

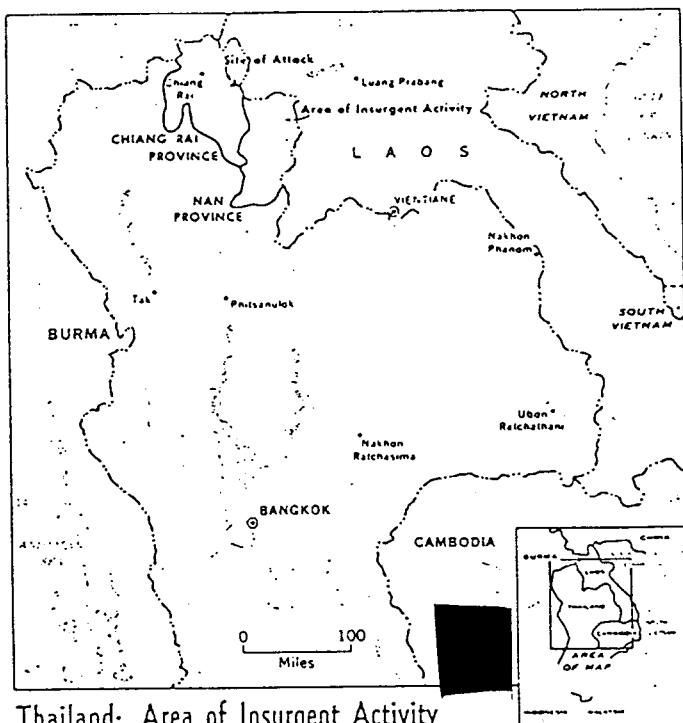
## INSURGENT ACTIVITY SPREADING IN NORTHERN THAILAND

The government has suffered its most serious setback to date at the hands of tribal insurgents in the north.

In mid-April, an estimated 100 Communist-led insurgents overran a border security post in Chiang Rai Province. They killed 15 of the 17 defenders and captured weapons, communications equipment, and security-related documents. The insurgents are reported to have increased their strength in the immediate area and to have challenged government forces to retake the post. An

army relief force was ambushed entering the area, and the insurgents continue to hold the site.

The post controlled a number of nearby tribal villages and was the center of the government's effort to expand its influence in the area. The insurgents' victory indicates that they have decided to expand their activity from adjacent Nan Province, which has been the center of guerrilla activity in the north for several months. The success of the attack provides further evidence that the insurgents are well led and highly motivated.



Thailand: Area of Insurgent Activity

Although Thai strong man General Praphat has referred to "drastic action" to counter the growing threat in the north, so far there is no indication that Bangkok is backing off from a decision it made last month to de-emphasize the purely military aspects of the counterinsurgency effort. The army, for example, is moving ahead with plans to recruit a tribal security force, one of the steps proposed as a longer range solution to the situation. Bangkok is also continuing its negotiations with Chinese irregular commanders in the area to gain their help against the guerrillas, but with little success so far.

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The government is also adopting more benign tactics in dealing with the tribal people. Although the situation differs from province to province, there is a growing appreciation by authorities in both Bangkok and the countryside that indiscriminate bombing of tribal villages and

the wholesale relocation of tribesmen have created more problems than they have solved. Nonetheless, the government will be hard put to reverse the deteriorating security situation in the northern border areas. [REDACTED]

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