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ORIGIN/ACTION		
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RM/R 1	REP	AF
ARA	EUR	FE
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AGR	COM	FRB
INT 7	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR 5
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OSD 34	USIA 10	NSA 3
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AIRGRAM

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A-22 NO. | SECRET | HANDLING INDICATOR

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ANALYSIS BRANCH

TO : Amembassy BANGKOK

INFO : Department of State, VIENTIANE, PHNOMPENH, CHIANGMAI, SAIGON, SONGKHLA

FROM : Amconsul, UDORN

DATE: October 14, 1971

SUBJECT : Northeast Thailand Quarterly Summary, July - September 1971

REF : A-14 NE Thai Quarterly Summary, June 30, 1971

Action Assigned to
Action Taken
Date of Action 10/22
Action Office Symbol
Name of Officer

CONTENTS (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE):

1. Nongkhai Flood
2. RTG Personnel Changes
3. Udorn's New Newspaper
4. Weapons Smuggling into Nakhon Phanom by RTG Officials
5. Other Weapons Smuggling
6. Cambodian Border Incursions
7. Sir Robert Thompson's Visit
8. Insecurity in Nakae and Khao Wong

1. Nongkhai Flood (UNCLASSIFIED) The Mekong River began flooding large parts of Nongkhai Province August 17. It rose to a high of 13.08 meters August 23 (compared with 14.08 meters during the record flood in 1966) and then gradually receded. Life was returning to normal by mid-September. The Thai on the whole have handled flood relief and post-disaster recovery coolly and effectively without our help (Udorn 144).

2. RTG Personnel Changes (CONFIDENTIAL) Eight of Northeast Thailand's fifteen provinces will have new governors in early October. Seven vice-governors will change and several deputy governors. Sorely missed will be Governor Charoon Lokakalin of Sakon Nakhon and Deputy Governor Sukit Chullanandh of Khon Kaen. Charoon, one of the three best governors

Group 3
Downgraded at 12-year intervals
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Drafted by: Michael B. Cook:10/1/71 mbc

Contents and Classification Approved by: M. B. Cook mbc

Clearances:

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of the Northeast, is moving to the troubled province of Narathiwat in the extreme south. Sukit, assigned to Nan, will probably be the youngest governor in the country at age 40 (see A-8 of April 15, 1971).

We look forward to the transfer within the Northeast of Governor Pramoon Sathathip (Udorn A-16 of 21 July 71) from Chaiyaphum to the more heavily traveled province of Roi-et. He replaces self-centered, arrogant Prachak Watcheraban whose assignment to well deserved obscurity is described as "attached to the Ministry of Interior".

We shall not mourn the loss of Governor Kamkerng Surakarn who is leaving Sisaket for Pathumthani. He is a stubborn, determined individualist with talent for getting involved in controversy. Major General Wit Nimnuan of Nong Khai is leaving for Chiang Rai and Phon Chuthangkun of Mahasarakham will be an inspector general at the Ministry of Interior. Both men are competent though neither has a claim to excellence. Their replacements could well prove better.

3. Udorn's New Newspaper (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) The Chao Udorn (People of Udorn) began publication on July 30, 1971 (Udorn A-17) and was published every five days until September 11. The editor, Thongchai Samranket, told us that since then the company he hired to print his paper has refused to turn out any more issues. His own printing press will arrive within a few days. He expects to resume publication October 11.

The printing company's owner, Ryang Wongasa, said that he stopped printing the Chao Udorn because it owes him 6200 baht. He has also received bomb threats from night clubs and massage parlors harassed by the police as a result of adverse articles in the paper.

4. Weapons Smuggling into Nakhon Phanom by RTG Officials (SECRET) Officials in Nakhon Phanom reported that in March and again in July they captured weapons smuggled into Thailand across the Mekong by agents of Bangkok-based police officers who were acting under orders from General Prasert Ruchirawong. These same police officers allegedly confiscated smuggled weapons seized by the Mukdahan district officer in March and turned only a part of them over to the police headquarters in Bangkok. The rest of the weapons disappeared. (Udorn 56 and 114).

