

Southeast Asia

Thailand

1. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, January 14, 1969, 1119Z.

513. 1. This morning I called at my suggestion on the Prime Minister² and took advantage of my prospective visit with Ambassador Johnson in Saigon later this week to raise with him questions about important developments in Thailand. Present at our conversation were Foreign Minister Thanat and Government House Secretary-General, General Sawaeng.

2. I first said that Amb Johnson will undoubtedly have been informed in general terms about the insurgency situation and I would like to pass on the Prime Minister's assessment, particularly with regard to the recent intensified action in the three-province area of the North. The Prime Minister replied in rather general terms noting the importance to the counter-insurgency effort of the kind of matériel and equipment which the US is providing, both for security forces and for development activities. The Prime Minister specifically mentioned communications equipment for the police, the helicopter delivery schedule, modernization of weapons, and assistance to support programs to improve the livelihood of the hill tribes and we agreed that we would have our respective staffs see that everything necessary was being provided. This gave me an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the Thais making full utilization of equipment already on hand and being sure that they were ready to receive and use on arrival new equipment in the pipeline. I also warmly endorsed the Prime Minister's reference to helping the hill tribes and mentioned to him our impression from discussions in the North that Thai officials had not been given as concrete policy directive concerning their dealings with the hill tribes as would be useful. I emphasized the importance of Thai Government officials recognizing the hill tribe population as part of the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL THAI-US. Secret; Priority; Limdis. Repeated to Tokyo for Ambassador Johnson.

² Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn of Thailand.

Thai nation and dealing with them in such a way as to make friends and avoid building any additional hostility. The Prime Minister readily agreed with these observations. I also emphasized the importance of collecting more and better intelligence and we noted as a useful first step the setting up of a new JSC in Phitsanulok. In general we concluded that Mr. Tanham will keep in close touch with Generals Surakij and Saiyud and others as pertinent to follow up on these matters.

3. I then asked the Prime Minister whether there was anything on the coming elections and he said that there was “nothing worth saying” to Ambassador Johnson at this time, although he indicated his general satisfaction with the way matters were proceeding.

4. I then mentioned that the new administration will undoubtedly be occupied with the question of security and US military posture with regard to Southeast Asia in the period following a Vietnam settlement. I asked the Prime Minister whether there was any Thai Government thinking on this subject which he would like me to pass on to Ambassador Johnson. After some expressions of concern about the military situation in Laos the Prime Minister in effect passed the ball on this question to Foreign Minister Thanat. The latter first went through his familiar recitation about American journalists, senators, professors and others who obviously wanted no part of any American presence or activity in this part of the world. Contrary to earlier comments, he did not express confidence about the new administration in this regard. He concluded by saying, with the Prime Minister’s agreement, that the Thai Government was not in a position to comment on these matters until the new US administration was able to provide some kind of a picture of what will be its security policy for Southeast Asia, and Thanat emphasized that given all the uncertainties of the past many months, the RTG hopes that clarification on this matter will be available soon. Before we left this subject the Prime Minister volunteered that, with regard to the current situation, Thailand does not need any more US forces; I accepted his point but noted that my question had related to a period following a Vietnam settlement when there would be a new situation.

5. At one point in our conversation the Prime Minister referred to the Anderson article in *Parade* and indicated his distress. He seemed to feel that my statement to the press had been helpful and was pleased that I had made my position clear to His Majesty when received in audience last Saturday morning.³

Unger

³ January 11.

2. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, January 16, 1969.

SUBJECT

LOTUS

PARTICIPANTS

Minister Pote Sarasin
Ambassador Unger

After I asked Minister Pote for his assessment of how the election campaign was going and about the prospects for the government party and received some generally optimistic comments, I then proceeded to some specific points. In the first place I mentioned the party image and the fact that to many voters it might be important to know that the government party has a strong civilian component and was not just a party of military men. For this reason it seemed to me important that Pote and other civilians be brought to the voters' attention so that they are aware of these important civilian elements. Pote said, as he had before, that he was not very skillful at public rallies, but that he would, for example, be going with the Prime Minister for the opening of several roads in the Northeast which would get a good deal of publicity. He also mentioned a very large meeting he had had awhile back with taxi drivers who have been organized into a kind of mutual benefit cooperative, and he said that when he has some kind of entrée as in this case, he has made efforts to reach the public. I noted that this was a point that could also be covered in campaign literature with pictures and brief reference to his activities.

As to election prospects, Pote specifically expressed concern about the Northeast, where one-third of the country's population resides and where he feared that Thep and other small parties and independents might be able to pick up considerable support. He said the Northeasterners are congenitally opposed to the establishment and that Thep is also busy trying to win them over by promising to eliminate the rice premium, etc. Pote explained some of the more abstract economic arguments as to why Thep was wrong, but he acknowledged that these were unlikely to make much of an impact on voters. I said instead that the government party could make it clear what the premium is used

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Thailand Lotus File 1968-69. Secret; Special Handling. Drafted by Unger. The meeting was held at Sarasin's residence. A notation on the upper right hand memorandum indicates Godley saw it.

for and how much benefit the farmer gets back from this tax. It was important that all the people being reached by Thep be reached by these counter arguments, whether in person or through graphic handbills or whatever.

I expressed concern about the discontented ex-SPT members who might be dividing the vote upcountry and thus preventing either the government candidate or themselves from getting into power and opening the way instead to an anti-government candidate. Pote acknowledged this problem and I asked whether some of those break-away candidates were now getting support from some of the people in the government party. Pote said that now that Chamnan is out of the political scene this was not the case. I asked what had happened to Chamnan's well organized political machine in the provinces and Pote said that he felt it had lost a good deal of its organization and effectiveness.

On party organization Pote averred that headquarters are now being set up in every one of the changwats and they would be appropriately identified and advertised. Pote also confirmed in reply to my question that funds had now been provided to all of the candidates and all of the provincial headquarters, along the line he had earlier sketched out to me (see my message of Dec 17 [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]). I emphasized at this point and several other times the importance of candidates in the provinces being well supplied with points of argument and information that they could use effectively with the voters. For example, I said it was very important to the candidate to be able to say what the government had done and what it contemplates doing in that particular area, where projects would have special meaning for those voters.

I referred to government party policy and asked whether this would now be disseminated and whether this was related to the Prame Grounds meeting scheduled for next week. Pote confirmed that this was the case, but he minimized the importance of a party policy statement saying that the voter was interested only in very concrete and specific matters and not in broad general principles.

I then told Pote I would like to "kibitz" a little bit about the election campaign and pass on to him some thoughts that I had developed on the basis of experience with our own elections in the US as well as other areas. I realized that some of these points would have limited or no pertinence to the Thai scene, but I nevertheless would pass them along for what help they might provide. I then reviewed the two memoranda, "Points To Be Made" and "How?"² Pote listened rather more

² Attached but not printed. The two memoranda outline points to stress for winning elections, including emphasizing economic achievement.

carefully than I had anticipated to my review of these points and appeared to take a number of them in. When I had finished he asked to have the papers so that he could translate them into Thai and pass them to a few people who could make good use of them. I said I would give them to him if he liked, but obviously it was very important that a US role of this sort not be known. Pote said that if they were translated into Thai any appearance of a US origin would be removed and that he would bear in mind to restrict use.

In discussing the points contained in these two memoranda Pote made a few specific observations of interest. He was particularly receptive of the idea of making full propaganda use of the government's contribution in the economic and social fields and cited many additional specific examples, and agreed with the importance of these accomplishments of the government and future projected accomplishments being brought to public attention. He specifically mentioned a film which we had provided which he would be shortly showing to His Majesty on his return from Chiang Mai, which would then be shown on television all over the country just a week before the elections; this sets forth the Thai Government's accomplishments over recent years. With regard to the Prime Minister, Pote mentioned that although he is not very aggressive, he does make a very effective contact with the people and that his modest manner had very considerable appeal to the Thais. On some of the specific Saha Pracha Thai activities, Pote indicated that many of these had already been considered and adopted by the party but they were waiting to use some of these until the campaign was further along. He made the point that the party wished to wait long enough so that the other parties would not have an opportunity to answer whatever campaign lines were launched.

I mentioned to Pote my conversation several days earlier with General Sawaeng³ and said that I had contemplated having Minister Hannah pass on some of these same thoughts to Gen. Sawaeng. Pote said he would be handing the translation of what I had given him to General Sawaeng and it was not necessary to pass it along separately, to which I agreed.

³ After his meeting with Thanom, Thanat, and Sawaeng on January 14 (Document 1), Unger met alone with Sawaeng to discuss the upcoming Thai election. (Memorandum of conversation, January 14; Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Thailand Lotus File, 1968-69)

3. Memorandum Prepared for the 303 Committee¹

Washington, February 7, 1969.

SUBJECT

Covert Support of the Thai Government Party in the Thai National Parliamentary Elections

1. Summary

On 11 November 1965, in response to a request from Ambassador Graham Martin and after 303 Committee approval, high authority authorized covert funding support [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to a political party to be formed by responsible Thai Government leaders.² Approval for this support was reaffirmed by higher authority on 15 September 1967 after favorable review by the 303 Committee. A final review was made on 16 August 1968. Funding which commenced on 31 August 1968 was completed on 4 February 1969. The Thai general elections will be held on 10 February 1969. A general accounting of the use of the funds by category has been obtained by Ambassador Leonard Unger. A recommendation is made that a report on the results of the election be made to the 303 Committee and, if possible, a relationship drawn between the results and the effectiveness of the financial support provided.

2. Background

In June 1965 a final draft constitution for Thailand had been completed providing for general elections which were assumed would be held in mid- or late 1966. With this in mind, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in June 1965 approached Ambassador Martin with a request for covert U.S. assistance to be used in conjunction with the upcoming general elections. Ambassador Martin subsequently proposed to Washington that CIA draw up a program of covert election support with the primary objective being to develop a viable political apparatus in Thailand under the present pro-U.S. leadership and to ensure the continuity of this leadership. A memorandum requesting 303 Committee authorization for such a program was presented to the 303 Committee on 7 October 1965. It estimated that initial funding requirements would be on the order of [*dollar amount not declassified*],

¹ Source: National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, Subject Files, Thailand. Secret; Eyes Only. A notation on the bottom left-hand corner of the first page reads, "303 Committee briefed on 11 February 1969."

² See *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XXVII, Documents 305 and 306.

stated that the number of witting Thai officials could probably be kept to six, [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]. The 303 Committee approved the proposal for the expenditure of [*dollar amount not declassified*] subject to approval by higher authority which was given on 11 November 1965.

The draft constitution of June 1965 was delayed in debate, however, and the proposal remained in abeyance. Following the passing of the third and final reading of the constitution in February 1968, the subject of covert political support was reopened by the Thais. [*1 line of source text not declassified*], approached [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], Bangkok with a request for covert election support based on past commitments. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] was advised that this question would have to be discussed with the Ambassador. [*name not declassified*] subsequently discussed the same matter with Ambassador Unger on 22 March 1968, noting that he was aware of the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] level of support previously considered. [*name not declassified*] emphasized that only [*1 line of source text not declassified*], were aware of the previous U.S. commitment. After a series of informal talks, Ambassador Unger requested authority from Washington to proceed with this covert support. After 303 Committee consideration on 16 August 1968, a message was sent to Ambassador Unger from Assistant Secretary of State Mr. William Bundy authorizing the initiation of a covert funding program. This message was specifically cleared by both the Secretary of State and the Special Assistant to the President. [*5 lines of source text not declassified*]

[*2 paragraphs (30 lines of source text) and 1 heading not declassified*]

4. Recommendations

A report on the outcome of the Thai elections scheduled to be held on 10 February 1969 will be made to the 303 Committee. If possible, an analysis of the relationship of this outcome to the effectiveness of the support provided should be made.

4. Memorandum of Conversation¹

CM-4011-69

Bangkok, March 9, 1969, 10–11:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting with Prime Minister Thanom in Bangkok on 9 March 1969

1. Prime Minister Thanom invited Secretary Laird to visit Thailand during his trip to Vietnam. Since Mr. Laird was unable to accept the Prime Minister's invitation due to time limitations, the Prime Minister suggested through Ambassador Unger that I come to Bangkok in his stead. Accordingly, Assistant Secretary Froehlke and I traveled to Bangkok on 9 March. We met with Prime Minister Thanom and Air Marshal Dawee, Deputy Minister of Defense, at the Prime Minister's residence, for about an hour and a quarter, beginning at 10 A.M. Present at the meeting were Prime Minister Thanom, Air Marshal Dawee, Ambassador Unger, Deputy Chief of Mission Hannah, Major General McCown, the Chief of our Military Assistance Group in Thailand, Assistant Secretary Froehlke and myself. Air Marshal Dawee acted as interpreter as necessary.

2. After the usual pleasantries, I briefed the Prime Minister on the military situation in South Vietnam, using a map, and pointing out that the situation was militarily favorable. I stated that the enemy had achieved no military successes and, contrary to the effects of the Tet offensive of 1968, little or no psychological success. Nevertheless, the enemy had not committed sizeable main force VC and regular NVA formations; therefore, the enemy continued to have the capability to mount substantial attacks, particularly in the I Corps Tactical Zone and the III Corps Tactical Zone. I observed that General Abrams and his subordinate commanders were confident that they could defeat any initiatives undertaken by VC/NVA forces.

3. As to the attitude of the South Vietnamese regarding rocket attacks on Saigon, I stated that I had been surprised at the calmness of President Thieu, Prime Minister Huong and General Vien and their feeling that these attacks did not as of the moment constitute a disturbing political factor for the Government of Vietnam. Of course, were these attacks to be continued over a long period of time or if they were

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret. The meeting was held at Prime Minister Thanom's residence. A notation on the memorandum indicates that Kissinger saw it. The memorandum of conversation was attached to a March 18 covering memorandum from Colonel Robert E. Pursley, Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, to Kissinger.

increased in magnitude the situation could change radically and suddenly. The Prime Minister appeared to be completely satisfied with my presentation and showed great interest in the location of enemy main combat elements.

4. I then asked the Prime Minister if he would be good enough to discuss the insurgency problem in Thailand and to give me the benefit of his thinking as regards the magnitude of the dissidents and the counter action being undertaken by the Thai Government. He responded willingly. He stated that the dissident group in the North was comprised of hill tribesmen who were being subverted by agents from the outside. The group is not large nor does he consider the danger of expansion great so long as the Government moves promptly to suppress the insurgents' efforts. In this connection, he pointed out that the dissident elements were located in very remote and extremely difficult country which required that the insertion of Government forces and their resupply be done by helicopter. He expressed the view, backed up by Air Marshal Dawee, that the Thai forces need more helicopters in order to cope with the threat and to maintain an acceptable number of helicopters at all times ready for operational use. Turning to the dissident problem in southern Thailand he stated that the insurgent group there was also quite small; however their activities were tied in with those of similar Malaysian groups and this complicated the problem. Nevertheless the Thai High Command is now planning with Malaysian officials joint operations against the southern dissident elements.

5. The conversation then turned to the need of the Thai forces for more helicopters and for the provision of M-16 rifles. The justification for the latter one was the usual one: the enemy dissidents are better armed with communist-type weapons than are the Thai forces. I responded by citing the production limitations on M-16 rifles and the priority which, of necessity, had to be given the Free World forces in South Vietnam. I added that we were in the process of expanding M-16 production and that it was a matter which could be discussed in the usual channel; namely with Ambassador Unger and General McCown.

6. The meeting ended on the same friendly note that had been maintained throughout our interview. The Prime Minister thanked Assistant Secretary of Defense Froehlke and myself for coming to Bangkok and expressed the hope that Secretary Laird would be able to visit Thailand at some future time. He also asked me to convey his warm regards to President Nixon.

7. After we left the Prime Minister's residence, Ambassador Unger stated that he felt that our meeting had been a great success; the Thais are very sensitive as to their status as one of the troop-contributing nations and are desirous of being able to publicize the visits of ranking

U.S. officials to consult with their leaders regarding the war. The Ambassador's observation was borne out by newspaper articles emanating over the next three days from Bangkok sources.

Earle G. Wheeler
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

5. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, March 11, 1969, 1154Z.

2928. Subject: Message to Prime Minister.

1. With Field Marshal Thanom already renamed PriMin by the King, expected to announce his new cabinet momentarily, and expected to present his new government's program to joint session of Parliament March 19 or 20, I believe it would be most appropriate for US to take formal note of Thailand's installation of a government constitutionally responsible to Parliament. I therefore strongly recommend the President send Thanom a message of congratulations on his new appointment. Most suitable delivery time would be just after Thanom presents government policy statement to Parliament.

2. We have been encouraged by Thai return to constitutional government. We have not, however, sent formal official congratulatory messages either at time of promulgation of constitution in June 1968 or following February 10 national elections,² largely because such mes-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 15–1 THAI. Confidential.

² The Thai national elections of February 10 resulted in a victory for the government parties, albeit a limited one. The Saha Pracha Thai (SPT) party of Thanom elected 75 deputies to the 219-member Lower House. Independent candidates, over half of whom were financially supported by Deputy Prime Minister Praphat, won 72 seats. The opposition Democrats won 57 seats, with the remaining 15 going to various minor groups. INR Intelligence Note No. 114, February 20, reported that the election "enhanced" Praphat's position and was likely to result in "a stronger behind-the-scenes role" for him. Forty-four Senators were appointed later in the month in order to bring the Senate up to its new constitutional size, and it remained securely under the control of the government party. Note No. 114 reported that Praphat was "unlikely to seriously threaten

sages could have been construed here as paternalistic and elsewhere if known as indicative of US influence behind Thai developments. Assumption of office by PriMin is, in contrast, an appropriate occasion to offer congratulations and to testify to our continuing cooperation without incurring disadvantages noted above.

3. Moreover, while RTG leaders have to date adjusted rather well to new political arena in which they are operating, taking opposition attacks during electoral campaign and failure to achieve absolute majority by balloting process more or less in stride, strains will continue and may well increase when opposition speaks out in elected House. Temptation to return to “good old days” and avoid all this parliamentary unpleasantness will still lurk in some leaders’ minds. An expression of favorable US view toward Thai constitutional development, at time and in manner that avoid any aura of interference in Thai internal affairs, could help to encourage RTG leaders to accept inconvenient aspects of constitutional government.

4. I suggest text along following lines: “Dear Mr. Prime Minister: I wish to congratulate you on your appointment by His Majesty the King of Thailand to serve once again as Prime Minister. Your formation of a new government, following elections under the new constitution, marks an important milestone in Thai political history and is a tribute to your leadership. I look forward to a continuation of our close cooperation in pursuit of peace and freedom.”³

5. Although no congratulatory messages on election results have been publicized, we have had indications that Koreans and perhaps a few others have sent them in one form or another.

Unger

Thanom’s position as Prime Minister” and was “probably aware that he would be an unacceptable Prime Minister to many Thais, from the King on down.” It added, however, that the composition of the post-election cabinet would probably reflect his wishes “that Thanom’s leadership position will be more circumscribed,” and that the influence of civilian leaders, such as Minister for National Development Pote Sarasin and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, could be decreased.” (Ibid., POL 14 THAI)

³ See Document 7.

6. **Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹**

Washington, March 17, 1969.

SUBJECT

Congratulatory Message to Thai Prime Minister

Recommendation

For reasons set forth below, I recommend that you approve the attached message of congratulation to Marshal Thanom on his reappointment as Prime Minister.² This message includes a general restatement of our security commitment to Thailand.

Discussion

On March 7 the King designated Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn as Prime Minister under the new Thai Constitution. A message from you congratulating him on his reappointment would be appropriate.

We believe it would be in our interest to use this message as an occasion for reaffirming the U.S. security commitment to Thailand.

We have reliable intelligence that the Thai leaders are currently in a mood of questioning and doubt with regard to the firmness of the U.S. intentions in Southeast Asia. This has been heightened by the Communist offensive in Viet-Nam (which the Thai view as a breach of the “understandings” which led to the total bombing halt) and the U.S. reaction to it. They are also apprehensive about the forthcoming Senate Foreign Relations Committee review of U.S. commitments. Many of these concerns have been reflected in recent public statements by the Thai Foreign Minister.

While initially reassured by your election, the Thai leaders are in some doubt about the policies of the new Administration. They have made it clear that they are hoping for a full discussion of where we expect to go in the war in Viet-Nam and the Paris peace talks during the SEATO and TCC meetings. But it will be risky to leave them in doubt regarding our basic intentions in the two and a half months until these meetings.

Early in the last two Administrations the President sent a message reaffirming in general terms the United States security commitment to

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 15–1 THAI. Secret. Drafted by Spear and cleared by Godley and William P. Bundy.

² Attached but not printed.

Thailand, so there are precedents for such a message. Conversely, the absence of a message could be noted by Thai leaders and add to their concern in their present mood.

WPR

7. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand¹

Washington, March 26, 1969, 0152Z.

46292. 1. Request Ambassador transmit following message to Prime Minister from President:

2. "Dear Mr. Prime Minister: Congratulations and sincere good wishes on your designation by His Majesty as Prime Minister. Under your continued leadership, I am confident that Thailand will sustain the remarkable rate of development it has experienced in past years, and will remain firm in the defense of freedom.

I want to reaffirm to you, at the outset of this Administration, that the United States will continue to support Thailand and its resistance to Communist aggression and subversion. We fully intend to honor our SEATO obligation.

Secretary Rogers will report to me on his conversations with you and your colleagues when he returns from the May SEATO Council Meeting in Bangkok. This meeting will provide an excellent opportunity for you and the Secretary to review in depth the various issues of mutual concern. It will, as well, be a most welcome occasion for our two new governments to reaffirm the close ties between our countries that are so essential to the maintenance of freedom in East Asia.

Sincerely, Richard Nixon"

3. The White House does not plan to make this communication public.

Rogers

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 15-1 THAI. Confidential. Drafted by Spear on March 10; cleared by William Bundy, Secretary Rogers, and in the White House by Richard Moose; and revised in the White House on March 25.

8. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 1, 1969.

SUBJECT

Meeting With The President

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign

Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullasapya, Thai Minister of Communications

Arun Panupong, Thai Chargé d'Affaires

United States

U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Moncrieff J. Spear, Country Director, Thailand/Burma

Referring to his meeting with the President at the reception the previous evening,² Dawee said he had had a good talk. The President has asked his views on Viet-Nam. He had replied that every day that went by was a loss of time because American casualties continued to grow. He also relayed a message from the Prime Minister that following the bombing halt the situation in Southeast Asia had gotten worse. One way or another, we should find a way to resume bombing in North Viet-Nam. Dawee also felt that we should be prepared to use South Viet-Nam ground forces to cut the infiltration. They were both capable and had the will to do this job.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL THAI-US. Secret. Drafted by Spear and approved in J on April 9. The meeting was held in Johnson's office. The memorandum is part 6 of 6; parts 1 through 5 are *ibid*.

² A memorandum of this conversation, March 31, is *ibid*.

9. **Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Godley)**¹

Bangkok, April 10, 1969.

Dear Mac:

Thanks very much for your March 28 letter.² You have identified some of the really tough questions which are likely to face us in more or less direct fashion at the SEATO and TCC meetings in May, but whether or not there, then surely in increasingly active form later on. In this letter I'll try to give you some first answers and perhaps we can fit in an exchange or two more³ before the meetings themselves.

Thanat Ploy

You are quite right to raise questions about Thanat's role and motivations in his rather excessive recourse recently to the press and public platforms. I have been troubled for some time by the apparent inconsistency between his deploring what he regards as serious waverings in American determination and resolve with regard to contributing to the defense of the Free World in Southeast Asia and his occasional insistence on a bilateral security treaty, no doubt motivated by these concerns; and on the other hand, his verbal approaches to Communist China and occasional expressions of reservations about a continued American military presence here. In a way I think we have to read this ambivalence as a product, at least in part, of our own current ambivalence in which we are on the one hand stoutly devoting great blood and treasure to the defense of Southeast Asia, which even Thanat cannot deny, but at the same time exhibiting to the world (no doubt in exaggerated form) a body politic, including much of the press, most of the youth, highly influential congressmen, and a preponderance of the articulate intellectual community, which condemns our involvement in Vietnam and which is obviously apprehensive even about our present degree of involvement in Thailand, which it tends to see as going the way of Vietnam. The Thai, to oversimplify somewhat, have increasingly

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 15-1 THAI. Secret; Eyes Only. A notation on the letter indicates Godley saw it. Copies were sent to Johnson, Ambassador Marshall Green, and Spear.

² Not found.

³ Copies of this and follow-up letters from Unger to Godley, April 15 and 17, were forwarded by Unger to Kissinger along with a May 9 covering letter. Kissinger replied in a June 2 letter to Unger that: "Your discussion of issues in Thailand as well as your views on Laos and Vietnam are directly relevant to our NSSM 51 study of Thailand and provide valuable assistance to us." (All in National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I)

based their national policy on collective security since 1954, and many of their own initiatives, and even more their agreement to actions of ours, including those on their territory, have been based on the continued availability of a protective cover from the US in case of trouble. Now Thanat and the Thai ask themselves to what extent that cover is still available and relate that question also to our readiness to see through the Vietnam process to the point where South Vietnam is going to be at least tolerably able to decide its own future without outside interference.

Most Thais don't take seriously the threat of massive Communist invasion as a likelihood in present circumstances, although they would undoubtedly argue that if there is an obvious American disengagement from Southeast Asia, the deterrent to such an invasion will have been largely removed and the possibility increased that the Chinese might return to something like Korean War methods. The President's recent message to the Prime Minister⁴ and the assurances provided by Marshall Green, together with what I presume Secretary Rogers will be saying in May, will probably keep those apprehensions in the background for most of the Thai leadership even though Thanat will probably not desist from carping comments. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Thai don't want our direct military involvement in their insurgency, although they certainly are counting on our continued contribution through MAP and AID to the support of their own counter-insurgency. There is, unfortunately, an ambiguous middle area between an invasion and the insurgency and I think it is here that our most difficult policy problems lie. This brings us to the Laos problem above all, and I'll save further discussion of it for the next section.

Thanat has become increasingly over the past ten years, and particularly since Thanom has been Prime Minister, the architect of Thai foreign policy. In fields such as the promotion of regional activities, the position in the UN and dealing with the US on matters such as the Paris negotiations, he has, in my opinion, an almost completely free hand. He also has been one of the three or four most influential decision-makers on such matters as sending forces to South Vietnam and on relations with neighboring countries. However, I think it is questionable whether Thanat would have won out if, for example, he had opposed the sending of the Queen's Cobras and Black Panthers to Vietnam, or if he had insisted on strong initiatives to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cambodia; the fundamental military leadership still controls these matters in the last analysis. Thanat has been able to play the role that he has because he has been basically in agreement with the military leadership on these matters. Similarly, on the question of future US military presence here, including in the post-Vietnam period, Thanat's voice will probably not be

⁴ See Document 7.

decisive since prime matters of national security will be involved and the military leadership will make the final decisions.

In spite of this, however, Thanat is heavily depended upon by the military leadership and especially the Prime Minister, and his familiarity with the American scene makes him particularly important as an advisor about relations with us. Thus, Thanat could be very influential in convincing the leadership that a collective security policy based on US participation was no longer realistic for Thailand. If he should undertake this (and I do *not* believe he is presently doing so) and be successful, then the military leadership would have a much more negative attitude about Thai participation in Vietnam and the future US military presence in Thailand than they have today. At the present time I believe Thanat's role with the military leadership is to raise some warning signals about the future American role and to stimulate some thinking about contingent actions in case the US should in fact disengage from Southeast Asia. The military leadership consists largely of simplistic thinkers in the foreign policy and military strategy fields; the subtleties of regional security organizations and Paris negotiations do not interest or concern them very much.

There are others on the Thai scene who play some role in the foreign affairs field, notably Pote Sarasin who undoubtedly does advise the Prime Minister in a somewhat conservative and definitely pro-US vein. While Pote has on occasion made some dubious comment about some of Thanat's more unbridled statements, he has shown no disposition to challenge Thanat's leading role in the foreign affairs field. A possible future figure of importance is Bunchana Atthakorn and in this regard I call your attention to the enclosed press article on a recent speech of his. As time goes on, there possibly will also be new members of the military leadership who will have some more sophistication about foreign policy and military strategy, including emerging leaders like General Kriangsak. Today, however, the field is left very largely to the Prime Minister, Praphat, Dawee and Thanat for the basic decisions.

Another factor of increasing importance in Thanat's thinking, I believe, is his growing concern as a somewhat over-sensitive Thai nationalist about the impact of the presence here of 50,000 American military. Thanat, and most other Thais for that matter, are enough aware of what South Vietnam looks like today from the inside to know that they do not want American ground forces participating in fighting in Thailand. Thanat, and even more some members of the new Parliament and younger, semi-intellectual Thais, are increasingly disturbed about what happens to Thai communities under heavy GI influence and they are also vaguely uneasy about the effect on Thailand's freedom of decision in an increasingly tricky and uncertain period. Thanat is also over-sensitive at the twitting he no doubt gets occasionally from his colleagues in neighboring countries (although I would guess this

is less true than in the past) and in international forums such as the UN about Thailand's having become so closely tied to the US. None of these things, in my opinion, will lead Thanat to begin to press for the pullout of American forces here, or even a substantial reduction, as long as the Vietnam war requires their presence. He does not like to have it assumed, however, that once that is past Thailand can be taken for granted as a home for indefinite US deployments in the future. You have noted, I am sure, however, that Thanat has carefully left a loophole in all of his statements about US withdrawal from Thailand which makes it clear that the Thais might find that there were compelling reasons why some US forces should remain here. I believe that in the absence of a virtually utopian settlement of Southeast Asia's security problems, Thanat will in fact, along with the military leadership, wish to have some continued US presence unless we seem to have gone the total disengagement route.

You are undoubtedly right in suspecting, too, that Thanat is in part addressing the American public. He bitterly resents the references which occasionally (and a good deal less frequently than he alleges) appear in the American press about Thailand's sending "mercenaries" to Vietnam and about Thailand's being a US puppet and one of "our boys", ready slavishly to do the US bidding as long as we continue to throw a few bones its way. Thanat is also acutely conscious of the "Thailand: the next Vietnam" theme. For all of these reasons he is intent on conveying to the American public the sense of an independent RTG posture, even some reservations about or hostility to the US, and removing the black and white image of Thailand as a single-minded, anti-Communist US ally. In my mind this is surely one of his reasons for making such repeated loud noises about a willingness to talk with Communist China. Thanat, not unjustifiably in my opinion, has identified the peculiar American syndrome of denigrating and scorning its close and loyal allies and being attracted to those who kick us in the teeth from time to time; I think he is carrying out what is largely a one-man campaign to move Thailand toward the second category.

Finally, a last little intriguing twist. You will see from Bangkok's 4299⁵ that Thanat probably is going to make a bid for the ICJ seat in 1970. Could it be that he has been working on his image and trying to be sure that he is regarded as an international statesman of broad views and not tied to the US kite, so that he does not lose the votes on which he must depend for election?

This first answer has gone on for so long that I will send it off by itself and proceed to the questions of post-Vietnam planning and Vietnam and Paris prospects as soon as I can turn to them.

Yours,

Len

⁵ Not found.

10. National Security Study Memorandum 51¹

Washington, April 26, 1969.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Director of the Bureau of the Budget
Administrator of the Agency for International Development

SUBJECT

Program Analysis of Thailand

The President has directed that a program analysis of Thailand be undertaken in accordance with the procedures described in NSDM 4.²

If appropriate, two or three alternative outcomes to the Vietnam conflict should be assumed.

The study will:

1. Analyze U.S. interests and objectives in Thailand and their implications for future U.S.-Thai relations, giving due consideration to the historical background as it relates to Thai interests and U.S.-Thai relations.
2. In the light of alternative views of U.S. interests and objectives in Thailand, analyze those policy issues which will have a bearing on the size, mix and composition of U.S. programs to support these objectives over the next five years.
3. Analyze the program and budget implications of the key policy options.
4. Develop alternative statements of U.S. objectives, policy options and their program implications for consideration by the National Security Council.

The study should include an analysis of the following U.S. programs and possible trade offs among them:

1. Military assistance and its role in the development of Thai security forces.
2. The AID programs and their role in helping the Thai control the insurgent threat and in developing Thailand's economy.
3. U.S. forces and bases in Thailand in the light of possible post-Vietnam war contingencies in Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand.
4. CONUS-based and Theatre-based U.S. forces required as a reserve for Thai contingencies.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 365, Subject Files, National Security Study Memoranda, Nos. 43-103. Secret. A copy was sent to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

² NSDM 4, January 20, authorized program analysis studies for certain countries. (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-208, NSDM Files, NSDMs 1-50)

5. U.S. research activities and their contribution to U.S. and Thai program effectiveness.

6. The programs of the U.S. Information Agency, the Peace Corps, and the Central Intelligence Agency in Thailand.

Field research activities to obtain information needed for the analysis shall be undertaken as required.

The study will be performed by an Ad Hoc group chaired by the NSC Assistant for Programs; the Country Director for Thailand will be the Vice Chairman of the Ad Hoc group. The Chairman will consult periodically with the East Asia Interdepartmental Group. The Ad Hoc group will comprise members from the addressee agencies who shall be selected after consultation with the agencies and designated by the undersigned in a separate memorandum.

To assist the Ad Hoc group in its study, the Secretary of Defense should provide an analysis of possible Southeast Asia contingencies, including the defense of Thailand, and their implications for required U.S. forces and bases. This analysis will incorporate the results of analyses of the effectiveness of past operations conducted from Thailand and reflect agency views on the major outstanding issues. This study will be forwarded to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs by July 1, 1969.

The Department of Defense will provide administrative support for the Ad Hoc group.

The study should be forwarded to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs by October 1, 1969. Subsequently, the study will be referred to the NSC IG/EA for comment prior to consideration by the Review Group.

Henry A. Kissinger

11. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, May 23, 1969, 1217Z.

6750. Subject: Secretary Rogers, Prime Minister Thanom Bilateral. Following is an unclassified record of the Secretary's conversation with Prime Minister of Thailand Thanom Kittikachorn.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, ORG 7 S. Secret; Priority; Limdis. Also sent to New Delhi for the Secretary's party.

1. Following seven nation meeting Thursday, May 22, Secretary Rogers, accompanied by Amb Unger, Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan and DCM Hannah called on PriMin Thanom accompanied by Foreign Minister Thanat, Minister of Communications and Chief of Staff Marshal Dawee Chullasapya, Minister without Portfolio General Sawaeng Senanarong, and General Jira Vichitsonggram, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister (on security).

2. After pleasantries, Secretary Rogers expressed our deep interest in Thailand and our intention to continue to cooperate and assist in any way we could. The Prime Minister said that the main thing Thailand needs today is military equipment to assist it in coping with the infiltrated Communist subversion. He mentioned specifically transport equipment, helicopters, signal equipment and hand-held radar. Secretary Rogers asked Ambassador Unger to comment on this point. The Ambassador explained that we are in regular touch with the Thai with respect to military equipment programs in various fields. With respect to transport, helicopters and signal equipment, we have fully coordinated continuing programs, primarily in MAP. Much equipment has been delivered and more is programmed. With respect to the hand radar, this is a subject on which we require further knowledge of Thai requirements.

3. Secretary Rogers asked if the most serious subversion is in the North. The Prime Minister replied that there are infiltration and subversion threats in both North and Northeast. Marshal Dawee interceded at this point to explain that there is serious infiltration in both areas and this is why the hand radar equipment is needed as well as helicopters with miniguns. He also mentioned reports of infiltration by enemy helicopter and pointed out that the Thai had disagreed with their American friends who had contended that enemy infiltration by helicopter was impossible and there were no authentic instances of craft having been seen. Marshal Dawee indicated that several confirmed sightings have in fact been made.

4. Ambassador Unger invited the Prime Minister to give the Secretary a fuller appraisal of the Communist terrorist campaign, particularly in the North where the counter-insurgency concept of the RTG may not yet be entirely clear. The Prime Minister said that internally there is no need for undue worry because subversion within Thailand can be controlled. But the Thai Government is very deeply worried about the external threat which comes from Laos. He said the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese are advancing in Laos. The Chinese Communists are building roads to points close to Thai borders. The North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao are developing concentrations at points near the Thai border for purposes of infiltration. In this connection he mentioned particularly Campassak Province in Southwestern Laos which lies west of the Mekong, creating a special danger for Ubol Province. The Thai support the Lao Government and want it to keep up the fight in Laos outside of Thailand, but the Lao Government is very

weak. Dawee interjected that recently General Quan visited Thailand saying “my pockets are empty.” Dawee said the Lao Govt is in very severe financial difficulties and is unable to pay or care for its soldiers. He feared this would create a dangerous sag in morale, desertions, etc.

