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ACTION EA-11

INFO OCT-01 SS-20 NSC-10 NSCE-00 INR-06 DODE-00 PM-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8191

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 10296

LIMDIS

SUBJ: NSSM-51: POLICY AND PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR THAILAND

REF: STATE 127088

WE HAVE CONFINED COMMENTS TO MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE POINTS WITH DETAILED AND SPECIFIC POINTS BEING SUBMITTED BY AIRGRAM.

1. GENERAL

A. BELIVE THIS EXERCISE SHOULD MORE FULLY DEFINE OUR INTEREST, STRATEGY AND POLICY TOWARD THAILAND IN PERSPECTIVE OF US OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY FOR THIS REGION. PRESENT DRAFT STATES OUR GREATEST -- INDEED ALMOST OUR ONLY -- INTEREST IN THAILAND DERIVES FROM OUR OBJECTIVE OF BRINGING VIETNAM WAR TO SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. THERE IS AN IMPLICATION OF IMMEDIATE DIMUNUTION OF US INTEREST IN THAILAND THEREAFTER WHICH WE CONSIDER MISLEADING. EVEN IN THE STRICTLY MILITARY SENSE THE US WILL HAVE A CONTINUING INTEREST IN SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE FACILITIES HERE. BUT BEYOND OUR INTEREST IN THAILAND ITSELF, WE FEEL EXAMINATION OF US INTEREST SHOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAILAND'S POSITION IN REGION AND WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO THE REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ELSEWHERE, E.G. JAPAN, IF THAILAND WERE CLOSED OFF TO US INFLUENCE, AND ITS GEOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES WERE MOBILIZED AGAINST US. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE THE VIEW THAT US INTEREST HERE OR IN ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY SHOULD BE DEFINED SOLEY IN TERMS OF US SECURITY OR DEFENSE CONSIDERATIONS, NAMELY THE DEGREE OF WILLINGNESS TO COMMIT US FORCES IN DEFENSE THAT COUNTRY, IS TOO NARROW. US

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INTERESTS SHOULD ALSO BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF WORLD ORDER AND SOCIETY WE ENVISION FOR FUTURE; ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WE WISH DEVELOP IN ORDER ENRICH OUR OWN SOCIETY; AND SOCIAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RELATIONS WE WISH FOSTER FOR OUR BENEFIT AS WELL AS OTHERS. THESE INTERESTS AND CONSEQUENT POLICIES NOT REFLECTED IN DRAFT NSSM.

B. WE BELIEVE US INTEREST IN THAILAND WHILE LIMITED IS BROADER THAN THAT REFLECTED IN DOCUMENT. IT SHOULD BE STATED IN TERMS NOT ONLY OF THE OBJECTIVE OF SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO OUR MASSIVE US MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM (WITH ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THAILAND). IT SHOULD ALSO ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING THIS IN A MANNER WHICH AVOIDS A CONSEQUENT MAJOR SHIFT IN THE BALANCE OF POWER IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WITH ALL THAT THAT IMPLIES FOR A POSSIBLE BROADER CONFLICT. IT SHOULD ALSO DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIPS WE WISH TO ACHIEVE WITH THAILAND IN OTHER AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, SUCH AS ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL, ETC. DRAFT SHOULD PROVIDE POLICY OPTIONS AND GUIDELINES COVERING ALL US ACTIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO THAILAND.

2. TOWARD A "NEW EQUILIBRIUM"

A. WE AGREE THAT WE SHOULD WORK TOWARD A "NEW EQUILIBRIUM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA" AS A WAY OF DILUTING OUR DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAI SECURITY. DOCUMENT'S APPROACH IN TERMS OF A) RESOLUTION OF THAILAND'S PROBLEMS WITH CHINA,,'?) A GREATER SOVIET ROLE, AND/OR C) DEFENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN STATES IS GREATLY OVER-SIMPLIFIED AND RESULTS IN EXCESSIVELY PESSIMISTIC OUTLOOK. WE BELIEVE PROSPECTS FOR ACHIEVING A NEW EQUILIBRIUM THROUGH A COMBINATION OF A) INCREASING THAI STRENGTH, B) INCREASINGLY EFFECTIVE REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS,) A GROWING JAPANESE ROLE, AND D) POSSIBILY SOME SOVIET ASSISNCE AT LEAST ON POLITICAL FRONT ARE REASONABLY GOOD. WE FEEL, OWEVER, THAT POTENTIAL CHANGES TOWARD A CLOSER THAI RELATIONHIP WITH COMMUNIST CHINA ARE OF A DIFFERENT ORDER, AND THAT HIS ASPECT NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AT WITH SPECIAL CARE IF US NTERESTS ARE TO BE PROTECTED.

