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SUMMARY: In North Central Thailand the RTG continues to prepare for implementation of Plan 16/17 in the Tri-Province area where the CT are consolidating their position after successfully defending their base areas against RTG penetration attempts. Augmented CT forces successfully prevented RTA and Chinese Irregular Force (CIF) efforts to penetrate their base areas in Chiang Rai. RTG and CT activities continued at their usual pace in the Northeast where the RTG appears to be emphasizing political/psyops over military methods against the CT while the CT continue to exploit the more obvious problems of the RTG in resettlement and forestry management. In the South CT activity generally remained at a low level.
END SUMMARY

NORTH: The RTG attempted to wrest the initiative from the CTs in Chiang Rai through a series of sweep operations. The CIF and the RTA 31st Regimental Combat Team focused on areas of Chiang Khong and Thoeng Districts where the CT had attacked in March and subsequently ambushed a government reaction force. The CT were reportedly reinforced by an unidentified force brought in from Laos. The CIF suffered 13 KIA and 57 WIA in the face of unusually firm CT resistance and lost two radios which will add to the growing CT capability to monitor or jam RTG CI communications. A curfew was declared in the two Districts during the operation. All major operations had terminated by the end of the month. Continuing

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reports of CT reinforcements coming into Chiang Rai from Laos, while unconfirmed, may indicate an attempt to reinforce the area before the rainy season, partly because of continuing CT difficulties in controlling the hilltribes. In April an armed group of 200 including tribals and "Chinese" reportedly responded to a request from a CT leader at Doi Nam Sa (PB 6682) for assistance in intimidating tribals who are on the verge of defecting to the RTG. The CT in Doi Nam Sa are also sending agents into an RTG resettlement village to try and convince the Meo there to return to CT control. The Meo reportedly claim that they are starving. Two families have left and others are threatening to return. The RTG is caught between a requirement for initial care of incoming tribals and a necessary long term policy of promoting self sufficiency while the CT are caught between the need for discipline and retaining tribal support.

In Nan CT small arms fire destroyed two helicopters, and damaged another helicopter and a fixed wing gunship. Weather was responsible for damage to five L-19s and one helicopter gunship. These losses reportedly contributed to a small reduction in military activity, indicating that in remote areas and in difficult terrain RTG military operations against guerrilla foot soldiers are tied to use of sophisticated support equipment. Cavalry Division Forward activity included company size probes of CT areas with few contacts, but primary CT and RTG activity was in road construction. The CDF has been heavily involved in road security operations because the CT continue to harass road construction crews in certain areas. An RTG official claims that the major road contractor in Nan is also the biggest CT supplier in the province because of an RTG policy allowing private accommodation with the CT in order to get the road built. This situation presumably causes local officials to refrain from arresting other local supporters of the CT.

In the Tri-Province area the CT concentrated on consolidating their base area in the aftermath of successful resistance to RTG penetration attempts in March. RTG authorities sent Special Reconnaisance Teams to verify that the CPT area 23 headquarters has been relocated to Khao Ya (QU 1031). This

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was the first time that these teams, trained two years ago for this type of mission, have been used for this purpose. With the termination of JTX-16 the RTG plans interim containment operations until the start of Operation 16/17 (possibly beginning in October) which will include civil and police as well as military operations. Operation 16/17 is a more carefully planned joint C/P/M effort than JTX-16 or the Phu Kwang fiasco in early 1972. In July there will be a joint meeting of Bangkok officials and regional authorities concerned to discuss implementation of the plan. The U.S. Mission CI Committee has been invited to participate. Dan Sai District of Loei will reportedly soon come under the responsibility of Police Region 6, which now includes the Tri-Province area. Region 6 Police have so far a resource control requirement to be met with present personnel strengths. Although 16/17 will involve new civil and police inputs over a period of time the burden will be carried by current local assets. Available reporting from Tak indicates that both the CT and RTG are performing poorly.

NORTHEAST: CT military activity in April increased considerably over March but was comprised mostly of attacks by fire from a distance rather than close-in ground attacks or probes. CT military ability continues to gradually improve in terms of numbers of personnel, aggressiveness, tactics, quantity and quality of weapons and coordination between main, local and village forces. The number of defectors in April dropped to 16 after rising to 25 in March. Despite CT supply shortages the number of CT recruits appears to be greater than the number of CT defecting to the RTG. Less CT military activity is expected during the coming rainy season because it is normally a time for CT to propagandize villagers while helping them plant their rice. RTG CI activity continues to employ more resources than previously but falls short of the aggressiveness and coordination shown by the smaller CT organization. A recent report (Udorn A-4 dated 17 April 1973) indicates that the RTG is emphasizing political/psychological campaigns over a military response to the CT. Such campaigns include psyops during military operations, which are not usually followed up, and more long-range and widespread programs such as the nationally organized Village Scouts and the relatively ad hoc "People's Volunteers" organizations. Government radio has also proved an effective means of attracting defectors. Such activities show an improved sophistication of RTG CI techniques, largely based on traditional thinking, but which tend to take the place of

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military measures to eliminate insurgent forces. Unless the RTG implements present plans for small unit action against the CT jungle forces, those forces will remain free to influence the many villages that the RTG cannot protect.

