

## THAIS EVACUATING BORDER TRIBESMEN

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BANGKOK, Thailand, March 18 (Reuters)—Government authorities are uprooting thousands of Meo hill tribesmen from their homes in northern Thailand and moving them away from growing Communist influence there, official sources said today.

The move was necessary, these sources said, because Peking and Hanoi-trained Meo guerrillas had grown so strong they had begun launching large ground attacks on Government forces instead of conducting their traditional hit-and-run raids.

Last week, Meo Communist guerrillas attacked seven Government posts in northern Nan and Chiangrai Provinces near the Laotian border.

According to the sources, the situation would deteriorate unless Meo tribesmen, many of whom supported the guerrillas, willingly or unwillingly, were moved from the region. Those who refused evacuation would be regarded as Communist sympathizers and punished, the sources added.

So far about 1,000 people from 200 Meo families have been evacuated, the sources said. About 10,000 people would be affected altogether.