operational area for intelligence purposes. These willing individuals would receive intelligence training in RVN and then be returned to their home areas where they would establish and expand an intelligence net.*

d. In reviewing the intelligence net concept, the American Ambassador to Vientiane considered that it had merit provided that it could be appropriately installed and maintained. To him, the proposal appeared to require Prairie Fire elements for implementation. As viewed by the Ambassador, this called into question the basic Prairie Fire rule requiring teams to avoid contact with non-combattants. This rule, as he saw it, was designed not only to protect civilians but also to minimize the risk of compromising the Prairie Fire program. The Ambassador also questioned the training of recruits in RVN where they might be exposed to US personnel or sensitive operations. The Ambassador conceded, however, that the recruits could be trained in RVN within a carefully sanatized setting. In order to give studied consideration to the proposal, the Ambassador requested to know how many agents would be recruited and how the intellig ence net would function.**

e. In answering the Ambassador's questions, COMUSMACV elaborated on the plan, and recommended CINCPAC approve the following Prairie Fire Phase II intelligence collection concept.

> (1) "Prairie Fire assets under US control will infiltrate Laos, establish temporary base camps from which small all indigenous patrols will be dispatched to contact friendly natives from areas west of Dak To and Khe Sanh.
>
> (2) "Attempts will be made to recruit and train ten principle agents during six month period. After training, each principle agent will in turn attempt to recruit five sub-agents or informers and employ them in collection roles. The net when fully operational should not exceed a total of 60 agent personnel.

* (TS) COMUSMACV Msg, 151025Z Jan 1968.
** (TS) Embassy Vientiane Msg, 021036Z Feb 1968.

(3) "Training of agents will be conducted in the base areas within Laos when possible, or in a carefully sanitized and remote setting in RVN. U.S. Prairie Fire personnel will avoid contact with natives in Laos and should training be conducted in RVN will assume the accepted roles of US advisors to RVNAF. Training in RVN will be only on rare occassions when sophisticated training is required and/or the tactical situation precludes training with Laos. VNAF helicopters will be used to exfiltrate for training when necessary. The net organization will be compartmented so that only a few selected individuals (LAOS/RVN Officers) will be knowledgeable of US involvement.

(4) "Collection efforts will be directed toward simple and easily understandable EEI requirements to answer. the who, what, where, how and when type questions.

(5)

---

f. In April 1968, the PRAIRIE FIRE intelligence net concept was approved with the following stipulations.

(1) All recruitment missions would be cleared prior to launch with the Embassy Vientiane in accordance with established PRAIRIE FIRE coordination procedures.

(2) All recruiting would be conducted by indigenous PRAIRIE FIRE personne; recruits (later agents) would have no contact with US PRAIRIE FIRE personnel.

(3) Training in RVN would take place in a sanitized setting with minimum contact with US personnel. Airlift of recruits and agents to and from RVN would be by VNAF helicopters.

(4) The intelligence net, when fully operational, would not exceed a total of 60 agent personnel. Ten principal would be recruited and trained during a six-month period. After training, each principal agent would in turn attempt to recruit five sub-agents or informers.**

---

* (TS) COMUSMACV Msg, 051438Z Mar 68
** (TS) DEPSECDEF Memorandum of 5 Apr 68; Subject: PRAIRIE FIRE Intelligence Net (C)

B. RESOURCES

1. Personnel

a. In 1968, 64 reconnaissance teams were authorized for the PRAIRIE FIRE program. Each team consisted of 12 personnel, three US and nine VN.

b. PRAIRIE FIRE Exploitation Forces, in 1968, consisted of two battalions of four rifle companies each, and an additional four independent rifle companies. The basic exploitation element was the rifle platoon of the rifle company. Thirty-six rifle platoons, composed of four US and 41 VN, were authorized. The total authorized strength of the PRAIRIE FIRE forces was 567 US and 3,052 VN.

