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A-1 NO. SECRET/NOFORN — HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : SecState WASHDC
AmEmbassy BANGKOK

INFO: AmConsul CHIANG MAI
AmConsul UDORN
AmEmbassy KUALA LUMPUR
AmEmbassy SINGAPORE

FROM : AmConsul SONGKHLA

DATE 2/22/70

SUBJECT : Quarterly Counterinsurgency Report on Peninsular Thailand; October, November and December 1969

REF

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SUMMARY: Insurgents made headlines by severing for short periods of time first the main road and then the rail connection between Thailand and Malaysia; a spectacular ambush of Thai police in Haadyai district of Songkhla province; and several ambushes and assassinations in the Mid-South. Security forces launched operations against insurgents and bandits which produced mixed results. Both the Thai and Malaysian governments were reorganizing their CI apparatus with the Army taking a larger command role on both sides of the border, though police continue to be the active forces deployed. End Summary.

PART I: THE FAR SOUTH (CSOD Region 5: Songkhla, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun provinces)

1. CTO Activities

As RTG attention turned toward bandit and Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) elements during the quarter, the CTO, who have never been seriously hampered by Thai/Malaysian operations, enjoyed an even greater measure of freedom. The CTO spent the time consolidating their hold on the populace, with occasional harassments of the Malaysians across the border. Efforts to rebuild the presence in Malaysia are expected to continue. Given the continued personnel shortages among RTG forces, the distractions created by bandits and CPT, and the impending confusion as both the GOM and RTG alter their CI structure (see below), the CTO will continue to operate without major interference.

Two effective propaganda feats were accomplished just across the Malaysian border. On October 25 a CTO unit placed 43 explosive devices, some electrically detonated, on the main road connecting Thailand and Malaysia several hundred yards south of the border. An ambush was set alongside the

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first group of charges but as the first charge was exploded before Malaysian forces entered the kill zone, no casualties resulted. The road was closed for four days. No effective government reaction was mounted from either side of the border for over 24 hours.

On December 10 a CTO unit blew up a rail bridge at Kok Mak village, several kilometers south of the Padang Besar border crossing. Again no casualties resulted but all rail traffic between the two countries was halted for one week. On December 14 small arms fire was directed at the Malaysian police station at Padang Besar.

The bulk of CTO units have remained based in Thailand, while small teams have entered Malaysia to test the water there. There are reports that numbers of Muslim CTO cadre have been transferred from the predominantly Muslim 10th Regiment (Narathiwat/Bannang Sata) to the predominantly Chinese 12th (Yala) and 8th (Songkhla) Regiments. On November 15 clandestine radio broadcasts (probably transmitted from China) sponsored by the Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM) began. CTO cadre in the 12th Regiment area had advance word of the broadcasts and encouraged villagers to tune in.

CTO units for the most part continued to concentrate primarily on masses work, supply collection and recruiting. However, on November 8 a Border Patrol Police (BPP) teacher in Betong district, Yala, was wounded by persons unknown but believed to be CTO. If this is the case, it is the first time a BPP schoolteacher in Region 9 has been so targetted.

On December 22 BPP units clashed with CTO 10th Regiment personnel at Ban Lubok Lasak, Tambol Mamong, Waeng District, Narathiwat. No casualties were reported. A report was also received that a thirty to forty man CTO 10th Regiment unit, personally commanded by State Committee member Rashid Maidin, moved across the border into Kelantan during December. Rashid Maidin is a senior CTO cadre having been a member of the three-man delegation led by Chen Ping which met with the Tunku at Baling in 1955.

2. Reorganization of CI Apparatus

During the quarter a number of steps were taken to implement the change from National Security Command (NSC) control to the Communist Suppression Operations Directorate (CSOD). On October 17 CSOD issued orders signed by General Praphat Charusathien establishing strength, chain of command,

