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SUMMARY

The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) throughout Thailand is concentrating on expanding -- and in some areas, solidifying or rebuilding -- the insurgent support organization. Its full-time armed forces, the Thai People's Liberation Armed Forces (TPLAF), are assisting party cadres in this primary effort and are devoting a large share of their present efforts to feeding themselves. The TPLAF are avoiding military contact with RTG security forces which would jeopardize the political and logistic efforts. The insurgents are employing violence, largely assassinations and attacks on local security forces, to reinforce local political efforts.

In August there was an upsurge of military incident reports in North, Northeast and Central Thailand (noted in reftel), primarily attributable to the Royal Thai Army's "Ramasoon II" operations. The declared aim of the Ramasoon II operations was to interdict TPLAF lines of supply from base areas to the villages and rear areas which support the insurgency. The RTA operations -- apparently largely patrols near temporary operating bases -- fell short of the declared objective and, with the exception of operations in the central Phuphan Mountains in the Northeast, they appear to have had little lasting effect on the insurgent forces. As the RTA did not maintain persistent pressure on the insurgents and as these operations -- for reasons of security -- were poorly coordinated with other RTG security elements, the net effect of the operations was limited. Contact in most Ramasoon II areas appears to have been largely insurgent-initiated, although it would not have occurred if the RTA forces had not been in the

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field. A compilation of Field reporting indicates that RTA losses in the series of operations were 17 KIA and 36 WIA. Communist losses, which probably included at least several wounded, are not known as no bodies were recovered.

With the Ramasoon II operations the RTA completed the counterinsurgency field operations which RTG agreed to fund -- on an offset basis -- in the FY 72 Additional Assistance to Thailand (ATT) (known to the RTG as the Ramasoon Plan) Program. In return for a $15 million add-on to the regular FY 72 US Military Assistance program and for other US assistance, the RTG -- among other things -- agreed to expend $2.97 million (in Baht) of its own funds for 18 "battalion months" of RTA field operations against the insurgents during the March 1, 1972 to September 30, 1973 period. These operations were beyond the level of RTA activity the RTG would otherwise fund. (Another 4 to 6 battalion months of Royal Thai Marine Corps operations and training also were funded by the ATT/Ramasoon Program.)

In the Tri-Province area, the August phase of Ramasoon II operations included a 2 to 3 week deployment of elements of 4 battalions into the southern Petchabun Mountains, 12 to 18 kms north and 10 kms southwest of the reported [redacted] location of the insurgent base near Khao Ya Mountain (QU1031). Insurgent ambushes and harassment cost 6 RTA KIA and 20 RTA WIA. Insurgent losses are not known.

In the northern Petchabun Mountains, insurgent local forces reportedly have been tied down since June maintaining CPT control over restive tribal villages. Numerous low level reports indicate, however, that insurgent cadre with small TPLAF elements are busy reestablishing and developing further the insurgent infrastructure among remote ethnic Thai settlements in eastern Nakhon Thai and Chon Daen Districts of Phitsanulok Province.

In Chiang Rai Province, RTA activity was confined largely to patrolling along the fringe of the cultivated valleys of southern Thoeng District as the base of insurgent-controlled ridgelines (where RTA and KMT units suffered serious losses in April). The only noteworthy contacts were an insurgent daylight harassment attack on an RTA operating base and two daylight attacks on police stations in Thoeng. Two RTA, four civilians and seven policemen were wounded in the actions.

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There have been additional reports of possibly two 200-man unidentified units (possibly Pathet Lao Neo units on loan to the CPT) which have infiltrated into Thailand from Laos and are presently located in the hills of Thoeng-Chiang Kham District near the Laos border and in the hills of Pong District to the South. Some of these infiltrators, however, may merely be groups of Thai insurgents returning from training in Laos or China.

RTA Ramasoon II operations in Nan Province consisted of Cavalry Division units in short-range patrols in the vicinity of stalled construction work crews at the northern and southern terminus work sites of the ill-fated Nan "loop" road. The RTA lost two KIA and nine WIA in these efforts.

Construction of the highway linking the northern part of Nan Province with Chiang Rai Province is being held up by insurgents in the mountains of Pong District of Chiang Rai near BP5745.

The construction of the Mae Sot-Umphang road in Tak Province has been held up by insurgents since June at km 44 of the 135 km project.

