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U. S. TROOPS TO LEAVE THAILAND

As of Sunday, March 21, all U. S. base operations in Thailand ceased in preparation for final withdrawal.

Q: Bangkok announced Sat. morning that all remaining U.S. forces will have to leave Thailand within four months. Previous reports had indicated that some residual U.S. forces would remain after March 20, the date set for the withdrawal of all "combat" forces. Why has there been this change? What effect will this change have on U.S. -Thai relations and on U.S. commitments in Asia?

A: Following a lengthy negotiating process, the Thai and the U.S. mutually agreed on March 20 that the United States will withdraw all of its forces from Thailand within four months of that date.

Thai-U.S. relations have always been close, and we expect that we will continue to have friendly relations with Thailand in the future.

This withdrawal does not in any way affect other U.S. commitments in Asia, nor our continued interest in Southeast Asia as a whole.

FYI: The Thai Government announced about 4:00 p.m. Saturday, March 20, Bangkok time, (3:00 a.m., March 20 EST) that all remaining U.S. forces in Thailand, except for a 270 man Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG), will withdraw within four months. This announcement follows prolonged negotiations with our Embassy in Bangkok which failed to resolve the question

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Unclassified cable with Q's and A's prepared for State Department use is attached.

of the legal status of non-JUSMAG military personnel who would remain. The Thai had originally agreed orally to allow us to retain certain intelligence and operational facilities manned by about 3000 military personnel. They repudiated these previous agreements March 1 and demanded that we agree by March 20 to a set of seven principles to govern the status of the remaining troops. While we made several concessions to the Thai position, we could not compromise on the fundamental point of legal jurisdiction over American forces. Prime Minister Khukrit expressed regret over the need for this action, and expressed hope that we would continue to enjoy friendly relations.

US EMBASSY BANGKOK RELEASED THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC STATEMENT MARCH 20:

For the past months the United States Government has withdrawn its combat forces in accordance with Royal Thai Government wishes, and has negotiated in good faith regarding a residual non-combat U.S. Military presence, that would serve mutual U.S. and Thai interests. We have been prepared to meet the conditions of the RTG for this continued presence, while also asking for consideration of the special problem of the status of our military personnel.

The status, rights, and privileged which we sought during the negotiations for our residual military presence in Thailand were those encompassed in the standard status of forces agreements ("SOFAS") in force wherever our military elements are stationed around the world. However, the RTG has not been able to agree to these terms and has asked our remaining forces to be withdrawn. We plan to begin this withdrawal immediately.

We continue to believe that Thailand and the United States have many common interests, and we are confident that our friendly relations will be sustained.

When asked by reporters if the U.S. were prepared to pull out its troops, Ambassador Whitehouse replied "of course - we don't stay where we're not wanted."

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VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY  
E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: HARR, MPOL, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND

FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS THE STATEMENT BEING ISSUED  
MARCH 28 BY THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN.

TEXT STATEMENT: STATEMENT ON WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN  
MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM THAILAND.

FOR THE PAST MONTHS THE US GOVERNMENT HAS WITHDRAWN ITS  
COMBAT FORCES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT  
WISHES, AND HAS NEGOTIATED IN GOOD FAITH REGARDING A  
RESIDUAL NON-COMBAT US MILITARY PRESENCE THAT WOULD SERVE  
MUTUAL US AND THAI INTERESTS. WE HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO  
MEET ALL DESIDERATA OF THE RTG FOR THIS CONTINUED  
PRESENCE EXCEPT FOR THE STATUS OF OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL.

THE STATUS, RIGHTS, AND PRIVILEGES WHICH WE SOUGHT DURING  
THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR OUR RESIDUAL MILITARY PRESENCE IN  
THAILAND WERE THOSE ENCOMPASSED IN THE STANDARD STATUS  
OF FORCES AGREEMENTS ("SOFAS") IN FORCE WHEREVER OUR  
MILITARY ELEMENTS ARE STATIONED AROUND THE WORLD. HOW-  
EVER, THE RTG HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO AGREE TO THESE TERMS  
AND HAVE ASKED OUR REMAINING FORCES TO BE WITHDRAWN. WE  
PLAN TO BEGIN THIS WITHDRAWAL IMMEDIATELY. WE CONTINUE  
TO BELIEVE THAT THAILAND AND THE US HAVE MANY COMMON  
INTERESTS, AND WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT OUR FRIENDLY  
RELATIONS WILL BE SUSTAINED.

