

3 October 1985
MBK-5012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- Bangkok Bureau -- September 1985

I. GENERAL

A. The big event of the month was the attempted coup against the government on 9 September. The ostensible leader was a former Thai Army colonel; the same one who led the previous coup attempt in April 1981. Despite the fact that the two top leaders of the country -- the prime minister and the supreme armed forces commander -- were both abroad at the time, enough forces rallied to the government side to quickly put down the rebellion. By late afternoon on the 9th, most of the rebel troops had surrendered and the rebel tanks were headed back to barracks under the control of the loyalists. There were casualties, although the numbers were much less than in most coups around the world -- 5 dead and 59 wounded. Among those killed was the well-known news cameraman Neil Davis and his soundman Bill Latch. While the former colonel leading the coup and several of his aides were allowed to leave the country, a number of prominent former military and political figures, including a former prime minister, were arrested and being interrogated at the end of the month to determine their involvement. In typical Thai fashion life went on even in the midst of the coup. About all that was noticeably different to those of us in the bureau was a slight decrease in the level of traffic congestion on the streets. The government issued a state of emergency decree, but apparently felt confident enough that matters were sufficiently under control and so did not even bother to impose a curfew that night.

B. On the 30th, the long-awaited official letter from the Thai Government was received approving the microwave frequencies to be used in connection with the ROSET installation. The actual frequencies had been learned earlier through unofficial contacts, although to preclude any possible unpleasant surprises the actual authorization was needed.

C. The Thai currency joined most other currencies toward the end of the month in gaining strength against the dollar. We have enjoyed a favorable exchange for some months; however, at this writing the dollar has dropped about 3.5 percent against the baht over the past week. Further dollar losses are expected, although nobody knows to what extent.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The unsuccessful coup attempt on the 9th resulted in the bureau instituting a 24-hour operation that night. Monitorial, teletypist, and editorial schedules were all quickly adjusted to focus on covering the coup. The first indication the bureau had that something was up came about 20 minutes after the bureau opened when Bangkok domestic service departed from normal programming and began carrying patriotic music. Ten minutes later the first announcement by the revolutionary party was monitored in which the populace was informed that the government had been taken over. A number of announcements then followed citing economic reasons for the takeover. The first army division radio remained in government hands and later began broadcasting counter-coup announcements until it was shot off the air by rebel troops. It was at the headquarters of this radio that most of the shooting took place. Almost immediately the bureau also began to monitor Thai television even though it is normally off at that time of day. Bureau efforts were rewarded when the government loyalists decided to make television their primary medium for countering the coup announcements. The aftermath continued for several weeks for the bureau and even now is not completely over as the investigations continue into the conduct of high-ranking individuals during the coup with the resultant processing of reports in the media.

2. The "retirement" of Pol Pot occasioned a great deal of interest and commentary in this part of the world. It appears no one knows for sure whether the retirement is real or cosmetic, but a lot of quarters were heard from which added to the bureau file during the month.

3. The bureau made special efforts on the 26th to cover the elections in the Indian state of Punjab. Reports were processed expeditiously and the bureau stayed open late that night to cover the election updates.

B. Communications

The rehome of the bureau's primary circuit was scheduled for 9 September. However, the quick work by the bureau engineer when the coup broke out that morning resulted in a postponement. The situation was sufficiently back to normal by the 11th to permit the rehome to proceed. Since then the circuit has had its ups and downs so far as circuit quality is concerned. Overall it looks like the circuit is moving toward quite acceptable quality.

C. Lateral Services

1. The American Embassy in Laos requested texting of two items from Vientiane Domestic Service during the month.
2. BBC requested the videotapes of the coup material. Since the tapes had already been sent to Headquarters, the bureau referred them to MOD.

III. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

1. Bureau Chief [redacted] arrived PCS on 1 October.
2. FBN technician [redacted] entered on duty with the bureau on 23 September.

IV. VISITS

IG inspectors [redacted] on an inspection visit from 17-20 September.