In the Northeast, in August, small elements of TPLAF were reported to have moved from the Phuphans to the vicinity of the lowland villages of their supporters -- probably to facilitate feeding themselves during the lean monsoon season, to reinforce local cadres' political efforts, and to avoid RTA operations in the hills.

The highlight of Ramasoon II operations in the Northeast was a series of helicopter-borne company-size combat patrols in the central Phuphan Mountains, which destroyed a number of hastily vacated TPLAF campsites and reportedly wounded several insurgents. The insurgent forces which left their base camps in the RTA's operating area moved to the neighborhood of villages of their supporters in Kut Bak Subdistrict of Sakon Nakhon Province.

We have recently learned that when funds are available the RTG plans to resettle 2,500 So tribesmen from six remote villages of southwestern Nakae District (Nakhon Phanom Province) rather than expend the resources and effort required to establish effective control over their original homesites. Five of the villages will be moved to a resettlement area in southern Mukdahan District (Nakhon Phanom) and the sixth village will be moved to an already established resettlement area in Sahatsakhan District of Kalasin Province.

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The majority of the contacts in the Phuphan area continued to be by local security forces (VDC volunteers, and police), who killed 13 insurgents and supporters and captured 11 others during the month while suffering three KIA and seven WIA themselves.

Total insurgent recruiting in the northeast appears to be keeping pace -- and probably exceeding -- insurgent losses; but the insurgents are clearly hurting in a few areas because of losses of personnel and local support (parts of southern Sakhon Nakhon Province and Don Tan District of Nakhon Phanom).

Low-level RTG reports in August indicate that the CPT is seeking to expand its influence among the village population in the four areas near the Phuphans and in southern Ubon Province, southern Sisaket Province and Prachinburi Province along the Cambodian border. North Vietnamese arms support, which has shown a marked increase since the Vietnamese ceasefire, has already reached insurgent units along the Cambodian border. The CPT activity in Prachinburi, 100-150 kms due east of Bangkok, especially worries the RTA Second Army.

In the hills of western Udorn Province and adjacent eastern Loei Province, Communist influence continues to expand. In August RTA forces -- two reinforced companies -- and police units provided only local security for the limited government presence in the area and the RTA elements withdrew after three weeks.

The flurry of military activity in Prachuab Khiri Khan Province in the upper peninsula area of Central Thailand was attributable to brief RTA operations to counter CPT efforts to organize the population of a remote mountain valley near the Burmese border. The RTA lost nine KIA and three WIA here. Insurgent losses are not known.

In the south, continuing defections indicate that the insurgent organization is clearly in trouble in at least two old hardcore population bases. RTG suppression activity, however, was down in August. [redacted] the CPT is attempting to compensate for these losses by developing popular support and new bases in the hills of western Songkhla and Phatthalung Provinces. END SUMMARY.

A. THE NORTH

1. Tri-Province Area

(The mountainous areas of western Loei Province, eastern and northern Phitsanulok Province, and western Petchabun Province).

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The RTG appears particularly concerned with the insurgency here because of its proximity to the populous central plain of Thailand. Hence, the RTG is devoting its primary CI attention to the area in the next two years and -- through the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) -- has developed Plan 16/17, a joint civil, police and military operation concept for the period from October 1973 through September 1975 (Buddhist Era year 2516 and 2517) to contain and attack the insurgent forces in the region.

The RTG is moving very slowly in putting Plan 16/17 into operation. On September 7 an authoritative CSOC officer candidly admitted to Embassy officers that it would be a good "six to eight months" before the various organizations and units charged with the conduct of the plan were actually functioning according to the concept of the plan.

On August 6, the CPT radio Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT) described TPLAF activities in the Tri-Province area as "defensive".

a. Southern Petchabun Mountains

A rash of contact reports (16) in the August 10-26 period resulted from the RTA 3d Army's temporary (two to three weeks) deployment of elements of four battalions into the southern Petchabun Mountains to the north and southwest of the new insurgent base area near Khao Ya Mt (QU1031). Most of the Colonel Narong Kittikachorn's 11th Regiment (King's Guards) and the 3d Bn. 4th Regiment were involved. The Colonel, son of Field Marshal Thanom, was not with his regiment (again) for most of the month, but his deputy apparently functioned well in his absence.

The RTA, perhaps impressed by earlier casualties it suffered at the hands of insurgents in the area, apparently employed its forces very cautiously. The insurgents aided by advance knowledge of the operation (on July 29 VOPT reported that it would begin shortly) harassed the RTA forces.

