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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-67-68  
1 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: H-34 Helicopters for the VNAF 219th Squadron (S)

1. (S) On 27 September 1966, you approved the transfer of 39 Navy Ready Reserve H-34 helicopters to the VNAF on the basis that no reduction in Reserve force levels would be required. The 219th Squadron, which exclusively supports MACSOG's out-of-country operations, received 18 of these helicopters, with the remaining 21 assigned to the four VNAF Corps squadrons.

2. (S) On 25 September 1967, COMUSMACV stated that the 219th Squadron had 14 of their authorized 25 H-34 helicopters. This critical shortage of 11 helicopters can be expected to increase due to expansions of cross-border operations. These 11 plus projected attrition of 21 helicopters, computed at 1.4 per month loss rate for 15 months, result in a total requirement for 32 helicopters.

3. (S) On 6 October 1967, CINCPAC requested that the critical shortage of helicopters in the 219th Squadron be alleviated by:

a. Providing additional H-34 helicopters from sources outside Vietnam to bring the 219th Squadron to authorized strength and to maintain that strength through January 1969, at which time the 219th Squadron could be augmented through lateral transfer of CH-34s from the other four VNAF squadrons as they in turn received UH-1 deliveries scheduled to begin in mid-1968.

b. Realigning relative priorities for nine UH-1 helicopters, currently programmed for delivery to the VNAF in June 1968, for expedited delivery beginning 1 December 1967.

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Case No. 94-F-0532  
T.S. No. 94-73-08  
Document No. 34

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Date 31 Oct 94  
70174025  
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4. (18) Expedited UH-1 delivery was considered and rejected due to higher US priorities, increasing US needs, and decreasing production.

5. (18) Internal reallocation of VNAF resources without diversion of UH-1 deliveries is not practical because of H-34 shortages already existing in the four VNAF squadrons supporting in-country operations. COMUSMACV desires to increase this VNAF helicopter lift capability to improve Vietnamese combat effectiveness.

6. (18) The transfer of H-34s from sources outside Vietnam is required but can be accomplished only at the detriment of Service readiness. In the Army instance, the withdrawal of helicopters from USAREUR would reduce significantly essential helicopter combat logistical and troop-lift capability. The same withdrawal from CONUS (excluding the aviation training base) would result in almost total loss of helicopter medical evacuation capability at training centers or serious reduction in H-34 training essential to REFORGER units in CONUS. In the Marine Corps instance, any transfer of UH-34s to the VNAF would increase the shortage of medium helicopter lift capability in the Active forces. The 4th Marine Expeditionary Force (Reserve) is authorized during FY 1969 a total of 120 UH-34s. An additional result of a transfer would be to delay further the attainment of this force level.

7. (18) The principal sources of available H-34s are active Army and Navy/Marine Ready Reserve assets. A summary of the assets relating to the transfer of the 32 H-34 helicopters is contained in the table in Appendix A hereto. The discussion of alternatives is contained in Appendix B hereto.

8. (18) The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the requirement for 32 additional helicopters for the VNAF 219th Squadron during the next 12 months is valid. Further, they consider that Reserve assets should normally be utilized to fill the 219th Squadron requirement rather than drawing from Active forces. However, since time is limited in providing helicopters to the 219th Squadron, they recommend that 32 H-34s be provided to the 219th Squadron by:

- a. The immediate transfer of 16 H-34s from Army resources.
- b. The transfer of 16 Marine H-34s during May 1968.

9. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that production limitations have resulted in a worldwide helicopter shortage and have initiated an examination of overall helicopter production. The results of this study will be forwarded with their recommendations to you upon completion.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



EARLE G. WHEELER

Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachments

APPENDIX A  
Helicopter Spread Sheet (ARMY TO&E Minus 10% Float) (NAVY/MARINE UE)

Service	UH-1 (auth)	UH-1 (assigned)	CH-34 (auth)	CH-34 (Assigned)	U-6 (helicopter substitute)	Total (auth)	Total (assigned) Over	Short
<u>Army</u>								
USAREUR	402	106	0	212	117 <sup>/1</sup>	402	435 (318 helicopters) 33 <sup>/2</sup>	84 <sup>/3</sup>
USCONARC Active	74 <sup>0</sup>	103	0	36		749	139	610
AVN Tng Base	661	652	34	32		695	684	11
ARNG/USAR	1044 <sup>/5</sup>	0		0		1044		1044 <sup>/5</sup>
USARSO	75	6	0	2		75	8	67
<u>Navy</u>								
Active			109 <sup>/4</sup>	109 <sup>/4</sup>				
CONUS NAVAL RESERVES			58	57		58	57	1
<u>Marines</u>								
Active			222	190		222	190	32
Reserves			72	35				37

1. OSD designated helicopter substitute.
2. The figure 33 "surplus aircraft" includes the 117 U-6 fixed wing aircraft.
3. This figure indicates actual helicopter shortage.
4. Figures have been determined from data provided SACSA in Navy memorandum, "VNAF Helicopter Support (U)," dated 24 Nov 1967 and pertain to SH-34 helicopters.
5. To be filled insofar as possible from resources available, after termination of conflict in SEA.

