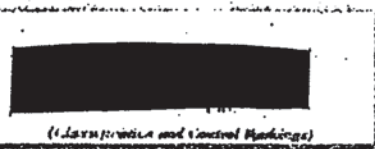


NOTE: This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, U.S.C., Sec. 793 and 794. The transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.



This report contains unprocessed information. Plans and/or policies should not be evolved or modified solely on the basis of this report.

COUNTRY: Thailand	8. REPORT NUMBER: 1 656 0111 69
SUBJECT: UNKNOWN ENTITY	9. DATE OF REPORT: 6 September 1969
Identified Object Thought to be Helicopter	10. NO. OF PAGES: 4
Observed Near Nakhon Phanom RTAFB (U)	11. REFERENCES: DIRM 1S1
ISC NUMBER:	12. ORIGINATOR: OSI District 51, Bangkok, Thailand 56-713/03/5
DATE OF INFORMATION: 24 August 1969	13. PREPARED BY: SA ROBERT D. KAEHLER, OSI Det 510 Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand
PLACE AND DATE OF ACQ: Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, 24 August 1969	14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: <i>George W. Blank</i> GEORGE W. BLANK, Lt Col, USAF Commander
EVALUATION: SOURCE INFORMATION	
See Item 15	
See Item 15	
SOURCE:	
See Item 15	

REC'D 03 24 SEP 1969

SUMMARY:
Early on the morning of 24 August 1969, the pilot of a base aircraft observed what he thought to be a helicopter, with folded rotor blades, on the ground approximately five miles north-northeast of Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base. He also reported seeing a large, omni-directional light. A Royal Thai Army sweep of the area met with negative results. Subsequent checks, however, disclosed that a religious procession passed through the general area during the same time period and that the pilgrims carried with them two large ceremonial drums suspended between two long poles. One of the participants also carried a powerful electric lantern which, when an aircraft was noted circling overhead, he pointed skyward.

(Leave Blank)

Information contained in paragraph 2 below was provided by the Director of Intelligence, 56th Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base (RTAFB), Thailand. The source of the information in paragraph 3 (5106-ASP-6J) is a resident of Ban Ram Rat, Nakhon Phanom Province who has contributed in the past, but whose reliability is still unknown. The contributor of the information in paragraph 3, and source of the information in paragraph 4, (5106-ASP-6), is a member of an official Thai agency who has contributed in the past, but whose reliability has not yet been fully established.

100-210-202300-306302-308400

DISTRIBUTION BY ORIGINATOR:	17. DOWNGRADING DATA:	18. ATTACHMENT DATA: 1 Atch
1. Dir OSI USAF 4		Sketch of Sighting Area
2. Dir OSI (PACAF) (CINC- 5		1 cy, 1 pg
3. (C-J21-2) 5		<i>DIA</i>
4. Dir Ch, JUSMAGTHAI (DCHI) 1		
5. 2 USMACVTHAI (G-2, 3		
6. JARFAC-2) 3		
7. Embassy (CAS-1, POL-1) 2		
8. 4th AF (D/I-1, IGSP-1) 2		
9. JARSUPHAI 2		
10. 4th MI Det 2		
11. 621st TacConSq 4		
12. 1st AFAG 1		
13. JDSRT JUSMAGTHAI 1		
14. Distribution "A" 18		
15. File-1, A2D-1, SCO-1 3		

FORM 1396

REPLACES DA FORM 1036, 1 AUG 60, DISAV FORM 1020 (Rev 10-61)

