

SECRET

OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD
Washington 25, D. C.

August 12, 1959

REPORT ON SOUTHEAST ASIA (NSC 5809)

(Approved by the President, April 2, 1958)

(Period Covered: From May 28, 1958 through August 12, 1959)

A. Adequacy of U. S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia (NSC 5809)

1. Review of policy with respect to Singapore is recommended on an urgent basis, in order to provide guidance for the new situation which has developed in Singapore with the granting of internal self-government and the victory of the leftist People's Action Party on May 30, a development adverse to U. S. and free world interests. If this revision of policy is made, the review of U. S. Policy Toward the Far East (NSC 5429/5) should be kept in mind.

B. Summary Evaluations of Progress made in Accomplishing U. S. Objectives

2. There has been substantial progress toward meeting the objectives of NSC 5809 in most of the mainland countries of Southeast Asia. In Singapore, however, left-wing political elements won an overwhelming electoral victory. Friction between Cambodia and its pro-U. S. neighbors adversely affected Cambodia's relations with the U. S. for some months but subsequently there was noticeable improvement. There has been an increased awareness of the communist threat. This increase was given new impetus by recent events in Tibet. The resolution of all governments in the area, except those in Singapore and Cambodia, to take a firm line in response to this threat was reflected in the political developments described below. United States political, economic, information and military assistance programs have played a significant part in these developments.

Regional cooperation in Southeast Asia has improved as a result not only of our own efforts to promote political and economic cooperation and to reduce specific areas of discord, but also because of increased Asian awareness of the Sino-Soviet threat and of the material benefits possible from regional development. This favorable trend has been facilitated by the fact that the Southeast Asian leaders feel able to work with one another due to similarities in governmental practice and political philosophy. Aggressive Chinese Communist policies in Tibet and elsewhere in Asia have given them a sense of urgency to draw together regionally. The United States has

SECRET