. JAPAN - WHILE IT IS TRUE JAPAN DOES NOT SEE ITS SECURITY NTERESTS AS BEING INVOLVED IN THAILAND TO THE SAME EXTENT THAT HEY ARE IN KOREA, JAPANESE INTERESTS IN THAILAND AND IN

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SOUTHEAST ASIA NEVERTHELESS ARE CONSIDERABLE. FURTHERMORE, JAPAN'S ASSESSMENTS OF ITS OWN SITUATION WOULD BE DEEPLY AFFECTED BY A REORIENTATION OF SEA AWAY FROM THE FREE WORLD AND TOWARD COMMUNIST CHINA. CONSEQUENTLY WE BELIEVE A MORE ACTIVE DIPLOMATIC ROLE AND AN EDGING TOWARD ASSUMPTION OF SOME SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES BY JAPAN IN THE AREA POSSIBLE AND EVEN LIKELY. EVEN ASSUMING THAT THE JAPANESE SECURITY ROLE WILL BE SLIGHT, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEIR GENERAL ROLE WILL BE UNIMPORTANT. IN FACT NON-MILITARY FACETS MAY BE OF INCREASING IMPORT DURING THE PERIOD IN QUESTION. RECOGNITION OF THIS GROWING JAPANESE ROLE MAKES THE OUTLOOK FOR "NEW EQUILIBRIUM" MORE HOPEFUL.

C. USSR - AS FOR POSSIBLE GREATER SOVIET ROLE IN THAILAND, PERFORMANCE TO DATE IS NOT ENCOURAGING. OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE SOVIETS HAVE BLOWN HOT AND COLD. THEY SEEM CLOSE TO SIGNING A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THAILAND. THEY HAVE ASSIGNED A NEW AND MORE PERSONABLE AMBASSADOR. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE PINCH HAVE RARELY ACTED TO REDUCE THE KINDS OF COMMUNIST PRESSURES IN LAOS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH SO DIRECTLY EFFECT THAILAND'S SECURITY. THEY ARE CURRENTLY WIDENING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE THAI GOVERNMENT BY SOME RATHER HEAVY-HANDED PROPAGANDA, AND THEIR EFFORTS TO MANIPULATE ONE OF THE SMALL POLITICAL PARTIES ADDS TO THAI SUSPICIONS. WE AGREE THAT US SHOULD NOT SEEK TO PREVENT THAIS FROM IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SOVIETS OR ATTEMPT TO PRECLUDE EMERGENCE OF SOVIET ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ROLE IN REGION, BUT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH BENEFIT TO OUR OWN OBJECTIVES FROM THIS. FOR ONE THING, AS LONG AS THE USSR HAS ANY STAKE IN HANOI'S FUTURE POLICY, IT WILL NO DOUBT SUBORDINATE ITS THAI POLICY TO THAT CONSIDERATION.

D. CHINA - (1) POLICY LINE ON THAI RELATIONS WITH CHINA IS MUCH MORE DELICATE MATTER. WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED AT THAI INITIATIVES OF A GENERAL SORT TO EASE TENSIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND CHINA SUCH AS WERE MADE IN THE MID-1960S, I.E., FEELERS RANGING FROM COVERT MISSIONS ALL THE WAY TO ATTEMPTS TO INITIATE A NEW VERSION OF BANDUNG MEETING. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THESE KIND OF MOVES SHOULD BE FORMULATED IN TERMS OF THE CONSITIONS AND SITUATIONS EXISTING AT THAT TIME.

