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PROJECT

Contemporary
Historical
Evaluation of
Combat
Operations
REPORT

USAF OPERATIONS FROM THAILAND-1966

COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THAILAND

8 NOVEMBER 1967

APPROVED FOR
PUBLIC RELEASE

HQ PACAF

Directorate, Tactical Evaluation
CHECO Division

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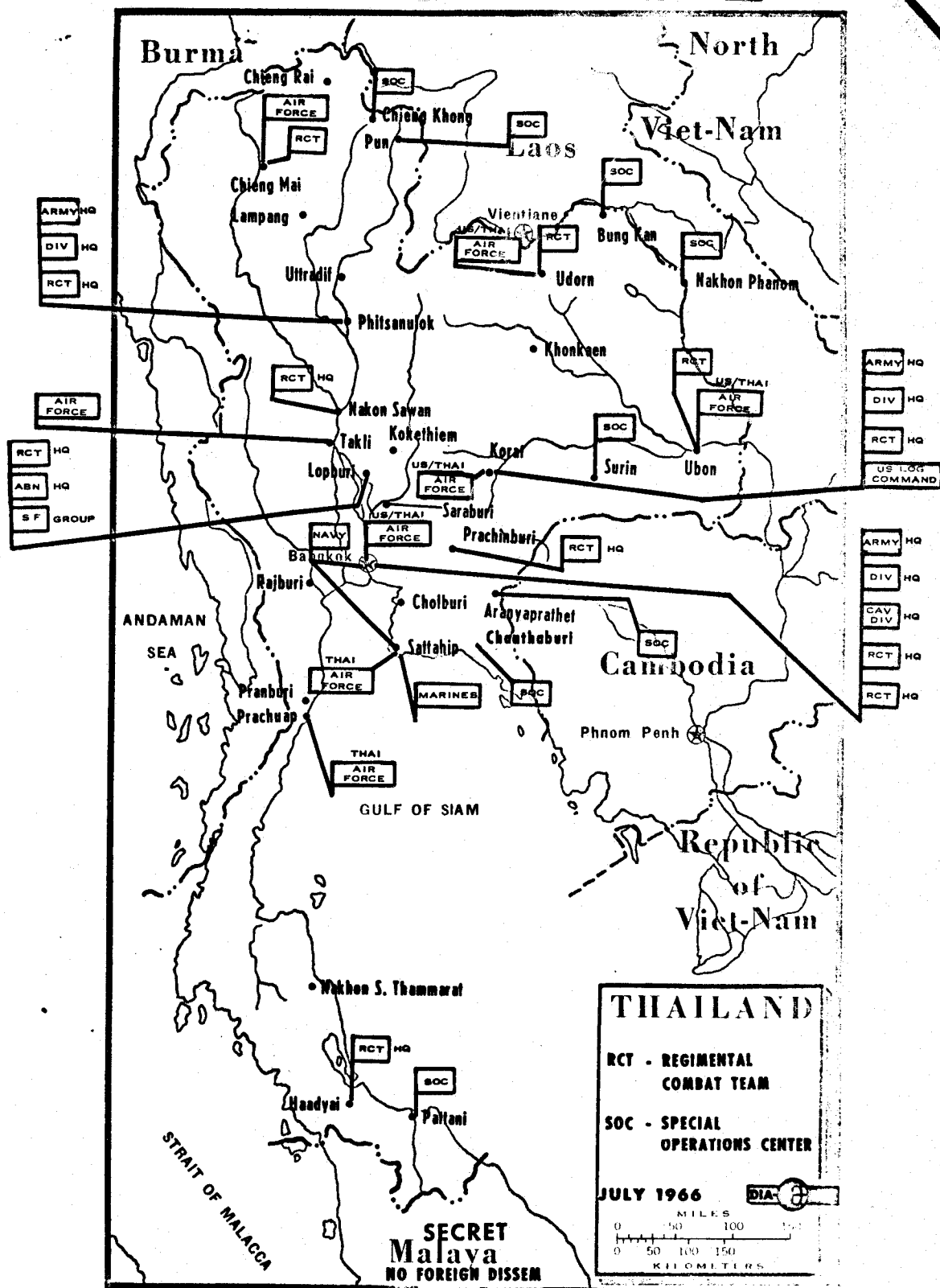
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INTRODUCTION

This study is Volume III of a trilogy on "USAF Operations from Thailand-1966." Volume I was entitled "Posture" and the second volume concerned "Air Operations." This volume on counterinsurgency in Thailand during 1966 does not duplicate the material published in an earlier CHECO Study, "Lucky Tiger Special Air Warfare Operations," but is meant to complement that material. Whereas the Lucky Tiger report presented a detailed review of USAF support of the Thai counterinsurgency (COIN) effort, the synoptic view in this report reveals certain general trends, and evaluates the COIN effort in the light of these trends.

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THAI GROUND FORCES - ORDER OF BATTLE

Fig. 1



CHAPTER I

THE COMMUNIST THREAT

"The Chinese Communists have designs for all of Thailand, presently concentrating their efforts in the northeast area. The Chinese provide the money, direction, and have recruited North Vietnamese, Laotians and dissident Thais as agents. They have begun an extensive subversive movement which is growing at an alarming rate. Subversive activities have increased by approximately 400 percent within the last year." 1/

Maj. Gen. Charles R. Bond, Jr., USAF

Although the communists had made a persistent effort since World War II to develop a capability for overthrowing the Royal Thai Government (RTG), the current insurgency movement did not materialize until the early 1960s. Subversive activities in Thailand were directly related to the communist drives in South Vietnam and Laos, and the degree of insurgency could be measured against the intensity of effort in those neighboring countries. While there were only 12 terrorist incidents reported in Thailand between 1962 and 1964, 2/ the communists unveiled a systematic and determined drive against the autonomy of Thailand in 1965, as the war continued to intensify in South Vietnam, and the eyes of the world were focused on the American commitment there. 3/

Acts of terrorism, murder, and sabotage were on the increase. There were more than 30 incidents reported in 1965, with 25 of these occurring in the last half of the year. 4/ By mid-1965, Thai border police had intercepted illegal arms and munitions and the first encounter with a band of armed insurgents was reported. If doubt existed that a full-blown subversive

effort was in the making, it was soon removed by communist propaganda and diplomatic pronouncements. The newly-established Thailand Independence Movement published a manifesto proclaiming its four-point program: ^{5/}

- To drive the U.S. imperialist aggressors out of the territory of Thailand.
- To overthrow the dictatorial and traitorous Thanom government and replace it with a government composed of political parties and patriotic and democratic members who follow a policy of neutrality and peace.
- To struggle for salvaging and safeguarding the genuine rights and liberties of the people.
- To struggle for a policy of neutrality, peace, and democracy, and for the prosperity and happiness of the people.

The clandestine radio "Voice of the People of Thailand" announced the formation of the Thailand Independence Movement, and the China News Agency carried the organization's manifesto. Another clandestine organization, calling itself "The Patriotic Front of Thailand," was announced by "The Voice of the People of Thailand." This subversive group offered a six-point program: ^{6/}

- Abrogate aid and other agreements with the United States.
- Expand civil liberties.
- Withdraw from SEATO.
- Cooperate with "International Peace Force."
- Eliminate foreign enterprise.
- Oppose imperialism.

[REDACTED]

It was reasonable to assume that this step-up in the subversive timetable was directly related to the increased Thai involvement and cooperation with the United States in the Vietnam conflict. U.S. military personnel and equipment began to move into Thailand as the country became a major staging area for the air war in North Vietnam and Laos. In early 1965, a New China Radio broadcast carried the warning from the clandestine Thai Communist movement that American attacks on North Vietnam could bring the Vietnam war to Thailand. 7/

Seeds of Insurgency

Close ties between the United States and Thailand began after World War II. Thailand joined the United Nations (UN) in 1946 and, during the Korean conflict, made a significant contribution to its military operation in Korea. In September 1954, Thailand signed the SEATO Collective Defense Treaty, of which the United States was a signator. Under Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn, the RTG represented a fairly stable government, closely allied with the United States and other SEATO nations in combating Asian communism. There were, however, certain weaknesses in the Thai political and economic milieu upon which dissident elements could capitalize. 8/

There were many factors which allowed the communist-planted seeds of insurgency to sprout in Thailand--not the least of which was the political structure of the country. For all intents and purposes, Thailand was a military oligarchy. Although the King and Queen were respected and admired by the people, the power of the throne had been usurped by a series of coups. The only elected officials were the village chiefs; all other

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positions of authority were filled by appointees, often senior military officers, satisfactory to the central government. One senior Air Force official in Thailand during 1965 and 1966 summarized the political weaknesses of the country: 9/

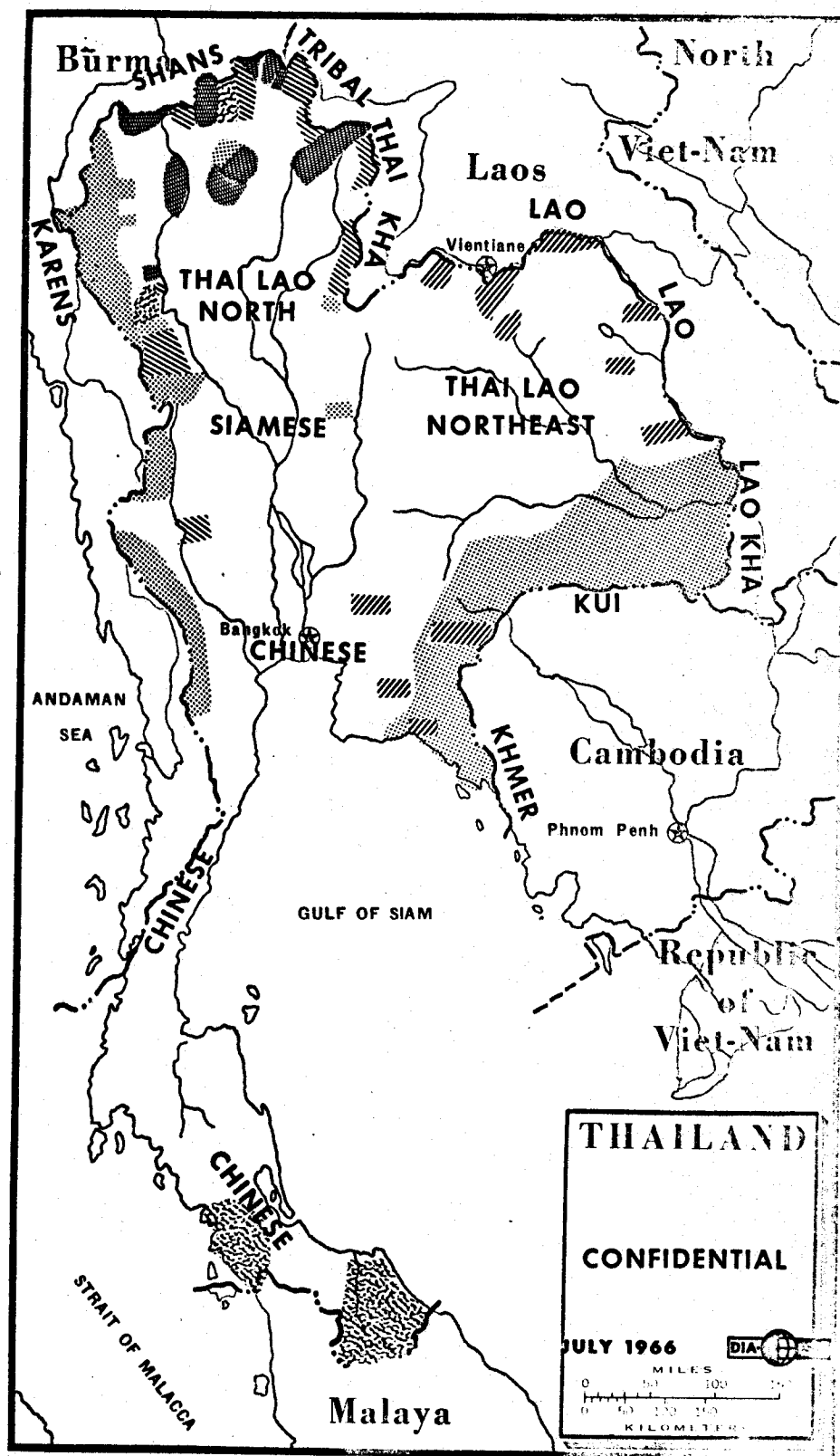
"Since the tightly held reins of power place great opportunities for corruption at the disposal of senior government officials, it is not too surprising to find that Government funds intended for various projects to improve the health, welfare and living conditions of the tribesmen are not obligated for expenditure in the intended direction. Often these funds mysteriously disappear....

"Thailand Government officials can and do accumulate considerable wealth on the side. This, of course, cannot escape the attention of those Thais who genuinely regret the lack of civic action on the part of the Government. These same people are highly susceptible to Communist propaganda...."

The lack of a viable economy in the Northeast had opened the door to insurgency and the low state of education and political sophistication of the villagers had allowed it to grow. This section of the country had been largely ignored by the Thai Government and provided the typical lucrative breeding ground for the incipient stages of subversive insurgency. The communists who had trained a handful of hard-core Thais in the Northeast claimed the villagers were overtaxed and suggested these taxes would be eliminated under communism. 10/

Problems in the Northeast were complicated by the diversified and sensitive ethnic groups indigenous to the area. A great share of the population is ethnic Lao, with approximately 50,000 Vietnamese refugees and

- ETHNIC GROUPS**
- TIBETO-BURMAN**
-  KAREN
 -  LAHU (MUSSO)
 -  LISU (LISSU)
 -  AKHA (KAW)
- MON-KHMER**
-  KHA (PHOUTHENG)
 -  KHMER (CAMBODIAN)
 -  KUI
 -  LAWA (WA)
- MISCELLANEOUS**
-  MEO(MIAO)
 -  YAO (MAN)
 -  VIETNAMESE (ANNAMESE)
 -  MALAY



GEO-ETHNIC GROUPINGS - THAILAND

Fig. 2

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities within the organization. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the sampling techniques employed and the statistical tools used for data analysis.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over the period studied.

