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January 31, 1951

OIR/DRF Contribution for NIE 20: Resistance
of Thailand, Burma, and Malaya to Communist
Pressures in the Event of an Early Communist
Victory in Indochina

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Problem

To assess the will and ability of Thailand, Burma, and Malaya to resist Communist political and military pressures in the event of an early Communist victory in Indochina.

SCOPE

This paper will examine political, psychological, and military conditions in Thailand, Burma, and Malaya in order to determine (a) to what extent these countries would be willing and able to resist political and indirect military pressures that would result from the establishment of Communist control in Indochina; (b) their capabilities for repelling actual military attack; (c) the possibilities for concerted action among them; and (d) the effect on these countries of large-scale employment of Chinese Communist armed forces in Southeast Asia.

(Refer to Terms of Reference for NIE 20 issued by the Central Intelligence Agency 17 January 1951; only sections allocated to State/OIR are treated below.)

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QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

I. WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IN THAILAND OF A COMMUNIST VICTORY IN INDOCHINA?

A. Local Communist movements in Thailand have confined their activities mainly to organizing an apparatus for propaganda and covert political activity. The Thai Government has introduced a number of measures to control Communist activities, although [REDACTED] Thai officials has militated against the effectiveness of these measures. 25X6

Communist influence prevails among the minority groups, the most significant of which is the economically powerful Chinese minority of some three million. The Chinese Communists have captured the leadership of most of the important organizations of the Chinese community, and, for the present, most politically articulate Chinese have adopted a pro-Pei-p'ing orientation. The Chinese Communist Party in Thailand, which operates covertly, has about 3,000 members but derives additional strength from the Chinese organizations it dominates. The politically conscious segments of the 60,000 Vietnamese in Thailand are led by the Viet Minh, which is Communist-controlled.

The vast majority of the Thai have no comprehension of Communism and have not been exposed to Communist influence to any degree. The Thai Communists probably number less than one hundred and are essentially an appendage of the Chinese Communist Party. The Communists have made attempts to influence the small number of Thai intelligentsia, but with few direct results.

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B. The ruling clique in Thailand depends upon the loyalty of the armed forces to maintain its position. Consequently, the Thai Government is basically unstable; changes in political control can be effected by the disaffection of a few key leaders who control the armed forces. At present, however, Prime Minister Phibul and his supporters, who came to power by a coup d'etat in 1947, command enough strength in the army and police to thwart attempts to overthrow the government. Thai security forces are considered capable of maintaining internal order -- except in the event of direct Communist aggression accompanied by large-scale infiltration and subversion. A reorientation or overthrow of the present Thai Government would, however, be possible at any time if Thai leaders considered Communist pressure to be a direct threat of Thai security.

C. 1. Thai leaders have frequently voiced concern for the independence of Thailand^{and} the preservation of Thai national values in the face of the threat of world Communism. The Thai Government's support of the United Nations action in Korea would seem to reflect at least in part its awareness of the danger of Communism to the integrity of weaker states. Measures designed to control Communism in Thailand have been promulgated, although the ineffective manner in which these programs have been implemented indicates a gap between awareness of the Communist threat and ability or willingness to take the decisive action necessary to meet this challenge. Although Thai leaders are generally aware of the dangers from world Communism, Thai leaders, when faced by superior external forces, would be inclined to preserve national integrity by effecting a political adjustment.

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2. The attitude of Thai leaders toward the Viet Minh is strongly conditioned by a long-standing Thai antagonism toward the French. While generally aware of the Communist character of the Viet Minh, the Thai leaders also regard that organization as a more genuine instrumentality for Vietnamese nationalism than the Bao Dai government, which is closely associated with the French. The Thai Government has reluctantly gone along on measures to support the Bao Dai regime because of Thailand's alignment with the West.

