

MALAYSIA

Floods

December 26, 1970
to January 5, 1971

...from 10 days of torrential monsoon rains—81 inches measured—creates havoc in Western Malaysia where 61 people were killed. 243,000 were evacuated, thousands of whom were left homeless. Estimated dollar damage \$37 million

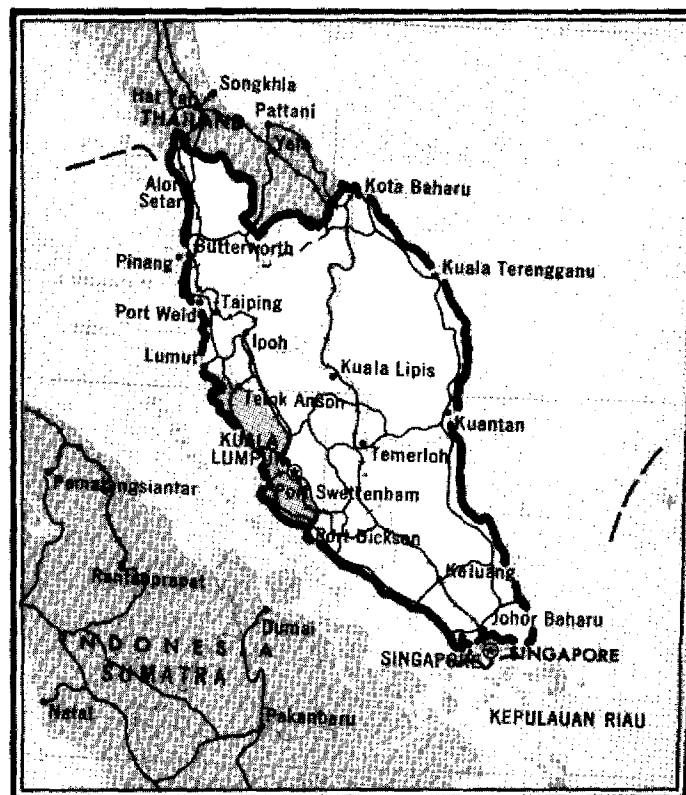
Value of U.S. Assistance	\$265,749
Value of Assistance by Other Nations	604,950
	<hr/>
	\$870,699

DETAILS:

Although it was the monsoon season, such a deluge was most uncommon and unexpected. Rivers and streams poured over their banks, spreading death, destruction and misery throughout Western Malaysia. It was considered the worst flood disaster since 1926.

Rural areas of the States of Pahang, Trengganu, Kelantan, Selangor, Negri, Sembilan, Malacca, and Johore were hardest hit where many villages were completely swept away. It also struck the capitol, Kuala Lumpur, and the major West Coast town of Malacca.

Flooding peaked in many areas on January 5, at which time large numbers of people were stranded on roof tops or high points of ground, and calls for evacuation were widespread. Local police lacked adequate water transport to meet the mushrooming needs. Selangor police headquarters was under



water and the National Police Headquarters was without telephone or power except for radio communications. Dozens of East Coast rural communities were isolated with no means of communicating with State Relief Centers.

The rains slackened by January 5, by which time six feet of water covered downtown Kuala Lumpur. Squatter settlements adjacent to the rivers were washed out. A number of American residences in the city were flooded, but no American lives were lost. The Bentong road was blocked by 50 landslides, and in one section 100 feet of the road disappeared. Police ordered access routes to Kuala Lumpur blocked, because massive traffic jams had occurred. Besides road damage, landslides in Kuala Lumpur also caused extensive building damage.

By January 8 the flood had eased and was continuing to improve as fair weather held in many parts of the country. Although much of Western Malaysia, including Kuala Lumpur, was fast returning to normal, parts of the States of Pahang, Malacca and Johore remained under water, and a fresh flood was reported in the coastal areas of Selangor. By January 12 essential services in Kuala Lumpur had been largely restored. A clean-up effort in one area of the city was enlivened by the escape of 65 crocodiles from a Croc Farm.

Besides Malaysian self-help, rescue and relief missions were carried out with helicopters, ships and boats provided by other countries. Some 234,000 people were officially listed as evacuated, though thousands of others had evacuated themselves. Tens of thousands of others lost property and suffered crop loss.

It was estimated close to 100 bridges of substantial construction were destroyed as were innumerable small rural bridges. Communications and transportation lines throughout the stricken part of Malaysia were interdicted, and road and rail transport were impossible in most areas for at least a week. No estimate of crop damage was made, but small landholders were most affected. The major rice producing areas were largely unaffected. Loss of earnings was extensive, largely attributable to the inability of workers to gather latex or mine

tin ore. Damage to commercial firms in Kuala Lumpur was also heavy since many were located close to rivers. Business was halted in the city for several days.

