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By MMK NLDDE Date 10/16/14

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PLANNING COORDINATION GROUP
Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C.

August 18, 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD

SUBJECT: Overseas Chinese Students and an Asian University

The Planning Coordination Group has reviewed the current situation with respect to shortage of educational facilities in the Far East area for Asian students, particularly overseas Chinese students.

Recent developments in Singapore affecting Nanyang University appear to be indicative of the difficulties in establishing a university for Chinese students in the Far East area and make it imperative that action be taken to offset the educational opportunities being offered by Peiping, which have resulted in thousands of overseas Chinese students going to Communist China. Of equal importance is the establishment or expansion of facilities in one or more locations in the Far East for education of Asian students in the area. (see Tab A, "Summary of Recent Communist Activities in Singapore," May 19).

As a result of its discussion, the Planning Coordination Group has concluded that several alternatives should be actively considered in connection with educational facilities for Asian students.

It is the view of the Group that establishment of a university solely for Chinese students in Southeast Asia is probably not practicable, primarily due to the rejection of Chinese in various countries of Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand and the Philippines, where there is open hostility.

Expansion of the existing facilities on Taiwan offers some possibility inasmuch as the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China reportedly is in favor of expanding existing facilities and the necessary land is available. Difficulties in this project involve a shortage of professors, the emergency situation resulting from Communist threats to attack Formosa, and some political difficulties which would involve overseas Chinese students going to Formosa.

The establishment of a university for Asian students in Thailand or the Philippines, in the view of the Planning Coordination Group, offers the best opportunity for a U.S. contribution to the establishment and expansion of educational facilities. In the undertaking of such a program, it is considered likely that the governments concerned

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would be receptive to the establishment of educational facilities which would attract Asian students from the entire area. It is also possible that through such a program arrangements could be made for specific facilities for Chinese students which would ease the political problems that are inherent in establishing a university solely for Chinese students.

However great the contribution of additional educational facilities toward the strengthening of morale and the countering of communist ideology among the non-communist Asians (especially the overseas Chinese), it must be emphasized that these potential benefits will be wholly lost if the communists acquire a major intellectual influence within the universities. Already their influence and that of left-wing socialists is very great, if not dominant, within most of the existing academic institutions in Japan and parts of Southeast Asia. Even where overt communist influence is weak, the Marxist philosophy of history, theory of capitalism, and analysis of imperialism is highly influential, and anti-Western attitudes are generally held. The menace of this already existing situation is great and justifies every effort to alter the political climate in academic institutions and in intellectual circles generally. Clearly, if new institutions are to be established, precautions should be taken to forestall a parallel development therein.

Even if adequate educational facilities are established, there remains the problem of successfully locating Chinese graduates. Difficulties in this respect include the enforcement of residence permits for Chinese in Southeast Asian countries, problems of Chinese emigration to free world countries in other than the Far East, and restrictions on the absorption of Chinese into such indigenous forces as those of the Philippines.

The Planning Coordination Group understands that at least three activities of the OCB are currently and actively directed at finding solutions to aspects of this problem. The Philippine Working Group was requested by the Board Assistants on August 1 to review courses of action to improve the effectiveness of American overseas education programs in that area. Concurrently, an ad hoc OCB committee on technical and educational services in Southeast Asia has met and instituted requests for field information. Finally, two OCB working groups (on Southeast Asia and on Formosa and the Government of the Republic of China) are jointly meeting to produce a possible regional approach to the problem of the Chinese in Southeast Asia.

It is believed that each of these groups might give active consideration to the following, and it is requested that these points be brought to their attention:

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a. The feasibility of establishing an Asian university in the Philippines, Thailand, or both, which would include facilities for overseas Chinese students.

b. As an alternative, the feasibility of expanding one or more existing academic institutions in the Far East into an Asian university open to students from all countries in the area, including the overseas Chinese, having a faculty drawn from several countries, and concerning itself with the several cultures in the area.

c. The feasibility of expanding the existing facilities on Taiwan and attempting to reduce the political restrictions on access to those facilities so as to create a distinguished Chinese university at an appropriate location.

d. The possibility that one or more of these projects might be sponsored by a well-known non-governmental organization in the United States so as to cover any official U.S. support furnished.

e. Measures that might be taken to counter Communist and extreme anti-Western attitudes in the intellectual and academic communities of the Far East.

f. Measures that might be taken to accommodate Chinese graduates in free world countries.

For the Chairman

/s/

T. W. Parker
Executive Secretary

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Tab A to FCG Memo to OCB
"Overseas Chinese Stu-
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University".

