option III transmitted to participating units.

24 Apr 75 - Option V submitted to CINCPAC.

25 Apr 75 - Option V approved by CINCPAC.

(5) The following forces were available for the operation:

(a) USN Special Task Force of approximately 45 ships, including 2 CVA's for TACAIR, one LPH, and two CVA's utilized as helo platforms.

1. 44 H-53 helicopters (10 USAF and 34 USMC.

The USAF helicopters were embarked on the USS Midway). 42 used in actual evacuation operations.

2. 27 CH-46 helicopters (USMC). 14 used in actual evacuation operation.

3. 3 USMC Battalion Landing Teams (BLT).

4. USN TACAIR (A-7, E-6, F-4 and F-14).

(b) USAF Forces

1. USAF TACAIR (A-7, AC-130, and F-4, including F-4 Wild Weasel).

2. 36 KC-135 tanker aircraft.

3. 4 KC-135 Radio Relay aircraft.

4. 5 HC-130 rescue aircraft.

5. 4 EC-130 Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Centers (ABCCC).

(c) The Air Support package, while designed for an optimum duration of 12 hours, was easily tailored to operate around the clock in order to accommodate unforeseen developments. USAF and USN fighter aircraft would provide TACAIR support during daylight hours, while AC-130 gunships would provide night coverage.

(6) In summary, the planning time was compressed due to the rapidly changing tactical situation and broad range of potential evacuees considered. The OPlan possessed the flexibility necessary to accommodate these factors while affording the framework within which the mission could be successfully accomplished.

c. Execution

(1) Military response posture in preparation for the evacuation was increased by JCS msg 172323Z APR 75 directing CINCPAC to bring the Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG) and appropriate escorts to 24-hour

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status in position off Vung Tau. ARG's Alfa and Bravo and the Attack Carrier Task Groups sailed to their positions; ARG Charle was constituted and later sailed. PACAF C-130's were prepared for 24 hour per day evacuation operations. At the direction of JCS (msg 181753Z APR 75) ten USAF CH/HH-53's were deployed from Nakhon Phanom via U-Tapao to fly aboard the USS Midway to augment the helicopter forces; the fly-on was completed at 200355Z APR 75.

(2) Prior to 21 Apr 75 the Embassy was evacuating personnel using civil/contract carriers, military supply airlift back-haul, and MSC shipping. On 21 Apr 75, in coordination with the Ambassador through DAO, USSAG/7AF scheduled an around-the-clock evacuation from Tan Son Nhut using C-130 and C-141 aircraft. Between 21 and 28 Apr 75, 170 C-130 and 134 C-141 sorties evacuated 42,910 personnel. The last C-141 flights were on 27 Apr 75, having been terminated by CINCPAC due to increasing small arms fire around Tan Son Nhut.

(3) On 24 Apr 75, JCS authorized CINCPAC to direct the execution of Option II, III, and/or IV when requested by the Ambassador. Frequent Wind force deployments were completed and forces directed to assume a one-hour readiness posture on 28 Apr 75 in anticipation of execution on 28 Apr 75. No decision to execute was forthcoming and the forces reverted to a 6 hour posture.

(4) The military situation in the Saigon area continued to deteriorate rapidly, with an increasing threat to air operations at Tan

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Son Nhut including attacks by fire (ABF), AAA, and SAM as well as attacks on the airfield by South Vietnamese fighter-bombers flown by unknown elements. CINCPAC msg 281412Z APR 75 directed all Frequent Wind forces to assume one-hour alert by first light 29 Apr 75 (accomplished as of 282100Z Apr 75); C-130 forces were alerted to prepare to execute a maximum practicable evacuation airlift as soon as feasible and to expect an execution order shortly. That execution order was contained in CINCPAC msg 291809Z APR 75. Meanwhile, C-130 aircraft continued the previously scheduled "Option I" evacuation airlift. This flow was halted after a C-130 was destroyed on the ramp at Tan Son Nhut airport by an ABF at 282005Z Apr 75.

(5) COMUSSAG/7AF msg 282325Z APR 75 directed the launch of all USAF support aircraft (tankers, radio relay, ABCCC) with TACAIR to be withheld. This was done to shorten response time for the TACAIR and provide communications and control for the C-130 operation, even though Option II, per se, had not yet been directed. CINCPAC then directed (USSAG/7AF MSG 290005Z APR 75) the immediate launch of Navy E-6 and MIG CAP coverage to support C-130 operations as required under Option II. All indications at this time were that the execution of Option II was imminent. C-130's from Clark were launched in anticipation of execution, but never landed at Tan Son Nhut airport. Civil disorder and hostile ABF's by this time had closed the airport to fixed-wing operations and the C-130's were ordered to withdraw and return to base at approximately 290230Z Apr 75.

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at 290707Z Apr 75 with the GSF aboard, and the evacuation began. Planned loads of 50 evacuees were quickly surpassed as emphasis on maximum personnel and minimum baggage was implemented. 1532 evacuees were moved in the first hour. Adjustments in GSF disposition and helo flow were required when it became clear that there were many more potential evacuees to be processed and extracted from the Embassy than had been expected. Embassy plans for cross-town movement of evacuees to the primary LZ's at the DAO compound apparently had broken down due to civil disorder. Evacuation of the DAO compound (6416 U.S. personnel and refugees, including 774 GSF) was completed at 291612Z Apr 75.