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personnel slots, location, table of organization for CSOD Region 5 and the provinces located therein [redacted] Subsequently the newly designated commander of CSOD Region 5, RTA, Major General Sun Chitpattima, visited the South. He will establish a CSOD Forward Headquarters at BPP Area 9 Headquarters in Songkhla, with opening date set for January 5. The Forward Headquarters will be staffed by a number of police and military officials already stationed in the South, although there are reports that General Sun may bring a few key officers with him. General Sun will reportedly remain a deputy to the overall commander of CSOD Regions 4 (Mid-South) and 5, General Cherm Pruikwayachiwa, CO of the Fifth Military Circle in Nakhon Sri Thammarat. It should be noted that some reports predict the eventual amalgamation of CSOD Regions 4 & 5 into one region under a new commander (not General Cherm) but no firm information is available. General Sun will in turn have three deputies: one civil (not yet named), one police (Major General Jitt Lelayudh, CO, Provincial Police Region 9) and one military (Special Colonel Sanan Yuddhasaratrasiddhi, CO of the 5th RCT in Haadyai). Each province will have its own Communist Suppression Committee headed by the Governor with civil, police, and military (CPM) deputies. Officers for the provincial CSOD/CPM staffs have started arriving in the Far South. It is not yet clear what these changes mean for the joint Thai/Malaysian Regional Border Committee Office (RBCO) in Songkhla, the joint intelligence/operational center for border security operations. The only change to date is the departure in late December of the Deputy Joint Chairman, RTA Colonel Wichien Wichaiwatana, who had been on detail from the NSC to Songkhla since 1964. His replacement is not yet known but it will be interesting to see whether he comes from the NSC or CSOD.

The Malaysians have on their side replaced the Co-Chairman of the Regional Border Committee (RBC). The previous incumbent, Chief Police Officer for Kedah Perlis, Che Abdullah Bin Hanifah, was replaced by Army Major General Dato Mohammed Sang Bin Abdul Ghaffar, General Officer Commanding West Malaysia. Added to the RBC was Army Brigadier General Abdul Latiff Bin Hussein, CO of the Second Malaysian Infantry Brigade at Perak.

3. CPT Activities

In the most spectacular incident of the quarter a CPT team ambushed 10 Provincial Police (PP) in Haadyai district of Songkhla province. 7 police were killed in action, 3 wounded, and weapons and a radio lost. The CPT in Haadyai appear to be becoming more aggressive and are reported to be moving freely through their operational area. Morale has probably been

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boosted by the successful ambush and further such attacks must be anticipated.

Evidence came to light in September of another CPT colony in King Amphoe Thung Wah, Satun Province. Like the element operating in Haadyai, the Satun group appears to have been set up in 1968 by a group of thirty or less cadre from the Trang/Phatthalung group.

4. Government Activities

The biggest operation of the quarter was RAMKHAMHAENG, a Thai police operation to suppress Muslim bandits (and alleged seccessionists) in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces. Launched in early October and still continuing, Thai reporting indicates about 260 bandits arrested or captured; 15 killed; and 88 surrendered of whom 10 are alledgedly CTO supporters. [redacted] it is probable that a substantial number of those rounded up by security forces are villagers involved in bandit support only to a limited degree. But the operation has succeeded in at least temporarily scattering and depleting the bandits. It remains to be seen whether the necessary long-term political, development and police work will be begun to prevent bandit resurgence as soon as the current pressure is removed.

The operation has also led to the uncovering of what appears to be a substantial arms/ammunition smuggling apparatus which moved a minimum of three hundred modern arms including numerous M-2 carbines to South Thailand during 1969. There are indications that some of the smugglers might have also been providing weapons to CTO elements, but investigation is not yet far enough along to draw firm conclusions.

Other Government operations during the period included:

A. WANG PHA, directed against CPT elements in Haadyai. Following the November 12 ambush additional BPP and PP forces were committed as well as two BPP PARU units.

B. ECLIPSE, an ongoing operation covering Thai/Malaysian border crossings to prevent CTO infiltration into Malaysia.

C. CHAIYO, an ongoing joint BPP and Malaysian Police Field Force (PFF) operation against the CTO 10th Regiment in Narathiwat.

D. SAWATDEE/SALAAM, an ongoing joint BPP/PFF operation against CTO 12th Regiment units in the Betong and Ban To areas of Yala.

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RTG support for the latter three operations has been diminished by requirements for RAMKHAMHAENG and WANG PHA. The agenda for the 16th Regional Border Committee (RBC) meeting included a call for a new joint operation against CTO 8th Regiment units in Sadao district of Songkhla. However, given continuing critical personnel shortages in the BPP there seems little prospect of the new operation materializing.

The five T-6 aircraft of the RTAF Composite Air Squadron at Songkhla flew some leaflet drops during the quarter.