2. [REDACTED] At approximately 0033 hours, 24 August 1969, the pilot of a fixedwing, light observation aircraft (OV-10) observed an unidentified object on the ground approximately five miles north-northeast of Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. At the time, the pilot was searching for unidentified flying objects pursuant to an earlier Base Command Post request made while the OV-10 was on final approach for landing. The aircraft orbited the sighting area, and the pilot observed what he thought to be a large, omni-directional light on a stretch of road. On his next pass, the pilot sighted 15-25 individuals gathered around a "lattice structure", which he said could have been a helicopter with its rotor blades folded. He next observed the object being moved into trees adjacent to the road. The pilot vectored the area and pin-pointed the location as VE 652280. USAF Security Police representatives subsequently advised that a sweep of the sighting area, from Ban Na Mun Hin (VE 668235) to the vicinity of Ban Ram Rat (VE 641280), by Royal Thai Army (RTA) personnel between 0100 and 0400 hours, 24 August 1969 produced no results, nor did a joint RTA-USAF Security Police search at 1100 hours the same day. (OSI Evaluation re helicopter sighting: F-5).

3. [REDACTED] 5106-ASP-6J reported that on the night of 23-24 August 1969, some twenty Thai National residents of Ban Sang Hin (VE 682249) reportedly travelled to and from the Wat Si Sa-at, located in Ban Ram Rat (VE 641280), to make an offering. This religious procession followed the country road to Ban Ram Rat, passing through Ban Nong Bua (VE 668265) and Ban Khok Sawang (VE 657278). On their return trip, between Ban Nong Bua and Ban Sang Hin, members of the group noticed an aircraft circling overhead. One of the villagers, who was carrying a portable electric lantern to light their path, shined his light upward at the plane. Source (5106-ASP-6J) stated that this incident occurred sometime between 2400 hours 23 August and 0100 hours 24 August 1969. (F-3).

4. [REDACTED] In an effort to obtain further details, 5106-ASP-6, supra, travelled to Ban Sang Hin, where he questioned a villager (NFI) who allegedly took part in the pilgrimage to Wat Si Sa-at. This villager confirmed the information received from 5106-ASP-6J, and provided the following additional details:

a. The religious procession left Ban Sang Hin at approximately 2000 hours, 23 August 1969, arrived at the wat two hours later, and departed for home again at 2330 hours. Enroute, the villagers travelled along the country road more or less in a single file. Some carried flashlights to light the way, and at least one villager carried a powerful electric lantern. On the return trip, the pilgrims carried with them two large ceremonial drums. Due to the weight of the drums, they were suspended between two long poles, with several persons supporting each pole. (F-3).

b. When the procession was nearing home, between Ban Nong Bua and Ban Sang Hin, members of the group observed an aircraft circling overhead, and the villager with the electric lantern directed its beam at the plane. When the plane continued to circle, and began to come lower, some members of the group became frightened and ran into the woods along the road. After the aircraft left the area, the group continued on its way, arriving at Ban Sang Hin between 0100 and 0130 hours, 24 August 1969. (F-3). (See attached sketch).

COMMENTS OF THE APPROVING OFFICER: [REDACTED] The information in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, was furnished the Commander and Director of Intelligence, 56th Special Operations Wing and 56th Security Police Squadron, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, upon receipt.

[REDACTED] While the location of the pilot's sighting and the route ascribed to the religious procession do not coincide precisely, their proximity and the coincidence of timing makes it apparent that the "helicopter with folded

rotor blades" was probably no more than the poles supporting large ceremonial drums. The location pinpointed by the OV-10 pilot is little more than a mile from a line between Ban Nong Bua and Ban Saug Hin, and such an error would not be unreasonable considering the sighting was made from a moving observation point at night. Further, the possibility exists that RTA personnel, searching for the ground object originally reported, may have come across information pointing to the religious procession, but failed to report it.