(9) The estimates of the numbers to be evacuated from the Embassy continued to grow. Constant revisions in flow scheduling were made based on these estimates, and the estimated completion time continued to slip. A break in the scheduled flow occurred around 291700Z Apr 75 as a result of a need to service helo's which had been running continuously for over 12 hours (COMSEVENFLT msg 240001Z MAY 5).

(10) The operations continued until the last GSF elements landed on their ships at 300035Z. USSAG/7AF msg 300030Z recommended Frequent Wind termination, later confirmed by JCS msg 300054Z.

d. Command and Control

(1) Acting as the designated subordinate commander and coordinating authority for CINCPAC in the conduct of Frequent Wind, COMUSSAG/7AF exercised operation control (OPCON) of USAF units

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chopped to COMUSSAG/7AF and of the GSF and helicopters when over/on land. OPCON of supporting forces was retained by CINCPACFLT, for Navy TACAIR, at all times, and for Navy/Marine GSF and helicopter forces when over water. Command and control was exercised by COMUSSAG/7AF from the 7AF TACC through the airborne mission commander in ABCCC and the GSF commander on the scene.

(2) Upon direction of CINCPAC, Frequent Wind forces were committed and operated in accordance with USSAG/7AF OPlan 5060V-2-75. Some items of concern were noted in the area of command, control and coordination.

(a) Two factors were prominent in increasing the difficulties of the command and control task: the rapidly changing tactical situation and the constantly changing estimates of the number of personnel to be evacuated. The first resulted in execution of a military airlift under Option I, later shifted to Option II with TACAIR held off shore and then to Option IV. Until Option IV, insufficient time was spent in any mode to get the lift or support force flow fully developed. The dynamics of the situation resulted in a highly compressed time span to effect actions necessary to insure integration and coordination of the USAF and Navy TACAIR packages with helicopter flow to the LZ's. Smooth implementation of the plan envisioned four hours from the order to execute (with all forces on one-hour alert) until the first evacuation helo touched down at the LZ. When it became clear that a military evacuation under either Option II or

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IV was imminent, USAF support forces (tanker, ABCCC, and radio relay aircraft), Navy EA-6 and MIGCAP coverage and, later, USAF Wild Weasel aircraft were launched in order to compress the reaction time and perhaps permit completion of operation in daylight. However, the GSF/helicopter forces, apparently expecting the planned amount of reaction time to be available, awaited an established L-hour before beginning the cross-decking maneuver required for their integration. By the time the execution order was received, a feasible L-hour determined, and an integrated evacuation, TACAIR, and support force on its way into Vietnamese airspace, many valuable daylight hours had elapsed and a night operation resulted. |

(b) The second factor complicating the command and control task was the continuous and unexpected increase in the number of personnel to be evacuated. Although command elements made and evaluated several estimates of completion time and planned crew rest and follow-on force requirements accordingly, the inability to fix the number of evacuees remaining complicated the maintenance of a smooth, continuous helo flow. Flow plans were further hampered and slowed down by the requirement to evacuate over 2100 evacuees (vice a planned 100-150, GSF not included) from the Embassy LZ's. These LZ's restricted both passenger processing and helo flow, requiring dual ship (later, single ship) operations rather than simultaneous arrival and departure of up to six aircraft as had been the case at the DAO compound.

(c) The synergistic effect of all of these factors greatly extended the duration of the operation. The midday beginning, the unexpected

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increase in evacuees at the Embassy, the restrictions of the Embassy LZ's, the breakdown in smooth helo flow, and the cautious slowness required by the resulting night operations extended the operation well beyond the time anticipated. The de-centralized command and control arrangements adapted to these new conditions quickly and, with minor exceptions, smoothly. 7915 refugees were evacuated in 14 hours, numbers which were well within the range of anticipated accuracy of planning factors.

(3) The rules of engagement (ROE) developed for this operation were designed to allow the protection of U.S. forces while observing several constraints and criteria. The operation was to be executed using the minimum force necessary, within guidance prohibiting aggressive, hostile acts. This required constraints on the expenditure of ordnance for any purpose other than for the direct defense of the evacuation force and/or designated evacuees under actual attack, and required ROE sufficiently explicit to function well with a decentralized command and control structure. In execution the ROE proved adequate with no additional clarification or modification required.

e. Communications

(1) Communications adequate for command and control of the operation were available at all times. The 7AF TACC was the Air Force command net control, and coordinated the command net frequency changes throughout the operation. However, detailed real time reporting requirements levied after execution were not satisfied in all cases.

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Occasional brief lapses in the quality of communications on the HF primary command net were due to innate HF propagation characteristics. This net was also periodically saturated by other agencies who did not follow the published communications plan. Further, the UHF back-up link which depended on airborne radio relay equipment was never firmly established between ABCCC and the 7AF TACC, although it was satisfactorily established between the 7AF TACC and other agencies monitoring the net.

(2) At times, the lack of sufficient operational HF radios aboard the ABCCC prevented use of the secure teletype, with the HF in-commission rate ranging from 50 to 75 percent. On the other hand, UHF and VHF transmissions from the ABCCC to TACAIR, helos, SAR forces, and to the GSF and LZ controllers on the ground were good.

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