19 May 1955

SUMMARY OF RECENT COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN SINGAPORE

1. For the past year Communist activities among Singapore's vigorous Chinese element have manifested themselves through student activity, increased anti-British and anti-U.S. propaganda in the press, the Peoples Action Party, the sabotaging of Lin Yu Tang as Chancellor of the new Nanyang University, and selected terrorist activities of the Singapore branch of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). To say that all these avenues of approach by the Communists represent a coordinated plan of action would most likely be ascribing too much cohesive planning to the Communists. However, these approaches by the Communists are not entirely unrelated and fit in perfectly with the tactical change in MCP policy as laid down by the Party in October 1951. At this time the MCP realized that it did not have the support of the masses to assist it in its undertaking of a program of terrorism and violence, and as a result its new policy called for a subordination of such tactics to those of infiltration and subversion. It is quite likely that the whole Communist program for Singapore will show increased integration in the next twelve months as the MCP solidifies its position as the agent of the Communist Party of China.

2. The Chinese Middle Schools have provided the nucleus for anti-government activity by student groups. Singapore Police said that the MCP had infiltrated the Middle Schools with a small number of professional agitators who are able to organize the student masses into taking concerted action.

- a. Fourteen months ago the Singapore government inaugurated a system of registration of all Singapore youths for compulsory military service. The MCP underground organ, "Freedom Press", labeled this registration program as an attempt by the British to coerce Chinese youths into fighting Britain's fight against the Chinese. The Anti-British Youth League took up this propaganda line, and ABYL groups were formed in two large Singapore Chinese Middle Schools. The anti-registration campaign culminated in the student demonstrations of May 13, 1954, and was followed by a sit-down strike lasting 22 days at the Singapore High School. During the strike the students were remarkably well organized and disciplined, with picket lines, songs, and leaders delegated to negotiate with government or community representatives. Seven Chinese students arrested

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for non-compliance with the National Service Act were successfully defended by D. N. Pritt, noted British lawyer, and an official in several Commie-front organizations. Lee Kong Chien (K. C. Lee), wealthy Singapore business tycoon and son-in-law of Tan Kah Kee, was mainly responsible for obtaining the services of Pritt.

- b. Classroom discipline in many Chinese schools is reported to have passed entirely into the hands of the students. Any anti-Communist or pro-British efforts by the (poorly paid) teachers were howled down, and in some cases the teachers were physically forced from their rooms and acid thrown in the faces of certain teachers noted for their anti-Communist views.
- c. On weekends, students would go off on picnics where they would be further indoctrinated with Communist propoganda. During the past year it has become increasingly evident that, among other things, the students were being taught to facilitate unrest by giving support to legitimate labor unrest in Singapore.

3. In the Chinese-language newspaper field there has been a noticeable increase in the anti-British, anti-U.S. and pro-Red China slanting of the news. Through intimidation and infiltration the pro-Mainland China elements have increased their control to the point where most known pro-West journalists have been fired. It is extremely difficult, almost impossible, for USIA, the British or ourselves to get material published in any Chinese-language organs other than KMT. This pro-China trend is most apparent in the "Nanyang Siang Pau", the largest Singapore Chinese daily (owned and operated by George Lee, half-brother of K.C. Lee), and has been highlighted by the enforced demise of the "Sin Lit Pao", a mosquito newspaper heretofore openly anti-Communist and the only anti-Communist mosquito paper.

4. The advent on the Singapore scene of a new political party, the Peoples Action Party (PAP) has had the effect of creating a strong political party which supports the Communist program. PAP's strength lies not so much in its numbers as in its effective leadership. This party was not formed until November of last year. Yet by 2 April 1955 the PAP showed surprising strength in the Singapore elections. Lee Kuan Yew, Secretary of the Party, received the largest number of votes of any candidate running for the legislature. On 5 May 1955 the Straits Times of Singapore published an article which reported Lee Kuan Yew as denying to be a Communist but admitting the fact that "any man in Singapore who wants to carry the Chinese-speaking people with him cannot afford to be anti-Communist....If I had to choose between colonialism and Communism I would vote Communism and so would the great majority." Students have



been effectively organized to get out the vote for PAP candidates. The demagogic tactics of the leaders are well received in an area where it has become fashionable to attack colonialism.

5. According to the police, the PAP seems to be a resurrection of the old-pre-emergency Malayan Democratic Union which, as a result of falling under Communist domination, was forced to dissolve itself in 1948. A look at the officers of PAP discloses that a substantial number of them have been implicated in subversive activities.

