
The Politics of Air Power: The Deployment of Australian Air Power to Southeast Asia, 1962-1972

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The Tet Offensive, 1968

Nguyễn Ngọc Loan executes Viet Cong
Captain Nguyễn Văn Lém (Source:
Wikimedia)


Air Power for Political Effect

Air power is an unusually seductive form of military strength, in part because, like modern courtship, it appears to offer gratification without commitment.

Eliot Cohen, 'The Mystique of U.S. Air Power,'
Foreign Affairs 73, no. 1 (1994), p. 109.

[t]he reliance on airpower to produce success in Vietnam was a classic rendition of the “ends, ways, and means” formula for designing strategy taught today at staff and war colleges worldwide.

Mark Clodfelter, 'The Limits of Airpower or the Limits of Strategy: The Air Wars in Vietnam and Their Legacies,' *Joint Forces Quarterly* 78 (2015), p. 112.



The Curious Case of No. 79 Squadron



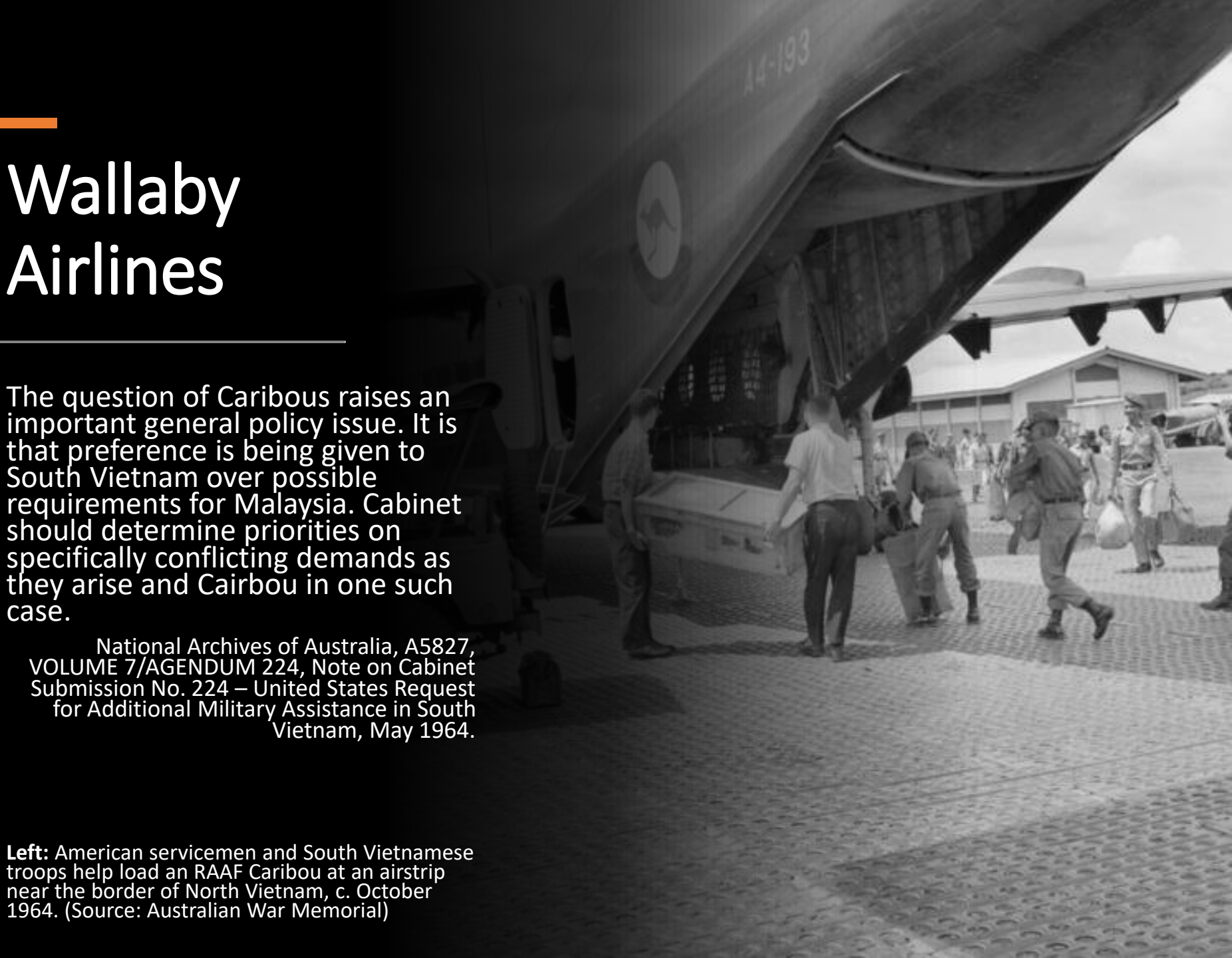
Concrete revetments sheltering two Sabre aircraft of No. 79 Squadron RAAF at RTAF Ubon. (Source: Australian War Memorial)

Wallaby Airlines

The question of Caribous raises an important general policy issue. It is that preference is being given to South Vietnam over possible requirements for Malaysia. Cabinet should determine priorities on specifically conflicting demands as they arise and Caribou in one such case.

National Archives of Australia, A5827, VOLUME 7/AGENDUM 224, Note on Cabinet Submission No. 224 – United States Request for Additional Military Assistance in South Vietnam, May 1964.

Left: American servicemen and South Vietnamese troops help load an RAAF Caribou at an airstrip near the border of North Vietnam, c. October 1964. (Source: Australian War Memorial)



Helicopters for Vietnam...

Top: Ground crew of the Australian Army's 161st (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight change the oil on one of their Bell H-13 Sioux helicopter at Vung Tau airbase. (Source: Australian War Memorial)

Bottom: Two RAAF Bell Iroquois UH-1B Helicopters belonging to No 9 Squadron sitting on the tarmac at Vung Tau, with another one taking off behind them. (Source: Australian War Memorial)





No carrier, but more helicopters

An unidentified pilot of the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam. The RANHFV was attached to the US Army 135th Assault Helicopter Company. (Source: Australian War Memorial)



Fighters or Bombers?

A moments rest under the wing of a No. 2 Squadron RAAF Canberra whilst the aircraft is being refueled for a nighttime mission, 8 June 1967. (Source: Australian War Memorial)

Conclusion

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