3. A Viet Minh victory in Indochina under any conditions would make Thai leaders more apprehensive of the Communist threat, particularly of Chinese Communist intentions toward Thailand. Thai apprehensions would be greatest in the event of direct Chinese Communist participation in a Viet Minh victory and manifestations of hostile Communist intentions toward Thailand. Chinese Communist withdrawal following direct participation in Indochina might temporarily allay Thai apprehensions, especially if accompanied by a diminution of Communist political activities in Thailand. A Viet Minh victory in Indochina without overt Chinese Communist participation would cause somewhat less concern among Thai leaders -- particularly if, as considered unlikely, the Viet Minh permitted at least nominal non-Communist participation in government and refrained from setting up Communist-controlled regimes in Laos and Cambodia. Under these conditions Thai leaders might wish to avoid antagonizing the Viet Minh regime and might even establish nominal relations with it while recognizing its Communist character and its potential threat to Thailand. Meanwhile the Thai could be expected to maintain their

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present ties with the West and to explore the possibilities of a firm commitment from the West in the event of Communist aggression. In any case, a Viet Minh victory in Indochina would cause Thai leaders to consider actively the possibility of a firm commitment from the West or accommodation with the Communist bloc. Direct Chinese Communist or Viet Minh military pressure against Thailand would obviously precipitate such a decision.

D. 1. The present Thai Government has been subject to increasing Communist propaganda (Soviet, Chinese, and Viet Minh), including vague threats of military attack, and to limited Communist infiltration. Thus far the Thai Government has resisted these pressures and has attempted to cope with Communist activities in Thailand. Probably the present Thai Government will continue these policies at least until such a time as the Communists are in a position to exert direct military pressure or to effect large-scale infiltrations and give assistance to dissidents in Thailand. In the event of a Viet Minh victory in Indochina followed by manifestations of hostile Communist intentions, Thailand would seek either a firm commitment from the West for full support in case of Communist attack or an understanding with the Communist bloc that would forestall Communist aggression. The second alternative might necessitate a change in the present Thai Government either with or without the connivance of the present ruling clique. The possibility of accommodation would be markedly increased by a Communist take-over in Burma and by Communist successes in other areas of the world, particularly if the US had not actively intervened in adjacent areas. In any event

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Thai resistance to full-scale Communist political pressure, infiltration, subversion, or direct military attack would be conditional upon receipt of prompt, effective, outside support and upon the Thai estimate as to the success of such a defensive effort.

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II. WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IN BURMA OF A COMMUNIST VICTORY IN INDOCHINA?

A. The Government of Burma has been engaged in suppressing a number of Communist and other dissident groups that have been in open rebellion since 1948. The position of the Government improved in 1950, and the areas controlled by the Communists and other dissident elements have been gradually reduced. It is possible that the government will be able to destroy organized rebel resistance by the end of 1951, provided that these groups receive no significant amount of outside aid, although a degree of internal unrest will probably persist for some time.

Dissident Groups:

(1) Burma Communist Party (BCP) or White Flag Communists.

The strength of the BCP is estimated to be from 5,000 to 10,000, although it derives additional influence from the front organizations it controls and the popular sympathy and support that it sometimes can evoke. In the election of April 1947 -- the only general election held in Burma since World War II -- some 125,000 out of approximately 1,830,000 voters cast their ballots for Communist candidates. Government military successes and the splintering of the BCP-dominated People's Democratic Front have reduced the following of the BCP. In the past year the military forces of the BCP have been dislodged from a number of strong points in central Burma and have been moving north toward the Chinese border.

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Although diminished in strength and short of supplies, the BCP forces are capable of extensive guerrilla action against the government. The BCP would be a likely recipient of aid if the Chinese Communists should decide to support dissident groups in Burma.

- (2) Communist Party of Burma (CPB) or Red Flay Communists. The CPB is a maverick Communist group that has little popular support. The CPB forces of perhaps 1,000 men operate in a limited area in western Burma. While no threat to the Government in itself, the CPB contributes to the General unrest in Burma.

