

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

COUNTRY Thailand/Indochina

SUBJECT 1. Relations Between the Ho Chi Minh Government and the Free Laos
2. Relations Between the Vietnamese and Thai in Northeastern Thailand

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DATE OF INFO. 25X1X

- 25X1X 1. The Free Lao movement now is largely dominated both politically and militarily by Viet Minh elements, who also are supplying some financial and material support to the Laos [redacted] Recently, Rouen (sic), Nguyen Duc Quy's deputy, Tran Van An, and certain unidentified Lao leaders held a meeting in Udon.
- 2. The Free Laos claim control of two sizeable areas in Laos, each comprising several thousand square miles.** Recently, the Free Laos liberated Mong Singh. Communication between the two areas claimed by the Free Laos is dependent upon Ho Chi Min. Government communication channels, which act as relay stations. The communications agreement was made with Prince Souphanavong in Bangkok.***
- 3. Thai officials in northeast Thailand recently have adopted a more aloof attitude toward the Vietnamese in compliance with Thai Government orders.**** The Thai officials, however, still are in sympathy with the general movement of liberation from the French rule.
- 25X1X 4. The Thai and Lao population favor the Vietnamese liberation movement. Although there is some fear of business competition from the energetic Vietnamese, the native inhabitants get along fairly well with the Vietnamese and resent them much less than they do the Chinese [redacted]
- 5. Viet Minh elements fear and hate the Thai officials in northeastern Thailand. This attitude is a new development and resulted from the recent Thai Government restrictions on the Vietnamese, which included the closure of their schools. Two prominent Viet Minh leaders state that Thai officials now are cooperating with the French in the capture of Viet Minh members attempting to enter Thailand.***** Individuals captured are turned over to the French. The Viet Minh leaders promise to take revenge on the Thai officials at an opportune time.

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6. Viet Minh members are staying out of local politics. They prefer the political philosophy of Pridi, particularly his Pan-Asian policy, to that of Phibul. However, the Vietnamese are entirely concerned with maintaining their position in Thailand and with pushing their own political aims, thus, they are avoiding anything which would seem to be an alliance with dissident and out of power political factions in Thailand, which would only serve to jeopardize their position and further alienate the Thai Government.

7. The Vietnamese in Thailand live quietly, are obedient to Thai authority, and do not display the aggressive attitude of the Chinese.***** One of Tran Van An's functions is to see that the Vietnamese obey the Thai law. The Vietnamese are employed in various capacities, except as servants. The Viet Minh organization forbids the Vietnamese to work as domestics. The Vietnamese are most successful as farmers, mechanics and laborers. Their success is attributed to three factors: as political refugees with no financial resources, the Vietnamese were forced to work to exist; the Vietnamese charges less for his services as a laborer than the local inhabitants; finally, the Vietnamese do their work with thoroughness.

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8. The Viet Minh organization in northeastern Thailand apparently receives its entire support from the Vietnamese population in the area [redacted] A substantial portion of the contributions appear to be voluntary. Laborers are reputed to save up to a quarter of their daily rice ration, which they sell and turn the proceeds over to the Viet Minh. Members of the professional class are said by Viet Minh leaders to give up to 50 percent of their income to the Viet Minh organization. According to the Governor of Sakon Nakhon, only two percent of the Vietnamese refugees favor the Bao Dai Government.

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[redacted] Comment. For previous reports on the relationship between the Viet Minh elements and the Free Laos, and on the resistance movements in Cambodia and Laos, [redacted]

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[redacted] Comment. The areas claimed by the Free Laos have not been located. Presumably, the Laos are claiming all the territory not actually occupied by the French.

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[redacted] Comment. [redacted] contain information on the relations between Prince Souphanavong and the Ho Chi Minh Government.

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[redacted] Comment. [redacted] further information on the attitude of Thai officials toward the Vietnamese in northeastern Thailand. [redacted] reports on Vietnamese personalities and activities in northeastern Thailand.

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[redacted] Comment. Instead of cooperating with the French by intensifying restrictive measures against the Vietnamese, the Thai authorities would do well to adopt a more lenient attitude. In so doing, it seems probable that the Vietnamese ill-feeling toward the Thai would be largely eliminated and the possibility of Vietnamese cooperation with the Chinese would be avoided. Actually, the Vietnamese are the most feared and effective business rivals of the Chinese. Therefore, if Vietnamese friendship can be gained by the Thai, the Vietnamese would serve as a valuable counterforce to the Chinese in northeast Thailand, in the event of unrest.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. Although the Vietnamese in northeastern Thailand are peaceful at the present time, they are always a potential danger. They number from 30,000 to 40,000 individuals, including women and children, who are unified through the Viet Minh organization and the common desire for national freedom. Intense Vietnamese dislike of the Thai Government is increasing as a result of the Thai Government cooperation with the French and the adoption of restrictive measures, such as, the closure of Vietnamese schools, the prohibition of religious celebrations (Annamese New Year), and the adoption of aggressive police actions. Viet Minh propaganda is extremely effective and widespread among Vietnamese refugees. The propaganda stresses the qualities of unity, sacrifice and obedience, but avoids the mention of Communism. If the Ho Chi Minh Government wants to take aggressive action against Thailand, apparently they can count on the full cooperation of the Vietnamese in Thailand.

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