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Declaration of Kerry George Hamill
on October 13th 1978 working under the orders
of Commandant Michael Leborvitz

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THE CIA PLAN TO GAIN CONTROL
OF THE MALACCA STRAITS.

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My information for the following came from CIA Major Michael Lebowitz, my superior officer in Tokyo, during one of our regular meetings between May and December 1977. I think this particular meeting took place towards the end of November.

The CIA is very concerned about the lack of U.S. protection for the Malacca straits which is a vital ^{and naval} trade route between the East and West and therefore of great strategic importance in the event of war breaking out between the Soviet Union and the U.S.

The strengthening of the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean and the creation of a Naval base in Vietnam are seen by the CIA as posing a direct threat to the Malacca Straits, and ^{as} signifying the Soviet Union's desire to ~~gain~~ be able to gain control of them whenever it wants to. A strong U.S. response is thought to be vitally necessary by the CIA in order to neutralise this Soviet threat.

By seeking the cooperation of the Indonesian and Malaysian governments the CIA hopes to establish, over the next three to five years, a naval base ~~at~~ at Malacca, Malaysia and an air force base in north western Sumatra. The naval base will be designed to handle submarines as well as ships as the CIA wants there to be an increased force of submarines - both conventional and Polaris missile-carrying - in both the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. U.S. plans to help control the straits in the event of a U.S. - Soviet confrontation.

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Although the initiative for the plan came from the CIA, most of the negotiations between the U.S. and the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia will be carried out at ministerial level - i.e. between the respective defence ministries - and through diplomatic channels via embassies. The CIA will play a behind-the-scenes role ensuring that everything goes smoothly.

Because the U.S. is the most important ally for both Malaysia and Indonesia, and because it is the chief anti-communist force in the world, the CIA expects negotiations to be fairly straightforward. The U.S. will pay in cash and trade credits to be allowed to establish its bases and the host countries will be well aware that the U.S. presence will greatly increase the security of the whole of Southeast Asia as well as that of Malaysia and Indonesia in particular. The presence of U.S. bases in these countries will be a strong deterrent against a Soviet attack as the U.S. would automatically be involved in such a confrontation.

The CIA will prepare the ground for the negotiations by finding out whether there is likely to be any strong opposition to its plan then bribing opponents to keep quiet or, if this doesn't work, arranging for them to miss important government meetings to discuss the plan. The CIA will also bribe influential politicians and lobbyists if necessary to speak in favour of the plan and gather support for it. The CIA's activity will be controlled from Washington as the CIA operates with government permission in Malaysia and Indonesia and will be supervised from local CIA offices and U.S. Embassies.

According to Lebowitz when I met him in March, 1978 shortly before leaving Tokyo, the Malaysian and Indonesian governments were due to be notified informally in April, through diplomatic channels, of the U.S. desire to discuss the question of bases with them. More

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formal, secret negotiations would probably begin anything from six to ten months later after all sides had had a chance to consider the plan in more depth.

Referring back to my November, 1977 meeting with Lebravitz, he told me that the CIA considered it important to seek the backing of China as this would lessen the feeling of distrust which most Southeast Asian countries, but particularly Indonesia, feel towards her, and make them see the Soviet Union as the main enemy - from a military if not from an ideological point of view. It would also give the Soviet Union cause for concern to learn of China's determination to oppose ^{Soviet} hegemony and the reaffirmation of her anti-Soviet alliance with the U.S. In March, 1978 Lebravitz told me that China would be informed of the plan - again informally - after the U.S. had received an initial reaction from Malaysia and Indonesia.

~~During the time~~ The CIA plans to ensure U.S. control of the Malacca Straits before its bases are built. It wants the government to increase the strength of the Pacific and Indian Ocean fleets ^{as soon as possible,} particularly the former to counter the Soviet buildup in Vietnam. The CIA is afraid that the Soviet Union might try to 'sandwich' the straits between two fleets and nobody but the U.S. can prevent this.

The CIA wants the U.S. government to use its position as most important ally to win an agreement from Malaysia and Indonesia to allow U.S. naval vessels to perform exercises ^{within} inside their territorial waters inside and close to the Malacca Straits so that the U.S. will be able to justify the regular appearance of its navy in the Straits. As with the setting up of bases, this will have to be arranged at ministerial level and will be an integral part of the U.S. deal.

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As a further step to deter the Soviet Union from trying to gain control of the straits in the near future, the CIA will try to arrange for U.S. ~~ships~~ naval vessels to visit Singapore with greater regularity so that there will always be a U.S. vessel of some sort present in the Straits area. Any move by the Soviet Union to take control of the straits could therefore be interpreted as an act of aggression against the U.S. and this will be a strong deterrent ^{against} ~~to~~ her.

Relying on the fact that the U.S. is the main ally of both Malaysia and Indonesia, the CIA also plans to arrange with the governments of these countries for U.S. navy ships to engage in exercises inside their territorial waters. This will enable the navy to become familiar with the waters of the straits ~~and~~ themselves and the approaches to the straits so that they can be guarded at all times, making it ~~impossible~~ impossible for the Soviet Union to take the U.S. by surprise.

If all the CIA's wishes are fulfilled, the air force base on Sumatra will be constructed so that it can be quickly converted into a missile base for land-to-sea missiles ^{and medium range inter-continental ballistic missiles}. However, ^{the U.S. government feels that} such a move might complicate relations with China if she felt that these missiles could be used against her ~~and~~ ~~and~~ it would also possibly jeopardize Detente and SALT talks and lead to a deterioration in Soviet - U.S. relations.

As I have stated above, no opposition is expected from the governments of either Malaysia or ~~Singapore~~ Indonesia, however, in order to ensure the success of its plan, the CIA will bribe influential politicians and lobbyists, if necessary to speak in favour of the plan and gather support for it.

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obtaining the backing of several government ministers,
^{arranging}
~~arranging~~ receiving the allotment of land for the bases.

After this is done the army will step in and run the rest of the operation. They will have to negotiate with the Australians, ~~and~~ build two army bases with gun installations and start a supply base for the navy ships that will be based there. Once the ~~oper~~ plan is operational it will come under the direction of the Secretary of Defense in Washington D.C. That is, it would be completely a military campaign.

While in Phuket, Thailand in January of nineteen seventy eight I made enquiries about going to the Nicobar Islands, North of the North-Western tip of Sumatra. I was told by the Thai ~~man~~ immigration official that these Islands were part of India's territory and that no one was allowed to go near them. He said also that Russian Gun

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boats had been seen at and near these island frequently over the last four or five years. The Soviets have had a good political relationship with India now for many years therefore it is quite likely that they have rented the Nicobar Islands from India. However whether it is for the specific purpose of controlling the Malacca Strait is doubtful as the entrance is too wide to control at this point. A Soviet base in the Nicobars though could certainly be a hazard to any western shipping using the Strait but would not counter-act American control of the Malacca Strait.

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