- (3) Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO). The KNDO is the military arm of the Karen minority, which seeks full independence from Burma. The present strength of the KNDO is probably about 6,000. The great majority of the three million Karens are at least passively sympathetic to the KNDO movement and bear a long-standing animosity toward the Burmese population and the Rangoon government. Recent government military victories have forced the Karens from many of their strong points and brought some Karens to reluctant acceptance of the necessity for a settlement with the government. Nevertheless, the KNDO rebellion remains a major problem for

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(4) People's Volunteer Organization (PVO).

The PVO is a quasi-military organization that seceded from the AFPEL, the political coalition in control of the government. Elements of the dissident PVO's joined the Communist-dominated People's Democratic Front (PDF). At present the PVO commands a relatively small following, although it once had wide popular support. Military defeats have diminished its strength, and some PVO's have surrendered under the government's amnesty program; today there probably are only about five thousand PVO's still in opposition to the government. It is anticipated that PVO support will dwindle further in the event of continued government military victories.

(5) Pyaukas or Arakanese Moslems.

The Pyaukas of the western coastal area of Burma have sponsored a separatist movement that has led to minor local disorders. Government forces are capable of coping with the not more than 1,500 armed Pyaukyas.

B. In the event of Communist control of Indochina, the Burmese Government could probably continue to exercise the present degree of control over Communist and other dissident elements if these groups received no significant amounts of outside assistance.

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However, recent reports of an aid agreement between the Chinese Communist regime and the Burma Communist Party point up the possibility of a Communist program of infiltration and subversion across the Burma-China border, which in itself would materially increase the difficulties of the government in dealing with dissident groups. Control of Indochina would afford the Communists further channels for small-scale movement of arms and irregular forces across the inadequately controlled Burma border and give them access to material that presumably would no longer be required in Indochina. While Communist control of Malaya would have little direct effect on the capacity of the Burmese Government to control dissident elements, Communist expansion into Thailand would expose Burma to greatly increased Communist infiltration along the extensive Thai border. Burmese armed forces would be unable to institute effective control of the country's borders while simultaneously conducting operations against dissidents within the country. Thus Communist control of contiguous territory in Indochina and Thailand, coupled with a determined program of infiltration and support of dissident movements, would imperil the government and national security of Burma.

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C.1 The majority of the Burmese leaders do not consider Communism per se a threat to independence and sovereignty, although some leading members of the government, including the present Prime Minister, have become increasingly aware of the designs of international Communism and have taken a firm stand against Communism in Burma. Many members of the political elite have a Marxist political background; generally these leaders do not regard Communism as an instrument of Soviet or Chinese Imperialism, even though they are apprehensive of the Chinese threat to Burma's northeastern frontier.

2. Burmese leaders regard the Viet Minh as an indigenous nationalist movement, although they are aware of its Communist character and its connections with the Chinese Communists.

3. A Viet Minh victory in Indochina with no indication of overt Chinese participation or with overt Chinese participation followed by immediate withdrawal of Chinese forces would probably not affect the concept of Communism held by Burmese leaders. Overt Chinese Communist assistance to the Viet Minh followed by evidence of Chinese Communist intentions of maintaining forces in Indochina would probably cause Burmese leaders to reevaluate the Viet Minh's relationship to international Communism. In the event that either of these developments were followed by political and military pressure on Burma from Communist China or Vietnam, already existing Burmese apprehensions of Chinese aggression, which are largely divorced from ideological considerations

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would be confirmed. However, even these conditions would not necessarily effect a fundamental reorientation of Burma's foreign policy vis-a-vis world Communism.

D. The present government of Burma would probably resist Communist political pressures and threats of military attack. The government has been actively suppressing the indigenous Communist insurrections since 1948 and would continue to combat future Communist infiltration and subversion, including indirect military aid to dissident elements in Burma. Responsible leaders of the present government have categorically stated that Burma would resist Chinese Communist aggression to the extent of the country's limited military capability. Burma would probably look to the UN and India for assistance in the face of imminent aggression, but would probably resist even without such assistance. Short of resisting direct aggression, the Government of Burma can be expected to be very circumspect in its dealings with the Chinese Communists in an effort to avoid giving the Pei-p'ing regime an excuse for overt action against Burma. A decision by the Burmese Government to resist a Chinese Communist invasion would probably have widespread emotional support from the population, although there might be little effective concerted action in opposition to the Chinese aggressors. It can be expected that the Chinese Communists invaders would meet guerrilla opposition even if the Burmese Army were defeated.