2. Bases

During 1968, PRAIRIE FIRE operations were conducted from FOBs located at Phu Bai (FOB-1),Kontum (FOB-2), Khe Sanh (FOB-3), and Danang (FOB-4). Overall field operational control of the operations were still exercised through the Command and Control Detachment North (CCN) located at Danang.*

3. Thailand Staging

a. COMUSMACV, in September 1967, determined that bad weather in RVN during 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 months of the Northeast Monsoon season precluded sustained SPIKE operations from RVN. Geographically in the northern two-thirds of the PRAIRIE FIRE zone, the spine of the Annamite Cordillers dominated the RVN/Lao border. During the Northeast Monsoon (October - April) precipitation, cloud buildup, and air turbulence above the eastern slope of the Annamites severely restricted helicopter operations into the PRAIRIE FIRE AO from RVN. Lacking a

* (TS) Annex F to COMUSMACV 1968 Command History

base to operate from in RVN during the periods of poor weather, the air base at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, was sought as an alternate launch site.*

b. A concept of operations for operating from Nakhon Phanom was approved in late 1967. Under this concept, SPIKE Teams were allowed to stage through Nakhon Phanom providing that they did not remain at the base overnight, and that while on the base they would be confined in an isolated area.** These procedures were necessitated by the restrictions placed on Vietnamese forces operating in Thailand. In 1968, operations were conducted, to a limited degree, from Nakhon Phanom.***

4. Air Support. Resources required to provide air support for cross-border operations were identified in COMUSMACV's 1968 command history as well as aircraft utilization figures. This material was set forth as follows:

"(1) Cross-border operations require a high level of air support. The majority of operations, both RT and exploitation, are helicopter infiltrated and extracted. TAC air support is scheduled for all insertions and is the principal fire support weapon for exploitation of targets of opportunity. Light fixed wing aircraft are used to provide FAC, visual reconnaissance, and radio relay coverage for committed forces.

"(2) A normal RT operation is supported by the following fragged air package:

"(a) Three troopcarrier helicopters.

"(b) Two or four helicopter gunships.

"(c) Two A-1E close air support aircraft (PF only).

"(d) One O-2 FAC aircraft.

"(3) TAC air support in the PF AO, for exploitation of targets of opportunity is provided, as required, through standard FAC channels.

---

* (TS) American Embassy Thailand Msg, 090529Z Sept 1967
** (TS) Joint State/Defense Msg, 150001OZ Sept 1967
*** (TS) Annex F to COMUSMACV, 1968 Command History.

"(4) MACSOG has no organic helicopter or TAC air assets; however, the following units are 'dedicated' to support MACSOG cross-border efforts:

"(a) VNAF 219th Helo Squadron.

"1. Authorized: 25 CH-34s.

"2. Average daily availability: 12.

"(b) 20th Helo Squadron

"1. Authorized for MACSOG: 15 UH-1Fs.

"2. Average daily availability of MACSOG: 8.

"(5) Total average helicopter utilization for FY 68 was 47 per day, the majority of which were provided from Field Force assets. Of the daily average, 14 were used to support DANIEL BOONE and 33 in support of PRAIRIE FIRE operations.

"(6) Overall average on-call TAC air utilization was .78 sorties per operation. PRAIRIE FIRE operations used an average of 1.28 sorties per mission and DANIEL BOONE an average of .41 sorties per mission."*

C. OPERATIONS

1. Summary

a. The COMUSMACV Command History indicates that during the first nine months of 1968, the tactical situation imposed by the enemy's winter-spring offensive influenced the scope and direction of PRAIRIE FIRE operations. The seige and subsequent closure of Khe Sanh Combat Base precluded operations into the northern fifth of the PRAIRIE FIRE AO from January through mid-June and tied down approximately 600 PRAIRIE FIRE personnel in a static defense role. Loss of the Kham Duc launch site in May 1968 further degraded MACSOG's capability to provide coverage of the AO. The Kham Duc site had provided coverage of the south central portion of the PRAIRIE FIRE area. Cross-border operations were emphasized during the last three months of 1968, and 77 percent of the PRAIRIE FIRE efforts were directed into Laos.

* (TS) Ibid.

b. One SLAM (reconnaissance-in-force) type operation was conducted during 1968. SLAM VII, targeted against BA 613, was initiated in November and continued into December. Thirteen RTs, four independent platoons, and four companies were concentrated against this target area, a suspected VC/NVA base area - logistics complex. There were 112 tactical air and 42 helicopter gunship strikes against targets detected and fixed by ground forces. As a result of these air strikes against this complex, 370 secondary explosions and 64 sustained secondary fires were observed.

c. In December, four operations were mounted into the northern quarter of the PRAIRIE FIRE area from the launch site located at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.

d. During 1968, PRAIRIE FIRE elements mounted 546 operations, of which 310 were cross-border missions and 236 were in-country missions. Results of these missions are summarized in Figure D-4.