5. Secretary Rogers inquired as to the quality of Lao soldiers. Ambassador Sullivan replied that it depends on how well led they are and where they are fighting. He said that shortly before leaving Laos he had recommended provision of M-16s to the Lao Army and also conversion of 2 AC-47s into gunships of the kind which have worked so well on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in recent months. With respect to the financial situation, he pointed out that the RLG has always paid its own forces but we, with help from some others, have put in considerable financial help to bolster the kip. He thought that Japan could very well make a significant contribution to this cause without infringing its “constitutional limitations”. He suggested that FonMin Thanat urge the Japanese to make such a contribution. Thanat said he has talked with the Japanese in the past about making a greater effort in this area and is not optimistic that they will do so.

6. Secretary Rogers expressed his satisfaction with the two meetings that have occurred this week, and paid tribute to Thanat for his role in them. After a courteous response, Thanat expressed the Thai Govt’s appreciation for Secretary Rogers’ reaffirmation of US commitments in his opening speech at SEATO,² indicating in particular the 1962 communiqué. Thanat thought the Secretary’s speech had an excellent effect on the whole meeting. Secretary Rogers indicated that this was why he had reiterated our commitments in his opening speech at the beginning of the meeting. As for the 1962 communiqué, he said that he regards it merely as a valid statement, not an interpretation, of the commitments undertaken in the Manila Pact.

7. Before the meeting broke up, Secretary Rogers made a special point of expressing his deep appreciation to the Thai for the excellent treatment they have accorded US servicemen in Thailand.

Unger

² Rogers, in his opening statement at the SEATO Council of Ministers meeting in Bangkok on May 20, said that SEATO had provided “a credible sense of security” in Asia and that “this is why we continue to adhere to the treaty and to regard the Rusk–Thanat communiqué as a valid restatement of the responsibility set forth in Article IV (Para 1) of the Treaty.” (Telegram 14754 from Bangkok, October 30; *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. I) Article IV (1) of the SEATO Treaty provided that “Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the Treaty area against any of the Parties or against any state or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.” When the Treaty was executed the U.S. Government clarified that its response was limited to Communist aggression.

12. Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to President Nixon¹

Bangkok, June 17, 1969.

Dear Mr. President,

May I draw your attention to a matter of prime concern with regard to Thailand and our relations with that country.

As you well know Thailand and the United States are intimately associated in many of the security arrangements related to the protection of Southeast Asia, and the fighting in Viet-Nam in particular. It is essential for this reason that mutual confidence be maintained between us particularly at a time like the present when critical decisions and actions are being taken with far-reaching consequence for Southeast Asia's future.

Now that the first step has been publicly taken with regard to the replacement of U.S. forces by South Vietnamese forces in South Viet-Nam and the initial need for absolute secrecy no longer applies so strongly, I deem it essential that we open a dialogue on this subject with the Royal Thai Government which has always held in strictest confidence the many highly sensitive matters we have discussed in the past. We have already reviewed with the Thai the considerations regarding withdrawal raised in your May 14 speech.² At an early date we would like to resume these discussions along the following lines:

1. As indicated by the Midway announcement it is the judgment of the U.S. and South Vietnamese Governments that the expansion and strengthening of the forces of South Viet-Nam have reached a stage which makes it possible to begin the withdrawal from Southeast Asia of some of the U.S. forces there. The U.S. Government would like to discuss this process with the Royal Thai Government in general, as it relates to our further actions on the ground and in negotiations toward a satisfactory solution of the Viet-Nam problem, and in particular as it relates to the U.S. air and army support forces presently stationed in Thailand.

2. We would also like to solicit the views of the Royal Thai Government concerning the continuing role of the division of the Thai Army now fighting in Viet-Nam.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret.

² In his May 14 address to the nation, Nixon proposed the withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, thus initiating the process of U.S. troop withdrawals from that country. The overall idea implied in this address, and in subsequent remarks from Midway Island, June 8–10, was that Asian nations should determine their own destinies. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 369–375)

3. These matters also suggest the desirability of our looking ahead to the situation following a Viet-Nam settlement and beginning to consider, in that context, such matters as the future of the Royal Thai Air Force bases now very heavily utilized by the U.S. Air Force, of the air defense radar and communications system, and of the U.S. logistic system based on Sattahip and Korat.

I am persuaded, Mr. President, that unless we undertake to consult with the Thai Government on their forces presently deployed to Viet-Nam they may reach a decision unilaterally to begin the withdrawal of these forces. Since this would detract from the multinational force fighting there now and providing an important political symbol, I believe our consultations should begin promptly to avoid this.

A source of continuing preoccupation in Thai-American relations is our massive presence there today, made up primarily of U.S. air forces engaged in the defense of Viet-Nam and, to a lesser extent, Laos. For this reason and also for sound budgetary reasons, I am seeking by every means to reduce the number of official Americans in Thailand whenever this can be done without a loss in our effectiveness. In particular, I believe we should plan to begin a modest withdrawal of such of our Air Force units as may no longer be essential to the fighting in Viet-Nam and are not needed for air support in Laos. However, I would strongly recommend against any move of this sort or any indication of our intention to take such action until after we have carried out with the Royal Thai Government the kind of consultation outlined above which will give the Thai the full context of any actions we plan to undertake. Without such consultation the Thai may misread a withdrawal as premature and signalling a weakening in our resolve to see the struggle through in Viet-Nam to an acceptable resolution.

With this in mind, we will be formulating an authorization for Embassy Bangkok to undertake these consultations with the Royal Thai Government as a matter of urgency in accordance with instructions to be provided from Washington.

Leonard Unger³

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

13. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, June 19, 1969.

SUBJECT

Appointment with U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Leonard Unger

Ambassador Unger will pay a brief courtesy call on you at 11:15 a.m., Friday, June 20.² He is currently on home leave from his post in Bangkok and will be returning there for a second tour.

Ambassador Unger has three major points to raise with you. They are:

1. *Insurgency in north and northeast Thailand:* While the Thais have been fairly effective in dealing with insurgency in the northeast, their effort in northern Thailand has been discouragingly poor. There has been some consideration to a greater U.S. involvement, but Ambassador Unger feels strongly that U.S. forces should not become involved in counterinsurgency operations. If the Thai cannot do the job, it will not be done, and excessive U.S. involvement tends to weaken the Thai sense of responsibility. Preferably, we should continue to advise and assist the Thais, but let them conduct counterinsurgency operations.

2. *The U.S. presence in Thailand:* Ambassador Unger is concerned over the need both to reduce the U.S. presence in Thailand and make it as little visible as possible. He would particularly like to see some military units, no longer essential to the Vietnam war effort, withdrawn at an early date. At your direction, we have asked the Under Secretaries Committee to study this question and come up with recommendations to you.

3. *Fuller consultations with Thailand:* Ambassador Unger suggests there is a need for fuller consultations with the inner circle of the Thai Government on both withdrawals from Vietnam and U.S. military deployments in Thailand after the Vietnam conflict. He believes this can be done with minimal risk of public leakage. He will be bringing a letter to you on this subject, a copy of which is attached at Tab A,³ in view of the short time available for discussion with you.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret. Sent for information. Drafted by R. L. Sneider on June 19. The memorandum is unsigned but bears Kissinger's handwritten initials in the upper right-hand corner.

² No other record of this meeting has been found.

³ See Document 12.

Talking Points

I recommend that:

1. You encourage Ambassador Unger in both efforts to avoid direct U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency and to reduce the U.S. presence in Thailand.
2. Indicate your support in principle for fuller consultations with the Thais, if this can be done without breach of security and without becoming enmeshed in the process of clearing specific troop replacements with the Thais.
3. Ask him to convey to Prime Minister Thanom your appreciation of Thai determination to continue the close cooperation with us for common objectives in Southeast Asia. (We have recently received a copy of Thanom's letter to you expressing appreciation for your recent messages to him. This is attached at Tab B.)⁴

⁴ Nixon had sent Thanom several courtesy messages in advance of his May 14 and Midway Island Vietnamization speeches; attached but not printed. Attached at Tab B but not printed is Thanom's undated letter thanking Nixon for his messages received on May 14 and 22. Telegram 115643 to Bangkok, July 12, asked the Embassy to thank Prime Minister Thanom for his letter of May 29 and for his assurances of continued cooperation between Thailand and the United States. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 27–14 VIET)

14. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand¹

Washington, July 9, 1969, 2353Z.

113614. Ref: Bangkok's 9168.² Subj: Response to Fulbright Allegation of Secret Thai-U.S. Agreement.

Summary.

1. Sen. Fulbright has alleged both publicly and in top secret memorandum to the Secretary that U.S. has secret agreement with Thailand

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Top Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Linwood Starbird (EA/TB); cleared by Cross and Brown (EA), Dennis Doolin (OASD/ISA), Robert McCloskey (P), and Davis R. Robinson (S); and approved by Green.

² Telegram 9168 from Bangkok, July 9, requested a full text of the Fulbright letter and an opportunity to comment on it. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, DEF 4 THAI-US)

much broader than any publicly-known commitment. Department will continue inform you of significant press coverage and other public developments. Top secret reference is to Project Taksin military contingency planning. We plan both public and top secret response. End Summary.

Public Response

2. McCloskey held to same non-committal line July 9 as he used July 8 (State 112736).³ However, rather than allow speculation to build up, we hope we can make clarification at regular Department press briefing July 10. Statement has not yet been fully cleared, but represents careful study and evaluation of pertinent documents and other material. Would appreciate your immediate comments on whether it would cause any significant problems with Thais.⁴ Also request you talk with appropriate RTG leaders, explaining how matter has arisen, reassure that as our intended public statement makes clear our SEATO commitment remains unchanged and urge calm public posture in order to help put to rest in interest of all.

Suggested Statement

3. "Our commitments involving the defense of Thailand are defined by the SEATO Treaty of 1954. These were restated in the Rusk–Thanat Communiqué of 1962. There is no defense commitment to Thailand going beyond that Treaty. We believe Senator Fulbright refers to contingency military planning. For more than a decade we have participated in formulating contingency military plans involving the defense of Thailand. This planning involves no further commitment."

Fulbright Letter to Secretary

4. Senator Fulbright has also sent Secretary a letter⁵ and top secret memorandum on, inter alia, our commitments to Thailand. Memorandum: 1) expresses concern over growing influence of DOD in foreign policy; 2) notes statement in recent Department letter to effect that our contingency planning, both multilateral and bilateral, is simply normal activity undertaken pursuant to SEATO Treaty commitment and does not enlarge that commitment; 3) refers to existence of

³ Dated July 8. (Ibid., PPB 9 US)

⁴ See Document 15.

⁵ Senator Fulbright sent Rogers a June 5 letter concerning U.S. commitments to Thailand. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, SEATO 3 THAI) Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations William B. Macomber, Jr., responded to Fulbright on behalf of the Secretary in a June 27 letter, stating that U.S. obligations existed under Article IV (1) of the SEATO Treaty without any extension. (Ibid.)

“COMUSTAF Plan 1–64⁶ and subsequent plans” and provides summary; 4) claims that such plans lead the other party to believe that U.S. has firm commitment—already made in accordance with our constitutional processes—to specific action involving use of substantial military forces; and 5) argues plan already given partial effect by the stationing of 40,000 Americans in Thailand. Summary of “COMUSTAF Plan 1–64” included is full direct quotation of Top Secret June, 1965 “Hoopes Report” on military assistance reappraisal pages V–35 through V–37.⁷

⁶ Senator Fulbright contended that the Thais might believe that the United States had committed itself to take specific action involving substantial use of American troops through the Taksin contingency plan, known also as Project 22 or by its DOD acronym, COMUSTAF 1/64. The Department of State had tried to assure the Senator that both it and the Thai Government agreed that military contingency plans did not affect commitments and were only operational details to be used if, as, and when agreed upon. Furthermore, Fulbright insisted upon seeing a copy of the plan, rather than having a briefing on it, as the Department of Defense proposed. On July 29, Fulbright renewed his request to the Department of State for text of COMUSTAF Plan 1/64. The text of Fulbright’s July 29 letter to Acting Secretary of State Elliot Richardson is in the *Congressional Record*, August 8, 1969, p. S9504. The Department of Defense continued its resistance to providing a copy of the plan as Richardson informed Fulbright several days later. The text of Richardson’s letter, August 4, to Senator Fulbright is *ibid.* On August 8 Fulbright stated unequivocally on the Senate floor that the Department of Defense offer of a briefing in lieu of the text of the plan was not acceptable. (*Ibid.*, pp. S9503–S9505) On August 19 Kissinger informed Laird that he had spoken with President Nixon about the contingency plans and that “they should be looked at only at the Pentagon.” Also the Senate Committee could only see the Thai plan “and no others are to be shown.” (Notes of a telephone conversation, August 19, 11:30 a.m.; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 360, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

⁷ Printed from an unsigned copy.

15. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, July 10, 1969, 1049Z.

9229. Ref: State 113614.²

1. Reftel arrived just as I was departing with Secretary to the Cabinet John Whitaker to call on Foreign Minister Thanat. During our re-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Top Secret; Immediate.

² Document 14.

view with Thanat of President's forthcoming visit to Thailand, I found an occasion to refer to *Bangkok Post* publicity regarding Fulbright charges. I reviewed the subject with Thanat on the basis of paras 1 and 2 reftel. Thanat seemed perplexed concerning the charge that there is a top secret agreement which commits the U.S. beyond the SEATO Treaty. When I mentioned Project Taksin, he seemed nonplused but his secretary, Birabhongse, confirmed to him that Taksin is a military contingency plan. Thanat expressed the opinion that all military contingency planning is within the SEATO context, but Birabhongse informed him that Taksin is purely bilateral. In any case, Thanat fully understands that military contingency plans do not affect commitments and are only operational details to be used if, as and when it is agreed to do so.

2. I read to Thanat the suggested statement in para 3 reftel and he commented "that seems very good." As for himself, he said that if he is questioned publicly, he will simply say that he has no knowledge of any additional Thai-U.S. defense agreement beyond SEATO. Based on our own judgment, as well as this interview with Thanat, we concur with the suggested statement.

3. We will forward additional comments re reply to Senator Fulbright. We believe the question of historical context is very important particularly since we will be talking in those terms to Pincus and Paul who will undoubtedly report to the Senator. We reiterate our desire to see proposed reply before it goes forward.

4. On incidental interest, Thanat remarked that Fulbright's charges appear to be similar to some of the things written in *The Washington Post* and he speculated on the possibility of some kind of "cabal" between Fulbright and *The Washington Post*. This quite inevitably led him into a pithy review of his feelings about Stanley Karnow,³ who he hopes will not seek to visit Thailand during the President's visit (being reported septel).

Hannah

³ *Washington Post* reporter Stanley Karnow.

16. Department of State Briefing Paper¹

NCV/T-5

Washington, July 10, 1969.

THAILAND

Background—Thailand's Role in Viet-Nam

The Thai regard the Viet-Nam war as part of the defense of Southeast Asia. Therefore, the Paris talks, the status of Laos in a Viet-Nam settlement, the stability of the GVN, improvement of the South Vietnamese fighting effectiveness, withdrawal of U.S. forces, the post-Viet-Nam U.S. force structure in Southeast Asia, all are matters in which the Thai are vitally interested and wish to feel involved in decisions on them. It is highly desirable that the U.S. initiate a dialogue with the RTG on these matters as soon as U.S. thinking reaches a point at which it can be shared.

A. The Paris Talks

The Thai are very interested and concerned about the Paris talks. They will be alert to any indication that they are not being kept as fully briefed as other TCC's, particularly since their record of maintaining security in sensitive matters is excellent. Thailand is less fully informed about the Paris talks than certain other TCC's (GVN, Australia, NZ) and less regularly briefed than Korea and the Philippines; only Foreign Minister Thanat is kept informed, and he has been only partially briefed by Ambassador Unger.

Their special interest vis-à-vis Paris will be the inclusion of Laos in any settlement. (See background paper on importance of Laos to Thai security.)² The Thai may also feel lingering anxiety about the possibility of unreciprocated U.S. withdrawal and its adverse effect on Asian security, and doubts about the viability of any government in South Viet-Nam that would include Communists. They understand that now is not the time to include TCC's in the talks but they (like the other four participants) expect that the time will come.

B. U.S. Troop Withdrawal from South Viet-Nam

Although Thai leaders have commented favorably and helpfully in public on the results of the Midway meeting, they are watching very closely the developing pattern of U.S. actions for indications of U.S. in-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 454, President's Trip Files, President Nixon's Trip, July–Aug 1969, Country Briefing Book, Thailand. Secret. Drafted by Starbird and Martin (EA/TB) and cleared by Spear, Sullivan, and Devine (OASD). Prepared for the President's July around-the-world trip to Guam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and India, et al.; also see Document 17.

² Not printed. (Ibid.)

tentions in Southeast Asia. In discussing the Midway meeting with RTG leaders, we have reviewed the progress in the expansion and modernization of the Vietnamese regular and territorial forces and the Midway agreements growing out of our collective assessment with the GVN of these situations. We have assured the RTG that our actions did not involve a diminution of Allied combat capability or a lessening in American determination for an equitable and honorable settlement, and have told them that there will be further review in August of troop replacement.

C. Thai Forces in South Viet-Nam

Thailand recognizes the intimate relationship of its security with that of Viet-Nam and Laos, and the dangers which would attend Communist successes among its Southeast Asian neighbors. Consequently, although indigenous Communist insurgency threatens many regions of the country, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has sent approximately 11,500 men to South Viet-Nam, including an army light division, small naval units, and an air force transport contingent.

When queried about the status of these Thai forces in Viet-Nam following the Midway Conference developments, Prime Minister Thanom stated on June 12 to the press that Thai forces would be neither increased nor withdrawn at this time, that the subject of their withdrawal was being studied, and that when SVN strength was sufficient, Thai forces would be gradually withdrawn.

We have not yet sounded out the RTG's views concerning the future of the Thai division in Viet-Nam. There are a number of factors which need to be considered: (a) the need for Thai forces in their own country to counter insurgency and provide a credible deterrent to Communist advances in Laos, (b) the capability of Vietnamese forces to replace the Thai, (c) the political importance of Thai forces participating in the defense of its Southeast Asian neighbor, and (d) the need to forestall a unilateral decision to withdraw on the RTG's part which might adversely affect the political significance of the multinational and Asian support for South Viet-Nam.

D. Future of U.S. Forces in Thailand

Good behavior by U.S. servicemen and energetic efforts by the Embassy and military commanders have kept the incident rate low, but sheer numbers, language, and cultural and income differences have led to inevitable incidents affecting the Thai community. And as the atmosphere in Bangkok has become increasingly political with the advent of elections and a national assembly, the RTG has become increasingly sensitive to these incidents.

The large U.S. military presence in Thailand—primarily U.S. air forces engaged in the defense of Viet-Nam and Laos—now totals about 48,000, including 35,000 USAF personnel; 11,000 Army personnel

involved in support of air operations, in construction work, and in maintenance of prepositioned equipment; and 1,200 in JUSMAG involved in training Thai forces. We have built about \$400 million worth of military facilities, including major expansion of five of the six Thai air bases we are using, the new port-airbase complex at Sattahip/U Tapao, and improvements in roads, communications networks, supply depots, etc.

In April 1968 Prime Minister Thanom asked that “American Air Force personnel now stationed at Thai bases remain in country, even though in reduced numbers, following U.S. withdrawal from Viet-Nam and thereafter be taken out only gradually.” During his visit to Washington in May 1968 we agreed to consult on this matter.

Foreign Minister Thanat has several times stated (e.g. interview with Terrence Smith of *New York Times*, February 14, 1969; Foreign Ministry statement of February 20, 1969) that U.S. forces are in Thailand in connection with the war in Viet-Nam and will leave afterwards unless there is some compelling reason for them to stay. In that event, a new agreement would have to be drawn up between the two governments.

On February 21, 1969, the Department’s spokesman affirmed that “the bulk of U.S. forces are in Thailand in connection with the war in Viet-Nam . . . that obviously large numbers of U.S. forces would not continue to be stationed in Thailand after a satisfactory settlement in Southeast Asia unless there were some compelling reason for them to stay. It is also quite clear that U.S. forces would remain only with the agreement of the two governments.”

17. Department of State Briefing Paper¹

NCV/T-18

Washington, July 11, 1969.

THAILAND

Scope and Objectives

A. Background

With a prospering economy and remarkable social and political stability—in spite of military coups which have been bloodless and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 454, President’s Trip Files, President Nixon’s Trip, July–Aug 1969, Country Briefing Book, Thailand. Secret. Drafted by Spear and Nelson (EA/TB) and approved by Green. Prepared for the President’s July around-the-world trip to Guam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and India, et al.; also see Document 16.

largely of the “palace” variety—Thailand’s problems are largely externally instigated, and as yet barely felt by the population as a whole. The insurgency is small, affecting the lives of relatively few and remote rural villagers. Thai leaders are concerned because they realize its Communist Chinese instigation and potential seriousness. Progress in government, by Western standards, is being demanded by Thailand’s educated elite, while the mass of Thai people still complacently accept Thai government in traditional terms, demanding little from the government. The leading opposition party is royalist, conservative, and urban, while the pro-government party was strongest in rural areas.

Thailand is approaching a cross roads in basic policy directions as Thai leaders anticipate an end to the Viet-Nam war and try to plot their post-Viet-Nam course. Since World War II Thailand has been increasingly committed to a pro-U.S. policy in reaction to the Chinese Communist threat. During the last five years—with our heavy involvement in Viet-Nam—Thailand’s commitment to this policy has been almost total. Foreign Minister Thanat has been one of the most outspoken of Asian champions of resistance to Communist aggression in South Viet-Nam. Now, with demands for peace and withdrawal being publicized in the United States, the Thai are beginning to wonder whether they have stuck their necks out too far by sending forces to South Viet-Nam and allowing our use of Thai air bases to bomb North Viet-Nam. Though still maintaining a pro-U.S. stance they are seeking to widen their policy options by strengthening regional ties and increasing contacts with other nations, such as the Communist countries of Eastern Europe.

Thai leaders have been basically reassured by your letters to Prime Minister Thanom and by Secretary Rogers’ statement at the SEATO Council meeting last May. However, contrary press reports and agitation in this country continue to disquiet them, making continuing reassurance necessary. Your visit, and re-affirmation of U.S. firmness in seeking a genuine peace in Viet-Nam without sacrificing the freedom of our allies, will help to maintain Thai confidence and stability.

The Thais have smarted under criticisms that their government is military and un-democratic. Their new Constitution, adopted June 20, 1968, and election of a House of Representatives on February 10, 1969, have reflected both a desire to improve Thailand’s image before the Free World and genuine democratic aspirations on the part of Thailand’s educated people generally. By low-key notice of this political liberalization your visit can encourage the Thais in these efforts.

We feel that by and large the Thai are meeting their present problems effectively. They are improving their counterinsurgency efforts—though encouragement to do still better in north Thailand is needed. They have responded helpfully to the peace talks in Paris and to our

efforts to de-escalate the fighting. They have publicly maintained a posture of confidence in their pro-U.S. policy, in spite of underlying anxieties. They are supporting regional developments in the hope of someday building a foundation for a regional security system. They have taken modest but significant steps toward democratic rule. Your visit can dispel existing doubts on their part as to the constancy of U.S. friendship and the feasibility of their continued support to U.S. objectives as a means of ensuring their own security.

B. Outstanding Issues

- Withdrawal of U.S. forces from Viet-Nam and its effect on the Paris negotiations;
- The future of Thai forces in Viet-Nam;
- Redeployment of U.S. forces from Thailand and what forces, if any, should remain post-Viet-Nam;
- Thai concerns about Communist gains over the last year in Laos and the related Communist insurgency in north Thailand.

C. U.S. Objectives

Maintain Thai confidence in their policy of alignment with the United States.

By giving the Thai leaders assurance of our determination and continued support and an insight into our thinking on such subjects as Viet-Nam, the future of our forces in Thailand, and our shared concern about developments in Laos and the insurgency in north Thailand, you can help shape Thai policy in the direction of further support for U.S. objectives.

Help the Thai to improve their image as a Free World nation.

The Thai are proud of their long record of independence, and are very sensitive to insinuations that they are dominated by the United States. Communist propaganda harping on that theme accentuates their sensitivities. It is important therefore to emphasize the equal and independence status of Thailand in all possible ways.

It would also be helpful to use this visit to publicize Thai political liberalization as evidence of Thailand's dynamic, progressive development.

(Caution: It should be borne in mind that the powers of the new Parliament are quite circumscribed. References to progress toward democracy in Thailand should therefore be in low key.)

Encourage Thai efforts promoting regional organization in Southeast Asia.

Your visit provides an opportunity to encourage Thai leadership in Southeast Asian regional development. Congratulatory remarks would be appropriate concerning the skillful and constructive role the

Thai have played in mediating differences and stimulating cooperation between nations of the region.

D. Thai Objectives

To “size up” your Administration. While Thai leaders know you as a person from several private visits, and while they got an initial “feel” for your Administration from Secretary Rogers at the SEATO Council meeting, they will want to use the visit to form their own assessment of the directions you will take as President.

To assure themselves of U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. The Thai will seek continued assurances of U.S. determination to “stay the course” in Southeast Asia; this inquiry may well focus on Laos. They will also be seeking our forward thinking on the war in Viet-Nam and the Paris peace talks.

E. The Message

We want to initiate a dialogue with the Thai regarding the future of U.S. forces in Thailand, so that they will not misinterpret withdrawals when they occur. (We want to avoid *initiating* any proposal that our forces remain in Thailand after the Viet-Nam fighting is over. This proposal should come from the Thai side.)

We want to convey:

—American respect for their status as an independent country, and our pleasure at their progress as reflected in their new Constitution and their recent Parliamentary elections.

—Confidence that Thailand can rely on U.S. firmness in supporting the freedom and independence of its allies in Southeast Asia while seeking an enduring peace in Viet-Nam.

—Recognition of the need for continued counterinsurgency efforts, particularly in northern Thailand.

—Our admiration and approval of their efforts to promote regional organization and cooperative development in Southeast Asia.

18. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, July 29, 1969, 10:10 a.m.–2:28 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn
Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman
President Richard M. Nixon
Mr. Henry A. Kissinger

Thanom said that the communiqué of the 9th Party Congress shows that Peking has reaffirmed its intention to carry on war with its neighbors. Thailand will be under pressure. Many countries in South-east Asia are not strong enough to resist.

Thailand does not want ground forces—but not having an industrial base, it does need assistance with matériel. It would need help with ground forces in a general war. As long as it is an unconventional revolutionary type war, however, the Thais want to depend on their own ground forces. The Thai government wants to pursue a vast program of civic action. The Thai government wants, (1) to work to create a viable grouping of non-Communist nations, (2) to receive matériel assistance, (3) to repel force with force—but with its own men, and (4) to continue to pursue economic reforms to supplement other means of defense.

So far the Communist intruders have chosen remote spots where economic development has not reached. They promise a paradise. The President said, “like China.” Thanat responded that in rural areas of Thailand, nothing is known of China.

The President said he wanted the Prime Minister to know his own thinking. In case of overt aggression, we would expect to react. Where major powers act, they must expect reaction from other major powers. If the Communist Chinese were to try that, there will be a very strong reaction from the U.S. But this is not likely.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 105, Geopolitical File, Asian Trips, July–Aug. 1969. Another copy is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1048, Staff Files, Tony Lake Chron File, [June 1969–May 1970], [4 of 6]. Secret; Sensitive. According to President Nixon’s Daily Diary, the participants included Nixon, Thanom, Thanat, Kissinger, and Dawee. Presumably, Lake was also present. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Government House in Bangkok. The closing time of the meeting is also from the President’s Daily Diary. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The President’s ideas, only very briefly outlined here, became known as the Nixon or Guam doctrine.

Thanom said he fully agreed about the unlikelihood of overt aggression. From the pattern we have been seeing, we can expect that Peking and Hanoi will continue to rely on war by proxy.

The President noted Thanom's statement that the Thai wish to rely on their own manpower. There is a difficult political problem in the U.S., he continued, but the U.S. public *will* endorse matériel support.²

Thanom said that in meeting subversion, the Thais will meet force with force, using a combination of military personnel, police and civic action. They are increasing security measures for all areas, with a three-pronged program. Attention will be given to getting produce to market.

The President noted that one can't deal with subversion by force alone—the causes must be removed. But he doesn't agree with soft-heads who think that you can solve every problem with another bowl of rice. Thus he was glad that Thanom referred to his determination to use force.

The President said he wanted to ask a critical question, and asked that Thanom not spare our feelings. He referred to our handling of Vietnam. How the war is ended will be critical for peace and freedom in the Pacific. Is there concern that the U.S. may move too fast in withdrawing its forces? Is there a feeling that regardless of what he says publicly, we will let the GVN go down the drain gracefully? He asked for an honest answer.

Thanom smiled and said that since the President asked him to be frank, he wanted to recall the views of leaders of previous Administrations. If a decisive step had been taken, the will of the enemy would now be broken. Because of the importance of public opinion, one must take measures to meet its demands. He hoped the other side would respond. If the other side does respond, the war can end. But so far the other side has not responded. What does the U.S. intend? If concessions are made by only one side, we have cause for concern. He hoped the U.S. wouldn't go too far.

The President responded that nothing substantial has happened on their side. If after a year the enemy refuses to talk, we can't

² En route to the Far East on July 25, President Nixon held a press backgrounder on Guam. The President believed that, following the conclusion of the Vietnam war, there should be no U.S. withdrawal from Asia: "the way to avoid becoming involved in another war in Asia," he said, "is for the United States to continue to play a significant role." But at the same time, he said, the United States should avoid policies that would make countries in Asia so dependent that it would be dragged into conflicts such as that in Vietnam. Later, the President added that the United States was determined to keep its treaty commitments, for example with Thailand under SEATO, but that it would encourage Asian countries to solve their own internal security problems. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 546, 549)

continue to talk in Paris and fight in Vietnam with one hand tied behind our back. U.S. opinion won't tolerate this. What did the Prime Minister think of that?

Thanom said that other government leaders understand our motivation and our desire to meet public opinion. In certain quarters in this part of the world and in Vietnam, there is fear that the U.S. may appease the enemy too much.

The Thai government understands that the Vietnamese forces are to be trained. Thus it is not overly worried by U.S. withdrawal. If the enemy does not respond public opinion in the U.S. will recognize that the U.S. has no other choice but to end the war satisfactorily. Thus, if after the withdrawal of another 50,000 troops, there is no response, the U.S. will have no choice but to take these measures.

The President turned to the views on Peking and Moscow in Indonesia, noting that some people there think we have a condominium with the USSR. Others see too much significance in the easing of restrictions with China. With respect to Moscow, a condominium is out of the question. Moscow's objectives are the same as Peking's but their tactics differ. With respect to China, we took some tactical steps. But we play an even-handed game—depending on how each country conducts its policy. There is no sign of a Chinese change in this regard. Until this happens, no major alterations are possible.

Thanom thanked the President for this insight into U.S. policy. He expressed deep faith in the policy of the U.S., which has never known defeat in its history and, he was sure, had no intention to do so now. The Prime Minister hoped that some measure of assurance could be extended to other countries which have troops in Vietnam.

The President asked for Thanom's view on Laos. What should be done, other than our sending troops?

Thanom passed on information he said was provided by the Laotian government: The Lao capital is encircled by enemy forces. Enemy forces are coming closer to Vientiane. Laotians have asked for help from Thailand. The Prime Minister is reluctant to do so—although willing to help Laos with volunteers. They must get material assistance from outside. If the need is urgent, the Laos government should talk to the U.S. Thanom is willing to send volunteers provided he gets U.S. support.

The President returned to his previous point: the Thai contingent in Vietnam is extremely helpful with U.S. public opinion. Though our withdrawals will continue on a major basis as South Vietnamese troops are trained, the President hopes the Thai troops will stay.

Thanom replied that his government has faith in its ability to resist pressures from MP's who want to withdraw forces from Vietnam and reserve them for combatting subversion here in Thailand. From

his standpoint the priority is clear: Thai forces should join in the struggle against Communist aggression in Vietnam. The presence of Thai forces there is justified. He will resist pressures to withdraw.

In response to the President's questions, Thanom said there are 45,000–50,000 Americans in Thailand. The majority conduct the air war in Vietnam and Laos. In addition, there are engineer troops.

The President asked if it would cause concern if we reduced some support forces related to bombing of North Vietnam, but not engineers working with Thai support forces.³ Thanom said it was up to the President.

The President asked if the troops are behaving themselves. Thanom replied there are very few incidents. He would like to make a suggestion, he said, with respect to B-52's. Laotians have indicated eagerness for their use. The Prime Minister recalled having asked our headquarters for B-52 strikes: he welcomes B-52's here. As for frictions, he has talked to the military authorities regarding arrangements for a Status of Forces agreement similar to Korea and Taiwan.

The President asked what he believes the Chinese Communists will do after Vietnam.

Thanom replied that it depends on the Vietnam settlement. If the settlement is satisfactory for the Communists, China may have less opportunity for pressure. But whatever the outcome, the countries of Southeast Asia will be subject to pressure. There is roadbuilding toward Thailand from China and then from Burma to Thailand. China has not given up the possibility of interference. They are using proxies, influencing attitudes by means of these roads.

The President noted the Chinese Communists have their own problems. The Sino-Soviet disagreement may produce its own premises. Thanom replied that the Chinese are not losing their own men—they are losing others.

The President stated that we must bring the war to an end in a way that contains a message to China and USSR to discourage other aggression of this type. This should have been done three years ago.

Thanat asked if the Soviets have shown any indication of helping. The President replied that they have on procedural points—and in some oral comments. But he has been disappointed. There is a chance the Soviets might find a way. Until Vietnam is out of the

³ Concerning the question of possible reductions in U.S. troop strength in Thailand, the President said in his July 25 background briefing that this would be discussed with the Thai in light of a general U.S. review of military and civilian personnel abroad. (*Ibid.*, p. 552)

way, we will not talk to them on other issues such as the Middle East, trade, etc.

Thanom noted that the USSR is not more liberal, as was shown in the case of Czechoslovakia. The President replied that we must avoid armed conflict. Self-survival requires that. On the other hand, Soviet policy is not soft. The Brezhnev doctrine completely discourages independence. We are therefore approaching them in a hardheaded way.

Thanom asked how about Romania. The President said he had visited Romania in 1967. He was invited by Ceausescu shortly after the inauguration. His visit is not an affront to Russia or a move toward China. What we are saying is that any country not threatening its neighbors can have good relations with us. It would be a mistake for the U.S. to recognize the Soviet doctrine of limited sovereignty. Some believe we should have an immediate conference with the Soviets and control of arms. We have not done so—not because the President doesn't want these things, but because U.S. power is essential to protect the free world. We will not tolerate Soviet superiority.

Thanom turned to the Middle East and asked about the balance of forces between Egypt and Israel. The President said that Israel is stronger than its neighbors not because of better equipment but because it is more capable, and will be for 3–5 years. The Soviets are continuing to send arms into Egypt and also for other Arab forces. In the long run, the balance may change because the Arabs have more people. Therefore we try to work for a peaceful solution and to prevent a change in the balance. Until there is a settlement, no change in the arms balance can be tolerated. Thanom drew a comparison between Israel and Thailand—a small country can resist outside pressure only with outside help. The President agreed this was a good analogy.

19. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State

Bangkok, August 12, 1969, 1123Z.

[Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 15–1 THAI. Secret; Limdis. 6 pages of source text not declassified.]

20. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, August 25, 1969.

SUBJECT

U.S.-Thai Relations

The following is a preliminary draft prepared by CIA analysts in response to a request for an objective unbiased view of current U.S./Thai relations. An updated and more in-depth analysis will be provided early next week.

The analysis makes the following points:

—Thai/U.S. relations have been severely strained in past weeks by the public dispute over the contingency plan.

—The Thais are looking for assurance that Secretary Laird's remarks² are not meant as U.S. renegeing on a commitment made by the Johnson Administration.

—Bangkok will almost certainly conclude that:

(1) Domestic forces tending to undermine the U.S. commitment are becoming stronger.

(2) The U.S. government may be powerless to uphold its commitments even if it chooses to do so.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret; Noforn; Nodis. A note to Kissinger on the first page in Nixon's hand reads: "Urgent. K—Give me a brief statement as to [how to] handle this issue if Fulbright raises it Tuesday A.M." According to an attached September 15 memorandum from Ken Cole to Kissinger, the President was referring to a September 16 meeting with Fulbright. A notation on the memorandum indicates it was of high priority.