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There is a possibility that the present government could be displaced by a regime that would capitulate to a Communist threat without real resistance. Although it lacks strong popular support, the present government of Thakin Nu is in a moderately strong position as long as it retains the backing of General Ne Win, who controls the army. Ne Win, the only person at present capable of overthrowing the government by a coup, already commands considerable influence in Thakin Nu government and apparently sees no need to attempt direct control at this time. However, a split with Thakin Nu over the advisability of resistance to Communist aggression could conceivably impel the opportunistic Ne Win to overthrow the present government and seek the best possible settlement for Burma. Indications of Ne Win's intentions are not sufficient to permit an evaluation of the possibility that he would seize power and effect an accommodation with the Communists. However, the possibility would be heightened by Communist success in Thailand and Malaya.

E. The Government of Burma is primarily concerned with the possibility of aggression against Burma from Communist China. Communist take-overs in the other areas of mainland Southeast Asia would probably tend to intensify Burmese fears of aggression from China but might not shake the resolve of the present government to resist any attacks from China or Communist aggression mounted from bases in Southeast Asia. There is a possibility, however, that the present government might be displaced by a regime seeking accommodation with the Communists.

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III. WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IN MALAYA OF A COMMUNIST VICTORY IN INDOCHINA?

The lack of a national consciousness in Malaya's diverse population makes it impossible for the British to rely on any effective aid from local population groups in the defense of Malaya. The largest elements of the population, the Malays (43.3 percent) and the Chinese (44.9 percent), form separate, mutually antagonistic communities. Although the Malays form the bulk of the large police force and generally support the British out of fear of the Chinese, it is doubtful that they could make any substantial contribution to the British military effort. The more aggressive and economically powerful Chinese element has generally failed to cooperate with the British effort to suppress local Communist guerrillas, who are largely Chinese, and has in some instances given covert aid. Although not openly committed to Communist China, the anti-Kuomintang majority of the Chinese community is favorably impressed with Communist China's strength. As long as the British are able to maintain their position in Malaya, the Malayan Chinese are likely to remain publicly neutral in their reaction to Communist China. In view of the British failure to eradicate Malaya's Communist guerrillas during the military campaign of the past two years, however, it seems likely that the Malayan Chinese would defect to Communist China if military pressures were applied.

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IV. WHAT WOULD BE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CONCERTED ACTION AGAINST COMMUNISM BY BURMA, MALAYA, AND THAILAND?

Possibilities for effective joint action against Communism by the governments of Burma, Malaya, and Thailand are slight. The British Government in Malaya would be the most willing, as well as the most able, of the three governments to join in a plan for concerted defense, but it would probably be unable within the next eighteen months to provide troops or police to assist in the defense of either of the other countries, which would undoubtedly be menaced before Malaya.

Since early 1949 British authorities in Malaya have been interested in cooperating with other governments in Southeast Asia in an effort to prevent the spread of Communism to Southeast Asia. In January 1949, British and Thai officials agreed on a program for cooperative control of the Thai-Malayan border in an effort to stop Malayan terrorists from using southern Thailand as a refuge out of the range of the Malayan police and army and as a source of supply and recruitment. The joint patrol effort has been fairly successful and can be expected to continue.

The UK has sold military equipment to Thailand for use in the southern provinces and has joined with France, the US, and Thailand in efforts to uncover and prevent the smuggling of arms through Thailand to the Viet Minh. British authorities will no doubt continue these types of joint efforts and perhaps assist with intelligence to discover subversive activities.