4. The final part of the document provides a conclusion and recommendations for future research. It suggests that further studies should be conducted to explore the underlying causes of the observed trends and to develop strategies to address any potential issues.

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21,000 Chinese in this region. The majority of the Vietnamese came to Thailand between 1944 and 1947, fleeing from battles between France and the Viet Minh. A program of repatriation was underway, but was suspended in August 1964, after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. ^{11/} The Communist line had been successful among the Thai-Lao and the Vietnamese refugees, who were lagging economically. The North Vietnamese refugees, in addition to being restricted to certain provinces, were forbidden to own land, while the Thai-Lao were impoverished tenant farmers. ^{12/}

Another reason insurgency had been allowed to spread in Thailand was the demonstrated inability of the Thai police to contain it. Until the beginning of 1966, responsibility for controlling insurgents rested with the Thai police, rather than the military. Brig. Gen. John R. Murphy, Assistant Deputy Commander, Seventh/Thirteenth Air Force (7/13AF), explained this in his End of Tour Report in June 1966: ^{13/}

"The populace has never had much respect for the inefficient Thai police, and only a few revenge murders of police informants were necessary to cut off sources of intelligence. In a February 1966, evaluation of insurgent strength in the Northeast, MACTHAI (Military Assistance Command, Thailand) found eleven districts in Nakhon Phanom, Ubon, Sakon Nakhon and Kalasin Provinces in which local government forces were unable to fulfill their security commitments because of insurgents."

Communist Strategy and Tactics

Prior to 1966, Communist insurgency in Thailand was largely covert but became openly aggressive during the closing months of 1965. Whereas, the Communist agents had previously limited their actions to recruitment,

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solicitation of funds, propaganda and isolated terrorist instances, guerrilla bands began openly challenging police control in the northeast provinces, especially in the Nakae District in Nakhon Phanom Province. More and more murders were reported committed by Red agents and clashes between border policemen and bands of armed communists were reported weekly. Agents were also reported to be infiltrating through Laos and Cambodia. While subversion in northeast Thailand steadily increased, behind religious fronts, Malaysian and pro-Indonesian agents were reported to be agitating the predominantly Muslim population of the five southern provinces in Thailand. Thai officials were also keeping a cautious eye on subversive developments in neighboring 14/ Burma and Maylasia.

Activity in the northeast was manifested in three ways: 15/

- Assassination: Approximately 85 assassinations occurred between January - November 1966. Most of the victims held fairly responsible village positions.
- Armed Encounters: Approximately 125 armed encounters occurred between January - November 1966. Very often the fire fights were initiated by terrorists even in some areas where government sweeps were in progress.
- Propaganda: Groups of up to 200 armed insurgents would forcefully gather the villagers together after dark and berate the RTG and its association with U.S. agencies. This was usually followed up by attempts to gather rice and other food. These groups operated freely and were known to publish future village agenda on occasions. Approximately 80 such meetings occurred between January-November 1966.

Communist terrorist activities, including assassinations, were carried out against village leaders, teachers, and other persons in responsible

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positions. Reports of communist harassment against teachers and village chiefs had actually closed some schools in Nong Muang and Nong Kung villages in the northeast. Several other teachers in nearby areas had also requested 16/ permission to close their schools because of the communist threat.

It was often difficult to distinguish between communist guerrilla groups and the armed bandits who roamed the northeast. Both, however, represented a threat to security, and definite steps needed to be taken to provide protection for the villagers. Without the assurance of protection, citizens in the northeast were at the mercy of terrorists, and Communist propagandists would capitalize on this weakness. It was obvious at the beginning of 1966 that this protection was not being afforded by the police. One report, in early January, indicated that terrorists could strike at will, with relative impunity.

In one case, two Thai policemen and four civilians, on an assignment to investigate an assassination of a village leader, were ambushed and killed. No firm evidence at the time linked the communists to this ambush, but the attack did fit Communist guerrilla methods of operation. Thai police expressed the opinion that the individuals who attacked the jeep knew the police requirement of responding to an assassination report within 24 hours, and used this knowledge to plan the ambush. 17/ In other instances in late January, two villagers were shot and killed in Sakon Phanom Province and, 18/ in Nakhon Phanom, two policemen were ambushed and seriously wounded.

Clearly aiming their attacks against the Thai police, in early February, terrorists critically wounded two provincial police reservists at a religious

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festival, and shot and wounded two other policemen on the following day under similar circumstances. On the same day, a lone patrolman was killed as he walked a foot patrol. The terrorist took the policeman's carbine, 50 rounds of ammunition, a hand grenade and the police crest and insignia from the dead man. ^{19/} It was becoming increasingly clear that the police force, alone, was incapable of coping with the terrorists.

Although terrorist attacks had thus far been directed only against the Thai citizenry, the presence of communist terrorists and increasing insurgency represented a real threat to U.S. installations in Thailand. On 1 January, the Deputy Commander for the Air Force in Thailand cautioned all base commanders: ^{20/}

"Recent activity by reported Communist forces in north-east Thailand is further indication of possible infiltration of U.S. airbases which are prime targets for Communist sabotage and terrorist operations. The presence of a rather large enemy concentration in the Nakhon Phanom - Mukdahan area poses a real threat. You should review your base defense, disaster control, and evacuation plans."

There were also indications that problems existed in the defense of USAF bases, should the communists attack. The Deputy Commander, General Bond, ^{21/} advised MACTHAI:

"This headquarters is very concerned about reports from USAF bases that RTAF reservist security forces refuse to carry out their assigned duties if any personal risk is involved. In a recent incident at Nakhon Phanom, an RTAF reservist refused to guard the wreckage of a downed F-4C located approximately 30 nautical miles west of Nakhon Phanom. The NCOIC of the Thai guard detachment refused to send a detail as he stated it was 'too dangerous.' In view of the present situation in Northeast

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Thailand and the lack of response from Thai reservist guard units, recommend MACTHAI evaluate the Thai reservist guard program to determine means to improve effectiveness."

As it turned out there were no overt threats made against USAF bases in 1966. There were reports of minor harassment, and several USAF aircraft were purportedly subjected to ground fire on takeoff and landing; however, no Americans were attacked by terrorist groups. Since intelligence officials felt the communists were capable of attacking U.S. bases, it could only be surmised they did not consider such a move in their best interests, at least for the time being. Perhaps they feared the Thai Government would retaliate strongly against North Vietnamese refugees in Thailand, or that the U.S. Government might reply with intensified strikes against North Vietnam. An additional factor to be considered was the establishment of a relatively strong Communist suppression organization within the Thai Government and reorientation of the Thai armed forces toward internal security. ^{22/}



CHAPTER II

THE GOVERNMENT POSTURE

"Historically, sole responsibility for controlling insurgency rested with the Thai National Police; its total inability to handle the problem led to the formation of the Joint Counterinsurgency Organizations." 1/

Brig. Gen. John R. Murphy, USAF

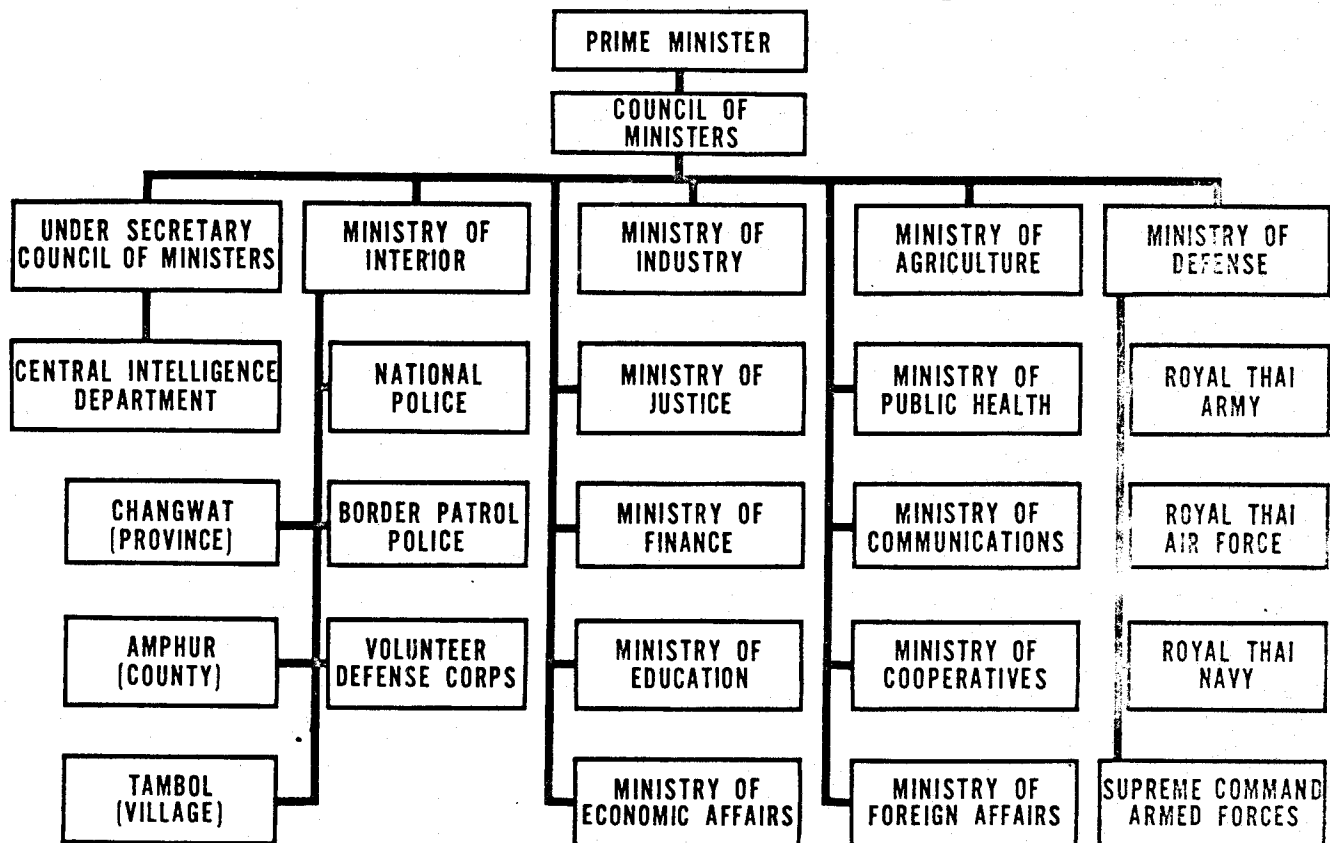
Not only had the Thai National Police been unable to cope with insurgency and provide protection for the villagers, but many of their actions and techniques had alienated the people they were duty-bound to protect. Corrupt practices, more often than not, turned the underprivileged citizenry against the police and made the citizens receptive to communist propaganda. Thus, in late 1965, with the insurgents openly aggressive and showing little concern for Thai police opposition, the Thai Government found itself reorganizing to more effectively combat the communists. 2/

Background

Organized as an interministerial body in 1962, with the Prime Minister as its director, the National Security Command (NSC) was responsible for coordination and conduct of all countersubversive programs within Thailand. Before the outbreak of overt communist operations in the northeast, the NSC had been primarily concerned with suppressing terrorism along the Malaysian Border. Some effort was directed against subversive activities in the northeast, as well as along the Cambodian Border. Communist infiltration from Cambodia had long been a problem. Although this infiltration was not related to the rapidly expanding communist subversion in northeast and midsouth

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GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND



KEY THAI OFFICIALS

H. E. Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn	Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Supreme Commander Armed Forces
H. R. H. Prince Wan Waithayakorn	Deputy Prime Minister
H. E. General Prapass (Pra-Paat) Charusathiara	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, Deputy Supreme Commander Armed Forces and Commander in Chief Royal Thai Army
H. E. Phra Prakas (Pra-Gaat) Sahakorn	Minister of Agriculture
H. E. Sunthorn (Soon-Torn) Hongladarom	Minister of Economics
H. E. Pote Sarasin	Minister of National Development
H. E. Colonel Thanat (Ta-Naat) Khoman	Minister of Foreign Affairs
M. L. Pin Malakul	Minister of Education
H. E. Lieutenant General Pong Punnakan	Minister of Communications
H. E. Phra Bamras (Bam-Raat) Naradoon	Minister of Public Health
H. E. Phya Atthakari (At-Ta-Ka-Ri) Nippon	Minister of Justice
H. E. Air Marshal Muni (Moo-Nee) Mahasandanna-Vejyant Rangsarit	Minister of Industry
H. E. Dr Serm Vinichsaikul	Minister of Finance

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION - THAILAND

Fig. 3

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[REDACTED]

Thailand, the threat existed and had Chinese Communist (CHICOM) assistance. ^{3/}

After establishing a suppressive mechanism the NSC announced its intention to emphasize positive countersubversion prevention programs. Extension of the NSC's action into critical security areas was provided in the form of Mobile Development Units (MDUs). These were tailored task forces of military and civilian officers, formed and trained for operations in a specific area. Each MDU employed civic action and psychological activities as the basis for accomplishing its mission. At the beginning of the MDU program, \$1.5 million worth of equipment and supplies were procured by the U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP). This included radios, heavy road building equipment, farm tractors, well digging rigs, and medical supplies. In 1963, the U.S. Overseas Mission (USOM) assumed funding assistance for the MDU program and provided an even larger amount in AID funds to procure equipment for three road construction units and additional audio-visual units. Later, an additional \$353,000 was provided by AID for add-on items of equipment for road construction units, and additional funds were programmed. ^{4/}

A U.S. official reported on the success of the MDUs:

"Unfortunately, I must report that the MDU program has not achieved the degree of success one could expect from a program of this nature...when the U.S. Government informed the Thai Government of U.S. willingness to support a comprehensive development program, the Thai Government's reaction was to accept the funds offered but provide a program which did not answer the needs of the villagers. The program outlined to the U.S. was based upon estimates of village and district needs as seen through the eyes of the appointee's such as the District Chief or the Governor of the Province. For example, where the villagers, if they had been asked, would have indicated a need for a bridge, the District Chief (because of his own particular interests -

financial or otherwise) designated a road project completely foreign to the economic or social needs of the people. Consequently, economic growth was not encouraged and the psychological potential inherent in the correct use of the available funds was wasted. Secondly, the experts at work with the MDU's tended to restrict their efforts to those geographical areas of work where per diem was offered."

