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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry  
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WSAG PAPER

23 JUL 1970

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 Systems  
Improvement Program for CIA  
Irregular Forces in Laos

1. On 17 July 1970, Dr. Kissinger requested that a memorandum be submitted to the Washington Special Action Group outlining the requirements for upgrading the ground weapons systems of the existing CIA special guerrilla unit (SGU) battalions in Laos. 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. Faced with a severely limited manpower reserve in Laos from which to recruit additional combat personnel, there are essentially three measures which can be taken to improve the combat effectiveness of the existing CIA irregular forces. These are a reorganization and retraining program which is currently being

*Cushman*

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~~EYES ONLY~~

undertaken, a continued program of combat leadership training and an improvement of the individual weapons carried by the guerrilla in combat. The North Vietnamese enemy is armed with the latest family of Soviet weapons. For the most part, the CIA irregulars are still armed with World War II vintage ground weapons. In late 1969, a general weapons improvement program was undertaken by the Department of Defense which resulted in some 6,000 M-16 rifles being issued to CIA irregulars who were heavily engaged in combat. The introduction of the M-16 rifles into the irregular ranks was particularly effective in placing these guerrilla forces on a more even footing with the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao who were armed with the Soviet AK-47.

3. Our Vientiane Station is currently engaged in a comprehensive retraining and reorganization program. In north Laos this is being done principally with General Vang Pao's forces involving the retraining, reorganization and re-equipping of 16 SGU battalions. In the south the Station has completed the recruitment of and is currently training an additional five SGU battalions to augment the ten existing SGU battalions deployed out  In the north the irregular forces must be ready for the inevitable enemy dry season offensive which will commence as it has over the years by December. In the south the irregular forces are faced with an intensified enemy effort to expand its control over the principal supply routes and waterways. As a consequence, it is our responsibility to mount a sustained harassment and interdiction program to prevent the enemy's effective use of south Laos to supply its combat forces in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

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

4. Our Vientiane Station was recently requested to identify clear shortfalls in minimum support requirements and make recommendations for increases or improvements where these recommendations stood a reasonable chance for improving the performance or effectiveness of the irregular forces. Included within the Station's responses were a number of recommendations for

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additional ground weapons systems. These weapons requirements are 12,000 M-16 rifles, 500 M-60 light machine guns and 3,000 additional M-18A1 Claymore mines per month. The total cost for the weapons and a one year's supply of ammunition for these weapons is [redacted]. A detailed budget schedule providing the unit cost, quantities and ammunition cost equations is attached in support of this total cost estimate.

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

5. The allocation of the M-16A1 rifles and the 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. An initial exploration indicates that this problem can be favorably resolved. The current allocation of the M-18A1 Claymore mine is sufficient to support the increased field request.

6. The principal problem, therefore, is the funding requirement. The funds for these weapons are not included in the FY 1971 budget now before Congress. It is estimated that the Laos paramilitary program for which CIA is now responsible will cost [redacted] in the FY 1971 budget. The CIA contingency reserve is low and cannot begin to finance this and the various other projects currently under consideration by WSAG. It is requested, therefore, that the Department of Defense be asked to examine the feasibility of providing the M-16A1 rifles, the M-60 light machine guns, ammunition for these weapons, and the M-18A1 Claymore mines. The alternative is to provide the necessary funds from some source external to CIA.

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

*J. B.*  
*R. H.*

/s/ Thomas H. Karamessines  
Thomas H. Karamessines  
Deputy Director for Plans

Attachment  
Budget Schedule

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



F. The ammunition cost equation for the M-16A1 is based on:

- (1) 20 rounds per day per weapon.
- (2) 180 days of combat per year.
- (3) 3.6 million rounds per month for 12,000 weapons.

G. The ammunition cost equation for the M-60 light machine gun is based on:

- (1) 80 rounds per day per weapon.
- (2) 360 days combat per year (defense/offense).
- (3) 1.2 million rounds per month for 500 weapons (requested at 1.5 million per month).

Memorandum for the WSAG Principals

SUBJECT: Proposed Ground Weapons Systems Improvement Program  
for CIA Irregular Forces in Laos

DDP:CFE/TBL [redacted] jmw (22 July 70)

(b)(1)  
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