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For Director DSB.

Agenda for D/C mtg Tuesday

AGENDUM NO. 3 (S)/1963

COPY NO 11 OF 13 COPIES

DEFENCE COMMITTEE AGENDUM

TACTICAL 'Y' SUPPORT IN THE BORNEO TERRITORIES.

The attached minute dated 17th September by the Acting Secretary, Department of Defence, with enclosures, on the above subject is referred for consideration by the Defence Committee.

J.J. CORRIGAN  
Secretary,  
DEFENCE COMMITTEE  
17th September, 1963

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Secretary,  
DEFENCE COMMITTEE

TACTICAL 'Y' SUPPORT IN THE BORNEO TERRITORIES

Attached is copy of a Note which the British High Commissioner gave to the Prime Minister's Department in August. It contains proposals in the nature of a contingency plan for the despatch of tactical sigint resources to Borneo, and seeks Australian assistance against the possible need.

2. The British note has been examined by the JIC(S/C) with particular reference to:-
- (a) the practicability of making available the tactical sigint resources sought by the United Kingdom for contingency planning purposes;
  - (b) the effect of so doing on the planned deployments under existing SEATO contingency plans.

A minute dated 6th September by the Acting Chairman JIC containing the observations of the JIC is attached.

3. It is mentioned for background information that the British authorities recently asked whether a small AMF unit ( 8 or 10 members) could be sent now to Borneo to investigate the existence of low level communication links which it is believed the Indonesians may have set up in Indonesian Borneo. With the approval of the Ministers for Defence and External Affairs, Australia declined to accept this task but agreed to make available an AMF linguist for attachment in Borneo for two short periods.

4. The United Kingdom Note, and the observations on it by the JIC(S/C) are referred for consideration by the Defence Committee.

*J. P. ...*  
Acting Secretary.

17<sup>th</sup> September, 1963

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NOTE ON REQUIREMENT FOR TACTICAL 'Y' SUPPORT  
IN BORNEO

At the end of January, 1963, fears of a possible Indonesian intention to follow up the Brunei revolt by intervention, either covert or overt, in other Borneo territories due to be incorporated in Malaysia, led the Government Communications Office in Singapore to put two questions to Government Communications Headquarters and Defence Signals Branch:-

- (a) How far was it possible to obtain [redacted] Sigint that had a bearing on possible Indonesian intentions in Borneo?
- (b) Should arrangements be made to provide a service of Sigint in the field ("Tactical 'Y' Support") for ground forces that might be involved in hostilities or in the control of Indonesian-inspired infiltration in Borneo?

2. [redacted]

[redacted] all communications believed to be relevant to the problem of Indonesian intentions with the possible exception of low-level communications in Eastern Kalimantan. To establish the existence and assess the intelligence value of these communications it was considered necessary to set up an interception station in North-East Borneo. Arrangements were accordingly made to detach a team of U.K. civilian operators from Singapore to Labuan for this purpose.

3. There remains the question of provision of Tactical 'Y' support for ground forces that might be engaged in Borneo. Troops used for this purpose would need to be acclimatised, equipped-to-operate in a mobile role, experienced in the interception of Indonesian transmissions, and supported by analysts and by linguists capable of dealing with Indonesian Voice communications.

4. The military authorities in Singapore and DMI in London are convinced of the need to prepare to meet this requirement at short notice. DSB has estimated that up to five teams of operators (four to five men in each) would be needed for this purpose. [redacted]

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It could not readily be relocated and made effective against Indonesian targets. The requirement could therefore be met only by the formation of a special British unit for the purpose or by the provision of Australian troops with the necessary qualifications and experience or both.

5. As a preliminary step, the War Office transferred a number of interception operators now serving in Germany together with the necessary analytical staff to Singapore. Here they were acclimatised and given experience in the interception and analysis of Indonesian communications. They have recently been sent to Labuan to replace the civilian operators, who had meanwhile confirmed that there are low-level communications best intercepted in Borneo.

6. It is not possible however for the U.K. to find more than about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teams of operators for this purpose against an estimated requirement of 5 teams. The requirement for linguists will be particularly difficult to meet. The Australian Army, on the other hand, is thought likely to find it relatively easier to provide operators and linguists with the necessary qualifications and experience.

7. It is proposed, therefore, that an approach should be made to the Australian authorities, through the usual channel of D.S.B., for the provision of tactical Sigint resources which could operate jointly with the small British party. Ideally we would suggest a self-contained 'Y' unit of up to 4 teams with its own vehicles and equipment, to which the British party would then be attached, and it could be described as a joint Australian/British unit or simply a British unit, whichever the Australian authorities preferred. Should this be found impossible, however, an Australian contribution of 2-3 Indonesian linguists with experience of the problem of intercepting and/or analysing Indonesian communications, would be of invaluable assistance to the British 'Y' unit and would go some way at least towards remedying the deficiencies inherent in the formation of a 'Y' unit from personnel having no previous experience of the targets against which they are required to operate.

8. It should be emphasised that these proposals are in the nature of a contingency plan. There is no requirement for the immediate despatch of any Australians to Borneo; at the moment, the processing resources in Singapore can handle the output of both the Singapore station and the Labuan unit. But in the event of trouble

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3.

in Borneo or threat of trouble - there would be a need to despatch personnel there immediately. It is against that need that Australian assistance is sought.

9. Although it is proposed that the approach for Australian help in this should be made through the usual channel of DSB, it is considered desirable, in view of the importance which the British authorities attach to the request, that Prime Minister's Department should be aware of it in advance.

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