The 11th Regiment established, and operated from a series of company and platoon-sized patrol bases taking most of their contacts in a 25 square km area located 12 to 18 kms north of the principal, reported insurgent bases. The 3d Bn, 4th Regt. and elements of the 11th Regt. also patrolled from a temporary operating base approximately ten kms to the southwest of the communist base camps.

Reported contacts were all in daylight hours and almost all were enemy-initiated. Contact resulted largely from harassment and ambushing of the RTA patrols. The RTA sustained six KIA and 20 WIA with enemy casualties unknown.

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The August operations appear to have been the RTA's final effort in the area under the US-supported Ramasoon Plan (which ended September 30). The Ramasoon Plan in the Tri-Province Area was designed to apply "continuous pressure" on the insurgent forces through interdiction of insurgent lines of communications and supply operations rather than to penetrate CPT bases or to destroy insurgent forces. The RTA did not apply continuous pressure on the insurgents in the area. (The last RTA venture into the Khao Ya region occurred in the February 16 to April 1 period. That effort, which began as a two battalion northward and southward sweep toward the Khao Ya area, concluded in a debacle when the northward sweeping force was diverted to protect a downed helicopter. The insurgents frustrated RTA effort to recover the helicopter, pinned down the 2 Bn 4th Regt. for nearly three weeks, and ultimately forced the withdrawal of the RTA forces from the area. The RTA lost 25 KIA and 95 WIA in that operation .)

The more recent operations showed a marked improvement in RTA tactics from the February-March efforts. Small unit patrolling replaced battalion sweeps. The RTA may have been testing tactics it will employ in the forthcoming dry season operations in Chiang Rai and Nan Provinces.

The August RTA operations appear to have had no lasting effect on the insurgents in the area although insurgent contact with the population of nearby Chon Daen District of Petchabun during the period was reduced temporarily.

b. Northern Petchabun Mountains

(Note: Information about insurgent activity in this area is limited and derived previously from CSOC daily reports. These reports note CPT military activity (sighting and contact reports) but give little information about what the forces and political cadres are actually doing. They are based largely on occasional reports of village informants. The nature, timing, and location of the activity described in the reports suggest fairly free insurgent movement among the Thai population of remote villages in eastern Phitsanulok Province.)

[redacted] much of the CPT effort in this area is devoted to maintaining its control over restive Meo and other tribesmen. A June report [redacted] states that early that month squad-size units (12 local force soldiers) were moved into each village under CPT control for the purpose of taking control of the village organization. The deployment was to last for at least five months.

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There have been reports, however, that the CPT is again attempting to establish an infrastructure among isolated ethnic Thai villages and settlements along the western fringe of the mountains in Nakhon Thai and Wang Thong Districts of Phitsanulok Province and directly to the south in Chon Daen District of Petchabun. TPLAF troop movements, supply collection, political agitation, and some recruiting have been reported, largely in Nakhon Thai District.

While numerous daytime sightings of insurgent force movements were reported in August, only one RTA contact was reported (an 11th Regt. strike team contact on August 15, near the Lomsak-Phitsanulok highway in which one RTA soldier was wounded.) A paramilitary hunter-killer team (naresuan team) had better luck on August 12 near Wang Pong in Chon Daen District when the team reportedly killed six and wounded two in a four-hour long battle with a group of 24 insurgents. (No bodies, however, were recovered).

