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4. What are the possibilities of utilizing third country nationals in covert activities in Vietnam?

DISCUSSION:

As noted in the answer to Question 1, Vietnamese capabilities in covert and clandestine activities are limited by the availability of trained, experienced personnel.

This deficiency can be overcome in part by training of Vietnamese. Available trained and experienced personnel can also be augmented by the use of third country nationals. Some of these are:

1. Chinese Nationalists. The Chinese Nationalist Air Force and Army Special Forces have been extensively trained in covert activities and have a great deal of experience in this field. The Chinese Nationalists have the best qualified clandestine human resources available in Asia. This is particularly true with respect to their ability as pilots since one of the major missions of the Chinese Air Force is covert overflights of Mainland China. Both for low-level navigation and clandestine night flying there are probably no better qualified pilots any place in the world. Chinese Special Forces personnel would be of particular value in programs of Rural Reconstruction, Montagnard operations, etc, as they live, eat and operate in much the same manner as Vietnamese, avoiding the logistic and security problems posed by Americans.

The relations between the Government of Vietnam and the Government of the Republic of China are excellent and it is believed that a request for Chinese pilots or Chinese Special Forces for use in Vietnam would be

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approved by the Chinese Nationalist Government. The presence of these Chinese in Vietnam could be covered to the point of plausible denial by the presence of a large indigenous Chinese population in Vietnam. There are more than 1,000,000 persons of Chinese origin in Vietnam. Many of these persons maintain ties with the Taiwan Government and not a few send their children for intermediate or advanced schooling to Taiwan. Many of the Vietnamese Chinese speak little or no Vietnamese. Chinese pilots utilized in covert missions in South Laos or North Vietnam could be covered either as:

- a. Naturalized Vietnamese citizens.
- b. Indigenous Chinese who received their education in Taiwan.
- c. Refugees from other Chinese speaking areas who have gained Vietnamese citizenship.

While the use of these Chinese pilots could give rise to provocation of the Chinese Communists, it is probable that this provocation would not prove sufficiently great to cause the Chinese Communists to commit troops in South Vietnam, particularly since the Chinese Communists would be unable to prove these Chinese were not Vietnamese citizens.

While it is possible that the Chinese Nationalist pilots flying covert missions might attempt to create some provocation of their own, they would not be used in significant numbers and would not be using combat aircraft. In addition, of course, these Chinese pilots would be subject to the control of both the U. S. and Vietnamese who employ them in covert operations. In sum, Chinese Nationalist could make a significant contribution in the area of covert operations; i.e., aircraft commanders and limited Special Forces instructors, in which the

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Vietnamese are critically short of experienced and trained personnel and where the acquisition of training and experience is both lengthy and costly.

2. Malayans: Malaya has faced a problem of Communist insurgency for a number of years and has effectively diminished this problem both through overt and covert programs designed to defeat the enemy on his own grounds and to deny him support of the local populace. Malaya thus has a pool of trained and experienced covert operations personnel who have faced and overcome problems not greatly dissimilar to those which face the Vietnamese today. Malayans have been particularly effective in the utilization of special counter-subversive police and it is in this area that the Vietnamese badly need experienced guidance. The Malayan Government has expressed considerable interest in aiding the Vietnamese Government in its fight against the Communists. It is believed that the use of selected Malayan cadre for counter-guerrilla and counter-subversive covert operations training could be accomplished through an appeal on the part of the Vietnamese Government itself. Malayans would need interpreters but their utility on a limited basis should still be considerably high.

3. MEO. The Mso tribesmen of Laos have proved themselves to be effective guerrilla fighters. Their motivation has largely been the protection of their homes and families in Xieng Khouang. Should a "neutralist" Savanna Phouma government come to power in Laos it is probable that considerable effort will be made to destroy the guerrilla

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potential of the Meo. As an alternative to their annihilation, the Meo might be persuaded to migrate in significant numbers to the Lao-Vietnam border area where there are sparsely settled highlands in which they could resettle. The Pathet Lao might be quite willing to allow this resettlement to rid themselves of the troublesome Meo element in their midst, particularly if the resettlement were part of an overall "disarmament" of opposing forces in Laos. Once in the border area the Meo could be rearmed and there significantly deter Viet Cong violations of the border. A major United States effort would be required to achieve this resettlement especially in the new home areas of the Meo where agricultural aid and establishment of schools for Meo children would be of paramount importance in accommodating to the new environment.

CONCLUSIONS:

Third Country Asian nationals, particularly Chinese Nationalists, possess critical skills which can be utilized under plausibly deniable cover in covert activities in Vietnam. In most cases they could best be utilized in augmentation of available American training personnel but in the case of pilots, they can also be used directly in operations. Their use poses no greater threat to American policy interests than does the use of American personnel in similar tasks. In addition, the fact that they are Asians and that they have experience in fighting Asian Communists, gives them an advantage which few others can offer.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The United States urge the utilization of a limited number of Chinese pilots and Special Forces instructors for covert operations in Vietnam.
2. The use of Chinese Nationalists and Malayans as instructors and pilot personnel in covert operations in Vietnam be discussed with President Diem and his concurrence solicited.
3. Suitable American representatives in Nationalist China and Malaya be authorized to discuss the utilization of appropriate third country personnel in Vietnam with the respective Governments involved.
4. CIA be given the responsibility for the operational control, cover and utilization of such personnel, once committed to Vietnam.
5. Resettlement of the Hmo in the Lao-Vietnam border area be considered in the light of the progress of negotiations concerning Laos.