



Jack Anderson

Smugglers Using Thai Connection

DESPITE furious denials by the Thai government, evidence is mounting that members of Thailand's 16-man ruling council have been corrupted by international dope smugglers.

As far away as this oriental intrigue is, it directly affects the alarming rise of crime on America's streets where addicts rob, house-break and shoplift to feed their gnawing heroin habits.

Reports from the Central Intelligence Agency, and the State, Justice and Defense departments, all agree that more and more heroin is pouring into the United States from Thailand, one of America's closest allies.

"Historically, this area has not been an important source of opium-based narcotics for the U.S. market. This is no longer the case," bluntly states a classified CIA report now in our hands.

Buttressing the CIA are other U.S. intelligence sources who allege that at least two of the 16-man Thai National Executive Council protect dope smugglers.

The official U.S. sources also describe in detail heroin trade involvement of a top Bangkok police commander, a former parliamentarian, a Thai border patrol major and a colonel in a northern Thai army division.

The police official, say the sources, is owner of a well-known Bangkok massage parlor-brothel where heroin is readily available from employees. Run by a woman friend of the police official—who himself maintains an office in the building—the bordello is called "The Smack Parlor" by its American patrons. "Smack" is slang for heroin.

While this and other dope hangouts have long operated openly under the noses of Thailand's rulers, the lucrative up-country opium trade has been changing dramatically since this January.

Crude morphine base from the Thai-Burma-Laos border is no longer processed almost exclusively in the laboratories of Bangkok.

Instead, Royal Laotian Air Force fliers and a few pilots of the CIA-run Air America now airlift much of the morphine to warehouses in the "Golden Triangle" along Thailand's northern border.

The warehouses are dutifully protected by corrupt senior officials of the Royal Thai Army and the Thai border patrol who take a cut of the profits.

When the warehouses are bulging with illicit morphine

base, chemists from Taiwan fly in, the sources say. They are ceremoniously welcomed by remnants of the old Nationalist Chinese divisions driven from Red China and now living off the land in Thailand.

No longer under Taiwan's control, the Nationalist veterans now support themselves in the dope trade. The Chinese chemists work night and day for 30 days, earning as high as \$10,000 for converting the morphine base to pure heroin.

Then the Royal Laotian Air Force and an occasional Air America pilot, who pretends he is unaware of his cargo, ferry out the newly processed white powder. This time it goes to distribution points in Bangkok, Vientiane and other Southeast Asian cities.

From there, it is transhipped to the United States. American intelligence officers are even fearful some may get aboard Air Force KC-135 tanker planes which fly directly to the United States from Thailand. The planes or crews are rarely checked properly by U.S. customs.

In Hong Kong, an important trans-shipment point, British officials are also seething over the corruption of the Thai government officials. Some proof of this dismay is contained in a cautious, classified cable from David Osborn, American consul in Hong Kong, to Secretary of State William Rogers.

Dated March 27, the cable urges secrecy, then confides: "Hong Kong narcotics officials have long-standing belief that Thai officials have been involved in drug traffic for some years."

Yet, despite all this evidence of official Thai corruption, the United States continues to supply Thailand with millions in American arms. And the Thai government smugly dismisses this column's documented reports of heroin in high Thai places as "slanderous accusations."

FOR A welcome change, the government is going to get some return from one of its administrative frills.

White House protographer Ollie Atkins accompanied President Nixon to Red China and helped put together a book called "The President's Trip to China." Atkins' share, instead of going into his pocket, will go to the federal treasury along with a check from his publisher for the pictures. Another Atkins book, "Eye on Nixon," will provide royalties to the American Red Cross.

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