Chief
Bangkok Bureau

RMB:cla

Attachment:

Monthly Production Report

BANGKOK BUREAU PRODUCTION REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 1985

I. TOTALS FROM ALL SOURCES:

TOTAL PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	619,210
TOTAL NON-PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	269,820
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHABLE ITEMS FILED DURING MONTH:	1,410

II. INPUT OF REGULAR COVERAGE:

(minutes or issues per week)

<u>BROAD-CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI-CATION</u>
20,670	20,420	254.00
min.	min.	issues

III. OUTPUT FROM ALL SOURCES:

(publishable words per month)

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne Overseas Service in

English

15,960

Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN in

English

2,440

Sydney THE BULLETIN in

English

0

Sydney THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN in

English

0

BANGLADESH

Dhaka Domestic Service in

Bengali

260

Dhaka Domestic Service in

English

3,420

* Dhaka Overseas Service in

English

800

Dhaka BSS in

English

290

Dhaka SANGBAD in

Bengali

0

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in

English

1,250

BRUNEI

Kuala Belait THE BORNEO BULLETIN in

English

500

BURMA

Rangoon Domestic Service in

Burmese

5,510

Rangoon BOTATAUNG in

Burmese

0

BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATION
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BURMA (continued)

Rangoon LOKTHA PYEITHU NEZIN in Burmese		0
Rangoon MYANMA ALIN in Burmese		0
Rangoon WORKING PEOPLE'S DAILY in English		430

CHINA

Beijing International Service in Bengali	0
Beijing International Service in Burmese	0
Beijing International Service in Indonesian	120
Beijing International Service in Lao	0
Beijing International Service in Thai	0
Beijing in Cambodian to Cambodia	8,290
Beijing in Hindi to India	0
Beijing in Malay to Malaysia	1,770
Beijing in Urdu to India and Pakistan	0

CLANDESTINE

(Clandestine) Vietnam Resistance Radio in Vietnamese	0
(Clandestine) Voice of Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodian	31,850
(Clandestine) Voice of Malayan Democracy in Malay	7,730
(Clandestine) Voice of The National Army Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodian	11,000
(Clandestine) Voice of The People of Burma in Burmese	0
(Clandestine) Voice of The People of Malaysia in Malay	600

INDIA

Delhi Domestic Service in English	29,390
* Delhi Domestic Service in Hindi	120
Delhi General Overseas Service in English	5,880
Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English	3,230

BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATION
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INDIA (continued)

* Delhi PTI in English	630	
Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English		680
Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali		0
Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English		1,600
Delhi INDIA TODAY in English		0
Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English		720
Delhi NATIONAL HERALD in English		630
Delhi PATRIOT in English		670
Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English		1,210
Madras THE HINDU in English		120

INDONESIA

Jakarta Domestic Service in Indonesian	10,260	
Jakarta International Service in English	960	
Jakarta BERITA BUANA in Indonesian		1,790
Jakarta JAKARTA POST in English		810
Jakarta KOMPAS in Indonesian		1,240
Jakarta MERDEKA in Indonesian		2,070
Jakarta SINAR HARAPAN in Indonesian		3,050
Jakarta TEMPO in Indonesian		0
Jakarta THE INDONESIA TIMES in English		2,440

KAMPUCHEA

Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian	35,700	
Phnom Penh SPK in English		11,930
Phnom Penh SPK in French to KPL Vientiane		0
Phnom Penh SPK in French		6,690

