

General Taylor
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Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 22 Jan 2012 Authority: EO 13526
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Reason: _____
MDR: 12-M-3087

5 U.S.C. 552 THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
May 13, 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: The Special Group (Counterinsurgency) from January 18, 1962, to November 21, 1963

Attached to this memorandum are the following enclosures which portray the activities of the Special Group (Counterinsurgency). This senior-level inter-departmental committee was established by President Kennedy January 18, 1962, with the promulgation of National Security Action Memorandum No. 124, to assure unity of effort and maximum effectiveness in the use of all available resources to detect and either prevent or defeat subversive insurgency and related forms of Communist-inspired indirect aggression in friendly foreign countries.

Enclosure A - Memorandum for the Record, Subject: Background Information on the Establishment of the Special Group (CI)

Enclosure B - National Security Action Memoranda pertinent to the establishment of the Group:

NSAM 124 - dated January 18, 1962
NSAM 165 - dated June 16, 1962
NSAM 180 - dated August 13, 1962
NSAM 184 - dated September 4, 1962
NSAM 186 - dated September 17, 1962
NSAM 204 - dated November 7, 1962

Enclosure C - Minutes of the Special Group (CI) from January 18, 1962, to November 21, 1963

Enclosure D - Progress Reports submitted to the President. (NOTE: Other special reports were submitted during this period either orally or by separate memoranda. Written reports in this category are not included as they are not available in this office. However, it is believed they exist in other Presidential files.)

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James W. Dingeman
JAMES W. DINGEMAN
Executive Secretary
Special Group (CI)

12-M-3087

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Background Information on the Establishment of the Special Group
(Counterinsurgency)

The first year of President Kennedy's Administration, up to the formation of the Special Group (CI) on 18 January 1962, was a period of searching for doctrine and organization to cope with what was believed to be a gap in our national security posture to defeat communist-inspired indirect aggression or subversive insurgency. After the Special Group (CI) was formed, General Taylor took over White House management of most CI efforts.

President Kennedy's Administration came into office with the conviction that Communist inspired or exploited subversive insurgency was one of the major threats to the Free World in the 1960's. The Attorney General says that Khrushchev's January 1961 speech on wars of national liberation "was a major factor in influencing President Kennedy." It is understood that the President's Vienna meeting with Khrushchev on 3-4 June 1961 reinforced his determination to initiate measures to increase US efforts in the field of counterinsurgency. Subsequent events deepened that conviction.

The following sequence of developments stand out as significant:

At his first NSC meeting, 1 February 1961, President Kennedy asked the Secretary of Defense to examine, along with other interested agencies, means for placing more emphasis on developing counter-guerrilla forces. On 23 February 1961, the NSC Planning Group made "deterrence of guerrilla warfare" one of its planning tasks. The Bissell Report "Elements of US Strategy to Deal with 'Wars of National Liberation'" emerged from this effort as did the Policy Planning Council's paper, "Internal Defense of Less Developed World". The Bissell Report called for a single high-level authority to coordinate the inter-agency counterinsurgency effort.

The military were requested to conduct a number of studies for increasing our counter-guerrilla and limited war capability. The JCS study, "National Cold War Procedures," dated 9 December 1961, recommended establishing a group to coordinate the Government's continuing effort.

A series of problems--Laos, Viet-Nam, Brazil--forced the President to focus piecemeal on a variety of problems caused by actual or potential insurgency.

Similar to the problems listed above, but in a class by itself, the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion started a cycle of investigations and studies of how we should plan and conduct paramilitary operations. It is understood that the Cuba study group recommended that a single high-level committee be formed to coordinate responsibilities for paramilitary operations.

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Following General Taylor's mission to Viet-Nam in October 1961, the need was demonstrated for the establishment of Washington-level organizations to supervise the execution of accelerated US assistance programs in Viet-Nam.

The exploratory phase ended with the establishment of the Special Group (CI), with responsibilities spelled out in NSAM 124, dated 18 January 1962.