² Secretary of Defense Laird had held a press conference on August 21 during which he elaborated on Rogers' theme that the present administration was neither involved in nor responsible for formulation of the contingency plan. Rogers had called it "an appendage that is a hangover from bygone days" in his August 20 news conference. (Department of State *Bulletin*, September 8, 1969, pp. 205–208) Speaking of the contingency plan, Laird said that it "does not have my approval and does not have the approval of the Administration." Respecting Rogers' allusion to consultation with Congress on use of troops, Laird said, "I don't agree with the plan, I don't agree with using American troops without proper consultation and advice by the Congress of the United States, and I can assure you that this Administration would follow the procedures that were outlined by the Secretary of State yesterday." A verbatim transcript of Laird's news conference is in Annex 11 of the Department of State Historical Office's study entitled "The Reexamination of the United States Commitment to Thailand, June 5–August 31, 1969," Research Project No. 978, November 1969. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II)

—The impact on U.S.-Thai interests will depend on assurances given the Thais and actions taken in Vietnam and Laos.

Intelligence Memorandum

U.S.-THAI RELATIONS

1. The events of the past several weeks have not only largely dissipated the good will and the sense of congruent interests that President Nixon engendered during his short visit in Bangkok, but they have also placed Thai-U.S. relations under the greatest strain since the Laotian crisis in 1961 and 1962. Much of the difficulty involves Thai sensitivity to being treated as something less than a full partner in the struggle for Southeast Asia, and displeasure that its contribution to the Vietnam effort has not been fully appreciated. But it would be a mistake to dismiss the current unpleasantness as nothing more than a display of the ephemeral of the Thai psychology. We are witnessing the surface manifestations of underlying problems that have plagued U.S.-Thai relations since the 1961 Laotian crisis, and which have grown worse as a consequence of the Vietnam war.

2. The principle cause of the current difficulties has been the public dispute over Project 22, the so-called Taksin Military Contingency Plan for the defense of the Mekong Valley. The Thai have been upset over the way the U.S. has managed the controversy. Caught in a cross-fire between the U.S. Senate and the ill-conceived remarks of Thai leaders regarding the juridical basis for the plan (Air Chief Marshal Dawee asserting at one point that the plan was a SEATO document and could not be shown to anybody without the consent of the SEATO partners), U.S. spokesmen have labored to set the record straight.³ In so doing, they have bruised Thai sensitivities. In a recent talk with Ambassador Unger, Foreign Minister Thanat made a special point of protesting what the Thai regard as the unseemly alacrity with which State Department spokesmen have challenged Thai statements on Taksin. The Thai not only regard coordination on the Taksin affair as insufficient, but they are also opposed to showing the plan to Senator Fulbright (we would guess that this was the real message that Dawee was trying to get across), and his Senate Foreign Relations colleagues.

Opposition on this score not only reflects Thai misconceptions of how the U.S. constitutional system works, but much more important, reflects their belief that Senator Fulbright is nothing less than a sworn enemy of Thailand. ("Why is it", Thanat has asked rhetorically, "that of all of the many military contingency plans, Fulbright has picked on

³ See Documents 14 and 15.

this one.") Turning the Taksin Plan over to the Senator then, is in Thai eyes, tantamount to giving the plan to the enemy. The fact that Senator Fulbright could pressure the Administration into showing him the document was a vivid—to the Thai at least—display of power on the part of those who are opposed to the U.S.-Thai alliance.

3. As upsetting as the Taksin imbroglio was up to this point, it still involved little more than strengthening the Thai belief that they had been once again misunderstood and pilloried for no other reason other than that they have been a strong supporter of U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. In order to get this monkey off their back, Thanat suggested to Ambassador Unger that the two countries publicly announce that they would soon open talks on reducing the number of U.S. military personnel based in Thailand. Thanat asserted that only in this way could Bangkok demonstrate that U.S. forces were in Thailand for the sole purpose of supporting the war in South Vietnam and that the Thai had no need nor desire for direct U.S. support in fighting their insurgency. Thanat argued that this would undercut the position of those elements in the U.S. who were warning against additional commitments to Thailand. It also seems likely that Thanat had other purposes in getting troop withdrawal talks. What better way to demonstrate to the U.S., the contribution Thailand has made to the war effort, and at the same time, that such support could not necessarily be taken for granted.

4. From the Thai point of view, the Taksin affair took a much more ominous turn when Secretary of Defense Laird made reference to the lack of support in the plan on the part of himself and President Nixon. Prime Minister Thanat lost no time in making it clear to Ambassador Unger that they regard the Secretary of Defense's statement not only as a disavowal of a joint contingency plan, but a renegeing on a commitment that has been made by the Johnson Administration. The Thai are clearly looking for some assurance that this is not what Secretary Laird or the government had in mind.

5. Even if such reassurances are forthcoming, the Taksin affair will probably leave a long-standing mark on U.S.-Thai relations.

6. How much Taksin effects U.S.-Thai interests will depend not only on what assurances we give the Thai, but also on what action we take with respect to Vietnam and, much more important, Laos. Vietnam is important to the Thai insofar as it is a bellwether of U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. Bangkok has been concerned over U.S. troop withdrawals, but once we made clear that the withdrawals would be something a good deal less than an indecent bug-out, Thai concern has centered on what they regard as their prerogatives as a troop contributor to the Vietnam war effort. They want the U.S. to truly consult with them before firm decisions are made on withdrawals. In the present

atmosphere, such consultations are likely to loom even larger in Thai thinking than they have in the past.

7. The question of Laos is much more difficult. For the Thai, Laos cuts a good deal closer to the bone than Vietnam, and Bangkok will take a long hard look at how the U.S. meets the current threat on the other side of the Mekong. Whether this becomes a major testing ground in the coming weeks and months depends, in the final analysis, on what the Communists do. The Taksin affair and its aftermath, however, will serve to further exaggerate the importance the Thai attach to the Laotian problem and the willingness of the U.S. to stabilize the situation there.

21. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, August 26, 1969.

SUBJECT

US Commitments to Thailand

I attach a summary of US commitments to Thailand and statements regarding the defense of Thailand (Tab A).² You may find this of use, given the current furor in the Senate. I would call your attention particularly to the Air Defense Operations Agreement described below.

In brief, these are the key points concerning our formal and Presidential commitments:

—SEATO obligates “each party” to the Treaty to “act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes” in the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret; Exdis. Sent for information. No drafting information appears on the memorandum. According to a handwritten notation, the memorandum was returned from the President on September 16.

² Attached at Tab A but not printed is a Background Paper that the Department's Executive Secretary Eliot forwarded to Kissinger under cover of an August 12 memorandum. It stated that while various bilateral agreements, including support of Thai troops fighting in South Vietnam and air defense agreements formalizing arrangements for defense against hostile aircraft, involved obligations on the part of the United States, “they do not extend our commitment to the defense of Thailand beyond that set forth in the SEATO treaty.”

event of an armed attack. We are obligated only to consult in the case of subversion, or of armed attack by others than Communists.

—The Rusk/Thanat communiqué of 1962 affirmed that our SEATO obligation is “individual as well as collective.” Secretary Rogers in May reaffirmed this interpretation of the SEATO Treaty.

—SEATO contingency planning is under the SEATO Military Planning Office, and covers most contingencies, including Communist insurgency in Thailand or Communist aggression against it. This planning is intended to effectuate our SEATO commitment.

—The Johnson–Thanom joint communiqué of May 9, 1968, included Thanom’s statement that “the Royal Thai Government regarded defeating the insurgency as a Thai responsibility to be carried out by its own forces.”

—You and your three predecessors have affirmed your intention to honor our SEATO (or “treaty”) obligations. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy spoke of “unswerving support in resisting Communist aggression and subversion.” You have spoken of US “support,” and have said that “the US will stand proudly with Thailand against those who might threaten it from abroad or from within.”

Project Taksin is a bilateral US/Thai military contingency plan to meet potential Communist moves in Laos. Its terms of reference provide specifically that it will be “implemented only upon mutual agreement and consent of both governments.”

We have specific bilateral arrangements with Thailand covering *atomic detection systems, radio research activities, and the logistic support of Thai troops in South Vietnam.* None of these involve US military commitments.

The USAF/RTAF Joint Use and Integrated Air Defense Operations Agreement. We have a technical agreement with Thailand governing detection of and protection against hostile aircraft. This involves elements of timing and decision-making which could, it might be argued, carry our commitment beyond the language of our SEATO commitment.

The Agreement states that the Thai Air Defense/Tactical Air Control System “has been integrated and incorporated into” the US Air Force’s Pacific Air Defense Network. It provides for the assignment of USAF personnel to units of the Thai system.

It provides that: “Hostile aircraft, including unidentified aircraft, will be destroyed when determined by the RTAF Air Operations Center and/or the USAF Tactical Air Command Center to pose a threat to forces and installations in Thailand . . . USAF rules (of engagement) will apply for all USAF fighter and interceptor aircraft.” The language does not distinguish between Thai and US “forces and installations” which will be protected by this Agreement.

The Agreement states, somewhat ambiguously, that: "The air defense of Thailand is a sovereign responsibility of the Government of Thailand which has been vested in the RTAF. United States Forces deployed to, and at the request of, the Government of Thailand, will assist in the Thailand Air Defense/Tactical Air Control System". It was perhaps this language which led Thai Air Chief Marshal Dawee to state publicly, shortly before the Agreement was formally signed, that US aircraft in Thailand could be called into action by the Prime Minister to defend Thailand.

Ambassador Unger transmitted this Agreement to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (at the latter's request), with a Note stating that the "Agreement will improve coordination between our respective air forces, in furtherance of our common commitments to the defense of Thailand under the Southeast Asia Defense Treaty." The reference to SEATO was thus explicit, though the phrase concerning "common commitments" was apparently new.

So far as I know, Senator Fulbright is not yet aware of this agreement. Senator Symington's investigating team (Messrs. Pincus and Paul) have listed this among the documents which they wish to receive. I have requested that State clear with the White House before replying to their request.

A copy of the Agreement with its covering Note is at Tab B.³

³ The Air Defense Operations Agreement is attached but not printed.

22. Memorandum From Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, August 28, 1969.

SUBJECT

U.S. Force Reductions in Thailand

I understand proposals to reduce U.S. strength in Thailand by 7,000 and 10,000 are under consideration.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret. Sent for information. Printed from an unsigned copy.

It is also my understanding that CINCPAC proposes to accomplish the reduction with the following withdrawals.

<i>7,000 man reduction</i>	<i>10,000 man reduction</i>
2 A-1 squadrons	Same as for 7,000, plus:
1 A-26 squadron	3 F-105 squadrons and related
2 EB-66 squadrons plus related support units	support units

These CINCPAC proposals raise important questions regarding the role of the remaining U.S. forces in Thailand. CINCPAC is proposing to take out virtually all of those forces best suited for missions over Laos (to assist the Laotian government and to bomb the Ho Chi Minh Trail), leaving in Thailand the forces best suited to bomb North Vietnam and clearly inferior for Laotian missions.

There are now 16 "fighter/attack" squadrons in Thailand. Twelve of these are high-performance jet squadrons (8 with F-4s; 4 with F-105s). Four are equipped with propeller-driven aircraft (3 with A-1s; one with A-26s).

Either CINCPAC proposal would remove all but one propeller squadron (which would remain primarily for search and rescue operations). According to available evidence on the comparative efficiency of these versus high performance jets, this would be a very poor allocation of our resources in Thailand.

Comparison of the effectiveness of jet aircraft and propeller-driven airplanes in attacking ground targets in Southeast Asia has shown that the prop planes are considerably more efficient than the jets. A recent study (August 1969) indicates that in Laos in 1968 propeller-driven aircraft were roughly twice as effective as jets in terms of targets destroyed per attack.

Prop-Jet Comparison of Targets Destroyed or
Damaged per 100 Attacks

<i>Target Type</i>	<i>Prop Planes</i>		<i>Jets</i>	
	<i>A-1</i>	<i>A-26</i>	<i>F-4</i>	<i>F-105</i>
Trucks	46.8	49.0	23.0	18.5
Truck Parks	3.4	5.2	2.5	1.9
Roads	53.6	55.0	25.9	23.3
Logistics Storage Areas	13.2	N/A	6.6	6.8
Air Defense Targets	12.6	12.9	8.3	12.7

Furthermore, the costs per year per squadron are substantially less for prop squadrons compared with jet squadrons.

Total Southeast Asia Operating Costs per
Squadron per Year

<i>Prop</i>		<i>Jet</i>	
<i>A-1</i>	<i>A-26</i>	<i>F-4</i>	<i>F-105</i>
\$41 m	\$30 m	\$56 m	\$61 m

The primary combat advantage of the prop aircraft is their ability to loiter, locate a target, and make multiple attacks on it. (Jets have a comparative advantage against sophisticated defenses, but these are not an important factor in Laos.) Prop aircraft also perform as well at night as during the day,² while jets are only half as efficient after dark. Most of the targets appear at night. One study has shown that the cost of destroying a target at night with a jet is 13 times greater than with a propeller aircraft. Finally, prop aircraft losses per target destroyed are about the same or lower than for jets.

Considering this evidence, it is hard to fathom CINCPAC's rationale for their proposed force cuts. An alternative proposal to take out three more jet squadrons instead of the A-1s and A-26s would provide more manpower reductions, considerably larger budgetary savings, and would have the least impact on the war effort. The disadvantage in doing so is that if bombing of North Vietnam were resumed jets would be preferable. Nevertheless, even an all jet redeployment would leave six squadrons of high-performance jets in Thailand, and if we decide to bomb North Vietnam again we can redeploy additional jet squadrons as necessary.

The proposal recommended by CINCPAC demonstrates again our inclination to attempt to suit the war to our equipment and technological preferences rather than the other way around. Our policies in this respect also serve to indicate to our allies that high-performance jets are better counter-insurgency aircraft than props, when in fact the reverse is true.

² It has been suggested that the reason the effectiveness of prop aircraft does not decline at night is that the enemy cannot make visual sightings at night, there is more truck traffic at night, and the enemy's visually targeted anti-aircraft weapons are less effective at night. These factors permit the low flying, slower prop aircraft to operate more effectively whereas the high-speed jet cannot operate at low altitudes at night without greatly increased risks. [Footnote in the source text.]

23. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, September 9, 1969, 0955Z.

12246. Please pass White House. Subject: Thai-US Contingency Planning.

1. The following background information describes the role played by bilateral planning in Thai-US relations over recent years. We have gone into this at some length because a full understanding of this role is important in assessing the impact the controversy over Project Taksin has had on the Thai and on their views of basic trends in US-Thai relations. We also believe this background of US-Thai planning may be useful in preparing for further Congressional scrutiny.² We will address in immediately following telegram the effects of the recent contingency planning controversy on US-Thai relations.³

2. Project 22 now called Project Taksin sprang from US and Thai concerns over Communist failure to observe the 1962 Geneva Accords and what appeared to be a growing threat to Thailand developing through Laos. In July 1965 reacting to this Thai concern, the DCM called on Prime Minister Sarit under instructions to say "we intend to do whatever is necessary to meet the obligations of the US in Southeast Asia. The United States will not sit idly by and allow the Communists to become entrenched on the borders of Thailand. The United States considers the Communist advance in Laos as a threat to United States security as well as to that of Thailand. As we have publicly confirmed in the Rusk-Thanat communiqué, "the United States considers Thailand's integrity and independence as vital to its own." (Bangkok 79, 7/15/63)⁴ A generalized version of this appeared in the Bangkok newspapers.

3. Two months later Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson consulted in Bangkok with Prime Minister

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box TS 64, Memoranda to the President, 1969 September. Top Secret; Priority; Exdis. Received at 1056Z. Repeated to SECDEF, JCS, and CINCPAC.

² Kissinger forwarded the telegram to the President under a September 26 covering memorandum in which he said that "Project Taksin itself originated as a Democratic effort to convince the Thai that we meant business when we said that we would do anything necessary to defend the Mekong, including the re-introduction of American troops." Kissinger also summarized that the "history of negotiations shows clearly that the plans were developed at our initiative more than that of the Thai." Attached but not printed.

³ Dated September 9; not printed. (DEF 1 THAI-US)

⁴ See *Foreign Relations*, 1961-1963, vol. XXIII, Document 479, footnote 1.

Sarit, Foreign Minister Thanat and others. When Secretary Johnson suggested it might be a good idea to return US combat troops to Thailand if the PL continued their advance, the Thai said that bringing troops to Thailand without intending to do more than in 1962 would not be good enough; if troops were to come the US should give a clear indication that they would move further if necessary.

4. On May 30, 1964, with continued deterioration in Laos, Secretary Rusk called on PM Thanom. When asked what the United States would do if the Communists continued their advances, the Secretary replied that a specific concrete answer would have to come from the President and that one would be forthcoming shortly. He added, however, that there was no limit to what the US would do if necessary to defend Thailand. The Prime Minister said the Thai were undertaking defense measures and might be compelled to cross the Mekong. He expected that if such steps were necessary the US and Thailand would act together. The Secretary said he was encouraged by this Thai planning and suggested the desirability of advance consultation. (Secto 27 5/30/64)⁵

5. At a June 1964 high-level US planning meeting in Honolulu attended by the Secretaries McNamara and Rusk it was decided that the US should request urgent consultations with the RTG regarding measures to be taken in the event of a PL drive towards the Mekong. On June 8, 1964, Ambassador Martin called on Thanom, reviewed the Honolulu discussions, and said he was convinced of the "complete firmness of the US decision to do whatever was necessary to prevent Communist domination in Southeast Asia." The Ambassador then referred to Rusk's discussions in May and said that he had been instructed that the US desired to consult urgently about measures to be taken. He said that "our willingness to engage with the Thai in immediate planning was further evidence of the complete seriousness of our intentions." He also pointed to the prepositioning of military equipment at Korat as further proof. (Bangkok 2106 6/8/64)⁶

6. On June 18, 1964, the first meeting took place with Dawee chairing the Thai side and with representatives from CINCPAC leading the US delegation. Dawee said he spoke for the Prime Minister. Thai policy was that they would hope to fight side-by-side with the United States, but would require substantial US logistical support should action be necessary against Communist advances in Laos. General Easterbrook, Chief, JUSMAG emphasized that this conference was a follow-on of the discussions held between Secretary Rusk and the

⁵ Secto 27 is printed *ibid.*, 1964–1968, vol. XXVII, Document 272.

⁶ Not printed. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, DEF 1 THAI-US)

Prime Minister. General Milton from CINCPAC said that he understood that Dawee was speaking for the Prime Minister but he was in a position only to transmit his views to CINCPAC and the JCS. Dawee said he understood how the United States Government works.

7. The US side pressed for Thai views on just what Communist acts would be required to trigger joint Thai-US actions. The Thai gave no definite answer but indicated that the situation would have to be judged against existing circumstances. Dawee also said that he assumed that this plan involving possible movement of forces to Laos would be implemented with the approval of the RLG but that we should be prepared to move without it.

8. In a letter to the Prime Minister from President Johnson transmitted on June 27, 1964,⁷ the President said "We regard Communist advances in Laos as a threat to the security of the United States as well as to that of Thailand. In accordance with this concept, I have authorized Ambassador Martin to open consultations with you looking toward joint Thai-US military planning of measures to be taken in the event of a Communist drive towards the borders of Thailand. I understand joint planning meetings will begin in Bangkok this week. We must be prepared to act promptly and effectively to check such a drive as necessary."

9. On August 11, 1964, State concurred in the terms of reference (TOR) in a letter from Bundy to Solbert⁸ which said "We see the possibility of real political as well as military advantages arising from joint planning with the Thai and we hope that it can begin soon."

10. The TOR called for planning to provide for the defense of Thailand to include military operations to hold the Mekong Valley, its principal cities, and its military facilities (in Laos as well as Thailand). The threat is defined as Communist operations in Laos as more than subversion but less than overt aggression. The defense of Thailand could require any of a combination of the following: definitive and punitive actions in the event of Communist border incursion into Thailand; counter-insurgency actions against Communist forces in Laos in the event of Communist border incursion into Thailand; counter-insurgency actions against Communist forces in Laos in the event of an insurgency in Thailand; and interdiction operations against North Viet-Nam. The TOR also stated that joint Thai-US consultations could be undertaken at any time to determine what portions of the plan should be implemented.

11. On October 26, 1964, the basic draft force level plan was submitted to the "national authorities" for approval. On August 23, 1965,

⁷ Dated June 18, 1964; the letter is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1964-1968*, vol. XXVII, Document 277.

⁸ Not found.

the final force level plan was promulgated by Prime Minister Thanom at MOD. In November of 1965 a draft field force plan was submitted to the national authorities and on December 23, 1966 the final field force plan was promulgated by Thanom at MOD.

12. At the signing of the field force plan by Thanom and General Stilwell on December 23, 1966, Amb. Martin noted he was participating “on behalf of and as the personal representative of the President of the United States.” He traced the plan’s beginning at the President’s behest. He said the plan did not really deepen American determination to do whatever is necessary to carry out American commitments to insure the defense of Thailand and that “as the President pointed out in his recent visit to Thailand that commitment is full and complete and as the President reiterated then ‘America keeps its word.’” Ambassador Martin said, however, “that the act witnessed today does translate into effective operational terms the modalities of carrying out our joint commitments should events dictate that our respective governments would authorize the implementation of the plan. As such it is of tremendous political importance in this translation into effective operational planning for the use of our combined resources.” He then coupled the plan with the recent approval of SEATO Plan 8 and concluded by saying that he had been authorized by the President “to convey to your Excellency his personal gratification and congratulations on the completion of this exercise.” (A-498, 12/28/66)⁹

13. On January 5, 1966, Ambassador Martin sent a letter to PM Thanom. The PM was under criticism from Praphas and Thanat to the effect that recent American construction projects and deployments had no relevance to Thailand’s security needs and that America was “occupying” Thailand. To help the PM fend this off the letter linked these construction projects to existing agreements and to both SEATO and Project 22 contingency planning.

14. In June 1967, the draft air, naval and unconventional warfare component plans of the project were approved in draft form and in October of the same year the draft ground component plan was approved by MACT.

15. In early 1968 a top secret working paper which gave a fairly clear picture of the plan disappeared from the trunk of a car belonging to a Thai member of the Project 22 working group. We do not know whether or not the plan fell into unfriendly hands. Following this the name of the exercise was changed from Project 22 to Project Taksin.

Unger

⁹ Not printed. (DEF 1 THAI-US)

24. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, September 15, 1969.

SUBJECTTalking Points for Your Use with Senator Fulbright at the Leadership Meeting, September 15²

At the Leadership Meeting on September 15 it is possible that Senator Fulbright will want to speak to you about the US role in Thailand. Although he has said that his differences with Secretary Laird over release of the Project Taksin plan (a contingency plan covering joint US-Thai operations to defend Thailand against aggression under the more general provisions of the SEATO Treaty) have now been eliminated, he may still wish to have a copy of this document turned over to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He may also reiterate the line which he has taken publicly to the effect that Project Taksin is in effect an automatic commitment by the US to use its forces to fight in Thailand.

Your Recommended Position

—The US commitment to Thailand exists wholly in the context of the SEATO Treaty, which in the event of aggression by an armed attack on any of its parties calls on them to act to meet the common danger in accordance with their constitutional procedures. In the case of subversion, all that the parties undertake to do is to consult. The Rusk–Thanat Declaration of 1962 adds that our obligations are individual as well as collective but we regard this as simply a valid re-statement of the responsibilities set forth in the SEATO Treaty.

—Project Taksin represents nothing more than a contingency plan undertaken within the framework of the SEATO Treaty. This type of contingency planning is a normal military function. The plan cannot be put into effect without the specific approval of both the Thai and US Governments, and emphatically does not automatically commit US troops to fight in Thailand.

—The US SEATO commitment to Thailand is a firm one, however, and affects the entire political relationship between our two countries. You have said, and you wish to reiterate, that the US will live up to commitments of this nature.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II. Secret.

² Holdridge indicated in a September 15 memorandum to Kissinger that he had drafted the talking points for the President "in the event that Senator Fulbright uses the Leadership Meeting" to bring up his "reservations about the US role in Thailand."

—You have also stated that our commitment does not extend to using US forces to help fight internal subversion. Our role is limited to providing military equipment and economic assistance where needed. The Thai understand this, and have publicly said that they do not want US troops to assist them in dealing with their insurgency.

—Demonstrating the Thai attitude toward the presence of US troops in Thailand, the Thai Government has encouraged us to reduce the level of US forces in Thailand if not needed for Vietnam. It understands that these troops are present in connection with the Vietnam war, and can be withdrawn as their need diminishes.

—You consider that the Thai deserve a great deal of credit for their staunchness as a US ally. Despite their tradition of not becoming identified with any great power, they joined with us as long ago as 1950 to help resist aggression in Korea, they have cooperated with us fully in regional and world affairs, and they have sent troops to fight in Vietnam in recognition of the issues involved there. But they are a very sensitive Asian people, and feel that somehow their contributions are overlooked or misunderstood. You personally believe that it is important to reassure them on this score.

—(*If asked*) Concerning release of the Project Taksin plan, you understand that arrangements have been worked out whereby the document is available at the Department of Defense for scrutiny by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.³ You hope that this arrangement is satisfactory. To do more would of course raise a Constitutional question over executive privilege and separation of powers, and you believe that this issue deserves further study.

³ A notation next to this sentence in Nixon's handwriting reads: "H.K. Does this make sense? I question revealing *any* contingency plan. 9-15-69"

25. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Laird to President Nixon¹

Washington, September 15, 1969.

SUBJECT

Reduction in Thailand

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II. Top Secret.

As you know, Ambassador Unger and Major General Seith in Bangkok have just completed a negotiation with the Royal Thai Government for a reduction of 6,000 military personnel in Thailand. All aspects of the reduction have been settled by normal State/Defense/JCS/NSC staff discussion with the exception of the precise timing of the withdrawals. Announcement of this reduction has been deferred temporarily, with the upcoming discussion between Secretary Rogers and Foreign Minister Thanat on September 20 at the TCC meeting in New York² the most likely time for release. The purpose of this memorandum is to secure your decision on a date for the completion of the first 6,000 withdrawal. I recommend that December 31, 1969, be adopted as the deadline.

Advantages

- The budget effect will be greater during this fiscal year.
- It might be a useful item to include in your State of the Union Message and my posture statement next year.

Disadvantages

- It may leave us open to a charge of bad faith by the Royal Thai Government, inasmuch as Ambassador Unger provided the Thai with a tentative timetable indicating that this withdrawal will not be completed until about 1 September 1970.

Note: The schedule given to the Royal Thai Government was in terms of effective date of cessation of functions and packing up time was added. Assuming the maximum packing time given (60 days) in all cases, the Royal Thai Government would see the schedule about as follows:

<i>Departure Date</i>	<i>Cumulative Total</i>
December 1, 1969	950
March 1, 1970	1,800
June 1, 1970	3,900
September 1, 1970	6,000

- Phasing out the 18 A-1s, 16 A-26s and 12 U-10s included in the package in December 1969 rather than in June and September 1970 may degrade the air support to the Laotian Forces during much of the next Dry Season enemy offensive (November to May) by about 10%.

—The Thai and other Southeast Asia nations might assess this as a decision to “cut and run”.

² See Document 28.

Given all of the above, I believe on balance that the domestic advantages outweigh the Southeast Asia-related disadvantages. Thus, I recommend that December 31, 1969, be established as the completion date now so that the field may begin the necessary planning.

Melvin R. Laird

26. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, September 16, 1969, 0910Z.

12592. Ref: A. State 156149, B. State 156407, C. State 156733, D. Bangkok 11910, E. State 156752.²

1. This morning I secured appointment with Prime Minister before he opened cabinet meeting and carried out instructions contained ref A. The Prime Minister had with him General Sawaeng and Deputy Foreign Minister Chitti acting in place of Thanat.

2. I first conveyed to Prime Minister text of announcement³ as contained ref A, as amended by ref B. Unfortunately, ref C arrived after I had departed from Embassy; to say nothing of ref E. I explained that short advance notice unavoidable because of inadvertent revelation from Saigon which Thais had all already read in morning newspapers here. I also related this announcement to our earlier discussions about troop replacement in Vietnam (latest of which reported ref D).

3. Prime Minister's first question was to ask for more information on reference to "offer of withdrawal of US and allied forces over 12 month period." I pointed out that this and other points made in same context all refer to efforts already made which are here being reiterated and I recalled that some time ago we had specifically offered to make such a withdrawal if accompanied by responsive action by other side.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 27 VIET S. Secret; Immediate.

² Telegrams 156149, 156407, and 156733 to Bangkok, all September 16. (Ibid., POL 27–3 VIET S) Telegram 11910 from Bangkok, September 2. (Ibid., POL 7 THAI) Telegram 156752 to Bangkok, September 16. (Ibid., POL 27–3 VIET S)

³ The final text of the President's announcement on troop withdrawals from Vietnam was transmitted in telegram 156895 to Paris, September 16. (Ibid., POL 27 VIET S)

4. Prime Minister then pointed out that total projected US withdrawal by December 15 will amount to more than ten percent of US forces in Vietnam. In view of this he considered it may be necessary to reduce Thai contingent in Vietnam and said that he would be discussing this with President Thieu when latter makes anticipated visit to Thailand in latter part of October. Marshal Thanom added that people here will feel that if US can make such a reduction, Thailand should also be able to do so. I acknowledged this and fact that Prime Minister had discussed this with President Nixon during July visit, but I also received his confirmation that he was speaking only of a reduction and not a total withdrawal of Thai forces from South Vietnam. I emphasized the importance the USG attaches to the continued presence of other allied forces in South Vietnam.

5. Marshal Thanom then inquired whether we will in fact go through with the reduction of 40,500 additional men if there is no improvement in the military situation. I said I believed we would since the reduction was based, as far as I could tell, primarily on the enlarged capacity of the ARVN to carry the load, thus permitting South Vietnamese to replace American manpower. I added that our carrying through of the projected reduction might have to be reconsidered, on the other hand, if the military situation should seriously worsen.

6. The Prime Minister asked whether the projected reduction was based on any indication of a greater willingness on the part of Hanoi to negotiate. I replied that I was not aware of any improvement in that quarter and reiterated my interpretation of Washington's action as being based above all on the improved capacity of South Vietnam to carry additional military responsibility. I added, however, that it may also have been thought that the projected announcement could possibly provide a helpful influence on the course of policy discussions which may now be taking place in Hanoi following the death of Ho Chi Minh. Marshal Thanom asked for any information I could give him about who may be assuming leadership in Hanoi but I told him I had no useful information on this subject beyond identifying the four well-known figures generally assumed to be the leaders principally in charge there today.

7. The Prime Minister made no further inquiries about the announcement but did go on to make some observation which he said he had also discussed with President Nixon during the July visit. Thanom said that here in Thailand and around the world people have noticed a basic change in American actions. In World Wars I and II there was determination to fight for the achievement of military victory. This has now changed as illustrated by our actions in Korea and Vietnam where the US appears to have lost this determination and is prepared to settle for something less. I said that the important thing to keep in mind was the objective which, both in Korea and South Viet-

nam, has been to help a free nation to preserve its independence; this was achieved in Korea where there is now a thriving and prosperous Republic of Korea and, I was persuaded this would also be achieved in Vietnam. The Prime Minister did not dispute this except to say that in the Korean case we had expelled the Communists from South Korea by military action which has not been done in South Vietnam. I replied that while this was true today the situation at the present time was vastly improved over that of 1965 when the collapse of South Vietnam seemed a real danger and when American forces were introduced. Now the Communists know they cannot win a military victory. I said again I was persuaded that ultimately a settlement would be reached which would preserve for the people of South Vietnam their independence and right to decide their own fate. On Thanom's general point I added only that there was a new element on the international scene since the days of World Wars I and II, namely the reality of nuclear war and its dangers for all of humanity; the US must take this into full account in its actions.

8. *Comment:* I would naturally have much preferred to have given the Prime Minister more advance notice of the announcement. Thai negative feelings on this score were, of course, heightened by Ky's leak in Saigon. I also would have been in a better position to discuss the announcement and Washington's thinking and intentions intelligently if I had either been provided with some background at this time or been kept currently informed as the talks in Paris and the deliberations in Washington proceeded.

Unger

27. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, September 18, 1969, 4 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Thai

Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman

Ambassador-designate Sunthorn Hongladarom

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL THAI–US. Secret. Drafted by Dexter (EA/TB) and approved by Kissinger on October 6. The meeting was held at the Waldorf Towers. This conversation was also reported in telegram 160368 to Bangkok, September 19. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II)

United States
The President
Secretary Rogers
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Mr. John B. Dexter, Country Director

Highlights

—President deplored Senate and press statements regarding U.S. commitments to Thailand, contingency planning, etc.

—Assured Thanat U.S. will keep commitments under SEATO to help defend against external aggression and will continue help Thai strengthen capability to defeat internal insurgency.

—Advised that RTG should not be too disturbed about unfavorable Senatorial and press statements but should discuss problems with USG.

—Reassured Thanat that USG not disavowing controversial contingency plan, which is necessary and remains valid for implementation in the appropriate contingency if so decided by two governments.

—Re U.S. troops in Thailand, President and Secretary noted false impression created by critics to effect these troops there to protect Thailand.

—Secretary referred to Thanat's talks with Ambassador Unger re troop withdrawals and said he understood RTG wanted gradual withdrawal. President and Secretary both told Thanat we wished withdrawal schedule to follow Thai wishes.

—Thanat said RTG not misled by Senate and press criticism but saw it as dangerous to both U.S. and Thailand.

—Thanat said his request for U.S. troop withdrawal was tactic to reveal truth about purpose U.S. troops in Thailand and relieve U.S. domestic pressures. Intent was not to drive U.S. troops out.

—Responding President's question, Thanat said he foresaw no immediate change in North Vietnamese policy following Ho's death and believed current U.S. policy correct.

—Thanat concurred in troop withdrawals from Viet-Nam as politically necessary but noted importance of preparing ARVN to take over.

—Thanat said Prime Minister asked him reaffirm assurance that RTG would not call on U.S. to help fight insurgency, though it did want U.S. to maintain current level of aid to support Thai counterinsurgency.

—In response President's request, Thanat indicated RTG concerned over Laos and would keep U.S. informed of its appraisal of situation.

Details

After introductory remarks, the President told Thanat he was glad to have this private talk because he had been disturbed over the effect

on Thailand of recent Senatorial and press statements concerning our commitments to Thailand, contingency planning, etc. These statements, he said, might cause some Thai to think the United States was going to renege on its commitments and, worse still, seemed to reflect use of Thailand as a “whipping boy” in U.S. domestic politics. Also, he said, these were inconsistent with what he, the President, had told the Thai personally. He wanted Thanat to know that because the Thai had stood with us in the past, the United States would not let them down now. We will keep our treaty commitments. He commented that the fate of Thailand was to a large extent what the Vietnam war was all about.

The President explained that in the Senate and in other circles in the United States there were many who wanted the United States to pull out of all of its overseas commitments. For them, Thailand was merely a convenient target even though most of them did not understand anything about Thailand itself. The President then urged Thanat, whenever any public “flare-ups” of this sort should occur in the United States, to check with Ambassador Unger, with the Secretary or with the President to determine the facts. If any real differences should develop between us, he said, the RTG will not learn about them first from the press.

Referring to the controversy over the contingency plan, the President commented that such planning was obviously necessary and added that we would not disclose it to anyone who ought not to see it. The Secretary then called attention to the fact that, before joint planning with Thailand had come under Senatorial fire, there had been an earlier controversy regarding military planning with Spain. This showed that Thailand itself was not the objective of the critics. He added that there had been some misunderstanding about the United States position on the contingency plan and that, specifically, some remarks of Secretary Laird’s taken out of context had been misinterpreted. When Secretary Laird characterized the plan as not having been approved, he meant simply that its implementation had not been approved; implementation would not, of course, be considered unless the appropriate contingency should arise.

The President then interjected to say that more important than any plan is the United States commitment. He said again, with emphasis, that the United States would help to resist external aggression against Thailand and would support Thai efforts to counter internal insurgency and subversion. He asked that this be conveyed to the RTG (the President then commented to Secretary Rogers that the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister had stood with the United States and were friends “whom we did not like to see kicked around”). The Secretary said there had been distorted statements in the press to the effect that United States troops were in Thailand to protect Thailand and this was false. He then referred to Thanat’s talks with Ambassador Unger on troop

withdrawal and said we wanted to follow Thai views on the timing which, he understood, the RTG wanted to be gradual. The President commented jokingly that, in light of Senatorial attacks on our troop presence in Thailand, those troops could stay as far as he was concerned "till hell freezes over." He said the Thai should let us know what they wanted in this regard and we would do it.

