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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD
MAR 3-20-2000

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD
PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

NO DDA objection
for 7/15/00

AT THE PENTAGON

TWELFTH MEETING

8 MAY 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR
MR. KENNEDY
MR. DULLES
ADMIRAL BURKE

GENERAL WHITE
GENERAL DECKER
GENERAL SHOUP
MR. BISSELL
COLONEL BLACK
COLONEL GAINES
COLONEL KING
COMMANDER MITCHELL
MR. COX
MR. SMITH
LT COLONEL TARWATER

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CIA PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS

Next to appear before the Group were Mr. Bissell, Mr. Cox and Mr. Smith, who were to describe CIA's paramilitary operations. Prior to the briefing Mr. Dulles and Mr. Bissell made a few introductory remarks. Mr. Dulles pointed out that if any changes were to be made in the responsibilities for covert or paramilitary operations the 5412 paper would have to be changed. Mr. Bissell stated that the rules under which an operation was to be conducted determined which agency would have the responsibility for the operation. He went on to point out that the CIA was responsible for covert operations ranging in size all the way from one or two people to a size where the numbers were obtrusive.

QUESTION: But you will need a new definition of covert operations in order to get the obtrusive operations justifiably inside your mission?

MR. BISSELL: Yes, sir.

MR. BISSELL: We need a halfway house. We should admit official, moral support of an operation and then this would make our operations much less difficult.

MR. COX

Mr. Cox stated that he was the head of a staff section in CIA which is responsible for fostering and guiding the buildup of paramilitary capabilities around the world. He stated that where paramilitary operations are relatively small they remain an integral part of the area divisions. However, if it appears likely that the operations are going to be sizable then an internal task force to handle the operation is developed within CIA.

QUESTION: What is your definition of paramilitary operations?

MR. BISSELL: Everything from guerrilla operations to sabotage.

MR. COX: The principles that govern paramilitary operations are: First, the covert support of a friendly government where the knowledge of U. S. support would do more harm than good. For example, in Iran or in Laos. The second principle is the covert

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support of a coup. The third is the covert support of guerrilla warfare, [REDACTED] Fourth, the covert support of conventional warfare, [REDACTED] Fifth, the covert support of expanded warfare, such as our AVG.

MR. SMITH

At this point Mr. Smith appeared before the Group to describe some of CIA's current paramilitary training and operations. Mr. Smith stated that our activities in Laos were restricted by the Geneva Agreement which limited the number of personnel that could be introduced into the country. He pointed out that in Laos the training mission was assigned to the French so that American personnel went in under the guise of the PEO, or the Plans Evaluation Office. Under this guise they came in contact with [REDACTED] He stated that our approach [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and that their strength is now up to 6,700; that up until six weeks ago they were considered a considerable asset. However, four weeks ago they became almost a liability because they must continue to be supported or they will be annihilated. If we abandon these people we will not only be losing their capacity, but more than that we will be setting a precedent which will be observed by others in Asia and which will make it much more difficult for us to recruit people in the future.

QUESTION: Is it possible to keep this group alive?

MR. SMITH: Yes, but we will have to supply them with food and ammunition. We particularly have to convince [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that we are in Asia to stay.

MR. SMITH: In South Viet Nam they have different operations in the north and the south. They have the 1st Observation Group which is all drawn from people in the areas of the north. However, due to the criticality of the situation in South Viet Nam this group, while specially trained for operations in the north, has been pulled out and is being utilized in South Viet Nam.

QUESTION: Are these men being trained to be guerrillas?

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MR. SMITH: They have three functions - intelligence reconnaissance, locate and establish secure bases, and provide a cadre for expanded resistance.

QUESTION: Could this force be expanded rapidly?

MR. SMITH: No, there are not enough refugees and, of course, there are tight controls exercised against us particularly by the Polish and Indian representatives on the Truce Commission.

QUESTION: Is there any difference in the language between the people from the north and south?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir, and in their appearance, outlook, energy, et cetera.

STATEMENT: You paint a discouraging picture of North Viet Nam.

MR. SMITH: Yes, because Diem feels he needs to concentrate on the south. He indicates he can't be concerned with a sore toe when he has a knife in his heart.

STATEMENT: I'd like to see the Communists start chasing our guerrillas for a change.

MR. SMITH: We've tried this a number of times with Diem. However, each time that we get the people trained, he utilizes them in the south.

MR. COX

At this point Mr. Cox returned before the Group to discuss the paramilitary situation concerning the [REDACTED]

QUESTION: Are you ready to send [REDACTED]

MR. DULLES: [REDACTED] has been pushing hard for dropping parachute teams to work [REDACTED]. However, we put in some teams and the take wasn't very good. The small teams don't seem to be able to survive. Consequently, [REDACTED] now wants to put in at least 20-man teams so that they might be a nucleus of resistance. At the moment, however, we have no contact with any of the teams that we have previously put [REDACTED]. In addition to our Asian operations, we are planning [REDACTED] in the Middle East

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and the Congo and we have [REDACTED] in the event of a hot war [REDACTED]

MR. BISSELL: However, we feel that this [REDACTED] capability is essentially wasted because they have no cold war capability at the moment. We believe this program should be revitalized so that they can play a role in the cold war.

MR. COX: We have started a new covert [REDACTED] program.

MR. BISSELL: We would like to have some control [REDACTED] in the same manner that the Communists do all over the world, where we can have [REDACTED]

MR. COX: We are starting a program for better selection and handling of foreign students. Everyone expects Americanism to rub off on visitors. However, this just hasn't proved to be the case. Now some of the problem areas are: First, the availability of military personnel that are sheep-dipped and quickly available. Second, we would like to have similar units to the [REDACTED] Third, we would like to see interagency coordination improved on the expanded operations. We would like to see the ground rules established in advance. Fourth, we need a program for expansion funds.

MR. BISSELL: We believe that the ground rules should be written when the project is first suggested.

MR. BISSELL: One other additional capability we'd like to acquire is to have assets similar to CAT. It has been a very great convenience to the United States Government to have the CAT operation. We are trying to establish similar organizations in the Middle East and Africa.

At this point the paramilitary briefing team from CIA left and Commander Mitchell briefed on the chronology of the ship movements based on the ship dispatches to and from the ELGAR. Inasmuch as the script of Commander Mitchell's presentation was distributed to the members, no notes have been entered herein.

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