Reorganization

In December 1965, the Royal Thai Government reorganized its counter-insurgency forces to suppress increased communist actions, especially in the northeast. A Communist Suppression Headquarters was organized and placed under the direction of Gen. Praphas Charusathien, who was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, in addition to being the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army (RTA). This headquarters was an interministerial body, consisting of General Praphas' deputies--Air Chief Marshal Dawee, Deputy Minister of Defense; General Prasert, Director General of the Thai National Police; and, Nai Prosong, Undersecretary of State, in the Ministry of Interior. Subordinate to this headquarters was a Communist Suppression Operations Center (CSOC) located in Suan Kularh Palace in Bangkok. ^{5/}

During 1966, there were several field organizations which were responsive to the CSOC. For instance, in the northeast at the regional level, a Communist Suppression Headquarters Forward was located at Sakon Nakhon and functioned as a regional command. Additional emphasis was provided this headquarters by the assignment of a major general as commander. At regional level, there also was a Joint Security Center, responsible for collecting and compiling intelligence from the many provincial sources. At provincial levels, operations centers were established under the respective governors.

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These centers were known as civilian/military/police (CMP), which were organized in seven provinces in the northeast. They provided the means through which security operations of all government agencies were coordinated and integrated. The main forces utilized in counterinsurgency action operated as part of the CMPs. A typical CMP commander had at his disposal 1,600 security troops, including an airborne company, several special forces teams, border patrol and marine police, as well as almost 300 volunteer defense corps personnel. ^{7/}

This new organization was developed with United States CIA assistance, and U.S. officials were well aware of certain limitations in the Thai counterinsurgency (COIN) capability. Requirements for additional U.S. assistance were under careful study by Ambassador Graham A. Martin and military officials stationed in Thailand. Of particular concern to USAF officials were the Special Air Warfare (SAW) capability of the RTAF and the airlift requirements of counterinsurgency forces. ^{8/} One USAF official concerned with Thai COIN operations made the following comments about them: ^{9/}

"Communications between headquarters and field units were poor and without security; personnel were poorly trained in COIN operations, particularly in the role air support could play; intelligence information passed from the field was seldom verified; and, there was little coordination or exchange of ideas and information between various agencies."

In a typical COIN situation at midyear, intelligence was forwarded to the CSOC through command channels from the lower echelon. Based on this intelligence, offensive plans were formulated and sent to the Joint Suppression

[REDACTED]

Center (JSC) which, in coordination with the CMP and usually the Governor of the Province, generated the detailed plan. The JSC also worked through the USAF Tactical Unit Operations Center (TUOC) at Udorn AB to arrange air-lift for the planned operation. Located at strategic points in insurgency areas, the JSC functions were initially organized to gather intelligence for the CSOC. It became apparent, however, that the collection of intelligence could not be widely separated from the subsequent COIN action. Accordingly, the JSC was given operational functions in addition to its intelligence gathering responsibility. The responsiveness of this organization to an overt insurgent action allowed troops to be on their way in two hours or less.

A new force for suppression purposes was under consideration later in 1966. This proposed force would be made up of provincial territorial defense volunteers. Some officials felt that such a force would strike at the heart of the insurgency problem and was, potentially, the strongest weapon against subversion. "If this force were properly trained," one official pointed out, "the insurgents could run head-on into a ready force, constantly available and with a mission to perform which is rooted in the law of self-preservation for the individual and his home and village." The concept proposed the following:

- 40 village volunteers.
- Quasi-military status.
- Extra pay for military duties.
- No volunteer required to respond beyond a 12-mile limit of his village.

[REDACTED]

- Training provided by Royal Thai Army.

General Murphy compared this proposed force to the civil guard and self-defense corps during the Phase I and II insurgency periods in South Vietnam. He said: 11/

"It has been stated that the two forces which could have guaranteed the internal security of South Vietnam were neglected. These two forces were the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps which are roughly equivalent to the proposed PTDV for Thailand. The training of the approximately 40,000 members of this Vietnamese Corps came from the Vietnamese Army and was rudimentary. It was hardly adequate to the task of defending villages, roads and other local strategic points against armed attacks by Communist insurgents. The shortcomings in the Civil Guard stemmed to a considerable extent from a protracted dispute between Vietnamese and American authorities over the nature of the organization. In addition, the Vietnamese Government did little to improve the efficiency or morale of the Guard during this period, using it as a dumping ground for inferior Army officers. The organization--poorly trained, poorly led, and lacking needed armament, transport and communications--was faced with the increasingly difficult job of maintaining security in an increasingly insecure countryside. I should hope the foregoing turn of events in South Vietnam is not the pattern for the future in Thailand."

From the Villager's View

To determine the best means of assisting the Thai COIN effort, U.S. officials were studying the situation down to the village level--the common breeding ground for poverty and discontent. It was generally accepted that strong steps needed to be taken to rebuild the image of the central government in the eyes of the people. In a special study of the village situation, Dr. Ralph Jans, U.S. Consul at Udorn, found that the villager's grasp "of the idea of the existence of the Prime Minister and Government Ministries in

[REDACTED]

Bangkok and what they represent is so weak that they have little useful meaning to him." There existed a somewhat stronger impression of the provincial governor, but what the governor did and how he carried on his assigned functions were unknown at the village level. Representatives on the governor's level were VIPs to the village and, as such, had to be shown unusual deference on the "infrequent occasions" they came in contact with the villager. 12/

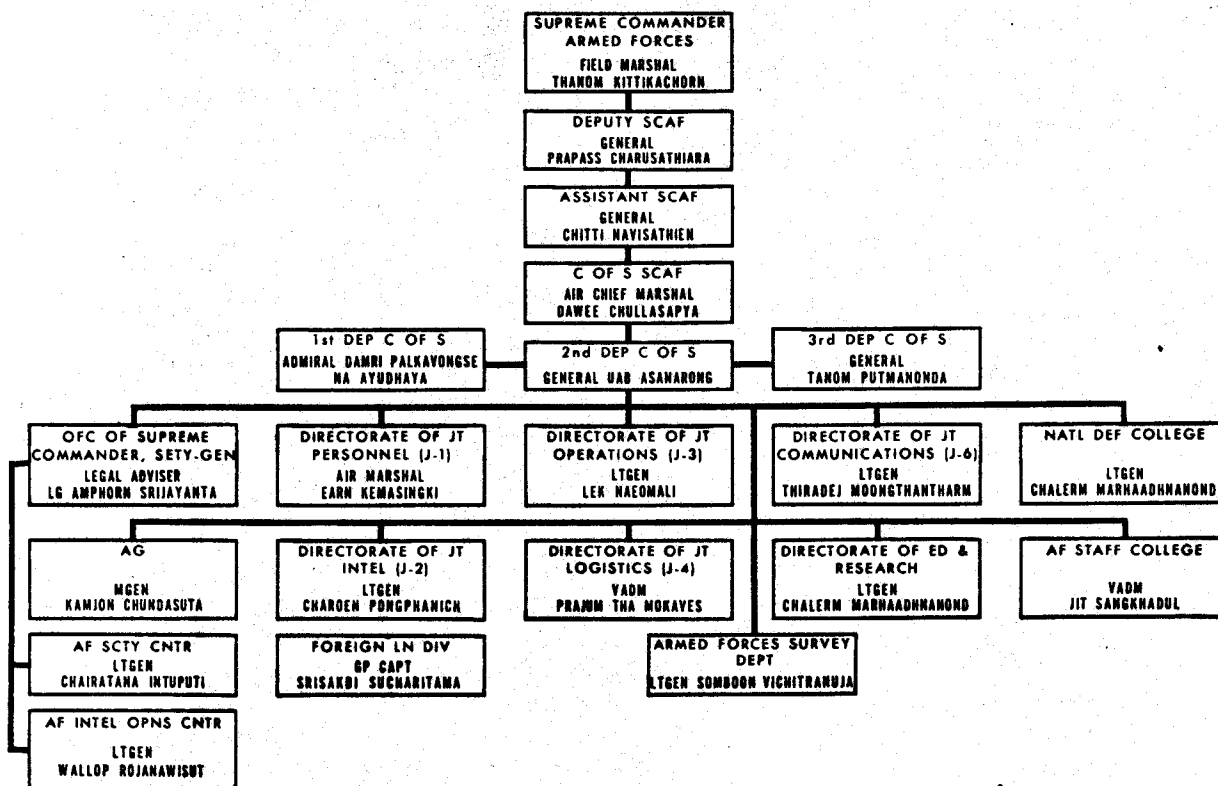
13/
Doctor Jans reported to Ambassador Martin:

"There has been little change in village attitude during the last three years. The antagonists to the Thai Government are the antagonists of three years ago. The main difference now is that these antagonists have been offered and have accepted organizational support from Asian Communism - financial, material and moral. Village aspirations are rising, and this is a phenomenon not confined to the last three years--but this improved condition has not kept pace with the rising expectations. Discontent with the status quo has been growing and will continue to grow. The idea of belonging is still very important. The average villager has no sense of belonging to or participating in what his government is trying to accomplish. The Communists are making an appeal to the villager and are allowing him to belong. The recruited subversive feels a part of something; an esprit de corps prevails."

Forces Structure

All three military services in Thailand remained directly under the control of Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn. The Royal Thai Army, under General Praphas, had an 85,000-man force and was responsible for territorial defense and support of SEATO commitments. It was organized into four major military area commands. The major combat units consisted of three infantry divisions, one mechanized cavalry division, one AAA division (brigade), one

SUPREME COMMAND ARMED FORCES (SCAF)



KEY MILITARY OFFICERS

Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn
General Prapass (Pra-Paat) Charusathiara

General Chitti (Jit-Ti) Navisathiara

Air Chief Marshal Dawee (Ta-Wee)
Chullasapya

Vice Admiral Nai Napokun

General Surakij Mayalarp

General Thanom Putmanonda

Admiral Charoon (Ja-Roon) Chalermtiarana

Admiral Ananda (A-Naan) Nateroj

Air Chief Marshal Boon Choo Chandrubeksa

Air Chief Marshal Harin Hongskula

General Kris (Krit) Sivara

Rear Admiral Sophon Sayarnsettakorn

Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces
Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed
Forces and Commander in Chief, Royal
Thai Army

Assistant Supreme Commander of the
Armed Forces

Chief of Staff, Supreme Command Head-
quarters

Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Fleet

Chief of Staff, Royal Thai Army

Deputy Chief of Staff, Supreme Command
Headquarters

Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Navy

Deputy Commander in Chief, Royal Thai
Navy

Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Air Force

Deputy Commander in Chief, Royal Thai
Air Force

Deputy Commander in Chief, Royal Thai
Army

Commandant, Royal Thai Marine Corps

SUPREME COMMAND ORGANIZATION - THAILAND

Fig. 4

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



[REDACTED]

independent regimental combat team, one Special Forces Group, one airborne battalion, and one field artillery battalion. Army aviation possessed some 74 aircraft to provide reconnaissance and limited logistic support. The principal concentration of troops was in the Bangkok area to serve as a coup deterrent and a strategic reserve. ^{14/}

The Royal Thai Navy, under the command of Admiral Charoon, was composed of some 23,100 men, including a 7,500-man Marine Corps. The Navy was responsible for defense of the seaward approaches to Thailand, the Gulf of Siam. A secondary mission was to assist the Army in maintaining internal security. The 19,600 man Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) was under the command of Air Marshal Boon Choo. It was responsible for air defense, tactical air support of ground forces, support of counterinsurgency operations, and aerial transport of personnel and equipment. It was organized into a six-wing structure. Aircraft included 14 F-86Ls, 32 F-86Fs, 52 T-28Ds, 8 C-123Bs, 22 C-47s, 1 C-54, 66 T-6s, 11 U-10s and 40 helicopters. RTAF units were based at Don Muang, Chiang Mai, Ubon, Udorn, Korat, Prachuap, Koke Kathiem, and certain other stations. ^{15/}

Although the Thai Armed Forces were relatively strong, they were not prepared to conduct effective COIN operations. An Air Force Special Air Warfare officer in Thailand, Col. Owen P. Farmer, listed some of the Thai force inadequacies: ^{16/}

- The main weakness of the RTA was the lack of training and experience in COIN operations. Prior to December 1965, the RTA had no role or responsibility in the COIN effort. Even in late 1966, except for a few units, the

[REDACTED]

RTA was not deployed into the most seriously threatened areas.

- Apparently the Thai Government did not believe it wise to fully apply the Army at this point. If they brought a large part of the Army into the COIN operations they would lay themselves wide open to communist propaganda. The people would be told that the RTA was brutally suppressing the people. They had seen this occur in South Vietnam and did not wish to repeat this error.
- There was a reluctance to permit the consolidation of services of power not directly controlled at Bangkok because of coup possibilities.
- Other serious weaknesses included the preoccupation of senior officers with political and economic affairs and inadequate logistics and air transport to support sustained combat operations in the remote isolated areas of the northeast.
- Due to a shortage of housing, all RTAFBs were considered TDY bases except Don Muang. This resulted in personnel being rotated every six months within the RTAF.
- A Special Air Warfare (SAW) capability was practically nonexistent in the RTAF.

