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INFORMATION

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SUBJECT Transfer of Admiral Taharn as Result of Army-Navy Clash

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25X1A2g

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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1. On 21 March, Vice Admiral Luang Nawa Vichitr, accompanied by his entire family of two wives and five children, left Bangkok for Sattahip. His reason for the trip was to forewarn Rear Admiral Taharn Khamhiran not to disregard the order transferring Taharn from the Marines to the Navy Staff. A refusal on the part of Taharn would mean a court martial.
2. At 2:00 p.m. on 23 March, Taharn crossed the Memorial Bridge to Thonburi to report to the Navy Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Chalit Kulkamthorn.
3. Phibul is credited with cleverly out-manipulating Vice Admiral Sindhu Ramonnawin by winning the Navy commander's consent to Taharn's removal. Phibul further ordered that the transfer be broadcast over the radio, at the same time secretly hoping that Taharn would disobey the order. To prevent this eventuality, Admiral Nawa Vichitr was sent as "special envoy" from the Navy to Taharn to explain the situation.
4. During the war years, Phibul, as Supreme Commander of all Armed Forces, once ordered the retirement of Vice Admiral Luang Nawa Vichitr and Vice Admiral Luang Sangwan Yuthakit, who at that time were organizing the Free Thai movement. The admirals ignored the order on the grounds that they held their appointments by Royal Proclamation and Phibul as Supreme Commander had no jurisdiction over Royal Decree. The admirals further informed Phibul that if he still wished to effect their retirement he should create himself King of Siam.

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.  
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