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JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: DRUM FIRE I

1. PROBLEM: To provide reference information to CSAF concerning DRUM FIRE I.

2. BACKGROUND:

a. After deployment in Feb 1965 the ARC LIGHT force went on alert for operations in SBA, primarily targeted for strikes in NVN under night/all weather conditions. In early March questions arose as to whether or not the B-52 force could effectively be used for operations in SVN wherein area/saturation type bombing would be employed against VC concentration areas. Although not favored initially by either CINCPAC, CINCSAC or the Air Staff, the subject was kept alive and interest was rejuvenated in late April following the relatively successful tactical saturation bombing North of Saigon. The JCS tasked SAC to develop area bombing techniques, in conjunction with PACOM. After joint conferences, a system was developed whereby the ARC LIGHT forces could be employed for area/saturation bombing of isolated VC areas.

b. The force was executed against an area in War Zone Delta (WZD) on 18 June (ARC LIGHT I).

c. On 2 July, MACV requested maximum effort attacks by ARC LIGHT forces in two areas in WZD. Time over the first target (TOT) was 05/0100 Saigon time to 05/0500 Saigon time. A definite break between two waves was requested in an attempt to lead the Viet Cong into believing the strike was completed after the first wave. TOT for the second target was requested for 07/0800 Saigon time with TOT ending at 07/0845 Saigon time (no break). Additional background information is in Tab 3.

d. The mission plan for target No. 1 was finalized by SAC FRAG, order 104 (TAB 3A).

e. Mission accomplishment is summarized at TAB 3B.

3. RECOMMENDATION: That you use the attached background papers, TABS 3, 3A and 3B as reference material for discussions you may have concerning DRUM FIRE I.

Colonel L. E. Moses/gr/71666

6 July 1965

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