Another force under the Minister of Interior, General Praphas was the Thai National Police. Under the Bangkok Headquarters, there were three branches of particular importance--the provincial police force, the border police force, and the police aerial reinforcement unit. Weaknesses in the police operation have already been discussed, but it was expected that many of these weaknesses would be offset once the armed forces took complete control. There were more than 30,000 men in the provincial police force assigned throughout Thailand, who were directly responsive to the Province Governor and were charged with maintaining internal security and protecting people and property. The 6,800-man border patrol was responsible for

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patrolling the border to a depth of 15 miles to prevent illegal traffic. They also engaged in intelligence collection, active COIN operations, and civic action activities in the border areas. The police aerial reinforcement unit was a 250-man organization patterned after the U.S. Army Special Forces. They operated in ten-man teams and provided the police with an immediate reaction strike capability. Mobility and communications problems plagued all police operations, but these were being worked out with U.S. assistance. 17/

CHAPTER III

U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

"The growing and potential insurgency threat in Thailand is becoming a matter of increasing concern. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) have indicated that adequate and timely military assistance to Thailand is essential to its retention as a cooperative and capable member of the Free World Community." 1/

Adm. Ulysses S. Grant Sharp,
Commander-in-Chief, Pacific

Background

The United States provided the main source of international support for Thailand's counterinsurgency efforts. Based on support the Thais gave the United Nations Forces in Korea, the United States recognized the possibilities for increased cooperation with Thailand. This recognition was further strengthened by the SEATO arrangements. U.S. Military Advisory Missions were organized in Bangkok and, during the 1961 threatened invasion of northern Thailand from Laos, the United States dispatched a brigade of Marines to assist in counterinsurgency efforts. According to one official source, the abrupt withdrawal of this force when the threat subsided, or appeared to do so, did not "endear us" to the Thai Government. It was claimed that the United States did not officially advise the Thai Government of a planned withdrawal. The display of U.S. determination in South Vietnam and Laos, as well as increased COIN assistance to the Thais, however, had strengthened the relationship of the two countries. US/Thai bilateral defense agreements reinforced Thailand's confidence in U.S. support. 2/

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Since 1964, Thailand had become increasingly important to the U.S. posture in Southeast Asia. The Thai Government had agreed to the positioning of USAF units in Thailand and execution of airstrikes against North Vietnam and in Laos by Thai-based USAF jets--although these aircraft were not permitted to conduct strikes in South Vietnam. By the end of 1966, there were more than 25,000 USAF personnel and more than 400 USAF aircraft positioned at seven Thai bases--Udorn, Ubon, Takhli, Korat, Nakhon Phanom, Don Muang, and U-Tapao. There were also more than 9,000 other U.S. military personnel in the country. Thirteenth Air Force in the Philippines provided logistics and administrative support to USAF units in Thailand, while Seventh Air Force in South Vietnam had command and control of combat operations from Thailand. Thus, United States forces were not only concerned with the protection of Thailand from the enemy, but their own personnel and facilities as well. ^{3/}

Obviously, the positioning of U.S. strike aircraft in Thailand made the country a prime target for the communists; however, by 1966 the danger of armed invasion by communist forces was hardly a consideration. Enemy forces were too heavily engaged in South Vietnam, and airpower in support of friendly forces had the communists bogged down in Laos. By necessity, the Red design in Thailand was an insurgency movement much like the program in South Vietnam during the pre-escalation period. Although the movement in Thailand did not have the strong Viet Minh base, which provided the impetus for communist operations in Laos and South Vietnam, certain conditions did exist that made the country ripe for an insurgency movement--with which it

[REDACTED]

was not prepared to cope, without assistance from its SEATO allies.

The insurgency had as its basic objective the overthrow of the Royal Thai Government. An additional objective was harassment of USAF bases through the threat of hostile actions or by pressuring the Thanom Government to cease USAF operations. Thus, the problems of Thailand became almost completely enmeshed with events in Laos and South Vietnam--shadowed by developments in other bordering countries such as Cambodia and Burma. And, of course, there was always the massive shadow cast by Communist China. Primarily, however, it was advances made by the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese in Laos, which increased Thai concern for their own security. Thai reaction was to establish defenses as far from Thai borders as possible; this had enhanced infiltration and increased vulnerability of the border areas. ^{4/}

In 1964, in partial answer to Thailand's security and to bring additional pressure to bear on Communist forces in Laos, Project Waterpump was launched. The mission of Waterpump was to train Royal Lao Air Force pilots, Thai mercenary pilots, and certain support personnel for an increasing air effort against the Pathet Lao forces in Laos. Waterpump (USAF) personnel were soon operating within the troubled areas of Laos as forward air controllers and guides, establishing weather and communications nets, manning the AOC in Vientiane, Laos, and providing liaison officers with the Royal Laotian Air Forces (RLAF). An additional mission of Waterpump was in Thailand in the field of medical civic actions. The Waterpump contingent initially consisted of TDY forces from the 1st Air Commando Wing, Special Air Warfare Center (SAWC). These personnel were highly trained in Special Air Warfare

[REDACTED]

(SAW), and the majority were veterans of the Jungle Jim and Farmgate operation in South Vietnam in the early 1960s. ^{5/}

As the insurgency grew and weaknesses in the Thai Government COIN capability became more apparent, U.S. military and civilian agencies under the guidance of Ambassador Martin began studying the most effective means of providing assistance. Based upon an analysis of country requirements, it was determined that the joint effort of civic and military agencies would be needed. The civil, or political emphasis was to be placed on those activities and projects intended to help build Thailand as a nation, in addition to more specific security requirements. Certain agencies under the U.S. Embassy; i.e., U.S. Information Service (USIS) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel, would work closely with USAF and U.S. Army agencies in developing the Thai COIN capability. Acting in an advisory capability, these agencies would work through the COIN apparatus which had been established by the Thai Government.

USAID had been active in Thailand for several years, and had concentrated much of its effort and funds into the Northeast since that section had long been the poorest and most neglected of Thailand's four major regions. The National Statistics Office estimated that the average per capita income in the northeast was \$42.50 as compared to approximately \$97.50 for the rest of country. The yields of rice there were about half the average in the rest of the nation. USAID had focused its Rural Development Assistance program on the northeast to help alleviate these problems. In 1964, a

[REDACTED]

joint Thai/USAID decision was reached to accelerate rural development in six provinces on the northeast border, largely because of the security problems prevailing in those areas. This joint program was designed to raise incomes of the people of the northeast and to strengthen their links with and allegiance to the central government. ^{6/}

U.S. Counterinsurgency Augmentation

The USAF and the U.S. Army were called upon to provide COIN assistance to the Thai military forces. Due to inadvisability of U.S. forces actually engaging in operations against Thai insurgents, U.S. military personnel were directed to act in a training or advisory capacity only. An Army special forces unit was deployed to train and advise Thai Army personnel in COIN operations, and a USAF SAW squadron was deployed to train and advise the RTAF. Both military elements were also to engage in medical civic action programs, primarily in the northeast. ^{7/}

It was hoped that increased U.S. support and advisory assistance would accelerate improvement and performance of the Thai forces in dealing with internal security and that this would preclude the need for still greater assistance later. The following general rules applied to the application of U.S. military assistance: ^{8/}

- The Royal Thai Government was responsible for counter-
ing insurgency in Thailand. The U.S. role was one of
providing early and adequate assistance to permit the
Royal Thai Government to deal with the insurgency prob-
lem on its own.
- The goal was to assist the Royal Thai Government in
achieving an effective COIN capability which would not
rely on U.S. support.

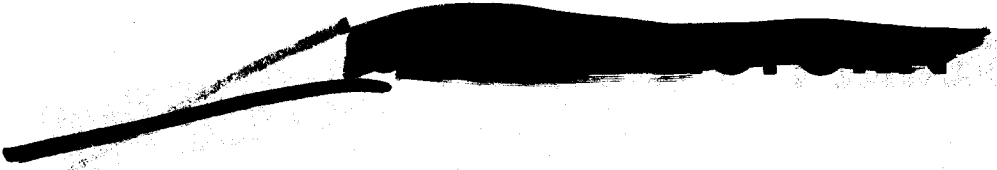
- [REDACTED]
- U.S. military personnel would not participate in Thai COIN combat operations. However, U.S. advisors could accompany units on field operations as observers/trainers but not below battalion headquarters level.

Of particular concern to the USAF was the development of the RTAF capability to support the government in its COIN endeavor. The preponderance of political and military significance enjoyed by the Royal Thai Army within the government structure had resulted in the RTAF being "woefully incapable" of providing the necessary SAW support in COIN operations. Operation Water-pump had shown that with proper training the RTAF could assimilate the SAW role in the Thai program. Plans were made to augment the USAF SAW forces in Thailand to accommodate the training of four composite squadrons of the RTAF as well as other units having a COIN role or potential. This resulted in the deployment of the 606th Air Commando Squadron (ACS) to Thailand beginning in April 1966 under the program nickname "Lucky Tiger." ^{9/}

Lucky Tiger Deployment

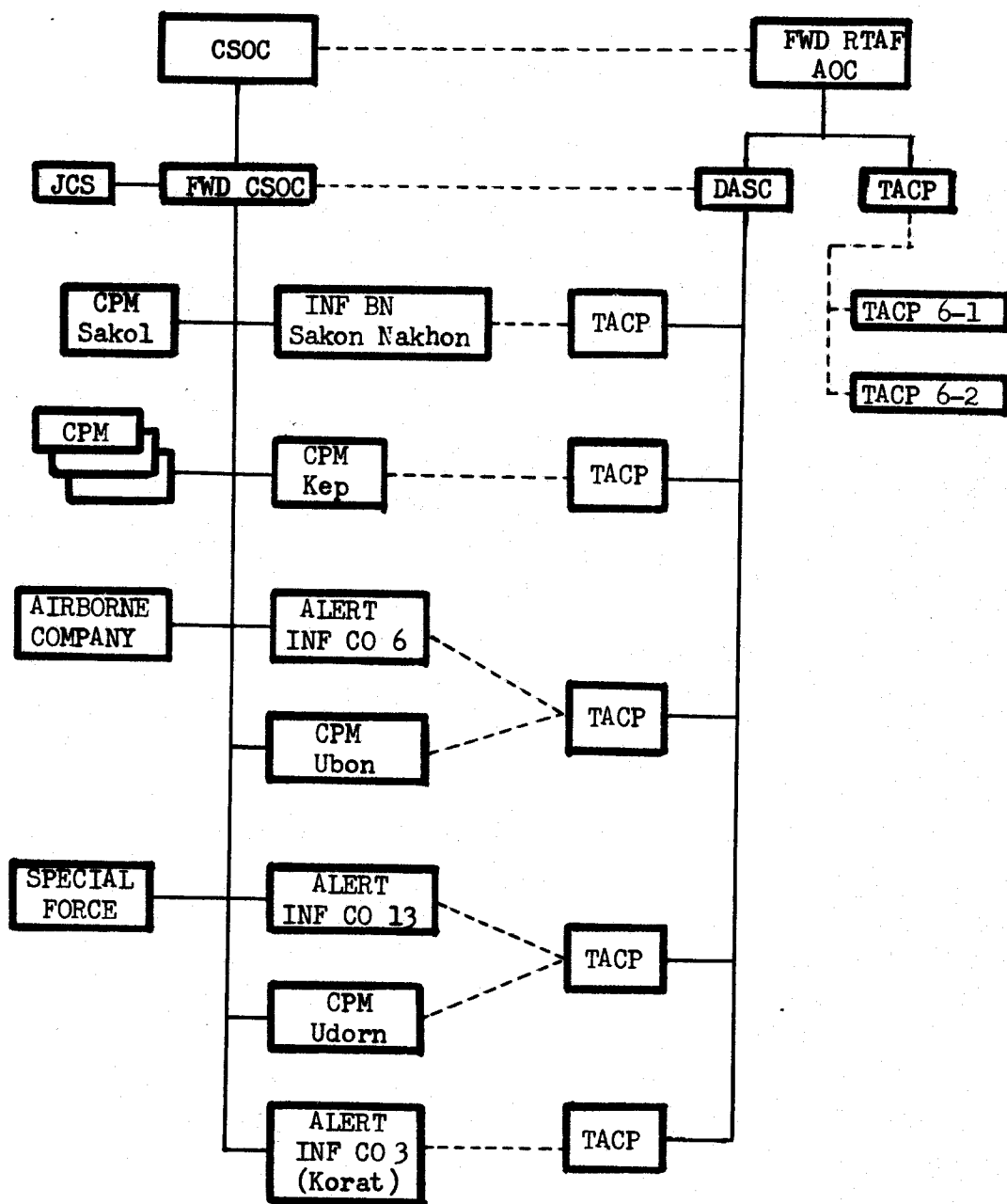
Although the 606th ACS was to be charged with a secondary mission of combat operations over Laos, its primary purpose was to train the RTAF SAW units and operate, in conjunction with USAID, a medical civic actions program in its area of responsibility. Lucky Tiger Headquarters was established at Nakhon Phanom Air Base, which was located near the border of Laos, in the center of the insurgency movement.

Air support was essential to suppression operations in Thailand. Transportation was a principal problem as roads in Thailand, especially in the northeast, were extremely poor in the dry season and impassable during the


rainy season. Additionally, slow overland movement of forces would alert the enemy and allow movement from the area. Therefore, it was essential that ground forces be deployed and resupplied by air. In this regard, a training program was begun to provide the RTAF with a helilift capability in COIN operations. Prior to completion of this training, it was necessary to deploy USAF helicopters to Thailand to assist the Thai ground forces by airlifting them to operations areas. Communist suppression operations were underway before arrival of the 606th ACS and were being supported by CH-3C helicopters of the 20th Helicopter Squadron. Additional UH-1F helicopters were deployed on a TDY basis after the arrival of the 606th ACS. 10/

By December 1966, the 606th ACS Commander reported that Mobile Training Teams (MTTS) were in place with the four RTAF composite squadrons and training was being accomplished. Training officials found the RTAF relatively well-equipped with the potential of decisively arresting insurgency in Thailand. RTAF pilots, however, were incapable of conducting a complex joint air-ground operation, nor were Thai ground forces aware of the role airpower should play in the COIN effort. 11/

The Royal Thai Government agencies concerned with the civic action portion of the COIN program had been contacted and liaison had been established with these agencies. Medical civic action teams had been deployed into remote village areas to work with Thai doctors and set up training programs. Liaison officers had been made available to the Thai air operations center (AOC), the border patrol police, CMP 1 at Mukdahan/Sakon Nakhon, and to the



—— Command (Preplanned Requests)
 - - - - Liaison (Emergency Requests)

TACTICAL AIR CONTROL SYSTEM

Fig. 5



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12/
Provincial CMP at Nakhon Phanom.

