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25 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: ExComAir

SUBJECT : STOL Capability in Southeast Asia

1. The Vientiane Station [redacted] asks for three Helios and one DO28 to be added to [redacted] in Vientiane "to alleviate STOL aircraft shortage. At present rate Air America's Helios flying in excess 200 hours per month." [redacted] cable [redacted] from Taipei states that the USAID Vietnam is asking for one or two DO28's and one Caribou. Further, the American Embassy in Saigon is arranging to make full time use of the two Apaches that are currently in Vietnam.
2. Headquarters has offered to airlift one Helio from the U.S. to Southeast Asia (DIR [redacted]) and this appears to be the only Helio available anywhere in the world to transfer to Southeast Asia. The hulk of a crashed Helio is in Vietnam, and this machine is said to be unrepairable; however Air America would like the opportunity to inspect it and possibly attempt repair.
3. The above quoted messages state a definite requirement for 5 or 6 STOL aircraft in addition to the Caribou, and there appears to be only one and possibly two Helios available to fill these needs. In addition, it can be expected that under present operating conditions in Laos we can anticipate Helios to be ^{ing} out of operation from damage.
4. We have available to us immediately three Turbo Porters which can be airlifted from the U.S. to Southeast Asia and a fourth Turbo Porter can be available in Switzerland in August. The cost of these aircraft at their present location is some \$70,000 each and Turbomeca Astazou II E engines with Ratier Figeac reversing propellers are installed. We have reviewed at ExCom meetings on a number of occasions the desirability of planning towards equipping our fleet with American-manufactured, turbine engines installed in present or newly acquired aircraft such as the Stallion. Neither the new engine nor the new aircraft is available and the Department of Defense has not as yet chosen either engine or aircraft of COIN or STOL projects. When DOD has made such a choice, we should standardize where possible, and it appears that it might be practical for us at that point to adopt the same turbine as is accepted for the COIN project and standardize throughout our fleet. Meanwhile, there is only the Porter and Astazou available.

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5. We recommend immediate purchase of the three Turbo Porters now available. The seller is engineering Pratt & Whitney and AirResearch modification kits for the Porter and agrees to take the Astasou back in trade when an engine is chosen for COIN and we have the availability of American engines for standardization. On this basis, the introduction of Porter air frames would not seriously interfere with a standardization program, and we believe procurement should be approved and expedited.

DDS