	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
<u>KAMPUCHEA</u> (continued)			
Phnom Penh VNA in Vietnamese to VNA Hanoi		0	
<u>LAOS</u>			
Vientiane Domestic Service in Lao	30,200		
Vientiane KPL in English		11,640	
Vientiane KPL in English/French to SPK Phnom Penh		0	
Vientiane SPK in French to SPK Phnom Penh		0	
Vientiane VNA in Vietnamese to VNA Hanoi		0	
Vientiane PASASON in Lao			0
<u>MALAYSIA</u>			
Kuala Lumpur Domestic Service in English	1,200		
Kuala Lumpur Domestic Service in Malay	1,960		
Kuala Lumpur International Service in English	7,460		
Kuala Lumpur BERITA HARIAN in Malay			370
Kuala Lumpur BERITA MINGGU in Malay			0
Kuala Lumpur MINGGUAN MALAYSIA in Malay			0
Kuala Lumpur NEW STRAITS TIMES in English			4,760
Kuala Lumpur NEW SUNDAY TIMES in English			0
Kuala Lumpur UTUSAN MALAYSIA in Malay			190
<u>NEPAL</u>			
Katmandu External Service in English	600		
Katmandu THE RISING NEPAL in English			200
<u>PAKISTAN</u>			
Karachi Domestic Service in English	8,940		
Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu	10,630		

<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
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PAKISTAN (continued)

Karachi Overseas Service in
Urdu

490

SINGAPORE

Singapore Domestic Service in
English

4,200

* Singapore Domestic Service in
Malay

300

Singapore THE STRAITS TIMES in
English

2,530

Singapore THE SUNDAY TIMES in
English

980

SRI LANKA

Colombo Domestic Service in
English

2,420

Colombo Domestic Service in
Tamil

0

Colombo International Service in
English

3,820

Colombo International Service in
Hindi

310

Colombo DAILY NEWS in
English

730

Colombo SUN in
English

1,880

Colombo WEEKEND in
English

0

THAILAND

* Bangkok 1st Army Division Radio in
Thai

2,780

* Bangkok Air Force Headquarters in
Thai

270

* Bangkok Antiaircraft Artillery Division Radio in
Thai

160

* Bangkok Armored Division Radio in
Thai

110

* Bangkok Army Television Service in
Thai

8,590

Bangkok Domestic Service in
English

1,570

Bangkok Domestic Service in
Thai

21,520

* Bangkok Domestic Television Service in
Thai

150

Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in
Cambodian

0

Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in
English

2,130

	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
<u>THAILAND (continued)</u>			
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Lao	230		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Thai	480		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Vietnamese	0		
Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English			38,340
Bangkok BANGKOK WORLD in English			14,040
Bangkok LAK THAI in Thai			0
Bangkok MATICHON SUT SAPDA in Thai			0
Bangkok MATICHON in Thai			4,920
Bangkok MATUPHUM in Thai			0
Bangkok NAEO NA in Thai			3,370
Bangkok SIAM RAT SAPDA WICHAN in Thai			2,570
Bangkok SIAM RAT in Thai			1,490
Bangkok SU ANAKHOT in Thai			0
Bangkok THAI RAT in Thai			3,740
Bangkok THE NATION in English			30,320
Bangkok WIWAT in Thai			650

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Moscow International Service in Tamil	0
Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in Indonesian	0
Moscow in Bengali to Bangladesh	0
Moscow in Burmese to Burma	920
Moscow in Cambodian to Kampuchea	1,800
Moscow in Hindi to India	1,390
Moscow in Indonesian to Indonesia	0
Moscow in Lao to Laos	1,160
Moscow in Thai to Thailand	0

<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
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UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS (continued)

Moscow in		
Urdu to India	0	
Moscow in		
Urdu to Pakistan	710	

UNITED KINGDOM

London BBC World Service in		
English	3,240	

VIETNAM

Hanoi Domestic Service in		
Vietnamese	110,290	
Hanoi International Service in		
Cambodian	0	
Hanoi International Service in		
English	14,870	
Hanoi International Service in		
Thai	0	
Hanoi NHAN DAN in		
Vietnamese to NHAN DAN Ho Chi Minh City		0
Hanoi VNA in		
English		930
Hanoi NHAN DAN in		
Vietnamese		34,750
Hanoi QUAN DOI NHAN DAN in		
Vietnamese		1,870
Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in		
Vietnamese		0

(Note: Irregular Coverage during month is marked with an asterisk)