The Border Patrol Police (BPP) of Area 9 continued to be seriously short of personnel and officers. Plans now call for the establishment of a sixth company in Satun which heretofore has had no BPP presence. During the quarter the BPP have, as always, provided the Thai forces for joint operations with the PFF against the CTO. Added to that traditional role have been the requirements of Operations WANG PHA and RAMKHAMHAENG. BPP officials in the area now feel that with the primary thrust of RAMKHAMHAENG over, the BPP should be replaced in the operation by other security forces and returned to its principal task--border security.

During December BPP training of assistant instructors began at Nathawi, Songkhla province, with the assistance of US Special Forces personnel. The Remote Area Security Development (RASD) program supported by USOM continues; during the quarter two specialists were hired to work with platoons in the field. Outside speakers were solicited to lecture to the assistance instructors now in training at Nathawi on cultural, historical, and religious aspects of the Muslim and Chinese populace of the Far South in its historical concept. Planning has gone forward for BPP mobile public relations teams with initial support to come from USIS. Provincial Police (PP) from Region 9 have been engaged in the RAMKHAMHAENG WANG PHA, and PHATTHALUNG (described below) operations in addition to more traditional law enforcement work. Within the last several months commanders in every province of the police region except Trang were transferred although some of this was a trading of positions only (e.g., Songkhla commander moved to Narathiwat). With the arrival of a Special Action Force (SAF) in Pattani on November 25, the region now has five SAFs operational with two more being formed (for Narathiwat and Yala). The regional police commander, Jitt Lelayudh, was promoted to Major General.

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A two-week training program for 800 village security personnel, primarily village headmen, is scheduled to begin at the Southern Coordination Center in Yala in early 1970. Each class will consist of 100 individuals and a total of eight classes are scheduled.

PART II: The Mid-South (CSOD Region 4: the provinces of Trang, Phatthalung, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, and Surat Thani, plus Krabi, Phangnga, Phuket, Ranong, and Chumphon)

1. CPT Activities

The Mid-South CPT continued to initiate infrequent but highly effective attacks on RTG forces. In October eight deaths resulted from six incidents; in November three were killed and two seriously wounded on the RTG side; though information for December is sketchy at least two incidents occurred. On December 8 twelve CTs disguised in military uniforms visited a tambol police station in Trang. No shots were fired as the police were taken by surprise. The CTs obtained an FM-5 radio, a pistol, and a small amount of supplies. On December 23 police clashed with a CT force at Tambon Thalec Noi, Khuan Khonun district, Phatthalung. One CT was killed and police recovered a grenade and pistol. CPT actions during the quarter seemed aimed at acquisition of weapons and radios, elimination of RTG agents, and demoralization of security forces. One of the incidents in October involved the assassination of an RTA major commanding a sub-unit of a mobile development unit. A similar assassination was executed in September, leading to speculation that the mid-South CPT group may have decided to attack development workers in addition to security personnel. In addition to the CPT incursions into Haadyai and Satun described in Part I above, reports indicated that CPT was also recruiting in Khlong Thom district of Krabi.

2. RTG Activities

The big news of the quarter was the launching of the biggest operation in the Mid-South in three years in Phatthalung province. BPP platoons from Area 8, Provincial Police from Regions 8 and 9, and RTA strike platoons were deployed with a mission to calm the level of violence in Phatthalung. Now entering its third month the operation has yet to produce any major successes against the CPT, but insurgent activity has subsided somewhat, although this may be due to heavy rains and floods rather than security force actions. The operation has demonstrated a higher degree of cooperation among PP and BPP of different regions and provinces than heretofore and hopefully some worthwhile lessons have been learned. It should be noted that the operation was originated, planned, and conducted almost exclusively by the police, leaving CSOD Commander General Cherm very much out of the picture.

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BPP and PP including Special Action Forces have been primarily concerned with the Phatthalung operation. The RASD program of Area 8 BPP now has two specialists in the field with line platoons. Village surveys are also being conducted under the program.

It is reported that the NSC will send a mobile medical team to work in Trang and Phatthalung.