Thanat said he was grateful for the President's assurances and would pass them to his Government. The RTG was not misled by the U.S. press but was concerned that the publicity campaign and political controversy were dangerous to both U.S. and Thai interests. He feared the U.S. public was being deceived about the role of U.S. troops in Thailand and the effect would be to drive a wedge between the United States and Thailand. He said he had discussed the subject before a correspondents' gathering in Thailand following conversations he had with Mr. Shakespeare, USIA Director, and Ambassador Unger. As he had told them, his purpose in calling for withdrawal of U.S. troops was not to drive them out but to bring the truth to the attention of the U.S. public and the world. He added that he thought that this tactic had succeeded. The President concurred.

The President said we understood the RTG position regarding our troops and advised that the RTG could help in minimizing harm done by unwarranted public criticism by keeping U.S. press and Congressional comments in perspective. He assured him again that, if any real troubles or differences should develop between us, Ambassador Unger, the Secretary and the President would be certain to discuss them.

The President then asked Thanat's views on the new situation in North Viet-Nam following Ho Chi Minh's death. He wondered if Thanat anticipated that the new leaders would be more intransigent or less or about the same. Thanat said he expected that North Viet-Nam's policy would continue about the same for some time. He said the new leadership has not made up its mind yet and would require time to determine any new course of action. In the meanwhile, its eyes and ears would be directed at U.S. public opinion.

In response to the President's question as to what the United States should be doing on Viet-Nam, the Foreign Minister answered that currently the United States policy is in general accord with Thai views. He said they realize that the United States must withdraw troops to ease domestic pressures and he drew attention to the fact that the RTG had never objected to announced troop withdrawals. He cautioned, however, that we must make sure that the South Vietnamese are trained and equipped to take over the combat burden as U.S. troops leave.

Thanat then said the Prime Minister had asked him to reaffirm to the President that the RTG would not call upon the United States to help fight its insurgency. The RTG only hopes the United States would

continue helping the RTG in its own efforts. He asked that there be no reduction in U.S. assistance.

The President inquired about Thai concern over Laos and whether the Thai were more or less optimistic now than they have been in the past. The Foreign Minister said recent developments have been favorable though the situation is of continuing concern. In response to a question from the President about the strength of the North Vietnamese forces in Laos, the Foreign Minister commented that they were not so powerful as they seemed but were reckless with human lives. The President concluded by urging Thanat to keep us closely informed of Thai views of Lao developments.

28. Telegram From Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State¹

New York, September 24, 1969, 2030Z.

Secto 44/3193. Subj: Secretary's Bilateral with Thai ForMin, Sept 23.

1. Following summary based on uncleared memcon, noform and FYI only subject to revision upon review:

2. Secretary began substantive conversation by asking if ForMin Thanat would agree to a slight alteration in troop reduction scheduled. He said we would like to complete draw down by July 1 to meet our fiscal year.² ForMin agreed to July 1 date, saying RTG would leave scheduling to us. Secretary said he understood troop reduction announcement wording was agreed³ and we would like simultaneous

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL THAI-US. Secret; Priority. Repeated to Bangkok.

² In a September 19 memorandum to the President, Kissinger recommended approval of the withdrawal of the 6,000 troops by July 1, 1970, noting that, at his request, the Departments of State and Defense had compromised their divergent views. Laird had wanted the troops out by December 31, 1969, while State "as a result of a working level agreement with the Thais in Bangkok" had the withdrawal projected to September 1970. Kissinger noted that "State believes this revised schedule will be readily accepted by the Thais and Mel agrees providing you approve." Nixon checked and initialed his approval on September 23. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box TS 64, Memoranda to the President, 1969–74, Feb. 1969–Feb. 1970. Another copy is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II)

³ The text of the agreed joint announcement is in telegram 164797 to Bangkok, September 27. (Ibid.)

announcement in Washington and Bangkok, leaving handling Bangkok release to RTG. Thanat said his govt would follow US lead. Secretary responded that he would discuss exact timing with President and be in touch with ForMin.

3. Secretary asked Thai appraisal prospects success Thanat's ICJ candidacy and asked what we could do. After saying opposition spreading rumors US would prefer his withdrawal in order retain services as ForMin, Thanat said Colombian vote crucial. Amb Yost noted we had spoken to Colombians and received reply they committed to Indian candidate. Thanat raised possibility Colombia could vote for both Indian and himself. Amb Yost said we would check it out. It was agreed that work in SC was the most important, Amb Yost informed Thai that Finns presently studying issue. Secretary volunteered to discuss Thanat's candidacy with Colombian ForMin at LA dinner this evening and recommend vote for Thanat and Indian. Amb Anand said Thanat now had 7 votes for SC but 8 needed and 9 better.

4. Secretary turned to present attack on US administration in Washington on Laos. Thanat asked what we proposed to do. Secretary said we have time to prepare and he would have better fix following his return from Washington later this week. Thanat said in his view all part of same problem. It first focused on Thailand, now shifted to Laos, including charge US backing Lao units and 5,000 Thai troops in Laos, this last charge ridiculous. He regretted lack press coverage Lao reps GA address including fact 40,000 North Vietnamese troops now in Laos. Thanat said he was going to Washington Oct 3 to address Institute Foreign Affairs and, if Secretary agreeable, would hit North Vietnamese troop figures and fact no regular Thai army troops now in Laos. Secretary agreed that this approach would be helpful and expressed wish to see Thanat in Washington.

5. Thanat asked about results Gromyko dinner previous evening. In particular, anything new on Vietnam. Secretary replied he had not raised matter since we had previously made clear our willingness accept Russian initiatives to aid in settling Vietnam conflict. He said we do not want to appear overeager or panicky, which we are not. As result, neither Vietnam or China discussed. Secretary offered his opinion that Russians not settled on many aspects of foreign policy and these matters pretty much up in air. Only positive aspect was tone of meeting. Sov proposals on European security conference cloudy, only wished large conference to ease tension. ForMin and Secretary agreed that there was equally little substance in Asian security proposal. ForMin mentioned Sov overtures re Aeroflot service and Secretary observed that they appear willing only supply good will but no help.

6. ForMin said he supported US gestures to gain settlement but wished reaffirm need for US to maintain strong position. If such position

held, he felt confident something would develop. Secretary reiterated that it was firm intention President maintain firm position on Southeast Asia.

7. ForMin asked if it would be possible for him to have more advanced consultation on US troop replacement. Secretary replied we will of course consult and asked if he were referring to B-52 36-hour pause or cessation B-52 action. He assured Thanat that we had no intention cease B-52 activities. Secretary then outlined our hope for evenly paced troop withdrawal, discussed problem of leaks which reduce President's flexibility, and undertook to give Thai more advanced notice. He said we expect to consider this problem again in mid-Nov.

8. Secretary asked if RTG considering troop reduction in Vietnam. ForMin replied not without full consultation with Vietnam allies and not unless reduction would not affect SVN war effort. In response to Secretary's suggestion that Thai need troops for internal use, Thanat replied that RTG might possibly require them in northeast.

9. ForMin then asked about effect of Cooper amendment. Secretary replied it intended prevent use of US ground forces in undeclared war and would not affect US commitments under SEATO. In response to ForMin's question re Chinese invasion, Secretary said that if Chinese attacked, SEATO obligation would become operative. Secretary went on to say concern was mainly over possible use US ground forces in Laos. He said this was a one-year amendment on an appropriation bill and he would get exact wording and discuss with Thanat in Washington. ForMin asked if it were not similar to Tonkin Gulf Resolution and Secretary replied negatively and repeated previous explanation. Secretary promised to get exact amendment wording and give a memo on subject to Thanat in Washington.

10. Tone of meeting very cordial and Thanat appeared pleased with answers to points raised.

Rogers

29. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, October 20, 1969.

SUBJECT

Washington Special Action Group's Recommendations for Providing Military Assistance to Laos

The Washington Special Action Group has developed a plan for providing military assistance to the Lao Government forces.² This plan lists actions which are already under way, and also contains agreed recommendations on further actions for your approval. The actions already taken include providing the regular and irregular Lao Government forces with M-16s and more artillery, giving the Air Force additional T-28s, improving and maintaining US aerial reconnaissance capability and tactical air operations, increasing Thai training and support of the Lao forces, and supporting political moves by Prince Souvanna Phouma to improve his posture as a genuine neutralist.

Actions for which your approval is requested are:³

1. Working out with our Embassies in Vientiane and Bangkok the introduction of a small Thai fire-control element into Laos to assist Meo

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-071, WSAG Meeting 10/6/69 Laos. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. Drafted by Holdridge. According to a handwritten and stamped notation, the memorandum was returned from the President on October 22.

² The record of the October 6 WSAG meeting, and attached documents, are in *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, vol. VI, Document 131. The minutes of this meeting also mention two other items related to Thailand: T-28 aircraft and 155 mm. howitzers. U. Alexis Johnson "brought up the matter of T-28 aircraft for the RLAF and the Thais, stating that the provision of additional aircraft is a high priority action. Kissinger was strong on the point that T-28s should not be taken from the Thais to be given to the RLAF. Vice Admiral Nels C. Johnson agreed," and reported that the JCS would probably recommend getting 22 aircraft from the VNAF and giving them to the RLAF. There followed a lengthy discussion of artillery support. It was reported that Thai Prime Minister Thanom had recommended introducing a Thai artillery unit equipped with 155s into Laos. It was noted that at "the present time Thai volunteers are training the Meo in the use of 155s. This gun is not particularly suited for operations in Laos. Moving them about from mountain to mountain by helicopter is an awkward task. Nevertheless, field recommendations favor introduction of Thai 155s with a combat defense force of about 300 troops. CINCPAC recommends a return of the Sierra Romeo 8 package to train the Meo, and then move it back out of country." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-071, WSAG Meeting 10/6/69 Laos.

³ The President initialed his approval of all recommendations. In an October 23 memorandum, Kissinger directed the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence to implement the five approved recommendations. Kissinger noted that he "would appreciate regular reports on the progress which is being made to implement the President's directive." (Ibid.)

gun crews, phasing the Thai out when Meo have been adequately trained to replace them. The assumption is that immediate reintroduction of the full Thai artillery battery which was withdrawn earlier (“Sierra Romeo VIII”) might reveal the Thai presence and leave Thailand vulnerable to charges of violating the 1962 Geneva Accords.

2. Continue studying with Embassies Vientiane and Bangkok the possible utilization of “Sierra Romeo VIII” elsewhere in Laos where it can be both effective and not readily visible or vulnerable. Defense believes that this battery is a useful asset; Ambassador Unger wants it to show the Thai that US interests continue in maintaining a military balance in Laos.

3. Consider via our Ambassadors in Bangkok and Vientiane giving specialized and intensive training to Thai forces for possible future operations against the North Vietnamese in Laos. Although the Thai forces would not necessarily be committed, their extra capabilities would be available in the event that their help becomes needed.

4. Once a North Vietnamese offensive begins and suitable targets are identified, implementing B-52 reconnaissance to develop strike information and possibly to give Hanoi a signal. This action would be withheld for the present, however, to give us an opportunity to study countermeasures for dealing with the risks involved and to provide for necessary advanced planning.

5. If an enemy offensive assumes a size indicating an intention of going beyond the previous pattern of attacks, giving commanders in the field authority to increase manned tactical reconnaissance activities over North Vietnam and the Lao border area below 19 degrees north and initiate tactical reconnaissance in the border area above 19 degrees north. Such activity would enhance intelligence collection capability, provide target data for possible future actions, serve as a signal to the DRV that we might bomb portions of North Vietnam, and possibly cause the DRV to disperse supplies and reconsider plans for an offensive.

30. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 30, 1969.

SUBJECT

Symington Subcommittee Hearings

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign:

Sunthorn Hongladarom, Thai Ambassador to the U.S.

United States:

U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

John B. Dexter, Country Director, Thailand/Burma

Under Secretary Johnson opened the conversation by referring to our current concern about the Symington Subcommittee hearings.² He informed the Ambassador confidentially that Ambassador Unger was returning to Washington shortly to testify before the Subcommittee on Thailand. He assured Sunthorn that we would do all we could to protect Thailand's interests in connection with public release of testimony but outlined the problems involved and warned that we could give no guarantee that the Subcommittee would not eventually publish information that we and the RTG would prefer to keep confidential. The Ambassador expressed appreciation and urged that every effort be made.

The Under Secretary noted that Senator Fulbright and the Symington Subcommittee were motivated largely by fear that in Laos and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 17 THAI-US. Confidential. Drafted by Dexter, approved by Green, and approved in J on December 1. The memorandum is part 1 of 3; part 3 is *ibid.*; part 2 is Document 31.

² In an October 10 letter to Rogers, Senator Stuart Symington (D-Missouri) announced that the third phase of hearings of the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations would take place the week of November 10 and would focus on Thailand. He requested that Unger, among others, be available for testimony in executive session. Symington noted that some of the subjects with respect to Thailand would include treaties, joint planning and exercises, U.S.-built military facilities and military forces in Thailand, military assistance, external and internal security threats to Thailand, U.S. electronic intelligence gathering in Thailand, the Thai roles in the Laotian and Vietnamese wars, and Thai companies controlled or run by Thai Government or military officials. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, DEF 1-1 THAI-US) Subsequently, in a lengthy telephone conversation with Kissinger on November 17, Fulbright insisted that "Unger should testify by himself," rather than with Helms, who "throws a cloak of secrecy" over the testimony. Kissinger demurred, stating that his instructions were that they testify together. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 361, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Thailand we might have undertaken commitments that could lead to direct involvement as in Viet-Nam. The Ambassador commented that Thailand was much better off than Viet-Nam in terms both of leadership and national will and thus the situation was not likely to become as serious as it had in Viet-Nam. The Under Secretary agreed and assured him that this point would be made in the hearings and put in the public record. He agreed with the Ambassador that it was in United States interest for us to help the Thai maintain their security but that there should be no need for United States troops. He told the Ambassador he believed the USG had nothing to apologize for in either Thailand or Laos, and that both we and the Thai should be proud of the story we had to tell about our relationship.

31. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 30, 1969.

SUBJECT

Thai Economic Problems

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign:

Sunthorn Hongladarom, Thai Ambassador to the U.S.

United States:

U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

John B. Dexter, Country Director, Thailand/Burma

The Under Secretary asked the Ambassador what he saw as his most important problems as Ambassador in Washington. Sunthorn immediately responded that his most important concern was that the United States Government maintain economic assistance at past levels. Past assistance had been successful, he said, but Thailand's economic outlook was such that continuation of substantial assistance was desirable. He pointed out that the trade balance was adverse, primarily because of declining rice exports, and noted that the World Bank had reported that this year for the first time Thailand would suffer a balance of payments deficit. The decline in exports is a major factor

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 17 THAI-US. Confidential. Drafted by Dexter, approved by Green, and approved in J on December 1. The memorandum is part 2 of 3; part 3 is *ibid*; part 1 is Document 30.

and another is increasing domestic expenditures for development purposes, especially the accelerated rural development program (ARD) which has been sufficiently successful to justify increasing allocation of Thai resources.

The Under Secretary asked how U.S. economic assistance compared in magnitude with U.S. military expenditures in Thailand. The Ambassador could not give statistics but said military expenditures were considerably larger. He added that, while U.S. assistance has been substantial, U.S. exports to Thailand have also been increasing. In response to a question by the Under Secretary the Ambassador indicated there was also a growing trade deficit with Japan.

There followed a discussion of Thailand's efforts to diversify its agricultural production and exports through development of corn, millet, tapioca, cassava, etc. The Ambassador said there was little expansion of exports of manufactured goods, the development of manufacturing thus far serving primarily for import substitution (with the exception of cement).

Ambassador Sunthorn then reiterated that the main problem was rice and commented that our Department of Agriculture was familiar with RTG complaints about PL-480 sales in the area and exports of U.S. rice to Hong Kong, an important traditional Thai market.

The Under Secretary said one of the problems affecting decisions on U.S. aid to Thailand was Thailand's high level of foreign exchange reserves. Some argue that this means Thailand does not need foreign assistance. On the other hand, one could question whether the Thai should be "penalized" for the good management which resulted in accumulation of reserves. In any case, the high reserve level was a problem when we tried to justify aid to Thailand on the Hill.

The Ambassador explained that the RTG had to maintain substantial reserves because it needs flexibility in the event of contingencies such as drought, floods, etc. which might suddenly reduce exports and require rapid drawdown of reserves. He added that Thai reserves will probably be down this year about \$30 million and this trend is expected to continue for the next few years. This is one reason the RTG hopes U.S. economic assistance will remain at a high level.

Under Secretary Johnson responded that it was nevertheless desirable to look toward a termination of all foreign assistance to Thailand as soon as possible, as had occurred with Taiwan. Thailand, he said, is a "success story" and it is healthy for both sides in the circumstances to anticipate an end to aid and to placing relations on an equal footing. The Ambassador agreed but argued that timing is important.

32. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, October 31, 1969, 0245Z.

14764. Subject: Symington Sub-committee Hearings (Thai Role in Viet-Nam). Ref: State 178591.²

1. This message contains all of the material we have been able to gather in response to the sub-committee's question.³ We have found several gaps, particularly concerning the onset of negotiations with the Thai about the possibility of their sending ground troops to SVN. What follows should serve as a solid basis for a prepared statement:

2. The Thai arrived at their present force level in SVN in four stages. In 1964 they sent a small air force contingent, in 1966 a naval unit, in 1967 an infantry regiment and in 1968 they increased the regiment to a division. We began supporting their effort in 1966. This support evolved through several stages and for a time varied from unit to unit. There is consequently some overlap in the following account of the various Thai contributions.

[Omitted here are paragraphs 3–10 describing details of the Thai military involvement in Vietnam.]

11. Thailand can notify the GVN at any time that it wishes to withdraw some or all of its forces in SVN. While our records do not contain information specifically on the duration of the Thai commitment to SVN it is reasonable to assume that neither we nor the Thai are under an obligation to continue support of the Thai military contribution to VN indefinitely; therefore, the US could terminate its support of the Thai forces after, of course, notifying the RTG. Also we feel certain that we could persuade the RTG to withdraw its forces from SVN if it were prudent to do so. The Thai have indicated their desire to coordinate closely with the other allies in SVN. We have not suggested to the Thai that they reduce or withdraw their forces; however both we and they are aware of the insurgent threat in Thailand and the related threat of enemy advances in Laos. There has been some speculation among individual RTG authorities that it might be necessary to withdraw or reduce their forces if the threat to Thailand becomes worse. However, recently the RTG has publicly announced its intention to continue its military contribution to the GVN as long as each believes it is a necessary contribution.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, DEF 1–1 THAI-US. Secret; Limdis. Repeated to SECDEF, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACTHAI.

² Telegram 178591 to Bangkok, October 21, transmitted the text of Senator Symington's October 20 letter to Rogers. (Ibid.)

³ For a summary of the information Symington requested, see footnote 2, Document 30.

Assistance to the Thai

12. USG direct assistance to the Thai to support their troop contribution is described above.⁴ This aid is outside the regular Military Assistance Program. The MASF program was used to meet Thai requirements stemming from a deployment decision in 1967. Amb Unger's Nov 7, 1967⁵ letter outlines this. The Thai had two major concerns when they decided to increase its infantry contribution to a division in late 1967.

A. They were concerned that sending their best troops out of country in substantial numbers would weaken their military posture in Thailand. They sought to meet this by accelerating their modernization efforts and sought our assistance. In response we agreed to increase the MASF level from \$60 million to \$75 million for FY 68 and to a \$75 million planning figure for FY 69. We also agreed to consult with the Thai on the composition of the program.

B. With the decision to send a division, longstanding Thai anxieties about air attack surfaced once again. They asked for a Hawk battalion and after considerable discussion we settled on a Hawk battery to be deployed after the RTG had acquired the necessary land and completed the requisite construction. We also agreed to train the Thai to operate the battery and turn it over to them. The cost of the battery, not to be borne by the MAP Program, is about \$7 million. The annual O&M cost to the MAP Program is estimated to be about \$1.2 million. To date the site has not been prepared and the Hawks have not been deployed.

13. The dispatch of forces to Vietnam has had a nearly uniform positive political impact in Thailand. The Thai believe that their participation in the conflict reflects credit on the nation, particularly because it is a volunteer expeditionary force. The Thai believe that unit performance has been creditable and they take pride in the recognition given for specific actions by the allied command.

During the election campaign, nearly a year ago, a few voices were raised by left-wing fringe candidates advocating withdrawal of Thai forces from Vietnam (and US forces from Thailand), but as noted elsewhere these had no effects on the campaign or its outcome. More recently, in the wake of the beginning of the US troop reduction program, some similar comments have appeared. These have been divided among the handful who advocate withdrawal in principle, and who are still regarded as aberrant by most Thai, and a few who have

⁴ Paragraphs 3-10 describe U.S. financial support of overseas allowances, meals, and accommodations for Thai forces in Vietnam, and death and disability gratuities. The United States also agreed to equip and pay for the training of the Thai ground forces going to Vietnam.

⁵ Not printed.

argued that Thai forces should be drawn down along with other allied forces in the light of security requirements at home.

RTG and Viet-Nam Strategy

14. The Thai Government has participated as one of the troop contributing countries in periodic meetings and in the process of consultation on major political and military moves to which the US Government is pledged. The more formal acts of consultation have, of course, been accompanied by a continuing exchange of information, ideas and views.

15. By these means, key Thai leaders have been given a sense of participation commensurate with their contributions to the joint effort—contributions which in their minds include not only the dispatch of Thai forces to Vietnam, but the provision of bases and facilities for use by US forces in Thailand. They have neither had nor sought a direct role in development of strategic or tactical plans by COMUSMACV and the GVN. But they have felt free to express their judgments as to the general course of action best calculated to bring the war to a satisfactory ending. They have consistently advocated, and still prefer, that efforts at negotiation be accompanied by application of sufficient military pressure to make the negotiations meaningful and to protect the fundamental principles on which US and Republic of Vietnam participation in the Paris Talks has been premised.

RTG and Viet-Nam Settlement

16. The Thai Government expects to have a voice in the eventual Vietnam settlement and, indeed, desires to have a part in the post-hostilities efforts to maintain stability and promote regional reconstruction and development.

17. The Thai Government has accepted the propriety of the current phase of the negotiations being conducted by the US and the Republic of Vietnam, speaking for all the troop contributing countries. They expect to be kept informed of developments in and related to the talks. This has been done on a very selective basis, and there has been no indication that the Thai feel their legitimate interests are being disregarded. They have however emphasized their desire for more timely consultation in advance of actions. They have made no requests to participate in the Paris Talks themselves at this stage, but expect to participate in negotiations leading up to the eventual settlement.

18. The claim of the Thai and other troop contributing govts to participate in appropriate ways in the eventual settlement is recorded in the Manila Communiqué of 1966.⁶ The Thai understandably and

⁶ For text of the Manila communiqué, see Department of State *Bulletin*, November 14, 1966, pp. 730–735. Paragraph No. 28 dealt with the participation of troop-contributing countries in the settlement. It stated that “they would act on this basis in close consultation among themselves in regard to settlement of the conflict.”

properly take this seriously. The US Government has given expression to the need for consultation as events unfold through meetings of the foreign ministers of the troop contributing countries, which have been held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the SEATO Council and, in Sept. 1969, at Secretary of State Rogers' initiative in New York. In the absence of clearer indication of the time when negotiations will become meaningful, and in what kind of forum, the Thai Govt has not spelled out its ideas on the way in which it could appropriately participate. In the meantime, however, as noted above, they have wished to maintain a dialogue on the substance of the Vietnam problem. We believe that the Thai do this with the other allies as well as with the US and that the views of the Govt of Vietnam are given special weight in the development of Thai positions. Throughout the period of the Paris Talks, Thai leaders have spoken in opposition to the imposition of a coalition govt on South Vietnam, taking in this respect at least as hard a position as that of the GVN.

19. Foreign Minister Thanat has indicated in a general way the disposition of the Thai Govt to continue to play an active role in Southeast Asian affairs following achievement of a settlement. The Thai seem attracted to the idea of entrusting the task of supervising provisions of the settlement to a largely Asian group of nations, more broadly based than the International Control Commissions established in the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements. If such a step were feasible now, it seems likely that the Thai Govt would itself be willing to contribute to such an effort.

20. The prospect of a coordinated attack on the problem of reconstruction and continuing development in the Southeast Asian region has held great appeal for the Thai ever since President Johnson's speech at Johns Hopkins in 1965. The Royal Thai Govt is already an active participant in virtually all regional organizations, either indigenous to Asia or involving participation of outsiders as well, and believes there is the prospect both for further strengthening of such institutions and for the Asian members to carry a progressively greater share in the effort. The Thai do not believe, however, that either such organizations or the region in general can achieve its potential without support from the US and other nations outside the region continuing for a further period.

Unger

33. **Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State**¹

Bangkok, November 1, 1969, 0402Z.

14847. For Under Secretary Johnson & Asst. Secretary Green.

1. Before departing Bangkok to return to Washington I would like to give you a sketch of the way things look from here with regard to Thai-US relations. Some of the points mentioned are not at this time known to the Thai but if and when they are, I anticipate a cumulatively negative reaction which could well jeopardize close and effective relations which we have sought to maintain with the Thai over many years. My concern is further heightened because of the unfavorable publicity which I very much fear may result from the Symington hearings on Thailand.

2. The factors I have in mind are in a number of different fields but they all have in common what the Thais will take as an indication of acceleration disengagement on our part. These are the more pertinent factors:

(A) The decision which has apparently been taken to terminate the activities of USIS in Thailand which are "on behalf of the Thai Government" (see memo from Henry Kissinger to Frank Shakespeare October 9, copy to SecState).² We have been working steadily for some time now to get the Thai Government to assume more and more informational activities but I have been intent on continuing our support of necessary functions until the Thai were ready and able to take over. The order cited appears to foreclose any such orderly handover.

(B) Reduction of US military forces in Thailand: Although this action also has its constructive side if carefully executed, it nevertheless adds to the preoccupation of the Thais when combined with the other factors mentioned here. Furthermore, it would become a strongly negative factor if we should move too quickly to proceed beyond what is already programmed.

(C) The serious doubts raised about the continuing validity of the contingency planning with the Thai (Project Taksin) and therefore growing doubts about the credibility of our SEATO commitment.

(D) The downward trend in our economic aid as contrasted with high level assurances that we will continue to assist Thailand to handle its own problems through economic and military aid.

(E) The continuing Congressional and press criticism of Thailand (and our other allies in this region) which seems to concentrate on castigating just those who are most willing to help the US; the most re-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL THAI-US. Secret; Priority; Nodis.

² Not found.

cent unhappy case is Otto Passman in the Thai and other loans to the US to help out on the balance of payments.

(F) Our apparent reluctance to continue Sierra Romeo which has been a major element in our close cooperation with the Thais to employ all of the limited means available to us to try to stave off disaster in Laos.

3. I continue to assume that Thailand is of importance to us and that we wish to continue to enjoy the facilities and privileges we have here, such as those relating to the prosecution of the war in Vietnam and our actions in Laos, as well as certain highly classified vitally important activities. I also assume that Thailand, as the heart of Southeast Asia, is important to us as the key probably to assuring that that part of Southeast Asia which lies beyond continues in friendly hands.

4. Unless my assumptions are in error, the independence and friendly disposition of Thailand towards us must continue to be a priority objective in this part of the world. Heretofore our shared conviction with the Thais that we were working toward essentially the same goals and that we were both prepared to make contributions toward those goals assured a relationship of mutual confidence. We are now beginning to raise real doubts about our future intentions and beginning to undermine our close relations without which we could not expect to enjoy here the advantages we have had in the past. The reports about the RTG's reviewing its foreign relations (Bangkok 14722)³ is one of a few significant straws in the wind of and "agonizing reappraisal" which the Thais may in due course reluctantly decide they must take.

5. These are fundamental points which have to be considered when we are weighing the nature and the level of our programs in Thailand in the coming period. Decisions on these matters which cumulatively signal growing US disinterest and disengagement will surely undermine and perhaps in due course destroy the effective and constructive relations we have had with the Thais for so long. I hope this is not where we mean to be heading.

Unger

³ Dated November 1. (Ibid.)

34. **Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, November 5, 1969.

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with Ambassador Unger, November 6

You have a brief meeting scheduled with Ambassador Unger on Thursday.²

Unger remains a “big commitment” man to the last; his soul is rooted firmly in the days before the Guam doctrine. He is not happy with much that is going on now, and in recent weeks his mission has orchestrated a set of messages to support his line:

—It has cited declining Thai foreign exchange reserves and an alleged new Thai grasp of Thailand's problems to argue that “we should broaden our support to Thailand's efforts” (in counterinsurgency).

—It has reported in extenso (and I think over-interpreted) a Bangkok *Post* article to the effect that Thailand may have to make policy “readjustments” in view of US policy changes.

—It has dwelt upon evidence of the expansion of insurgency on the Malaysian border and of Communist re-grouping in the Northeast.

Unger's present preoccupations are stated in a recent Nodis cable (Tab A).³ He cites recent US decisions (including the instruction on USIS operations in Thailand)⁴ as evidence of an “accelerating disengagement” by the US. He warns that this disengagement will raise Thai doubts as to whether we share common objectives, and that these doubts may lead to an “agonizing reappraisal” by the Thai of their relations with us.

Unger is here to testify before the Symington Sub-Committee, and he is most concerned that the Hearings—and release of the testimony—will further damage Thai/US relations.

Suggest You Say:

—We are readjusting our policy, and it is natural and desirable that the Thai also engage in “readjustments.” (e.g. broadened international

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II. Secret; Nodis. Sent for action. A notation on the memorandum indicates Kissinger saw it.

² No other record of the Kissinger–Unger meeting has been found.

³ Document 33.

⁴ The USIA instruction was, according to Holdridge, very preemptory and allowed no time for winding down this operation. [Handwritten footnote in the source text.]

contacts; self-reliance in counter-insurgency; social and economic measures to avert disaffection; planning to live within their economic means)

—You wonder what the content really would be of a Thai “agonizing reappraisal.” Would the Thai leadership seriously think they could go over to the Communists? Or would they more likely seek means and redouble their efforts to maintain Thai independence and their own positions by making limited accommodations as necessary with Communist China but continuing to fight Communist subversion at home?

—On the USIS issue, you wish to make clear that you heard the Thai themselves express the feeling that popularization of the Thai King and Government should be done by the Thai. The President feels this very strongly, and has instructed that we look not only at Thailand but at our USIS operations elsewhere to see whether they are over-involved in the internal affairs of host countries.

—On the Symington hearings, you agree heartily with Unger’s concerns. You hope that he will make his point forcefully in State. You are looking now at possible ways of controlling Senate release of confidential materials which damage our international relations.

—(Unger has not indicated whether he has asked the King about his views on the timing of a visit to the US.) Ask whether Unger has had a chance to raise the question of a visit to the US with the King.⁵

⁵ No record of a U.S. visit by the King or of the Nixon–Unger meeting has been found.

35. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, November 11, 1969, 0623Z.

15295. Subject: Symington Subcommittee Hearings. Ref: Bangkok 15212.²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II. Secret; Exdis.

² Telegram 15212 from Bangkok, November 9, reported Deputy Chief of Mission Hannah’s recent contacts with Thai officials concerning the upcoming Symington subcommittee hearings. Hannah included an account of Hollings’ statement to Thanat on November 7, in which Hollings warned that the hearings would produce press accounts

1. Foreign Minister Thanat received me at his home Tuesday morning before going to Cabinet meeting. I conveyed the substance of State 189585.³ Thanat listened attentively and expressed appreciation, but made clear his sense of deep concern, not only over the Symington subcommittee hearings but over the fact Plan Taksin had been shown to Senators.⁴ He said that despite our assurance, he must assume that for all practical purposes “Plan Taksin is out in the open now.” I pointed out that we hoped to keep the content of the plan secret, but he shrugged his shoulders and remarked that the essence of the plan has already been revealed in the papers to the extent of revealing that it is a Thai-U.S. contingency plan for responding to a threat through Laos. He therefore feels that the other side knows more about our plans than we do about theirs.

2. I reminded him of the assurances contained in para 2 of State 160368⁵ to the effect that we still support Plan Taksin. Thanat replied that he accepts implicitly the President’s support of the plan but that he cannot overlook the fact that “a lot of water has flowed under the bridge in the past two or three months.” He said that it is no longer possible to have confidence that the Senate would permit the plan to be executed even were the appropriate contingency to arise.

3. He appreciated my offer to keep him informed regarding the progress of the hearings and concurred with my expression of hope that press leaks or critical public statements would not be allowed to pit US and the RTG against each other. Nevertheless, he argues that the problem is in the United States—not in Thailand, which he described as “a silent partner.”

4. On the whole I believe that my representation to him, and in particular the expression of desire to coordinate with the Thai to avoid

contrasting sharply with the expressions of friendship which both sides had made during the just-concluded Codel Sparkman and urged “very close coordination between the United States and Thailand governments during this difficult period immediately ahead.” Hannah also requested that the Department provide him with daily reports on the hearings, so that he could maintain close liaison with the Thai Government on this matter. (Ibid.)

³ Telegram 189585 to Bangkok, November 6, requested that Hannah confer with the Thai Government about the fact that the Taksin contingency plan would soon be shown to select Senators of the Foreign Relations Committee, and to inform its officials about other aspects of the subcommittee hearing. (Ibid.)

⁴ The Department of Defense finally let the Senate Foreign Relations Committee see a copy of the Taksin Plan on November 7. A Marine one-star general brought it to the Capitol, where it was perused by Senators Fulbright and Church; it was returned to the Pentagon later that same day. As reported by major newspapers the next day, including the *Baltimore Sun* and *The New York Times*, Fulbright said, “I really don’t want a copy . . . This resolves it.”

⁵ Not printed.

misunderstandings, was useful. Although it is quite apparent that Thanat is deeply worried about the hearings and their impact and that he relates this to "the water which has flowed under the bridge," which in his view undermines the solidity of our relationship. I believe the foregoing illustrates how important it is that we be provided with daily reports on the hearings in order that we may maintain regular liaison with the Foreign Minister.

5. Since drafting foregoing, I have just received State 190375⁶ describing Assistant Secretary Green's briefing of Sunthorn. I will relay substance of this telegram to Thanat. When I told him earlier this morning that Sunthorn would be briefed, this reminded him that he had received a letter two or three days ago from Sunthorn in which the latter had said that he had called at the Department (possibly on Under Secretary Johnson)⁷ and had been told that we would not reveal Plan Taksin to the Senate. I explained that the Department intended to call Sunthorn in again and bring him up to date.

Hannah

⁶ Telegram 190375 to Bangkok, November 11, reported the highlights of Green's meeting with Ambassador Sunthorn on November 10, including Green's notice to the Ambassador that the Project Taksin Plan had been shown to certain selected Senators, but that the classified nature of the document would continue to be protected. Green said that it had been decided that it was "a tactical necessity" to let the committee see the document itself to forestall further criticism so that the committee "would recognize it for what it was, a contingency plan." During the Symington subcommittee hearings, Green informed Sunthorn, "there were some topics on which there would be no testimony, others which we would explain but keep classified, and a third category which would eventually appear on public record." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II)

⁷ See Documents 30 and 31.

36. Editorial Note

Hearings on Thailand before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, were held on November 10–14, and 17, 1969. The declassified version of the hearings was printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office in 1970, after it was released by the subcommittee on June 8. (*United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, Kingdom of Thailand, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 91st Congress, 1st Session,*

Part 3, Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1969) The record pertaining to the subcommittee hearings is further amplified by Department of State telegrams to the Embassy in Thailand, as cited below.

The November 10 hearings were described as mostly harmonious, “although the Senators, especially Fulbright and Symington, were predictably antagonistic toward U.S. policies in Southeast Asia (not confining their questions and comments to Thailand) and especially to an alleged failure of the executive to keep Congress fully informed of what it was doing and the ‘commitments’ that it was alleged to be developing. They doggedly persisted in tendentious questioning about Project Taksin and the Rusk–Thanat communiqué, both viewed by them as unauthorized executive commitments going beyond SEATO.

“The most critical questions were on contingency planning (Taksin) and U.S. payments for Thai troops in Vietnam and Laos. Symington also fulminated against failure of the Thai and other SEATO allies to bear their proportionate share of the fighting burden in Vietnam.