D. EVALUATION

As the result of increased helicopter and personnel losses sustained in October 1968, COMUSMACV directed that the PRAIRIE FIRE and DANIEL BOONE operations be evaluated to determine their value in relation to the increased losses sustained. Paragraph C of Part VII to Appendix I (MACSOG Intelligence) sets forth conclusions and recommendations which emanated from this evaluation.

FIGURE D-4

SUMMARY OF PF OPERATIONS--CY 68

MISSIONS	PF	IN-COUNTRY
Reconnaissance Team	271	203
Platoon	56	17
Company	0	16
TOTAL	327	236
Helicopter Gunship Sorties	287	138
Tac Air Sorties	635	68
Mines Emplaced	191	5
Enemy KIA (Body Count)	219	109 *
Enemy KIA (Estimated) **	1353	238
Secondary Explosions	676	29
Caches Destroyed	12	3
Structures Destroyed/Damaged	114	58
Enemy Weapons Captured	19	79
Enemy Vehicles Destroyed/Damaged	50	12
Enemy Prisoners Captured	1	18 *
Intelligence Reports	410	0
US: KIA	18	21 *
WIA	101	78
MIA	18	6
TOTAL	137	105
VN: KIA	40	21 *
WIA	173	98
MIA	39	11
TOTAL	252	130
TOTAL CASUALTIES	389	235
Helicopter Losses	12	5

* Includes 38 Enemy KIA, 9 Enemy POWs, 15 US KIA, and 16 VN KIA in the attack against CCN in August 1968.

** Includes killed by air and artillery

Extracted from MACV Command History 1968, Annex F, Page F-IV-A-1, TAB A

PART VI

1969 HISTORY

A. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

1. STRATA Teams

a. Following the bombing halt in November 1968, which restructed MACSOG operations in NVN, STRATA (Short Term Roadwatch and Target Acquisition) assets, including the Monkey Mountain FOB, were turned over to OP-35 (Ground Studies Group) for employment in Laos and Cambodia. Paragraph E to Part III of Annex B to Appendix C (Airborne Operations) discuss the STRATA program in detail.

b. MACSOG records indicate that during the period from January to June 1969, a total of 22 STRATA teams were infiltrated into the Prairie Fire area. The mission of these teams, generally, was to watch trails and exploit targets of opportunity for tactical air and artillery missions. An evaluation, by SOG, of STRATA operations under OP-35 resulted in the teams being returned to the control of OP-36 (Airborne Studies Group) on 1 July 1969. The principal factors promotiong the return, was the deterioration of training and morale resulting from reduced individual attention devoted to the teams under the OP-35 arrangement.

2. EARTH ANGEL PROGRAM

a. Utilizing NVA defectors and volunteers as agents, COMUSMACV proposed, in 1969, the establishment of a DAT route reconnaissance program (EARTH ANGEL) in Laos and Cambodia. As envisioned by COMUSMACV, three teams of two to three men comprising North Vietnamese ralliers would be recruited and trained to be inserted into infiltration cooridors along the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex south of the 17th parallel and along the Sihanouk Trail complex in Cambodia. It was

considered that these personnel would be able to more readily integrate their activities into the local environment than US led teams, thus enhancing the intelligence collection potential and, at the same time, reducing the possibility of compromise.

b. As proposed, recruitment of these personnel would be of a highly selective nature amongst NVA officers and NCOs who had surrendered their units or turned in caches of arms and equipment. Once selected, they were to be trained in intelligence collection techniques, observation, reporting, radio communication, demolition, prisoner capture, cover and subjects relating to infiltration and exfiltration.

c. The method of infiltrating these agents would depend on the mission of the team and location of the target area, and either overland or air infiltration techniques would be used. It was planned that missions would include locating and reporting the position of way stations, bivouac areas, areas, and field has pitals; the capture of POWs and wire tapping. Initial missions were planned to not exceed five days. If initial missions were successful, longer missions were planned.* Authority was granted to COMUSMACV in March 1969, for implementation of the EARTH ANGEL Route Reconnaissance program in the Prairie Fire and Daniel Boone areas of operations. Conduct of the operations, as outlined by COMUSMACV, were approved subject to the concurrence of American Embassies in Vietnamese and Bankok.**

B. RESOURCES

1. FORCE POSTURE

a. In order to provide greater flexibility in support of cross-border operations, MACSOG, in 1969, repostured its Prairie Fire and Daniel Boone forces in the following manner.