By January 13, 151,000 people who had been evacuated from their homes had returned.

Several days after the peak floods in West Malaysia, the East Malaysian State of Sarawak experienced moderate flooding with one death.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Although the Government of Malaysia was without a disaster preparedness program in anticipation of such a flood disaster, it geared itself within 24 hours to deal with the emergency.

A coordinating organization, headed by the Chief of the Armed Forces Staff and a Cabinet Minister, was created. It included representatives from all elements of government with a capacity to render assistance, i.e., the Military Services, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Welfare, etc. In the affected states, similar state coordinating mechanisms, under the direction of the Chief Minister, were established. Cabinet sessions were held regularly throughout the emergency period to coordinate and develop rescue and relief operations. Prime Minister Razak was kept informed of developments and provided ultimate direction for the relief program. He visited several flood-stricken areas at the height of the emergency as did several of his Ministers.

The American Embassy reported that the Government of Malaysia marshalled an impressive rescue operation throughout the period of the floods, fully utilizing its Armed Forces' capabilities, to provide helicopters, trucks and boats.

The Ministry of Health initiated a wide-scale typhoid and cholera inoculation program. A number of schools and other organizations gave on-the-spot assistance, and the Malaysian Red Cross conducted a broad program to meet housing, clothing,

food and medical needs of the victims.

Some \$3 million had been expended by the Government of Malaysia by March 15, 1971, for short-term assistance to those whose livelihoods had been affected. The GOM stated at that time that this amount would be increased. Estimates for medium-term and long-term assistance were not available but were expected to include the resettlement of people to higher ground

A National Disaster Relief Fund was established. Indicative of the universal civic sense of Malaysian society was the immediate and continuing flow of donations to the Fund by firms, organizations and individuals totaling 13.5 million Malaysian dollars having a US dollar equivalent of \$4.5 million. Unfortunately, at the end of the emergency the special governmental coordinating mechanisms which had been created to deal with the disaster were dissolved, leaving Malaysia without a permanent disaster organization

The American Embassy reported that many of the lessons learned from the May 1970 civil strife disaster—and the programs adopted to deal with that situation—were applied to the floods. Foreign observers, including American Embassy personnel close to the flood relief assistance scene, were impressed with the ability of the GOM to develop realistic requirements and to take appropriate action.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

President Nixon sent the following message to His Majesty Abdul Halim Mu'azzam Sha: "Your Majesty: I have been saddened to hear of the death and destruction being caused by the floods in Malaysia. I have instructed Ambassador Lydman to confer with your Prime Minister and other appropriate officials of your government with a view to recommending how we can most effectively assist and cooperate in Malaysia's own relief efforts. On behalf of all Americans, I extend my heartfelt sympathy to you and to the people of Malaysia."

The American Embassy received the first formal request for

airlift and other assistance from the Government of Malaysia the afternoon of January 5. The Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission visited the National Coordination Center on January 5 to obtain details of the flood situation and to estimate help needed. As a result of rapid Washington reaction, the Ambassador was in a position on the morning of January 6 to inform the GOM that the U.S. would assist in every way possible

The first USAF C-124 with two UH-1 helicopters, 13 U.S. Army personnel with essential tools on board, arrived at Kuantan early on the morning of January 7. It was followed by an airlift of four additional helicopters, boats, vaccines and other supplies. USG helicopter operations were completed on January 18 and departed Kuantan January 21, 1971.

Ambassador Lydman was personally active in emergency relief operations. Key Mission personnel worked around the clock, maintaining liaison with the GOM in connection with U.S. relief assistance. Defense Attaché personnel remained on duty throughout the period in liaison with the GOM Ministry of Defense and Royal Malaysian Air Force

Private American citizen residents contributed volunteer assistance to the Malaysian Red Cross as did the wives of U.S. Embassy employees

State/AID Washington responded immediately to the requests of the Ambassador. AID/DRC obtained a funding level of \$260,000 to cover USG assistance, arranged with the Department of Defense for helicopters, personnel, medical and other supplies and bought and arranged air delivery of boats from the U.S.

