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EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
(C)

SUBJECT: Substance of Response to Chiang Kai-shek's Request
for High Level Strategy Talks

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
(C)

1. The Gimo has made it clear that he desires to know whether President Kennedy feels it timely to exchange views on the subject of circumstances under which GRC intervention on the Mainland might be feasible or desirable from the Free World strategic viewpoint. He wants a discussion at least with someone who can speak for the President.

2. The Gimo's initiative on this subject probably results from his conviction that the moment is approaching when maximum Chinese Communist difficulties will coincide with maximum effectiveness of the GRC military forces. At the minimum we can assume that he wishes to be ready for the contingency of spontaneous uprisings on the Mainland. We doubt the Gimo would move unilaterally against the Mainland except under the most desperate conditions. Despite his desire for return to the Mainland he, and particularly his key military advisors, know that whatever he can do against the Mainland is almost totally dependent upon U.S. policy approval and material support. To proceed prudently he needs to measure the parameters of such approval and support.

3. His knowledge of these parameters is somewhat restricted. On the one hand he has very limited U.S. approval for small clandestine probes to determine resistance potential on the Mainland. The only U.S. commitment beyond this is to take counsel with the GRC on larger scale but still clandestine measures that might be feasible and follow-up any successes that might be achieved in the first phase.

4. On the other hand he is faced with treaty provisions which he feels prevents any concrete consideration by the Department of State of contingencies requiring GRC intervention on the Mainland. He would prefer to set the limits of action not by the treaty but by

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three considerations: (1) that it would not adversely effect the U.S., (2) that it would not directly involve a policy commitment or the forces of the U.S., and (3) that it would not militate against the GRC capability to defend Taiwan.

5. If the U.S. response to the Gimo's initiative is flatly negative, i.e. that under no circumstances will the U.S. approve or support GRC action of any scale against the Mainland, it is predictable that a new severe period of strain will emerge in U.S.-GRC relations. Such action will probably rekindle the Gimo's suspicions that the U.S. is moving toward a "Two China" policy. He would probably continue an accelerated program of unilateral planning. In desperation he might in the last analysis initiate some action which, if he could force his military commanders to move, would result in a military adventure that could be disastrous both for the stability of the GRC and U.S. security interests in the area.

6. We would tend to favor a course of action which would result in a sympathetic hearing of the Gimo's case, [REDACTED] which would have to be inconclusive on the chances of Mainland collapse—and an indication of U.S. willingness to proceed with appropriate actions within a clandestine framework to probe and follow-up Mainland resistance potential. We believe a convincing case can be made for the need for clandestinity in these operations from both the GRC and U.S. point of view. We think additional electronically protected air support capability should be provided as a tangible token of U.S. interest.

7. We believe that the above course of action would avoid the drawbacks of a negative response and would run relatively small risks of U.S. involvement in large scale action against the Mainland. It would have the advantage of continuing communication with the GRC on this subject. It would take considerable time to get the back-up aircraft in place (four to six months) and insistence on the principle of clandestinity would provide built in limitation to action the U.S. would approve. The chances of a successful build up of resistance to a point that would warrant large scale involvement of troops appears extremely remote and even if such were the case, there is considerable evidence to suggest that without overt U.S. support in air and sea lift when the chips were down the Gimo's military commanders might refuse to attempt such an invasion.

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8. We would recommend therefore that an adequate response be made to the Gimo's request for strategy discussions, that such discussions be carried on by someone with obvious access to the President and empowered to speak for him, that we indicate sympathy and support for the Gimo's plans within the limits he himself has set and that we further supplement his clandestine air lift capability by the provision of either one configured C-130 or two or three smaller aircraft.

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