* (TS) COMUSMACV Msg, 190558Z February 1969.
** (TS) CINCPAC Msg, 152054Z March 1969.

(1) Within the overall authorized strength, the two operations were reorganized into three command and control detachments. Each of these detachments consisted of a headquarters element, a reconnaissance company, and one security company. Thirty reconnaissance teams composed of three US and nine indigenous personnel were formed within the reconnaissance company.

(2) The total MACV cross-border forces, for Cambodia and Laos, consisted of one command and control detachment located at Ban Me Thuot (C&C, South), one at Kontum (C&C, Central), and another at Danang (C&C, North), all directly subordinate to MACSOG.*

2. Facilities

a. In January 1969, the mobile Launch Team (MLT) concept was initiated. This technique provided for a small mobile staff element to be sattelited on a friendly compound located as close as possible to the planned area of operations of the RTs. From this advance base the MLT directed the infiltration of the teams. There were two organized within each C&C detachment. In addition, CCN at Danang was authorized a "Liaison detachment" which fulfilled the MLT function on a semi-permanent basis at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. This seven man detachment was identified as Support Facility, Nakhon Phanom.**

b. During adverse weather conditions in SVN, the launch site at Nakhon Phanom was utilized to insert teams into the northern portion of the PRAIRIE FIRE AO. Also, in 1969, the American Embassy, Bankok received permission from the Government of Thailand to use the air base at Ubon during marginal weather, for a launch site.*** This site at Ubon, in conjunction with a forward refueling site on the Plateau de

* (TS) COMUSMACV Msg, 090829Z March 1969.
** (TS) MACSOG Reconnaissance Team Techniques dated 1 July 1969.
*** (TS) AMEMBASSY, Bankok Msg, 070955Z January 1969.

Bolovens, Laos, was used to insert teams into the southern PRAIRIE FIRE area.

C OPERATIOONS

A summary of PRAIRIE FIRE operations conducted during the period 1 January to 31 Dec 1969 is contained in Figure D-5.

FIGURE D-5

Summary of Prairie Fire Operations CY69

MISSIONS	PIAO	IN - COUNTRY
Reconnaissance Team	404	4
Platoon (or larger)	48	2
Company	0	0
Battalion	0	0
Total	452	6
Bridges Destroyed	2	0
Helicopter Gunship Sorties	689	14
Tac Air Sorties	1,016	8
Anti-personnel Mines Emplaced	272	2
Vehicle Mines Emplaced	20	0
Enemy KIA (Body Count)	454	0
Enemy KIA (Estimated)	718	0
Secondary Explosions	253	23
Caches Destroyed	25	0
Structures Destroyed/Damaged	161/21	0/0
Enemy Weapons Captured	55	0
Enemy Vehicles Destroyed/Damaged	18/2	0/0
Enemy Prisoners Captured	0	0
Intelligence Reports	748	18
Helicopter Losses	28	3
Friendly Casualties:		
US: KIA	19	1
WIA	199	0
MIA	9	0
TOTAL	227	1
VN: KIA	56	1
WIA	270	0
MIA	31	0
TOTAL	357	1
US/VN Total Casualties	584	2

Extracted from MACV Command History 1969, Annex F
Page F-III-4-A-1, TAB A

CINCPAC JOINT SURVEY TEAM DISCUSSION OF CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS

15 November 1967

1. General:

a. SOG is conducting operations into Cambodia and Laos to gather intelligence and impede VC/NVA use of these territories. Operations are accomplishing their objectives but are limited by lack of helicopter assets, restrictions on number of missions in Cambodia, and restrictions on the size and number of exploitation forces in Laos. Tac air and B-52's are employed to strike located targets. However, on occasion, failure to be able to obtain tac air has permitted fleeting targets to escape. Improved VC/NVA warning systems are also resulting in more and quicker compromises of inserted teams.

b. Enemy reactions. Ground and air operations in the PRAIRIE FIRE/TIGER HOUND areas during the past two years have forced the enemy to increase defenses and take other security measures throughout his infiltration system. The following reactions have been noted:

