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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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ANALYSIS BRANCH

TO: Amembassy BANGKOK
INFO: Department of State
Amembassy KUALA LUMPUR
Amconsul CHIANG MAI
Amconsul HOHOM

FROM: Amconsul SONGKHLA

SUBJECT: Satun Province

REF:

Action assigned to

Action Taken

Date of Action 9/14

DATE August 19, 1970

Action Office Symbol

Name of Officer

SUMMARY: Although both CTO and CPT insurgents conduct subversive activities in Satun, the problem has not yet reached serious proportions, government security forces and development activities are small scale. END SUMMARY.

INTRODUCTION: Satun province borders Perlis State of Malaysia, the Indian Ocean, and the provinces of Trang, Phatthalung, and Songkhla. It is one of the smallest provinces in the country in terms of area and population, the latter, estimated at 95,000, is 80% ethnic Malay Thai Muslim, however contrary to the situation in the Muslim provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala, almost all of Satun's Muslims are Thai speakers. The 80 kilometers of coastline on the Indian Ocean is indented with many fingers of the sea which make fishing and smuggling easy. A sparse population lives on the more than 100 islands offshore. Inland the terrain is mountainous and forested with only 14% of the land area under cultivation, primarily rubber and rice. The information in this report is based on several trips to Satun, the latest of which was August 17. END INTRODUCTION.

1. Subversive Activities: There is little overt insurgent activity in Satun. However Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) insurgents have moved into the northern mountains of the province. A colony has been established near the Trang-Phatthalung border. This group, estimated at 50-60 men, engages in propaganda and supply gathering activities among Thai Buddhist settlers, including some in a large government sponsored self help land settlement.

Small groups from the 9th Regiment, Malayan National Liberation Army (also called the Communist Terrorist Organization = the CTO) sometimes cross

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into Satun from Sadao district of Songkhla province at a point near the Perlis border. Officials describe these intrusions as low level propaganda missions. It is also believed that GTO groups take refuge in Satun when security sweeps in Sadao put pressure on them. As far as is known the GTO maintain no permanent armed presence in Satun.

Officials describe separatist activities among the Thai Muslims as minimal.

2. Security Forces: RTG forces consist of three Provincial Police (PP) stations, one PP Special Action Force (SAF), and one Border Patrol Police (BPP) platoon stationed at BPP 6th Company Headquarters adjacent to the Satun airfield.

The province conducts an active psyops program with frequent village visits.

3. Development Projects: In addition to normal government activities, there is a Mobile Development Unit (MDU) stationed in the province. The MDU has built 137 kilometers of earth roads, built three model villages, and conducts a variety of other programs: vocational training, crop improvement, nutritional assistance, rural health, etc.

The self help land settlement now has more than 3,000 families. The settlement is experimenting with palm oil production.

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