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AIRGRAM

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A-152 NO.

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Action assigned to
Action Taken
Date of Action
Action Office Symbol
Name of Officer

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO: HONG KONG, CANBERRA, COLOMBO, NEW DELHI, DJAKARTA WELLINGTON, MANILA, SINGAPORE, TAIPEI, STOCKHOLM

FROM : Amembassy KUALA LUMPUR DATE: May 22, 1970

SUBJECT : Asian Students' Conference

REF : Kuala Lumpur A-167, May 26, 1969

1. The reporting officer called on N. Paransothi, Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Students (ASA) on May 13, 1970 to discuss the forthcoming Asian Students' Conference (ASC) to be held by ASA in July at Chung Chi College, Hong Kong. Paransothi said that the main purpose of the Conference would be to acquaint leaders of the national student organizations which are ASA members with each other; this was important as student leadership tended to change annually. He added that whereas last year's ASC (held in Kuala Lumpur) was concerned with organizational matters (the founding of ASA), this year's meeting would consider political matters. Paransothi was vague on precisely what political issues would come up, except to say they would probably be cast in general terms and deal with large issues, such as racism.

2. Paransothi said that ASA was considering inviting some non-member national student organizations* to attend as

* ASA member national student organizations represent the following countries: Australia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, The Philippines and Singapore. Hong Kong is also a member.

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Drafted by: POL:JWMoyle:nlp

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observers. No Japanese national student organization was invited last year because of the confused student situation there. However, this year there appeared to be one organization (not named) with enough member student organizations to be qualified to speak for a significant number of Japanese students. Paransothi also indicated that ASA was trying to extend an invitation to Communist China to attend the meeting but was finding it difficult to contact them. North Korea and North Vietnam were "technically qualified" to attend but Paransothi did not appear enthusiastic about inviting them. Paransothi said ASA was attempting to invite representatives of national student organizations from both Israel and the Arab states; ASA did not wish to have only Arabs or only Israelis attend. He said that backroom maneuvering was currently in progress in an attempt to have representatives of both attend.

3. Paransothi said that ASA was having some financial difficulty and added that there would probably be no ASC next year because of financial problems. Part of the problem was that certain organizations, which were potential sources of funds, such as the Asia Foundation, were on the "blacklist" and could not be utilized. However, there was a possibility that ASA would receive some financial assistance from the Swedish and Norwegian governments. He noted that ASA is still not registered in Malaysia as a society, but added that the Malaysian Government seemed content to let this anomalous situation continue for the time being.

4. Comment: Paransothi is a Malaysian of Indian descent and recently received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Malaya in Agricultural Science. Paransothi expects to continue as the ASA Secretary General only through the July ASC, which he will attend. He is uncertain where he will go after that but thinks that he may work for The Philippine Government in the agricultural field. He is a fairly forthcoming contact, although somewhat suspicious of Americans.

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