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No large-scale cooperative action that would involve the peoples of Malaya would be possible. Most of the large Chinese population in Malaya has maintained publicly a politically neutral attitude and has been unwilling to help the British authorities in Malaya combat the Communist-led terrorists who have operated from the Malayan jungles since 1948. In fact, if a Communist move against Thailand showed promise of success, it could be anticipated that many Malayan Chinese who now appear neutral, as well as those who have already come out for the Communists, would -- first covertly and later overtly -- make terms with and assist a Communist effort against Malaya. The few Malayan Chinese who have publicly supported the British in the last few years (e.g., Tan Cheng Lock, H. S. Lee) would be unable to rally any effective Chinese support for the British and would be forced to rely on British protection for their lives.

The Malay population, about equal in number to the Chinese, would also prove unable and unwilling to assist a cooperative effort against Communism. There has been no particular sympathy and practically no contact between the Malays in Malaya and the Thai or Burmese, and there is the gulf of a different language and a different religion between them. Hence, the Malays could not be aroused for any cooperative action in those neighboring countries despite the possible desire of a few Malay leaders to participate (and it is not clear what

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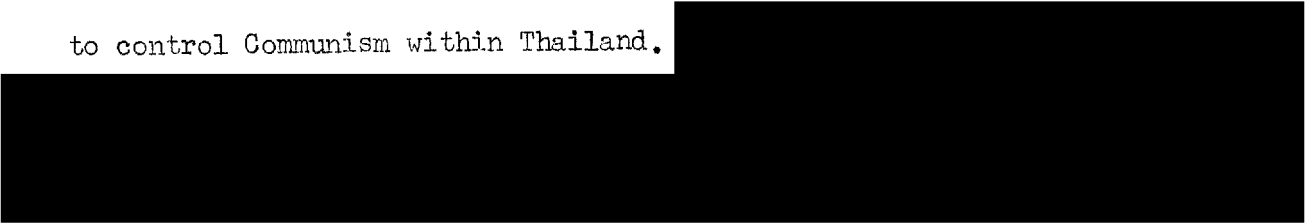
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attitude the Malay leaders would take). It is even doubtful how much, if any, support the Malay population would give to the defense of Malaya itself against direct or indirect aggression.

The present government of Thailand under Field Marshal Phibul has from time to time expressed an interest in joining a Pacific Pact for defense against Communism. This government would be interested in any cooperative effort that assured Thailand sufficient military support from other powers, particularly the US, to guarantee Thailand against direct Communist aggression or that helped the Thai Government to control subversion within its borders (i.e., the joint patrol operation on the Thai-Malayan border). The Phibul government would receive unenthusiastically, if it did not reject altogether, any suggestion for participation in any small-scale action that would not assure Thailand's security against aggression or that might antagonize a would-be aggressor.

Despite Thailand's generous offer of troops to the UN forces in Korea, Thailand would not provide troops to Burma or Malaya unless they were being given to a massive US or US-supported UN operation.

25X6 The Phibul government has frequently aligned itself with the 25X6
countries that oppose Communism. It has publicized widely its efforts
to control Communism within Thailand.



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Failing the

assurance of full military support from the West, an accommodation of the Thai government is likely to take place as soon as, although not before, Thailand is convinced of the hostile intent of a contiguous Communist neighbor. There are no groups among the Thai population that would effectively oppose such an accommodation. Elements of the domiciled Chinese population are being organized into an apparatus for subversion that could influence the Thai government toward accommodation.

Although the Burmese government would itself resist overt Communist aggression, it would be the least willing and the least able of the three governments under discussion to join in concerted action against Communism. The Burmese Government is the only one of the three that already has a common frontier with Communist China (although it should be noted that there are few Chinese Communist troops in the border area and the Chinese Communist government of Yunnan has so far been unable to control the anti-Communist guerrillas operating in that province). The Burmese Government was quick to recognize the Chinese People's Republic and has hesitated to take any action to antagonize that regime. The Burmese Government has followed India, Indonesia, Pakistan, etc., in trying to maintain a neutral position in the East-West struggle, and it has made a covert but as yet ineffective effort to join Indonesia in bringing Viet Minh and French-Bao Dai representatives together to end

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the warfare in Indochina. Since mid-1948, however, the Burmese Government has had to use all its military and administrative capacities to maintain itself in existence in the face of separate insurrections from Communist groups and the Karens. It is only within the last few months that Lower Burma has been pacified sufficiently to give security to the Rangoon environs and to open road and river connections with Mandalay. The insurrectionist groups will undoubtedly continue to be a threat to the Burmese Government and they present a convenient tool for the use of any potential external aggressor. Their existence, as well as the limited capabilities of the Burmese Government, would prevent Burma from giving any real assistance to its neighbors even if the Burmese Government should desire to do so.

