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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

WSAG PAPER

MEMORANDUM FOR:

✓ The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The Honorable U. Alexis Johnson
Under Secretary of State for
Political Affairs

The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT:

Proposed Ground Weapons Improvement
Program for CIA Irregular Forces
in Laos

REFERENCE:

CIA Memorandum dated 23 July 1970,
Same Subject

1. On 23 July 1970, the Washington Special Action Group briefly considered the feasibility of upgrading the ground weapons systems of the CIA special guerrilla unit (SGU) battalions in Laos. The systems included M-16A1 rifles and M-60 machine guns. No conclusion was reached. This memorandum discusses the necessity for this improvement program, the allocation availability of the individual weapons included, and a cost estimate for the additional funding required.

2. Referent memorandum pointed out that there were three measures that could be taken to improve the combat effectiveness of the existing CIA irregular forces. Two of those measures were

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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initiated last year and continue. They are a reorganization and retraining program and a program of combat leadership training. The third measure was an improvement of the individual weapons carried by the irregular in combat. This measure has not yet been undertaken although it should be noted that 8,000 M-16A1 weapons have been issued to CIA irregular forces since late 1969. The improvement program being recommended includes M-16A1's for the remainder of the CIA irregular forces. The M-16A1 rifles issued to date to the irregular ranks have been particularly effective in placing these forces on a more even footing with the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao who were armed with the Soviet AK-47.

3. CIA irregular forces are currently heavily engaged in the defense of Long Tieng and in the south Laos interdiction program. We can expect that the CIA irregular forces will continue to be heavily engaged for some time to come. The bulk of these forces are still armed with World War II type weapons. The Thai [] [] forces in Laos, alongside whom the CIA irregulars are fighting, are armed with the improved ground weapons. The North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao they are facing are all armed with the Soviet AK-47.

4. Consequently, our Vientiane Station has recommended an improved ground weapons system for the CIA irregulars. weapons requirements are 15,000 M-16A1 rifles and 150 M-60 light machine guns. The cost for the weapons and a supply of ammunition for the remaining four months of FY 1971 is [] The cost of ammunition for FY 1972 will be []

5. The allocation of the M-16A1 rifles and M-60 light machine guns must be approved by the Department of the Army. We understand that the current stocks for the M-16A1 rifles and the M-60 light machine guns are currently allocated to designated units up to production capacity. The availability for our increased use, therefore, must be achieved through a reallocation.

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

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6. The funds for these weapons are not included in the CIA FY 1971 budget. It is requested, therefore, that the Department of Defense be asked to examine the feasibility of providing without cost the M-16A1 rifles, M-60 light machine guns and ammunition for these weapons.

Thomas H. Karamessines
Deputy Director for Plans

Attachment
Budget Schedule

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