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USAF review(s)
completed.

11 April 1951

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Rear Admiral Leslie C. Stevens, JSPD
Dr. Louis N. Ridenour, OSAF
[redacted] OPC

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SUBJECT: Air Force Interest in Guerrilla Warfare Doctrine, Techniques, Capabilities and Limitations

DATE: 10 April 1951

1. During the course of my more general conversation with Admiral Stevens yesterday, Dr. Louis Ridenour, OSAF, called upon Admiral Stevens to present a proposed paper which purported to set forth the terms of reference for a study group to be established by the US Air Force in connection with a study of guerrilla warfare doctrine, tactics, capabilities and limitations.

2. The paper which Ridenour exhibited to Stevens was apparently an outgrowth of a paper which Dr. John H. Gardner of the Research and Development Board had discussed with Stevens previously.

3. Ridenour suggested the purpose or intent and the interest of the Air Force to be as follows:

a. Little is known of doctrine and techniques associated with guerrilla warfare.

b. It has been employed to a considerable extent by our enemies in numerous parts of the world and undoubtedly will be employed against us at such time as we might become more broadly engaged in hostilities.

c. Undoubtedly weapons and other hardware which can be associated with guerrilla warfare activity can profit by directing attention of intelligent and imaginative people to the issues involved.

d. The Air Force is desirous of fitting guerrilla warfare characteristics and requirements into an appropriate tactical system.

e. The Air Force desires to be aware of the requirements which may be placed upon it for air support in relation to guerrilla warfare activity.

f. The Air Force is solely concerned here with the overt aspects of the employment of guerrilla forces in conjunction with employment of conventional military organizations.

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4. Ridenour

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4. Ridenour suggested that the Air Force proposes to establish a group to be headed by Major General Otto Nelson, USA, Retired. This study group would under present plans be [redacted] and would intend to pursue its investigations for approximately four months. 25X1

5. In reading Ridenour's paper Stevens commented negatively upon numerous statements contained therein. Some of these statements asserted that nothing was known of the doctrinal characteristics of guerrilla warfare activity or of capabilities and of limitations. Admiral Stevens took strong exception to a statement of intent relating to political and sociological implications. Stevens said that it is not possible to discuss the organization or employment of guerrillas apart from the political implications and motivations of guerrilla groups. Ridenour therefore pointed out that he thought it inappropriate for the Air Force study group to concern itself with political motivations, particularly if it were to be necessary for the group to be briefed on current interests in support of the US Government in this field. Ridenour asserted that it was not the intent of the Air Force to request briefing or indeed to make investigations of current interests of the US Government. He further asserted that it would be entirely appropriate for a group to receive briefings concerning past experience deriving from World War II in connection with the political aspects surrounding the organization and employment of guerrillas.

6. Stevens asked Ridenour to leave the paper with him for his review and some circumscription of the terms of reference of the study group. Stevens stated that after he had reviewed the paper he would pass it on to CIA (OPC) for review, after which time the Air Force could proceed.

7. I was concerned to know whether Ridenour considered that this study group would to a greater or lesser extent duplicate the activity to be undertaken by the Department of Defense pursuant to NSC 90. Ridenour stated that he thought there would be considerable duplication but that he had never considered that thinking by imaginative minds was bad in itself and that he considered that such a study group as was contemplated by the Air Force might make a distinct contribution, particularly in the development of hardware and air support equipment and tactics.

8. Ridenour did not state clearly what was the intent of the Air Force following completion of the study. He did, however, state that he thought undoubtedly the Air Force would undertake to modify certain tactical means and equipment if such were indicated as necessary by the study.

9. I believe that Admiral Stevens will bring the paper, as amended by him, to OPC this date for our review. We should carefully consider the terms of reference of the Air Force study group and should provide

for appropriate

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for appropriate briefings of the group and for such tie-in with them as may be necessary to insure that their investigations and conclusions shall not be inimical or duplicative of our activity.

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AREA OR COUNTRY(S)	ORGANIZATION(S)	GENERAL FUNCTION(S)	SPECIFIC FUNCTION(S)	DOC DATE / CLASS S
HQ	OPC	DDP	NSC 90	11 April
	Air Force	CA	G/W	16 April
		FI	Research	1951
			Doctrine	

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IDENTIFICATION OF DOCUMENT

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Memo of conversation from [redacted] OPC.
Subject: Air Force Interest in Guerrilla Warfare, Doctrine, Techniques, Capabilities and Limitations.

ABSTRACT NOTATION REFERENCES.

At meeting with Admiral Stevens on 10 April 1951, plans for Air Force study group to be located at [redacted] to look into guerrilla warfare doctrine, tactics, capabilities and limitations brought up by Dr. Louis Ridenour, USAF. There was some discussion of whether this would duplicate the activity to be undertaken by the Department of Defense pursuant to NSC 90.

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Memo of conversation dated 16 April 1951 [from [redacted] OPC] indicates OPC's agreement to proposed term of reference for study group.

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