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13 October 1966

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SPECIAL
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 40/50-66

SECURITY CONDITIONS IN FIVE COUNTRIES
OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC AREA

Submitted by

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Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf

13 October 1966

DATE

NOTE: This is the estimate.
No further version will be
published.

Authenticated:

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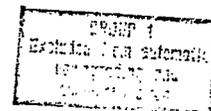
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Mr. Howard C. Brown, Jr., Assistant General Manager Atomic Energy Commission, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

13 October 1966

SUBJECT: SNIE 40/50-66: SECURITY CONDITIONS IN FIVE COUNTRIES
OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC AREA

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the likelihood of incidents which would endanger President Johnson during his visits to Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia, and South Korea.

THE ESTIMATE

1. Australia and New Zealand. The security situations in Australia and New Zealand are roughly similar. Both countries are in the final weeks of a national election campaign in which Vietnam is one of the principal issues. In both countries, students, intellectuals, leftists, and others have demonstrated against participation in the war. Some of these demonstrations

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have involved as many as 2,000 people, but they have been peaceful. Both countries are likely to permit some demonstrations at the time of the President's visit.

2. The police and security agencies of both Australia and New Zealand are well-trained and competent. In close cooperation with US officials, they will take all possible precautions to control demonstrators and will probably be able to prevent any situation which might endanger President Johnson. Their problems will be made more manageable by the generally high regard for the US which prevails among the people of both countries.

3. Thailand. The great majority of Thai people are loyal to their government, particularly the Crown, and favorably disposed toward the US and its role in defense of South Vietnam. The small-scale Communist insurgencies in northeast Thailand and in the south have had virtually no impact on the security situation in Bangkok. The indigenous Thai Communist Party is outlawed and, in any case, probably has fewer than 500 members and would be incapable of mounting any significant demonstration against the President. Even among students and intellectuals, there is little overt anti-US sentiment in Thailand. Any demonstration attempted by these or other potentially dissident elements would probably not attract

more than a handful of participants and could be controlled easily by Thai security forces.

4. Thai security forces in the Bangkok area are fairly well-trained, their domestic intelligence capabilities are good, and they would round up potential troublemakers if it seemed prudent. There are close relationships between the Thai security forces and US officials in Thailand and the Thai will cooperate to take precautions to prevent any incident which might endanger the President. The National Police (including its Central Investigation Department and the Metropolitan Police) will have the primary responsibility for security during the President's visit to Bangkok. On any occasion in which the King participates, the well-trained elite Royal Guard will share responsibility. If considered necessary, the security forces would be augmented by major units of the Thai Armed Forces stationed nearby. We believe that Thai security forces will be able to prevent a situation in Bangkok which would jeopardize the President's safety.

5. Security at US bases in northeast Thailand is the responsibility of special Thai units, armed and supplied by the US but under Thai command, and stationed on and around the bases. These bases are close to the operational areas of some 600-1,000

armed Thai Communist dissidents. The Thai security guards may be infiltrated by Communist agents. Though none of the bases has yet been attacked by the Thai insurgents, it is possible that terrorists with advance information on the President's destination would attempt sabotage or a minor armed action, e.g., a mortar attack, on the base he visits.

6. Malaysia. Malaysia has a weak but vocal leftwing opposition which strongly opposes US policy in Vietnam. Pro-Communist, ethnic Chinese youths from this opposition constitute the principal security problem in Kuala Lumpur. Over the past year, small groups of them have damaged US property and engaged in noisy demonstrations against US officials. It is likely that these same extremists will use the occasion of the President's visit to attempt once more to show their hostility, and small-scale sporadic demonstrations will probably occur.

7. Malaysian security officials will detain leftists leaders and other extremists who might have access to Kuala Lumpur during the President's visit. Security during the visit will be the responsibility of the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), a generally efficient and experienced force with specialized paramilitary units totaling several thousand men with intensive training in

riot control. Intelligence functions of the RMP -- concentrated in its Special Branch -- are highly developed; there is an excellent capability for swift response to fast-breaking situations. The RMP will cooperate closely with US officials and we believe that it will be able to prevent any situation that will jeopardize the President's safety. We believe, furthermore, that it will prevent any large demonstrations and keep any small demonstrations from getting out of hand.

8. South Korea. There is little overt opposition in South Korea to US policy in Vietnam. Under the vigorously anti-Communist Pak government, of course, such opposition would be suppressed. More important, it would probably be unpopular; most South Koreans clearly approve of US military intervention in defense of small Asian nations. There is much less certainty, however, that South Koreans approve President Pak's heavy commitment of ROK combat troops to the conflict. His leading political opponents charge him with weakening the nation's defenses; more vehement critics charge that he is bartering Korean bodies for US dollars in a series of shady deals. Such charges have failed to spark significant public opposition to the government; nor has the generally favorable Korean attitude toward the US been impaired. We believe

therefore that President Johnson, when he visits Seoul, will receive a friendly reception from most South Koreans.*

9. It is possible, however, that Pak's political opponents might stimulate small demonstrations in connection with President Johnson's visit in order to cause the Pak government to lose face. Such tactics are traditional in Korean politics; moreover, opposition leaders are currently engaged in a no-holds-barred preelection campaign to discredit Pak. It is unlikely, however, that these opposition leaders, most of whom seek US friendship and support, would deliberately endanger President Johnson in the course of their demonstrations or other antics.

10. In any case, we believe that South Korean security forces available in the Seoul area would be capable of controlling any hostile demonstration and preventing a situation which would jeopardize the safety of President Johnson. The National Police, who will have a major share of the responsibility for the visitors' safety, are tough and experienced in crowd control. So are the ROK Army contingents permanently assigned to internal security duties in the Seoul area. Intelligence organizations -- the ROK

* In the only previous comparable visit, the public reception of President Eisenhower in 1960 was so enthusiastic that the Presidential motorcade had to be rerouted to avoid the crowds.

Central Intelligence Agency and the ROK Army Counterintelligence Corps -- are efficient and cooperative with their US counterparts. They will probably round up known troublemakers and issue stern warnings in appropriate political and student circles.

11. While there have always been some North Korean agents in the Seoul area, their missions have not involved deliberate violence but rather intelligence collection and recruitment.

12. In the event of a Presidential visit to US military bases north of Seoul, ROK forces would probably share security responsibilities with US military forces. In view of the generally secure conditions prevailing in this area, we do not believe that such a visit would involve any significant risk to the President.

13. General. In none of these five countries can we exclude the possibility of an assassination attempt, for example by a Communist or psychopath.