Training accomplished by the MTTs provided special air capabilities such as helicopter airlift, psychological operations, reconnaissance, and combat control. Additional programs for advanced training were established to train RTAF pilots in T-28 night ordnance delivery. The civic action program included medical, dental, veterinary, and civil engineering tasks with individual specialists advising and assisting their RTG counterparts. With self-help of local people, these tasks were carried out in remote and isolated villages, where the need was strongest. They included well-digging, sanitation projects, and small airfield construction, or improvement. 13/

Organizing a TACS

USAF officials in Thailand were also engaged in assisting the RTAF to organize a Tactical Air Control System (TACS). Established during the latter part of 1966, the organization was to be used principally in the northeast, but there was a provision for one Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) in the southern area. Royal Thai Air Force units were attached for liaison to Royal Thai Army units in the CSOC chain of command. Other units could use available RTAF units for liaison with the Air Operations Center for emergency missions. 14/

The DASC would be collocated with the Forward/CSOC. This organization was first stationed at Mukdahan, but was programmed to move to Sakon Nakhon. This move was considered desirable because the location at Mukdahan was too close to the Laotian border and the Mukdahan airfield could not support troop carrier aircraft. Also, Sakon Nakhon was more centrally located in

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the insurgency area, and the Forward/CSOC would be closer to the infantry battalion he would support. Manning would include 20 personnel at the DASC, seven at the Udorn CMP, seven at the Nakhon Phanom CMP, and four at the Ubon CMP. USAF liaison personnel would work with the Thais, advising them in their support to the Thai Army. 15/

[REDACTED]

CHAPTER IV

COMMAND AND CONTROL

"It is my impression here that the Army (MACTHAI) wants control of or at least be the major U.S. military participant in the counterinsurgency mission in Thailand, and is going to great length to accomplish this purpose." 1/

U.S. Air Attache, Thailand

During the early stages of the U.S. COIN augmentation, there was some confusion concerning command and control channels between U.S. agencies and joint US/Thai relations. This confusion, by and large, was a product of the complexities involved in the mixed agency control structure for Thailand operations. Roles and missions controversies also arose, apparently, as a result of MACTHAI's desire to strengthen the Army's posture in Thailand--despite the Ambassador's expressed desires that a tight ceiling on U.S. deployments be respected. Another cause for dissention was the strong political influence wielded by the Thai Army, and its apparent desire to dilute the influence of the RTAF, even at the expense of limiting the government's COIN capability. 2/

As of June 1966, command relationships were still confusing. The Assistant Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF, Thailand, reported that thus far the American Embassy had seemingly chosen to ignore MACTHAI in-country, insofar as it related to USAF participation in counterinsurgency. Instructions had been received from the Communist Suppression Operations Center, located in Bangkok, through the local Joint Suppression Security Center at Udorn, completely negating MACTHAI channels. Discussions concerning this matter

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between MACTHAI and Headquarters, 7AF/13AF, prompted the Assistant Deputy Commander to note, "It is conceivable that a serious relationship problem will develop as a consequence of MACTHAI's obvious desire to control in-country counterinsurgency efforts." ^{3/}

To clarify the command and control structure in Thailand, it should first be made clear that the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand was the sole individual responsible for dealing with the Thai Government on all joint matters--political, civil, and military. All military assistance program (MAP) matters had to be cleared through the U.S. Ambassador, and the Ambassador was responsible for coordinating all U.S. military deployments to Thailand with the RTG. MACTHAI, which was a joint headquarters, was largely staffed by Army officers and was headed by an Army Major General. The senior USAF representative in Thailand was also a Major General, who served in the position of Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF. ^{4/}

As Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF, the USAF representative was responsible to the Thirteenth Air Force Commander for logistical and administrative support, and to the Seventh Air Force Commander for operational control of all air operations. The latter was the Air Component Commander to the Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV); however, in Thailand the senior Air Force representative did not serve as a component to COMUSMACTHAI. This was true although COMUSMACTHAI was officially the representative of the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) in Thailand. In many respects, the Air Force representative was considerably more involved with Ambassadorial coordination than was MACTHAI because the preponderance of U.S.

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personnel in Thailand were Air Force. Army forces stationed in Thailand served in purely an advisory capacity, while the USAF posture was primarily designed to provide air defense and conduct out-of-country strike operations. ^{5/}

When the USAF SAW force was deployed to Thailand, it naturally came under the same Air Force command and control structure as the other Air Force units in-country. They were assigned to 13AF and were under operational control of the 7AF Commander. They had a dual mission which included combat operations in Laos, and were definitely not under the control of COMUSMACTHAI. To allow a more responsive control over SAW operations in Thailand, the 7AF Commander delegated in-country SAW control to the Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF. A 7AF regulation published in October 1966, clearly delegated control over USAF support for RTAF training and counterinsurgency to the Thailand Deputy Commander. ^{6/}

Although the senior USAF representative coordinated all SAW matters with MACTHAI when applicable, MACTHAI Headquarters continuously tried to move into the advisory effort of the RTAF and the RTAF TACS. This also carried over into the areas of helicopter airlift support and civic actions. In early February 1966, MACTHAI had requested that special air warfare planners be assigned to his headquarters. This request was not coordinated with the USAF senior representative, and he was not advised of MACTHAI's planned use of these individuals. The USAF senior representative advised CINCPACAF that his needs for qualified special warfare personnel to act as an advanced party "are more immediate and pressing than those expressed by MACTHAI." He advised: ^{7/}

[REDACTED]

"Therefore, I recommend two well-qualified field grade special warfare officers be dispatched to my headquarters for detailed planning well in advance of the beddown date of the 606th. Either one or both of these officers will be subsequently assigned to the 606th when that organization commences full operation. If my request for the personnel noted above is granted I have no objection to fulfilling MACTHAI's request provided those officers so assigned for duty with MACTHAI are processed through this headquarters for a thorough briefing prior to beginning work in Bangkok."

Ambassador Martin had made it clear that the COIN effort was a Thai Government responsibility, and U.S. policy was that U.S. military forces would not direct the COIN effort nor actively participate in operations. Thus, the concern of USAF officials was not that MACTHAI would assume active direction of the COIN effort, but that MACTHAI influence, if prejudiced, might create further strain and misunderstanding between the Thai Army and the Thai Air Force, which would have a damaging effect on the government's COIN capability. Relations among the various Thai services, especially the Army and Air Force, were already much too strained, but appeared to become even more so as the COIN effort was accelerated. ^{8/}

An earlier CHECO study detailed the roles and missions controversy instigated by MACTHAI over which military agency would provide rotary air-lift training and interim airlift for the Thai forces. The RTAF was charged with developing a rotary COIN support capability, and the USAF was responsible for providing the necessary training. Interim rotary airlift support was required until the RTAF could obtain this capability. Disregarding the fact that the rotary air mission in Thailand was an Air Force responsibility, MACTHAI made a strong bid for deployment of a U.S. Army helicopter company

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to Thailand to provide the necessary interim support. Such a move could very well have indicated to the Thais that the RTAF helicopter mission was actually a Thai Army responsibility, creating further tension. After considerable staffing of this problem at the Washington level, MACTHAI lost its bid in the ensuing roles and missions controversy, and USAF helicopters were deployed to Thailand to do the job. ^{9/}

The top members of the RTG emphasized to the U.S. Government that the most "critical single deficiency" they faced encountering the step-up in insurgency in the northeast was the lack of rotary airlift to provide the "vitally essential mobility to their forces there." According to Ambassador Martin, "They deeply believe the increased pace of communist action is directly attributable to the complete cooperation they have extended to U.S. military operations over the past two years." The RTG therefore made a formal request to the Vice President of the United States for the temporary provision of a "U.S. Army helicopter company" to assume this burden. ^{10/}

Not only would the stationing of Army helicopters in Thailand conflict with the mission of the 606th ACS, but Ambassador Martin, not wanting to increase the U.S. presence in Thailand, was decidedly against "bringing into Thailand a U.S. Army helicopter company with some 700 people." ^{11/} Whenever possible, it was the Ambassador's desire to utilize in-theatre resources, without building up another permanent U.S. force in the country. In this regard, he advised CINCPACAF on 14 March: ^{12/}

"At Udorn on last Tuesday I went over this problem with

[REDACTED]

General Westmoreland (COMUSMACV). We discussed the necessity of maintaining the momentum of the Thai counterinsurgency activities in the northeast, the danger to our own installations if this was not done, and the effect on Thai morale and cooperativeness if our lack of action indicated we failed to recognize we are all fighting the same enemy in the same geographic area.

"With his usual perceptiveness General Westmoreland agreed that the prompt and adequate provision of rotary lift was essential and suggested an immediate solution. Noting that an Air Commando Squadron (606th ACS) is now scheduled to be deployed to Nakhon Phanom, he suggested that the normal complement of four helicopters be increased to 25. This would accomplish the same result in lift capacity and at the same time eliminate the overhead of a separate Army Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) company. General Westmoreland said if this is not feasible for any reason he would be prepared to examine priorities and see what could be provided on a temporary basis from MACV resources.

"I have considered this at length and our response must be prompt and it must be affirmative if we wish to continue to receive the unlimited cooperation we have received until now."

In addition to four UH-1Fs assigned to the 606th ACS, additional UH-1Fs, as well as CH-3Cs from the 20th Helicopter Squadron in South Vietnam, were deployed to Thailand to provide interim rotary airlift capability. Meanwhile, officials proceeded with the RTAF to firm up their actions to meet 1 July and 1 January deadlines and insure that pilots and mechanics would be available to begin their own training with helicopters supplied through MAP. Higher headquarters directed that the USAF helicopters would be required to depart Thailand no later than the end of January 1967, at which time the RTAF would ^{13/} assume this responsibility.

Ambassador Martin advised the 7AF Commander in May 1966, that prompt

[REDACTED]

action by the USAF in providing the rotary airlift support had a "dramatic" effect upon the Thais and provided "essential mobility in effecting operations against insurgents." ^{14/} Despite this precedence, MACTHAI officials continued to assert themselves in the air role. The 9th Logistics Aviation changed its name to United States Air Support, Thailand, and MACTHAI on occasion provided U.S. Army air advisors at the lower COIN echelons. There was some evidence that this had a negative effect on Thai Army and Air Force relations. ^{15/} On 26 December, an air liaison officer (ALO) with the COIN structure reported on this trend: ^{16/}

"The RTA openly indicated that air operations in support of CPM-1 will not be requested after the USAF helicopters and liaison officers depart. Open contempt for the RTAF H-34's was expressed. Whether this is due to interservice rivalry or knowledge of H-34 capabilities has not been ascertained....

"The RTA still refuses to include the RTAF on initial planning for operations. This is a continuing problem and no solution is in sight at this time. Work in this area is continuing, but last minute planning for air is still the rule rather than the exception."

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CHAPTER V

THE PHANTOM TRACKS

"There have been innumerable reports of unknown low, slow-flying aircraft penetrating Thai air space. Presumably these are helicopters, and speculation is that they are infiltrating and resupplying Communist agents. The Thai Air Force has orders to shoot, but have yet to intercept one of these unknowns." 1/

Col. John E. Bridge, USAF

One inherent weakness in the Thailand Aircraft Control and Warning (ACW) system was that existing radar sitings did not offer complete peripheral radar coverage at low altitudes--specifically in the Surin area bordering Cambodia, in the Muang Loei area to the north, and in the extreme southern area bordering Malaysia. Plans were underway to correct this deficiency, but meanwhile, Thai officials insisted that unfriendly air forces had penetrated Thailand especially in the Muang Loei area. The RTAF AOC had been given authority to engage all hostile aircraft penetrating Thai air-space, and to direct attack against enemy ground forces firing from positions across the borders of Thailand. All RTAF fighter and interceptor aircraft--offense and defense--were placed under operational control of the AOC. 2/

East of Muang Loei and approximately 65 nautical miles west of Udorn, there was heavy insurgency activity. The RTG insisted that supplies were dropped to these troops by helicopter from North Laos. In an attempt to stop this activity, the RTAF planned to install a radar site near Muang Loei. Air Marshal Boon Choo authorized six airstrikes per day in this area using T-28s. These aircraft would be scrambled upon request by the Thai Army. If

[REDACTED]

more than six strikes were required, permission had to be obtained direct from the Air Marshal. ^{3/}

In June, the RTAF director of the AOC, Colonel Chakorn reported that "unknown chopper" activity was increasing. Helicopters were reported by ground observers to be dropping supplies in the Phu Phan area. Lt. Col. Carmen Torrie, Operations Staff Officer, Headquarters, 7AF/13AF, reported on this after a staff visit: ^{4/}

"Most of the unknowns are suspected U.S. or Air America aircraft, otherwise RTAF would fire and look later. But for fear of hitting an allied aircraft they have been attempting to identify. When an unknown is observed the spotter or controller contacts all agencies: CPM-1, Udorn, TACC, RTA, USA and Air America to inquire if they have anything flying in the suspect vicinity. This is a time consuming process and seldom produces results before the unknown is lost."

By late July, reports had become more frequent that guerrilla forces in the northeast were being supplied by helicopter or low, slow-flying aircraft during the hours of darkness. In addition to visual sightings, operators of the USAF radars at Mukdahon had observed unidentified slow-moving tracks originating in Laos and crossing the Mekong River into Thailand. The exact positions of take-off and delivery were not known, but approximate locations were reported. Thus far the Thais had been unable to effectively engage these aircraft. They had antiaircraft weapons strategically positioned, and maintained night alert for these covert aircraft, but this had been to no avail since contact could not be accomplished. ^{5/}

On 16 June, a meeting of all U.S. and Thai agencies possessing light

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fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft was conducted by MACTHAI. U.S. representatives from Vientiane, Laos, were also present. After the history of unidentified aircraft reports was discussed, they determined that most of the reports were from villagers, isolated RTG security elements, and 11 were radar tracks of questionable validity. COMUSMACTHAI reported to CINCPAC on findings made at this meeting: ^{6/}

"We are not completely convinced that many of these flights are entering Thailand for the purpose of supplying subversive elements in the area. However, there is certainly a possibility. Fifty-nine of the 95 unidentified aircraft reports occurring between 6 Sep 65 and 16 Jun 66, including four radar tracks, occurred between the hours of 1800 and 0600. An additional 17 reports had no time specified. Many of these reports stated that the aircraft had no lights. Additional reports concern pyrotechnic signals and flashing lights followed by aircraft activity. Several reports referred to Pathet Lao helicopters crossing the Mekong River into northeast Thailand and contacting communists. These clandestine flights landing in areas of insurgency coupled with reports of Pathet Lao association would point to the possibility that some of these flights may be communist-associated. However, the possibility of opium, gold and weapons (not subversive associated) smuggling cannot be overlooked. Neither can the possibility of friendly clandestine flights without flight plans be ignored. RLAF flights from Savannakhet to Vientiane overflying northeast Thailand are also probable."