(1) Security screen. In the early days of cross border operations the enemy maintained a thin security screen consisting primarily of small VC or Montagnard patrols along the trails in the immediate vicinity of Laos/SVN border. Now, the deep penetrations made by friendly units using helicopters has forced the enemy to develop a more elaborate security system. This system appears to consist of a network of interlocking observation posts and patrols manned by irregular units which attempt to keep all likely helicopter approach routes, landing zones, and major trails under surveillance. Security appears to be coordinated through an elaborate communications system using radio, telephone land lines, and various visual and sound signal devices.

(2) Reaction forces. Again, in the initial stages of cross border operations, enemy reaction/defense forces appeared to consist of platoon sized units composed primarily of poorly armed Pathet Lao, VC, and Montagnard troops. These units were located along the trails at infrequent intervals and may have been the ones from which the patrols were obtained. However, now, reaction forces encountered have consistently been NVA regulars in units up to at least company size with modern infantry weapons. The indications are that these regular units have had to be deployed throughout the area in sufficient numbers to be able to react to landings in the vicinity of all major way stations, storage areas, and other vital points.

(3) Anti-Air Defense. It has also been noted that air defenses have been increased. Where initially pilots were encountering ground fire from infantry weapons, the major installations are now protected by light anti-aircraft weapons all the way south to the tri-border area.

Tab to
Appendix D

(4) Infiltration units. Recent interogations of NVA prisoners captured in SVN reveal that, prior to infiltration, units are now trained in counterambush drills and other security measures/tactics. This was directly attributed to the possibility of becoming engaged while infiltrating through Laos.

2. Status of Operations:

a. PRAIRIE FIRE (PF), started in October 1965, conducts ground reconnaissance and exploitation as well as air exploitation of located targets with the purpose to impede VC/NVA use of Laos. Reconnaissance is conducted by Spike Teams (3 US and 9 VN personnel) and ground exploitation by platoon size Hornet Forces (HF) (4 US and 32-38 VN personnel). Air exploitation is accomplished by tac air, helicopter gunships, and B-52 strikes (ARC LIGHT). PF, authorized 20 Spike Teams (ST) and 3 battalions, currently has 17 STs operational. The battalions are employed in platoon size elements. While ground exploitation forces are restricted both in size and number, the most severe limitation on current operations involves helicopter assets. Helicopter gunship support is provided from various aviation units as required. While this is a workable system, the assignment of a helicopter gunship company to SOG would permit a more responsive system of support.

b. DANIEL BOONE (DB), authorized 26 May 1967, conducts reconnaissance operations to determine the extent of VC/NVA military use of Cambodia. The major problem, a political as well as a military one, which restricts operations and prevents full effectiveness is the limitation placed on use of helicopters. This restriction permits the use of helicopters for only five of the 30 authorized missions per month, and then only to a depth of 10 KM. DB received the remainder of the 16 authorized RTs on 1 November. Exploitation ground forces are not authorized. This operation is not permitted to exploit located targets with tac air and may use helicopter gunships only to assist in an emergency extraction.

c. Cross border air support consists of 6 programed A-1 sorties per day with additional tac air by request. Tac air has been immediately responsive in the past but recently the time lag between request and strike has increased. However, response to an emergency request is immediate. Helicopter gunship support is by attachment. This has been a workable solution but with each change of helicopter crews new coordination procedures and crew/team training is required.

3. Problem Areas:

a. Political considerations. The major political factor is plausible deniability of cross border operations into Cambodia and Laos. This has prevented using trained regular SVN forces in the exploitation role. The restriction imposed on PF of only 3 platoon size units employed in any one operation prevents the ground destruction of many lucrative targets. In addition, the 20 KM zone limitation prevents ground reconnaissance and exploitation by PF forces to the west of the boundary line. This boundary should not be considered a barrier but rather a flexible coordination line. The political attitude toward Cambodia has imposed both helicopter

Tab to
Appendix D

penetration distance and exploitation restrictions on the DB operations. It is imperative that a system be devised so that tactical advantage may be taken of large VC/NVA units moving toward SVN. While it is recognized that the U. S. does not wish either the government of Cambodia or Laos to fall, procedures to take tactical advantage of military targets in both countries that are a threat to FWMFs in SVN should be developed. Interdepartmental discussion at the highest levels is required to determine the appropriate methods of overcoming these limitations and to carry the war to a successful conclusion.

b. Operational restrictions.

