

January 22, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Aircraft for Vietnam (U)

By memorandum dated 30 December 1958, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that thirty (30) AD-4 type aircraft be substituted for T-28s in the Vietnam Military Assistance Program to replace F-8F aircraft now used by the Vietnamese Air Force. We are advised by the Air Force that the F-8F aircraft are supportable through Fiscal Year 1960 and probably through Fiscal Year 1962 and, although obsolescent by U.S. standards, remain capable of performing their mission. While a more advanced capability for the Vietnam Air Force is both militarily and politically desirable, we question the advisability of introducing AD-4 aircraft at this time.

Although the ASCP rate for the F-8F aircraft is extremely low (average less than 2% for the last 18 months) the utilization rate (monthly average 7 hours per assigned aircraft during Fiscal Year 1958) is very unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactory utilization rate, which is 50% of the programmed flying hour requirement, is because of high unscheduled maintenance rate and substandard logistic practices, aggravated by a lack of trained supply and maintenance personnel. The result has been an in-commission rate of less than 35% during the past few months. This poor maintenance and an inability to operate the logistics and supply facilities necessary to support these aircraft are partially due to the fact that the Vietnamese are changing over from a French operated system to a U.S. recommended system which must be operated by the Vietnamese themselves.

Because of the above and the tightness of the 1959 program and in light of the coming Congressional presentation, we believe it advisable, until there is improvement in Vietnamese training and maintenance, and at least until Fiscal Year 1960, to withhold the proposed substitution of AD-4 aircraft for the F-8F aircraft.

SIGNED

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