PART III: Activities Encompassing Both Regions

1. The Royal Thai Army

During the reporting period the 5th RCT and subordinate elements benefited from an apparent application of a higher priority by RTA related to assignment of personnel and allocation of equipment. Some relief from low personnel strength was gained by the temporary assignment of officers and non-commissioned officers for periods of 3 to 5 months. Permanent assignments also have increased slightly. Allocation of equipment has improved; especially to the 4th Bn, 5th RCT (Pattani) which had been experiencing some equipment shortages. Equipment to the 4th Bn, 5th RCT also included 4 105mm Howitzers. The unit has been reinforced, since its reorganization, by a separate battery of 75 mm Pack Howitzers.

On 25 November an infantry company from the 2nd Bn, 5th RCT (Nakhon Sri Thammarat) moved to Sadao District, Songkhla province to join elements of the separate companies of the 5th RCT Headquarters. The latter units had established an exercise headquarters on 17 November. This exercise was conducted in lieu of the annual company Army Training Tests. Exercises of this type are purposely planned in areas of recent CT activity and serve the added purpose of a "show of force." Live ammunition is available for all individual and crew served weapons. A similar exercise was conducted in Surat Thani Province during the first part of November by the 1st Bn, 5th RCT. Another commenced on 21 December in Narathiwat Province, conducted by the 4th Bn, 5th RCT.

In November all the units of the 5th Military Circle received new recruits as part of the semi-annual conscription. Recruit training began the first week of November and will continue for approximately 8 weeks. Training is conducted by separate units at respective home stations.

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2. USIS Activities

With field travel at a very low level due to this year's unusually wet rainy season, the USIS posts in the South were able to devote practically undivided attention to training activities during October, November, and December. Following is a brief discussion of each of the training projects begun, continued, or completed during this period:

The three USIS posts in the South, in order to make the most effective use of the resources available, cooperated to form a lecture team which will develop a standard training "package" to be used by all the posts in this region. This team will use the informal seminar approach which has proven successful in the past--the lecturers (including RTG speakers whenever possible) give brief talks on subjects related to psyops or information work, during which the participants are invited to interrupt freely with comments and questions. Following each talk, time is provided for discussion, and the trainees are encouraged to participate, drawing on their own experience in the field. In December, the BPAOs of USIS Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat worked out plans with the Governor of Surat Thani for a training seminar to be conducted there in early March 1970 by this lecture team.

USIS Yala and USIS Songkhla worked together during the quarter to produce a series of four lectures on psyops for the training program conducted by U.S. Special Forces for BPP CI instructors at the company headquarters in A. Nathawi, Songkhla progince. Only three of these lectures, "Introduction and Definition of Psyops," "Use of Media with Village Audiences," and "CTO Propaganda," which included a question and answer session with a former CTO propagandist, were given during the period under review. The fourth, a psyops game, is scheduled for January 2nd.

USIS Songkhla held a two-day "reaching the people" seminar for changwat officials in Songkhla in early October. Speakers included the Governor of Songkhla, the RBCO Psyops Officer, a Deputy PP Commander for Region 9, the Region 9 BPP Commander, and USIS local personnel. The Governor has since given his approval to a proposal to have similar seminars for each of the amphoe in the province, and the Governor of Phangna has requested USIS to conduct a seminar in his changwat in January.

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USIS Nakhon Si Thammarat participated in RTG training programs at the BPP regional headquarters in Thung Song and at the Fifth Military Circle in Nakhon , in addition to its regular monthly projectionists training of amphoe personnel.

USIS Songkhla produced two training documents during the quarter (now being translated and prepared for printing)--"Face-to-Face Communication" and "CTO Propaganda Themes and Techniques."

In addition to training and material and personnel assistance to RTG information programs, the posts also were involved in an unusual amount of "conventional" program activities--book presentations, AFS oral panels, and, following the recent moon flights, Apollo programs for school and official audiences. Interest in the Apollo programs was extremely strong, and all the posts received many requests for lectures and film showings.

3. Martial Law

In mid-November it was announced that martial law would be implemented in insurgent threatened provinces of the peninsula. The move caught local officials by surprise. Governors, Army officers, police commanders, and judges asked one another what this meant as apparently the RTG failed to provide any ground rules or implementing instructions. The consensus opinion in the South is that martial law thus far means that:

A. The RTA has arrest power;
B. The RTA has search and seizure power; and,
C. The CSOD Commander and/or provincial governors can declare curfews.

To date the martial law announcement has caused no material change in the situation.

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