

U.S. Regrets CIA Agent's False Letter

From News Dispatches

BANGKOK, Jan. 5—The U.S. embassy today admitted that an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency sent the Thai government a phony letter last month, signed with the name of an insurgent leader and signed with the name of an insurgent leader and proposing a ceasefire.

The letter called for a halt in the fighting in return for guerrilla autonomy in the northeastern region of the country near the Laos border.

The embassy apologized to the Thai government.

The proposal in the letter addressed to Premier Sanya Dharmasakti was never taken seriously by the Thai government because it was inconsistent with known Communist policy.

The embassy, which admitted the affair after three Bangkok newspapers broke the story, said, "The incident of the cease-fire letter . . . was a regrettable, unauthorized initiative."

It added that U.S. Ambassador William R. Kintner, who presented his credentials only Nov. 29, "has directed categorically that no American official be involved in any activity which could be interpreted as interference in Thai internal affairs."

The incident was especially embarrassing since Kintner has been trying to play down his former career as a U.S. Army officer, including two years with the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington as a planning specialist on paramilitary activities in 1959-1952.

The Bangkok newspaper *The Nation* cited "unimpeachable sources" as saying that the agent who sent the letter—code-named "Lion"—had actually contacted insurgents in the northeast jungles and had sent the hoax letter with good intentions, hoping to gain the defections of more Communist-led guerrillas by indicating a soft attitude on the part of their leaders.

The letter was signed "Chamras"—the code name of a central committee member of the Communist Party of Thailand in the northeast. *The Nation* reported.

The newspaper said that whoever mailed the letter had made the mistake of having it registered, and it was traced back to the CIA office in Sakon Nakhon by Thai police.