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OPENING CEREMONY FOR EXERCISE RAMASOON

A SEATO-controlled Command Post Exercise, nick-named RAMASOON, which involves purely communications aspects, is being held in Thailand from the 4th to 15th of March. The exercise is designed to test communications between the forces of SEATO member countries. Detailed planning for this exercise has been under way since August, 1967, when Exercise RAMASOON was included in the revised exercises scheduled in the exercise year 1967-68. RAMASOON was one of two exercises scheduled in the exercise year 1967-68 as part of SEATO's traditional exercise program.

His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Thailand, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, officially opened SEATO Exercise RAMASOON at a colorful public in Bangkok on March 4th. The ceremony was held at the former Tourist Organization of Thailand building. The Exercise Director, Brigadier General Edwin F. Black, USA, and his deputy directors, Colonel Pongs Peksanan, Royal Thai Army, and Brigadier C.M.I. Pearson, Australian Army, were present, along with senior armed forces officers and high ranking officials and dignitaries from SEATO nations.

In addition to speeches given by Field Marshal Kittikachorn and by B.G. Black, a feature of the ceremony was the releasing of a thousand doves and hundreds of balloons. There was a display of communications equipment set up, which enabled the individuals present to see some of the equipment at first hand, how the various machines functioned, and what phase of communications they are employed in.

An honor guard of Thai and US forces was inspected by Field Marshal Kittikachorn and by BG Black. A Royal Thai Army band provided music throughout the ceremony. Members of each SEATO nation participated in the program, which commenced operation RAMASOON.

On 7 March, 1968, His Majesty _____, the King of Thailand visited the various communications installations throughout his Kingdom which were participating in the RAMASOON exercise. One of these installations was the huge Microwave radio relay site at Korat, Thailand. He was escorted on the tour by Brigadier General Black, the exercise director, who pointed out and explained the function and operation of the equipment involved in the exercise. The King remained in Korat for approximately two hours before moving on to see other sites spread throughout the countryside.