A 30-day surveillance period, beginning 23 June, was established. Special emphasis was placed on the necessity for filing flight plans with the RTAF air operations center at Don Muang. The surveillance system was simple. As a report of an unidentified aircraft observation was received, whether from Thai or U.S. agencies, it was to be sent to the AOC for confirmation or denial as friendly. If still unidentified, then the Thais would double check Thai agencies and MACTHAI would seek identification from U.S. flying organizations. All officials present at the 16 June meeting agreed to cooperate. The

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surveillance period resulted in ten unidentified aircraft reports which were
neither confirmed nor denied as being hostile or friendly. ^{7/}

When the surveillance period ended, the Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF, at Udorn was tasked as action agency for unidentified aircraft activities. One significant report was made on the night of 10 August when Ubon radar reported eight tracks to the AOC between the hours of 1912 and 2342. All tracks were detected within a five to 20-mile radius of Ubon and were carried only by Ubon GCA radar. The RTAF scrambled four T-28 sorties and two C-47 flareship sorties in attempts to identify these tracks. Twice when T-28 pilots were told they had merged with the target at low altitude, the only sighting was of trucks on the highway. A third merger produced only the sighting of a power pole. Consensus of RTAF and USAF personnel involved in this situation was that the tracks were all of the same nature; i.e., truck, other vehicular traffic, or trains in the Ubon area. AOC confirmed that the tracks conformed to the highway and railroad track patterns in the Ubon area. ^{8/}

Only one flight was definitely identified as a foreign aircraft violating Thai airspace. On 1 July, with the concurrence of CPM-1 Headquarters, an Udorn-based CH-3C Pony Express helicopter forced down an H-34 helicopter with Laos markings at Mukdahan. The helicopter carried an Air America manifest, was later released and returned to Laos. ^{9/} Visual sightings such as ^{10/} the one listed below continued to be reported:

"At 0500 local on 6 November villagers reported sighting a large helicopter which came from Bung Kan to an unlocated position in the northeast. Seven Vietnamese women and an unknown number of Vietnamese men left the

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helicopter which then departed. The wording of the message suggests the landing zone was near Bung Kan; possibly it was in the Phu Sing Mountains located about twenty miles southeast of Bung Kan. This is the site of previously reported unidentified helicopter activity. In addition to this report, there are other ground reports of unidentified helicopter landings in Udorn, Sakon Nakhon Province and Nakhon Phanom Province which have cited passengers departing. No report has mentioned a cargo load, which would be consistent with the resupply theory. Perhaps, at this time, helicopters are being used mainly to infiltrate non-Thai terrorist leaders."

Although there were indications that many of the unidentified aircraft were involved in activities other than insurgency support, U.S. officials were concerned because the possibility of increased subversion constituted a security threat to U.S. Forces located in Thailand. The Royal Thai Government was deeply concerned and was taking counterinsurgency action in the affected areas, including the establishment of a DASC. Additionally, the RTAF had, within the limits of its capability, made continued attempts to intercept and identify these unknown aircraft. These unilateral actions had generally been unsuccessful during the hours of darkness, and at the end of the year, no enemy aircraft had been contacted.

Part of the problem lay in the fact that the unknown aircraft were detected and flight-followed for relatively short periods of time. This, in turn, required immediate tactical decision response and almost immediate application of the weapons to be employed. Thai tactical decision delays at the AOC were experienced frequently. Many times the target had disappeared from the radar scope prior to intercept action being taken. In other cases, even though tactical decision response was timely the target had disappeared

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before the intercept aircraft reached the last known position. Therefore, it appeared the solution to the twin problem of immediate tactical decision and immediate application of the weapons system was airborne alert, under positive radar control, in the areas of known clandestine air activity.

General Bond, Deputy Commander, 7AF/13AF, commented on other factors 11/ which complicated the problem:

"The processing and dissemination of air movement information is inadequate and unsatisfactory. The whole air traffic control complex in Thailand is antiquated and it is further limited by an insufficient communications capability. In addition, there are many agencies, both civil and military, operating aircraft in Thailand and Laos. This air traffic adds considerably to the normal incidence of flight plan deviations, late flight plans, and failure to file flight plans. As a result there are numerous unknowns intercepted, and identified friendly, during daylight hours. It follows, therefore, that during hours of darkness, some air movements, not identified friendly by the TACS, are, in fact, friendly aircraft. This fact limits the role and effect of the F-102s assigned for air defense purposes. Although the F-102, with the assistance of the TACS, possesses the capability to acquire a target at night and destroy it, neither the TACS nor the F-102 can be absolutely certain that the target is hostile. Consequently, reaction measures taken to counter insurgent air movements, must be designed to provide a capability, at night, to visually identify friendly aircraft, as well as a capability for destroying or capturing hostile aircraft."

Since November 1966, the 606th ACS was engaged in an intensive T-28 night flying training program for the RTAF at Udorn and Ubon. The training program included night intercept tactics utilizing flare techniques for target location and identification purposes. A proposal to create a mixed Thai-USA F T-28 air defense alert force for night intercepts had been under study for some time at General Bond's headquarters. The concept of this proposal

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was that four T-28s would be available at Udorn, Nakhon Phanom, and Ubon to provide an airborne alert force between the hours of sunset and midnight. Two of the four aircraft would be flare-equipped to spotlight the target and the remaining two would be weapons platforms. The complete plan, which included utilization of follow-up transport flareships or helicopters to transport Thai Border police or military personnel to hostile aircraft landing or wreckage sites. This was considered to be the most effective means to conduct night interception and identification missions without endangering friendly aircraft.

At the end of the year, General Bond stated that his headquarters was prepared to implement the T-28 night intercept program at any time, contingent upon initial concurrence of the major headquarters or agencies involved, and the satisfactory conclusion of agreements with the Royal Thai Government. Considerable coordination and joint agreements would be required before the plan could be implemented. General Bond defined the areas to be worked out:

12/

- The Thai Prohibited or Restricted Area. This area was defined as a point on the Laos Border approximately 20 miles east of Udorn, running south-southeast to Ubon and thence east to the Laotian Border. The Thai directive concerning this area specified that all aircraft movements, below 3,000 feet, were prohibited between the hours from sunset to sunrise. Thai military and police forces were authorized to fire on any aircraft which violated this prohibited area. Therefore, detailed plans to provide for the safety of intercept forces operating in this area, below 3,000 feet, would be required.
- Rules of Engagement. The concept of a mixed RTAF-USAF T-28 force overcame the bulk of the restrictive measures of the U.S. Rules of Engagement. Theoretically, Thai participation

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in the program, provided access to the Thai Rules of Engagement; however, this matter would have to be clearly defined prior to implementation of such a program.

- The Thai Commitment. This responsibility to support aircraft and pilot requirements to sustain the program had to be clearly established by agreement with the RTAF.
- USAF Commitment and Support. This would include not only the USAF aircraft and pilot commitment but also base support including alert facilities and communications. House-keeping support for the Thai contingent might also be required.

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CHAPTER VI

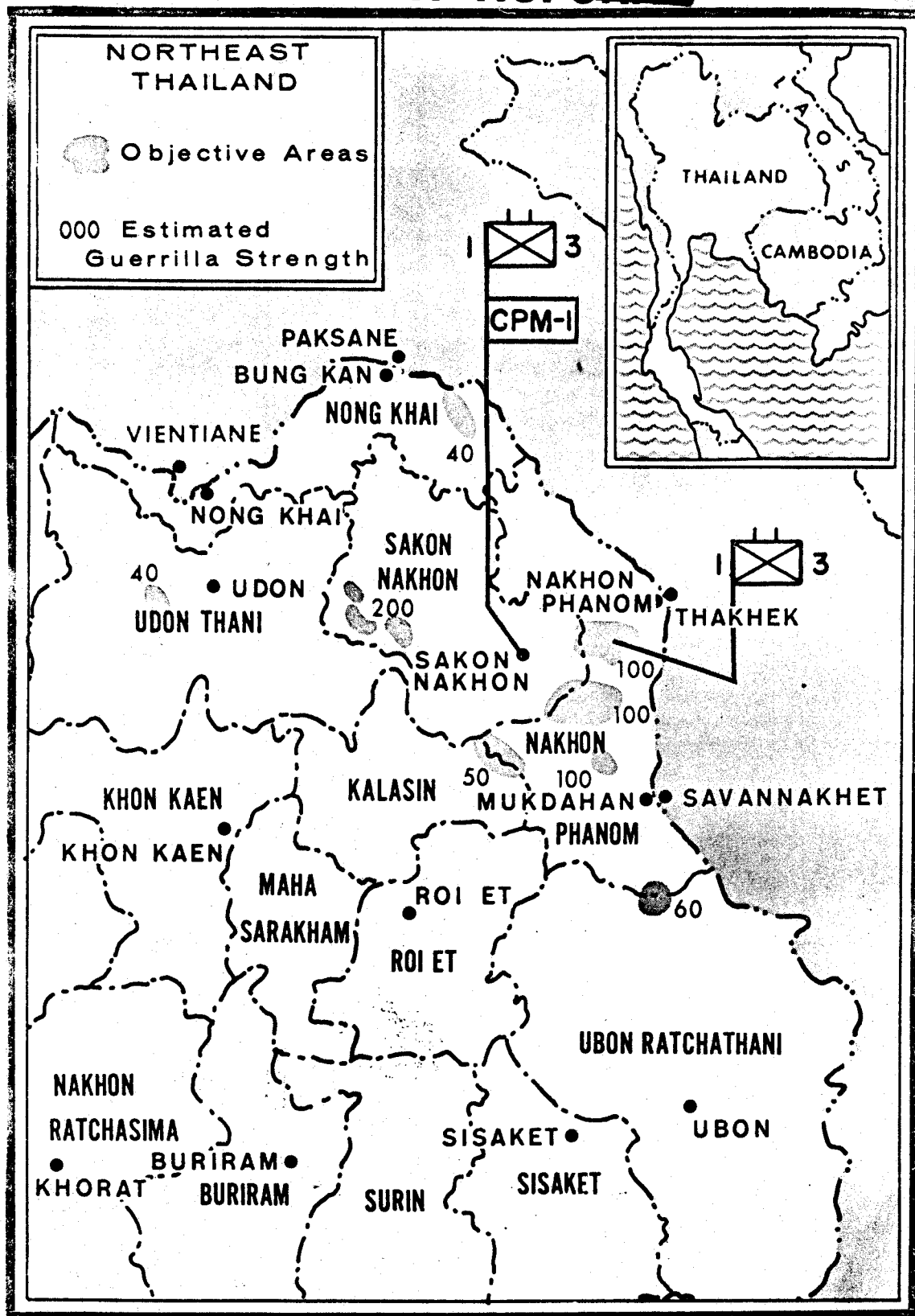
COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFECTIVENESS

"If, as we confidently believe, the RTG does effectively contain, suppress and out-perform the Communist insurgents, a disproportionate part of the credit will be due to the catalytic effect of these 25 USAF helicopters and the rare political sensitivity of the personnel of the 606th Air Commando Squadron." 1/

U.S. Ambassador, Graham A. Martin

In Thai COIN operations, helicopters were essential for access to many areas. USAF helicopters had supported suppression operations involving various Thai civilian and military agencies primarily in the northeast, since the early spring of 1966. Specialized personnel, U.S. Army advisors, and USAF advisors were also being used in support of these operations. Other USAF aircraft, C-123s and U-6s, were available later in the year and were also being used for airlift support, village monitoring, and visual reconnaissance. By the end of the year, RTAF training was nearing completion, and pilots were scheduled to assume the major role of COIN air support beginning in early January 1967. Meanwhile, however, USAF helicopters made the difference between success or failure of the COIN effort. Use of U.S. personnel in other than an advisory or support role was forbidden, and every precaution was taken to insure strict compliance with the policy. 2/

There were basically three methods by which the Royal Thai Government conducted communist suppression operations. First was the relatively static area security and patrol operation conducted in the vicinity of Mukdahan. There were 30 integrated teams ranging from 12 to 20 men available to provide



GUERRILLA FORCES - NORTHEAST THAILAND

Fig. 6

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security and conduct short range patrols to locate and harass terrorist groups. They also maintained a quick reaction force which was deployed by helicopter to augment the small patrols when terrorists were engaged. A second method was the quick reaction deployment of mobile reserve forces to sites of armed clashes or assassinations. The third method was the large sweeping operation directed against a large terrorist concentration. When intelligence indicated that terrorists were concentrated in groups large enough to make such operations profitable, a plan was prepared and joint forces were employed to set up blocking positions and conduct sweeps of the insurgent area in the classic hammer-and-anvil tactic. ^{3/}

From the standpoint of terrorists killed and captured, these operations were not highly successful during 1966. The most profitable one was conducted approximately 40 miles east of Udorn in August. This operation was approved by the Communist Suppression Operations Center on 19 August. Joint Thai and U.S. planning meetings were held the succeeding four days and the operation commenced on 24 August. Eight UH-1F helicopters from the 606th ACS and two Pony Express CH-3C helicopters airlifted approximately 350 Thai police and Army troops from Udorn and Sakon Nakhon to positions surrounding the insurgent area. A direct air support team was established at the command post, and two UH-1Fs supported the operation on a continuing basis. These aircraft were used to resupply and relocate government forces and contributed greatly to the success of the operation. Fifty-one captives were taken and a sizable terrorist camp and supplies were seized. About 12 government troops were wounded in clashes and two villagers were murdered by the terrorists

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in retaliation for aiding Government forces. ^{4/}

In a typical operation in the Phu Sing Mountain area in June, 168 persons were arrested but all except one were released after interrogation. Earlier government forces had been ambushed in this area; however, when the large sweeping operation was made the communists had apparently left the area. Despite Government forces having swept the area thoroughly, only one communist was found and he was turned in by the villagers. Government forces fired their weapons, on one occasion calling for four rounds of 81-mm mortar fire, but they were only shooting at shadows. The assault was considered unsuccessful mainly due to faulty intelligence. All 168 "captives" were taken to a health center where they were treated well and given medical treatment as required. Thai officials stated this was to dispel the general feeling that the RTG was "cruel and unresponsive" to the needs of the people. ^{5/}

In another operation in November, Government forces were helilifted into an area reportedly hiding an estimated 50-to-100 terrorists. Results of this large scale operation were two Government troops killed in action and eight wounded, and three terrorists killed and eleven prisoners taken. The Government forces were armed with mortars and on one occasion RTAF T-28s conducted airstrikes dropping napalm. ^{6/} No KBA was reported.