2. Chiang Rai Province

a. Thoeng and Chiang Kham Districts

i. Background on the Battle for the Thoeng Mountains. This area, known as Area 24 to the CPT, lies in northeastern and eastern Chiang Rai Province. Two parallel mountain ridgelines running southwest to northeast along the Thailand-Laos border dominate -- rising abruptly 2,500-3,000 feet above -- the ricelands to the west and south. Prior to the outbreak of the insurgency, Meo and Yao tribesmen lived in the mountains and Thai farmed the valley land. From 1950 to 1965, there were also settlements of remnants of the Chinese Nationalist 93rd Division (KMTs) living in the small valley between, and at the northern end of, the ridgelines along the Laos border. The RTG forced the KMTs to leave this area in 1965. Insurgent recruiting among the Meo of this area began in 1966. On April 17, 1968, insurgents overran a Border Patrol Police (BPP) development outpost at Ban Huai Khu (PC 4702) along the border and thereafter the RTG had no presence along the eastern ridge-line. Subsequent Thai military operations failed to dislodge the insurgents. In April 1971, KMT troops were allowed to reoccupy their old area in return for assuming the RTG's security responsibilities there. KMT operations and RTAF bombing in 1971 caused heavy insurgent losses and in November 1972 the KMTs pushed the insurgents to the border ridgeline. Concurrently, the RTG hired a contractor to build a road between the ridgelines. In March 1973 the communist-led Meo forces returned from Laos and attacked KMT, Thai police, and RTA outposts between the ridgelines. Inhabitants of two Yao villages and some 200 Meo left their homes and took refuge in Chiang Kham District to the south. In the April 20-27 period, the insurgents routed a combined KMT and RTA 31st Regiment effort to dislodge their hold on a lower cross-compartment ridgeline between the two mountain ridges (PB 4595). In June, road construction involving heavy equipment was halted, although the contractor continued providing "protection" supplies to the insurgents. Land clearing near the road, however, continues. On April 18, the Governor of Chiang Rai imposed a curfew on both Thoeng and Chiang Kham Districts, which still is in effect. Since April, no RTG security forces

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or KMT forces have ventured in force into the mountains and reports of communist movements in the surrounding lowlands have increased.)

Operation "Ramasoon II" (August-September 1973) in Chiang Rai Province, a regiment-size RTA operation, had as its declared objective the interdiction of insurgent lines of supply in the Thoeng-Chiang Kham area. The RTA assigned the 1st Bn. and 2d Bn. of the 31st RCT and the 1st Bn. of the 37th RCT to the operation.

ii. August Activity

In August, RTA Ramasoon activity apparently was confined to daylight patrolling along the fringe of the populated area at the base of the hills along the southern end of the valley between the Thoeng mountain ridges. Interdiction of insurgent lines of supply was not accomplished, as the support areas are in the hills beyond the range of RTA patrolling. The only notable contact with RTA units was enemy-initiated: an August 26 harassment raid (at 1445 in the afternoon) on a joint 1st Bn. 31st RCT and BPP position (PB 402882) in which two RTA and four civilians were wounded.

The insurgents in the area, apparently short of food, have been concentrating on feeding themselves. In June, [redacted] insurgent armed units in the area were ordered to avoid contacts which could disrupt their own farming efforts. The VOPT on August 6, described the TPLAF units in Chiang Rai as "counterattacking" -- hence, being on the defensive. Nevertheless, squad and platoon-size groups of armed insurgents were reported moving in daylight hours in and near the Thoeng District lowlands throughout the month. On August 13 at 1115 they harassed a police station at Pa Tan (PB 3393) and on August 28 at 1445 they attacked a Tambon police station at Ban Pak Kha, wounding seven policemen.

The insurgents may recently have received reinforcements from neighboring Laos. [redacted] a group of 200 insurgents arrived in the area in July from Muang Sai, Laos -- reportedly a Chinese-supported CPT training facility. More recently, the RTG received information that 200 infiltrators from Laos (possibly the same group) moved into the vicinity of Doi Lao-u (mountain PB 488885).

Pong District

The RTG received low-level information(not yet substantiated)that a group of approximately 200 infiltrators (possibly Pathet Lao Meo soldiers) arrived at Ban Maeo Mo (PB 5344) to reinforce the local insurgent forces.

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3. Nan Province

"Ramasoon II" in Nan began on August 6 and consisted of two battalions of the Cavalry Division being deployed on Royal interest and RTA instruction in Thung Chang District and in Mae Charin Subdistrict of Pua District protecting construction sites of the strategic Nan "loop" road. The RTA activity apparently was confined to small daylight patrols near RTA operating bases as a screen for the road building crews. Two RTA soldiers were killed and nine soldiers were wounded during the August operations. No insurgent losses were reported. One Hilltribe Volunteer was killed and three villagers were wounded by insurgent mines near construction areas. On August 4, insurgents sabotaged a bridge over the Nan River on the road and damaged nearby construction machinery (three generators, a D-7 tractor and a dump truck) belonging to ITALTHAI, the construction contractor.

The Nan "Loop" Road

The so-called "loop" road in northeastern Nan when completed will connect Thung Chan District in northern Nan and isolated settlements along the Laos border in eastern Pua District with the Nan River Valley. The road was begun in 1968. Only about 30 kms of the road have been completed, a 17 km stretch in the south from Ban Nam Yao (Q80401) to Huai Lak Lai (QB 2102) and a 12 km stretch in the north from Ban Pon (QB 0359) to QB 1366. Nearly 100 kms of the road remain to be constructed, all of it through insurgent-controlled territory.