“An impasse developed between Ambassador Unger and Ambassador McClintock, and Symington and Fulbright over (1) the Ambassador’s position that he was not authorized to testify on the contents of the Taksin contingency plan, specifically the political implications of its provision for possible U.S./Thai intervention in Laos, and (2) on U.S. arrangements with the RTG concerning financial support of Thai military activities (especially the Artillery battery) in Laos.” (Telegram 190428 to Bangkok, November 11; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II)

In addition, the hearings record provides a wealth of statistical and descriptive information about the nature of the U.S. commitment to Thailand, U.S. assistance to and forces in Thailand (as well as USAF reconnaissance and bombing in Laos from Thailand), and Thai efforts and contributions in Vietnam and Laos. Included in this information was testimony that revealed that under a secret accord entered into in 1967, the United States had been paying \$50 million a year to Thailand for sending a combat division to South Vietnam. In addition, the United States agreed to increase its military assistance by \$30 million for 2 years and to supply Thailand with a battery of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles in return for the 11,000-man Thai unit in Vietnam. It was also disclosed the United States had invested \$702 million in construction of military bases in Thailand. (*United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, Kingdom of Thailand, Hearings before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 91st Congress, 1st Session, Part 3, passim.*)

Telegram 190484 to Bangkok, November 12, summarized the first 2 days of the hearings. It reported that the subcommittee had asked probing questions about the meaning of the phrase "constitutional processes" in connection with implementing the Taksin contingency plan, and had asked about "what expectations Thai have as to how we will execute commitments." It noted that some of the Senators had been strongly critical of U.S. payments to the RTAVF and of the alleged failure of Thailand to bear its "proper share of Vietnam war burden." The telegram reported that when Fulbright and Symington expressed doubts that either North Vietnam or China were sufficiently serious threats to justify the costs of U.S. security programs in Thailand, Ambassador Unger and other witnesses tried to emphasize that the "bulk of U.S. presence and expenditures in Thailand have been in relation Vietnam war and not directly for Thailand's security, either external or internal." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II)

Telegram 191152 to Bangkok, November 13, reported that "today's questions were largely directed at possibility U.S. through military assistance and counterinsurgency programs was being drawn into implied commitments or creeping involvement in Thai internal security operations. We believe, however, that Ambassador Unger and other witnesses were able to establish clear record that subcommittee's apparent presumptions were unfounded and that mission and executive branch generally acting with great prudence to avoid the dangers mentioned." (Ibid.)

Telegram 192811 to Bangkok, November 15, reported on Ambassador Martin's testimony before the subcommittee on November 14, based on his tenure as Ambassador in Bangkok preceding Unger. Asked whether joint U.S.-Thai activities had enlarged the basic U.S. SEATO commitment, "he expressed conviction that they had not in a legal sense, but everyone was free to make his own judgment whether the kind of loyalty and help extended by one partner created a 'moral' commitment. In his opinion, the Thai performance had been such as to fully merit our continued support." Regarding the nature of the U.S. SEATO obligation to Thailand, Martin "maintained his view that it obligates the United States to help Thailand against overt communist aggression or massive external support to insurgency but does not specify precisely what we should do or obligate us to provide combat support against purely internal insurgency." The telegram also reported that "up to now" the hearings had received "virtually no press treatment" and urged the Embassy to "make sure you have minimized possibility information leaking out that RTG has any knowledge subcommittee hearings." (Ibid.)

Secretary Rogers called Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger at 5:50 p.m. on November 17 to inform

him that Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms had called “and said he was very unhappy and that it wasn’t going too well. Having Unger go up there with Helms and pretend it is intelligence.” Helms had stated that what Ambassador Unger was telling the committee about Thai troops “can’t be presented as intelligence. K said he thought it considered military operations run by CIA. Rogers didn’t think so. These are Thai troops that go into Laos. K asked what Rogers thought should be done.” Kissinger later asked, “what would happen in Thailand if we let it get into the record. Rogers thought there would be trouble. Rogers thought on these things we should go to the Committee and tell them frankly what the problem is and say this is going to be harmful to the national interest and have them keep that in mind. When Symington agreed with the President about intelligence, he didn’t have this in mind. K agreed that it didn’t mean we could shift non-intelligence issues into intelligence and keep it out of the record.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 361, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Thus, telegram 196666 to Bangkok, November 22, reported that “as a result extensive discussions with Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Symington subcommittee over questions concerning Thai involvement in Laos and U.S. support thereof, Ambassador Unger called back to testify again today on this subject. Testimony given before full committee in executive session with understanding that it involved matters of highest sensitivity and would not appear in public record.

“Ambassador Unger’s testimony covered following questions: number of Thai troops in Laos; U.S. arrangements for financial support; U.S. pay for Thai pilots; funding procedures; Thai casualties in Laos; and various special payments such as death benefits. Ambassador answered factually and apparently to full satisfaction of committee.

“In view special consideration on which this hearing based, you should not inform RTG.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II)

37. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, November 13, 1969, 1146Z.

15438. Subject: Symington Subcommittee Hearings. Ref: A. Bangkok 15212;² B. State 190484;³ C. Bangkok 15369.⁴

1. I spoke today to Marshal Dawee in great confidence and entirely alone, mentioning only very generally some of the points in ref B. I mentioned the agenda topics in para 2, ref B, explained the reasons for showing Plan Taksin to the Committee, and pointed out that Ambassador Unger had been at great pains to protect Plan Taksin in the hearings and to reassure the subcommittee that our commitments are limited to SEATO. Characteristically (and unlike Thanat), Dawee was inclined to be sympathetic and understanding of our problems and appreciative of our efforts to minimize the danger. He understands that there will inevitably be some unfortunate leaks or public statements, and while he will be angry when they occur, he is not inclined to punish us before they occur.

2. Without mentioning subcommittee criticisms of the Thai contribution in Vietnam or U.S. personnel, payments to the RTAVF, etc., I did tell Dawee that the committee is, of course, interested in obtaining a review of these aspects of Thai and U.S. cooperation in the Vietnam war. I emphasized that while we would have to explain to the committee our support to the RTAVF we would expect to keep this kind of thing confidential.

3. I believe this very once-over-lightly treatment with Dawee was useful and will be helpful at some future time. In view of Thanat's rather cool attitude two days ago and Birabhongse's critical attitude to our political counselor yesterday, I believe we will go slowly with the Foreign Minister. The Department should know that under my instructions to

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II. Secret; Priority; Exdis.

² See footnote 2, Document 35.

³ See Document 36.

⁴ Telegram 15369 from Bangkok, November 12, reported on the Embassy political counselor's talk with Foreign Minister Thanat's Secretary, Birabhongse. The latter revealed his and Thanat's pessimism about the subcommittee hearings, especially the revelation of the Taksin Plan to Fulbright and Symington, saying that "Thanat fears that, in wake of this first step contents of plan will ultimately be revealed, rendering it worthless." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II)

be cautious and because of Bira's absorption with the successive Johnson and Green interviews with Ambassador Sunthorn, political counselor did not mention a number of items in ref B, including contentious points paras 4, 6, and 7, which perhaps is just as well.

Hannah

38. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, November 20, 1969, 1132Z.

15793. Subject: Symington Subcommittee. Ref: State 193723.²

1. I briefed Foreign Minister Thanat today on the basis of reftel, giving him the text of subparagraphs 3 a, b, and c. I did not take up the questions and answers in paragraph 4 since those deal solely with the Philippines and would probably have alarmed Thanat prematurely since he would regard them as a harbinger of future questioning regarding the Black Panthers.

2. Even so, the relatively bland contingency guidance of paragraph 3 stimulated his blood pressure. He resented the necessity to deny the characterization "mercenary" and remarked that "if the senators are opposed to the presence of Thai forces in South Vietnam, we could very easily withdraw them and on quite short notice as well." I tried to explain to Thanat that the focus of the subcommittee's interest was quite different and that, if anything, some Senators had been critical of other east Asian countries for not having contributed to the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II. Confidential; Exdis.

² Telegram 193723 to Bangkok, Manila, and Seoul, November 17, reported that, in response to public transcripts and press releases by the Symington subcommittee implicitly criticizing Asian allies in Vietnam for needing U.S. assistance, the Department of State had contingency guidance "which could be used along general following lines: a) the United States provides equipment and supplies, training, overseas allowances, and other kinds of support. b) The contribution by these nations to the Vietnam conflict and the support they receive from the U.S. cannot be characterized as 'mercenary' in nature since each of the countries concerned decided on its own to contribute to a cause it supports by reason of its own national interests and security. c) All three countries (Thailand, Philippines, and South Korea) had needed military and economic assistance for years and would be obviously unable to finance an overseas force without assistance while still facing considerable challenges at home." (Ibid.)

Vietnam war, even though their security was at stake. However, this charge certainly could not be levied at Thailand, which had supported US in the war in countless ways, I had some difficulty making this explanation in the face of several interruptions from Thanat who was intent upon insisting that I report fully what he had said regarding the ability of the RTG to withdraw the Black Panthers, "if the Senate does not like them."

3. I informed Thanat that the hearings were completed and that as far as I knew they had gone better in the latter part than during the first two days. Thanat quizzed me on the "sanitization process" which preceded publication of the report on the Filipino hearings. He is obviously fearful that the sanitization will not be very thorough and he clearly expects the worst when it comes to Thailand's turn.

Hannah

39. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Vice President Agnew¹

Washington, December 17, 1969.

SUBJECT

Your Visit to Bangkok

1. *The Current State of Relations:* US-Thai relations are basically sound. However, we are presently undergoing a period of strain due in particular to Thai fears that the US troop withdrawals from Vietnam may represent a US pull-out from Southeast Asia, but also due to a number of lesser irritants including US PL 480 rice shipments to traditional Thai markets and to sensationalized press reporting of the Symington Subcommittee hearings on Thailand which alleged that the US paid a billion dollars for the Thai troop contribution in Vietnam.²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 450, President's Trip Files, V.P. Trip East Asia, January 1970. Secret.

² Telegram 16597 from Bangkok, December 9, contains a report of efforts by the President and Department of State Spokesman Charles Bray to expose the inaccuracy of this allegation and to give the public "a better appreciation of Thai contribution." (Ibid., Box 398, Subject Files, Symington Subcommittee, Vol. II)

The implication of the latter issue of course is that the US paid for Thai “mercenaries”, and the Thai resent this implication as well as what they regard as another instance of unfair criticism of them in the US press—in itself, a long-standing irritant in our relations.

Behind the immediate problems in our relations is a belief on the part of the Thai leaders that the US commitment in the area will indeed decrease over time, and they are seeking means to assure Thai independence in the changed context. They are worried over the prospect that the US withdrawal from Vietnam will proceed at a rate which would leave Thailand and other free nations exposed to a Chinese and North Vietnamese communist threat. The long-term threat from China is their greatest concern.

Most immediately, the Thai leaders are apprehensive that once the US withdraws from Vietnam, Laos may fall to the Communists who will then give direct large-scale aid across the Mekong River to the insurgency in the Northeast. Over the longer-term, they are worried about their ability to contain the Peking-backed insurgency in the North.

The constancy of US support, then, becomes a matter of great importance to the Thai. Any developments in the US which appear to question this constancy cause over-reaction in Thailand. Our Embassy is anxious to smooth things down and prevent the Thai tendency to over-react. At the same time, we feel that some officers in the Embassy may be over-solicitous on behalf of their Thai clients, who are perhaps more mature and capable than the Embassy gives them credit for, and who appreciate the realities of Southeast Asian developments despite a tendency to react emotionally to the issues of the moment. (For example, the Embassy is upset at our decision to cease the activities of USIS mobile information units which have been doing what the Thai themselves should be doing in calling for loyalty to the King and the Government. The Thai themselves expressed criticism of these units to me last summer.)

The President’s visit to Thailand last July helped to reassure the Thai as to the continued US role in support of Thailand, as restated in the President’s Guam doctrine, and your visit should have the same effect. They are on our side, and are proceeding in the directions which we favor such as supporting regionalism and self-help measures. We have no reason to believe they will want to withdraw their troops from Vietnam out of pique over their treatment in the US press.

2. *What the Thai Will Want*

a. The Thai will want to unburden themselves on what they consider unjustified US public and Congressional criticism of their role in Vietnam. They may do so in emotional terms. This may be more of a means of blowing off steam than an expression of a real crisis in our relations, and may, in fact, have a therapeutic effect.

b. The Thai will be worried about the present situation in Laos, and whether the US is doing enough to hold back the Communists there. They are also worried that an eventual Vietnam settlement will provide adequate protection to the integrity of Laos, or prevent Communist infiltration through Laos into Thailand. They will want your reassurances.

c. They may want to elicit your thoughts on the future of Southeast Asia and of US-Thai relations.

d. US "interference" with Thai rice sales.³ The Thai have long resented US PL 480 rice sales. Right now, they are highly indignant because they think we "ordered" the GVN to back away from a purchase of 20,000 metric tons of rice from Thailand. (In fact, we have regularly supplied Vietnam's rice requirements through PL 480, to save foreign exchange. The possibility of a Thai sale arose from a momentary shortage in Saigon which we were able to meet through a diversion of a PL 480 shipment from a third country to Vietnam. We did not order the Vietnamese to do anything, but their requirements were met by this arrangement. While we do not regard South Vietnam as a normal marketing area for Thai rice, we are very sensitive to Thai feelings on the question of PL 480 rice sales, and will continue to consult and to endeavor to minimize frictions. You should use this line only if the Thai raise the issue.)

e. They are unlikely to raise specific bilateral issues directly, but may touch on some of the problems I have outlined above in passing.

3. *What We Want:*

a. To reassure the Thai of the constancy of US backing, under the principles outlined by the President in his Guam Doctrine. (The Thai appear to understand the revised US approach and even to be pleased at the confidence placed in them that they are capable of handling internal subversion.)

b. To downplay the effects of what may appear to the Thai as unjustified criticism. This of course represents only a small percentage of American opinion and certainly is not indicative of the attitude either of the Administration or the great majority of Americans.

c. To reassure the Thai of their own ability to handle the insurgency in Thailand.

d. To encourage the trend toward self-confidence, self-help and regionalism.

4. *Points to Stress:*

a. *On Laos:*

—The Administration is acutely aware of Thailand's particularly exposed position and the importance of Laos to Thai security. Recall that our side has insisted that a satisfactory settlement in Laos is an integral part of any solution in Vietnam.

³ Extensive information on Thai complaints of U.S. interference in Thai rice sales is in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, AID (US) 15-8 THAI and, especially, INCO-RICE 17 INDON-THAI, from December 1969 to December 1970.

—Refer to the steps we have undertaken in concert with the Thai to strengthen the ability of the Lao Government to cope with the threat posed by the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces (see State Talking Points).⁴

b. *On Vietnam:*

—Stress the great appreciation which the President has expressed for the Thai troop contribution. The fact that these troops are volunteers demonstrates how clearly the people of Thailand see the issues in Vietnam.

—We are also grateful for the great assistance which Thailand has provided through the US-Thai airbases in Thailand in support of the Vietnam war. We recognize that countless American lives have been saved because of the existence of these bases.

—Ongoing US troop withdrawals will be carried out in keeping with the South Vietnamese ability to take over. We will consult with the Thai beforehand.

5. *Points to Avoid:*

—The Thai Government has little love for Sihanouk, although it has expressed willingness to normalize relations if he takes the initiative. The Thai are probably unenthusiastic about our decision to resume diplomatic relations with Cambodia. If they raise the issue, you might turn it aside with the observation that Sihanouk has caused all of us problems, but that none of us want to see Cambodia pulled toward the Communists, and that we might both derive some advantage from a US presence in Phnom Penh.

6. *Meeting with the King:* Your discussions with the King will probably parallel those with Prime Minister Thanom and other Government leaders but be much briefer and more general. The same line of approach applies.

⁴ Ibid.

40. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, December 23, 1969, 0936Z.

17214. Subject: Thai Volunteer Forces in Vietnam. Ref: Bangkok 17181.²

1. During conversation I had this morning with Thanat on another subject, he volunteered brief rundown his discussions in Kuala Lumpur with RVN ForMin Lam on subject of withdrawal of Thai forces in Vietnam. Thanat told me his purpose in discussing this was to establish the principle that Thai forces were not intended to remain in RVN indefinitely and that they could be withdrawn once circumstances permitted. In response to my question whether the RTG was currently making any such plans to withdraw, Thanat said this was not the case. He said underlying objective in making his statement to the press about the possibility of Thai withdrawal reftel was to convey to Hanoi another indication of the growing capability of the South Vietnamese to take care of their own problems and also to blunt thrust of Hanoi propaganda. He asked me to keep in strictest confidence his acknowledgment that no plans for withdrawal were actually underway as well as his motivation, with Hanoi as the target, of raising in public the possibility of Thai withdrawal.

2. I said that we are also convinced of the value of the Vietnamization policy as means, inter alia, undercutting the NVN propaganda effort. I added that at same time we saw continuing value in having some Thai forces in Vietnam. He said he knew this and we did not need to convince Thailand on this score. He added that some of the people in the government, including some military, did not understand the political and psychological reasons for his public statement re withdrawal Thai forces from Vietnam. He then left for the Tuesday cabinet meeting at which he said this issue would be discussed and, presumably, his initiative will be explained to those less sophisticated.

3. Department please transmit Embassies Saigon, Vientiane and Paris and CINCPAC for Adm. McCain and Polad.

Unger

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II. Secret; Priority; Exdis.

² Telegram 17181 from Bangkok, December 22, reported on Thanat's "obviously planned" statement to newsmen upon his return to Bangkok from an ASEAN meeting in Kuala Lumpur that he had met with the South Vietnamese Foreign Minister during the conference and had discussed with him the subject of Thai troop withdrawals from Vietnam. (Ibid.)

41. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, December 24, 1969.

SUBJECT

Representations by Thai Chargé on U.S. Interference with Thai Rice Deal

The Thai Chargé called on you this afternoon to pursue the matter of US interference with the sale by the Thai of 20 million tons of rice to the GVN, which lost them \$2.5 million. [2 lines of source text not declassified]

The points which the Chargé stressed in his presentation to me were: (a) this is viewed by Thailand as a very serious matter (the word "blatant" was used in describing the incident,) (b) the Thai government is nevertheless willing to work closely with us to find ways in which the US might make "amends" by purchase of other goods from Thailand to an equivalent amount for use in aid to Vietnam and Laos, and (c) it is urgent that such amends be made by January 3–4 when the Vice President arrives in Bangkok "so that the circumstances of the Vice President's visit will be the most favorable." [2 lines of source text not declassified]

The amends business was suggested by Len Unger to Foreign Minister Thanat. [3½ lines of source text not declassified] Nevertheless, if anything can be done, I believe that appropriate steps should, in fact, be taken. The element of "face" is deeply bound into the situation, since the Thai Minister of Economic Affairs was actually in Saigon and the deal was all set to be concluded except for his signature when we intervened and killed it. I believe that they are smarting under what appears to them to be a low, and totally unexpected blow from a country which professes to be an ally. In addition, a great part of Thailand's foreign exchange earnings comes from rice sales, and we have hit them where it really hurts even though their economy is not likely to collapse through loss of this one deal.

In my conversation with the Chargé, I simply told him that I would report carefully to you what he had said, and also expressed sympathy with the Thai position. I assured him of the constancy of our rela-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II. Top Secret; Umbra. Sent for information. Two notations in Kissinger's handwriting read: "Let me call Allen tomorrow" and "Please move on this. HK"

tionship with Thailand, and that we regarded the Thai as true friends and good allies. This, I said, was exemplified by the President's remarks in Bangkok last July. I asked the Chargé if he had passed the word to the Department of State to which he informed me he had earlier today called on Under Secretary Johnson. The Under Secretary, it seemed, had taken the responsibility for having ordered the course of action which the U.S. had taken in this case.

As per your instructions, I have informed the Chargé that we will try to work something out by January 3rd.

42. Memorandum From Lindsey Grant of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, December 29, 1969.

SUBJECT

Amends to the Thai for the Rice Transaction

You asked for a recommendation as to what we can do to salve Thai feelings over the recent cancellation of the GVN rice contract.

I have told State that something needs to be done, that we leave it to them to propose specific measures, but that there must be something which the Vice President can offer when he arrives in Bangkok.

I am told by State that—accidentally, I hope—one of the two diverted ships containing PL 480 rice for Vietnam has sunk.

As a result, there are two immediate possibilities:

—we can encourage the Vietnamese to go to the Thai for 10,000 tons of rice, and the Vice President can let the Thai know that we are doing so.

—we can encourage the Vietnamese to buy some 30,000 tons of sugar from Thailand. Ambassador Unger has already been informally discussing this idea with the Thai Government.

I believe that with the application of continuing pressure from here, I can be confident that we will have a firm policy decision on one of these two possibilities for the Vice President to use in Bangkok.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. II. Secret; Exdis. Sent for action. A notation in Kissinger's handwriting reads: "Let's get this moved."

Other possible ways of recompensing the Thai seem somewhat farther down the road and therefore less attractive.²

Recommendation

That you approve my continuing to press State and AID for a favorable decision on one of these gestures to the Thai.

Approve³

Disapprove

Other

² We are asking Lindsey for a memo on what these are. [Handwritten footnote in the source text.]

³ Kissinger initialed his approval on December 30.

43. Telegram From the Vice President's Party to the Department of State¹

Bali, January 11, 1970, 0813Z.

Vipto 10/11. Dept pass Bangkok. Subj: VP's Meeting With P.M. Thanom.

1. Vice President Agnew met for nearly two hours on Jan 4th with Prime Minister Thanom and other Thai officials. Those attending the meeting on the Thai side included: Thanat, Pote, Dawee, Generals Sawang and Chira, Ambassador Sunthorn, and Dr. Sompong (Director General of Economic Affairs in the Foreign Office). Ambassador Unger and Messrs. Crane and Duemling attended with the Vice President.

2. Problems in US-Thai Relations. The Prime Minister stated that the Thai had been very pleased with President Nixon's visit last summer but several problems had cropped up since then. They were therefore delighted to have another chance to discuss matters of common interest with the Vice President. The Vice President responded that he was making his trip at President Nixon's request and noted that we

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/AGNEW. Secret; Immediate. U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Francis Galbraith was traveling with the Vice President.

too felt the need for a forthright dialogue. Although it would probably be difficult to get into detail, he felt that a discussion of intent would be useful at this time. Simply stated the intent of the US is to maintain the excellent relations which we have enjoyed with Thailand over the years.

3. US Intentions. The PM said he would appreciate clarification on "the so-called commitment of the United States to Thailand and Southeast Asia." The Vice President stated that his response would reflect U.S. integrity and intent in the area and that was just the sort of thing he wanted to discuss. He stated that the United States stands by its commitment to Thailand and will discharge its responsibilities as a Pacific power. There might be changes in technology which would call for specific readjustments in our defense posture, but this would in no way affect our commitments to SEATO or any of the other less formal arrangements with Thailand.

4. The Vice President then took the initiative to provide brief assurances on several other questions affecting US/Thai relations:

A. The Vice President felt that we could have consulted more effectively with the Thai prior to making announcements of troop withdrawals in Vietnam. He felt we should and could do better in the future and planned to make a strong recommendation on this score to President Nixon.

B. The United States greatly regretted the inconvenience and embarrassment to Thai officials which occurred when their projected sale of 20,000 tons of rice to South Vietnam fell through. We hope to be able to find some new economic opportunities which would make up for the loss of the sale. In this regard, the Vice President was encouraged to note that the South Vietnamese may be needing another 10,000 tons of rice from Thailand since the United States is not in a position to provide this.

C. The United States will continue to assist Thailand in combating insurgency. We intend to continue our economic and military aid programs. The US is looking favorably upon Thailand's requests for additional helicopters and M-16 rifles. Without going into detail, the Vice President stated that we hoped to deliver a substantial number of M-16s early this year.

D. The US clearly understands the importance of Laos to Thailand and we are concerned with the situation there. The Vice President assured the Thai that we felt any agreement reached at the Paris Peace Talks should recognize the integrity of Laos and call for the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from that country back into North Vietnam.

5. Project Taksin. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the reassurances offered by the VP. He said that he had raised the

issue of US commitments because the Thai were concerned over recent comments by high-ranking officials in the United States, not only Senators but Secretary Laird. The Thai could not understand our Defense Secretary's statement that Plan Taksin did not have either his or the President's approval.² Although Amb Unger had sought to clarify this statement, it was still most disturbing to the Thai. The Vice President replied that Secretary Laird's statement could be best understood in its local Washington context. The Secretary had merely been attempting to put out a political fire—a fire which the Vice President felt had begun with some rather irresponsible comments in the Senate. Mr. Laird had been attempting to dispel the false impression created by the media that the United States had secret contingency agreements which could be automatically activated without further review by the Secretary of Defense or the President. The Sec of Defense frankly had not had the occasion to review in detail and approve Project Taksin since this would likely take place only in an emergency situation when the USG would be considering how best to help the RTG.

6. Thai Support for SEATO. The Vice President expressed concern that troublemakers were attempting to drive a wedge between the US and its friends by implying that the US was planning to withdraw from this part of the world. We should not put much stock in such rumors and propaganda. As an example of how such rumors could upset people, the Vice President mentioned that we had heard that the Thai might be planning to drop out of SEATO. Although just a rumor, this concerned us greatly and we certainly hoped it was not true.

7. The Prime Minister responded that recent insulting comments by US Senators had been most upsetting to the Thai, Filipinos and others. These insults, plus revelations of what the Thai regarded as classified defense plans, adversely affected the normal SEATO relationships. However, the Thai have no desire to withdraw from SEATO or to see it broken up. As a matter of fact, the Thai have tolerated the lukewarm attitude and actions of certain European members of the Treaty Organization. The Prime Minister stated flatly that the Thai intend to keep working hard to preserve the regional defense arrangement.

8. The Vice President agreed that a few Senators have done serious disservice to the US in the way they have talked about our allies. Their statements were being played up by our enemies in an effort to try to destroy SEATO. On this score the Vice President had told President Marcos, and he wished now to repeat to the Prime Minister, that the US remained firm in its resolve to support SEATO. It was most important, in the Vice President's view, not to allow troublemakers to dis-

² See footnote 3, Document 20.

turb the good relations which existed between the US and its allies. The Vice President noted that Senators have many prerogatives but he felt that recent actions by some Senators had been less than statesmanlike. Leaving the question of substance aside for the moment, he regretted that their manner had been so insulting. As an American the Vice President felt obliged to apologize, even though neither he nor the President had any control over members of the Legislative Branch.

9. Symington Hearings. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the Vice President's statement, however he still felt obliged to touch upon those very derogatory statements which alleged that Thai soldiers were being used as mercenaries in Vietnam. Feeling was running high in Thailand over these insults, and many people felt the US does not appreciate what the Thai are doing in Vietnam. The Prime Minister could not hide the fact that the Thai had been dismayed by such statements as "the Thai are the best allies money can buy."

10. The Vice President again expressed his regret, and noted that such comments certainly do not reflect a majority of American views. He said that he himself had come in for a great deal of abuse, often from the same sources. The mercenary argument was so weak, in the Vice President's opinion, that he doubted any fair-minded American would subscribe to it. Mercenaries had historically fought far from home and had never felt any particular "involvement" in the conflicts they participated in. It is impossible to imagine that the Thai are not vitally concerned with what happens in Vietnam, so the mercenary argument really makes no sense. On the contrary, people in the US are most grateful for the efforts of Thai volunteers in Vietnam and realize that any support we can give the RTG is but a small token of our appreciation for its help. The Vice President was certain that such outrageous statements would never strike a responsive chord in the minds of the US public. He hoped that a more cool appraisal by the Cabinet would indicate that the offending Senators certainly did not speak for the United States.

11. The Prime Minister said he would like nothing better than to believe these assurances, but after all, in a democracy the repetition of falsehoods, even by a small minority, might snowball into a situation which could force a change in US policy. He pointed out that even in Thailand five Peace Corps volunteers had demonstrated against the Vice President's arrival. (*Note:* Investigation is still underway to ascertain the precise nature of this demonstration and its participants.)

12. The Vice President indicated he felt that the anti-war demonstrations had reached their highpoint with the Moratorium marches in November. Despite the media treatment of the demonstrations, it now seemed clear that they had so completely failed to attract public support that additional announced demonstrations had been cancelled.

Rather than provoking changes in US policy, the demonstrations had in fact caused Americans to coalesce behind the administration's position. Public opinion polls and mail received since the President's November 3 television speech had clearly shown the public support for our policies in Vietnam.

13. Insurgency Problems. The Vice President asked the Prime Minister to give him a rundown of the current status of the insurgency in Thailand. The Prime Minister replied that the situation was generally under control, but that since the end of the rainy season, infiltration from Laos appeared to be increasing. In response to a question, he stated that increased infiltration in the north and in the northeast seemed to be under a centralized command. The Thai were working hard to interdict the infiltrators. The Prime Minister wished to reiterate that while Thailand intends to rely on its own forces to combat insurgency, the RTG will need to receive material support for its forces. The Prime Minister had spoken to President Nixon on this point and had felt that he was receptive. The Vice President confirmed that we wished to be receptive to Thai military aid requests.

The Prime Minister stated that the RTG counter-insurgency policy was not simply one of meeting force with force, but also relied heavily on attempting to improve economic conditions. He claimed the Thai were committing "enormous resources to rural development." In addition, they were working hard to improve the quality of local officials and to involve the local populace directly in government programs. The Vice President stated that President Nixon was most impressed with the way the Thai were approaching their insurgency problem, and added that we respect their right to chart their own course in this area.

14. PL-480. The Prime Minister touched briefly on the Thai concern over their loss of the rice sale to South Vietnam. Rice sales, after all, were not economically important to the United States, but were of vital importance to Thailand where they were taxed by the Govt. and were thus of importance as a source of revenue as well as foreign exchange. He felt that there had not been sufficient consultation between the United States and the RTG on this question. The Vice President said we were very aware of the problem which had developed and hoped that some sort of compensatory deal could be worked out between the RTG and GVN. In addition, the Vice President pledged that we would try harder to consult more closely on matters of economic importance to Thailand in the future.

15. In a related discussion on economic development, the VP underlined the importance of the role which can be played by private business and investment, and mentioned the residence problems of US businessmen in Thailand. The PM acknowledged this and said he had asked the Cabinet to find a solution.

16. Thai Troop Withdrawals. The Prime Minister moved to the question of future Thai troop withdrawals from Vietnam. He said that any withdrawals would be related to improvement in the Vietnam situation and to security requirements in Thailand, and would not be based on US or Australian withdrawal schedules. If problems develop in Thailand requiring more troops, the RTG will simply have to withdraw from Vietnam. However, the Thai will consult first with their allies, particularly the US. The Vice President agreed that adequate advance consultation is of major importance to prevent doubts from clouding our relations and to avoid providing our enemies with propaganda opportunities. We have been deficient in this regard ourselves, and will make every effort to consult more closely on our plans in the future.

17. US Relations With Communist Countries. The Vice President asked the Prime Minister for his views on the Sino-Soviet split. After brief comments the Prime Minister said that since the US had entered into discussions with both the Russians and the ChiComs, he hoped the Vice President might provide the Thai leaders with some new insights. The Vice President replied that President Nixon believes he has a responsibility to try to lessen world tensions. Accordingly, we have begun some very important discussions on strategic arms limitation with the Soviet Union. It is too early to tell how the talks will turn out, but we are sincere in our attempt to plumb Soviet intentions.

18. In addition, we have made some small moves toward Communist China which are designed to determine how intransigent their policies are. As the Thai know, we have received no encouragement from the ChiComs so far. The Prime Minister commented that these moves toward the ChiComs had raised some doubts in the minds of our Asian friends, especially in the Republic of China. The Vice President once again offered assurances that our intentions to reduce tensions should in no way be construed as a diminution of our commitments to our allies.

19. In closing the Vice President expressed appreciation for the candor and understanding expressed by the Prime Minister. The discussions were valuable to the Vice President personally, and to the USG. The Vice President looked forward to a continued, mutually beneficial relationship with the RTG, and in response the Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the assurances which the Vice President had offered.

Galbraith

44. Telegram From the Vice President's Party to the Department of State¹

Bali, January 12, 1970, 0330Z.

Vipto 12/19. Dept pass Bangkok. VP Channel. Subj: Vice President's Meeting With the King and Queen of Thailand January 4, 1970.

1. The meeting was held at the Royal Palace. In attendance were the King, Queen, Prime Minister, Ambassador Unger, Commander Cernan, as well as other aides.

2. The meeting began with an exchange of gifts between the principals and presentation to the King of the Thai flag and moon rocks by Commander Cernan.

3. Surprisingly, there was very little small talk between the King and me, and he moved quickly to the substantive matters. He expressed his concern over the Symington Subcommittee's testimony with particular regard to the characterization of the Thai soldiers as "mercenaries". I assured him that this was not the prevalent American opinion and that President Nixon wished the Thai people to be aware of the continuing appreciation of the United States for their support in Vietnam and for their effective battle against insurgency in the north and northeast of their own country.

4. The King expressed grave concern over the situation in Laos, indicating that very serious mistakes were made at the time of the 1962 Geneva Accords—principally the failure to partition Laos in such a manner as to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail. When I inquired about the activities of the Pathet Lao, he indicated that their effort would collapse without active North Vietnamese cadres prodding them and threatening them with execution should they not continue the fight against the Laotian Government.

5. The King indicated that the Thais were very concerned that a possible settlement in South Vietnam would not include a satisfactory requirement that the North Vietnamese withdraw entirely from Laos. I assured him that his position was understood and that we would consult in advance with the Thai Government to make certain that the Laotian situation was satisfactorily covered in any final agreement with the Communists.

6. I asked the King about Sihanouk and how he appraised the present Cambodian position. I expressed concern over the augmenta-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/AGNEW. Secret; Immediate.

tion of shipments through Cambodia, particularly since the Vietnamization program was under its severest test in the Delta area. The King said that he felt Sihanouk was playing a dangerous game, but that he was virtually the captive of a nearly impossible situation. The moment that Sihanouk ceases to cooperate marginally with the Communists, the King said, he would be faced with wide-spread and effective insurgency which would probably result in his overthrow. Moreover, the King felt that so long as Sihanouk closed his eyes to the flow of Communist materials through his country he was in a better position to at least allow some American observation. He indicated that the Thailand-Cambodia ill feeling had receded to some extent and that he appreciated the difficulty of Sihanouk's position.

7. The King is very worried about increasing Communist capability in stimulating the insurgency in Thailand. The intention of the Communists is demonstrated by their focus of effort on the road construction program in Laos, and particularly the road that leads southwest toward Thailand. The King said that he did not think Souvanna Phouma wanted to encourage this venture, but that he did not know how to cut it off, having agreed to Communist road building assistance in other northern areas of Laos. The King's fear is that a good road will allow the rapid movement of troops and materials from North Vietnam to the Thai borders and that the supplying of the insurrection will become much easier.

8. My general impression of the King was very favorable. I assess him to be an extremely brilliant and intense young man who has a remarkable capability of concentration. Whatever he attempts he seems to throw himself completely into, and I would judge that he has a greater effect on the foreign policy of Thailand than the conventional monarch. He seems to have great social awareness and indicated that he was moving to provide increased social assistance to his people in the areas of education, health and land reform.

Galbraith

45. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, January 22, 1970.

SUBJECT

Economic Assistance to Thailand—FY 1970

I. Recommendation:

That you approve the continuation in FY 1970 of the A.I.D. program in Thailand, consisting primarily of advisory and financial support of Thai police and developmental measures to prevent the growth of Communist insurgency in the North and Northeast, at a total obligational level of approximately \$30 million of grant funds. No PL 480 assistance is proposed.²

II. Issue: Political Interpretation of Reduced FY 1970 Program Level

Discussion:

We are nearing the time in our discussion with the Royal Thai Government when we will be ready to make the major FY 1970 commitments in the A.I.D. program for Thailand. Prior to this agreement, we are submitting this Country Memorandum describing the program and the major policy issue for your consideration.

As shown in the table below, our obligations in the Thailand program rose to a peak of \$53.3 million in FY 1967, fell slightly to \$46.7 million in FY 1968, and last year were only \$35.5 million.

	<u>FY 1964</u>	<u>FY 1965</u>	<u>FY 1966</u>	<u>FY 1967</u>	<u>FY 1968</u>	<u>FY 1969</u>
Grant	12.7	19.0	43.3	49.8	46.7	35.5
Loan		³		3.5 ³		
Total	12.7	19.0	43.3	53.3	46.7	35.5

Our FY 1970 Congressional Request for the Thailand program was \$45 million. Due to Congressional action on our request for funds,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AID (US) THAI. Confidential. A covering January 13 memorandum from Hannah to Rogers, attached but not printed, indicates that both memoranda were drafted by George K. Pierson, Office Director for Southeast Asia, Bureau of East Asia, Agency for International Development, and were cleared by Green and Dexter, among others.

