

16 Nov 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: U.S. Force Commitments to the SEATO

1. Reference is made to ADMIN CINCPAC Message 040151Z July 1956, subject: "Preliminary Summary of SEATO Third Military Staff Planners' Conference, Singapore, 11-27 June," which stated, inter alia, that CINCPAC would require high level policy guidance on the matter of U.S. force commitments to the SEATO.

2. The permanent SEATO Military Planning Staff is scheduled to be established in Bangkok by 15 January 1957. As force requirements planning progresses toward detailed plans, there will be increasing pressure placed on the United States, particularly by the Asian members of SEATO, for information as to availability of U.S. forces to support SEATO plans.

3. The United States should not duplicate the pattern of NATO and its significant standing military forces by earmarking U. S. forces for Southeast Asia. Instead, the United States should maintain mobile striking power readily available for immediate operations and sufficient, in concept with other nations, to defeat overt Communist local aggression in the SEATO area. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that although detailed U.S. strategic plans should not be discussed with military representatives of the SEATO nations, the United States should discuss her capabilities and methods of providing support to these nations without making a specific commitment of forces. The major effort of the United States should be to provide those types of forces which are needed in the SEATO area and logistic support to indigenous forces.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the United States make no specific force commitments to the SEATO but that the U. S. Military Adviser, at the next meeting of the SEATO Military