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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 201

PAGE 01 BANGKO 16094 261517Z

43
ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 SNM-01 JUS-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
RSC-01 AID-28 SS-20 NSC-10 E-15 TRSY-11 HEW-08 SCI-05
SY-03 RSR-01 /141 W
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11/26/69*

R 261225Z NOV 69
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2104
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN HEROIN

REF: A. STATE 191972 B. BANGKOK 15794

SUMMARY AND COMMENT: AS ENUNCIATED BY LEADERSHIP, RTG IS COMMITTED TO ERADICATION OF ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFIC WITHIN THE KINGDOM. IT FACES SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING EFFORTS, HOWEVER, MOST SERIOUS OF WHICH IS THAT THE NORTHWESTERN MOUNTAIN REGION, SITE OF INDIGENOUS OPIUM PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, AND FOREIGN NARCOTICS TRANSIT, IS ALSO SITE OF SERIOUS AND GROWING INSURGENCY INVOLVING SOME OF SAME HILL TRIBE POPULATION INVOLVED AS PRIMARY OPIUM PRODUCERS AND TRAFFICKERS. IT IS VIEW OF ALL CONCERNED THAT ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS AGAINST PRODUCTION, EVEN IF POSSIBLE UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, WOULD FURTHER ALIENATE HILL TRIBES AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INSURGENTS. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, OTHER APPROACHES. WE BELIEVE USG COULD ASSIST RTG IN ERADICATION EFFORTS IN TWO PRINCIPAL AREAS (1) REDUCTION OF OPIUM PRODUCTION BY INTRODUCTION OF SUBSTITUTE CROPS AND (2) ENFORCEMENT AGAINST VIOLATORS OF NARCOTICS LEGISLATION. RTG WILL EXPECT NOT MERELY ADVICE FROM US BUT COMMITMENT OF ASSETS AND FUNDS AS WELL. WE ASSUME THIS WAS ANTICIPATED BY PARA 5 REPTEL A. OUR INITIATIVES WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT PUBLICITY OR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE. THAI ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE OVER MATTERS EFFECTING THEIR INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS ARE OCCASIONALLY QUOTED BY PRESS AS DENYING THAT THERE IS ANY OPIUM PRODUCTION WITHIN COUNTRY AT

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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 22, 2004



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 16094 261517Z

ALL. END SUMMARY

1. SUPPRESSION OF PRODUCTION (A) MOST SERIOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THAI NARCOTICS PROBLEM—EVER CONDUCTED BY NON-THAI WAS THAT UNDERTAKEN BY UN SURVEY TEAM JAN-MARCH, 1967 (US MEMBER WAS RETIRED FSO F.T. MERRILL). THEIR SUBSEQUENT REPORT WAS TRANSMITTED BY OUR A-987 OF 5/12/67 AND COMPLEMENTARY ANALYSIS SUBMITTED WITH O/I LETTER TO THEN THAI COUNTRY DIRECTOR DATED MAY 8, 1967. BANGKOK'S A-174 OF APRIL 1, 1969 REVIEWS RTG EFFORTS IMPLEMENT UN RECOMMENDATIONS. WE BELIEVE UN REPORT IS WORTHY OF CAREFUL RESTUDY AS POSSIBLE BASIS FOR DIRECTIONS OF US ASSISTANCE TO THAI IN THIS AREA. (B) UN REPORT MADE NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS, PRIMARY OF WHICH WAS THAT NEW RTG AGENCY AT CABINET OR SUB-CABINET LEVEL BE ESTABLISHED TO DEAL WITH ALL HILL TRIBE PROBLEMS. THAI HAVE RECENTLY EXPRESSED INCREASING INTEREST IN THIS PROPOSITION (A-174, PARA 4.K); WE BELIEVE THIS INTEREST SHOULD BE QUIETLY ENCOURAGED. A REVIEW OF UN REPORT ALSO SUGGESTS WE COULD ASSIST RTG TO IMPLEMENT UN RECOMMENDATIONS BY PROVIDING SOIL TECHNICIANS AND AGRICULTURALISTS WHO WOULD BE CONCERNED SOLELY WITH DEVELOPING CROPS WHICH COULD FEASIBLY BE PRODUCED BY THE HILL TRIBES TO REPLACE OPIUM. WITH REGARDS REPLACEMENT CROPS UN REPORT NOTED "WE REGRETFULLY CONCLUDE WE CAN SUGGEST NOTHING IMMEDIATELY ENCOURAGING", BUT WENT ON TO SUGGEST A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE CROPS (PEAS, VEGETABLE SEED, POTATOES, PYRETHRUM, TOBACCO, TEA AND COFFEE) POTENTIALS OF WHICH, AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADEQUATELY EXPLORED. WE MAY HAVE TO CONSIDER SUCH MECHANISMS AS UNILATERALLY HEAVILY SUBSIDIZING CROPS WITH POTENTIAL, OR OF PRE-EMPTIVE PURCHASE OPIUM PRODUCTION UNTIL TRIBESMEN CAN CONVERT. SCHEDULE OF DEESCALATING SUBSIDIES MIGHT IN LONG RUN PROVE MOST ECONOMICAL APPROACH TO ELIMINATING ROOT CAUSE OF PROBLEM.

2. ENFORCEMENT. RTG IS HAMPERED IN ITS ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS BY UNDER-MANNED, INADEQUATELY TRAINED, SOMETIMES CORRUPT, INSUFFICIENTLY FUNDED AND EQUIPPED NARCOTICS ENFORCES WHO ARE REGULAR POLICE OFFICERS. BNDD NARCOTICS ATTACHE AND REGIONAL DIRECTOR (WANZECK) ENVISIONS RECOMMENDING TO RTG THAT THEY ESTABLISH AN ELITE NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIVE FORCE WHICH WOULD BE PARTIALLY TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND PROVIDED WITH PARTIAL REWARDS BY USG. TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH A PROGRAM BNDD WOULD NEED ADDITIONAL RESIDENT AGENTS (WHOSE OPS WOULD BE MONITORED BY EMBASSY AND IN LIAISON WITH THAI). ASSUMING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLEAR EMBASSY COORDINATING ROLE, WE SUPPORT THESE PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH

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E.O. 12958, as amended
June 22, 2004



Department of State **TELEGRAM**

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 16094 261517Z

HE WILL ELABORATE IN REPORTING THROUGH HIS CHANNELS, AS WORTHY OF SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

3. ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE EFFORTS (A) WE BELIEVE THOUGHT SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO DEVELOPING PLAN TO STIMULATE RTG, RLG AND RGUB TO ESTABLISH MECHANISMS FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE RELATED TO NARCOTICS MOVEMENTS AND TRAFFICKERS WITH AN EYE TOWARDS POSSIBLE JOINT ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS AT A LATER DATE. (B) RECOGNIZING THAT GRC INFLUENCE ON "KMT" REMNANTS RESIDENT IN NORTHWEST THAILAND IS MINIMAL, IT WOULD BE WORTHY EFFORT FOR EMBASSY TAIPEI TO EXPLORE WITH GRC ANY MEANS IT MIGHT HAVE TO DISUADE KMT FROM PARTICIPATION IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WHICH IS NOW THEIR PRIMARY MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD. THIS MIGHT, OF COURSE, BECOME COMPLICATED PROCESS EVENTUALLY LEADING TO PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER EVACUATIONS OF KMT REMNANTS TO TAIWAN. GP-3.
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