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347th NSC Meeting  
5 December 1957

ITEM 5 (For Discussion)

PROGRESS REPORT ON U.S. POLICY IN MAINLAND  
SOUTHEAST ASIA (NSC 5612/1)

BACKGROUND

1. U. S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia was approved on 5 September 1956. This progress report covers the period 13 March through 6 November 1957.

SUMMARY

2. Political:

- a. Thailand: The coup in Thailand overshadowed all other developments in the area. The dependability of assurances that Thai foreign policy will not change remains to be seen. Owing to the changed situation, various U. S. programs are being reviewed.
- b. Burma cautiously developed closer relations with the Free World while maintaining publicly its neutral position and continuing to receive Communist aid.
- c. Laos: Negotiations for a cabinet including Pathet Lao (Communist-led) representatives became more active. The threat posed by Pathet Lao control of two northern provinces continues, and security conditions in the areas under government control deteriorated.
- d. Cambodia: A sharper awareness of the Communist danger appeared to create a more friendly climate toward the U. S. Nevertheless, the overall internal security situation deteriorated as a result of more vigorous Communist activity.
- e. Vietnam maintained its close relationship with the U. S. Progress was made in developing a representative government, and executive leadership remained strong.
- f. Malaya became an independent member of the British Commonwealth in August, and good will continues to exist toward the U. K. The new cabinet is conservative and pro-Western, but present indications are that Malaya will not join SEATO. Communist terrorists continue to threaten internal security.
- g. Singapore: The government weakened Communist strength by additional arrests.

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