It is problematical whether the Burmese Government would be willing to align itself with a cooperative anti-Communist effort in Southeast Asia even if such small matters as joint border patrols, anti-arms smuggling, and the sharing of intelligence unless it were assured strong military assistance by a major foreign power or unless India decided to support an anti-Communist effort in Southeast Asia.

India's attitude toward a concerted effort against Communism in Southeast Asia would be of primary importance in influencing the attitude of the Burmese Government, the Malay and Indian populations of Malaya, and perhaps the Thai Government. It is most unlikely however, that India would attempt to bolster resistance to Communist aggression in any

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Southeast Asian country except Burma. Even in the case of Burma India might, under certain circumstances, be unable or unwilling to do so, and if some attempt were made it would probably be covert and too limited to have much effect. Should Burma be subjected to open military attack from China or Indochina, the country would probably be overrun too rapidly to give India an opportunity for action. But should Thailand be subjected to Communist aggression before Burma, or should Communist operations against Burma take the form of infiltration and subversion, India might be prepared to give Burma moral support and encouragement and, if its own supply position permitted, to furnish the Government of Burma with such arms, ammunition, equipment, etc., as the Burmese might request. It is improbable that India would do more than this and there is little likelihood that it would be willing to send troops to Burma, with the exception of such forces as might operate in the immediate vicinity of the Indo-Burmese border.

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that agreement among the governments of Burma, Thailand, and Malaya for a real effort at concerted action against Communism is unlikely to be reached. Even if an agreement in principle were formulated, it would be of doubtful effectiveness. The three governments together barely possess the military potential to withstand direct Communist aggression such as has occurred in Korea. The most that might be accomplished through such cooperative efforts as patrolling borders, sharing intelligence, controlling smuggling, and planning anti-Communist propaganda would be to slow down Communist infiltration, local indoctrination, and subversion.

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V. B. WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IN THE REMAINDER OF SOUTHEAST ASIA IF A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT WERE ESTABLISHED IN INDOCHINA AS A RESULT OF EMPLOYMENT OF CHINESE COMMUNIST FORCES?

1. The immediate effect in the three remaining mainland countries of a Chinese-supported Communist take-over in Indochina would be increased apprehension for their own safety, measured to an extent by evidence of Chinese intentions either singly or in concert with Viet Minh forces to extend their "liberation," and increased disillusionment concerning the will and ability of the West to counter effectively Communist imperialism in Southeast Asia. Apprehension would be greater if Chinese Communist divisions had participated directly in the Indochinese fighting than if Chinese "volunteer" soldiers had operated under Viet Minh command.

A Chinese-supported Viet Minh victory in Indochina whether or not accompanied, or followed soon, by hostile pressure against Thailand would pose a sufficient threat to stimulate that government immediately to reassess its international alignment. No matter what the degree of Chinese participation in the Viet Minh's victory, Thailand would be inclined to assess the inability or reluctance of the US to commit its own troops to Indochina as being equally applicable to Thailand under similar circumstances. Should the extent of Chinese involvement and influence in Indochina be small and evidence of Viet Minh intentions of moving soon against Thailand lacking, the present regime might nevertheless hesitate to arrange prematurely for an understanding with the Communists and might instead approach the US for a guarantee of effective military support in the event of an invasion of its borders. In the event of failure of such efforts, the government of Thailand would be prepared for a rapid internal shift in

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policy at the first indications of hostile pressure from its Communist neighbors.

