

1 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Special Group (CI) Meeting, 1 March 1962

PRESENT: General Taylor, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Gilpatric, Mr. McCone, Mr. Coffin, Major General Krulak. Ambassador Young and (CIA) were present for Item 1.

1. Thailand

Ambassador Young discussed with the Group various aspects of the situation in Thailand bearing on the matter of counter-insurgency.

He commented on the weakness of the Thai apparatus for the detection of subversive elements, and remarked that largely because of this it is difficult to assess the degree or significance of infiltration of such elements into the community. He emphasized the necessity of improving access to villages on the part of government officials, with particular reference to assistance they would thus be in a position to render in Civic Action and similar programs. The Ambassador felt that the light aircraft which have been proposed are extremely important and that the development of roads is also a high priority.

As to the Border Police, Mr. Young said that the aircraft and adequate radio equipment are required. It was noted that in this case the communications equipment requires a degree of flexibility and adaptability to mobile use that distinguishes it from that required for the village alarm system in Vietnam. It was pointed out that the procurement of weapons and transport is proceeding satisfactorily, but that there is a delay in requisitions and related papers in connection with the communications equipment. The Chairman asked that the procurement situation be looked at again closely and that AID report to the Special Group (CI) if any bottlenecks appear that cannot be eliminated quickly.

Ambassador Young questioned whether any air unit provided could be effectively run by the Thais. On the other hand, he felt that it would be better to keep direction in the hands of the Air Attache rather than placing it in the MAAG. It was decided he would discuss the entire air matter further with General Krulak and Lt. Colonel Wilson.

NSC review(s) completed.

- 2 -

Mr. Young cited the following conclusions that he had personally reached: (a) it is necessary to inculcate in the Thais greater vision in recognizing the problems of potential insurgency that confront them, and to take more effective action to combat it; (b) Special Forces personnel should be assigned to Thailand and visits by U.S. experts should be encouraged; (c) the Thai military organization should be carefully looked at to make sure that it is properly adapted to the role that it should assume. In this connection, he mentioned the possibility of establishing an airborne battle group; he acknowledged that Admiral Felt is not in full agreement on this, at least as to the timing. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gilpatric undertook to look into this proposal of sending a battle group to Thailand.

2. Training Objectives

Mr. Johnson distributed a rewrite of the draft NEAM on this subject. The Group accepted his draft with a few changes. It was agreed that it would be presented to the President.

Mr. Gilpatric said that General Krulak will replace Colonel Smith as the DOD/JCS representative on the Testow Committee.

3. Vietnam

General Taylor asked whether economic programs are being pushed as vigorously as others. Mr. Coffin was asked to prepare a special report on this for next week's meeting, which would outline specific programs and show the emphasis being placed on support of counter-insurgency.

Mr. Coffin reported that the field has concluded that more radio sets for the village alarm system can be absorbed; consequently the production has been stepped up from 300 sets per month to 350.

The Group agreed that economic personnel should be included in survey groups for key provinces.

4. South America Assessment Team Report

The Group was in agreement that it is not necessary to place the coordination of recommendations stemming from this report under the cognizance of the Special Group (CI). It was decided that State should serve as the focal point to bring together all departmental comments on these reports.

With respect to Part III, Mr. McCone pointed out that if all the recommendations for stepping up intelligence activities were

- 1 -

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[redacted]

for CIA personnel. He and Mr. Johnson agreed that this is in direct conflict with current policy directing a scaling down of [redacted] and that this will require further examination. Mr. McCone also commented that possibly a number of the recommendations would not require implementation at this time.

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