The following is quoted from a letter from the GOM to Ambassador Lydman, dated February 22, 1971: "The Malaysian Government deeply appreciates the generous US donation of aluminum boats with related gear, relief and medical supplies, as well as the services of helicopters. I am pleased to say that the speed with which your Government delivered the boats and other material supplies in response to our request had contributed in great measure to the success of our flood relief



Two giant USAF C-124 transport planes delivered 50 of these boats to Kuala Lumpur arriving January 10 and 11, 1971."

operations. I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking you and your staff, especially Mr. John Helble, for the personal interest shown in making possible the valuable assistance rendered by your Government"

Ambassador Lydman cabled the following in a message to Washington and U.S. Military Commands involved in the total relief effort. "I would like to take opportunity at this juncture to express my deepest personal appreciation to all those among respective addressees who, in response to GOM appeals to this mission, played a role in developing and implementing USG assistance to Malaysia during recent flood crisis. In every case, requests submitted from here were handled with amazing speed and efficiency. Requests were approved in record time, manpower and material were assembled with outstanding degree of speed and efficiency and necessary equipment and men were delivered and operational in country with truly

remarkable timeliness. Result contributed substantially to Malaysian Government's efforts to save lives and relieve suffering of tens of thousands of Malaysians . . . There is no doubt this has been recognized in Malaysia as demonstration of warm friendship and goodwill which US holds for Malaysia." Ambassador Lydman singled out Lt. Col. Arthur A. Dalone, who commanded USG aircraft, and Major Timothy Merrill, who commanded U.S. Military personnel working with the GOM inoculation campaign, for special praise.

Following is a breakdown of USG assistance and costs:

Purchase 50 boats at \$298 each	\$ 14,900
Plus inland freight	335
Purchase 50 outboard motors at \$463 each, together with gas tanks, propellers, other accessories	25,525
Plus inland freight	447
Reimbursement to U.S. Military for:	
C-141 airlift cost for above boats, motors, other supplies	78,828
UH-1 helicopter operations (6) in Malaysia, 211 hours at \$124 per hour	26,164
C-124 airlift operations at \$205 per hour, for 717 hours	14,698
C-130 airlift operations at \$528 per hour, for 30.5 hours	16,104
Medical supplies, including antibiotics, vaccines, disposable needles/syringes, 20 jet inoculation guns, etc.	14,942
50 life preservers	1,575
General disaster supplies and support equipment for U.S. Military relief operations	8,527
7,000 blankets at \$7.42 each	51,940
Per diem, other costs, approximately	6,015
	<u>\$260,000</u>

Note: All bills were not received when this report was prepared. Some of above costs are estimates. Actual expenditures could be from \$3,000 to \$5,000 higher.

USG P.L. 480 Food for Peace commodities consisting

of 12,140 pounds of non-fat dry milk, 12,500 pounds bulgur wheat, 2,500 pounds flour and 350 pounds CSM were provided through Catholic Relief Services. Market value was \$ 4,082
 Total USG assistance \$264,082

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:

Catholic Relief Services made above P.L. 480 food available.
 Church World Service made a cash donation for flood victims in the Kapit District, Sarawak, through the United Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief of \$ 1,667

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Governments:

Australia—three DC-3s and two Iroquois helicopters, Bailey bridging and other material. Aircraft deployed at outset of floods. Value \$100,000 plus
Canada—cash 12,820
Federal Republic of Germany—cash donation to National Disaster Relief Fund 8,300
India—supplies 13,500
Indonesia—cash 5,300
Japan—cash to Relief Fund 10,000
New Zealand—textbooks and other education relief 12,000
Singapore—four Alouette helicopters, one Army medical team, 300 tons of foodstuffs. All arrived within three days of beginning of floods. No value was reported to AID/DRC. Estimated this to be about 50,000
Thailand—300 tons rice; no value given Estimated by AID/DRC 39,000

United Kingdom—provided British transport ship which moved large quantities of food and supplies from Singapore to Kuantan; three British Wessex helicopters for offloading operations from ship and other missions; C-130 shuttle missions from Singapore to Kuantan; inflatable rubber life rafts; lifejackets; blankets. All items provided from outset of flood. No value given, but roughly estimated by AID/DRC \$100,000

Red Cross Societies:

Australia—supplies \$ 870
Burma—supplies 840
Cambodia—cash 180
Canada—cash 7,500
 clothing *
Ceylon—unspecified *
People's Republic of China—blankets and other supplies Offer was announced in early February and supplies delivered early March. Value was reported at 208,000
Great Britain—cash 2,400
Japan—supplies, including 11 tons of cheese 15,000
Korea (Republic)—cash 150
Monaco—cash 360
Netherlands—1,500 blankets and 4,560 bottles of milk 2,880
New Zealand—cash 1,200
Norway—cash 3,500
Philippines—cash 250
Singapore—cash and supplies 1,020
South Africa—cash 280
Sweden—3,000 blankets 2,320
Switzerland Red Cross and Government—supplies .. 6,800
Thailand—cash 480
 \$604,950

* Value not reported