(2) ON THE OTHER HAND, THE "OPTION" OF US TAKING THE INITIATIVE

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TO ENCOURAGE A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN CHINA AND THAILAND THAT WOULD EXTEND TO ESTABLISHMENT OF FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS NEEDS CLOSE EXAMINATION IN LIGHT PAST HISTORY THAI/CHINESE RELATIONSHIPS. IT IS NOT ONLY BECAUSE CHINA IS AN EXTREMELY LARGE AND NEARLY CONTIGUOUS NEIGHBOR THAT THAILAND FEARS ITS DOMINANCE -- THAILAND ASSESSES ITS EVERY MOVE VIS-A-VIS THE MAINLAND IN TERMS OF ITS OWN LARGE CHINESE MINORITY. REGULARIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST CHINA WOULD BE SEEN BY MOST THAI (AND BY MOST SOUTHEAST ASIANS) AS RELEASING AN UNCONTROLABLE FORCE WITHIN THAI BOUNDARIES AS WELL AS "ACCOMODATING" TO A GREAT POWER ON THEIR BOUNDARIES. MANY WOULD SEE THIS AS SIGNALLING THE END OF A FREE THAILAND AND CERTAINLY OF US INFLUENCE HERE. AND THOSE MOST SENSITIVE TO IT (BEYOND THE THAIS THEMSELVES) WOULD BE COUNTRIES LIKE MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA, TO SAY NOTHING OF JAPAN. THUS INITIATIVE ON THIS FRONT WOULD BE THE CLEAREST SORT OF NEGATIVE SIGNAL FROM US.
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8169

S E C R E T BANGKOK 10264

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY GREEN FROM UNGER

SUBJECT: MISSION COMMENT ON NSSM-51

1. IN SEPARATE CABLES WE ARE COMMENTING ON POINTS RAISED BY DRAFT NSSM-51 DOCUMENTS TO ASSIST INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW. WISH CALL YOUR ATTENTION KEY POINTS WHICH CONCERN ME.

2. CURRENT DRAFT--THOUGH AN IMPROVEMENT OVER EARLIER VERSIONS --STILL HAS FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESSES WHICH I DO NOT BELIEVE SIMPLE EDITORIAL REVISION WILL ADEQUATELY CORRECT. MAJOR WEAKNESSES I SEE ARE:

(A) THE FOCUS ON THAILAND, WITHOUT ADEQUATE INTER-RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN LAOS, VIET-NAM AND CAMBODIA, IGNORES SOME OF THE MOST CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF OUR POLICY IN THIS COUNTRY.

(B) ABSENCE OF RECOGNITION OF KEY RELATION BETWEEN STABILITY IN THAILAND AND SECURITY OF PENINSULAR AND INSULAR SOUTHEAST ASIA BEYOND, AN AREA OF ALMOST 150 MILLION PEOPLE, WITH VAST RESOURCES AND CONTROL OVER KEY TRANSPORT ROUTES (E.G. STRAITS OF MALACCA).

(C) THE DRAFT LOOKS AT THE US INTEREST TOO NARROWLY WITHOUT REGARD TO THE WORLD ORDER WE HOPE SOMEDAY TO SEE AND THAILAND'S ROLE IN IT, OR TO THE KIND OF NON-DEFENSE RELATIONSHIPS (ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ETC.) WE MIGHT WANT TO MAINTAIN WITH THAILAND.

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(D) THE ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CHICOM POLICY TOWARD THAILAND IGNORE MANY COMPLEX FACTORS IN THAI-CHINESE RELATIONS, AND REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE STUDY.

(E) THE ROLE OF JAPAN DURING THE PROGRAM PERIOD DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION, NOR THE EFFECT ON THAT ROLE OF WHAT TAKES PLACE IN SEA.

(F) THE ASSUMPTIONS IN DRAFT PAPER REGARDING OUR CI ASSISTANCE POLICIES SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM THE PRE-1968 PERIOD AND ARE HARDLY APPLICABLE TO OUR CURRENT OPERATIONS.

3. FOR THESE REASONS, I FEEL THE DRAFT NSSM-51 PAPER STILL NEEDS CONSIDERABLE WORK BEFORE IT IS READY FOR HIGHEST LEVEL CONSIDERATION. I PARTICULARLY FEEL THAT THE TONE AND APPROACH OF THE DOCUMENT IS NOT FULLY IN CONSONANCE WITH THE APPARENT DIRECTION OF OUR POLICY TOWARDS THAILAND THAT IS REFLECTED IN RECENT MESSAGES FROM THE DEPARTMENT REFERRING TO THE MAINTENANCE OF A STRONG AND INDEPENDENT THAILAND AS A KEY FACTOR IN OUR OBJECTIVES FOR SEA.
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