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Apr 65. For General Martin from General Yudkin.

Ray

~~during first duty~~. The following LIMDIS message is quoted for your information: QUOTE:

O R 311121Z ZEA
 FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
 TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
 INFO RUEHEX/WHITE HOUSE
 RUEKDA/DOD
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV
 RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON
 RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
 STATE GRNC
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 1456 INFO COMUSMACV 17 SAIGON 357 VIENTIANE 304 WHITE
 HOUSE DOD UNN FROM BANGKOK MAR 31, 6 PM

LIMDIS

CITE 311121Z

REF: COMUSMACV J-5 10021, 301040Z MAR 65

1. In 1942 when Otto Nelson was working on reorganiza-
 tion of the Army to make it responsive to requirements

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then existing, I heard General George Marshall observe that he was shocked but not surprised at the number of his advisors who wished to organize to fight either a past war or a future war. Very few, he said, wished to concentrate on the proper organization to fight the present war. Contingency plans and contingency command arrangements, of course, were necessary but, he said, if one yielded to the temptation to implement them prematurely, it was very likely to result in a degradation of the capability to successfully cope with the actual war the enemy was in fact then fighting.

2. During this conversation, General Marshall also used some rather salty language in describing military officers in times of vital national emergency who having attained general officer or flag rank, would still engage in maneuvering for preference of Service or branch. I will not repeat these observations since I am certain this element not currently present in the Pacific.

3. It seems to me that in the above there is a certain relevance to the current question of command relationships in SEA. While overt Communist aggression in SEA is obviously possible and while it is certainly prudent to develop both operational plans and command arrangements for this contingency, the fact nevertheless remains

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SYMBOL that it is still a highly improbable contingency in the

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short or medium range future. Therefore, if we "concentrate on the proper organization to fight the present war," it would seem to me that we have to conclude that the independence of Thailand and Laos and the juridical fact that no participant has admitted a state of open belligerence under International Law do as a matter of practical fact introduce unavoidable complicating factors which if ignored will entail a completely unacceptable political cost.

4. At the risk of oversimplification, it would seem feasible to contemplate SEA military operations in the following interrelated but quite distinct categories. The first, and obviously the crucially important element, is the elimination of the Viet Cong in SVN. Second, almost as important at the moment, is the elimination, or at least the reduction to insignificant proportions, of the external supply of the Viet Cong both by land through Laos and by sea. The third distance military task at the moment is the progressive application of pressure through systematic strikes on NVN.

5. It would also seem to me that each of these primary military tasks is of vital importance demanding the utmost professional skill, vast ingenuity in improvising new techniques appropriate to the kind of war we are

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actually fighting. Above all, it would seem to require a political sensitivity to the necessity to insure that these new or old techniques are so employed that they do not succeed in permanently alienating a presently friendly populace, thereby increasing ore extent of the ocean in which Mao's guerillas are now swimming so well.

6. In considering command arrangements In have noted the statement in para 3 REFTEL that "underlying principle upon which these must be evaluated is centralized direction at one source, resistance to fragmentation of effort, and avoidance of any major reorganization whose birth pangs would degrade concentration upon vital task at hand." I find this a completely acceptable formulation of the obvious. To accomplish these tasks we are now employing elements of all three of CINCPAC's component commanders under CINCPAC coordination. It would seem, from Bangkok at least, that Admiral Sharp is presently quite adequately discharging his responsibilities in a way to validate the underlying principle quoted above. It would also seem that the recent discussions in Udorn have highlighted the distinct possibility of much more effective interdiction action in Laos on supply of Viet Cong. If different arrangements made it would also seem that all of these assets based in Thailand under a COMUSMAC' THAI separate from COMUSMACV are still completely subject to CINCPAC's

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authority to coordinate with those elements of the 7th Fleet in manner to assure the most effective use of all assets available to him. Unless it is contemplated that COMUSMACE-MACTHAI will be divorced from CINCPAC, the massive deployment of air squadrons now planned for Thailand will necessitate coordination by CINCPAC's component commanders in any event.

MARTIN

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UNQUOTE

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