Governor Yong Na Nakhon said in September that he took the matter to General Praphat and Phuong Suwanarath (Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Interior) who discussed it at the cabinet-level. Provincial offidals as a result now have exclusive authority to deal with weapons smuggling in Nakhon Phanom. Yong thinks that they can halt smuggling by RTG officials now that they do not have to worry about meddling from Bangkok. This will permit him to concentrate on slowing the insurgents' smuggling.

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5. Other Weapons Smuggling (CONFIDENTIAL) We have continuing reports that the insurgents are smuggling AK-47's and other small arms and ammunition across the Mekong. Six B-40 rounds discovered July 26 in a box moored in the Mekong at Tha Uthen District of Nakhon Phanom Province confirmed intelligence reports that insurgents are stocking up on these small rockets as well.

Khon Kaen police captured 46 M-72 Light Anti-tank Weapons, two M-16's, an M-1 carbine and assorted ammunition September 9 under the floor boards of a bus enroute from Ubon to Bangkok. Three more M-72's were captured in the house of an Ubon resident September 10. They are thought to have been smuggled in from Laos. We do not know what their final destination was supposed to be.

6. Cambodian Border Incursions (CONFIDENTIAL) Provincial officials in both Surin and Sisaket in July reported that Khmer Rouge Patrols continue to be sighted in Thai territory and occasionally clash with Thai forces. Officials said that the present level of activity is troublesome, but they can cope with it.

Sisaket Deputy Governor Udom Petchsiri reported July 23 that the Khmer Rouge have opened a new gambit and are crossing into Sisaket to register and recruit ethnic Cambodians in villages along the border. He said a number of men had already returned to Cambodia to join the anti-government forces.

7. Sir Robert Thompson's Visit (CONFIDENTIAL) Sir Robert's speech August 30 to a seminar of RTG officials responsible for counterinsurgency and his subsequent travels to insurgent-troubled areas prompted several Northeastern officials to reevaluate their efforts. We frequently heard repeated Sir Robert's themes of the need for patience, improved planning, careful marshaling of resources for a long-haul ahead and better delineation of responsibilities among police, military and civilian elements.

Governor Wichian Simantara of Ubon was the most profoundly effected. He told Sir Robert September 10 that the province had trained 34,000 Civilian Volunteers for five days each in village defense and development and planned to train another 26,000 in the near future. They are led by 6,000 Village Security Committee members drawn from prestigious groups such as teachers in the villages. The province had not given them any arms because, Wichian said, they could defend their villages without arms. He decided as a result of Sir Robert's visit, however, to supplement these forces with armed units. He also ordered the Ubon district officers to set up immediately small district-level intelligence units to pinpoint the insurgent political infrastructure via informant networks at the village level.

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8. Insecurity in Nakae and Khao Wong (CONFIDENTIAL) Nakae continues to have the highest level of violent incidents in the Northeast. The insurgents are consolidating their political control and using it to incite the population to open defiance of the government via a series of demonstrations began last April. The RTG's attempts to counter the insurgents efforts have been ineffective despite some strong points (A-18). The Nakhon Phanom CSOD advisor said recently, however, that the province is going to establish a CSOD Forward in Nakae to improve the coordination and responsiveness of the government's program.

Incidents in Khao Wong subdistrict of Kalasin increased sharply in June and have remained high. The apparent impetus was the insurgents' distaste for Second Army Forward's wet-season offensive and establishment of the RTA Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol Headquarters in the subdistrict. Villagers have demonstrated several times against the activities of the RTG in the area, once with a turnout of more than 1200 people.

Union Oil has meanwhile leased ten rai in Khao Wong to drill for oil. The Company will need at least an RTA platoon for local security to work safely there.

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