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**Prime Minister Downplays Abramowitz
Comments**

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Jul 94 p A2*

[Text] Prime Minister Chuan Likphai yesterday played down the controversy over an article written by a former US ambassador accusing the government of continuing to support the Khmer Rouge. He said the article was based on out-of-date information and was the opinion of an individual, not the US government.

Former US ambassador to Thailand and Morton Abramowitz's article was printed in THE WASHINGTON POST on May 29. It accused the Thai government and the

military of providing food and arms and giving sanctuary to the Khmer Rouge leaders. The column drew a storm of protest from the House committee on foreign affairs. Some of committee members called for a ban on Abramowitz entering Thailand and demanded he be declared persona non grata.

Chuan, speaking after attending Labour and Social Affairs Ministry ceremony, said the former US ambassador's article had been based on old information.

"Abramowitz may not have kept track of developments in the world situation. In the past it is true that the UN and other many countries including Thailand supported the Khmer Rouge, but the UN resolution on the issue has been changed," he said.

The premier said the press should not dance to the tune of such an article as it did no good for the country. He had already instructed the Foreign Ministry to carefully reread the article, as it was possible the former ambassador had not intended to damage Thailand's reputation. The article had also expressed a personal opinion.

"The article was written by an individual, not by the US government, so there's no point in people trying to create a rift between the Thai and US governments," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister Bunchu Rotchanasathian also said Abramowitz's article was based on old information.

"The Foreign Ministry is looking into ways to deal with the matter. The former US ambassador has written nothing new at all," he said.

First Army Region commander Lt Gen Chettha Thanacharo said not only the military that was displeased with such an article. Thais nationwide were offended.

"The US ambassador had been in Thailand. He should know what he should or should not write, especially about the monarchy," he said. However, the military would let the government handle the matter. "The Army has already declared its clear-cut stand against dealing with the Khmer Rouge."

Editorial Reacts to Abramowitz Article

*BK0207133394 Bangkok MATICHON in Thai 2 Jul 94
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[Editorial: "The Problem Is With the United States"]

[Text] The Thai Government and military are always accused of supporting the Khmer Rouge despite their constant denials. The latest accusation has been made by Morton Abramowitz, former U.S. ambassador to Thailand, in his article published in THE WASHINGTON POST. The Thai embassy in Washington has already issued a denial statement, but it is very difficult to clear Thailand from such an allegation because this is the impression of the people in the U.S. Administration.

All our attempts to clear ourselves from the accusation are likely to fail because the United States is attached to

the unchangeable impression that the Thai military supports the Khmer Rouge. Therefore, it is unfair to blame the government or military for their failure to iron things out. The crux of the problem is the strong belief on the part of the United States. The question that arises now is: How can we eliminate such an impression from the American mind?

This is the problem of the United States. Nobody can prohibit the United States from believing that. The United States has harbored ineradicable hatred against the Khmer Rouge for causing the death of millions of Cambodians during their rule. The United States does not want the Khmer Rouge to take part in the administration of Cambodia in the new era and has tried all ways and means to bar them from joining the coalition government. On the contrary, Thailand recognizes all factions including the Khmer Rouge. This is the contradiction between Thai and U.S. policies.

The United States will be very pleased and will discard its old belief if Thailand becomes an enemy of the Khmer Rouge and helps the United States wipe it out or cooperate to pressure them. Thailand's neutral policy and impartial dealing with all Cambodian factions have been considered useful to the Khmer Rouge. No matter how hard Thailand tries to explain its position, the United States will not believe that Thailand does not support the Khmer Rouge. There is no way to convince the United States in this regard because the policies of the two countries are contradictory.

For this reason, the trade activities along the common border between the Thai and Cambodians irritate the eyes of anti-Khmer Rouge countries like the United States. In any event, it can be said that the ongoing fighting and political conflicts in Cambodia can also be attributed to external causes. In other words, outsiders do not support the ideal of peaceful negotiations among the Cambodians. As long as the Cambodians are divided into factions as the result of external interference, there can never be any reconciliation among the Cambodians. Part of the problem is with the United States.