

GM 60-2

**CONFIDENTIAL**

21 March 1960

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Chief, LCD/CR

**FROM :** Chief, St/P/RR

**SUBJECT :** CIA/RR GM 60-2, Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, 22 January 1960 (C)

**REFERENCES :** (a) USIA Memorandum to OCR/CIA, 9 March 1960;  
 (b) LCD/CR Memorandum to St/P/RR, 11 March 1960, same subject

1. This Office has no objection to the USIA forwarding subject memorandum to USIA posts overseas providing its use is restricted to US Government personnel.
2. Please inform USIA that a request of this kind need not be made unless the document is restricted "No Dissemination Abroad."
3. Attached are eleven copies requested by USIA.



25X1A

**Attachments:**  
 Copies #152-162, GM 60-2

25X1A St/P/C  x-8622(21 Mar 60)

**Distribution:**  
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 DATE: 24/07/9

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23 FEB 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Analysis Branch, DD/CR

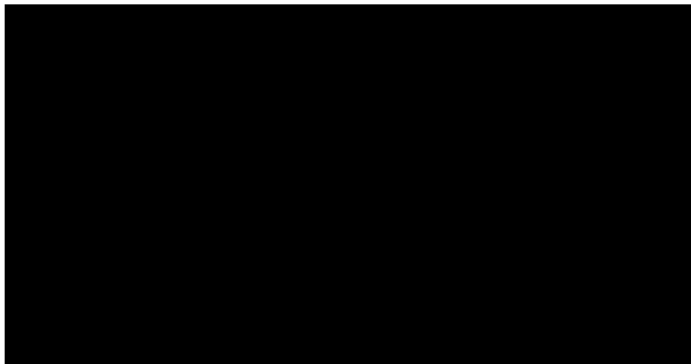
ATTENTION :  DD/AB/SS 25X1A

FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR

SUBJECT : Release of CIA/RR GM 60-2, Overseas Chinese  
In Southeast Asia, Confidential, to Foreign  
Governments

1. It is requested that the attached copies of subject report be forwarded as follows:

- #61 - #64
- #85
- #86 - #88
- #89
- #90 - #91
- #124
- #125
- #126



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2. All ORR responsibilities as defined in the DDI memorandum of 13 August 1952, "Procedures for Dissemination of Finished Intelligence to Foreign Governments," as applicable to this report, have been fulfilled.



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Attachments

DOCUMENT NO. 2  
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167  
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GEOGRAPHIC  
INTELLIGENCE  
MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 60-2  
22 January 1960

OVERSEAS CHINESE  
IN  
SOUTHEAST ASIA



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DATE: 21/2/79 REVIEWER: 035377

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

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Background

The presence of the Overseas Chinese in every country of Southeast Asia constitutes a minority problem that is unique to the region as a whole. Although the Overseas Chinese represent only about 1 percent of the total population of the region, more than their numbers would justify, they are a dominant force in the economic life of the area.

Historically, there has been a continuing flow of migration from China into Southeast Asia. Since neither ancestry nor citizenship is a realistic criterion as to who is Chinese in the overseas context, it is difficult to give a completely valid comparison of the distribution of Overseas Chinese throughout the region. Of the estimated total population of 300 million in Southeast Asia, some 11 to 12 million can be considered Chinese. Partially because the vast majority migrated by way of the sea, the Chinese live chiefly in the delta areas -- the sites of the Southeast Asian ports and great commercial centers.

The Indragiri has some almost exclusively from southeastern China -- the provinces of Kiangsu, Fujian, and Kwangsi -- with small numbers from Hainan Island and Yunnan. Five main language groups are represented: Cantonese, Hokkien-Teochi, Min, Malay, Balinese, and Indonesian. Only the Min and Teochi speak Chinese as their first language; the others speak distinctive languages that are not mutually intelligible.

China is the source of the vast majority of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. The vast majority of the Chinese in Southeast Asia are concentrated in Bangkok, 30 percent or more in Java in the Dutch and Dutch States. Most of the Chinese in the region are engaged in commerce and industry -- retail and leather working and carpentry -- but some are employed in fishing and mining.

Thailand: Approximately 50 percent of the Chinese in Thailand live in the Bangkok-Chon Buri Delta complex, with a second major concentration in the Isthmus, the center of Thailand's tin and rubber industries. Elsewhere, they tend to be found in some degree of concentration, such as the railroads in the northeast. Chinese are dominant in tinmine and industry, operating 80 percent of the rice mills and owning and operating more of the banking, insurance, and export-import firms. Most of the labor force in the rubber and tin industries is also Chinese.

Overseas Chinese may be defined as the China-born Chinese population residing in a foreign country, together with their patrilineal descendants who will regard themselves primarily as Chinese. For details of the number and distribution of Overseas Chinese by specific countries, see the map and tables on the reverse side. The figures given for internal administrative units are the latest available, generally from the most recent census, and may be taken up to date from the estimates of the total number of Overseas Chinese given in the textual table.

