DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 947484

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

PAGE 3 THAI
FOR FEE 16 1981
ERB USE ONLY

A-13 | CONFIDENTIAL | HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Amembassy BANGKOK

INFO : Department of State, CHIENGMAI, BONGKHLA, PHNOM PENH, VIENTIANE

FROM : Amconsul UDORN

SUBJECT : Northeast Thailand Quarterly Summary (U) 1970

REF

Cambodian Border

Newspaper sensationalism was rampant as North Vietnamese troops moved into northern and western Cambodia, and thus closer to the Thai border. The press reported infiltrators having entered Sisaket, Surin and Buriram provinces. Consulate officers travelling in the area discovered that these stories were unfounded (A-11), and that the border between Northeast Thailand and Cambodia remained quiet, although border patrol police and regular Army forces were on alert. Small scale refugee migration started from Cambodia into ethnic Cambodian areas of Northeast Thailand, mainly through the Prasat and Khao Phra Wiharn road routes, in Surin and Sisaket provinces respectively. Activity picked up June 30, however, particularly in the Ubon-Sisaket area, where some 150 Cambodian troops and civil officials from Preah Vihear province of Cambodia sought refuge at Khao Phra Wiharn Temple from an estimated 30 North Vietnamese PAX troops. The Thai dispatched reinforcements to the border to seal off potential incursions.

Roi Et Election

Democratic Front candidate Chawin Sakham was elected to fill a vacant Parliament seat in a special election held in Roi Et on June 28. The election culminated two and a half months of campaigning. The governments party candidate placed a close second, followed by an independent, wealthy Mrs. Sunirat Telan. What appeared to be a contest between the two major parties, the United Thai Peoples' Party and the Democrats, turned into victory for local favorite Chawin, who carried out a low budget, person-to-person campaign. Election day turnout, despite

GROUP 3

CONFIDENTIAL

FORM DS-323

Leibzelow & HYM:lcb 7/10/70 2888 | Controls and Classification Approved by Thomas J. Barnes

DEC JUL 27 PM 5 23
COPY LIB-FER

DECLASSIFIED
Authority

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 969041

scattered showers, was reasonably impressive as Roi Et voters responded to nationwide attention. Early results were broadcast by HSKK-TV in Khon Kaen, with reports "live" from Roi Et provincial headquarters (A-6, A-10, and A-12).

The Insurgency

During April, toward the end of the dry season, the insurgents launched a series of attacks, concentrated principally in only two of the Northeast's some 160 districts and sub-districts--Nakae of Nakhon Phanom province and a neighboring area just over the ridge of the Phan mountains--Khao Wong sub-district of Kalasin province. They overran several village defense units, most of which were manned by only a few men when the attack occurred. In another type of targeting, the quarter saw the Northeast's second and third instances of command-detonated mines used against vehicles. Also, five government helicopters were hit by ground fire in April alone--a newly-developed insurgent skill, particularly in the Nakae area. The Northeast continued to be the scene of about five out of every eight insurgent-initiated incidents in the country.

Government Counter-Insurgency Efforts

The Thai Army continued to be distracted by events in Laos and Cambodia. The Second Army did not precipitately pull out of the counter-insurgency campaign as had been rumored, however. Rather, the effort rocked along as usual, which has not proved sufficient to hurt the insurgents significantly. Second Army Forward ran one imaginative operation for two weeks in May in Khao Wong using small unit tactics. The planner and commander of the operation was then transferred to Prachinburi province as a battalion commander near the Cambodian border. This move is symptomatic of the Army's preoccupation with external events.

The village defense units are a weak l[illegible]n the government's security posture vis-a-vis the insurgents. Most units have poor leadership, inadequate fortifications, and faulty communications. They have not been well supervised, inspected, or supplied. Consequently, when some units met their first real test, they flunked. Only the comparable weakness of the insurgents has preserved others. The new Village Security and Development Unit program is off to a poor start because of lack of direction from Bangkok. In most cases, the men have been sent back to their villages after training without arms or pay.

Police

Two Border Patrol Police companies--at Mukdahan district, Nakhon Phanom province, and at Det Udom district, Ubon province--are setting up

DECLASSIFIED
Authority