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ANALYSIS BRANCH

Last year, following the mass expulsion of Soviet agents from the U.K., Bangkok's English-language press expressed concern over the Soviet presence in Thailand (ref. A). Now, following the disclosure of Soviet espionage activities in Denmark (ref. B), including an attempt to subvert the Thai Charge d'Affaires in Copenhagen, the same papers have again published editorials on the dangers to Thailand of Soviet espionage and interference. Copies of the editorials are enclosed, along with a copy of a news item crediting the Thai diplomat as being the first person to tip off the Danish Government about the Soviet espionage activities.

Enclosures:

Editorials and
News Items
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The Bangkok Post
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER
BANGKOK SATURDAY APRIL 22, 1972

AN OPEN THREAT

THE Soviets are very active in Southeast Asia now. Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman noted that the Soviet Union had made some gains in Southeast Asia by appearing to be "the one who delivers the goods." The delivery of military hardware to Hanoi made possible the present act of aggression by the North Vietnamese against South Vietnam. The Soviet Union trying to emulate the late US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in encircling the Chinese Communists has made gains in the Indian subcontinent. They have also been active in Africa and South America. News reports from Dakar stated that three Soviet officials had been declared personal non grata for interference in the internal affairs of Mali. They were identified as Ivan Lyssyk, Third Secretary, Lev Iatsina and Vitali Potchankine, both First Secretaries. They were evicted although Mali is considered to be pro Soviet.

Bolivia asked the Soviet Ambassador to remove 119 officials for involvement in activities of the leftist militant group, the National Liberation Army. The demand was made after Bolivian security services had raided five hideouts of the group and seized large quantities of weapons, bombs, dynamite, forged passports and other documents. Two contingents of Soviet officials have left, the first numbering 31 and the second 32. The Bolivian Press named everyone in the first group. The spotlight fell on Southeast Asia after disclosure that the Soviets had offered to buy the Thai diplomatic code from an official of the Thai Embassy in Copenhagen. The Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy revealed that he had been approached by a man who first claimed to be a South American diplomat but later turned out to be a Russian. The Soviet diplomat was identified as Anatoli Lobanov, First Secretary of the USSR Embassy in Copenhagen. The Thai diplomat remained loyal to his country.

It is recalled that in 1958 a Soviet official, Khairulla M. Shalkharov and Tass correspondent, Yuri F. Trushin, were expelled from Thailand. In 1961 Thomas V. Bulgakoff, Soviet film representative was arrested. In 1966, Leonid A. Mamurin and Alexei A. Oboukhov were expelled. These are indications of Soviet efforts to expand power and influence in this part of the world. Their massive aid to the North Vietnamese in support of the aggression against the South Vietnamese shows that they mean business. The small nations of Southeast Asia must speed up the process of cohesion to keep out the big powers — the Soviet Union, the United States and Communist China. We must be united to preserve our independence. Without unity this region is wide open to interference and intervention by outside powers.

On the other hand, the USSR and the other powers may become sensible enough to deal with us on a basis of equality and mutual respect—and leave us to live our own lives in our own way.

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Thai exposes Soviet spy ring in Denmark

A Thai diplomat in Denmark was the first person to tip the Danish Government off about the alleged Soviet espionage activities in that country, The Nation reliably learned from diplomatic sources last night.

The diplomat, who flatly turned down an offer of 10,000 kroner (about 38,000 baht) by a Soviet official in Copenhagen in exchange for his diplomatic code, was reported to have alerted the Danish Government of the matter.

On Friday, Denmark asked Russia to recall three members of the Soviet Embassy staff for spying.

According to diplomatic sources, a Soviet diplomat, Mr Mikhail Makarov, Press Attache of the Soviet Embassy in Copenhagen, had attempted to buy the Thai diplomatic code from Mr Soontorn Kongsakdi, Charge d'Affaires of the Thai Embassy in Denmark.

The last meeting about the code ended with a "flat and outraged refusal" from the side of the Thai, according to the sources.