\*\*\*\*\*NHSR COMMENT\*\*\*\*\*

VANDERHYE

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BELOW ARE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WHICH CAN BE USED  
IN MEDIA IF ASKED:

QUESTION: CAN YOU CONFIRM REPORTS THAT AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE THAILAND BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT? WHAT WERE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS LEADING TO THIS DECISION?

ANSWER: I WOULD REFER YOU TO OUR STATEMENT. OBVIOUSLY, WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF ATTEMPTING TO RETAIN A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL MILITARY PRESENCE IN ANY COUNTRY IN WHICH IT IS NOT WANTED.

QUESTION: THE THAI GOVERNMENT IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT ALL BUT 270 MILITARY ADVISORS WILL BE LEAVING. CAN YOU CONFIRM THIS? WHAT WILL THEIR FUNCTION BE?

ANSWER: A MAAG OF SUFFICIENT SIZE TO ADMINISTER THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WILL REMAIN.

QUESTION: HOW MANY MAAG MEMBERS ARE IN THAILAND NOW?

ANSWER: ABOUT 200.

QUESTION: IS THIS THE FINAL WORD? WILL WE SEEK TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS?

ANSWER: THAT'S UP TO THE THAI.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE SIZE OF OUR MILITARY AID PROGRAM TO THAILAND THIS YEAR AND WHAT ARE WE ASKING OF THE CONGRESS FOR NEXT YEAR?

ANSWER: FOR FY'76 THE CONGRESS IS NOW CONSIDERING OUR REQUEST FOR AID WHICH CONSISTS OF DOLS 28.3 MILLION MAP, DOLS 36.7 MILLION FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDITS, AND DOLS 1.7 MILLION FOR TRAINING. THE FIGURES WE ARE REQUESTING FOR FY'77 ARE DOLS 20 MILLION FOR MAP, DOLS 30 MILLION FOR FMS AND DOLS 1.5 MILLION FOR TRAINING.

QUESTION: WILL THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S ACTION TODAY CHANGE THAT REQUEST?

ANSWER: THE REQUEST BEFORE THE CONGRESS REMAINS UNCHANGED.

UNCLASSIFIED

QUESTION: THAT IS THE NATURE OF OUR SECURITY COMMITMENT

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TO THE THAI?

ANSWER: UNDER TERMS OF THE MANILA PACE (SEATO TREATY) OF 1954 EACH SIGNATORY AGREED THAT IN THE EVENT OF ATTACK IT WOULD "ACT TO MEET THE COMMON DANGER IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES..."

QUESTION: DOES THE THAI ACTION CHANGE THAT OBLIGATION?

ANSWER: THE TREATY RELATIONSHIP REMAINS AS IT WAS.

QUESTION: IS IT POSSIBLE TO FULFILL THE TERMS OF THIS TREATY WITHOUT AN AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE THERE?

ANSWER: NONE OF THE OTHER SIGNATORIES MAINTAIN A MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND.

QUESTION: DO YOU BELIEVE THAI DID THIS TO PLACATE THEIR COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS?

ANSWER: I WOULDN'T WANT TO SPECULATE ABOUT POSSIBLE THAI MOTIVATION.

QUESTION: HOW MANY US TROOPS ARE THERE NOW?

ANSWER: 4,000 ... ALL IN NON-COMBAT ROLES. (COMMUNICATIONS, LOGISTIC, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY ADVISORS).  
KISSINGER

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June 19, 1975

WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. FORCES FROM THAILAND

The Washington Post reports today that the U. S. will withdraw another 87 planes and 4,000 troops from Thailand by the end of June. They refer to this withdrawal as a "stepped up schedule" which, in fact, it is not. It is part of the mutually agreed upon reduction of 7,500 U. S. positions in Thailand by about the end of June.

Q. Have the Thais asked us to step up our schedule for the withdrawal of U. S. forces from Thailand?

A. No. The current reductions are part of the mutually agreed upon draw-down negotiated over a year ago. We continue to be in close consultation with the Thai on our presence in Thailand and, of course, we are keeping the situation under review.

May 19, 1975

U.S. - THAI RELATIONS

Q. We have heard reports that the U.S. letter of regret on the use of bases in Thailand during the recapture of the Mayaguez has been accepted by the Thai. Should this note be construed as a formal apology?