There was no effective measure of the psychological impact which such operations had on the local people. They were a show of force on the part of the government; yet, terrorists usually retaliated by moving into the

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villages afterward, holding forced meetings and frequently assassinating so-called "government collaborators." The show of force accomplished little, unless the villagers were secure from terrorist retaliation. Also, the Government forces faced the danger of alienating the villagers through indiscriminate arrests and use of heavy weaponry and napalm, especially if the Communist force was not sufficiently large to warrant their use. As long as the force was used discriminately, and the government kept the people properly advised through psywar methods, this backlash would not necessarily occur. Village security, however, was still the major factor, and by the end of 1966, it was still not being adequately provided. ^{7/}

A Headquarters PACAF Intelligence report summed up the insurgency situation at year's end: ^{8/}

"Although Government suppression operations are attempting to combat insurgency by performing civic actions and alleviating some of the basic causes, insurgency continues to make inroads into the masses of indigenous residents along the Mekong. Communist attempts to establish a rice-roots organization to undermine the stability of the government in the rural districts, and establish a base for future operations, have been moderately successful. There is considerable evidence of external support, including funds, equipment and training, with the Communist embassies in Vientiane as one focal point.

"In spite of increased Royal Thai Government concern and a vigorous COIN program augmented with U.S. air assets, insurgent activities continue to increase. During the fall of 1966 Government forces suffered 60 KIA in addition to 35 assassinations, which exceeded the 1965 figure and was a four-fold increase in three months alone, while 20 insurgents were killed during the same period. With a force of less than 1,000, Communist insurgents have forced the Royal Thai Government to commit a large portion of their security forces to counter the threat."

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While security represented the immediate need, there were other objectives to strengthen local government, strengthen rural confidence in the central government, and to narrow regional economic differences through more rapid development of the lagging rural areas. Many of the items needed to build a strong Thailand--better government, private enterprise, security, schools, health--were the very things required to eliminate the condition and situations that could be exploited effectively by subversive elements. The United States was very much involved in helping the Thai Government reach these objectives through the U.S. AID program. ^{9/}

Since March 1964, the Air Commando Detachment at Udorn AB had been sending joint US/Thai medical teams into remote areas of the northeast. By mid-1966, the mobile medical teams had treated nearly 200,000 patients, and this effort was accelerated later with the arrival of the 606th ACS medical personnel. It was said that for many of these patients the treatment constituted their first benefit from the Thai Government. To help the Thais become self-sufficient, basic medical courses were being taught to village volunteers. Graduates would return to the villages and provide continuing medical care. A major problem thus far had been the attitude of the Thai doctors. It was reported that they frequently treated the villagers harshly, as inferiors and created as much ill feeling as they did good. ^{10/}

There was a natural tendency to compare the Thailand insurgency with the early insurgency days in the Republic of Vietnam. At times it did appear to be the story of Vietnam all over again. But, there were two major differences: despite inherent economic and political weaknesses which allowed

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insurgency to grow, the Thai Government had not inherited a viable infrastructure of insurgency as had the Vietnam Government; and although it was surrounded by infiltration routes, it was not a divided country as was Vietnam. By Asian standards, Thailand was a viable nation with a government that could govern well. It had a history of independence, traditions that helped to unify the people, and a relatively well-established social order. Although there were divisive influences present in the Thai social structure, there was an underlying structure of national strength and unity. The economy generally was strong and growing. While these things, in themselves, were not sufficient to prevent or deter aggression, they did provide the basic framework upon which effective defenses could be built. ^{11/}

Basically, the objective of the United States was to prevent Thailand from becoming another Vietnam. On the optimistic side, it was generally agreed that the Thai Government was taking positive steps not only to counter the insurgency but to build a viable nation through helping its people. Because it was being directed from without, the insurgency would likely continue at an increased pace, and the COIN effort would be a long and costly process. The degree of insurgent activity would depend upon the degree of effort applied by Asian Communist nations, mainly North Vietnam and Communist China. Although there was much yet to be done by the Thai Government, they were much better prepared to combat terrorism at year's end than they had been at the beginning of the year. As Ambassador Martin stated, much of the credit for this would have to go to the helicopters provided by USAF. He said: ^{12/}

[REDACTED]

"Their work has covered the whole spectrum of non-combat activities throughout the northeast and to a lesser extent in other areas. A listing of a few of the kinds of work they have performed would include logistical services to military and civil agencies, flood relief, errands of mercy, support to Thai rural development programs and to related USOM activities, essential transport and communications services for the various Thai police agencies throughout the northeast, linkage between isolated areas and provincial capitals, transport of provincial governors and other officials from their headquarters to remote villages, and a host of other services too numerous to mention.

"The cumulative impact of all this had extended far beyond the intrinsic value of the tasks performed. It has resulted in stimulating, at a critical time, an essential surge of activity which would have been done in no other way. The psychological impact of this vast increased activity has given a credibility to the prospects for social and economic progress and an almost daily evident increase in hope and confidence.

"The work of these helicopters has shown dramatically to the Thai not only the need but the practicality of unifying this region. These 25 helicopters have had a catalytic effect on the Thai counterinsurgency effort which could not have been produced by several years of vastly more expensive and more diffused direct assistance. The results are evident everywhere--in getting governors out in their provinces, accelerating the fielding of medical and information teams, and stimulating further deployments of Thai security forces into critical areas."

CHRONOLOGY OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES *
1966

January - Insurgent incidents reported in January included four terrorist initiated ambushes, seven policemen killed and four wounded, ten civilians assassinated and one wounded. Terrorists also forced closing of schools in two villages in January; since then other teachers have asked permission to leave their jobs.

Counterinsurgency operations by Thai police and military units in Nakhon Phanom Province, northeast Thailand, resulted in the capture of one known and four suspected communists, and the death of a "probable" insurgent. Subversives in the area were reported to be suffering from food shortages and were seeking fresh supplies by nighttime travel to their home villages.

In nearby Sakon Nakhon Province, five suspected communists armed with homemade rifles were apprehended, two communists--one believed to be a Vietnamese--were killed, and weapons, communist propaganda, training materials, and a rice cache were captured. It was reported that a Thai ranger team which parachuted into the province killed 11 communists and captured five suspects.

Estimates by Thai and U.S. officials indicated that the mountains of Nakhon Phanom Province hid at least 150 subversives. There had been firefights between police and subversives and several small campsites had been discovered.

Police arrested 22 suspected communists in northeast Thailand in late January. Eight of these were arrested in Sisaket Province, two of whom were said to have entered Thailand illegally from Laos. The remaining 14 were arrested in Nakhon Phanom Province; they had been identified as communists by persons previously arrested.

February - An OSI report described three terrorist attacks in early February 1966 against Thai policemen at three separate districts in northern Ubon Province, northeast Thailand. At about 2300 hours on 10 Feb 66, a terrorist who was not further identified shot and critically wounded two Thai provincial police reservists who were on duty at a religious festival. At approximately 0100 hours on 11 February, two provincial policemen on duty at another religious festival in another district were shot and wounded by a terrorist. On the same day in another area, a provincial policemen walking an unaccompanied foot patrol was shot and killed by a terrorist.

* This chronology was prepared from available intelligence reports.

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As of 11 February, 263 communist suspects had surrendered in Sawang Daen Din District according to Thai military authorities in Sakon Nakhon. Interrogation of 27 of these revealed them to be new members who claimed they were forced to join the subversives and who said their decision to turn themselves in was prompted by government suppression operations.

Khamton Muphasa, an anti-communist village chief in Udorn Province was killed on 12 February. He had been warned by the communists in November 1965 that he had only three months to live if he did not switch allegiance to them.

After the murder of Muphasa, the government initiated a new suppression operation in Udorn Province on 24 February. Using helicopters in bad weather--providing an element of surprise--government forces arrested 83 communist suspects, of whom 69 were on the list of 85 suspects to be picked up.

The clandestine Vietnamese communist organization in the northeast took up a collection from the Vietnamese refugees on 27-28 February--money allegedly earmarked for the defense of North Vietnam against "American Imperialists." A collection for the same purpose was taken up on the occasion of the Vietnamese New Year.

March - Early March, six or seven men, whom Thai police identified as a Communist propaganda team, fired at a four-man police patrol near Nong Sang Soi Village in Udorn Province. In a forest area just outside the village, police exchanged shots with the group. Reportedly, the communist group had visited the village earlier and its leader had praised the communist system. He was said to be armed with a new machine gun and to have "plenty of ammunition." This was the first report of a communist group initiating an attack on a police patrol in Udorn Province. It occurred about 20 miles southwest of Udorn Air Base.

After the murder of a village chief in Udorn Province, apparently by communist terrorists, Thai police and military units arrested 83 persons as suspected communists. Two of the arrested persons were believed to be the murderers of the village chief, and six were thought to be communist leaders. Subsequently, 53 of the suspects admitted communist activity; many said they had received weapons training from a 17-man Communist guerrilla unit. Four weapons were captured when the arrests were made. The suspects were arrested about 20 miles west of Udorn Air Base.

In late March following a fire fight with a group of approximately 10 terrorists in Nakhon Phanom Province, a Thai police unit discovered a small cave containing "a number of large tins" filled

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with rice. A short distance from the cave was found a man-shaped plastic target which was apparently used for small arms practice.

In a separate incident in adjacent Ubon Province, Thai police attacked a group of 10 subversives, capturing eight and killing two. The dead were a subversive leader named Moon and his deputy. Police discovered a quantity of books and other documents including a "large number" of application forms completed by prospective members. During interrogation of the prisoners, police learned that Moon had offered to pay 2,000 baht (\$100) to anyone who recruited another member for the group.

April - In northeast Thailand, a newly established concept of reconnaissance patrols backed by a mobile strike force to counter subversion in Sakon Nakhon Province was tested on 2 April. Near Ta Daeng Village, about 20 communists fought a 15-man government reconnaissance patrol reinforced by a strike team brought to the scene by a USAF helicopter from Udorn. One member of the patrol and one communist were killed. Three communists, two rifles, one carbine, one hand grenade and assorted types of ammunition were captured. The hand grenade reportedly was of Chinese communist manufacture.

USAF helicopters were used to airlift Thai police and military forces into Udorn and Sakon Nakhon Provinces on 9 and 10 April for communist suppression operations. Early reports indicated the force had killed one suspected communist and had arrested 39. The dead suspect had two houses reportedly able to accommodate 51 to 65 men and he had been reported preparing enough food for 50 to 70 men each day. He was killed when he reached for a pistol. The area of operations was approximately 40 to 50 miles east southeast of Udorn Air Base. There were five suspected communist-directed assassinations and 14 clashes between police and known or suspected subversives in the area during the period 1 January to 31 March 1966.

In mid-April, an hour long fire-fight occurred between 17 Thai Border Patrol police and 15 communist terrorists in Songkhla Province, southern Thailand. One policeman was wounded and one communist was killed. The police captured food, medical supplies, Chinese language documents, and a .30 caliber rifle. The dead terrorist was wearing a green uniform with a cap bearing a red star. A week later, an 18-man Thai and Malaysian security patrol clashed with five communist terrorists in the same district. A large quantity of medicine and bandages were captured.

At 1910 hours on 23 April, a group of ten communists opened fire with tracer ammunition and grenades on a government patrol in

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Udon Province. Later that night, the same patrol clashed for about 20 minutes with another group of communists in the same area. Members of the patrol reported hearing women's voices in the communist group. Government casualties were one wounded, while communist casualties were not known. The government patrol reported finding spent carbine and M-3 submachine gun cartridges in the area.

Between 19 and 24 April 1966, Thai police conducted a training and reconnaissance operation in Sahat Sakhan District of Kalasin Province, northeast Thailand. The operation was predicated on USAF aerial photos which showed shelters, "T" shaped trenches, cultivated fields, slash and burn activity and numerous trails in a 120 square kilometer area which had no villages. USAF helicopters airlifted 217 policemen into the area. No contact was made with subversives; however, police did find seven empty but recently occupied houses at one location; a "T" shaped trench and firing range at a second; and gun cleaning patches and rags, cooking pots and food recently abandoned at a third location. This was the first police operation reported in this section of Kalasin Province. During 1965, five persons in the province were reported assassinated by subversive elements, apparently in an effort to intimidate the local populace into cooperating with the subversives and shielding them from the police.

May -

In two incidents in northeast Thailand in May, combat offensive actions were initiated by communist terrorists against regular Royal Thai Army forces for the first time. Also, the RTA suffered its first KIA casualties in combat operations against the communists. In the first incident on 18 May at 2100 hours an estimated eight terrorists attacked a small group of RTA soldiers who were guarding CMP-1 in Udon Province. Friendly casualties resulting from this encounter were two KIA and one WIA. No known enemy casualties were inflicted.

On 20 May at 1230 hours an RTA patrol from Korat was ambushed by an estimated 20 communists in Sakon Nakhon Province. The patrol broke contact but was ambushed again when returning to base camp. No casualties were sustained.

A joint military-police training and subversive suppression operation in Udon and Sakon Nakhon Province was conducted from 9 April to 26 May 1966. As of 23 May, there had been seven firefights which resulted in two communists captured and four killed while government forces sustained two killed and two wounded. Government forces also captured one carbine, one Springfield rifle, and a quantity of food and clothing which appeared to have been made in Bangkok. One of the communists killed was Chit Phumsakdi, whose identity card listed his residence as 15 kilometers from Bangkok.

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Thai communists were reported to be offering a bounty of 6,000 Baht (\$300) for the killing of a Thai policeman, and 20,000 Baht (\$1,000) for the killing of any officer of any Thai police agency. These offers reportedly were made to Thai villagers near Nakhon Phanom a few months previously and had spread by word of mouth westward toward Udorn. A communist terrorist killed by police near the end of March had on his body 1,000 Baht and the insignia of a Thai policeman who had been killed previously.