Later, the reports said, the Thai diplomat met a man who first claimed to be a South American diplomat but revealed himself to be a Russian afterwards. This Soviet diplomat was singled out by other diplomats as the First Secretary in the Soviet Embassy in Copenhagen, Anatoli Lobanov.

The sources also said at the meeting with the Russian, Mr Soontorn refused to sign an IOU for the 1,000 kroner which he had previously received from Mr Makarov for translating two English-language articles.

The reports added that Mr Kongsakdi later returned the 500 kroner to Makarov. The rest of the money was turned over to the Embassy's cashier.

The sources also reported last week that Mr Makarov had made an offer to Radical Folketing member Paul Overgaard-Nielsen in Copenhagen to underwrite expenses to have anti-Common Market pamphlets published and distributed.

When the story broke out, Mr Makarov gave a statement saying he had spoken with Overgaard-Nielsen but added that he might have been misunderstood since he was speaking in English.

Mr Overgaard-Nielsen refuted the account stating that Mr Makarov had made the offer and that he misunderstood nothing since his English was as good as that of Mr Makarov's.

In Bangkok, Foreign Ministry's Undersecretary of State, Mr Charoonpan Issarangura, told The Nation on Saturday that he had "no comment" to make on the reports.

The Danish Embassy here said no official reports had been received.

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ESPIONAGE?

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BRITAIN LATE LAST year expelled over a hundred Soviet spies. Bolivia expelled another hundred-plus Soviet spies recently. Nobody knows why more than a hundred Soviet diplomatic representatives were operating in a small South American country which has only five representatives in Moscow and which Che Guevara had chosen as his special field for bringing about the "socialist revolution" in all of Latin America.

The latest country to expel, or more politely ask Moscow to withdraw, three diplomats is Denmark. One of them, it seems, went to the extent of trying to bribe a Thai diplomat in Copenhagen and ask him for the "diplomatic code". The price offered was the equivalent of 28,000 baht, quite a big sum thinking in terms of a diplomat's salary.

Expelled KGB agents, posing as Soviet diplomats, are like those Thai drivers who, after an accident, "flee the scene". We cannot consign either of them to limbo. They have to turn up like a bad penny somewhere. Maybe in Thailand?

A KGB agent is a financial investment for the Soviet Union. Much money and much time has been spent on training him for the specific job he has to do abroad. Maybe it is commercial spying, and one agent may be interested in the latest developments of military aircraft, say, in France or in Japan. This means that if he ever bribes somebody to show him drawings of a prototype, he must understand the drawing or be able to secretly photograph it, etc., or it may be in another field the agent specialises.

Whatever it is, the nearly 250 Soviet agents who have been expelled from the Western world during the last six months form the cream of Soviet intelligence and they represent an intellectual and financial investment of the Soviet Union which cannot be consigned to limbo. They can change their names, they can undergo plastic surgery of their face, but they are bound to turn up somewhere else. . . in Zambia, in Italy, in Iraq or in Thailand.

How good is our intelligence to be able to spot them if after a change of name and a "nose job", one of the diplomats expelled from Bolivia or England turns up here. It is an odds-on bet that KGB agents are quite aplenty in Bangkok but we have never expelled any Soviet diplomat. Yuri Trushin when he was expelled in 1959 was a Tass correspondent.

Bangkok is known all over Asia as a city swarming with spies. In most capitals outside Thailand, it is said that Thailand tolerates these spying activities because the spies spy on each other than on any activities in Thailand. We do not know whether this is right or wrong.

From what we hear the Japanese are supposed to have the most sophisticated commercial intelligence system in Thailand. This intelligence system, we are told, has nothing to do with political or military matters. On the political side, the Burmese are supposed to have an excellent intelligence system. Again, we are told, that this has nothing to do with Thailand but only with the activities of former Burmese Premier U Nu and his coterie. The CIA, we presume, is also active.

This is where our own intelligence system comes in. We may not want to send spies to London, New Delhi or Tokyo, but we should keep tabs on the spies operating here. Hereafter, we cannot follow the policy of believing that they neutralise each other and so the more the merrier.

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