² The approve option was checked and a typewritten notation at the top of the first page reads: "The President approved (Jack Murphy to jmj, 3/10/70)."

³ A \$20.3 million loan was authorized in 1965 and then deobligated in 1967 and therefore is not shown in these figures. [Footnote in the source text.]

A.I.D. expects to reduce many of its country programs this year. Because Thailand competes with Vietnam for scarce supporting assistance funds, we will not be able to provide the full FY 1970 amount originally proposed. Taking into account funds still in the pipeline from prior year obligations, we believe our FY 1970 program requirements can be satisfied with up to \$30.0 million: \$22 million supporting assistance, and \$8.0 million technical assistance, including family planning.

Our assistance to Thailand plays a three-fold role by: (1) providing actual resources to help carry out Thailand's counterinsurgency effort; (2) promoting greater Thai attention and resource allocation to counterinsurgency measures and providing us an opportunity to influence the direction of this Thai effort—the primary aim of our program; (3) demonstrating continuing high-level interest in Thailand.

With respect to the above, we believe a program level of about \$30.0 million essentially is adequate for the first two considerations. However, a \$30.0 million program will not completely satisfy the third.

The Thais have become increasingly concerned that a Vietnam settlement will affect adversely their own security. At the same time, they have a growing doubt about the nature and extent of U.S. interest in Southeast Asia in general and Thailand in particular. A.I.D. obligations for the Thailand program are considered by the Thais as one indication of this interest. Thus, anything less than last year's obligation level of about \$35.5 million will raise questions in their minds about our commitment. However, since a program of about \$30.0 million is all our projects usefully can absorb, a consideration understood by the Thais, we believe adverse political reaction can be minimized and therefore are recommending this program level for Presidential approval.

III. U.S. A.I.D. Objectives and Strategy:

Thailand's importance to the U.S. lies in its key position in Southeast Asia, its key role in the economic and political development of the region, and its close cooperation with the U.S., particularly in support of our Vietnam effort. The basic U.S. assistance objective is to improve the Thai capacity for dealing with a Communist-supported insurgency threat.

The primary purpose of our program is to try to get the Thais to devote greater attention and allocate more resources to the security problem than they would in the absence of our program. Since the Thais contribute about \$2 from their own budget for every U.S. dollar of support to our joint projects, we exert influence not only through our advisory assistance, but also directly upon their budget allocation itself.

Both U.S. and Thai governments recognize that the fundamental responsibility for countering this insurgency belongs to the Thais. We

have concentrated our assistance in the North and Northeast of Thailand where incident rates have been highest and conditions conducive to insurgency are most acute. In combating the insurgency in other areas, the Royal Thai Government is using the strategy developed in our joint programs in the North and Northeast.

In dealing with the pressures of insurgency, Thailand has a number of strengths—its history of national independence, a widely-respected Royal Family, its well-established structure of government, and its strong economy. However, its highly-centralized government does not yet provide adequate channels for responding to local needs. Awareness and understanding on the part of Thai Government officials of the needs and aspirations of rural people and the increased commitment of resources are essential to the solution of Thailand's security problem. This weakness, even more than limitations of Thai manpower and fiscal resources, has been the greatest restraint on Thai Government efforts. It is this problem which is the principal focus of the A.I.D. program.

IV. Nature of Program:

Within the FY 1970 program, supporting assistance funds will be used primarily to facilitate Thai efforts to improve security in rural areas and to support Thai rural development programs. Technical assistance will be used to assist in more broadly developmental programs such as agriculture research and training, a river basin survey, private sector development, and improvements in Thai administration in civil service.

A. Rural Security

Against a \$30.0 million program level, about \$7.0 million of supporting assistance is proposed in FY 1970 for rural public safety programs. Our primary objective will be to help develop a rural security capacity of sufficient strength and efficiency to counter anticipated threats of communist terror and subversion to the rural populace. A.I.D. will continue to equip the new township police stations and vehicles and ammunition will be provided to the expanding police forces in the villages and to the mobile backup units now being manned.

B. Rural Development

The FY 1970 A.I.D. program includes about \$9.0 million for a number of rural development projects aimed primarily at increasing the government's responsiveness to village needs. This is a major part of our counterinsurgency strategy and is accomplished by providing advisory services and construction equipment to provincial authorities for impact programs such as feeder roads and small ponds.

C. Education and Health

A.I.D. also will help the Thais expand and improve their education and health services in the North and Northeast as an important part of our security-related program, and we are planning to provide about \$9.0 million for these purposes. We will continue to support mobile training units which provide vocational training to villagers as well as provide advisory services to a major Thai and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) financed vocational education project. Similarly, A.I.D. will provide commodities, advisory services, and participant training support to Thailand's rural health centers as well as its family planning program.

D. Government Administration

Consistent with our aim of narrowing the gap between the villager and government officials, A.I.D. support to in-service training will devote particular attention to provincial and local officials, as well as involve villagers in local self-government and project planning techniques. Our program includes about \$1.0 million for this purpose.

E. Longer-Range Regional Development

To establish a more rational framework for allocating Thai and U.S. resources to the development of the security-sensitive Northeast, we are providing advisory assistance to the Thai Economic Planning Agency and operating ministries in developing a plan for that area, and among other activities also are helping finance a study of a river basin in Northeast Thailand. We are planning to obligate about \$4.0 million for these activities, as well as for a few other projects such as private sector development.

V. Planning for the Future:

While our program rationale has been under continual review, this year the Agency will need to examine our program objectives and strategy for Thailand even more closely to determine if they will be valid in the near future. Our recent experience indicates the internal security problem in Thailand, while real, is a longer-range problem than was believed a few years ago. It does not pose an immediate threat to Thailand's political stability. This suggests that we should devote increased attention to identifying and bringing about fundamental changes in the political, social and economic conditions that foster insurgency, while stressing less short-run impact activities. Our strategy of concentrating our assistance in the North and Northeast of Thailand also must be reconsidered in this context.

Further, the situation in Thailand is being examined to determine the program implications of your statements at Guam and in the capitals of Southeast Asia, as well as the Administration's new Vietnam

policy. We will need to consider the program consequences of a post-war Vietnam settlement, with emphasis on the proper balance between the Agency's bilateral and regional assistance programs.

The National Security Council study on Thailand, now in the final stage of preparation, will address the major options open to the U.S. in our relations to Thailand, as well as the program implications of these options. This study will prove particularly useful to A.I.D. in conducting our review of the Thailand program.

Our current year program will not be affected by these examinations. Some program adjustments will be possible in FY 1971 and the FY 1972 presentation will take into full account the results of the current examination.

WPR

46. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand¹

Bangkok, January 28, 1970, 1515Z.

13154. Subject: Ambassador Sunthorn Meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary Barnett. Ref: Bangkok 508.²

1. On January 23, at Department's initiative, Sunthorn met with Barnett to discuss rice situation. Sunthorn presented aide-mémoire³ which reviewed importance of rice to Thailand including importance of timing of export shipments and adverse effects of "cutting in effected by American shipments to South Viet-Nam and expected supplies to Indonesia." Aide-mémoire concluded with statement "remedial measures of long-range effects are therefore essential."

2. Sunthorn began by stating Thailand has between 1.3 and 1.4 million tons of rice to sell and suggested U.S. could find a way to dispose of surplus rice in a way that Thailand might participate in sales to above countries, especially brokens which India and Ceylon also

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 15-8 INDON. Confidential. Drafted by Joseph B. Kyle (E/ORF/ICD) and Walter West (EA/TB) on January 27; cleared by Dexter; and approved by Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert W. Barnett (EA).

² Dated January 12. (Ibid.)

³ Not found.

use. Better grades of rice would be exported to traditional markets of Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore.

3. Barnett stated Thai should not imagine that we indifferent to or ignorant of problem, mentioning among other things Vice President's discussion of problem in Bangkok. Also referred to Thai good fortune in having second opportunity sell 20,000 tons to SVN, which would compensate original frustrated sale.

4. Barnett then reviewed history of rice shortage in Asia and U.S. rice acreage increase to avoid potential famine followed by acreage cuts to restore world supply demand equilibrium. Then explained differences of various types of markets including (1) usual Thai commercial markets (i.e. Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore), (2) Indonesia, (3) Viet-Nam and Korea and reasons for rice requirements of each. Main distinction emphasized was difference between aid channels and normal commercial outlets. Mutual interests and benefits of greater stability in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, were stressed and rationale for assistance to Indonesia explained in detail.

5. Barnett mentioned long term problem of dependency on rice exports and expressed gratification of Thai progress in other areas such as corn. Viet-Nam and Indonesia were characterized as undependable and unpredictable markets for Thai exports since, under normal circumstances, neither should be food importing countries. However, Barnett stressed that we not meeting all of Indonesia's requirements and it up to Thai to compete for commercial rice imports which amounted to about 400,000 tons during past year.

6. Sunthorn indicated appreciation of our position and agreed with desirability of long range diversification and industrial development but stated that flexibility limited in short run.

7. Memcon⁴ and copy of aide-mémoire being pouched.

8. Re consultation procedures, we did not tell Sunthorn that present system would be changed to accommodate RTG. As Embassy aware, we do not initiate consultations until interagency approval of proposed program obtained. Consultation period of ten working days generally accepted by members FAO Consultative Subcommittee on Surplus Disposal and unilateral decision by U.S. to give additional time to any consultee would meet with opposition, including within U.S. Government. Regarding Embassy follow-up in Bangkok, including supplying material to local press, information on proposed agreements is not to be made public, although occasionally such information has been [is] leaked. Procedures have been set up for the simultaneous public release of information at the time of signing between the U.S. and

⁴ Not found.

the recipient government. On occasion, final agreements differ from the proposal communicated to the consultees. This is due not only because of consultation with third countries, but also subsequent negotiations with the recipient government. Thus, premature announcement proposal could prejudice U.S. position during negotiations as well as cause embarrassment to government with which we are negotiating.

Rogers

47. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, February 6, 1970.

SUBJECT

Thai Relations

Ambassador Unger recently reported his concern² that the Thais were seriously considering moving towards the Soviets in reaction to a perceived reorientation of U.S. policy away from strong support of Thailand.³ You will recall that on Saturday last you would not clear

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III. Secret; Exdis. Sent for action.

² Telegram 1333 from Bangkok, January 30, reported Unger's conversation with Thanat on January 29, in which the latter spoke with deep pessimism about the future of the U.S.-Thai relationship and of SEATO. (Ibid.) Unger reiterated his concerns in a February 2 letter to Kissinger; attached but not printed.

³ In the conversation reported in telegram 1333 from Bangkok, Thanat concluded that the Church amendment, a legislative ban on the introduction of U.S. combat troops into Laos and Thailand, originally proposed by Senator John S. Cooper (R-Kentucky), later modified by Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho), and passed by Congress on December 18, 1969 (H-PL 91-171), would force Thailand to rethink its positions and policies and perhaps base its security on a pre-World War II, "or perhaps even pre-World War I," model. Unger told Thanat that it was his conviction that the United States Government "would respond to a situation such as that envisaged in SEATO article IV-1 and would have the support of the Congress. Circumstances at the time would dictate the nature of the response and whether or not it needed ground forces." Thanat replied that he could not ask his country to base its policy on "what decision that body (Congress) would take when his country might be about to be engulfed." (Ibid.)

State's proposed response which is attached at Tab A⁴ and states, *inter alia*, that:

—Thailand faces an uncertain future security environment.

—U.S. posture in east Asia in the 1970's will be different and inevitably affect U.S.-Thai relations.

—The U.S. policy trend represented by the Guam Doctrine will continue in a direction emphasizing Asian self-reliance and more rigorous definition of U.S. security commitments.

—Reductions in U.S. general purpose forces indicate that the executive branch must be more conservative than before in considering contingencies in which it would risk armed conflict.

—U.S.-Thai relations are likely to be affected by "continuing, even increasing, stringency in economic and military assistance appropriations."

—U.S. intentions will not require a relationship with Thailand as close and dependent [on Thailand's part]⁵ as in the past. Some loosening of our relationship would be healthy.

—In the process of moving to a more independent stance Thailand could become less closely aligned with the U.S. and more involved with the Soviets, which would not necessarily be an undesirable development. Thai initiatives to the Soviet Union are viewed without alarm.

—If the Thai relations became less one-sided the Soviets might be willing to contribute to multi-lateral institutions.

—The U.S. should no longer expect the degree of exclusiveness in U.S.-Thai relations that grew from the early cold war period and special conditions of the Vietnam War. More flexibility in Thai foreign policy is desirable.

Because you would not clear the message I have some indication that State is making its views known to Unger via back channel messages. Under the circumstances, there is every reason to expect Unger to become totally confused about your actual policies. Therefore, I would like to send a letter to Ambassador Unger⁶ giving him a clear interpretation of what is meant by the Nixon Doctrine.⁷

⁴ Attached but not printed.

⁵ Brackets in the source text.

⁶ An attached draft telegram to Unger bears the notation OBE.

⁷ Nixon initialed the approve option.

48. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 25, 1970, 5 p.m.

SUBJECT

U.S. Commitment and U.S. Congressional Attitudes

PARTICIPANTS

Thanat Khoman, Foreign Minister of Thailand
Ambassador Sunthorn, Thai Embassy, Washington
Ambassador Anand, Thai Permanent Representative to the United Nations

The Secretary
John B. Dexter, Country Director for Thailand and Burma

After a few opening remarks, the Secretary asked Thanat about conditions in Thailand, remarking that he gathered the Thai are “worried” about their security. Thanat confirmed this, indicating that they were worried mainly about U.S. congressional attitudes which, they fear, might limit the Administration’s ability to fulfill U.S. commitments.

The Secretary assured him that congressional actions and attitudes would have no effect on U.S. treaty commitments. Even the Church Amendment was not a restriction, the Secretary explained, because the Executive would in any case seek congressional concurrence if it wanted to use combat troops abroad. Thanat asked why in that case the Church Amendment was necessary. The Secretary explained that it was inspired by concern on the Hill about the war in Vietnam and a feeling that President Johnson and Secretary Rusk had misled the Congress as we became involved in that conflict, specifically in their presentation of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Now he said they want to be sure that they are properly informed and consulted.

The Secretary then recalled that the SEATO Treaty contains a provision that in taking action the signatories will follow their “constitutional processes,” to which Thanat commented bitterly, “Yes, an escape clause.” The Secretary continued that the Church Amendment merely

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI–US. Secret. Drafted by Dexter; approved by Moore (EA) and Okun (S) on March 12. The memorandum is part 1 of 4; part 2 is Document 49; part 3, entitled “Thanat Views on Relations with China,” and part 4, entitled “SEATO Council Meeting,” are not printed. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI–US) The meeting was held in the Secretary’s office.

reiterates the Senate's expectation that constitutional processes will be followed.²

Thanat observed that the Church Amendment refers to introducing "ground combat troops" and noted that the U.S. already has "troops" in Thailand. He wondered if those troops had the right to defend themselves. The Secretary explained that from our viewpoint the Church Amendment had no effect on the activities of U.S. military personnel now in Thailand who will naturally be expected to defend themselves if attacked. He said the amendment deals with a possible land war in Asia and the possibility that we might become involved in such a war without congressional approval. However, he repeated we would seek congressional approval in any case, just as had been done in Korea and as President Johnson thought he had done in Vietnam through the Tonkin Gulf resolution.

Thanat remarked that the Thai do not doubt the Administration's words in offering such reassurances but that the words of Congress raise doubts. He said he understands there is a struggle going on between Congress and the Executive for the control of foreign policy. He thought this was exemplified in congressional questioning about U.S. activities in Laos, adding that he thought attacks on U.S. policy in Laos were really intended indirectly for Thailand.

The Secretary responded that the real target is the Administration, that congressional attacks represent a feeling that Congress has not been adequately consulted and their determination that in the future they will be consulted. He repeated the point that the Executive would, under any circumstances, feel obliged to consult Congress on any measures that might involve armed combat.

Thanat asked about the "secret agreement" (Plan Taksin) and the Rusk-Thanat communiqué. What is the Administration's view on these? With regard to the latter, the Secretary recalled that when he was in Bangkok last year he reaffirmed the Rusk-Thanat communiqué and added that subsequent events had not in any way altered that position. As for the "secret agreement", he repeated the by-now-standard

² Telegram 19972 to Bangkok, February 10, complimented Unger on the "lucidity" of his response to Thanat's concerns as reported in telegram 1333 from Bangkok (see footnotes 2 and 3, Document 47). It noted that if "Thanat and others remain uneasy despite repeated assurances and explanations by the most authoritative U.S. Govt. spokesmen, then we have little hope that we could put their fears to rest by prefabricating new forensic ammunition. On the contrary we conclude that Thai concern is based largely upon their interpretation of the facts and we cannot deny that the facts of their situation do indeed give them reason for concern." It continued that "we see no profit for either ourselves or Thai in trying to gloss over the problem by proffering unrealistic and inflated reassurances. We cannot rid SEA of all conditions potentially threatening Thai security and we cannot expand our commitment to help them beyond what is stated in the SEATO treaty." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 1 THAI-US)

explanation that we regard this as a contingency military plan which clearly provides that both governments must approve before it can be put into effect. He said Congress had been concerned because it thought it was a "secret treaty" but it is really no more than a plan. (Thanat then muttered, "Yes, like an executive agreement.") The Secretary repeated that the plan required agreement between the two governments before it could be put into effect and that we thought of it as coming under the SEATO Treaty with its provision for constitutional processes.

Later in the conversation, after other subjects had been discussed, Thanat reverted to his concern about Congress, stating that his Prime Minister follows events on Capitol Hill closely and is worried. He mentioned that Ambassador Unger had given him (Thanat) shortly before he left Bangkok a useful memorandum on congressional developments but said the RTG is not happy. He said, "We want to establish squarely where responsibility lies."

The Secretary explained that from our viewpoint there is no problem at this time. He said that when he was in Bangkok last year there had been a problem because of strong sentiment in the United States against our Vietnam war policy, but that the situation was now quite different. He cited a recent Gallup poll indicating that 64 percent of the people favored the President's policy in Vietnam as compared with only 24 percent opposed. Previously he said there had been a problem of congressional pressure on our Vietnam policy but this was no longer serious except to the extent that it caused the Thai to be disturbed and fearful that we might disengage from the region. He elaborated on the point by comparing U.S. sentiment which had compelled President Johnson to decide against seeking reelection with the relative lack of interest in Vietnam today.

The Secretary expressed confidence that there is general public acceptance today of the President's policy, of which key elements are that we will not disengage from our responsibilities in Asia but will phase down our presence at a rate geared to the ability of local governments to take over. He mentioned as an example that we now have many troops in Korea but that, in due course, we will probably want to reduce them gradually, though not to withdraw them entirely. In any case, he said, we will not disengage or renege on our treaty commitments.

Thanat commented that the Thai for their part would also keep their promise not to call on outside manpower to help them with their internal insurgency problem, though they will appreciate continuing U.S. assistance.

49. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 25, 1970, 5 p.m.

SUBJECT

RTG Views on Laos

PARTICIPANTS

Thanat Khoman, Foreign Minister of Thailand
Ambassador Sunthorn, Thai Embassy, Washington
Ambassador Anand, Thai Permanent Representative to the United Nations
The Secretary
John B. Dexter, Country Director for Thailand and Burma

The Secretary asked how the Thai view things in Laos. Thanat responded that they were worried and that just before he left Bangkok there had been several Security Council meetings on the subject. He said they are not sure of Communist intentions. Possibly the Communists merely intend to secure the Ho Chi Minh Trail, but there are other indications that they may also have designs on Thailand. He cited the Chinese road. (He noted as a "nuance" that in the construction, after a certain village had been reached—he could not recall the name—the Chinese no longer used Chinese personnel but only Pathet Lao or North Vietnamese.) He said the Thai fear that the road is being constructed to serve potentially as another "Ho Chi Minh Trail" if the Chinese choose to move against Thailand in the future.

The Secretary remarked that since his last conversation with Thanat the war in Vietnam had been going worse for the North Vietnamese and that both infiltration and the intensity of combat were considerably reduced. Thanat observed that this was offset by increased Communist efforts in Laos. He added that there was also increased guerilla infiltration into Thailand. He said his Prime Minister was much concerned and had asked him specifically to express his concern to the Secretary.

Thanat said the Thai would be willing to help the effort in Laos by operating helicopter gunships and added that the RLG would also like them to do this. He said the Thai had trained personnel to operate them but would need help. He indicated vaguely that they might require additional helicopters (though he may have been referring to equipment needed to convert existing helicopters to gunships).

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL THAI-US. Secret. Drafted by Dexter and approved by Moore and Okun on March 12. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office. The memorandum is part 2 of 4; regarding parts 1, 3, and 4, see footnote 1, Document 48.

50. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, February 25, 1970.

SUBJECT

Economic Assistance to Thailand for FY 1970

State (Tab A)² requests your approval of \$30 million in grants for economic assistance to Thailand in FY 1970. Treasury and BOB (Tab B)³ concur.

This is a reduction from our FY 1969 obligations of \$35.5 million and FY 1968 obligations of \$46.7 million. The reduction adds to Thai doubts about U.S. interest in them. State feels that the Thais understand that the reduction is due to Congressional cuts in AID appropriations and a shortage of projects, so the adverse political reactions can be minimized.

The program's primary objective is to help preserve the security of Thailand, partly by inducing the Thais to allocate more resources to their own security programs. Our program concentrates on providing advisory and financial support to the Thai police, and assisting in development programs, to try to prevent the growth of Communist insurgency in the North and Northeast.

Specifically, the program provides:

—\$7 million for a public safety program, to help develop a security capacity sufficient to counter the growth of Communist insurgency in the rural areas.

—\$9 million for the accelerated rural development program, which emphasizes road construction and other projects aimed at increasing the Government's responsiveness to village needs.

—\$14 million to help increase support for the Thai Government in the North and Northeast, by helping their programs in health, education, agriculture and public administration.

In addition to the bilateral program proposed in State's memorandum, AID conducts a \$14 million East Asia Regional Program, roughly half of which benefits Thailand. The regional program is grow-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III. Secret. Sent for action. A notation on the first page reads: "Holdridge action."

² Attached at Tab A but not printed is a January 22 memorandum from Rogers to the President.

³ Attached at Tab B but not printed is a February 11 memorandum from Mayo to the President.

ing in importance and could expand rapidly if its support for Mekong River Basin projects moves beyond the feasibility study phase.

The NSSM 51 study of Thailand, now in the final stages of preparation, will address the major options open to the U.S. in our overall relations with Thailand. Issues which will be considered in that study are, inter alia:

—Have we overemphasized quick-impact counter-insurgency programs at the expense of longer-term development programs?

—Have we pushed the Thais into programs which they feel are of low priority, and will be discontinued by the Thais after U.S. inputs are withdrawn?

—Can the Thais take full responsibility for their public safety program and their accelerated rural development program?

Your approval of the recommended program for FY 1970 will not prejudice these decisions for FY 1971, which can be made in the context of the NSSM 51 study.

*Recommendations*⁴

1. That you approve the \$30 million economic assistance program for Thailand in FY 1970 proposed by State.

2. That you authorize me to instruct State/AID to develop economic assistance options for FY 1971, consistent with the broader options of NSSM 51.

⁴ Nixon initialed both approve options; a notation indicates S/S was notified on March 10.

51. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, March 3, 1970, 1140Z.

2550. Subject: Meeting With Prime Minister. Ref: A. State 027316 (Joint State/Def); B. State 030190; C. Bangkok 2522; D. State 023802.²

1. During cordial meeting with PM at Government House March 2 to discuss deployment of Sierra Romeo IX³ (reported ref c), I took the opportunity to inform him, in general terms (without divulging specific or sensitive information), of items I considered would be pertinent to his interests that were recently discussed at SEACORD meeting. I covered the military situation in SVN, status of pacification, our views of Hanoi's post-hostilities planning and the Vietnamization program, including a word about its relation to third country forces.

2. The PM was very interested and brought up several points the most important of which concerned Vietnamization. He pointedly asked whether the U.S. was training and equipping the RVNAF to replace U.S. forces only or whether we also planned to replace Thai and other allied forces. I explained to him that for the purposes of the Vietnamization program we were now discussing the revitalized VN forces were intended to replace a substantial share of U.S. forces in SVN but that in the longer run I assumed their eventually replacing FWF was also contemplated. (I had already said that some U.S. troops which would be remaining in SVN through the Vietnamization process would continue to provide the Black Panthers with the various kinds of support from U.S. forces they are receiving today; my comment was based on my discussions last week in Saigon.) He responded that he had been under considerable pressure from Parliament to withdraw Thai forces from SVN in face of continued U.S. and allied reductions. In response to my direct question on whether it was his feeling that he would be obliged to carry our reductions, he did not say he intended to reduce the Thai troop contributions in SVN, but again stressed that he was under growing pressure from the representatives in Parliament and said that "when the people feel very strongly about a situation, the government must do something to ease that situation."

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 1 THAI–US. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Repeated to Vientiane, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACHTHAI.

² Refrels A–D are not printed.

³ Sierra Romeo was the codename for the Thai artillery unit which was periodically inserted into and withdrawn from Laos in response to Communist pressure against the Lao Government forces, mostly the Meo tribesmen on the mountain front; see Document 29.

3. I replied that I was aware of and sympathetic to his problem. The USG had warmly appreciated his statement that the RTG intended to maintain the Thai forces in SVN as long as the GVN needs them or until Thailand itself requires those forces. I added that my government hoped the RTG would retain all of the Thai forces in SVN, or at least a substantial part of them, at least during the Vietnamization process. I had already emphasized, however, that the Vietnamization program did not have a specific schedule for completion but its rate depended upon intensity of enemy activity on the battlefield, the capacity of the Vietnamese to take over the combat role and progress in Paris, if any. I then pointed out the psychological and political importance of having not only U.S. forces but Thai and other allied forces as well to support the GVN during the period of its takeover of the combat responsibility. I also pointed out the importance of the Thai forces in protecting the eastern and southeastern approaches to Saigon and thus freeing GVN forces, as Vietnamization proceeds to establish a stronger Vietnamese military presence in remote areas along the Cambodian border. I requested that, if at any time he felt he had to decide to withdraw some of the Thai forces, I be given the opportunity to discuss his plans with him before he takes any action. He said that he would discuss such plans with the cabinet, GVN, and indicated that I would also have an opportunity to talk with him.

4. In connection with Vietnamization I told the PM that the U.S. forces in Thailand might have some additional functions to perform here because some of the combat support activities now being conducted in SVN such as air defense, air interdiction and reconnaissance might, as Vietnamization proceeds, have to be continued from outside SVN, e.g., Thailand and elsewhere. I added that while there appeared to be a continuing need to have U.S. forces and personnel in Thailand to support the VN effort until Vietnamization is well down the road, I did not believe this ruled out a continuation of the gradual reduction of U.S. forces in Thailand which we and the RTG had jointly got underway last September. I speculated that we might have a follow-on reduction to the present one in the next fiscal year which would reduce our forces by about the same magnitude and that I would consult with the RTG as our plans developed. He acknowledged these points without comment.

5. *Comment.* The PM carefully avoided saying that he would at some point have to withdraw all or part of the Thai forces. However, it was clear that he wished to register the point of Parliamentary pressure and I did not press the matter beyond making clear our interest in maintaining Thai forces and in being consulted about any reduction plans. I believe that in sharing with the PM some of our thinking on questions I know weigh heavily on his mind we have restored some

substance to our dialogue. I hope I will have made available to me timely information with which to continue such exchanges of information on matters of importance to the Thai, which also give us an opportunity to gain valuable insights into their thinking.

Unger

52. Editorial Note

In February 1970, North Vietnam began an offensive in Laos which caused great concern to both the Thai and U.S. Governments. The Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) began a series of meetings on the crisis in Laos in March 1970 that are covered in depth in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Documents 203, 204, 207, 209, and 211–213.

One of the key issues discussed by the WSAG was the question of whether Thai troops should reinforce friendly troops in the Long Tieng and other areas of Laos. In the March 19 WSAG meeting, the CIA's briefing officer, [*name not declassified*], noted that "the recently deployed Sierra Romeo IX Thai artillery battalion" was among friendly forces at Long Tieng facing severe North Vietnamese pressure. Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger wondered about the consequences if any of the Thai were captured by the North Vietnamese. The CIA Deputy Director for Plans, Thomas H. Karamessines, said [*text not declassified*], "but that there certainly might be problems if some of them were captured." In response to Kissinger's question about what further forces could be put into the defense of Long Tieng, U. Alexis Johnson mentioned a Thai regimental combat team (RCT) that had been advocated by the Ambassador to Laos, G. McMurtrie Godley. However, Johnson noted that neither the Thai nor the Lao Governments had yet approached the United States about that step. Assistant Secretary Green pointed out that the RCT in question was the one designated in the Taksin Plan, "and its employment might raise the question of US action under the plan. He noted that Ambassador Unger thought that the RCT would not be suitable for anti-guerilla operations." In response to Kissinger's asking whether anyone favored using Thai troops, Admiral Nels Johnson said that the JCS thought that the possibility should be explored. Green said that the North Vietnamese might retaliate against the Thais if the Thais became more involved in Laos. When Kissinger asked if the introduction of Thai troops at this time would restrain the North Vietnamese, Green replied that on the contrary, the

North Vietnamese “would very much like to give the Thais a beating, and Karamessines agreed.” When Admiral Johnson circulated a draft JCS cable calling for the transfer of the 13th RCT and the Thai unit in South Vietnam to Laos, Green objected that the Thai unit in South Vietnam was made up of volunteers who were entitled to discharge if withdrawn from Vietnam. Green added that it was “highly important to maintain the multinational character provided by TCC units in South Vietnam.” Johnson raised the question of briefing Congress about the Sierra Romeo operation, but Kissinger said that this should not be done yet. Kissinger cautioned that the United States did not want a Thai debacle at Long Tieng. His final comment was that he would discuss the use of additional Thai forces with the President. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970)

53. Message From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman¹

Washington, March 22, 1970.

I am grateful for your personal message of March 22² and wish to reaffirm the assurances provided during my discussions with you as well as those given by President Nixon earlier.

We are watching the situation in Laos very closely and have instituted on an urgent basis additional measures to strengthen Lao defenses. You should be aware that we have just delivered three B-52

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 102, Country Files—Far East, Thanat (Foreign Minister), [2 of 2]. Secret. In a March 22 memorandum Haig requested that the message be passed “on an urgent basis through established backchannel” to Thanat.

² Thanat had cabled Kissinger earlier that same day through the same backchannel to advise that “The Lao Government has appealed to the Thai Government for urgent help especially for despatch of combat units to stem the Communist advance” and that the Thai Government was ready to respond favorably to this request. Thanat noted that the Thai Government was prepared to send one battalion immediately, to be followed by two more, if needed, “provided necessary material and logistic support is received from the United States Government. Such support may be accorded [*text not declassified*] through the [*text not declassified*] unit now operating in cooperation with Laotian forces.” Attached but not printed.

strikes in support of Lao forces in Plain des Jarres area. This information is provided for your exclusive knowledge and should not be divulged.

We are also urgently studying the proposal outlined in your message, as well as other possible emergency steps. I will be in touch with you on this matter in the immediate future.

Best wishes.

54. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Karamessines) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the President's Military Assistant (Haig)

Washington, March 22, 1970.

[Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 102, Country Files—Far East, Thanat (Foreign Minister), [2 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive. 4 pages of source text not declassified.]

55. Letter From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman¹

Washington, March 23, 1970.

Dear Mr. Foreign Minister:

My colleagues and I have had an opportunity to study your letter of March 22.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 102, Country Files—Far East, Thanat (Foreign Minister), [2 of 2]. Secret. In a March 24 memorandum to the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Kissinger noted that his message to Thanat had been drafted by the Department of State and had “been approved and slightly modified by the President. It was dispatched via the same channel that Foreign Minister Thanat’s message was sent to me.” Attached but not printed.

You can rest assured that we are deeply concerned about recent developments in Laos and we appreciate the Thai wish to accede to the Royal Lao Government's appeal by dispatching an infantry battalion and possibly other units as well if future needs should dictate. We fully recognize the danger that Communist advances in Laos could ultimately pose to the security of Thailand which is, of course, a matter of highest importance to the United States. It is for this reason that we have recently taken the air actions of which I informed you yesterday as well as other steps designed to bring home to Hanoi the seriousness of our view of its actions.

Nevertheless, we are not convinced that the proposed deployment of Thai troops additional to those now serving in Laos with the Sierra Romeo artillery battery would be effective at this time. It is our current assessment that the fate of Long Tieng is not likely to be decided by introduction of such additional ground troops. Perhaps the best move that could be made at this time would be for you to assemble these battalions into an RCT at an advanced base (i.e., Udorn) and see that it is trained and readied against the contingency of further moves the North Vietnamese may make.

In expressing this judgment, I do not wish to imply in any way that, from a military viewpoint, Thai contributions to the Laos struggle have not been or will not continue to be extremely valuable. The Thai artillery battery now at Long Tieng has, according to our reports, been performing extremely well and may be given a large part of the credit for the fact that that outpost is still in Lao Government hands. We are also conscious that your Government's contributions, through your advisors in Laos, have been most important in improving the capability of the Lao Government forces. Our decision with respect to the proposed additional deployment of infantry is based upon our judgment that at this time, the risks and costs of this move would not be justified by the prospects of military success.

The President hopes that our two Governments will continue to maintain the closest contact with each other and with the Royal Lao Government on developments in Laos and on possible military and political means to stabilize the situation.

With warm regards,
Sincerely,

Henry A. Kissinger²

² Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

56. Editorial Note

According to the minutes of the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of March 25, 1970, which lasted from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger told the group that he had just been with President Nixon, “who wasn’t inclined to let Laos go down the drain and let the record show he had disregarded the appeals of the King of Laos, Souvanna and Thanat.” Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson noted that the group had just been discussing alternatives and he outlined them for Kissinger. The first two alternatives, 1) acceding to the Thai and Lao request by introducing the Thai battalion as [*text not declassified*] and 2) agreeing to move the Thai battalion in and providing pay and allowances, but as openly declared Thai forces [*text not declassified*], were given the most attention.

When Kissinger asked what advantage there would be in declaring the Thai presence, Johnson replied that “there would be an advantage in the U.S. showing that we were not continuing to fight a secret war, but rather that the Thais felt strongly enough to take a clear stand.” Kissinger then asked if the Thais would be willing to declare their forces. Johnson responded that this remained to be seen, stating that with respect to Long Tieng, the Thais were reluctant, “but if the RCT crossed the border, he didn’t see how they could be expected to act in any other way.” General Earle Wheeler of the JCS said that this issue raised the question of SEATO commitments. Kissinger added to this, wondering [*2 lines of source text not declassified*]

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Marshall Green noted, however, that the more covert the operation, “the more suspect it would be, and the more press criticism would arise.” Green thought that they might get away with a small operation, “but if it were larger it wouldn’t jell.”

The WSAG went on to discuss the numbers, mechanics, and details of Thai troop assistance. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970) The full text of the minutes of this meeting are in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Document 211.

The WSAG met on March 26 from 8:53 a.m. to 9:22 a.m., again in the White House Situation Room, concerned about the seriousness of the Laos situation and the gravity of the decisions to be made. Kissinger asked if anyone had had any second thoughts during the night. Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard replied “We would prefer not to put Thai troops into Laos now.” Kissinger asked if the United States was in a position to make a commitment to move Thai troops. General Cushman of the CIA replied that “the troops would be in place 36 hours after approval is received.”

Kissinger then advanced two options: option 1 was an airlift of a Thai battalion of 600 men to Long Tieng, and option 2 was a commitment to Souvanna and Thanat to prepare a full RCT of three battalions for introduction into Laos at a later date. Kissinger gave a detailed explanation of the pros and cons of each option.

Kissinger noted that "The President's preference [for putting Thai troops in Laos] has not abated." Johnson warned against building up Long Tieng into "a turning point of the struggle in Laos" and against the "Dienbienphu factor." Kissinger stated that the President wanted to know whether, "if we move in a Thai battalion, the enemy could then isolate it." General Wheeler replied: "Sure they could but it would be a difficult operation. I don't think the Meo and Thai would sit in Long Tieng for a long siege. They would just fade into the bush."

