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APPENDIX "C"

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NLE 2012-99 #2  
By MMK NLDD Date 10/16/14

THE PROBLEM

1. To re-examine our national strategy with respect to Indochina, taking advantage of any unifying forces existing in Southeast Asia as a whole in opposition to the spread of Communism, and treating Southeast Asia as a unit, with due regard to the long term objectives of the United States and the French in the area.



FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

2. On 9 September 1953, the National Security Council (NSC) approved the summary of PSB D-23 and transmitted it to the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) for coordinated implementation. PSB D-23 emphasized the strategic importance of Thailand in Southeast Asia and the ethnic bonds that unite the Thai peoples of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma, and China. It recommended the use of Thailand as a base, secondary to Indochina, in achieving U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia.

3. Ambassador Donovan, on a recent visit to Washington, also emphasized the unifying forces in Southeast Asia taken as a whole and recommended that our strategy take more cognizance of Southeast Asia as a geographical and ethnic, entity. He recommended that we base a psychological warfare and unconventional warfare effort on Thailand and target it toward Indochina.

4. Southeast Asia might conceivably be worked into the larger regional grouping represented in the Five Power Agreement (Australia, New Zealand, Britain, France, United States) due to the membership of France therein. Any step to consider Indochina in the context of a regional association instead of as a country in isolation is a step in the right direction, and any step urgently to enlist consideration by other nations of the problem is beneficial. CINCPAC has stated that a complete victory in

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Indochina cannot be won until the native populations are won over by anti-Communist psychological warfare and until sufficient native troops are available to garrison captured villages.

DISCUSSION

5. A Southeast Asian regional concept and union would be consistent with existing ethnic ties. It would further U.S. and French objectives. It should ostensibly be of native inspiration and development. A feasible approach would be through an Asiatic known to be friendly to U.S. Ramon Magsaysay might be held up as an example since he represents a people who have thrown off the colonial yoke and could represent a similar hope to the people of Southeast Asia. He also represents the rise of a man of humble origin, possible only in a true democracy, and could represent to Southeast Asians the hope of a similar democracy in their own country.

6. Concurrent with the development of Thailand as a base for U.S. effort as envisaged in PSB D-23, consideration should be given to developing Laos, with French consent, as a base for psychological and guerrilla warfare. It might be desirable to use a modest U.S. supported public works program as an economic and organizational base for the psychological and guerrilla warfare effort in Laos. The French preoccupation with Viet Nam would seem to favor such a course as would also the ethnic ties between Thailand and Laos. This concept is also believed to be in consonance with the views of Ambassador Donovan on contribution by the Thais to Southeast Asian strategy. It is understood that Ambassador Donovan is also of the opinion that Thailand is beginning to support a pan-Southeast Asia trend, and he feels that this feeling should be fostered.



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7. Consolidation propaganda by USIA could do much to foster the regional feeling in Southeast Asia. This is relatively easily accomplished in Thailand. Laos could be targeted, with French agreement. The balance of Indochina could be exploited by USIA. This should always be done by convincing the indigenous audience that their national self-interest is bound up in a regional package. Asiatic leaders should be used and the example of Ramon Magsaysay is especially appropriate here.

CONCLUSIONS

8. A regional strategic concept in Southeast Asia is desirable, and is now being initiated on a limited scale in response to PSB D-23. This strategy, if expanded, could assist materially in achieving U.S. and French union objectives in that area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. That the NSC Planning Board give further study to the desirability of revising our national strategy with respect to Southeast Asia to include a regional treatment.



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