A. I think the letter speaks for itself. The letter has been accepted by the Thai government, and we look forward to a continued relationship of consultation and cooperation in the future.

BACKGROUND: Our note contained the three elements which the Thai government had indicated to us that it required. It expressed our regrets, it reiterated our respect for Thai sovereignty and independence and said that the actions taken to retrieve the Mayaguez were unique and would not be repeated.

FYI: Refer to State for specific details on U.S. - Thai exchanges.

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Postscript

refer to State

Understand there were demonstrators  
some vandalism reported  
Refer to State for details

Q's AND A's ON  
REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND

[Text of Announcement Attached].

Q. Announcement has been made of an agreement between the United States and Thailand to continue to reductions begun in 1974 of U.S. forces in Thailand. By this summer, some 7,500 American military manpower slots will be cut from our forces now there. My question is: Is this the beginning of a total U.S. military withdrawal from Thailand that the government there has been talking about? What relationship does this announcement have to the victory of the Vietnamese Communists?

A. The U.S. military presence in Thailand has been the subject of a dialogue between the two governments which long predates recent developments in Indochina.

We expect this dialogue to continue for some time. As has just been announced, we will make another cutback between now and this summer, and we expect that other reductions will follow.

Our troops are in Thailand at the request of the Thai Government and people. Should they no longer wish our forces to be there, we would, of course, withdraw them. Whatever our troop levels, we expect to continue the close relationship we have enjoyed with Thailand.

May 1, 1975

U. S. TROOP PRESENCE IN THAILAND

Q. According to reports, the Thai Foreign Minister said that the United States will soon begin an enormous withdrawal of troops and equipment from Thailand. Can you confirm these reports, and what levels of troops will be withdrawn?

A. As we have stated on previous occasions, we have been in close consultation with the Thai government on our troop presence there. We expect that these consultations on troop levels will continue, but for any further details I would refer you to the Department of State.

May 5, 1975

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ANNOUNCEMENT

REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND

"In accordance with a joint announcement of the Royal Thai Government and the United States Government on March 29, 1974, concerning the reduction of U.S. military forces, U.S. military personnel in Thailand last year decreased by 10,000. Following consultations between representatives of the two governments, a decision has now been reached to further reduce the U.S. military forces in Thailand. By about the end of June, 1977, the current level of 27,000 authorized personnel will be reduced by 7,500. Further discussions will determine the specific forces to be deleted and the timing of their departure.

*5/5 Made by DOD confirming Thai announcement*  
[Back-Up Q's and A's Attached]

May 1, 1975

U.S. AIRCRAFT IN THAILAND

Q. According to reports, the Thai government has asked that American supplied Vietnamese planes that landed in Thailand be turned over to the Thai government, which will return them to the Vietnamese government. What is the U.S. position and what do we intend to do about this request?

A. The United States government is in contact with the Thai government, and I cannot give you any further information at this time.

FYI Refer to State for additional details. The problem here is a legal one, and it is our position that the disposition of American equipment being used for purposes not originally intended reverts to American control.

May 1, 1975

U. S. TROOP PRESENCE IN THAILAND

Q. According to reports, the Thai Foreign Minister said that the United States will soon begin an enormous withdrawal of troops and equipment from Thailand. Can you confirm these reports, and what levels of troops will be withdrawn?

A. As we have stated on previous occasions, we have been in close consultation with the Thai government on our troop presence there. We expect that these consultations on troop levels will continue, but for any further details I would refer you to the Department of State.

4/15/75

THAILAND

U. S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS

A FBIS item this morning says that the Thais will press on with U. S. troop withdrawals and the establishment of closer relations with the PRC.

Q. What is the U. S. reaction to Prime Minister Kukrit Promot's statement that Thailand will proceed with its target of having all U. S. forces withdrawn within the year? Has the U. S. been officially notified of the Thai announcement?

A. We have consulted regularly with the Thai government by whose invitation we have maintained troops in Thailand. The Thais have approached us to resume discussion on our future U. S. forces presence there. Details are being worked out, but I have nothing further to give you at this time.

March 20, 1975

THAILAND

New Prime Minister Kukrit Pramot won a narrow vote of confidence in the National Assembly yesterday (140 of 269 votes). He has pledged the withdrawal of 25,000 U.S. troops within the year. His new deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister General Adireksan told reporters that the Thai government will halt U.S. military support for Cambodia through Thailand.