A recent report [redacted] indicates that the North Vietnamese Army "Sappers" who attacked Udorn Air Force Base in October of 1972 did not want the CPT involved in their plans because they feared the CPT would compromise the attack by spreading rumors. Relations between the CPT Udorn Provincial Party Committee Headquarters and the NVA sappers were apparently not cordial. This confirms previous evidence that the threat to U.S. Air Force installations is from externally infiltrated North Vietnamese rather than Thai Communist insurgents.

Na Kae District of Nakhon Phanom continued to be the focus of insurgent activity in the Northeast. CT attacks on Village Protection Teams, either in outposts or on patrol, underline the importance as well as the weaknesses of these units. A VPT patrol was credited with capturing two jungle insurgents (TPLAF), the first to be captured in Na Kae in over three years. The CT also attacked a Village Scout training camp, suggesting that they believed this part of the RTG's political program to be harmful to their organizational efforts. The CT focused their efforts on resistance to an RTG road building project from Ban Song Phai (VD 5349) into Na Kae District in connection with the 14/15 plan. The CT have destroyed vehicles, equipment and bridges, and in one mine ambush killed nine Volunteer Defense Corps personnel (VDC) and wounded five. The Mukdahan District officer claims that the CT have brought in reinforcements from other areas to halt the road project. He has transferred additional VDC to the area in addition to recently deployed police and RTA platoons, including a BPP heavy weapons platoon. Local officials in Na Kae are presently planning to resettle about 1,000 people in a mountainous area of Na Kae adjacent to Khao Wong District of Kalasin. Resettlement plans have apparently not been fully thought through posing a potential theme for CT propaganda.

The Udorn CPT area, including west Udorn, northeast Loei and west Nong Khai, continues to gradually expand despite local RTG CI operations. According to a recent report [redacted]

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jungle insurgents of this organization increased from 206 in March 1972 to 240 in March 1973. Since these figures are based on names in documents they might be low. Eight squads of local soldiers and nine squads of village militia (normally unarmed) have reportedly been organized. During the past year expansion work in Area 92 (part of the Muang District of Loei) had reportedly spread from one village to at least six additional villages. In Area 94 (part of Pak Chom District of Loei) the villagers,after a month's propagandizing, were apparently still not interested in the CPT and feared the jungle soldiers. However, they also hated RTG forestry laws. CPT Area 92 propaganda in early 1972 focused on forestry laws and especially corrupt government officials enforcing the laws. After the CT destroyed a Forestry officials' camp in Wang Saphung District of Loei in March that Forestry unit was dissolved. The insurgents primary problem was the poor quality of long-term cadre. Transfers in of new leaders caused some hard feelings. The progress of expansion work in the two above areas was not considered satisfactory. Although RTG CI operations apparently caused supply shortages and drove CT camps farther away from the villages, lack of military aggressiveness has allowed continued gradual CT growth accompanied by an increased rate of attacks and assassinations.

In Sakon Nakhon an RTA company was sent to Ban Muang District to deal with a recent step-up of CT activity there. A police Special Action Force (SAF) was sent to guard the Nam Oon Dam Resettlement Project which has been attacked twice this year. The insurgents have asked villagers about compensation for their flooded lands. The RTG has been considering an increase of funds for compensation. A senior provincial official has expressed a desire to abolish Village Protection Teams and use VDC as patrol and reaction forces, but claims he cannot take this local initiative because of a requirement to adhere to CSOC plans. CT activity in Khao Wong District of Kalasin remains at a low level.

In the Korat-Buriram-Prachinburi Area 4 RTA were wounded in April by boobytraps, the first casualties in a three month old CI operation. Two RTA infantry companies conducted

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preparatory patrols for one month south of the CT base camp in Prachinburi, apparently trying to avoid casualties, thus giving the CTs time to clear out and plant mines. The units were only able to destroy a few vegetable fields and some old supplies. Lack of contact and the difficulty of resupplying troops in the mountainous area has caused the Second Army to consider terminating the operation.

SOUTH: CT activity stepped up in Region 8, the Northern part of the southern Thai peninsula, after several months of calm. C/P/M forces in Ron Phibun District of Nakhon Si Thammarat successfully assisted a Volunteer Defense Corps camp under attack by the CT with no casualties on either side. An increase in CT assassinations, including two members of a People's Resistance to Communism (PRAC) team in Ron Phibun, indicated a renewed CT effort to discourage village level support of the RTG. In Region 9 CT activity was limited in contrast to recent months.

During the past two months RTG forces have shown an increased capacity to react to CT attacks in the South. Examples include the attack in Ron Phibun mentioned above, an April attack on a patrol in Phatthalung and a response to a night attack on a Tambon Police Station in Chauat District of Nakhon Si Thammarat. RTG small unit patrols have resulted in some contacts with the CT. Four clashes resulted in six police and two VDC wounded with one CT confirmed dead and blood trails. RTG capture of supplies in these clashes indicates continued disruption of CT supply channels. Reporting indicates that the Malaysian Communist Terrorist Organization (CTO) in the Far South is stepping up mass development activity and improving arms to include M-16s, AK-47s and M-79s. Although the CTO are still apparently focused on the Malaysian insurgency, their increased activity and better arms will further hinder the limited Border Patrol Police effort to suppress the CTO.

Muslim separatist activity continues to harass RTG local officials and Provincial Police who are tasked with implementing the RTG's low key approach to the Muslim problem.

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