CHINESE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: Areas of Origin and Overseas Concentration

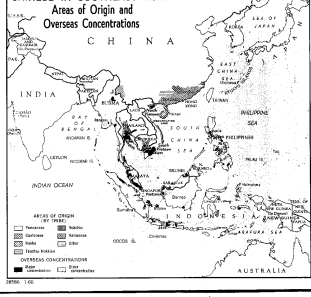


Table with 4 columns: Country, Overseas Chinese Population, Chinese Population, and % of Chinese Population. Rows include Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Philippines, and others.

Indonesia: The Chinese live in live chiefly in the larger towns and are predominantly concentrated in Java.

Malaysia: The Chinese in Malaya are concentrated in urban centers. Of Malaya's total population of 8,000,000, approximately 1,000,000 are Chinese. They are over 50 percent of the rice mills, almost monopolize the fish industry and bus transport service, and are active in import-export trade and banking.

South Vietnam: About 750,000 of South Vietnam's Chinese population of 700,000 live in the four cities of Saigon-Cholon -- most of them in Cholon. In Southeast Asia, only Singapore has a larger Chinese urban population than Cholon. The rice trade and most of South Vietnam's other retail and wholesale trade are dominated by the Chinese.

North Vietnam: The number of Chinese in North Vietnam is uncertain. In 1958, the total for North Vietnam was estimated at 50,000, nearly half of this number reportedly lived in Hanoi and Haiphong.

Philippines: In Malaya the Chinese have settled largely in the states of Johore, Selangor, Penang, and Malacca. In Penang, over 70 percent of the total population is Chinese and in Selangor and Malacca, 45 percent or more. Throughout the Malaya states the Chinese are largely urban. In the three largest cities -- Kuala Lumpur, Georgetown, and Ipoh -- they constitute 62 percent, 71 percent, and 67 percent of the population, respectively. Chinese own and operate most non-British commercial enterprises, rank second to the British in the volume of capital investment, are the chief employers and employers, and generally dominate service industries. They control over 90 percent of the tin production and own most small rubber holdings. The possibility of a future union of Malaya and Singapore presents the Malayan Government with the prospect of a combined Chinese population slightly larger than the total Malaya population and much more economically powerful.

Singapore: According to the 1971 census, the total population of the Colony of Singapore had increased 64 percent since 1947, the date of the last previous census. During the interval, the Chinese population increased 65.5 percent, but the Malay increased 64 percent. In 1947 the Chinese comprised 77.7 percent of the population and the Malays 21.7 percent; 20 years later the corresponding figures were 79.8 and 13.6 percent. In almost every line of commercial and business endeavor, Chinese preponderance is of significance to the fact that half of Singapore's population is under 19 years of age.

British Borneo: Although the Chinese in British Borneo live chiefly in urban centers, a substantial number are small farmers. In North Borneo the greatest number are located in the East Coast Borneo, where they comprise about 36 percent of the population. In Sarawak the concentration of Chinese, by both number and percentage, is greatest in Malak District. In Sarawak the first and third divisions have the major Chinese concentrations. The rubber, forestry, commerce, banking, and bus and taxi services throughout British Borneo are dominated by Chinese.

Philippines: As in other parts of Southeast Asia, the vast majority of the Chinese in the Philippines are urban dwellers. It is estimated that 90,000 live in Manila, comprising 7.6 percent of the city's population. Generally, Chinese are concentrated in the four cities of Cebu, Iloilo, Zamboanga, and Davao -- 30,000, or 18 percent of the total population of Cebu, live within that city and its immediate vicinity. In Zamboanga, 20,000, or 10 percent of the total population, live in Zamboanga, and 2 percent live in other islands. The Chinese are active in a wide range of the wholesale and retail trade and are active in the export-import trade, industry, and domestic agriculture. Recent official Indonesian statistics, which are probably based on a reported register of Americans.

Indonesia: The passage of time has largely invalidated the results of the last official census of Indonesia, which was taken in 1970. Current estimates indicate, however, that the Chinese population is probably distributed as follows: 18 percent in Java, 10 percent in Sumatra, 2 percent in Kalimantan, 2 percent in Sulawesi, and 2 percent in the other islands. The Chinese are active in a wide range of the wholesale and retail trade and are active in the export-import trade, industry, and domestic agriculture. Recent official Indonesian statistics, which are probably based on a reported register of Americans.