6. The ouster of Lin Yu Tang as Chancellor of the Nanyang University must also be cited as the realization of Communist intentions. It was hoped that the University would prove to be a medium by which Chinese students could obtain a higher education in Chinese without going to schools in Mainland China. There is no doubt now that the choice of Lin as Chancellor was an unfortunate one. His personality and strong anti-Communist views were such that it was inevitable that he would clash with his sponsors. Furthermore, the social and intellectual climate of Singapore is far from being favorable to intellectually oriented anti-Communist activity. Nevertheless, it would appear that Peking's influence was decisive in the campaign to force Lin's resignation and as a result free world supporters suffered a setback. With Lin's disappearance from the scene, along with the teaching staff he had chosen, there is every indication that if Nanyang University does open it will be oriented toward China, i.e., Communist China. The Peking influence took the form of pressure on the two main sponsors of the University, Tan Lark Sye and Lee Kong Chien, and in addition was exerted through the Chinese-language papers which gave Lin a consistently bad press, and through organized Chinese Middle School students whose demonstrations demanded Lin's ouster.

7. British Special Branch officials are convinced that the leftist activities in Singapore are being directed from Peking via the MCP. It should be remembered that according to the MCP table of organization, the Singapore Branch (Singapore Town Committee) is directly responsible to the Southern Bureau of the MCP, and specifically to the South Johore Regional Committee. Such direction by Peking is difficult to prove, but there are enough bits of evidence to lend strong support to such an allegation. Propaganda lines from China find their way into MCP publications. These publications, in turn, play a large part in the propaganda program of the students and the Peoples Action Party. Entirely aside from overt terrorism as practiced by the MCP, Special Branch officials feel that Chinese Communists have been successful in setting up what has been termed "the new underground". Postal links have been uncovered by the police connecting individuals in Singapore and Malaya with Communist elements in China. It is further pointed out that the degree of organization shown by the students indicates professional direction.



8. The recent riot in Singapore is a continuation of Communist tactics. It has been reliably reported that the riot was masterminded by the PAP, who used the students to create trouble, thereby attempting to discredit the new Labor Front government. Events leading up to the riot centered around the Hock Lee Amalgamated Bus Company. About three weeks ago the Singapore Bus Workers Union called a strike at the Hock Lee Amalgamated Bus Company. It is perhaps pertinent to point out that the secretary of the Singapore Bus Workers Union was also a founder of the PAP. This same man has also been reported as being the link between the PAP and the MCP. Students used this strike as the excuse to start demonstrations. It was the support of the students which magnified the strike out of all proportions.

9. In order to evaluate the position of the riot as it applies to overall Communist strategy it is necessary to look into the relationship between the Labor Front Party and the PAP. The Labor Front emerged from the elections as the single most powerful party. In order to form a government, they formed a coalition with the Alliance Party. The Labor Front is Socialist, but anti-Communist. The PAP looks upon the Labor Front as their enemies; hence they feel that any weakening of the Labor Front would react to PAP's advantage. The riot was therefore probably aimed at bringing discredit to the Labor Front government. If the Labor Front had decided on strong action in support of the police, PAP could then accuse the Labor Front of being the tools of the British Colonial Government. If the Labor Front did nothing, and abetted the riot by inaction on their part, there was the possibility that the Colonial Government might have to step in and take over the management of affairs. The usurpation of power by the British at the expense of the newly elected government would then provide ample propaganda ammunition for the Communists. From the Communist point of view they were apparently willing to take the chance that they might be antagonizing public opinion. But then if the public did react unfavorably to the disturbances, the Communists could hope that "irresponsible students" would be blamed.

10. The PAP apparently have decided that, at least for the present, the 13-14 May riots have gone far enough. It was in their power to continue the disturbances or call them off. They chose the latter course. However, unless conditions change, it will also be within their power to find some new excuse for starting future disturbances.

11. The recent riot has clearly illustrated the following significant points:

- a. Communist influence through infiltration, subversion and threat in the political, labor, and student fields in Singapore presents the greatest danger to the stability of the Colony of Singapore since World War II. The degree to which the Communists have penetrated and influenced student

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groups cannot be overemphasized. Communist strategy in Singapore is directed toward discrediting the present Labor Front Government, welding together a student organization which can create disorders and thereby weaken the influence of the British, and convincing the Chinese public at large that those who oppose Communism will be dealt with harshly.

- b. The present newly elected government is too weak to effectively cope with critical situations on an anti-Communist basis without calling for assistance from the Colonial Government.
- c. If the present policy of the Colonial Government prevails, it also will probably not be able to prevent future riots of the same nature from occurring. Unless the Government adopts a strong and firm attitude toward any manifestation of Communism, it will only be a matter of time before the Communists, through the Peoples Action Party, legally take over the Colony of Singapore.