Until August 1972, RTG Public Works crews were doing the construction with (often inadequate) RTA protection. In August 1972 the RTG awarded a contract for construction of the road from Huai Lak Lai (QB 1701) to Huai Kan (QB 1865), an area under insurgent control, to ITALTHAI Construction Company -- a private contractor. Since then, the insurgents have forced a halt in construction at Huai Lak Lai (QB 2102) and at QB 1366 despite the payment of bribes and other attempted bribes. The RTG has stated that the construction has cost five persons killed by insurgents for every kilometer of construction.

4. Tak Province

The insurgent organization (Region 10) continues to have problems with a restive tribal population who resent CPT organizational practices and policies. [redacted] the party has lost much of its credibility among the Meo of the area. Construction work on the 135 km Mae Sot - Umphang highway has been stalled at km 44 since the June 10 attack on a contractor (Sakol Sathapat Architects Co.) crew in which nine employees of the company were killed. Despite the CPT's population control problems, RTG forces are not actively challenging their control of areas of Mae Sot and Umphang Districts.

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The Mae Sot - Umphang Road, a 135 km long project, was begun in 1969 and is scheduled for completion in 1976, but the work is well behind schedule. The road has already cost 30 construction crew and security force lives. The project was begun by a province public works crew, but late in 1969 the national Public Highways Department took over construction with police and military security being provided as required. After numerous delays and casualties, the RTG in 1972 decided to award a contract to a civilian contractor -- the Sakol Sathapat Company -- on the theory that the firm would be able to bribe the communists to let the construction continue. The contractor has not been able to buy the insurgents off. Construction has been halted at km 44 since the June 10 attack. Currently, the RTG is considering providing the contractor with Border Patrol Police (BPP) protection. The BPP resources in the area are stretched thin, as they have primary security responsibilities in both Mae Sot and Umphang Districts, where the CPT has established strong influence since at least 1969. The insurgents move easily in Tak, 80% of which is heavily forested mountainous terrain. RTG personnel reach remote Umphang District only by aircraft. There the RTG has less influence than the CPT. Recently, when the district administration called a meeting of 37 village headmen in the district, only five reportedly showed up. The rest had been intimidated by the CPT. Five of 13 primary schools in the district have been forced to close because of communist pressure. The population of Umphang includes approximately 7500 Thai and hilltribesmen, over whom the RTG has some control, and 10,000 Karens over whom the RTG has no control. On September 30, the Bangkok Post reported that a senior RTG official admitted that 19 villages (two Meo and 17 Karen) along the Burma border in Umphang District were completely under communist control and that RTG personnel do not enter the area.

B. THE NORTHEAST

1. The Phuphan Area and Ubon

Throughout the Northeast, the heartland of the Thai insurgency, the CPT and the TPLAF were concentrating on developing or reinforcing control over and influence among the population. Military actions with RTG forces that would jeopardize these efforts were avoided. In some areas in Sakon Nakhon the full-time insurgents (both political cadre and TPLAF troops) are being forced to devote much of their time to feeding themselves, but in other areas they are helping the villagers cultivate their rice. The villagers in many of the insurgent-influenced areas are themselves poor and are hard put to support the insurgent units in the hills. In some areas, the insurgents have had to cultivate crops to sustain themselves. The July-October monsoon season, just before the single annual rice harvest in the non-irrigated areas of the region, is the bleakest period of the year for the insurgent commissariat system. In August, hungry teams of TPLAF

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soldiers ranged far afield from normal operating areas to collect food. Local CPT cadres apparently used their presence in some circumstances, however, to reinforce their own organizing efforts (as well as helping with the cultivation noted above).