June - USAF CH-3C helicopters supported a government sweep operation in the Phu Sing Mountains near the Lao border in the northeast, beginning on 3 June. When the operation was brought to an end on 7 June, 168 people had been arrested. However, only five of these were being held for further investigation. The remainder had been released. Only one of the five suspects admitted to being a communist, claiming he had not joined the communists until late April 1966. This suspect had been captured by the villagers themselves and turned in to the police. They claimed he was pro-communist and always harassed them.

A combined Thai police and military patrol was ambushed on a highway in Nakhon Phanom Province, northeast Thailand, on 11 June. Five Thai soldiers and two provincial police were killed and one military vehicle was set afire.

In another incident occurring in the same province on 15 June, about 30 persons ambushed a government Land Rover carrying five government officials along a highway from Nakhon Phanom City to Mukdahan City. Despite bullets striking a front tire and the chassis of the vehicle, the driver was able to drive past the "kill zone." The assailants withdrew as 17 armed Thai soldiers jumped out of a truck which had been following about one hundred yards behind the Rover. The soldiers took up defensive positions on both sides of the road and exchanged fire with the assailants.

July - A communist captured in July in Lerng Nok Tha District, Ubon Province, revealed that 120 fully armed and equipped communists--including 70 Vietnamese who had infiltrated from Laos -- were located in the district. The Thai government began a military operation to search for the communists, using 1,500 government troops and T-28 aircraft, which bombed suspected communist positions. Results were unknown.

A Thai communist defector told U.S. interrogators that in February he had completed an eight month political and military training course given in the Hoa Binh area of North Vietnam. He said his class of 130 Thais, most of them from northeastern Thailand, had been taught by North Vietnamese officers and that the training included guerrilla tactics.

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Another defector surrendered weapons and field equipment which had been issued to him in Cambodia for use in guerrilla-type missions in Thailand. He said he had been forced by armed men to go to Cambodia in March 1965 and again in February 1966 for training in guerrilla and sabotage activities. During training, 60 men from Thailand were assigned with him. They were drilled in firing the M-1 rifle, submachine guns and light machine guns, and in handling explosives, throwing hand grenades, planting land mines and booby traps, and sabotage. The defector led police into the jungle in Buriram Province and helped them recover mines and explosives which had been planted by members of his unit.

August - During the period 12 July - 15 August, more incidents of communist violence occurred in Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, and Nong Khai Provinces in the northeast. Among these incidents were seven encounters with government forces, six assassinations, twelve forced village meetings, four kidnappings, and two forced entries into private residences. Among the six persons assassinated were two government intelligence agents, a sub-district chief, and a school teacher. Three of the kidnappings occurred following forced village meetings. One of the victims was the younger brother of a village chief and another, the son of a village defense unit member. USAF helicopters were used to transport Thai security people to counter these activities.

During a Thai Government suppression operation in Sakon Nakhon Province, government troops clashed with subversive units on four occasions and discovered two empty campsites which had been occupied by subversives. One of the camps was large enough to accommodate 80 people and contained 36 individual living quarters and 35 foxholes. The second camp site contained six foxholes. The larger of the two appeared to have been used for about six months and contained a small arms firing range, a tent large enough to house 26 persons and three other tents believed to have been used for housing persons in command.

The following evening an unidentified helicopter was observed shining a light down toward the camp. Attempts to shoot it down were unsuccessful and it flew off in the direction of the Phu Pha Lek mountains. In a village near the camp site, government forces learned that six male and three female villagers were in Peking attending a guerrilla warfare school. The large camp site was less than a mile from the scene of a 23 June ambush during which about 15 to 20 guerrillas attacked a village defense patrol and killed two policemen.

An intelligence agency reported that Pathet Lao and Thai communists met in Laos and discussed policy for future subversive action in

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Thailand. The policy makers reportedly flew into Laos from Hanoi by helicopter. Planned activities given by priority were to assassinate Thai military personnel, police officials, village leaders, school teachers and volunteer defense members. Additional items mentioned on the list was to ambush and destroy supply movements or support units, bridges and government offices, kidnap VIPs, and recruit new members.

On a large sweep operation by government forces on 24 August, eight UH-1F helicopters from the 606th ACS and two CH-3Cs of the 20th Helicopter Sq airlifted approximately 350 police and army troops from Udorn and Sakon Nakhon to positions surrounding an insurgent area 40 miles east of Udorn AB. A DASC was established at the command post and two Hueys (UH-1F) supported the operation on a continuing basis by resupplying and relocating government forces. Fifty-one captives were taken and sizable terrorist camp and supplies were seized. Twelve government troops were wounded in clashes, and two villagers were murdered by the terrorists in retaliation for aiding government forces.

September - Approximately 60 Thai communist guerrillas, armed with about 20 carbines, rifles, and some submachine guns, held a forced village assembly near Nakhon Phanom AB and displayed one mortar, size unknown. The mortar was described as a large tube with stand and plate, and one round was fired as a demonstration. The remainder of the meeting consisted of anti-U.S. and anti-Thai government speeches.

An intelligence source advised that 30 villagers from Pla Pak and Phan Than villages, located about 25 miles southwest of Nakhon Phanom AB, traveled to Laos for insurgency training.

September intelligence reports indicated that forced village assemblies conducted by subversive groups in northeast Thailand had shown a steady increase over the previous six months. During the period, March through May, a total of eight assemblies were reported. Ten were reported in June, 13 in July, and 21 in August. More than one-half of the incidents in August occurred in Nakhon Phanom Province where the USAF had units at Nakhon Phanom AB and at Mukdahan City.

These forced assemblies included more violence than had been displayed in the past. In one instance, a villager who refused to attend a meeting was publicly executed and in two other villagers were abducted by the subversives. The assemblies were apparently intended to spread communist propaganda and to impress villagers with the strength and power of the subversive units.

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Crew members of two USAF aircraft reported receiving ground fire during landing approaches at Ubon AB. The pilot of a C-130 reported he saw two or three rounds of small arms tracer fire at 2330 hours, 22 September, while at an altitude of 300 feet and about two miles northeast of the runway. No other crew member observed it and no damage was inflicted.

About 3½ hours later, the pilot in the front seat of an F-4C observed groundfire, while at an altitude of 1,500 feet and 11 miles northeast of the runway. He said a large diffused light came from the ground through the haze layer and appeared directed at his aircraft. He observed about ten rounds of small arms tracer fire originate from the general area of the light. The other pilot did not observe the incident. No damage was inflicted.

Attention in insurgency was diverted in September by the serious flooding of the Mekong River, but terrorism continued unabated with forced propaganda meetings in the villages continuing at an increasing rate. Thirty forced propaganda meetings were held during the month.

The intimidating effects of propaganda meetings could be gauged by the response to a joint Thai/U.S. mobile medical team that visited a village in Nakhon Phanom Province on 27 September. This village had been previously subjected to a propaganda meeting and as a result no one came to sick call in contrast to the high turnouts at other similar villages.

In Phattalung Province near the Malaysian border, police clashed with armed communists, killing one on 4 September.

A villager was assassinated on 13 September in Sakon Nakhon Province and an Army Sergeant was killed by insurgents on 17 September.

In Ubon Province a village chief was assassinated during the night of 20 September. On 24 September a police patrol was ambushed with four policemen being wounded; two insurgents were killed.

October - Most terrorist activity in October was concentrated in Nakhon Phanom Province. On 7 October a large group of terrorists surrounded a village and kidnapped two residents. A special operations unit clashed with approximately 50 insurgents on 17 October, killing one communist. One policeman was killed and four others wounded, one of which later died. Several insurgents were wounded when a band of 80 terrorists on their way to an armed propaganda meeting clashed with a police patrol on 21 October. On 23 October one terrorist was killed. A group of insurgents

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attacked a military camp on 29 October without any casualties on either side.

In Ubon Province an operation team clashed with a group of insurgents armed with machine guns on 18 October. Several insurgents wounded in the night skirmish were carried away on litters by the enemy. Terrorists machine-gunned a school teacher off his bicycle as he was riding to work on 17 October.

In Nong Khai Province 11 insurgents surrendered to police officials on 27 October. Meanwhile in southern Thailand only one clash between the border police and communist insurgents was reported.

Hq PACAF Intelligence reported that the continued increase in violence and armed propaganda reflected communist plans to weaken government control at the village and district level while at the same time they increased their influence over the villages. They depended on local support for their rice roots organization as they developed their cadre and trained their new recruits. The disproportionate application of force could backfire and alienate the villages to the subversives if they misjudged local indifference to central government authority as discontent.

Crew members of two USAF aircraft reported additional incidents of groundfire observed in the immediate vicinity of Ubon Air Base. Two pilots of an F-4C reported seeing one round of tracer ammunition apparently directed at their aircraft on 11 October. They were at 1,200 feet altitude and about two miles from the runway at the time. One pilot estimated 20 to 30 AW rounds were fired at the aircraft. On 19 Oct, a pilot of an F-4C reported observing three tracer rounds fired at his aircraft while he was on landing approach about nine miles from the runway.

A medical team sent to a small village in southern Ubon Province, at Thai Government direction, was charging token fees for treatment. As the team was preparing to leave, agitators accused that fees were being pocketed. Attempts were made to show actual medical costs far exceeded charges and were properly accounted for, but the team chief stated that his team and village officials were discredited in the eyes of the villagers.

November - Between 22 October and 14 November, additional incidents involving terrorists occurred in Udorn, Sakon Nakhon and Nakhon Phanom Provinces. There were nine forced village meetings; four clashes between communists and Thai government forces; three attacks on Thai government units of which two were village protection units; five off-duty volunteer defense corpsmen were ambushed; one villager was executed and another abducted; and an attempt was

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made to penetrate a village protection unit area.

The most significant activity during the month was an attack on 12 November by an unknown number of communists resulting in three insurgents KIA and two WIA, with government forces sustaining a loss of two KIA and 12 WIA. Thai Army airborne reinforcements were later flown to the area from Mukdahan by USAF helicopters. The next morning, the Governor of Nakhon Phanom Province requested T-28 strikes that dropped napalm on the suspected insurgent stronghold area.

On 14 November, a government patrol clashed with communists in northern Ubon Province without any casualties. There was a firefight west of Khemmaret on 16 November, with neither side sustaining casualties. A government special operations unit operating in the foothills of the Phu Phan mountains clashed with approximately 25 insurgents including some women on 16 November. There were no government casualties but an unknown number of insurgents were hit during the engagement.

Insurgents burned a wooden bridge in Sakon Nakhon Province on 21 November. An insurgent base camp nearby reportedly contained advisors trained in China and was guarded by sentries.

December - Communist propaganda stated that beginning in 1967 Vietnamese and Thai communists would organize fighting units with the mission of launching attacks against air bases used by the USAF in Thailand and sabotaging roads and bridges in northeast Thailand and Bangkok. The threat was made that American servicemen would be ambushed and killed.

During the first two weeks of December communist activity was again predominantly in the northeast areas. Among the more significant incidents were five armed propaganda meetings using a microphone belonging to the local Buddhist Temple. Government operations teams were attacked on four different occasions.

On 8 December an Assistant Village Chief, who was also the security guard of the village defense unit, was assassinated. Earlier on 1 December in Nakhon Phanom Province, a villager who had been a supplier of provisions for the communists was shot and killed by unidentified men. On 7 December another resident of the same district was kidnapped and taken to the edge of the jungle and killed.

Police authorities discovered on 19 December the two bodies of residents who were kidnapped three days earlier in Nakhon Phanom Province by ten armed communists dressed in military-type

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uniforms. A group of seven village security officers were kidnapped. Later they were released unharmed but without their weapons.

On 29 December, a group of communists held a forced meeting in Ban Pho Cai and gave propaganda speeches about overthrowing the Thai Government and chasing the Americans out of Thailand. They told the villagers that some time in the future 2,000 Communist troops would be sent in as reinforcements in the area. Before leaving, the communists collected one kilogram of rice from each house.

On 31 December, about 14 communists armed with light machine guns and other weapons held a youth meeting at Ban Phon Ngam which was attended by approximately 40 youths from the area.

Communist terrorists were reportedly stepping up their subversion of isolated Meo tribesmen in northern Thailand. The communists had been active in the Meo area since 1959 and had trained a cadre of Meo trainers and propagandists. The Meos had been told to avoid all violence at this time and to await the activist phase which was to begin at some time unspecified when arms would be distributed.

The Chinese Communist Embassy in Vientiane, Laos was reportedly trying to purchase 1:15,000 scale maps of Thailand. One million kip (approximately \$2,000) had been offered for each set obtained.

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GLOSSARY

AAA	Antiaircraft Artillery
AAIRA	Assistant Air Attache
ABCCC	Airborne Command Control Center
ACS	Air Commando Squadron
ACW	Aircraft Control and Warning
AID	Agency for International Development
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
AOC	Air Operations Center
CHICOM	Chinese Communist
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMP	Civilian/Military/Police
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COMUSMACTHAI	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Thailand
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CSAF	Chief of Staff, Air Force
CSOC	Communist Suppression Operations Center
DASC	Direct Air Support Center
ECM	Electronic Countermeasure
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JSC	Joint Suppression Center
JUSMAG	Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group
KBA	Killed by Air
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACTHAI	Military Assistance Command, Thailand
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MDU	Mobile Development Center
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NSC	National Security Command
PL/NVA	Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese Army
RLAF	Royal Laotian Air Force
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
RTAFB	Royal Thai Air Force Base
RTG	Royal Thai Government

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SAW	Special Air Warfare
SAWC	Special Air Warfare Center
SEAITACS	Southeast Asia Integrated Tactical Air Control System
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
TAC	Tactical Air Control
TACAN	Tactical Air Control and Navigation
TACC	Tactical Air Control Center
TACP	Tactical Air Control Party
TACS	Tactical Air Control System
TASS	Tactical Air Support Squadron
TCG	Tactical Control Group
TDY	Temporary Duty
TO&E	Table of Organization and Equipment
TUOC	Tactical Unit Operations Center
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIS	United States Information Service
USOM	United States Overseas Division

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