Attached (Tab A) is a chronological outline of developments, based on files of the NSC and CI Group.

Since NSAM 124 was issued, the following NSAM's pertinent to the establishment of the Special Group (CI) have been promulgated:

NSAM 165 - dated 16 June 1962 - placed Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Iran, Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala and Venezuela under the cognizance of the Group. These are in addition to Thailand, Laos, and Viet-Nam.

NSAM 180 - dated 13 August 1962 - added Director of USIA to the Group.

NSAM 184 - dated 4 September 1962 - Bolivia added and Cameroon deleted from Group's cognizance.

NSAM 186 - dated 17 September 1962 - Burma deleted.

NSAM 204 - dated 7 November 1962 - re-defined membership of the Special Group (CI), due to General Taylor's assuming Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEVELOPMENTS

- 2/1/61 At his first NSC meeting, President Kennedy asked the Secretary of Defense to examine along with other interested agencies means for placing more emphasis on developing counter-guerrilla forces. On 2/23 McNamara, in an interim reply, reported that State and CIA were considering a newly completed DOD paper outlining doctrine for improved counterinsurgency operations (part of DOD limited war task force report which recommended augmenting Special Forces by 3,000 in FY 62).
- 2/6/61 NSAM 9, a note from JFK to McGB, revealed President's personal interest. He suggested trying to get the Saturday Evening Post or some other such magazine to publish Gen. Lansdale's case-study of counter-guerrilla action in a South Vietnamese village. (This was done.) He also suggested we be alert to other similar opportunities.
- 2/23/61 The President approved a list of planning assignments which Rostow sent to him after the planning meeting on 2/22. Rostow's memo noted that item #2, "Deterrence of Guerrilla Warfare", had been assigned to Bissell and that Rostow would follow this project for the White House. The memo thus described this problem: "How can our military covert, nation-building and economic development programs in the under-developed countries be employed to deter guerrilla operations and to seal off areas?"
- 2/28/61 First meeting of Counter-Guerrilla Task Force at CIA, presumably chaired by Bissell.
- March - In a series of NSAMs, the President indicated his interest
April in counter-guerrilla actions in Southeast Asia (See NSAM's 28, 29 and 52)
- April - Bay of Pigs brought General Taylor on the scene and renewed
June attention to basic paramilitary requirements and organization:
- 6/4 Vienna meeting with Khrushchev
- 6/28 (signed by JFK) NSAM 55 informed the JCS of the President's views on their responsibilities in Cold War Operations. Cold War responsibilities were to be considered similar to that which exist for conventional hostilities.

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6/28 NSAM 56 asked Secretary of Defense with State and CIA to inventory paramilitary assets in US armed forces, estimate needs, and recommend ways to fill the gap.

6/28 NSAM 57 directed that the Special Group (5412 Committee) vice the Strategic Resources Group sort out responsibilities for paramilitary operations.

6/16/61 State Policy Planning Council published "Internal Defense of Less Developed World."

7/13/61 After a period of inactivity, Bissell task force revived and circulated the first draft of the introduction to the group's paper. Rostow redrafted.

Sept - A series of NSAMs came out hitting separate aspects of counter-insurgency effort:
Dec

9/5 NSAM 88 (signed by JFK) asked Secretary of Defense what steps we are taking to train Latin American armed forces in controlling mobs, guerrillas, etc. His interest was triggered by role military played in Brazil. He also noted suggestion to set up a police academy to train Latin American officers.

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10/19 NSAM 106 - President picked up police academy idea again and asked Secretary of State for a status report. (Secretary had mentioned this in a memo of 9/30, "Counter-Subversion Training for Latin American Police Forces.")

10/25 NSAM 110 directed that preliminary results of NSAM 56 study be incorporated into FY63 Budget planning.

11/22 NSAM 114 noted the response to NSAM 88 and asked Secretary of State to make a continuing review (with DOD and CIA) of the overall problem of US support for friendly police and armed forces and their special training to handle subversion.