The RTA conducted four two/three week operations in conjunction with the RTA's Ramasoon II Plan: two in the Phuphan mountain area and nearby Kalasin Province and one in northern Sakon Nakhon Province. The marked increase in military incident reports in the Northeast in August (17,as compared with eight in July) is directly attributable to this RTA initiative. In some areas, the RTA activity in the central Phuphans forced the TPLAF and the local cadre to move from the areas of operation to the immediate vicinity of the villages which support them. For example, the RTA heliborne patrol operations in the central Phuphans caused the insurgents in the area to move close to the villages of their support base/Kutbak District, Sakon Nakhon.

a. Ramasoon II Operations in the Phuphans

Beginning on July 28, following RTAF airstrikes, the RTA deployed the 2nd Co of the 1st Bn, 3d RCT and two long-range reconnaissance teams in a series of helicopter-inserted combat patrols along the central ridge-line of the Phuphans between Kalasin Province and Sakon Nakhon Province. The 3d RCT troops worked over several known insurgent camp sites and had six contacts with the insurgents. Subsequent low-level RTG intelligence reports indicate that the insurgent elements involved, including two TPLAF elements, suffered several casualties and relocated northward to the vicinity of insurgent-controlled villages in Kut Bak Subdistrict of Sakon Nakhon Province and southward into Kuchinarai District of Kalsin Province. No insurgent bodies were recovered.

Throughout August, a battalion-size task force of the 23d RCT remained deployed at three company operating bases along the northern and eastern edge of the Phuphans in Na Kae District of Nakhon Phanom Province, conducting patrols in the immediate vicinity of the operating bases. On August 23 when one of these patrols was attacked by TPLAF forces in southeastern Na Kae, the RTA called for and received prompt RTAF air support.

During two 15 day periods in July and August a reinforced RTA rifle company of the 6th Regiment with VDC support conducted search operations in the Dong Pha Lat forest area of northern Sakon Nakhon Province. TPLAF forces which had been based in the area were forced to seek temporary refuge to

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the north in Bung Kan District of Nong Khai Province and to the west into Ban Muang District of Sakon Nakhon. Low-level RTG intelligence reports indicate that the displaced TPLAF units were very low on food and many TPLAF soldiers were suffering from malaria. Subsequently, there were several reports of small parties of TPLAF foragers seeking food in nearby villages. RTG security forces (police, VDC of RTA), however, did not maintain the pressure on these units.

b. TPLAF Units Move Into Villages

Several TPLAF units appear to have moved from base areas in the Phuphans into the immediate vicinity of the villages of their supporters in nearby lowlands. The move probably was to avoid RTA activity in the hills, to obtain food more easily in the lean monsoon season, and to reinforce local cadre organization efforts among the village population. Throughout August, squad-size TPLAF elements were reported to be operating near villages at the edge of the Phuphans in Sakon Nakhon Province (Sawaeng Daen Din, Muang, and Kut Bak Districts), Nakhon Phanom Province (northern Nakae District, Pla Pak District, and in the Don Tan - Mukdahan District area), and in Kalasin Province. The TPLAF units apparently are dispersed with squads living in temporary refuges near the particular villages which support them e.g. along edges of swamps, in nearby woods, in farmers' field tending shacks). The choice of villages appears to be in part based upon family ties of the unit members. The units attempt to make their presence at least tolerable by providing medical care to the villagers.

The RTG is aware of this shift in TPLAF tactics, but it has not yet altered suppression activities to cope with it. 23d RCT Task Force Commander Colonel Arthitya Khamlangek expressed his concern about the change to a Bangkok Post reporter (BP, August 18), concluding (accurately) that this increased the threat to the RTG in the region.

c. So Resettlement -- A Permanent Solution

Embassy and Consultate (Udorn) officers have learned that the RTG has decided to uproot the population (approximately 2,500 ethnic So tribesmen) of six isolated villages in the Phuphans in western Nakae District and resettle the people of five villages near a previous resettlement area in southern Mukdahan District and the people of the sixth village in Sahat Sa-Khan District of Kalasin. Four of the villages (Ban Kham Pak Kut VD 123545, Ban San Wae VD 104546, Ban Na Hin Kong VD 163506 and Ban Pak Chong VD 138523) were considered to be "liberated" by the CPT and communal farming had been organized in the area. The villages reportedly supported a large (approximately 100 man) TPLAF force. A RTG Communist Suppression Operation Command officer said that advance elements of the villagers have already been moved.

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The resettlement of these So, to be completed when funds become available, will unquestionably weaken the CPT logistic apparatus in the area; but the forced move is likely to contribute to the strength of the insurgency in Mukdahan and Sahat Sa-Khan after the So arrival there

d. Local Security Forces (VDC) Operations

In the village areas of the northeast adjacent to and in the Phuphan Mountains, the local security forces (Volunteer Defense Corps personnel, village volunteers and police) continued to provide the lion's share of the RTG population security -- as is their role. According to Embassy computation, there were 13 contacts involving VDC units and village volunteers in which 13 insurgents were KIA and 11 insurgents were captured at the cost of six VDC members wounded. Two VDC members were assassinated and another was seriously wounded by insurgent assassins. The VDC continue to be a primary target of insurgent violence in the contest for rural population control.

