UBON RTAFB

1. PCL area
2. MMS area
3. Off-Base MMS area, 6 miles

FIGURE 8
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perimeter defense while the USAF would provide only "middle" and "close-in" site defense in the immediate vicinity of the USAF aircraft parking area. USAF also defended a portion of the joint USAF/RTAF MMS area and provided two sentry dog teams for the POL dump. Both the MMS and POL areas were outside the USAF defensive perimeter.

There was little close coordination and planning between the RTAF and the SPECS forces. Also, no Base Defense Security Center had been established.

The SPECS unit operated under two severe limitations. First, most of their personnel were SPs who had operated under AFM 206-1 and AFM 207-1 which were the references for resource defense in a non-SEAsia environment. These personnel were not familiar with PACAFM 207-25 tactics and concepts which were used in Thailand, and because of the newness of the program, few SPECS personnel had received any training for their role under PACAFM 207-25. Secondly, equipment and physical defenses were lacking. These problems will be examined in Chapter III.

Ubon RTAFB. The danger to Ubon was best illustrated by the three attacks between 1969 and 1972, as well as its proximity to the Laotian border and CT activities in the area.

There were 363 SPs and 507 TSGs assigned to the 8th SPS on 31 May 1972. These included 35 SPs TDY from Clark AFB, assigned as a result of the deployment.
RTG cooperation in the Ubon area was mainly in intelligence gathering. There was no RTAF infantry, and few other RTG forces were available in the event of an attack, although the TPP did provide two regular three-man jeep patrols in the 16km area around the base perimeter. An unarmed USAF security policeman was allowed to accompany each of the "Liaison Patrols" for coordination and communication with the base CSC. These patrols facilitated RTG response to unexplained activity outside the perimeter.

On the other hand, during the 4 June 1972 attack, it took more than an hour for the RTA "alert" forces to respond. The RTAF and RTA did not man the joint BDSC except during alert conditions, although they had cooperated in highly successful joint exercises. Additionally, the BPP frequently patrolled villages within the 16km circle, as did Special Actions Forces of the TPP. Local RTG commanders were anxious to assist in base defense, but they lacked the equipment and communication capabilities essential for a high level of effectiveness.

Infrequent daytime use of the HH-43 fire-fighting helicopter stemmed from the SP approach, since the rescue unit had indicated a willingness to conduct regular night missions. The HH-43 was used for illumination the night of the 4 June attack.

In mid-1972, the Chief of Security Police at Ubon RTAFB indicated that the single greatest problem facing him as a defense planner was the gap between supervisory personnel and the SPs on post. This, he felt, was due to a lack of sufficient professional training which resulted in
senior NCOs avoiding close supervision of their subordinates. He sought to remedy this problem by subdividing each main section of the base and assigning SP/TSG forces to a particular sub-section. This enabled each supervisor to make frequent post checks and maintain close contact with each man, thereby achieving better discipline, morale, and defense alertness.

To provide the needed "professionalism," frequent training exercises were held and job specialization was emphasized to a much greater degree than in normal SP squadrons. One such "specialty" was the Standboard, manned permanently by a senior NCO. This mission element was responsible for conducting exercises and standardizing the defense responses to given situations. This emphasis on professionalism and close supervisory control was justified by the response this force showed in the 4 June attack.

The smallness of Ubon RTAFB made employment of the "three rings of defense" very difficult. In one sector, the AC-130 aircraft were but 200 meters from the fence. POL was only lightly defended by posted sentries. Both the on-base MMS and the MMS area located six miles off-base were defended in-depth and a sign-in/sign-out procedure maintained accountability of Thai nationals inside.

Circulation control on the flight line was provided by the usual entry controllers and random posts, including several built into strategic positions in the top of the aircraft revetments. A major weakness existed
during the deployment period in that several of the "close-in" defensive positions were manned by inexperienced augmentees with one to three days of training. This augmentation occurred during the "Yellow" security alert condition which followed the 4 June attack.

Udorn RTAFB. In many respects, Udorn in 1968 and in 1972 was the base most vulnerable to attack. It contained large numbers of F-4 "targets," was in an area with a high concentration of CT, and had the worst geographic constraints of any base. (See Chapter III.) Furthermore, the serious lack of local RTG cooperation or support in the base defense mission jeopardized the defense posture. In October 1971, the Deputy Commander, 7/13AF, in a letter to the Commander, 432TRW, cited the base defense as "inadequate." This assessment was particularly grave in light of intelligence estimates:

A representative of another United States Government Organization has furnished this Headquarters 7/13AF with a report alleging enemy (NVA) plans to attack Udorn RTAFB in the near future. . . . This report states the group will enter Thailand armed with heavy weapons such as mortars, B-40 rockets/rocket propelled grenades and other kinds of explosive ordnance.

Serious efforts at securing local RTG cooperation were continued and, in June 1972, the RTA Commander, Major General Chau, reissued a base defense plan and promised to hold exercises "in the future." Despite the fact that the RTAF had expressed a willingness to conduct regular off-base patrols within 5km around the perimeter, the new plan still prohibited RTAF troop deployment in support of base defense without the prior approval of the RTA commander in person.
UDRON RTAFB

1. PHIL area
2. Off-Base PHIL area #1
3. Off-Base NMS Area #2, 1 mile
4. Air America Operation

FIGURE 9

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In January 1972, the RTA failed to provide external defense despite the fact that intelligence estimates indicated a strong possibility of enemy action. The only reason ever offered for this lack of cooperation by local RTG authorities was that they needed POL support for their transportation. Thirteenth Air Force promptly authorized this support, but there was no increased cooperation. When Ubon was attacked on 4 June, Udorn RTAFB entered a Red Alert Security Condition and urgently requested RTA support under the May 1972 joint-defense plan. None was forthcoming, and this prompted USA advisors to comment: "Advisors here feel that the quick reaction capacity committed to the RTAF base defense in the plan existed only on paper and did not, in effect, exist."