In weighing option 2, Kissinger noted that if Long Tieng fell the North Vietnamese would have moved closer to the Thai border, the effectiveness of the Lao forces would be less, "our commitment would be greater," and that it "would be difficult to avoid linkage to SEATO and Plan Taksin."

[*text not declassified*] He added that the "Thais want to involve us. They consider that U.S. involvement is tantamount to victory."

Kissinger concluded the meeting by stating that the President wanted to make a decision by noon and that he was leaning toward option 1, moving the Thai battalion to Long Tieng as soon as possible. In response to Cushman's question as to whether the CIA could go ahead with the movement, Kissinger replied that "I will be in touch with you." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969-1970) The full text of the minutes of the meeting are in *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, volume VI, Document 212.

57. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹**

Washington, March 26, 1970.

SUBJECT

Thai Forces for Laos

As I discussed with you, Souvanna and Thanat both have urged again that we agree to movement of a battalion-size unit to assist in the defense of Long Thien. Therefore we convened a meeting of WSAG at the Undersecretary's level² to consider available options. Two were developed:

Option 1: We could quickly flesh out the equipment needs of a Thai battalion (about 900 men) now located at Udorn Air Base and airlift it to Long Thien. This could be accomplished in about 72–96 hours.

Pro: If this unit is put into position before an all-out attack by North Vietnamese forces it would increase the probability of holding Long Thien against the forces now deployed against it. But it would not assure that the position could be held. It would delay the NVA forces, however, at least for the time they would need to move forward the division now held in reserve 40 miles away. It would boost the morale of Vang Pao and his Meo forces and toughen their resistance. It would stabilize Souvanna and Thanat for the time being and reduce the risk of the whole situation unraveling. The chances for an organized retreat should that become necessary, and thus the saving of those forces, would be increased. Moreover, this action would be a clear signal to North Vietnam that we would not let a major threat to Laotian sovereignty go unchallenged. This response also would strengthen Souvanna's hand against those rightist elements who seek his removal and whose succession could complicate our relations.

Con: On the other hand, Long Thien might fall despite the introduction of the Thai unit. We could face the same dilemmas compounded by an additional commitment especially if the retreat is not orderly. We would also face a strong domestic outcry which could result in increased inhibitions on our air operations in Laos. If the Thai battalion were lost in the action, it could be a serious blow to Thai morale.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 102, Country Files—Far East, Thanat (Foreign Minister), [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive. Printed from an unsigned copy.

² See Document 56.

Option 2: We could tell Souvanna and Thanat that the best way to use Thai forces would be to prepare a full regiment of three battalions for introduction at a later stage should North Vietnam take Long Thien and continue to move southward. We would commit ourselves to proceed on this course if the need were to arise. We would consult with them now on how to equip and train the unit readying it for use when the time came and decide on a place for putting it.

Pro: This course would avoid the danger of a disaster involving substantial Thai forces at Long Thien (although over 300 Thais are already there with an artillery unit). We would be giving a favorable response to the urgent plea of Souvanna and Thanat. The domestic political problem would be somewhat reduced—we could point to the fact that we had waited until North Vietnamese intentions to overrun Laos had become unambiguous and that we had shown great restraint in the face of earlier strong pleas for our help. Since it is not certain that North Vietnam intends to move much beyond Long Thien, we might not have to move the Thais at all.

Con: This response is less than Souvanna has asked—it might not prevent him from stampeding—and seeking a deal with North Vietnam in the belief that we are not prepared to support him. Moreover, by waiting we may be in a worse position when and if we have to move the Thai forces. The North Vietnamese would have moved closer to the Thai border, effectiveness of the Lao forces would be less and our commitment would be greater. Moreover, it would be harder in those circumstances to avoid the involvement of our SEATO commitments and our Taksin plan understanding with the Thais.³

Recommendation

Option 1

Option 2

Neither

³ There is no indication that the President approved these recommendations, but Document 59 suggests that the President verbally instructed Kissinger to implement option 1.

58. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman¹

Washington, March 26, 1970.

As a one-time exception and because of the need to initiate coordination and local action promptly I have cleared a response to your message of March 22 through Ambassador Unger. He will therefore be informing your Government shortly of the President's favorable decision on your request to introduce one of your battalions into Laos.²

In addition to the information which Ambassador Unger will be providing, you should also be aware that we have approved another two B-52 missions in support of the battle for Long Tieng. The latter is exclusively for your information.

Best regards.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 102, Country Files—Far East, Thanat (Foreign Minister), [2 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. In a March 26 memorandum Haig requested that the message be transmitted "through our special channel" and "*not* be shared with any other individual."

² On March 27 a message from Thanat for Kissinger was received over the same special channel, stating that the "Prime Minister has asked me to convey to the President and to you his deep appreciation for the very significant decision which the President has taken, which will go a long way to strengthen the defence of Laos as well as the security of the area, particularly that of Thailand." (Ibid.)

59. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, March 26, 1970, 2:34–3:06 p.m.

SUBJECT

Laos

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

State	JCS
U. Alexis Johnson	Gen. Earle G. Wheeler
Marshall Green	NSC Staff
CIA	Gen. Haig
Lt. Gen. Robert E. Cushman, Jr.	Col. Kennedy
Thomas H. Karamessines	Col. Behr
William Nelson	Mr. Holdridge
Defense	Mr. Guthrie
G. Warren Nutter	
Lt. Col. Gerald H. Britten	

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The WSAG was informed of the President's decision to move a Thai battalion, on an unacknowledged basis, to Long Tieng as soon as possible in response to the requests received from Thanat and Souvanna.²

2. CIA will have responsibility for making arrangements to move the Thai Battalion to Long Tieng. In carrying out the operation, it should be understood clearly that an orderly retreat from Long Tieng, if necessary, is considered preferable to encirclement.

3. The State Department will prepare and submit to Dr. Kissinger draft messages to Thanat and Souvanna informing them of the President's decision.³

a. The message to Thanat will take the form of a letter from Mr. Kissinger and will be delivered to Thanat by Ambassador Unger. The letter should include a statement to the effect that we consider it would be a prudent measure that a regimental combat team be assembled. We will not make any U.S. commitment to provide support for this regimental combat team or for its employment.

b. The message to Souvanna will take the form of a letter from the President. It will note the need for Souvanna to make a formal request to the Thai Government for the battalion. However, preparations to move the battalion will not be delayed awaiting confirmation that a Lao request has been transmitted to the Thais.

4. Our public position, on an if-asked basis, will be the same as that already taken on Sierra Romeo, namely, that reports of movement of Thai troops to Laos are exaggerated and that the question is one for the Thai and Lao Governments, to whom inquiries should be directed. We will ask the Thai and Lao Governments to adopt a position of no

² On March 28 800 Thai troops were airlifted from Udorn to Long Tieng and took up positions in the Long Tieng defensive perimeter. (Memorandum from Karamessines to Kissinger, March 28; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 101, Vietnam Subject Files, SENSITIVE/Laos Souvanna Phouma/Long Tieng)

³ See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. VI, Document 214 and footnote 6 thereto.

comment in response to inquiries. We will urge the Thai and Lao Governments not to deny that additional Thai troops have been sent to Laos.

5. It was the consensus of the WSAG that the Administration should take the initiative in informing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the movement of the Thai Battalion to Laos. The WSAG recommended that the Committee be told that in response to requests from the Governments of Thailand and Laos, we are assisting with the movement of a few hundred more Thai troops to Laos. The new movement should be explained as an extension of the Sierra Romeo program about which the Committee has already been informed. Mr. Kissinger will seek the views of Bryce Harlow and will ask the President's approval of the WSAG proposal.

6. All operational communications involving the movement of the Thai battalion are to be handled through CIA channels. Other communications are to be transmitted through the most secure channels. Knowledge of the movement is to be restricted within each agency.

7. The letters which the President has already approved to signatories of the Geneva Convention other than Great Britain and the Soviet Union are to be dispatched.⁴

8. The WSAG and Laos Working Groups will revise their contingency plans to take into account the President's decision to move a Thai battalion to Laos.⁵

[Omitted here are the minutes of the meeting.]

⁴ See *ibid.*, footnote 5, Document 204.

⁵ Kissinger talked on the telephone with Nixon who was in Key Biscayne, Florida, at 5:10 p.m. on March 26. The portion of the conversation dealing with Laos follows: "P: And the Thai battalion, are we going to get them in there? K: That's done also. P: And there's going to be no announcement. We are just going to do it. We don't have to explain it. The Thais are defending their own country. Hell, I would do that, wouldn't you Henry? K: I had a long talk with Alex Johnson and he feels the same way. P: He's a nice guy." (Memorandum of telephone conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, March 26; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1009, Alexander M. Haig Special Files, Haig's Vietnam File—Vol. 5 [2 of 2])

60. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 8, 1970.

SUBJECT

Potential Thai Assistance to Cambodia

You have asked for an analysis² of the potential Thai contributions to improving the situation in Cambodia.³

In the *short term*, the Thai can help the Lon Nol Government by:

—Issuing a statement recognizing the Cambodian border along the present frontiers. This is something which Sihanouk never got from the Thai, and issuance of such a statement now might help to give the Lon Nol Government extra credit in the eyes of the Cambodian people. The Cambodians have long wanted the Thai to accept the existing frontiers, since Thailand has maintained a traditional claim to large areas of Western Cambodia.

—Getting the word to the Lon Nol Government that Thailand has no intention of causing any military problems for Cambodia along the Thai-Cambodian frontiers. This would permit the Lon Nol Government to shift military forces from the Thai borders to more critical areas in Eastern and Northeastern Cambodia.

—Backing up Cambodian political and diplomatic initiatives, e.g. supporting UN consideration of the Cambodian situation if Cambodia wants this, and helping out where possible to bring about reactivation of the ICC in Cambodia. Thai help in this sphere would be most useful if other Asian nations without too close ties to the US (for example Indonesia and Singapore) were also in the act.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III. Secret. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates that Kissinger saw it.

² An attached but not printed April 7 memorandum from Haig to Holdridge relayed Kissinger's request. A notation on that memorandum in Haig's handwriting reads: "HAK—This is a very sound analysis in my view. But who can muster the courage?" A notation beside it by Kissinger reads: "I want to discuss Thai contribution in Cambodia."

³ By "the situation in Cambodia," it is assumed that Holdridge was referring to the recent replacement of Prince Sihanouk by General Lon Nol as head of the Government of Cambodia and to the North Vietnamese occupation of significant portions of eastern and northern Cambodia, in order to assist in their infiltration of South Vietnam.

Over the *longer term*, Thailand might provide additional help by:

—Offering military aid to Cambodia. Cambodia still possesses sizeable stocks of US-supplied weapons, and the Thai might be able to provide (or act as a transit point for) ammunition, spare parts, and additional arms in the event that the Lon Nol Government finds it necessary to draw upon its US-supplied stocks to supplement the Communist arms with which the FARK is now mostly equipped. Conceivably, Thai LOCs to Cambodia could become very important in sustaining the Lon Nol Government.

—Once a sufficiently large number of other nations have recognized the Lon Nol Government, extending Thai diplomatic recognition. Lon Nol will probably need all the international backing he can get, but it would be unwise for Thailand to act too soon because of Thailand's close association with the US and the desirability of keeping Lon Nol's neutral credentials intact.

The Thai may already be thinking of taking some of the above steps, both short and longer-term, but could be stimulated into focussing more closely on possible actions through conversations with Ambassador Unger and others on his staff.

One step which I would not recommend would be introducing Thai troops into Cambodia. From our Laos exercise, we know that trained Thai troops are in any event hard to come by and might not be particularly helpful if the Lon Nol Government were attacked by NVA/VC forces. In addition, in view of Thailand's territorial claims, the presence of Thai troops on Cambodian soil would probably not be welcomed by the Cambodian people or could play into Sihanouk's hands. Finally, we would have the SEATO commitment to worry about if Thai troops were introduced into Cambodia.

61. Summary of Conclusions of WSAG Meeting¹

Washington, April 14, 1970.

Laos

The WSAG discussed the pros and cons of responding to Souvanna's request for an additional Thai battalion. The principal arguments put forth in favor were that the battalion would strengthen the defensive situation and that it would deter the North Vietnamese from advancing further along Routes 7 and 13. The principal arguments cited against were that the presence of additional Thai troops might increase the incentive to the North Vietnamese to attack, that the Thai commitment to a conventional role in Laos would be increased at the expense of counterinsurgency activities within Thailand, that the Chinese might be led to step up their support for insurgency in northeast Thailand, and that the Thais might request additional military assistance from the US. The WSAG members noted the lack of Congressional and public reaction to the earlier introduction of a Thai battalion.

It was the consensus that the Thais would be willing to make another battalion available in return for the same sort of US support provided to the previous battalion. The WSAG members agreed that an immediate Presidential decision should be sought² regarding the second Thai battalion. Dr. Kissinger will prepare and clear with the State Department a memorandum to the President setting forth the advantages and disadvantages and requesting a decision.³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-073, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia and Laos, 4/14/70. Top Secret; Sensitive. Attached to an April 15 memorandum from Jeanne Davis to U. Alexis Johnson, Nutter, Vice Admiral Nels C. Johnson of the JCS, and Karamessines.

² According to the April 16, 1970, WSAG meeting summary of conclusions, the WSAG was informed at that time of "the President's decision to go forward with moving a second Thai battalion to Laos." The summary stated the movement would be "arranged on the same basis and according to the same procedures as were set forth at the WSAG meeting of March 26, 1970 to govern meeting of the first Thai battalion." It also added that the press guidance for the movement and the need for a contingency plan for orderly withdrawal would remain the same. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-073, WSAG Meeting, Laos and Cambodia, 4/16/70.)

³ Document 231, *Foreign Relations*, 1969-1976, vol. VI.

62. Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to Secretary of Defense Laird¹

Bangkok, May 11, 1970.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I deeply appreciated your letter of March 27, with which you enclosed the text of your statement before the House Sub-Committee on Defense Appropriations. I have reviewed this very significant document and I noted particularly the emphasis which you placed upon the Nixon Doctrine. As you know, the Thai have fully endorsed the Guam Doctrine. They have repeatedly stressed the identity of their and our views that U.S. forces should not become involved in Thailand's internal security operations. They have also stressed the very point you made in your presentation, namely, the need to obtain critical resources and skills to do the job themselves. The Thai attitude can be illustrated by reference to three specific points which are currently active issues, i.e. military assistance, Laos and U.S. force reductions. These points and some others that are also relevant are discussed in greater detail in a memorandum attached to this letter.²

U.S. military assistance is regarded by the Thai as a key measure of the meaning of the Nixon Doctrine. Unfortunately, military assistance is declining. Viewed in isolation the projected downward trend for Thailand would probably not be unmanageable, but the Thai will regard it as only one among several recent developments that have produced a sense of uncertainty about our future intentions. I was encouraged, however, by your remarks in the March 27 letter about the importance of improved training and sales programs. We are making certain recommendations regarding intensified training and the Thai are interested in increased military sales.

With respect to Laos, it is obvious from the map, why the Thai regard the situation there as being even more directly related to their own security than the situation in Viet-Nam. You are familiar with the rather considerable commitment Thailand has already made in cooperation with us to support the neutral Government of Laos. We are considering ways in which that support may be expanded. From the Thai point of view a Viet-Nam settlement which does not include a satisfactory stabilization in Laos would leave them under a very grave

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, ISP/P Files: Lot 72 D 504, Box 1. Top Secret; Exdis. Copies were sent to Rogers, CINCPAC, and Kissinger.

² A more detailed analysis of Laird's reduction recommendations, summarized in an April 29 memorandum from the Embassy's Political-Military Counselor, George F. Muller, to Unger, is attached but not printed.

threat. In the light of recent developments in Cambodia,³ the same would apply to that country. Accordingly, the Thai have been gratified and encouraged by the strong actions and position announced by the President in his statement of April 30.

The reduction of U.S. forces in Thailand is inseparable from the Laos question. It is for this reason that I take this opportunity to express to you personally my grave reservations regarding the impact of the 10,000-man force reduction which is now under consideration in Washington.⁴ The removal of seven out of 15 USAF squadrons, three of A-1s and four of F-105s, would necessarily gravely weaken our capability in Laos and, accordingly, the capability of the Lao forces to resist. As seen in Thailand, it would comparably increase the threat to Thailand's security. The Thai expect us to propose a new force reduction and I believe that a reduction of approximately the size of the last one, 6,000 men, could be managed without either cutting too deeply into the Air Force muscle required for Laos, or arousing acute Thai concern over a too rapid withdrawal.

I understand that the projected Vietnamization program requires the continued availability of Thai bases and facilities as well as Thai forces in South Viet-Nam well into 1973, if not beyond. I don't think we will have any difficulty retaining the use of these facilities if we maintain Thai confidence in our intentions as manifested in military assistance under the Nixon Doctrine, our firmness in Laos, and the utilization of U.S. military facilities in Thailand. A further point which is most germane you yourself made very clearly on page 29 of your summary when you emphasized the need to maintain the confidence of our allies that we do not intend to renounce our long-standing obligations here. It is because of the close relationship between the success of the Vietnamization program and the availability of Thailand facilities over the next few years that I have taken this opportunity to emphasize the foregoing points. I appreciate the political and budgetary pressures at home and I assure you that we will do our utmost, given the situation in Thailand, to assist in the success of the Nixon Doctrine in Southeast Asia.

Sincerely,

Leonard Unger⁵

³ President Nixon announced in an address to the nation on April 30 that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had stepped up their infiltration and occupation of the part of Cambodia that bordered South Vietnam and, in response, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were moving into Cambodia to attack them. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 405-410)

⁴ The Thai reduction package recommended to the Secretary of Defense by the JCS was submitted as part of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) Improvement and Modernization Program.

⁵ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

63. Editorial Note

The Chief of Staff of the Cambodian Army (FANK), General Srey Saman, arrived in Bangkok on May 11, 1970, to discuss the Thai proposal to train ethnic Khmers in Thailand to fight for the Lon Nol government against the Communists in Cambodia. This followed South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and U.S. incursions into Cambodia to hit Communist supply centers and routes.

The Thai planned to form two regiments of 1,826 men each, according to an undated Central Intelligence Agency memorandum from Richard Helms to Henry Kissinger, U. Alexis Johnson, David Packard, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle G. Wheeler. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 5/12/70)

Further details of the Thai-Cambodian meetings emerged a short time later. A memorandum from Karamessines to Kissinger, Johnson, Packard, and Wheeler, dated May 13, noted that Cambodian General Srey, meeting with General Chairatana Intuputi, Commandant of the Thai Armed Forces Security Center, and with Prime Minister Thanom, General Praphet, and Air Marshal Dawee, gave full approval to the Thai proposal, but with a number of provisos, including that the “undertaking should be a joint Thai-Cambodian-U.S. operation with U.S. representatives to be invited to participate fully in formalizing the plans,” that the “operation is to be accomplished covertly,” and that the “Thai regiment would be paid in a similar manner to the Thai troops in Laos.” (Ibid.)

The Thai-Cambodian proposal was discussed in the Washington Special Actions Group Meeting on May 13, with Karamessines noting the above-mentioned aspects of the plan, as well as some additional aspects, such as the training of the two regiments in Thailand. He described the proposed pay arrangements last. Kissinger noted that the “difference is on the Thai regiment. They want us to pay in Cambodia.” U. Alexis Johnson responded that this was “out of the question,” and Kissinger agreed. Packard noted that the “training and equipment are service funded.” After a discussion of various pay scenarios, the following notation was made in the minutes: “[All agree that we will go back to the Thai and tell them to pay for their own regiments. We will pay for the training.]” (Ibid., Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970)

In backchannel message 405 to Bangkok, May 14, Johnson advised Unger that he could inform the Thai Government “that in principle we would be prepared to help with supplies and equipment requested of the Thais by the Cambodians either by directly turning over to the Thais U.S. stocks available in the area or elsewhere, or replacing material provided by the Thais from our own stocks.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III)

64. Backchannel Message From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) to the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger)¹

Washington, May 20, 1970.

510. Ref Bangkok 645² (being repeated Saigon and Honolulu). For Ambassador Unger from Alexis Johnson.

1. This message responds, to extent we are now able, to questions you raised reftel and which were not answered in my message of May 14 (in this channel).³ In all of this we should be careful not to get too far ahead of RTG and GOC.

2. In addition to our previous concurrence with general philosophy of para 3 reftel, subject to approval its application in specific cases, we agree our special forces should not become involved directly in training of two regiments. We envisage a supply program which would not contemplate MAP or USOM style follow up or supervision. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]

3. We note (re para 4) that you have already approached Dawee and PM (Bangkok 5941 and 6030, both notal)⁴ on setting up Thai-Cambodian coordinating organization and Thai internal staff to centralize management and control of Thai assistance programs for Cambodia. We concur in your suggestion and emphasize the importance of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], MACTHAI, or Embassy officers not becoming part of this organization. They should assist and keep in touch with activities only through exercise of their advisory role with Thais. No special advisor should be assigned to the coordinating body.

4. We concur (para 5) in keeping communications on two regiments in this channel; other questions should be handled in Nodis/Khmer or other controlled distribution series following guidelines set up in Washington (State 061378 or 066129).⁵

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, 5/22/70. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only; Immediate. Repeated to Saigon for Bunker and Abrams and to CINCPAC for Admiral McCain.

² In backchannel message 645 from Bangkok, May 14, Unger urgently requested guidance on details of U.S. cooperation in the Thai-Cambodian plan to train and equip two regiments for Cambodia. In paragraph 3 Unger recommended that "our role should be to provide advice and counsel, technical knowledge, equipment and some financial support but not to become intimately involved in the conduct of the Thai-Cambodian programs." (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III)

³ See Document 63.

⁴ Both dated May 18. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III)

⁵ Neither printed.

5. On para 6, while provision by Thais of equipment and funds which are their property need not be protected, use of U.S.-supplied or funded equipment for the two regiments should be protected on a closely held basis. Provision by Thais of U.S. supplied equipment for any other projects must also be carefully protected.

6. In regard second para reftel numbered 6 (number duplicated), we would expect to furnish initial equipment for the two regiments from three to four 1000-man packs of arms, ammo and communications equipment which we have allotted for Cambodian assistance. Uniforms would be required. We would hope to provide uniforms from DoD stocks in RVN which would be moved [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to training sites to avoid any major draw down of DoD stocks in Thailand. We do not believe this project could be kept covert if DoD stocks in Thailand are used. We expect [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] covertly to fund for both regiments during period of training in Thailand, costs of food, housing and training, and following training to fund transportation to Cambodia. While in Thailand, Cambodian regiment will be paid covertly [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], but we would expect Thais to assume responsibility for paying their regiment during training period. In Cambodia, ammunition and some replacement of original equipment will be required and we are planning to do this under same arrangement we have made for support of Khmer Krom troops now in Cambodia, i.e., from DoD stocks in RVN using South Vietnamese military transportation and delivered to FANK. After arrival in Cambodia, pay, food and housing for Cambodian regiment would become responsibility of FANK. Thai regiment presents special problem. We are proceeding on assumption that Thais will take direct responsibility for pay, food and housing for their regiment [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. It is essential that (a) both regiments (officers and men) be composed entirely of or, in Thai regiment, almost entirely of ethnic Khmer troops and (b) follow same process as have Khmer Krom of being folded into FANK. Press and public seem to have accepted return of Khmer Krom to fight in Cambodia as natural and normal state of affairs. We realize Thais may have a different concept of operations for their regiment and need more information on Thai plans before we can make final commitment on this half of project.

7. On questions para 7, we are and will keep aware of what others may do to assist Cambodians. Question on supply while in Cambodia answered para 6 above.

8. Regarding para 9, question A, we have a Presidential determination establishing a small (7.9 million dollars) MAP program for Cambodia. This determination permits use of DoD stocks in RVN or those in possession of GVN or RTG which will then be replaced (unless

equipment is excess of U.S., Thai or Vietnamese requirements) from Cambodian MAP funds of \$7.9 million. We would hope to avoid any major use of RTG or DoD stocks in Thailand for reason stated para 6 above.

9. In response to para 9, question B, we wish to make it completely clear to Thais that the two regiments cannot become a U.S. responsibility in event they get into a situation in Cambodia like that faced by SR VIII last June in Laos. As is case for other FANK units, U.S. ground forces could not be committed to assist them; and it should not be assumed USAF air support would be available. You should make clear to RTG that our support for this project does not carry any implication of a decision on our part to commit U.S. forces to Cambodia or Thailand.

65. Letter From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) to the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Packard)¹

Washington, May 21, 1970.

Dear Dave:

I understand² that in response to Secretary Laird's February 19 memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff,³ a copy of which has been shown to me, the Joint Chiefs have provided the Department of Defense with their recommendations regarding the possible withdrawal from Thailand during fiscal year 1971 of some 10,000 U.S. military personnel, broken down into two packages of roughly 5,000 personnel each. As was noted in the SecDef memorandum, the problem is a complex one with important political implications that must be fully considered, particularly because of the likelihood of base closures and significant force readjustments.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Under Secretary Johnson Chronology Files: Lot 96 D 695, Box 11, May 1970. Top Secret. Drafted by Hicks (EA/TB) and Colonel Arthur Hanket (PM/ISP). A notation in Johnson's handwriting reads: "P.S. There is also an aspect on this I want to discuss directly with you. UAJ."

² Green and Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs Ronald I. Spiers informed Johnson in a May 18 memorandum that they "had been made aware informally" that Laird had directed the JCS to begin planning a 10,000 man troop reduction in Thailand; attached but not printed.

³ Attached but not printed.

Because U.S. troop withdrawals are of most serious concern to the Royal Thai Government, it is important that the foreign policy implications be fully taken into account. In addition, we must be mindful of the necessity in any planning we do, to provide adequate time for genuine consultations with the Royal Thai Government (anticipated to take about 60 days minimum) on any U.S. troop withdrawals we may desire to undertake. Some of the questions which will undoubtedly arise during discussions with the Thai are outlined in the attachment. With these in mind, I suggest we ask our staffs to review together the troop withdrawal proposals so that foreign policy problems can be resolved prior to consultations with the Royal Thai Government.⁴

Sincerely,

Alex

⁴ Attached but not printed is a list of questions that were likely to arise during consultations with the Thai Government. Most of them dealt with rationalizing a 45 percent reduction in Thai-based air resources in the face of increased North Vietnamese activity in northern Laos and Cambodia, the projected reduction in the sortie rate in those areas, and compensating for that "loss of firepower which is required to deter, delay, or defeat in NVN/Pathet Lao advance into critical areas of Laos."

66. Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Bangkok, May 21, 1970.

Ref: [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] 510.²

Ref is very much appreciated by Ambassador [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. We will have a number of questions to raise, but the most immediate problem is set forth in the following message from Ambassador Unger. For Under Secretary Alexis Johnson from Ambassador Unger

1. Dawee asked to see me on urgent basis this afternoon. As anticipated, he wanted above all to discuss support arrangements for Thai

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, 5/22/70.

² Document 64.

forces that might go to Cambodia. Present at our discussion also were General Kriangsak and General Prasert, Deputy Commander AFSC. Dawee said that after the Prime Minister had received another urgent letter for help from Lon Nol both the Cabinet and the Security Council had again discussed this issue. The Thai were prepared to send two regiments (3,600 men) of [1 line of source text not declassified], but could do so only on the basis of support arrangements similar to those made for the three battalions in Laos. He said, "If you cannot help Cambodia directly, help us to help them." Dawee stressed the importance of holding Cambodia and that the situation there required immediate deployment of Thai forces; there was no time to await completion of a training program as previously discussed. Yem Sambour is still in town and he will meet again with Deputy PriMin Praphat tomorrow. Next week Praphat and a Thai delegation including Dawee and Chairatana will leave for Phnom Penh to conduct further discussions on Thai assistance.

2. Agreeing with him on the importance of assisting Cambodia, I went into the basic differences between the situation in Cambodia and that in Laos and Viet-Nam and explained Washington's thinking about support arrangements in terms of para 6, refel. I stressed that we would help out with training and equipment while the forces were still in Thailand, but once they went into Cambodia we could no longer support their subsistence the way we do in Viet-Nam or Laos. We do not and will not have the means we have in both of those places to set up direct supply channels for Thai personnel. Dawee accepted this but retorted that if we don't find some means to help the Thai with the financial burden of supporting the forces, there would be no chance of sending any Thai forces to Cambodia; Thailand has the men, but needs matériel assistance. He confirmed that the RTG would pay basic pay, but would look to us for payment of subsistence and other allowances, various benefits, as well as for matériel and equipment. He said the reason they were thinking in terms of the same support arrangements as in Laos was that they would not send regular troops, but [2 lines of source text not declassified]. In this manner, the question of budgetary support would not come to public attention. He felt this was politically the most acceptable arrangement for us and would not stir up trouble in the U.S. such as charges about Thailand and/or Lon Nol trying to involve the U.S. a la Vietnam.

3. The forces provided by Thailand could be immediately used to stabilize the situation around Phnom Penh, and generally along the route from Thailand as, for example, around Kompong Thom; perhaps also on the west bank of the Mekong. He also said it was important to destroy enemy forces in the border triangle of Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. After the forces drawn from the Khmer Serei and other Cambodian groups had had their training (in about 3-4 months) they could

be rotated in to replace the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Thai forces. The latter can be phased in one battalion at a time, beginning practically immediately.

4. In a separate development, Pote Sarasin asked [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to call on him this morning in order to urge U.S. reconsideration of decision re non-support for Thai troops once deployed in Cambodia. Pote pointed out that the RTG intends to commit all the help to Cambodia that it can from its own resources and that the National Security Council had allocated 20 million baht to provide the kinds of finished goods which can be produced in Thailand such as shoes, uniforms, mosquito nets, and canteens. The RTG, however, needs U.S. assistance of the kind provided in Laos for Thai regiments in Cambodia and, in any case, could not fund such support from the Thai budget, even if it were able, without the knowledge of parliamentary reviewing committees and the consequent exposure of the covert nature of the effort. He pointed out that with U.S. assistance the Thais can maintain a credible cover story, if the presence of Thai troops in Cambodia subsequently comes to public attention, by claiming that these Thais are volunteers who are fighting with the Cambodian Army. Finally, Pote cited the contributions Thailand is now making to support free world efforts to resist aggression in Vietnam, Laos, and now Cambodia as evidence of RTG commitment to participate fully in this effort within the limits of its means.

5. To summarize, the Thais have undertaken to make two regiments of total of 3,600 men available as rapidly as possible in response to Lon Nol's urgent request. To the maximum extent possible, these troops will be familiar with the Cambodian language [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. In the meantime, the Thais are proceeding to recruit former Khmer Serei and other Cambodian-speaking men on both sides of the Thai/Cambodian border. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] has independent confirmation that this recruitment is proceeding. When these troops trained they can be rotated to replace the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Thai forces.

6. It seems to me that we should agree to pay such allowances as we are now paying the battalions in Laos in addition to the training expenses which you have authorized in reftel. These include subsistence, combat allowance, and death and disability payments. I have made it clear to Dawee that we cannot provide subsistence in kind as in Vietnam. It seems to me, therefore, that a monthly sum based on a daily baht rate should be negotiated as a reimbursement for the outlay the RTG will have to make. I think it is clear from the reasons which have been cited by Dawee and also by Pote that the Thais are unlikely to feel able to respond to Lon Nol's urgent request for these troops unless arrangements similar to those in Laos can be worked out. I am sat-

isfied that Thais do intend and have already started providing significant assistance to the Cambodians from their own resources, namely finished goods which can be produced here. They are also ready to continue the basic pay for the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] troops just as in the case of all of the other troops now fighting outside of Thailand.

7. I urge therefore that you give this matter urgent and favorable consideration³ since it is highly desirable for the Praphat delegation to be able to discuss further and complete the arrangements for Thai troops when it visits Phnom Penh, possibly as early as Monday, the 25th of May.

³ This request for U.S. financial support for the two [*text not declassified*] regiments received extensive consideration at the WSAG and other high levels in Washington, but was never given an affirmative response. Instead, Washington's basic negative response was given in message 637, May 28, in which Johnson informed Unger of the "number of legal and operational questions" concerning the requested financial support. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 561, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. III)

67. Backchannel Message From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) to the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger)¹

Washington, June 2, 1970.

691. For Ambassador Unger from Alexis Johnson. Ref: Bangkok 680.²

1. You authorized to proceed as requested reftel in further exploration of scheme for expansion of Black Panthers and for their use

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Repeated to Saigon for Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams and to CINCPAC Honolulu for Admiral McCain.

² Backchannel message 680, June 2, reported Unger's belief that he would be approached by the Thais the following day to resume the dialogue on the "short range proposal," in the form of an expansion of the Thai Black Panthers division in Vietnam and for its partial use in Cambodia. (Ibid.)

in Cambodia along lines discussed para 3 of Bangkok 669.³ In exploring this proposal with Thais, you should make clear to them that Black Panthers would have to be used in a fashion consistent with the theory of operations which we developed here and which was sent to you as para 3 of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] 637.⁴

2. You should emphasize to Thais that particularly since this matter remains in exploratory stage, and no decision yet made, it is essential that Thais do not make any public comment concerning it.

3. During course of exploration you should also make clear to Thais that as in the case of two Thai Khmer regiments ([*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] 510, para 9),⁵ it should not be assumed by Thais that USAF air support would be available to Black Panthers.⁶

4. For our planning purposes here, it would be helpful if in the course of exploration you could also elicit from Thais their thinking with regard to the timing of this deployment.

³ Backchannel message 669, May 30, discussed various aspects of the “short range proposal,” the quick deployment to Cambodia of two regiments of Thai regular troops to meet the emergency need for forces. Paragraph three covered a number of points, including that the Black Panthers were not up to their allocated full strength, would probably deploy personnel “presently in South Vietnam” after being reinforced, would receive “all repeat all support arrangements” for the two additional regiments as for those already there, and would consult with the South Vietnamese Government concerning “some reduction in Black Panther area responsibility in Vietnam.” (Ibid., Vol. III)

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 66.

⁵ See Document 64.

⁶ Unger responded, in backchannel message 687, June 3, by stating that “it is hard to see the logic of air support changes” (considering U.S. air support for Thai forces in Laos and also its use of Thai air bases). Unger concluded by stating that “I would not be surprised, for example, if my telling the Thais that USAF air support could not be assumed to be available to Black Panthers operating in Cambodia would mean the end of any further consideration of that project by the RTG.” Attached but not printed.

68. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 5, 1970.

SUBJECT

Thai Actions on Cambodia

From Ambassador Unger [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in Bangkok we have received a number of reports covering actions which the Thai are planning to take on Cambodia. These are:

—The Thai Cabinet has agreed to send two regiments to Vietnam for augmentation of the Black Panthers, and the commitment of Black Panther units inside Cambodia in the sanctuary area. These will go probably a battalion at a time.

—The decision has been made to proceed with the recruiting and training of two Thai ethnic Khmer regiments, with U.S. support. These will be trained in Thailand by battalions, and the process might take 8–16 weeks.

—The Thai will train 8 Cambodian pilots (but characteristically want us to pay).

—The Thai will also train regular Cambodian Army and Navy personnel.

—The question of giving Cambodian forces Thai Air Force support is being looked into. The Thai are also considering using the RTAF to support their forces in Cambodia.

—There is some possibility that the Thai will give a few (perhaps 5) T-28's to the Cambodians² while their T-28's are being prepared.

In addition to the foregoing, the Thai would like our help on the following:

—Furnishing trucks. They want us to provide 30–50 and are unwilling to take them from their own MAP.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum in Kissinger's handwriting (in addition to his initials) reads: "Take up in June 9 WSAG." Another notation in Haig's handwriting reads: "John next WSAG."

² A notation in Kissinger's handwriting next to this sentence reads: "Let's push this."

—Provide 5–10 kilowatt transmitters for giving psychological warfare assistance to the Cambodians. It would be set up in Thailand near the Cambodian border.³

³ Kissinger wrote next to this paragraph: “Why not.”

69. Letter From the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Packard) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Washington, June 13, 1970.

Dear Alex:

This responds to your letter of May 21² regarding troop withdrawals from Thailand.

As you probably know the FY 71 Department of Defense budget is facing serious pressure from both the Congress and inflation. We anticipate that these difficulties will increase sharply in FY 72. For this reason it is essential that we reevaluate the essentiality of each SEA program. As part of this review Secretary Laird asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assess the relative priorities of all Department of Defense programs. In their response they found that, in the absence of supplemental FY 71 funding from Congress, reductions in SEA air operations must be made if we are to support other essential SEA and non-SEA Department of Defense programs. Since the mood of the Congress, in our judgment, prevents consideration of supplemental funding at this time, Secretary Laird has approved the proposed air reductions in Thailand.