Principal VDC actions took place on August 14 in Pla Pak District of Nakhon Phanom Province (three related clashes in which two insurgents were killed and three apparently were wounded), on August 20 in Mukdahan District of Nakhon Phanom (VDC and village volunteers ambushed local insurgent group killing three at the cost of two VDC WIA), on August 25 in Kalasin Province (VDC surprised a local insurgent group eating breakfast with their children and killed eight and captured two), and on August 26 in Don Tan District of Nakhon Phanom (where VDC and RTA broke out of an insurgent ambush in which one RTA and two VDC were WIA).

Local security force pressure on the insurgent local forces and cadre appears to be effective in Don Tan District, Nakhon Phanom, where 11 insurgents and supporters (including two local cadre) defected to the RTG in August.

e. Insurgent Recruiting and Defection

CPT recruiters appear at least to be replacing insurgent losses from combat and defection in the Phuphan Mountain area and Ubon Province. August RTG reports indicate that the insurgents recruited 24 members for the jungle forces and that additional recruiting occurred in at least three areas but the number of recruits was not reported.

Fourteen insurgent defections to the RTG were reported in August (including six village supporters who were arrested then offered the chance of release if they declared themselves to be defectors, and two dazed survivors of an VDC ambush). Eleven of the fourteen defectors had been operating in Don Tan District of Nakhon Phanom Province.

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f. Insurgent Organization Status in Northeast In August

(Note: RTG field reporting about communist cadres' population contact work in the villages -- as differentiated from reports of sightings of TPLAF elements -- is very limited. It is likely that only a small percentage of the contact work is being reported.)

CSOC and RTA Second Army Area daily reports when compared with earlier information and other reporting indicates that in August the CPT was attempting to expand its influence over the population and to organize new support for the insurgency in Pla Pak District (Nakhon Phanom P.), Ban Muang District (northern Sakon Nakhon P.), in the more remote areas of Waritchapum District (southwestern Sakon Nakhon P.), in northern Sahatsakhan District of Kalasin, in Bung Kan District of Nong Khai Province, and in northern Buntharik District and Na Cha Luai Subdistrict of Ubon Ratchatani Province.

Late July reports from the RTA 2d Army Area Forward Headquarters indicates that CPT cadres also are working to expand the insurgent organization among the villagers in Kantharalak, Khun Han, and Khu Khan Districts of southern Sisaket Province along the Cambodian border just west of the older areas of CPT activity in Det Udom District of Ubon.

The insurgents appeared to be concentrating on strengthening their organization and support in northern NaKae District (Nakhon Phanom), eastern and southern Muang District, Kut Bak Subdistrict, southern Sawaeng Dean Din District (Sakon Nakhon), Amnat Charoen District (Ubon Ratchatani) and the adjacent Dom Tan Subdistrict (Nakhon Phanom).

The insurgent organization appears to be in trouble in Khao Wong Subdistrict of Kalasin Province as a result of RTA operations and in parts of southern Sakon Nakhon due to personnel losses.

2. Udorn - Eastern Loei Area

The CPT considers that it is on the offensive against the RTG in Udorn (VOPT Aug 6). Although the number of reported incidents in this area was lower in August than in July, the insurgents were continuing the same type of activity: developing a population support base among the villages of the more isolated areas of western Udorn and eastern Loei. CPT efforts to organize the villagers continue to be concentrated in Nam Som Subdistrict, the new Suwan Khuha Subdistrict (of Na Klang District), Na Klang District, and Nong Bua Lamphu District of Udorn Province and among isolated settlements in Pak Chom and Muang Districts of Loei Province.

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RTA assigned a 600-man task force comprised of elements of the 13th antry Regiment for approximately one month (July 25 through late ust) to Na Klang District and Nam Som Subdistrict in western Udorn vince. The RTA force was deployed as four companies to conduct ulation security patrols. One 13 Regt. company, two platoons of ice and 290 VDC were assigned to protect the new subdistrict ernment facilities at Suwan Khuha. The RTA units stayed close to ir temporary operating bases. The insurgents retained easy contact h the population.

recent transfer of CPT political cadre to the north probably is an lication that communist organization work in western Udorn has been ogressing. A recent defector from the area informed the RTG that 20 cadre from the CPT Udorn Provincial Area had been nt in early August to Nan and Chiang Rai to assist in "mass work" there.