(1) Helicopters impose tactical limitation on cross border operations. The shortage of H-34 helicopters in the 219th Helicopter Sq requires that crew and aircraft be exposed with short relaxation and maintenance time. Helicopter troop carriers are also required from other aviation units to provide the necessary support for operations.

(2) The exploitation forces are restricted to platoon size and as such do not have the necessary combat power and strength to take advantage of located targets. Additionally, these platoons are formed from local indigenous personnel that join for the higher pay and other advantages offerred by SOG. When casualties increase, so does the rate of desertion. This results in fluctuation of personnel and available assets. As stated above, currently authorized exploitation forces are incapable of destroying many targets due to target size and defense The employment of battalion size units would provide a unit of greater staying power and with a greater potential. In the DB operational area exploitation forces are not authorized.

c. Execution.

(1) Priorities. Although SOG considers itself to be a top priority organization and has had some indications from MACV to confirm this, nothing has been "spelled out" which specifically identifies SOG as a priority unit. Thus, SOG completes with other units for personnel, equipment, air support, etc. A recent example where an established priority would have assisted SOG concerns distribution of the M-16 rifle. An ARVN training unit received several hundred of these weapons while SOG has been unable to obtain a sufficient number to equip their exploitation forces.

(2) Coordination. A basic problem effecting coordination between SOG and other organizations is their apparent lack of knowledge concerning the cross border operations being conducted by SOG. Although many of the key individuals in these units were once briefed on SOG's activities, the turn over of personnel requires that such briefings take place on a more frequent basis. In addition, more than just the key individuals of a unit must be informed regarding cross border activities. The "working" people supporting SOG cross border operations have a definite need to know. For example, the air operations officers aboard the TIGER HOUND Airborne Command Post should have a full appreciation of recon team and exploitation force operations. Further, tactical information obtained during cross border operations should be routinely passed to adjacent units and the brigade and higher commanders should have full knowledge of how the information was obtained. Finally, the Command and Control Det. at Danang should be in constant contact with the III MAF Hqs and the Field Forces Hqs on all cross border operations adj[redacted] TAOR.

Tab to
Appendix D

(3) Helicopter Assets. The main source of helicopter troop lift for cross border activities is the 219th VNAF Sqd. This unit is authorized 25 H-34 helicopters, yet on 10 Nov 67 only 14 H-34s were assigned. This forces SOG to "beg & borrow" troop lift helicopters to keep operations going at the pace desired. If SOG cross border operations are going to be fully effective and productive, the 219th Sqd must be provided its full compliment of aircraft.

(4) Tactical Air Support. For cross border operations, SOG is allocated 6 A-1E sorties per day. However, this fixed allocation is not sufficient in many cases. In such cases, the TIGER HOUND Airborne Command Post is requested to provide additional tactical air support. There have been times when this support was not forthcoming or excessively delayed. In order to insure that the airborne air operations officer can properly assess the request for air support, he should be given a full and complete briefing on cross border operations. Although this will not insure that tac air support is always provided when required, it will insure that the request is given proper consideration, vis-a-vis other requests for air support.

(5) Logistics. In several cases it appears there is needless duplication in the logistic support system for special operations. For example, both SOG and the 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) have requirements for like items at roughly the same location. However, each organization has its own logistics system and in some cases they compete with each other. A separate "look" at the system of logistics support for these organizations seems to be in order. This "look" should be accomplished with a view toward reducing duplication and eliminating competion for similar type items, and possibility recommending that the 5th SFG assume the logistical support for cross border operations for common items.

(6) Personnel. The personnel picture for cross border operations has improved during the last few months; however, again SOG is competing with other organizations for certain talents. As stated in para (1) above, it appears that some priority system should be established to provide guidelines for the requisition and assignment of critical specialties and for total personnel authorization as well. Personnel priorities are extremely important in cross border activities. The physical and mental strain associated with these operations necessitate a rapid turn over of personnel. A formal personnel rotation system, with the 5th Special Forces Group should be investigated.