Should Chinese political influence and military force accompany the take-over and continue to be present in Indochina, the Thai would consider their country subject to imminent hostile pressure. Under these conditions, Phibul, deeply committed to the Western position, would undoubtedly demand immediate and effective UN or US military support to defend the Thai borders. However, such a demand would probably be more in the nature of a gesture to insure the future reascendency of a government acceptable to the West in the event of eventual victory for the West in the East-West struggle than a real effort to muster aid for an active defense of Thailand. Once convinced of the hostile intent of its neighbors and of the inadequacy of military aid, the Thai Government might be expected to seek rapid accommodation with its Communist neighbors. Under no circumstances would the Thai Government commit what it would undoubtedly consider to be national suicide by inviting Chinese-Viet Minh military aggression through continued, futile, political intransigence.

The present government of Burma would not consider a Chinese-supported Communist victory in Indochina an immediate or direct threat to its own security. Burma's early recognition of Communist China, refusal to recognize the Bao Dai government, and disposition to follow India's leadership in international affairs would incline Burma to maintain a neutral attitude toward Communist China. In the event of Communist aggression against Thailand and Malaya, Burma would probably remain "neutral" unless directly

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attacked or unless, as is highly unlikely, India were to sponsor an effort for concerted defense. However, the government of Burma would in no case capitulate to Chinese aggression unless overthrown by military invasion or an internal coup directed by local Communists or political opportunists. The prospects of concerted action with Thailand and/or Malaya without Indian participation are negligible.

2. The British in Malaya would attempt to maintain their position until forced to withdraw or unless commitments for European defense required withdrawal from Malaya. Even if they were faced, as it is likely they would be, by a critical food shortage in Malaya as a result of the cutting-off of normal mainland food supplies, the British would attempt to hold until forced out by superior military strength.

3. British resolution to hold in Malaya would not increase the possibilities of concerted action in mainland Southeast Asia unless such action were at least supported, if not led, by India or the US.

C. If the Chinese Communists employed armed forces in an attempt to extend their conquest beyond Indochina, the following would probably ensue:

1. Thailand, if it had not already arrived at a political accommodation with China, would probably offer token resistance while at the same time accelerating changes in government necessary to achieve a cease-fire and establish an indigenous government acceptable to the Communist bloc.

Burma, if directly attacked, would resist to the limits of its capabilities, which, in view of military impotence and internal disunity, would soon be exhausted.

2. The British in Malaya, in the absence of compelling reasons to

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withdraw from Malaya (i.e., to assist in the defense of the UK), would resist in Malaya until forced to withdraw by superior military force.

3. At this juncture, it would be too late for concerted action. Resistance, therefore, would be unilateral and, except in Malaya, of token character.

4. The countries concerned could not themselves successfully oppose a Chinese Communist attack.

5. External aid, probably including troops with air and sea support, if committed in time and in adequate strength, could possibly insure successful resistance against Communist aggression in the three countries concerned. The timing and character of the aid provided would be all important. As indicated above, the lack of any firm ideological opposition to Communism in Thailand and Burma and the relative inability of these countries to defend themselves against massive Communist military pressure would incline them to avoid overt moves that would precipitate Chinese Communist aggression. This hesitancy would impede full preparations for their own defense and imperil the prospects for effective resistance. At the same time Communist success in Indochina would almost certainly increase the Thai proclivities to accommodate peacefully to Communism. Communist expansion into Thailand or Malaya would accentuate the dangers of an overthrow of the government in Burma either by local Communists or by political opportunists capable of accommodating with Communism.

The position of India would be important because of its effect on Burma's willingness to accept Western aid in time. Support by India of

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concerted defense against further Communist aggression would act as a catalyst, generally, throughout Southeast Asia and would provide a basis for really effective unity between East and West against Communist aggression.

Aid to Thailand alone, to be effective, would have to be guaranteed well before the inception of direct Communist aggression. Should any of the three countries fall to Communism, the difficulty and unlikelihood of successful resistance in the remaining countries would be vastly increased.

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to GA:
a suggestion for you are no 1 on pp 22-3.
Hitchcock