

CIA
JSSA



JCSM-839-64
2 October 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: US Search and Rescue Operations -
Southeast Asia (U)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered recommendations from CINCPAC and COMUSMACV with regard to search and rescue (SAR) operations in support of Operation Plan (OPLAN) 34A actions and cross border operations into Laos by Republic of Vietnam (RVN) forces.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that existing SAR plans should be expanded to include OPLAN 34A and RVN cross border operations in order to enhance the morale and will of both 34A personnel and RVN forces engaged in these operations. Substantial time and effort have already been invested in organizing, planning, and training for cross border operations into Laos, and in building 34A resources and capabilities. Insofar as possible, the additional SAR effort should be made to protect our interests. On the other hand, care should be exercised to reduce the risk of accidental US involvement in DRV/RVN engagements which may result from 34A operations.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend you approve expansion of SAR operations in accordance with the conditions listed in the Annex attached hereto.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

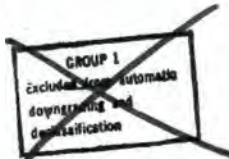
SIGNED

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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JCS 2343/468-1 - SACSA

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23-573 (J3-68)

ANNEX

SAR CONDITIONS/LIMITATIONS

A. LAOS

1. A rescue attempt will be made when the aircraft is down 1
and it is evident a reasonable chance exists to rescue per- 2
sonnel. 3

2. US SAR resources committed in Laos will be provided air 4
cover sufficient to insure protection of the US SAR force 5
from hostile interference. Rules of engagement for the pro- 6
tective force will be the same as the rules of engagement 7
for other US forces operating in Southeast Asia. 8

3. No overt rescue attempt will be made if personnel are 9
down in the DRV. 10

4. Night SAR operations may be conducted at the discretion 11
of commanders concerned. 12

B. GULF OF TONKIN 13

1. Rescue attempts will be made only when information exists 14
that an aircraft or surface craft is in distress in or over 15
international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. 16

2. Every precaution will be taken to reduce the risk of 17
accidental US involvement in DRV/RVN engagements which may 18
result from 34A operations. 19

3. US SAR resources committed in or over international 20
waters of the Gulf of Tonkin will be provided air and naval 21
surface cover sufficient to insure protection of the US SAR 22
force from hostile interference. Rules of engagement for the 23
protective force will be the same as the rules of engagement 24
for other US forces operating in Southeast Asia. 25

4. SAR operations by air and naval surface or subsurface 26
craft may be conducted at night at the discretion of the 27
commanders concerned. 28

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JCS 2343/468-1

29 September 1964

Pages 7 - 11, Incl.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SAC

for the

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

US SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

DECISION

1. At their meeting on 30 September 1964, the Chiefs of Staff approved the recommendation of the Joint Search and Rescue Staff of the enclosed memorandum.

2. This Decision replaces the previous regulations and destroy the superseded parts of the regulations.

3. The recommendation in the memorandum was forwarded as JCS 2343/468-1 to the Secretary of Defense, copy to CINCNAV.

4. In the Marine Corps, the US Code, Title 10, applies to the

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- Gen. Wheeler (C/JCS)
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Each having of this paper requested. Xerox should be made to individuals requiring information herein in order to carry out their official duties.

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ENCLOSURE

MEMORANDUM BY THE SACSA

for the

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

US SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS - SOUTHEAST ASIA (U)

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1. Problem. To consider a CINCPAC concept* for US search and rescue (SAR) operations in support of Operation Plan (OPLAN) 34A and Republic of Vietnam (RVN) operations into Laos. 1-3
2. Information. On 18 September 1964, COMUSMACV requested that authority be granted to include OPLAN 34A operations in existing SAR plans for Laos and the Gulf of Tonkin. 4-6
3. On 24 September 1964, CINCPAC concurred in the requirement from COMUSMACV, modified and expanded the specifics thereof and requested approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide SAR support for OPLAN 34A and RVN cross border operations into Laos. 7-11
4. Discussion. OPLAN 34A air operations utilize routings over the Gulf of Tonkin and over Laos en route to and from their designated drop zones in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). 12-14
5. OPLAN 34A maritime operations operate in international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin en route to and from their targets in the DRV. Whenever possible, the routes remain outside DRV territorial waters. 15-19
6. The inherent risks of these operations, as well as those faced by RVN forces operating in Laos, and the procedure for military SAR operations would: 20-22

* CINCPAC message to JCS, DRU 242356Z Sep 64, on file in Joint Secretariat.
 ** COMUSMACV message to CINCPAC, MAG 800 237Z Sep 64; on file in Joint Secretariat.

