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26/3/21

SIGINT IN BORNEO

Declassified by ASD - 09/11/2021  
Information removed for national  
security and/or personal sensitivities

FAS(B),

Department of Defence

As mentioned last week, the possible requirement for tactical SIGINT support to British operations in Borneo has been raised by GCO Singapore. His enquiry is attached as Annex "A", GCHQ's initial comments are at "B", and DSB's at "C".

2. In brief, the position is that the Australian Services (in particular, the AMP) would be the only immediate source of trained SIGINT troops with current competence in Indonesian interception, processing and intelligence reporting, i.e., capable of providing a self-contained field unit for direct "tactical" support of anti-insurgency, etc, operations. The bulk of the British SIGINT effort in the Far East is civilian, and there is no British experience or capability in some aspects of critical importance, particularly linguistic. We consider it would take many months to convert British Service SIGINT resources, which might be withdrawn from Europe or the Middle East, to Indonesian tasks (including processing and reporting aspects).

3. Meanwhile, we are discussing (with Singapore and GCHQ) possible arrangements for a party of British Civilian intercept operators to be transferred from the Singapore station to North Borneo (probably Labuan) to improve the collection of SIGINT from Indonesian links in East Borneo. This material would be sent back to Singapore, DSB, etc, for processing and reporting.

GCHQ has stated that the U.K. is considering the means and timing of an approach to the Australian authorities for a "Y" party which might later supplement or replace the proposed civilian effort. Action in the event of Australian inability to assist in this way is also under consideration by GCHQ and War Office.

*Rs.*  
(R. N. THOMPSON)  
DIRECTOR, D.S.B.

20 FEB 1963

Copy to :- Chairman, JIC(SC)



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