Despite the apparent willingness of RTAF forces to assist in internal security of vital resources, USAF security personnel chose not to utilize the available infantry force in any direct defense role. The reason for this was the inadequate RTAF training and their lack of familiarity with the USAF tactics and positions.

At Udorn, manning in mid-1972 stood at 297 USAF SPs and 427 TSGs. An additional 25 SPs were sent TDY from Clark AFB during the deployment.

As at Ubon, the Udorn POL area was inadequately defended. It was contiguous to civilian housing and to a major highway. This "indefensible" situation was recognized by base authorities.
There were also two off-base MMS areas—one a few hundred meters from the perimeter and the other about a mile from the gate. Both were very lightly defended and were highly vulnerable to attack and destruction.

No regular use of the HH-43 helicopters was undertaken for exterior patrol efforts, although it was available to "check-out any suspicious activities."

Because of the limited base area, the "three rings of defense" concept was not followed in all areas of the perimeter. Additionally, Udorn shared a section of the perimeter with Air America, a U.S. Government-owned airline operation. There was no existing defense of that common perimeter although an agreement was reached in June 1972 between USAF and MACTHAI whereby the USAF could initiate limited defense of that area in July. There was a very sophisticated "close-in" defense around the aircraft consisting of perimeter sentries who had excellent circulation observation and control. There was a danger, however, that an enemy who had penetrated this far might then be too close to vital resources for their successful defense.

U-Tapao RTNAF. Once thought to be the most secure base in Thailand, this installation received what could have been a devastating lesson early in 1972. Fortunately, the attack did more damage to the illusion of safety than to the strike capability of this vital USAF installation. The attack
1. POL AREA 3. On-Base Thai Village
2. MMS AREA 4. B-52 Ramp

U-TAPAO RTNAF

FIGURE 10

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had the desirable effect of catalyzing action aimed at the development of an effective defense concept tailored to the unique problems at U-Tapao RTNAF.

U-Tapao RTNAF was the largest USAF facility in Thailand, both geographically and operationally. As such, in June 1972, it had the largest security force: 450 SPs, including 46 SPs TDY from Clark AB sent during the deployment; 537 TSGs; and 49 sentry/patrol dogs.

RTG cooperation in base defense, both during the January attack and continuing through June, remained excellent. Royal Thai Navy Marines (RTNM) in 20-man units conducted regular, vigorous 24-hour patrols outside the base perimeter. The RTN conducted evening patrol-boat sweeps on the sea side of the perimeter. Thai Provincial Police also cooperated and patrolled the exterior area during increased security alert conditions. USAF and RTN personnel manned the BDSC 24 hours a day. Even though U-Tapao did not have a formal Joint Base Defense Plan by mid-1972, RTG emergency-response capability was considered significantly above average for Thai bases. Despite all these efforts, however, the actual net effect was difficult to assess as indicated in a message from the CSP in July 1972:

The external defense provided by the RTG and Provincial Police forces is adequate; however, their true capability and effectiveness is seriously limited. The Thai units . . . are highly motivated, adequately trained and willing to help . . . however, their combat capability is limited by adverse manning, outdated weapons, lack of communications equipment, limited vehicle fleet, and inadequate fuel allocation for their vehicles.
Regular HH-43 helicopter patrols of the perimeter were made at night. Additionally, defense personnel were coordinating plans with the RTNM to conduct evening "liaison patrols" of off-base areas around the perimeter. This concept was similar to that developed at Ubon RTAFB.

Several significant personnel actions resulted from lessons learned in the January attack. First, despite the large defense force, the 19-1/2km perimeter, taken with other geographic constraints discussed in Chapter III, made perimeter defense difficult. The ease with which the January sappers moved once they penetrated the base clearly demonstrated the inherent risks of an "egg-shell" perimeter defense posture. An effective, in-depth, middle-line-of-defense was developed for personnel utilization. Plans were made for sophisticated physical barriers in this manageable middle ring. Additional close-in defenses were tightened and strengthened. Each aircraft revetment was guarded by either an SP or TSG, and K-9 patrols were concentrated in the middle defenses and in areas around the resources. Several ambush sites were manned in the large, densely foliated regions inside the perimeter. Regular full-field exercises were conducted on the seashore perimeter with live fire from machineguns, grenades, and small arms used to provide tactical experience with these weapons.

Circulation control in the aircraft area was generally excellent, possibly reflecting the several years' experience that the Strategic Air Command had with this type of defense measure. The POL and MMS areas, however, were not defended in the depth evident on the flight line. This,
of course, was typical of the majority of Thailand bases and reflected the relative priorities dictated by resource limitations. Circulation control in the MMS area was tightened after the January intrusion. Various intelligence sources indicated the threat of sapper penetration of the base via the hundreds of trucks that each day delivered bombs to the base MMS, which was adjacent to the B-52 parking ramp. Careful searches of these trucks were routinely performed.

The major problem facing security forces in 1972 was summed up by the Chief of Security Police at U-Tapao RTNAF in the following words:

_Mission motivation is critical. The security policemen would want to do a good job if they felt the situation called for it. But this is hard because the small threat here gives rise to apathy; morale is not a problem, boredom is! This place is not indefensible. It is a little harder than most other bases, but it can be effectively and adequately defended with presently available resources if our people believe it can!_