- a. Enhance the morale and will to fight of RVN forces engaged in cross border operations, and 34A personnel; 1
- b. Provide the best possible plan for assistance to RVN ground forces, air and boat crews, and air crews from (b) (1) engaged in OPLAN 34A operations; 2
- c. Conserve to maximum practicable extent important and expensive RVN and 34A assets. 3
- 7. As CINCPAC indicated, OPLAN 34A personnel should not be briefed on safe areas in Laos because of the risk of compromise in the event of capture in the DRV. 4
- 8. Recommended Action. It is recommended that: 5

 - a. The memorandum in the Appendix, together with its Annex, be forwarded to the Secretary of Defense. 6
 - b. Copies of this paper be forwarded to CINCPAC. 7
 - c. This paper NOT be forwarded to US officers assigned to NATO activities. 8
 - d. This paper NOT be forwarded to the Chairman, US Delegation, United Nations Military Armistice Commission. 9

- 9. Coordination and Security. 10

Plans have concurred 19
20

APPENDIX

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: US Search and Rescue Operations - Southeast Asia (U)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered recommendations from CINCPAC and COMUSMACV respecting search and rescue (SAR) operations in support of Operation Plan (OPLAN) 34A actions and cross border operations into Laos by Republic of Vietnam (RVN) forces.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that existing SAR plans should be expanded to include OPLAN 34A and RVN cross border operations in order to enhance the morale and will of both 34A personnel and RVN forces engaged in these operations. Substantial time and effort have already been invested in organizing, planning, and training for cross border operations into Laos, and in building 34A resources and capabilities. Insofar as possible, the additional SAR effort should be made to protect our interests. On the other hand, care should be exercised to reduce the risk of accidental US involvement in DRV/RVN engagements which may result from 34A operations.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend the appropriate expansion of SAR operations in accordance with the conditions listed in the attachment hereto.

GROUP 1
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AND DECLASSIFICATION

JCS 2343/468-1

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(Revised by 2nd. Corrigendum)

ANNEX

SAR CONDITIONS/LIMITATIONS

A. LAOS

1. A rescue attempt will be made when the aircraft is down and it is evident a reasonable chance exists to rescue personnel.

2. US SAR resources committed in Laos will be provided air cover sufficient to insure protection of the US SAR force from hostile interference. Rules of engagement for the protective force will be the same as the rules of engagement for other US forces operating in Southeast Asia.

3. No overt rescue attempt will be made if personnel are down in the DRV.

4. Night SAR operations may be conducted at the discretion of commanders concerned.

B. GULF OF TONKIN

1. Rescue attempts will be made only when information exists that an aircraft or surface craft is in distress in or over international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin.

2. Every precaution will be taken to reduce the risk of accidental US involvement in DRV/RVN engagements which may result from 34A operations.

3. US SAR resources committed in or over international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin will be provided air and naval surface cover sufficient to insure protection of the US SAR force from hostile interference. Rules of engagement for the protective force will be the same as the rules of engagement for other US forces operating in Southeast Asia.

4. SAR operations by air and naval surface and subsurface craft may be conducted at night at the discretion of commanders concerned.

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29 September 1964

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NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the

HOLDERS OF JCS 2343/468-1

A Note by the Secretaries

on

US SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS - SOUTHEAST ASIA (U)

FIRST CORRIGENDUM

At the request of the originator, holders are requested to make the following change:

✓Page 9, paragraph 9, line 20.

Delete "...The Services are expected to concur."

and substitute "...The Service Planners have concurred."

R. C. FORBES

J. E. MURPHY

John E. Murphy

1st Corrig to JCS 2343/468-1

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US SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS - SOUTHEAST ASIA (U)

SECOND CORRIGENDUM

Holders are requested to substitute the attached revised page 10 and to destroy the superseded page in accordance with security regulations.

R. C. FORBES

J. E. MANSFIELD

Joint Secretaries

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2nd Corrig to JCS 2343/468-1

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29 September 1964

Briefing Sheet for the Chairman, JCS, on a report to be considered at the Op Deps meeting on 30 September 1964.

Subject: JCS 2343/468-1 - US Search and Rescue Operations - Southeast Asia (U)

Background - On 18 Sep 64, COMUSMACV requested CINCPAC's authority to include OPLAN 34A operations in existing search and rescue (SAR) plans for Laos and the Gulf of Tonkin.

- On 24 Sep 64, CINCPAC requested authority from the JCS to include OPLAN 34A operations in existing SAR plans for Laos and the Gulf of Tonkin. He further expanded COMUSMACV's requirement and included cross border operations in the request.

Current Report - TAB A -

a. Contains a memo for SecDef recommending approval of the conditions/limitations for US SAR operations. These conditions and limitations have been collated with the current approved rules of engagement (contained in JCS msg 7947, DTG 151318Z Aug 64), and coordinated with J-3.

b. In essence, the memo proposes US SAR operations in support of OPLAN 34A operations except in the DRV, and when circumstances are such as to likely involve the US in a combat action.

c. Provision of a SAR capability in support of OPLAN 34A and RVN cross border operations is believed important in order to continue the existing close confidence between the US and various third country and RVN personnel engaged in these operations, to conserve these valuable assets, and to maintain and raise the esprit of these assets.

Service Comments - Service Planners have concurred.

External Agencies - Consultation not appropriate.

Comment and Recommendations - The memo for SecDef is believed to include consideration of the minimum conditions and limitations necessary to modify existing SAR plans for OPLAN 34A and RVN cross border operations. SACSA recommends that the Chairman, JCS, support the report as written.

Approved by B. Brownfield SACSA

Opinion as to Recommendation:

Director, Joint Staff _____ (Concur) (Nonconcur)

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n
A
Ar
n

Briefing Sheet prepared by: Colonel John E. Van Duyn, USAF
Special Operations Division, SACSA/3-7
Extensions 72650/72602

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AND DECLASSIFICATION~~

TAB A - JCS 2343/468-1