4. Planning/Programming.

a. General:

(1) From initial inception, cross border operations have been continually expanded. The development of necessary base facilities, provision of equipment, and acquisition of sufficient personnel, both U.S. and indigenous, has consistently lagged behind the granting of authority to commence new or different phases of the operations. This lag appears to result from management requirements outside MACSOG cognizance in the areas of programming, budgeting, personnel distribution, and purchase/allocation/shipment of supplies and equipment.

(2) It appears that with better planning many of these problems could be alleviated. To be effective, such planning would have to be done on a continuing basis in order to stay abreast of adjustments in the program and to provide for early identification of new requirements.

(3) With broad planning guidance furnished by COMUSMACV, detailed planning could be accomplished at MACSOG with review at MACV, CINCPAC, and JCS. When plans were approved, the requirements generated could be programmed more readily by the responsible service headquarters.

(4) The establishment of such a planning staff at MACSOG would also assist Chief SOG with staff coordination. Since it must necessarily continually review all on-going programs in order to properly plan ahead, the plans staff would ensure that all aspects of the program were considered and coordinated including personnel, logistics, communications, and operations.

b. Future Direction:

(1) In light of the success of the program some consideration should now be given to future developments in addition to Phase III - Guerrilla Warfare. Some of the following concepts or ideas might be developed by a planning staff:

(a) The use of battalion sized strike forces should be studied. Units of that size could be placed in blocking positions forcing the enemy to abandon temporarily a portion of his trail system or to assemble sufficient force to eliminate the battalion thus providing good targets for tactica air. Such forces would have to be prepared to remain on the ground longer than present Hornet Forces. These forces should have sufficient combat power to hold blocking positions for the time required to cause the desired enemy reaction. In view of the fact that such forces may have to engage in sustained combat for a period of several days and be capable of conducting a withdrawal under fire, consideration should be given to the use of regular RVN troops sanitized for the operation.

(b) Another possible concept is the development and deployment of company sized helicopterborne units along the same lines as the 1st Air Cav. concept. These integrated air/ground teams would replace some of the Spike Teams and small Hornet Forces - combining the mission of both teams and producing faster, harder hitting forces.

(c) Both of the above suggestions point to the fact that operations in the PRAIRIE FIRE area could easily move toward reconnaissance and raids being conducted by regular forces supported by tactical air and artillery. In no case should an attempt be made to set up base camps in Laos. These operations would be coordinated with the Corps commanders and range along both sides of the border concentrating on the infiltration system wherever it may be located. Operations in the DANIEL BOONE area could not be developed to this point but could certainly include Hornet Forces and perhaps artillery support in the Tri-border area.

(2) Organization.

(a) As indicated earlier in this report, SOG is doing an excellent job with PRAIRIE FIRE/DANIEL BOONE operations. The operations are producing results and there are no indications at this time that reorganization or realignment of missions or tasks would produce better results. However, as these operations expand in size and become more diversified, consideration should be given to reorganization. Some ideas which might be given further study are offered below:

1. Establishment of a second Special Forces group with the mission of conducting operations against the infiltration system, both cross border and in country. Such a concept would assign a major program to one command and remove what is essentially an overt operation from a covert organization. It would allow SOG to concentrate on the development and execution of it's programs in the North. One problem would be that the necessary concentration of intelligence expertise and the necessary intelligence base is located in SOG. The other problem is that the deployment of a second large Special Forces staff and organization is questionable.

2. Another possibility is turning over the present SOG PF/DB assets to the 5th Special Forces Group. These assets would become a company with C&C Hqs becoming a "C" detachment, each FOB a "B" detachment and Phase III operations in Laos under "B" detachments control. Subordinate guerrilla units, strike forces, and spike teams would be controlled by "A" or modified "A" detachments. Such an alignment would assist in solving current personnel and logistics problems. However, the operational span of control might be too large for the 5th Group Commander and add a heavy responsibility and additional burdens to his staff.

3. Another solution is to organize as in 2 above with 5th Special Forces providing the assets but with operational control by the Corps commanders much as the Delta teams are controlled now. This would coordinate in country operations with cross border operations. Better support for cross border operations would probably result but the execution of the program might be fragmented.

Tab to
Appendix D

APPENDIX E -- CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA

PART I., II.
PART III. A. 1.
2.
3.-9.
B., C.
PART IV. [redacted]
V. A., B. 1.-3.
4.-6.
C., D.