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**Distribution of Chinese in Southeast Asia by Country and National Administrative Division**

**Summary: 1970**  
(By State and National Statistics)

Administrative Unit	Total Population	Chinese Population	Percentage of Total
1. Transasia/1	1,218,000	20,000	1.7
2. Korea	1,218,000	3,000	0.2
3. Japan	1,218,000	110,000	9.0
4. Indonesia	2,000,000	40,000	2.0
5. Malaysia	2,000,000	20,000	1.0
6. Singapore	1,200,000	50,000	4.2
7. Brunei	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
8. Philippines	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
9. Viet Nam	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
10. Thailand	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
11. Laos	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
12. Cambodia	1,200,000	1,000	0.1

**Summary: 1970-75**  
(By City and Town)

City/Town	Total Population	Chinese Population	Percentage of Total
1. Singapore	1,200,000	50,000	4.2
2. Kuala Lumpur	1,000,000	10,000	1.0
3. Medan	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
4. Jakarta	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
5. Bangkok	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
6. Manila	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
7. Hanoi	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
8. Ho Chi Minh	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
9. Phnom Penh	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
10. Vientiane	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
11. Bangkok	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
12. Kuala Lumpur	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
13. Medan	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
14. Jakarta	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
15. Singapore	1,000,000	5,000	0.5

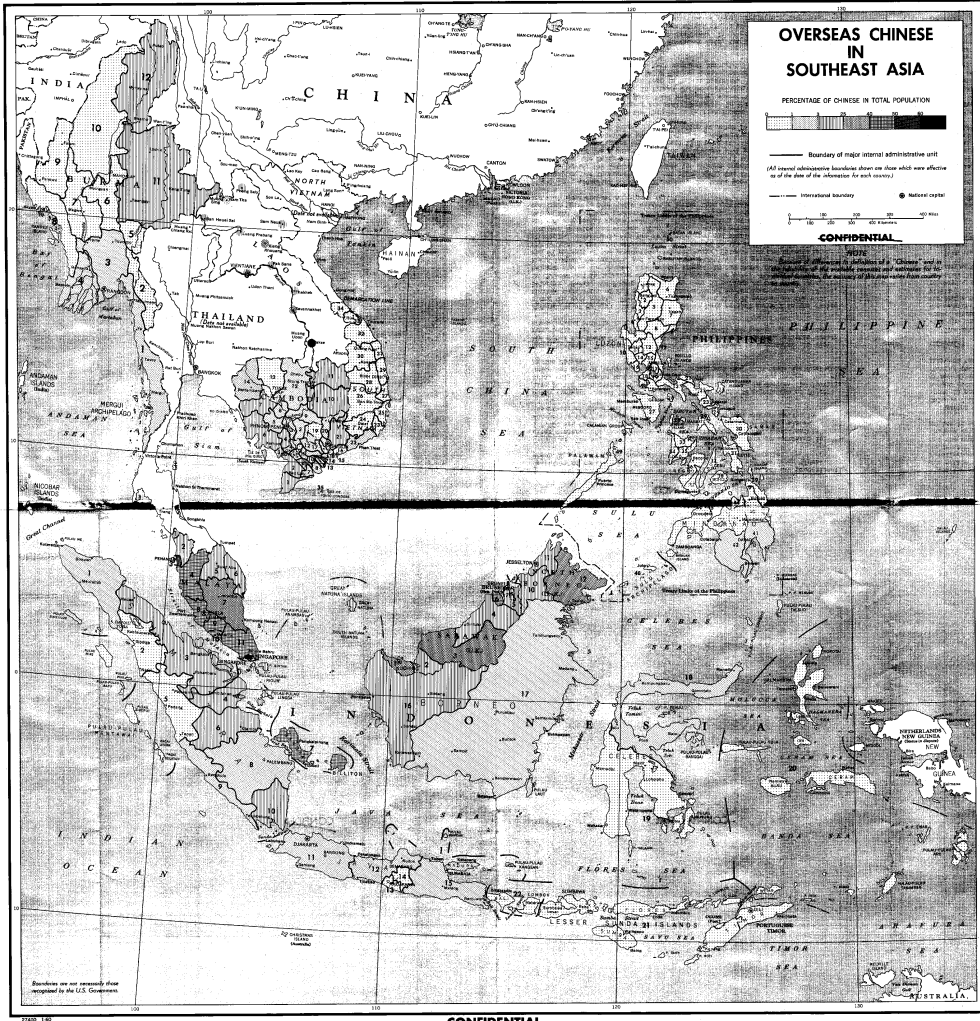
**Summary: 1970**  
(By Province and District)

Province/District	Total Population	Chinese Population	Percentage of Total
1. Singapore	1,200,000	50,000	4.2
2. Kuala Lumpur	1,000,000	10,000	1.0
3. Medan	1,000,000	5,000	0.5
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**Summary: 1970**  
(By Nationality)

Nationality	Total Population	Chinese Population	Percentage of Total
1. Chinese	1,200,000	50,000	4.2
2. Indonesian	1,200,000	10,000	0.8
3. Malaysian	1,200,000	5,000	0.4
4. Singaporean	1,200,000	5,000	0.4
5. Bruneian	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
6. Filipino	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
7. Vietnamese	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
8. Thai	1,200,000	1,000	0.1
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