3. Korat-Buriram-Prachinburi (KBP) Tri-Province Area

there are approximately 00 armed insurgents in the CPT's Region 20 organization (the CPT designation for the area). At least 70 villagers have been recruited into the insurgent jungle forces since January 1973. The CPT is concentrating on expanding its organization and support among the village population, especially in Prachinburi Province -- which lies on the eastern edge of the central Thai basin. RTA operations against the insurgents in the area, which have been limited to the intermittent assignment of elements of one rifle company to Lahansai District of Buriram and in the Prachinburi foothills, have not been effective in halting the CPT's organizing efforts.

There were two armed contacts in the KBT area in August. On August 8 in Prachinburi Province near the Cambidian border (TA 3905) a VDC police patrol ambushed nine local insurgents, killing one and wounding two and capturing five weapons. On August 22, approximately 20 insurgents attacked a VDC (Village Protection Team) outpost in southeastern Korat Province (TA 253914) wounding three VDC. In the latter attack, the insurgents used modern Bloc weapons including, for the first time in the area, B-40 rockets.

The debriefing of a CPT district-level cadre who defected from the Southern Sector of the CPT Northeast Regional Committee indicated that North Vietnamese logistic support for the Thai insurgents had increased since the Paris Agreements. The defector specified that in early May two convoys of three trucks each with a total of 30 tons of arms had arrived at Southern Sector headquarters -- in Cambodia near the border of

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southeastern Ubon Province and Laos. He also described the lines of logistic support from the headquarters to the Korat-Buriram-Prachinburi area and stated that arms were being shipped over this route.)

Recent 2nd Army Area Forward reports reflect a growing RTA concern about the expansion of CPT activity in Watthana Nakhon and Sakaeo Districts of Prachinburi Province, primarily because the Cambodian border (hence, logistic support) is readily accessible to the insurgents and because the area is only 100-150 miles east of Bangkok.

C. CENTRAL THAILAND (UPPER PENINSULA)

1. Prachuab Khiri Khan Province

Since at least early this year, CPT activity seems to be focused on organizing the population of (and recruiting in) four villages in Tambon Silaloi in Pranburi District -- a remote, geographically isolated mountain valley (NP 86) near the Burmese border due west of Pranburi town. The RTG, in an attempt to counter these activities, has moved Border Patrol Police, a Police Special Action Force (SAF) platoon and a company of the RTA 3d Bn 11th Regt into the area. (One company of 3d Bn. 11 Regt was deployed in the Khao Ya area of the Tri-Province area in the North.)

In August, the initiative apparently remained with the insurgents; but the RTG forces' presence and patrolling, if continued, may interrupt insurgent supplies. RTG forces lost ten killed and five wounded in four contacts. No enemy losses were reported. The most significant engagement was the August 8 ambush of a platoon of the 3d Bn, 11th Regt in which nine RTA soldiers were killed and three more were wounded.

D. THE SOUTH

The pattern of defections, which continue at a relatively high rate (17 in August) in the south, clearly indicates that the insurgent organization is in serious trouble in some of its old areas of influence. In August, for example, 11 insurgents (including a ranking cadre) surrendered in Patthalung Province and three (including a local cadre from hardcore area Chawang District) surrendered in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. VDC and village volunteers continued to patrol and ambush near villages in which the insurgents obtain food and other support, and there was a brief local RTA operation in Patthalung. In three clashes, village security teams killed one insurgent.

The CPT, [redacted] has been concentrating on extending its population contact work and on building bases in new areas notably in the mountain area where the borders of four provinces (Songkhla, Satun, Trang, and Patthalung) meet. FOIA(b)1 State

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1. Monk Beatings

Elsewhere in Thailand the insurgents have scrupulously avoided criticizing the King and generally have left the Buddhist monks and temples alone. In Thung Bak Village of the old CPT hardcore area of Ron Phibun District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, however, on several occasions this year (the last reportedly on August 27) TPLAF troops have harassed the monks. RTG intelligence reports state that the Abbot was beaten for refusing to distribute CPT leaflets to villagers visiting the wat.

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