

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO

Op-00:wn
Op-00 Memo 000122-61
24 February 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subj: Debrief of President's Meeting with JCS on 23 Feb 1961

1. General Lemnitzer explained the weapons demonstration in Puerto Rico.
2. The President said that he was just in the process of reading the Holifield report and wanted to make sure we all read it. He was concerned about nuclear weapons control. He wanted to know what our ideas were on nuclear weapons control and whether our weapons control actually conformed to law. What is the President's authority? What should he do? Should he change our procedures in any way? He wanted to discuss this thoroughly at the next meeting.

- brought up guerrilla warfare and asked General Decker how many men we have trained in guerrilla warfare in the Army. General Decker said 1800 now and increasing to 5,000. He asked what effort was being made in the MAAGs to increase guerrilla warfare training. General Decker replied that they were very limited, that they have teams of about twelve people. They had previously had about 30 people in Laos but they had been pulled out in November. There are about 112 to 175 in Viet Nam. This was a matter for the Unified Commanders. There are three hundred and some people in Germany and three hundred and sixty-four in Okinawa. The President was not very much impressed with the Army effort.

- then asked what General Lansdale was doing. It was explained that he was working for General Erskine.

- then asked what we were doing in Viet Nam to train against the activities of the Viet Minh and Viet Kong. He wanted to know if we shouldn't increase our effort and do much more than we are doing. He wanted to know what we were doing to train

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Viet Nameese or Filipinos, or somebody else to go into Viet Minh. Viet Minh are raising hell in Viet Nam, and why don't we send somebody up and raise hell with them.

- asked about Ecuador. He wanted to know what we were doing to counter Communist guerrilla operations in Ecuador. I stated that first, we had to have intelligence on who they are. The President then talked about Colombia and said that we will have to do something in all Latin-American countries and he thought we should increase the emphasis on guerrilla and counter guerrilla warfare operations in Latin-America. He asked the Joint Chiefs to take a look at the guidance for MAP, to see whether we couldn't reorient MAP to include conducting training in guerrilla warfare action. General Decker stated this is going to be started in July.

- then asked how we could get the dope from the military people in Latin-America as to how they feel about Castro, and what they think their governments should do. I explained that I had talked with the Chilean, Argentinean and Peruvian admirals and they were anti-Castro. They felt their governments should do more but realized that their governments were in a ticklish position because of a lot of unrest in their own countries.

3. Comment: Op-92 and Op-62, please confer with me on how we can best get this data from our Latin-American friends. The Chairman will probably try to have the Joint Chiefs get this from all the participants in the weapons demonstration, but I am not sure that this is going to work. We will have to handle this very carefully because, otherwise, the Latin-American sources will just dry up.

4. The President then stated that perhaps we should draw up a SEATO doctrine at the March meeting of the SEATO Council. Perhaps we should submit a paper indicating that we should have much more emphasis on anti-guerrilla warfare. He wanted to know if maybe we shouldn't put just a little bit of pressure on SEATO members, and how would they feel about this.

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5. I explained that it has been quite difficult in the past for MAAGs and U. S. military people to do anything about training guerrilla forces in a foreign country, because many of the American Ambassadors do not want anything to do with training guerrillas. This is particularly true in Southeast Asia where we need to do much more, but have not been able to because of some opposition by some of our own representatives. The President said that he had been aware of this and that he agreed we had a lot of trouble in Viet Nam and Malaya, and that everybody had to realize that we have got to do more in guerrilla warfare training, and that the MAAGs had to do more, or some other group had to train these indigenous people on how to protect themselves and how to get into the Communist countries. The Chairman stated that the Joint Chiefs and State should get together and prepare a message to the Ambassadors and Chiefs of MAAGs.

6. The President said, why can't we get a report from Iran on what Iran is doing, and what should be done in Iran to increase guerrilla warfare training by the Iranians. Certainly, the Russians were not going to attack across the border. The danger lies in an insurrection within Iran. This was the thing that the Iranians ought to be prepared to control. He repeated that we should submit some proposal to SEATO and ask Viet Nam what plans they have for controlling the Viet Kong and increase their guerrilla capabilities. We should ask them specific questions on how many people they have in anti-guerrilla warfare, and how many people in training, and when will they complete their training? By what date do they think they will have sufficient number of forces to clean out the Communist forces in Viet Nam?

- asked if we were satisfied with the nuclear weapons system. He asked to be briefed on local control of nuclear weapons and dispersal of nuclear weapons. Can we control the repulse? How could we control a Communist attack across the border with conventional weapons if the Communists attacked in such force that the Europeans were being forced back? Would they not shoot their nuclear weapons? How could we control it? Do we have positive control?

- then brought up "Berlin and asked what steps we could take to oppose all possible steps that the Russians might take,

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since he thought the Berlin question would come up by next summer.

- then asked whether Admiral Felt was happy about the military situation in Laos. Was it a stalemate now? What did Admiral Felt think was going to happen in Laos? What more did he think should be done, particularly in anti-guerrilla warfare training?

- then brought in the increased appropriations by stating that Mr. McNamara had talked to him a little bit. He said that surely 13,000 personnel would not make a difference between success and failure, and we could surely absorb the increase that we had asked for.

- I stated that 13,000 personnel was not what we asked for, but that we needed a great many more people. For example, we had stripped all the Fleet for personnel for Polaris submarines and we had gone to such a low limit that there was nothing left to strip and we had to put many more people in training. We had to reduce our other forces. We had to eliminate lighter-than-air and we wanted to cut out the Pacific DEW Line, although there was a difference of opinion on this. We can't reduce our destroyer force any more because they are required for anti-submarine warfare. He asked how many destroyers we had. I told him 225. He said, well he realized that but still, surely we could get a few more. I told him that this had been going on for years and we were down to the limit.

- asked about why an LPD. I explained the advantages of an LPD. He said why not build an ordinary transport. I told him the reasons why.

- then asked about Reserves and limited discussions to General Shoup.

- said he was going to ask Mr. Dulles on Friday on what basis did the various opinions arise on the number of missiles that Russia had. He wanted to get down to the reasons as to why people had different opinions as to the numbers. He does not want to get into the intelligence though.

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