12/5 NSAM 118 noted the JCS proposals "Military Actions for Latin America" and requested specific actions programs be developed. State was asked to formulate a policy paper covering this effort.

12/13 NSAM 119 instructed State, Defense, and AID to support military units which could contribute to economic development (civic action).

- 12/18/61 Bissell Report published (final draft had been circulated 11/21). Called for a single high-level authority to concert the inter-agency counterinsurgency effort. JCS study, "National Cold War Procedures" (12/9) and Cuba Study Group Report made similar recommendation. Debate followed over whether to create a new directing group or to saddle the existing Special Group with this job. McGB asked Special Group to consider all three reports.
- 1/18/62 The exploratory phase ended with the establishment of the Special Group (Counterinsurgency) with responsibilities spelled out in NSAM 124. Laos, Thailand and Viet-Nam were placed under the cognizance of the Group as critical countries.
- The Minutes of the Special Group (CI) from January 18, 1962 to November 21, 1963 (Enclosure C.) provides a chronological description of the Group's activities. Selected NSAMs are listed in this outline reflecting President Kennedy's interest and indicating trends in US efforts in the counterinsurgency field.
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5/26/62 NSAM 140 - The President approved State's policy guidance statement on participation of US and Latin American Armed Forces in attainment of common objectives in Latin America--prepared in response to NSAM 118. Reports on implementation were requested.

4/10/62 NSAM 146 pointed out the President's interest in seeking improvements in equipment and training of police forces of newly emerging countries and asked for recommendations as soon as possible on what organizational changes within the government, if any, are needed to improve performance in this field. Interdepartmental committee (Johnson committee) set up to study police programs.

6/19/62 NSAM 162 - President approved assignments of responsibilities to various agencies, as recommended by the Special Group (CI), reference the development of US and indigenous police, paramilitary and military resources.

5/14/62 NSAM 163 stated the President's desire that key military and civilian personnel assigned to positions of responsibility at posts within Latin America, Africa, Near East and Southeast Asia attended the Interdepartmental Seminar prior to departing for their stations. (Superseded by NSAM 283)

6/16/62 NSAM 165 - The President assigned Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Iran, Colombia, Guatemala and Venezuela to the cognizance of the Group in addition to Laos, Thailand and Viet-Nam.

7/18/62 NSAM 173 (signed by JFK) urgently asked State, in consultation with the Special Group (CI), to initiate a program of interdepartmental team field visits to underdeveloped countries as a need to accelerate our programs in these countries.

8/7/62 NSAM 177 (signed by JFK) directed AID to establish a separate office of public safety responsible for police matters, charged AID with responsibility for funding police programs; giving appropriate priority to police assistance; and providing coordination and vigorous leadership of all police assistance programs in appropriate less developed countries. DOD was directed to give increased emphasis to police aspects of existing MAP programs.

8/13/62 NSAM 179 - (signed by JFK) requested State to report on the possibility of expanded civic action, military aid, and economic stabilization and development programs in Indonesia.

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8/13/62 NSAM 180 added the Director of the U.S. Information Agency to regular membership of the Special Group (CI)

8/24/62 NSAM 182 - President Kennedy approved the U.S. Overseas Internal Defense Policy as national counterinsurgency doctrine.

9/4/62 NSAM 184 - The President assigned Bolivia to cognizance of the Special Group (CI) and deleted the Republic of the Cameroon.

9/17/62 NSAM 186 - The President deleted Burma from List of countries assigned to the Group's cognizance.

11/7/62 NSAM 204 redefined membership of the Special Group (CI) due to General Taylor's assuming Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

12/4/62 NSAM 206 - President Kennedy asked that the 1963 MAP program for Latin America be examined to assure it is appropriate and has desired efforts on our total efforts in Latin America.

3/14/63 NSAM 228 stated the President's desire for a review of our policy and programs in Iran to determine if they are linked to an overall strategy for moving Iran toward more effective solutions to its crucial internal problems.

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