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Appendix A

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APPENDIX B

DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES

BACKGROUND

1. (S) During most of 1966, the critical shortage of VNAF helicopters in Vietnam was handled as a FLAGPOLE item. This shortage was examined in JCSM-402-66 and JCSM-486-66.

2. (S) The product of this survey was a recommendation from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense to transfer 39 helicopters from US assets to the RVN. It was recommended that these be drawn from US Army, Europe, or, as a less desirable military alternative, from Navy Ready Reserve Forces.

3. (S) The naval alternative was approved on 27 September 1966 by Secretary of Defense memorandum 6142 on the basis that no reduction in Reserve force levels would be required. The transfer was completed between January and July 1967. The 39 helicopters were assigned as follows: 21 to 4 VNAF Corps squadrons (in-country operations) and 18 to the 219th VNAF Squadron.

4. (S) The 18 H-34s assigned to the 219th Squadron were reduced to 14 by 6 October 1967 as a result of combat losses. Thus, a shortfall of 11 aircraft existed between the presently authorized figure of 25 and the 6 October 1967 figure of 14 assigned. In addition, the 219th Squadron had an average of 70 percent "operationally ready rate" which resulted in an average of 10 helicopters operational at that time.

PRESENT SITUATION

5. This helicopter shortage severely limits the 219th Squadron's capability to meet its growing mission load and has limited the use of exploitation (HORNET) forces in PRAIRIE FIRE operations at a time when their need and use are increasing. This shortage requires that the 219th Squadron be augmented on a mission basis by US helicopters flown by US pilots, thus reducing the US helicopters available for in-country missions.

6. The aircraft shortage in the 219th Squadron, coupled with the aircrew surplus, means that experienced Vietnamese pilots must rotate missions and thus cannot make a full contribution to the war effort.

7. There are two general approaches to relieving the H-34 shortage in the 219th Squadron. The first is by an internal reallocation of VNAF resources.

a. H-34s could be transferred from the four other VNAF H-34 squadrons to the 219th Squadron. However, these units are themselves short of aircraft, and it is an objective of COMUSMACV to upgrade their capability to support the Vietnamese ground forces' in-country operations.

b. H-34s could be transferred from the other VNAF squadrons and replaced with UH-1s. However, other priority competition for UH-1 production and specific configuration requirements of VNAF UH-1s, if ordered, preclude expedited delivery of UH-1s for the VNAF. In addition, VNAF pilots are not yet trained in UH-1s. They are scheduled to be trained and on hand as UH-1s are made available to the VNAF. The current VNAF UH-1 delivery schedule, which experience has shown is subject to slippage, calls for nine helicopters to be delivered between June 1968 and January 1969. Because of

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past actions, the acceleration of UH-1 deliveries 1  
to US forces has been maximized. Hence, there is 2  
little possibility that the delivery schedule of 3  
UH-1s to the VNAF can be accelerated and may well be 4  
considerably delayed in favor of US deliveries. 5

8.  The second way to relieve the H-34 shortage in 6  
the 219th Squadron is to transfer H-34s from an out-of- 7  
country source. The Active Army and the Navy/Marine 8  
Ready Reserve forces are the principal sources of H-34s. 9

a. The CH-34 helicopter is a substitute for the 10  
UH-1, which is the Army's primary utility helicopter. 11  
Priority of assignment is RVN, units for RVN, and the 12  
aviation training base. The USAREUR utility helicopter 13  
inventory meets only minimum training requirements. 14  
Except for 2 in USARSO, all 280 US Army CH-34 assets 15  
are in Europe or CONUS. 16

(1) USAREUR. The current helicopter fleet is 17  
barely sufficient to meet airmobile training 18  
requirements or to support short-term combat 19  
operations. USAREUR is authorized 402 UH-1 20  
helicopters and has 106 assigned and 212 H-34 21  
substitutes. This is a total of 318 helicopters, or 22  
a shortage of 84 helicopters. USAREUR also possesses 23  
117 U-6 (fixed-wing) aircraft which have been 24  
designated by OSD as helicopter substitutes. The 25  
CH-34 is essential to USAREUR's combat logistical 26  
and troop-lift capability. Loss of additional 27  
helicopters would result in further decrease of 28  
combat effectiveness. Since 1 January 1967, USAREUR 29  
aviation assets have been reduced by a total of 10 30  
U-6s and 16 CH-34s. The CH-34s are now in CONUS. 31

