

RBK
10-27-72

PS
file subj.
date sub-cat.
10-72

PRAPHAT: THAILAND WELCOMES U.S.-DRV AGREEMENT

Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 1300 GMT 27 Oct 72 D

[Excerpt] Gen Praphat Charusathien, deputy head of the Revolutionary Party, replied to questions raised by reporters at the press center in the Revolutionary Party command headquarters at 1000 today. He said Thailand feels pleased with the possibility of an agreement between the United States and North Vietnam, since it will lead to peace in this region.

The Revolutionary Party deputy head said Thailand has notified U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mr William Sullivan, who came to talk with Revolutionary Party head Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachon last week and informed him of the development of the U.S.-North Vietnam negotiations on a peace settlement in Vietnam, as well as the publicized 9-point condition, that Thailand should have a share in acknowledging and approving a peace settlement in Vietnam and that its security should be insured.

Gen Praphat Charusathien continued: The 9-point condition on the settlement of peace in Vietnam is the matter directly involving the United States and North Vietnam. A peace agreement between both sides will, as a matter of course, be beneficial to this region and Thailand, which will thus be peaceful. Thailand adheres to the principle that Thailand is ready to have relations with one who does not invade it. Therefore, when the countries at war can reach agreement, Thailand, an ally of one side, will naturally be pleased, since the fighting and killing will come to an end; otherwise, commitments with that side will continue.

Concerning a statement made by a senior official of the Burmese Government charging Thailand with giving support to the rebellion in Burma, the Revolutionary Party deputy head explained that it is a matter of misunderstanding and that it is not true, because Thailand has no intention to become involved in the internal affairs of other countries. He said the fact is that former Prime Minister U Nu once sought political asylum in Thailand. He added that Thailand sounded out the Burmese Government's opinion and got the approval of the government of General Ne Win. Later former Prime Minister U Nu asked for permission to leave Thailand, he said.

He continued: Thailand does not know his whereabouts. Thailand never involves itself in any action former Prime Minister U Nu takes, since Thailand and Burma have close friendly relations and since the leaders of both countries are on good terms and are closely associated.

The Revolutionary Party deputy head said that Thailand is bearing the heavy burden of Burmese refugees in the country, adding that no action can be taken, since tribal people of many nationalities are living along the Thai border. A considerable number of them are living in even the metropolitan area, he said.

THAILAND TO BE U.S. 'BASTION' AFTER VIETNAM SETTLEMENT

Bangkok POST in English 28 Oct 72 p 1 D

[Then Chongkhadikit column]

[Text] Thailand is expected to be the United States bastion in Southeast Asia for a while after a peace settlement in Vietnam, according to official sources.

Part of the U.S. Air Force units stationed here will be withdrawn because with the peace settlement there will be a total halt to the bombing of North Vietnam.

However, an American presence would continue here as a guarantee for Thailand's security and "just in case the North Vietnamese violate the peace settlement."

But it is realised that the U.S. in the foreseeable future will stop sending out troops for combat duty in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, efforts are being made to transform SEATO from a purely defence alliance into an economic, social and cultural organisation designed to combat subversion. The Vietnam accords as well as progress in Bangkok-Peking relations are expected to bring about major changes in defence contingency plans.

Thai Government officials are concerned that the proposed Vietnamese settlement does not provide for the following:

Withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Maintenance of Parallel 17 as the border between North and South Vietnam.

They worry over the tripartite coalition proposed for South Vietnam because the so-called neutralist group would have to be a party at present in the opposition-- a party which could be won as an ally of the leftists (communists) against the Thieu rightists.

However, there is confidence that President Thieu's group could win in the proposed election because out of the 17.5 million population of South Vietnam the Viet Cong controls only an estimated one million.

It is believed here that President Nixon is in an advantageous position to extract more concessions from Hanoi than the tentative agreements between Dr Henry Kissinger, national security adviser and Le Duc Tho, chief North Vietnamese negotiator.

North Vietnam, it is surmised here, is under heavy pressure from various directions. The U.S. bombing has damaged not only military installations but also the economy of North Vietnam. Russia, Hanoi's closest ally, has greatly reduced shipments of arms to the North Vietnamese--probably as a result of a Moscow-Washington understanding about disengagement from the conflict.

Peking, another supporter of Hanoi, is believed reluctant to allow the North Vietnamese to control the whole of Indochina and eventually Southeast Asia--becoming a third communist power rivaling itself and Soviet Russia.

It is also realised there that President Nixon, seeking re-election has to bring back the American prisoners of war from North Vietnam--and this could be done only with an agreement to withdraw from the war totally.

In the bargaining between Dr Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, it is learned here, the North Vietnamese demanded an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of American forces. However, Dr Kissinger insisted on Hanoi starting the release of American POW's at the same time as U.S. troops begin to leave South Vietnam. Hanoi agreed.

Meanwhile an ASSOCIATED PRESS report from Washington said the United States is likely to delay any significant cutback of its air power in Thailand until after all U.S. troops are safely out of South Vietnam and all American prisoners of war have been returned.

Pentagon sources implied that this heavy air power, and most of the U.S. naval forces off Vietnam, will be maintained in place as a form of insurance during the proposed period for troop withdrawal and prisoner repatriation, which could last up to 60 days. Afterwards, the United States will continue to base some fighter and bomber squadrons in Thailand under the Nixon doctrine and SEATO, officials said.

Dr Kissinger said this week that the impending peace agreement imposes no limitations on American deployment in Thailand or afloat.

Under the Nixon doctrine, the United States has pledged to provide air and sea support for threatened Asian allies.

As Dr Kissinger outlined the tentative U.S.-North Vietnamese agreement, Hanoi would be bound to refrain from using Cambodia and Laos as springboards for encroaching on other countries.

This would appear to ease any external threat to Thailand.