Radar and visual sightings of UFOs, such as that being checked out by the OV-10 pilot in this instance, are not a new phenomenon, particularly at night. A January 1969 report lists seven UFO sightings at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB for the period 28 November 1968 to 1 January 1969 alone.¹ Attempts by base reconnaissance aircraft to further identify the objects were unsuccessful. Noting these unresolved reports, the 7/13th Air Force Director of Intelligence offered several comments and possible explanations:

a. On 28 November 1968, the Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP) began an operation involving four to six BPP and Royal Thai Army (RTA) helicopters, in the vicinity of some of the sightings northwest of the base. While Thai pilots had historically been reluctant to fly at night, a recent full moon had made night flying almost as easy as daytime operations, and pilots of both the BPP and RTA had been known to accomplish night flights. Centralized control of these agencies' autonomous counter-insurgency operations is weak, however, and Thai units frequently filed flights plans with the Air Defense Surveillance System only after the fact, if at all.

b. Alternatively, the UFOs sighted might have been aircraft on clandestine flights by US agencies, as such flights are often completed without details being released to traffic control offices. Though it is possible that the illicit flights were friendly, for purposes of private gain, pleasure or smuggling, there was no evidence at the time to substantiate that possibility.

c. During November and early December, radar gear in Thailand, particularly Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) scopes, have historically yielded large numbers of returns from natural or cultural phenomena, e.g., temperature inversions, balloons from fairs and religious celebrations, migratory birds, and kites. In November 1967, Headquarters 7/13th Air Force conducted an experiment at Udorn RTAFB, where GCA scopes were reporting more than fifteen unidentified returns. In a span of ten minutes, human observers physically sighted scores of balloons, three flocks of migratory birds, several kites, plus at least four local helicopters. These sightings, even of friendly flights, could not be correlated with GCA and other electronic returns.

d. In analysing the threat of helicopters penetrating Thailand or supporting insurgent forces, a preliminary study of the technical factors involved determined that landing helicopters in remote jungle clearings at night to airlift personnel or materiel was highly dangerous, particularly without sophisticated navigational and landing aids. Additionally, the nearby Communist or neutral countries from which the helicopters might come do not presently possess adequate numbers of low/slow aircraft to support their own field forces, officials or units by air, without considering any high risk extra-territorial missions.

e. In 1967, unidentified aircraft activity, purportedly in support of Communist insurgents inside Thailand, seemed to preoccupy Thai officials until U.S. resources provided Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. Then, in a speech of acceptance and thanks, General PHRAPHAT, Deputy Prime Minister, said the helicopter threat from outside Thailand had ended or come under control.

CONTINUATION SHEET

REPORT NO. 1 656 0111 69
PAGE 4 OF 4 PAGES
ORIGINATOR OSI District 51,
Bangkok, Thailand

It would not seem necessary for insurgents to use helicopters for crossing into Thailand. Evidence indicates that much of the Thai-Laotian border can be crossed at ground level without a great deal of difficulty, affording a far cheaper, safer and less obvious means of infiltration or exfiltration. Yet Thai military and police agencies continue to report helicopter sightings, or fail to report conflicting information which might derogate claims of helicopter activity. This phenomenon may reflect the fact that the presence of helicopters would be evidence of "externally supported aggression," and provide an explanation of Thailand's insurgent movement which fortuitously omits any possibility of an internal cause. A recent self-analysis by the Thai government Communist-suppression agency in mid-South Thailand provides a notably perceptive insight into a facet of Thai personality which affects additionally the gathering and validity of intelligence information from the field. The report cautions government officials against their prevalent attitude that no report of insurgent activity is sufficiently important to send forward unless it has been bulwarked with references to unidentified support helicopters, transceivers and AK rifles, or the presence of some famous guerilla leader.²

(U) Information coordinated with J-2 USMACTHAI/JUSMAGTHAI.

¹51D IIR 1 656 0003 69, dated 9 January 1969, file: 56-713/03/5.

²CAS Bangkok FTB 14,475, "Thai Report on Insurgency in the Mid-South, Entitled CSOD's Opinion of the Communist Situation in Mid-South Thailand, dated 11 August 1969".

DD FORM 1396e

REPLACES DA FORM 1028-1, 1 AUG 60
AND DA FORM 804, 1 AUG 60 WHICH