(2) CONUS. The Active Army (CONUS), less aviation 32  
training base, is authorized 749 UH-1 helicopters 33  
and has 103 assigned and 36 CH-34 substitutes. 34

CH-34 helicopters are essential for CONUS-based 1  
REFORGER units. REFORGER units, when redeployed to 2  
Europe, will be equipped in Europe with CH-34 3  
helicopters. CONUS CH-34 helicopters are required 4  
to support pilot proficiency, to provide logistical 5  
and lift support for training, and to maintain 6  
troop familiarity with the aircraft. Eight CH-34s 7  
have been earmarked against REFORGER unit 8  
requirements. Four provide VIP transportation in 9  
Washington and 14 provide med-evac capability at 10  
training centers, replacing helicopter medical 11  
detachments which have been deployed to RVN. In 12  
five of these centers, this is the only form of 13  
helicopter support. 14

(a) The training base is authorized 661 15  
UH-1 and 34 CH-34 helicopters and has 652 UH-1s 16  
and 32 CH-34s assigned. These CH-34 helicopters 17  
are essential for the training of maintenance 18  
personnel and VNAF aviators. 19

(b) The Army Reserve/National Guard have a TO&E 20  
authorization of 1,044 UH-1 helicopters, to be 21  
provided as far as possible from resources 22  
available upon termination of the conflict in 23  
SEAsia, and have no UH-1 or substitute H-34s 24  
assigned. This requires the use of Active Army 25  
helicopters during periods of civil disturbance 26  
and Reserve annual training. Thus, the Active Army's 27  
combat effectiveness is reduced during and 28  
following periods of Reserve support. 29

b. The current Naval Reserve SH-34J ASW helicopter 30  
inventory is barely sufficient to support ASW 31  
proficiency requirements of Naval Reserve forces. 32  
The Navy is authorized 58 SH-34J helicopters for 33  
Ready Reserve ASW helicopter squadrons. They presently 34

have 57 SH-34J aircraft assigned. Drawdown of these 1  
limited assets would have a detrimental impact on Navy/ 2  
Marine Corps capabilities because: 3

(1) The Navy Ready Reserve helicopter squadrons 4  
constitute a strategic reserve capability for 5  
Navy ASW forces. 6

(2) The Navy Reserve helicopters provide the 7  
sole source of equipment for maintaining ASW 8  
proficiency for 326 Navy Reserve ASW helicopter 9  
pilots and their 210 associated Naval Reserve ASW 10  
helicopter teams. The United States requires 24 months 11  
to train an ASW helicopter pilot at a cost of \$176,000. 12  
The Naval Reserve ASW helicopters also constitute the 13  
primary source of proficiency flying equipment for 14  
200 Marine Reserve helicopter pilots. 15

(3) The specially configured SH-34 ASW helicopter 16  
cannot be replaced from programmed production. 17  
There are no H-34 production lines, and the last 18  
SH-3 production line will close in December 1968. 19

(4) There will be a Navy Ready Reserve shortfall 20  
of four SH-34 aircraft by the end of FY 1968. Further, 21  
there will be an over-all Navy/Marine Ready Reserve 22  
shortfall of 65 H-34s by the end of FY 1968. 23

(5) A further requirement for the SH-34s may 24  
develop because of the present problems associated 25  
with the Marine Corps CH-46 helicopter. Since May 26  
1967, the CH-46 has had nine catastrophic failures. 27  
The most recent failure of a CH-46 (an improved 28  
D model) occurred on 8 January 1968. There are 29  
five CH-46 squadrons (120 aircraft) presently 30  
deployed to SEAsia. If its structural deficiencies 31  
are not resolved, the CH-46 will have to undergo 32

an extensive rework program. It would then be necessary 1  
to provide replacement helicopters to support Marine 2  
operations in SEAsia. 3

9. ( ) The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that Reserve 4  
assets should normally be utilized to fill the VNAF 219th Squadron 5  
requirement rather than drawing down Active forces. However, 6  
previous experience in the transfer of helicopters to the VNAF from 7  
the Navy Ready Reserve has indicated a reconfiguration and 8  
overhaul time of approximately six months for aircraft obtained 9  
from this source. Since time is limited in providing aircraft 10  
to the VNAF 219th Squadron, the Joint Chiefs of Staff therefore 11  
recommend that: 12

a. The Active Army immediately provide 16 H-34s 13  
to the VNAF 219th Squadron. 14

b. Sixteen Marine H-34s be transferred to the VNAF 219th 15  
Squadron during May 1968. 16