~~SECRET~~

CSHP
2.339

INFILTRATION AND RESUPPLY OF AGENTS

IN NORTH KOREA, 1952-1953

Draft
Review of B Flight effectiveness

by [redacted]

December 1972

~~SECRET~~

Volume

#

3

B. AIR/93/

In 1953 it was estimated that during the war period approximately [redacted] CIA agents were air-dropped into North Korea. The records were incomplete, especially in the case of project [redacted] and it was estimated that the total number dropped for [redacted] ranged from [redacted] to [redacted] agents.

The whole aim of the air activity in Korea seemed to be quantity, not quality. Tons and tons of rice and other commodities, as well as thousands of personnel, were dropped into North Korea during the war period from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953.

The USAF crews of B-Flight were able to receive credit for two missions and actually penetrate the bomb line only once. For example, if they dropped above a certain area or flew over five hours, the crew was credited with two missions. It was not unusual for B-Flight crews to rotate every three or four months. Even though there were occasional skilled crews, it was readily apparent that they would be lost within a few months by rotation. New crews arrived unskilled, completed their 75 missions, and returned to the US about the time they were acquiring skill.

From mission reports it was apparent that B-Flight was never taught the finer techniques of clandestine air support. Various passes were made over drop zones. Accuracy of altitudes, speeds, and dropping was not the practice in B-Flight. The normal practice seemed to be to get in and get out regardless of the quality of service rendered.

Training of reception committees was never extensive or adequate. The Korea Mission Air Operations personnel did not conduct the training in most cases. With the poor air support supplied by B-Flight, it would have perhaps been impractical to spend a great amount of time on training agents' reception committees, when the air crews did not observe the rules of clandestine air operations. Another disadvantage to the air support was the fact that various missions were combined, the Agency's being only one of several drops to be made during one flight. This was especially poor during personnel drops, as it compromised the security of the agent.

Complete control of air support is absolutely necessary for any Agency air support operations. Without complete control specialized training was useless when the air crews could not be trained in

the finer techniques of clandestine air support. Technique could mean the difference between success and failure of the mission, even though the air crew returned to home base. By using several of the basic techniques of air support, and using available electronics and visible or infra-red equipment, it was felt that a maximum of three aircraft and crews completely controlled by the Agency could have provided much superior support than was provided by B-Flight.

It was realized from past history of the Agency that it was probably not possible for the Korea Mission to establish a headquarters and immediately set up its own air support and operate. B-Flight might have been a second choice and was able to render some air support even though the quality might not have been of the highest degree. B-Flight ran other missions, such as flare and leaflet drops, which were entirely different from clandestine air support missions. It was hard to teach two entirely different methods to one pilot. It was recommended that in any future operations of that type CIA make every effort to give the mission the proper tools to work with, one of which is absolute control over air support.

94/

C. MARITIME

Before late 1952, the Korea Mission had no branch or section within its organizational structure charged with the responsibility of obtaining reports on maritime infiltrations and exfiltrations, and Mission case officers were not required to prepare routine reports regularly until the fall of 1952. Reports on maritime operations were therefore incomplete and fragmentary, and the different Mission case officers often overlooked maritime techniques altogether. An estimate of the number of maritime operations was made only from December 1952.

From December 1952 through June 1953, there were an estimated [redacted] infiltrations and [redacted] exfiltrations, with a total of [redacted] agents, averaging [redacted] per month, or [redacted] per year. At that rate, probably [redacted] agents would have been processed during 1953. For those results, the Korea Mission depended upon approximately [redacted] motherships and [redacted] small craft. Because operations were limited to the dark-of-the-moon phase, a mothership could handle one to three, but normally not more than two, operations.

It had been estimated that an APD* (or similar type naval craft) could have run at least [redacted] operations in one night and space the launching and recovery

* High speed transport craft

points at 15-mile intervals. On the basis of [redacted] nights for execution of each operation, one APD could have made about [redacted] operations per moon phase, or [redacted] of that actually achieved by the Korea Mission with approximately [redacted] vessels.

If the Agency had had at the beginning of the war [redacted] wooden-hulled, full-diesel, radar-equipped, American-manned PC's* capable of 15 to 20 knots and the resources to keep the fleet in operational condition eight or nine months of each year, it might have been possible to infiltrate [redacted] agents with [redacted] maritime operations per month and to exfiltrate agents when necessary. On that basis it might have been possible to infiltrate about [redacted] agents during the period of hostilities and exfiltrate as many as necessary. However, the Agency did not have the ships or personnel to maintain that average.

The Korean seamen employed by the Korea Mission had little or no technical maritime or naval training, and the Mission did not have properly equipped American personnel to remedy the situation. Consequently, operations were marked by a strong lack of precision that was at all times dangerous and intolerable. The extraordinary tidal conditions on

* Patrol vessels (submarine chasers)

Korea's west coast and the severe weather which produced heavy fogs and high winds were factors that hampered maritime efforts throughout the war period. Sea launchings and recoveries were further limited to the dark-of-the-moon periods.

In November 1952, when the number of vessels operated by the Korea Mission increased to [redacted] from [redacted] in late 1951, the Maritime Operations Section (MOS) was created. For a time MOS exercised operational control over [redacted] vessels, and the rest of the fleet remained under the respective case officers, a policy apparently dictated by the need for compartmentation of operations. Therefore, very little maritime centralization resulted, and at the same time there was little centralization of maritime administrative affairs. As a result, confusion and misunderstanding arose concerning the functions and responsibilities of the MOS. Maritime experience revealed that in Korea Mission thinking operations predominated consistently to the exclusion of support. Mission vessels never had a restricted berthing area in either Inchon or Pusan which inevitably led to the loss of security and efficiency. On the east coast no provision was made to ship supplies from

the rear echelon to staging areas which resulted in dependence upon FEC/LD ~~FS~~'s or upon Korea Mission operational craft to perform that function. Costly air cargo appeared to be preferred by Headquarters as a means of support. On the west coast case officers were forced to spend four-fifths of their time on supply and repair problems because of the lack of a support section to handle the logistics of island bases and the projects in those areas. These conditions were the results of extreme compartmentation and project self-sufficiency which Mission case officers found, without exception, a bitter experience.

The experience in Korea ~~resulted in~~ the following lessons learned:

1. The need for a simple maritime technical training program to produce reasonably efficient skippers and seamen.

2. The need for centralizing maritime administrative activities through the use of port coordinators who have been delegated substantial in-port authority and through a Maritime Administrative Section at Headquarters.

3. The need for assigning to a single support authority the necessary number of vessels to coordinate

and centralize maritime supply runs.

Although the maritime problems in Korea had been recognized for an extended period, the solutions had been rejected by higher authority because of security, compartmentation, and lack of qualified personnel. Some case officers also rejected assistance because they did not want to lose a part of their empire or be subjected to more control through a centralized system.