Q. Now that the new Prime Minister's government has received its vote of confidence, how will the United States respond to his call for the removal of U.S. troops within the year?

A. GUIDANCE: As you know, our troops are stationed in Thailand at the invitation of the government. Throughout our long association, we have consulted closely with the Thai government on questions relating to the presence of our forces. We assume the modalities of our future presence and force levels will be discussed in the same spirit of mutual interest and cooperation.

THAILAND

4. What does the Administration intend to do about the statement by the new Thai leader, Kukrit Pramoj that we ask all U.S. troops in Thailand to leave within the year? Do we intend to pull out all of our troops?

3/18/75 **GUIDANCE:** U.S. military forces are in Thailand at the request of the Thai government. A formal request to withdraw our troops is not a matter now before us. Throughout our long association, we have consulted closely with the Thai government on questions relating to the presence of our forces. We assume the modalities of our future presence and force levels will be discussed in the same spirit of mutual interest and cooperation.

4. What does the Administration intend to do about the statement by the new Thai leader, Kukrit Pramoj that we ask all U.S. troops in Thailand to leave within the year? Do we intend to pull out all of our troops?

3/18/75 GUIDANCE: The U.S. has consulted regularly with the Thai government on the presence of our forces. When the new government is in place, we assume consultations will continue. Our troops are in Thailand at the invitation of that government. *Vote of Confidence.*

4. Does the presence of a U. S. helicopter carrier in the Gulf of Thailand indicate that Americans will be evacuated shortly from Phnom Penh?

3/5/75

GUIDANCE: The U. S. fleet is always prepared for a number of contingencies which includes evacuation of Americans under certain circumstances.

FYI ONLY: We do not discuss operational movements from the White House. END FYI.

1. What is the Administration's reaction to the Thai government announcement calling for the withdrawal of all American forces within 18 months unless a critical military situation exists at that time?

3/4/75

GUIDANCE: The U. S. has had regular and frequent consultation with the Thai government on the levels of American troops since we have maintained a presence there.

When the government is formally in place we assume ~~it will then get in touch with us on this issue.~~

*The consultations will continue.*

## THAILAND

### U. S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS

A FBIS item this morning says that the Thais will press on with U. S. troop withdrawals and the establishment of closer relations with the PRC.

Q. What is the U. S. reaction to Prime Minister Kukrit Promot's statement that Thailand will proceed with its target of having all U. S. forces withdrawn within the year? Has the U. S. been officially notified of the Thai announcement?

A. We have consulted regularly with the Thai government by whose invitation we have maintained troops in Thailand. The Thais have approached us to resume discussion on our future U. S. forces presence there. Details are being worked out, but I have nothing further to give you at this time.

## REDUCTION OF U. S. FORCES IN THAILAND

(Can be used only if announcement has been made of the joint U. S. - Thai agreement to continue force reductions begun last year.)

Q: Announcement has been made of an agreement between the United States and Thailand to continue the reductions begun in 1974 of U. S. forces in Thailand. By this summer, some 7,500 American military manpower slots will be cut from our forces now there. My question is: Is this the beginning of a total U. S. military withdrawal from Thailand that the government there has been talking about? What relationship does this announcement have to the victory of the Vietnamese Communists?

A: The U. S. military presence in Thailand has been the subject of a dialogue between the two governments which long predates recent developments in Indochina.

We expect this dialog to continue for some time. As has just been announced, we will make another cutback between now and this summer, and we expect that other reductions will follow.

Our troops are in Thailand at the request of the Thai Government and people. Should they no longer wish our forces to be there, we would of course withdraw them. Whatever our troop levels, we expect to continue the close relationship we have enjoyed with Thailand.

I fully support and honor the American commitment to Thailand security, a commitment originally made in the SEATO Treaty and since reinforced by successive administrations.

## Withdrawal of U. S. Forces from Thailand

Q: Following the Mayaguez incident, there has been significant pressure in Thailand for the US to speed up its troop withdrawal and to quickly end the US military presence in that country. How is the US Government reacting to this? Are we withdrawing from Thailand at a more rapid pace?

A: As you know, we have been withdrawing aircraft and military personnel from Thailand. We have done so on the basis of close cooperation with the Thai Government.

Our military presence in Thailand is based on a mutuality of interest. We are there at their request. Our troop withdrawals and future force levels are worked out with the Thai Government.

We have not unilaterally stepped up any aspect of this process.