The decisions on this matter, which have been provided to the President for review and final approval, are attached as in the schedule for force reductions in Thailand³ as developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These decisions will result in only slight modifications of this very excellent plan which I believe goes as far as possible toward meeting legitimate political concerns within budget constraints.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, PM/ISP Files: Lot 72 D 504, Subject Files, Box 1. Top Secret; Sensitive.

² Document 65.

³ Attached but not printed.

At the juncture, it is essential that we initiate the discussions with the RTG as soon as possible. On June 5, Secretary Laird emphasized the urgency of this step. I believe that the appropriate next step is for our staffs to prepare negotiating instructions covering some of the questions in your letter and, consequently, I have not included detailed answers in this reply. However, I am satisfied that planned air resources will be adequate to continue Vietnamization progress and provide air support to the RLG forces.⁴

Sincerely,

Dave

⁴ Printed from a copy that indicates Packard signed the original.

70. Editorial Note

Because he “had the feeling” that the U.S. Government was “proceeding at too leisurely a pace,” President Nixon made his views about assistance to Cambodia directly known to his senior staff (including Kissinger, Helms, Packard, Moorer, Johnson, Green, Pickering, and Holdridge) at the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of June 15, 1970. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970) After initial discussion among these advisers, the President entered the room and, according to a June 17 memorandum from Kissinger to Helms, Johnson, Packard, and Moorer, immediately reaffirmed that it “is our national policy to preserve the neutrality and integrity of Cambodia. It is important for such countries as Indonesia, Thailand and Laos to know that we are standing firm; we must keep the psychological factor in mind.” (Central Intelligence Agency, Job 80–B01285 A, Executive Registry Files, DCI Eyes Only Files 1970, Box 11 of 13)

According to the WSAG minutes, the President said that the “situation might appear dubious” in Cambodia but that he equated the current views “with the decisions which he had made on March 17 regarding the defense of Long Tieng in Laos. There we had decided to use our air power and commit the Thailand battalions. It had been a close decision, but this decision had eventually had some effect. We had perhaps saved the decision for another year.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970)

“Regarding the Thais, the President mentioned that he knew the legal arguments and problems, but even Frank Church and several other Senators who had objected to Americans in Cambodia understood the principle of Asians helping Asians. This might be a costly business, and Congress didn’t like it, but the South Vietnamese, the Thai, the Indonesians, and others had an economic excuse for not assisting on their own. In addition, there would be a great psychological effect.” (Ibid.) The complete minutes of the June 15 WSAG meeting are in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Document 326.

71. Letter From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) to the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Packard)¹

Washington, June 20, 1970.

Dear Dave:

I refer to your letter of June 13² with regard to the force reductions in Thailand. I agree wholeheartedly that time is of essence, if we are to consult meaningfully with the Thais. We are proceeding as you suggest to prepare negotiating instructions for Ambassador Unger on an urgent basis. However, I believe we must adhere to the following ground rules if we are to keep from jeopardizing important programs in Southeast Asia.

a. As I pointed out to you in my letter of May 21, we must provide adequate time for genuine consultations with the Royal Thai Government. It is therefore urgently requested that any overt actions to withdraw our forces from Thailand, which have not already been agreed to by the Thais, be held in abeyance until our consultations can be satisfactorily completed. Furthermore, I think we must assure that any discussions of this matter with the Thais be coordinated by Ambassador Unger in Bangkok. In preparing these instructions we would

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, PM/ISP Files: Lot 72 D 504, Subject Files, Box 1. Top Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Hanket (PM/ISP). A notation on the memorandum reads: “P.S. You will recall Henry expressed interest in this. When we have our ducks in a row I suggest that we brief him. UAJ”

² Document 69.

want to address jointly with your staff those questions we can expect the Thais to raise, and assure that Ambassador Unger will be in the best possible position to answer them persuasively. In addition, it would appear that the evaluation directed by the President of our current air activities in Southeast Asia, as outlined in Mr. Kissinger's memorandum of June 15, could also affect the extent of our troop withdrawals for Thailand. I am well aware of the budgetary problems in DOD and I can assure you that we will proceed with these consultations with dispatch as soon as we have the necessary data to make a persuasive case to the Thais.

b. I have no doubt that US troop withdrawals from Thailand at this point will create political problems. Although we are working out plans with your staff based on the recommended DOD reduction package, it is necessary that the door be left open to reconsider the timing and extent of the program in light of the Thai reactions and reactions from other Asian allies as well as the Presidential directed evaluation mentioned previously. Changes would be recommended only if essential US programs and objectives in the area stand in jeopardy.

I note that the decisions made by Secretary Laird with respect to Thailand are but part of a broader package of decisions affecting our world-wide force posture for FY 1971. I think it would be useful, particularly in connection with the forthcoming DPRC budget review, if I could have a copy of the document approved by Secretary Laird; and if you could arrange in the future for similar documents reflecting major program decisions and which bear on our relations with our allies and other friendly states, to be made available to us. I will, of course, see to it that they will be used on a close-hold restricted basis.

Sincerely,

Alex

72. Memorandum of Conversation

Washington, June 26, 1970, 11 a.m.

[Source: National Archives, RG 59, Under Secretary Johnson Meetings Files: Lot 96 D 695, Box 25, WSAG Papers. Top Secret; Nodis; Khmer. 6 pages of source text not declassified.]

73. Letter From the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Packard) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Washington, June 30, 1970.

Dear Alex:

After our discussion over the weekend, I reviewed our force planning for U.S. forces in Thailand. I have concluded our plans to withdraw 10,000 men during FY 71 are militarily sound and should be executed expeditiously. Let me briefly review our plans for the 10,000-man phasedown.

About 40% of the 10,000-man reduction relates to the phaseout of four F-105 squadrons and the closure of Takhli Air Base. The F-105s were very effective during the bombing of NVN, but they are not well suited for interdiction in Southern Laos, particularly strikes against moving vehicles. Also, they are not as effective against enemy troop targets as are other aircraft in our force which will remain in Thailand. The eight F-4 squadrons which will remain in Thailand, in conjunction with carrier and SVN-based tactical air forces, will provide adequate capability for requirements in Northern and Southern Laos.

The air base at Takhli is the most appropriate candidate for phasing out U.S. operations, being the farthest away from targets in Laos. By closing out all U.S. activity, we can maximize the manpower and budget savings with the least impact on military capability. After we phase out of the Takhli base, we will still be able to increase the num-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, PM/ISP Files: Lot 72 D 504, Subject Files, Box 1. Top Secret; Sensitive.

ber of aircraft deployed in Thailand quickly, should the need arise. Each of the remaining bases has some limited expansion capability and can handle additional aircraft on an emergency basis. In addition we believe the Takhli Air Base will be kept open by the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF). A skeleton U.S. Air Force element will remain there for the rest of FY 71 to assist the Thai in learning to operate and maintain the base. Re-entry should be relatively easy since the base will be in full operation. In addition, we could move another Navy carrier into the South China Sea, or return forces to South Vietnam where ample air base facilities exist.

Another 15% of the planned 10,000-man phasedown concerns turnover of A-1 aircraft to the South Vietnamese in July 1971. These aircraft will be used in Laos until that time. Their turnover is part of our Vietnamization program and Vietnamese pilots are being trained to fly them. The loss of their truck-killing capability will be more than offset by the addition of new B-57G sensor-equipped aircraft and wider use of aircraft gunships. In this regard, I recently directed the Air Force to modify additional C-130 aircraft as gunships for use in the next dry season campaign. Planned reductions in reconnaissance forces constitute another 15% of the total Thailand force reduction. These are possible because of reduced overall sorties levels from Thailand.

We also plan to reduce Army engineers and transportation personnel (15% of the total phasedown) because they have largely completed their road-building efforts. A few parts of the projects may not be finished at their planned deployment date. If necessary, a small engineer force will be left to complete them, or local contractors will be used. The remainder of the 10,000-man phasedown consists of miscellaneous support, personnel, whose reduction will have little impact.

The 10,000-man phasedown reflects due consideration of the attendant military risks and I fully support it. Many of the redeployments were planned for the July-September period. We budgeted funds accordingly and any delays will force us to reprogram funds from other activities. You are well aware of our budget constraints and will appreciate our interest in getting these decisions carried out promptly.

For the above reasons I believe Ambassador Unger should proceed promptly with the necessary consultations with the Royal Thai Government. In his discussions he can assure the Thai that:

1. Reduction of F-105 and A-1 aircraft in Thailand will be compensated by additional AC-130 and B-57G aircraft which are considerably more effective for the type missions being flown in Laos.
2. The A-1 capability will remain in Southeast Asia, although the aircraft will move to South Vietnam to be flown by the VNAF.
3. The withdrawal of the Army engineers will not jeopardize the projects which we have promised the Royal Thai Government would be completed.

4. Remaining bases in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia have ample capability to support promptly an increase in our air assets, should the need arise. Also Takhli will be available for re-entry should it be needed.²

Sincerely,

Dave

² A joint State–Defense message to Unger on July 3 instructed him to “immediately initiate consultations with RTG re next reduction of U.S. forces in Thailand.” (Telegram 105295 to Bangkok; *ibid.*) However, a July 2 note to Spiers attached to the telegram noted that “entire instruction was withdrawn Friday night at White House instruction” and “DOD is now instructed to defer any action.” (*Ibid.*) This action was precipitated by a July 2 telegram from Rogers to Kissinger, in which the Secretary stated that he “had not had chance to talk to Johnson before departure about my conversation with President about slowing down our steps because of need to maintain strong position in Thailand for future. Telegram does not seem to take that conversation into account. Could you look into this with a view to revised instructions. In the meantime I have asked Unger to delay action on what he has received until we hear from you.” (Telegram 765 to Manila; *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV) In telegram 10662 from Saigon, July 5, Rogers added that “as a result of my talk with the President at San Clemente I am confident that he would not want any reductions made in Thailand that would reduce our air power there. Also the timing is particularly bad because our present efforts to encourage Thailand to do more in Cambodia.” (*Ibid.*) A July 2 memorandum from Haig to Kissinger indicates that Kissinger wanted “to hold up on the Thai force reductions until Larry Lynn’s TACAIR studies are completed.” (*Ibid.*) An attached note and handwriting on the memorandum indicate that Packard was informed of the delay.

74. Telegram From Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State¹

Saigon, July 5, 1970, 0940Z.

Secto 45/10660. Subject: Following uncleared memorandum of Secretary’s Manila Bilateral with Thai FonMin Thanat (July 3).

(1) FonMin Thanat responded to the Secretary’s mention of Cambodia and described the position of the RTG with regard to military assistance to that country. He explained that he had exerted some restraint on the Thai military leaders on the grounds that Thailand should

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files, 1966–72: Entry 3051 B: Box 516. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Drafted by Unger and approved in S by Peter Johnson and William Brandt. Repeated to Bangkok and Phnom Penh. Rogers had been in Manila for the SEATO meeting and in Saigon for the TCC meeting.

not move too quickly until the military situation in Cambodia became clearer and also until the results of the Djakarta meeting follow-up were known. Furthermore, it was essential for the RTG to have an understanding of US Government intentions and to know what support would be available for whatever Thailand felt able to do. He emphasized that the Thais could not afford to become militarily deeply involved and find themselves left high and dry with the US having washed its hand of the Cambodian problem.

(2) The Secretary then reviewed for the FonMin the actions which we contemplate, including the provision of small arms and equipment and economic assistance as well as the provision of some continuing air support of specified types. He referred also to the help which US would provide Cambodia through a new MAP program for fiscal year 1971 (beyond the \$8 million provided for fiscal year 1970), surplus weapons and equipment, the hand-over of captured items and perhaps some loans. The Secretary mentioned in addition the military help which we anticipate South Vietnam will provide to Cambodia and expressed the hope that others in the region will also help.

(3) The Secretary expressed specific hope that Thailand will do as much as it possibly can and he inquired how the US could help in this regard. FonMin first referred to the Black Panther unit now deployed to Vietnam and suggested that it might be wise in view of the new developments in Cambodia and the dangers closer to home for Thailand to use some of the Black Panthers to provide for Thailand's forward defense in Western and Northern Cambodia. In the discussion that followed the Secretary generally endorsed this idea after ascertaining that the FonMin was speaking of only a part, say about 4,000, of the Black Panthers and that he contemplated keeping some of the Panthers in Vietnam for some time yet. He also made clear that the US could not support the Panthers either in border areas of Thailand or in adjacent areas of Cambodia in the same way as they are now supported; specifically subsistence and various allowances could not be paid by the US under the circumstances although we could probably re-supply them with ammo, spare parts, etc. through the Cambodian MAP program. In answer to a direct question from the FonMin, the Secretary said it is US policy to encourage the Thais to provide direct military assistance to Cambodia as it may be necessary. He referred also to the President's view that we would understand that the Thais would put a priority on the use of their troops to defend their own home ground. In answer to the FonMin's question, the Secretary said that he did not believe that there would be any obstacles, generally speaking, put up by Congress which would stand in the way of US support of its allies who wish to help Cambodia, but there were certain specific kinds of assistance which were in question and would remain so until decisions were taken on some pending legislation.

(4) The discussion then turned to possible Thai assistance in training Cambodians and the help which the US might provide for this. Aside from the special arrangements which have been almost completed for US support for the training of Thai ethnic Khmer, we are not able at the moment to say precisely what help we can give although it almost surely would include some outfitting and equipping and possibly additional supply of consumables in Cambodia through Cambodian MAP. FonMin emphasized the teamwork he envisaged under the Nixon Doctrine in which Thailand and other countries in the area would provide manpower and the US would assist with weapons, equipment and financial and other support.

(5) The Secretary then turned to FonMin's obvious distress over statements made by US Senators and US press. He said that it was essential to recognize that these are personal and individual views and do not represent position of the Administration which deeply appreciates Thailand's position and the help it has rendered. He said it was essential to have a thick skin about critical comments and see them in perspective.

(6) Returning to Cambodia, the FonMin again expressed Thailand's very deep concern at this point about Cambodian situation and the threat posed to his country. The Secretary acknowledged this and said it was important for us to think about the measure it might be essential to take if a collapse of the government in Phnom Penh should threaten. He expressed the need to see that the supply route via Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) not be re-established by the Communists and he also mentioned the need to keep open access to Phnom Penh via the Mekong.

(7) The Secretary then referred to the FonMin's mention the previous year of his efforts to establish some contact with the government of Communist China. Thanat said that nothing had come of these. He said that he was sure that the Chinese would be glad to receive a secret mission from Thailand and then would undoubtedly seek to exploit it to Thailand's disadvantage. The Minister had no intention of playing this game, but was ready to talk openly; the Chinese were apparently not interested in pursuing this at this time.

(8) At the conclusion Ambassador Unger mentioned possible closer cooperation among the four nations of the region to make better provisions for their own security. Thanat generally endorsed this idea, noting the obvious common interests which Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam had in this regard. He also mentioned the reticence of the Lao to deal with the Cambodians and the South Vietnamese; the Lao preferred to work on security matters only with the Thais.

Department repeat as desired.

Rogers

75. Memorandum From Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, July 9, 1970.

SUBJECT

PL 480 Program for Thailand

Introduction

I understand:

—the WSAG is considering a proposal to provide a PL 480 loan of up to \$20 million to the Thai,²

—that this loan is intended to indirectly compensate the Thai for costs associated with possible Thai and Thai Khmer force deployments to Cambodia.

Although I have not seen all the cable traffic on this proposal, I understand the Thai have not asked for the PL 480 program or even an explicit quid pro quo for their Cambodian contribution. Rather, Ambassador Unger has suggested that such a program could be used to help the Thai defray the expenses of their Cambodian effort. We would give the RTG \$20 million in PL 480 commodities (e.g., wheat, tobacco, cotton). Thai importers would purchase these commodities from the RTG with local currency (Baht). According to the Unger proposal, sixty percent of the budget receipts, \$12 million, would be used by the RTG in agricultural development while the remaining \$8 million would be allocated to U.S. uses. The theory is that the Thai would divert currently budgeted agricultural development funds to their Cambodian effort.

Ambassador Unger proposed this PL 480 program on May 19, 1970. It was not clear why Thailand needed the program at that time (the economic circumstances of Thailand do not warrant such a program—see below) and his proposal was not favorably received at the working level in State, AID, or BOB.³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Secret; Nodis; Khmer. Sent for action.

² See Document 76.

³ In a July 9 memorandum to Kissinger, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs Clarence D. Palmby noted that his Department also opposed this program "based on normal economic considerations and normal Title I program criteria." He added, however, that "if you believe that such a program is in the national interest, we will cooperate with other agencies in its implementation." Palmby's memorandum is also attached but not printed.

Raising this proposal again, as a possible quid pro quo for Thai assistance to Cambodia, may be justified by the desire to obtain Thai help in Cambodia. On the other hand, a PL 480 action in this context raises serious political and legal problems in addition to its questionable economic merits that should be addressed.

Incrementalism versus Fundamentalism

As a policy proposal the PL 480 program represents a clear case of “incrementalism.” It is an example of a policy proposal made in response to immediate circumstances, that has not been viewed in the larger context of U.S.-Thai relations, the total U.S. program effort in Thailand, the requirements of the Thai economy and U.S. strategy in Southeast Asia:

—In 1969, the Thai economy continued the high rate of economic growth it has achieved throughout the 1960’s:

- GDP increased by 7.5%,
- budget revenues rose by 11.3%,
- foreign exchange reserves stood at a relatively high level of \$875 million at the end of the year, having suffered a slight decline from the over \$900 million level achieved in 1968 as a result of U.S. war-related expenditures in Thailand.

—Over the period 1971–1975 the Thai budget and balance of payments will come under serious pressure if the Thai expand their forces and if U.S. war-related military spending is reduced. This pressure could be alleviated by increases in U.S. military assistance and increases in the U.S. program assistance. Nevertheless, the NSSM 51 economic model indicates that in the near term the Thai economy clearly has the capacity to support increases in military and civilian expenditures.

—The Thai have been sensitive to U.S. press and Congressional criticism of our commitment to Thailand. They have repeatedly sought and obtained assurances of our commitment to defend Thailand. However, the NSSM 51 study concluded⁴ that by responding to these requests piecemeal the U.S. has broadened its commitment beyond what it can defend against its critics and possibly beyond what U.S. interests could justify. The study concluded that a diplomatic strategy more closely gauged to the basis of our commitments—SEATO as interpreted by Rusk–Thanat—would be easier to defend, less likely to raise Thai expectations beyond what we can meet, and more consistent with sta-

⁴ See Document 82 for excerpts from the NSSM 51 Thailand Analysis Program Study.

ble U.S.-Thai relations instead of the hot-cold cycle we have experienced recently.

—The Thai view the level of U.S. program assistance to Thailand as one of the most important benefits of close cooperation with the U.S. and as a signal of U.S. intentions to back up its commitment. The NSSM 51 analysis concluded that our past program effort has been too diffuse and volatile to take full advantage of the Thai perception of it. The study concludes that we should focus our program effort in fewer areas, and set long-term program strategy and funding goals in consultation with the Thai. Such an approach would have the important ancillary benefit of improving Thai performance in key areas, e.g., ground force performance.

—The NSSM 51 study presents several U.S. assistance program packages. The package choices most consistent with the threats to Thailand, and therefore the most likely to be selected, will increase the level of U.S. assistance to Thailand. Assistance to the army and air force and possibly economic assistance can be expected to rise.

—You have asked for a study of U.S. strategy alternatives for Southeast Asia. A decision to embark on a new style of assistance to Thailand, which is what Ambassador Unger's proposal amounts to, should be made after a review of alternative burden sharing arrangements, the forms of assistance we are able to give, etc. While all decisions cannot await the formulation of a Southeast Asian strategy, this one probably can.

Conclusion

In sum:

—the PL 480 proposal:

- is not justified on economic grounds,
- will probably not have any lasting impact on U.S.-Thai relations,
- is unlikely to result in Thai performance improvements.

In addition, major Congressional opposition can be expected on political and on legal grounds as soon as the PL 480 agreement is signed.

—an alternative approach would entail:

—assuring the Thai that our overall assistance will be responsive to the threats to Thailand.

—informing them that we have just completed an analysis of our supports to Thailand which will be reviewed for decision in the near future. The resulting decision will determine how our economic and military assistance programs will be modified in response to recent developments in Southeast Asia. We expect to make a major assistance contribution to the overall Thai defense effort in the foreseeable future, and our contribution will be in proportion to the overall Thai defense burden which we recognize is increasing.

Recommendation

I recommend disapproval of the PL 480 proposal. If action is required to assure the Thai of our financial backing for additional defense costs they will bear as a result of the deteriorating security situation on their borders, I recommend the U.S. inform the Thai of the pending review of our assistance effort and assure them that the upcoming decision will be responsive to the requirement for an expanded Thai defense effort.

76. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, July 10, 1970, 11 a.m.

SUBJECT

Support for Cambodia

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

CIA

Mr. Richard Helms

Mr. Thomas Karamessines

Mr. Nelson

JCS

Admiral Thomas Moorer

General Vogt

Defense

Mr. Nutter

Admiral Flanagan

State

Ambassador Johnson

Mr. Moore

Mr. Tom Pickering

NSC Staff

Col. Richard Kennedy

Mr. John Holdridge

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

[Omitted here is discussion on Cambodia.]

Turning to funding, Dr. Kissinger first brought up Thai activities with respect to Cambodia. It emerged that Senator Russell did not want CIA to finance Thai activities in Cambodia, and that Senator Stennis on the other hand believed that CIA rather than Defense should finance these activities. On the equipment costs for the Thai/Khmer regiment

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

(\$1.2 million) following a discussion of alternatives including Cambodian MAP, CIA funds, Thai MASF, or PL-480 trade-offs, *the decision favored using prior-year Thai MASF, but with the possibility of using some Cambodian MAP. Action was assigned to Mr. Nutter.*

In addressing the question of Thai operations in Western Cambodia, *it was agreed that RTAF operations took precedence over providing the initial equipment for an RCT.* The initial equipment costs for the RCT seemed highly loaded. *The funding route of using prior-year Thai MASF, with replacement of run-downs via PL-480 funds used to make purchases from U.S. military sales was agreed upon.* This would be used first to support a sortie rate by the RTAF of 900 per month. Ambassador Unger would be asked to discuss this with the Thai, and also to review with them the requirements for the RCT. *This cable should reflect the urgency of the need for Thai air support.* In the course of this discussion it was brought out that there was no economic justification of a PL-480 program for Thailand, *but that there was no choice other than to go for a PL-480 program up to \$20 million² as a source of funds for trade-offs.*

The issue of Thai training for 15,000 Cambodian troops was raised, with several members questioning the effectiveness of such training. It was generally accepted that all training should be carried out in South Vietnam, where the job could be done more effectively, more quickly, and more cheaply. *However, Admiral Moorer would be asked to look into a comparison of South Vietnam versus Thailand for training Cambodians, to include an estimate of the training times required.*

The question of pay and allowances for the Khmer Krom and the Thai/Khmer units was addressed, with the alternatives being Defense funds, AID supporting assistance, the AID contingency funds, or CIA funds. *The decision was made to rely on Defense funds for the 1st quarter of FY 71 and AID supporting assistance used later, subject to the views of the Secretary of Defense.* (This was based on the assumption that an increase in the AID appropriation for general supporting assistance would not get through Congress at this time; Mr. Nutter, however, quoted Secretary Laird as believing that the issue should be carried to the Hill now.) A Defense switchback would be required to pay separation allowances of \$1.7 million for the Thai/Khmer *and Mr. Nutter agreed to talk to Mr. Packard on this.* The size of the Cambodian MAP was considered. The

² Telegram 110878 to Bangkok, July 10, proposed a PL-480 program made up of tobacco, cotton, and wheat, as well as other aid programs. The telegram stated that "it may be desirable to provide some additional assistance to Thailand in recognition of Thai support of common effort to maintain Cambodian independence." It added that it was "important, however, that no impression be given to RTG or others that the U.S. would be providing such additional assistance on any kind of matching basis with the Thai contributions." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 10 THAI)

consensus was to go for a Presidential Decision calling for a \$40 million Cambodian program to be drawn from other programs, and to ask for a supplemental later when Congressional response might be better. The \$40 million was estimated as being sufficient to carry through January or February 1971. Admiral Moorer felt that this sum was insufficient.

The meeting agreed to consider the retention of Thai forces in Laos at the next session. Agreement was noted on providing SAR operations in Cambodia for the RTAF, and on providing communications jeps to Cambodia for use in air-to-ground control.

[Omitted here are the minutes of the meeting.]

77. Memorandum Prepared for the 40 Committee

Washington, July 16, 1970.

[Source: National Security Council, Intelligence Subject File, Country File, Thailand, 1969–1972. Secret; Eyes Only. 5 pages of source text not declassified.]

78. Memorandum Prepared for the 40 Committee

Washington, July 18, 1970.

[Source: National Security Council, Intelligence Subject File, Country File, Thailand, 1969–1972. Secret; Eyes Only. 3 pages of source text not declassified.]

79. Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for National Security Affairs (Ware) to Secretary of Defense Laird¹

I-35764/70

Washington, July 23, 1970.

SUBJECT

Redeployment of US Forces from Thailand (BANNER SUN)

Your memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff dated 5 June 1970,² approved a plan to redeploy 7,300 USAF and 2,565 USA personnel from Thailand during FY 71. These redeployments were to begin 15 July 1970, except for the small F-102 detachment at Don Muang which redeployed 25 June 1970.

A State/Defense message was sent on 2 July³ directing American Embassy Bangkok to initiate consultations with the RTG concerning these planned reductions of US forces in Thailand. At State's request the redeployments were rescheduled to begin 1 August, instead of 15 July, to provide Ambassador Unger additional time to facilitate negotiations with the RTG. Later, on the same day, State Department directed separately that action on redeployment of US forces in Thailand be suspended pending further instructions. This action was taken at the request of Secretary Rogers from Manila. Subsequent information indicated that the decision concerning this redeployment package would be withheld pending review of the FY 71 DoD budget and the VSSG study of air operations in Southeast Asia.

On the basis of the foregoing, JCS directed CINCPAC to take no further action to redeploy or prepare for redeployment of these forces. The FY 71 DoD budget is predicated, in part, on the planned reductions of forces in Thailand. A decision is required as soon as practical in order to begin negotiations with the RTG, preparatory to redeploying these forces.

Recommend you sign the attached memorandum to Dr. Kissinger⁴ reemphasizing the necessity for expeditious resolution of the questions

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, FRC 330 74 0142, Signers Copies Folder #24. Top Secret; Sensitive.

² Not found.

³ See footnote 2, Document 73.

⁴ Attached but not printed. The memorandum states that its purpose is "to reaffirm strongly" the Department of Defense position that negotiation with the RTG "should be started immediately so that we can retain our credibility with the Thai and minimize the adverse budgetary impact of the unplanned delay." It also states the hope that "no additional delays in completing the VSSG study will be encountered."

which are directly related to FY 71 force reductions in Thailand. (BANNER SUN). A talking paper on the subject for your use in California is also appended.⁵

RA Ware

⁵ Attached but not printed. The paper provides a chronology of the plan for military reductions in Thailand. It also asserts that the loss of the F-105 aircraft there would “be fully compensated for by the additional AC-130 and B-57s as in terms of interdiction in Laos” and that the Takhli base in Thailand “will no longer be needed” and that its closure “should have no impact on Thai decision-making regarding Cambodia.”

80. Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Sullivan) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, July 30, 1970.

SUBJECT

U.S. Air Force Reduction in Thailand

In accordance with your request there is attached the memorandum which I received from our Thai people concerning the problem of United States reduction of Air Force units in Thailand. This memorandum addresses itself only to those reductions which our Embassy in Thailand knows are included in the Fiscal Year 1971 program. Our Embassy in Bangkok is not yet aware of the fact that one of the alternatives in the tactical air package for Southeast Asia might result in the elimination of additional squadrons and in the evacuation of the base at Korat.

Naturally, if there were any decision taken to accept the alternative which involves the Korat evacuation, our problem with the Thai would be even greater than is suggested in the attached memorandum. On the other hand, if we are going to make such a decision we should not break the news to the Thai piecemeal but should give them the bad news all at once.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Top Secret. A notation in Kissinger’s handwriting reads: “Al—I agree, I want the *whole* ’71 package spelled out and communicated to DOD along the lines of VSSG decisions.”

Our very strong recommendation is that the decision on the tactical air package should leave the Korat installation intact. Therefore, if and when the decision is made to instruct Embassy Bangkok to implement the Fiscal Year 1971 package² we trust that will be a definitive decision concerning the total redeployments to be made from Thailand and that it will involve only the redeployment of the air squadrons and the evacuation of Takhli.

Attachment

Washington, undated.

Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green) to Secretary of State Rogers³

SUBJECT

U.S. Air Force Reduction in Thailand

During your forthcoming visit to San Clemente, the Viet-Nam Special Study Group will take up with the White House the reduction of the USAF sortie rate from Thai bases. Whatever decision is taken with respect to the sortie rate will be the foundation for subsequent actions to reduce U.S. military forces in Thailand. As you know from your conversations with Ambassador Unger in Manila and Tokyo, he is greatly concerned not only over the size and pattern of the cuts themselves but also over the political importance that there be thorough, unhurried and genuine consultations and that in these consultations we genuinely take into account Thai problems. In this connection there are two important points:

A. That there be adequate lead time for consultation and planning process to take place. In practice this would mean that there should be at least 60 days following the initiation of consultations with the Thai and prior to the actual commencement of reductions. Thus if a decision were communicated to Bangkok to commence consultations on August 1,

² The decision was made at the WSAG meeting of August 4, which was held in the White House Situation Room from 5:10 to 6:45 p.m. The WSAG agreed that DOD should pull its F-105s out of Takhli, but that the base should be kept open at least until October 1971. Excerpts relating to Thailand are in Document 81.

³ Green crossed out the Secretary as the addressee on this memorandum and wrote in Ambassador Sullivan's name with a note that reads: "Bill—I'm not sending this to the Secretary since he won't be at VSSG or even later at S. Clemente. However, you may find points here valid and relevant in your VSSG meeting. MG"

actual reductions in operations and/or redeployment actions should not commence until October 1. This is important not only for political reasons but to permit sound planning of what will prove to be a very complicated process for the Thai.

B. That the close out of Takhli Air Base be phased so as to gear into the Thai budgetary cycle, i.e. October 1, 1971, rather than on the proposed date of June 30, 1971. I understand our budgetary rationale behind the June 30 date, but there are substantial considerations arguing in favor of an October 1 close-out. Some 1900 locally hired workers will be thrown out of work in what is otherwise a tiny village community. There will be substantial local economic dislocation. In addition, if the Thai Air Force is to continue to keep Takhli open on a standby basis it will have to make budgetary arrangements to do so. All of these considerations will require budgetary and appropriation action by the RTG. To close out on June 30, 1971 will leave a three-month gap which will plague both the RTG and us in the future. If the consultation process is to be meaningful, we must be prepared to take account of this genuine problem. Even though the flying air squadrons may have already redeployed the USAF skeleton ground element should remain in Takhli until October 1.

I note from Under Secretary Packard's letter of June 30 to Under Secretary Johnson⁴ that Defense expects the RTAF to keep Takhli open. Mr. Packard goes on to indicate that "reentry should be relatively easy since the base will be in full operation". Since we are counting on the Thai to maintain the base in a operational status, it is in our own interest to facilitate Thai administrative and budgetary take over by phasing out our final withdrawal until October 1.

While the meeting in San Clemente is primarily concerned with the sortie rate and may not take specific questions of timing, yet the decisions to be made on the sortie rate will to a large extent determine our flexibility with respect to phasing and timing. I hope full consideration will be given to these points in considering the reduction of the sortie rate.

⁴ Document 73.

81. Editorial Note

During the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of August 4, 1970, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger announced first that the organization of several different

groups of principals dealing with various aspects of the conflict in Southeast Asia would be simplified, and that "this group of principals will now be called the Senior Review Group on Southeast Asia."

A summary reads as follows:

"Support for Thai Khmer Units. DOD is to pay initial family separation allowances for the first 2,000 troops, and to cover the first Quarter's pay and allowances after deployment in Cambodia. AID will offset this cost later by making available supporting assistance to cover a Vietnam cost which otherwise would be funded by DOD. The State Department is to make sure the Thais understand that these units must at least nominally be folded into FANK in order that initial equipment needs and operative support can be covered by Cambodian MAP."

The WSAG also agreed "that projects for recruitment of two additional Lao SGU battalions and six Thai SGU battalions for paramilitary operations in South Laos should go forward."

The last discussion of the meeting concerned the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Thailand. Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson asked about the withdrawal of air support and stated that the "Black Panthers are leaving Vietnam, and some U.S. troops are leaving Thailand." (Prime Minister Thanom announced on August 27 that his Government had informed the South Vietnamese Government that it planned to withdraw its troops from that country.) In response to Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard's question as to whether there was any reason to keep Takhli open, Kissinger made the following response:

"When you draw down your involvement in Thailand, it will be hard to get back in. Since one could conclude that Thailand will be our anchor in Southeast Asia, we might wish to pull troops now in South Vietnam into Thailand. If this should be the case, we would want to keep as much presence as possible in Thailand at this time. This is the argument that Sullivan has been giving me, and I understand that Secretary Rogers agrees."

Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms added that "We shouldn't indicate that we are closing Takhli at this time." Kissinger then stated, "I agree. Let's take out the F-105s, but keep open the base for now." Kissinger concluded by stating that if "we tell the Thais that we are getting out, we will have to pay the political price. On the other hand, if we just take the F-105s out, but leave the base open, we can come back at any time that we choose." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969 and 1970)

The discussions and agreement with the Thai Government concerning the redeployment of the additional 10,000 U.S. military personnel from Thailand during FY 1971 were publicly announced on September 8.

82. Summary Paper in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 51¹

Washington, August 5, 1970.

A PROGRAM ANALYSIS STUDY OF U.S. POLICY AND PROGRAM
OPTIONS FOR THAILAND 1971–1975

[Omitted here is Part I, Introduction.]

Part II
Analysis of Issues

(1) *U.S. Interests in Thailand, the Threats to Thailand, and Alternative
U.S. Commitments to Thailand.*

U.S. Interests in Thailand. In his February 18, 1970 message to the Congress the President prescribed the following relationship between U.S. interests and U.S. commitments: “*Our interests must shape our commitments rather than the other way around.*”

U.S. strategic, foreign policy, military, political, and economic interests are involved in Thailand.

U.S. Strategic and Military Interests in Thailand—The U.S. has made extensive use of air bases and support facilities in Thailand for wartime bombing and intelligence operations *in Vietnam*. The bases, however, remain under nominal Thai control. Thailand is in an ideal position for staging operations in Laos and for support efforts to help Cambodia. Thailand has also made a contribution to the war effort in Vietnam as a Troop Contributing Country.

In the event of a Sino-U.S. war, the U.S. would mount attacks from its East Asian bases e.g. Japan, Philippines, Korea, etc., because they are close to China’s industrial and population centers. Bases in Southeast Asia would be an asset but not of critical importance. Therefore, Thailand is not of great strategic value vis-à-vis *China*. However, Thailand is and will remain an important intelligence base for the monitoring of Chinese activities. Thai-based installations are useful for monitoring Chinese missile developments and potential military preparations, particularly for attacks on Southeast Asia. However, with

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, PM/ISP Files: Lot 72 D 504, Subject Files, Box 2. Top Secret. According to a September 16 memorandum from Jeanne W. Davis to the Secretaries of State and Defense, the response to NSSM 51 was not completed, but instead was incorporated into NSSM 99, Southeast Asia. (National Archives, RG 59, NSC Files: 80 D 212, General Files on NSC Matters, Box 1, NSC Admin. Matters, January 1970)

satellite air and seaborne capability, the loss of Thailand as an intelligence base would deal a severe blow to U.S. interests only with regard to our ability to have the necessary warning to defend Thailand itself. Therefore, in the absence of other U.S. interests, the intelligence value of Thailand alone would not justify a U.S. commitment to defend Thailand.

As the major industrial power in Asia, Japan's security interests are important to the U.S. However, unlike its attitude toward Korea, Japan does not view its security to be closely linked to Thailand.

With regard to Southeast Asia, although the U.S. has stated that it does not seek permanent bases in Thailand after the Vietnam war, it is conceivable that U.S. interests in preserving the outcome in Laos or Vietnam may require U.S. access to bases in Thailand. A U.S. presence in Southeast Asia maintained by the U.S. SEATO commitment to Thailand, may also provide a security umbrella against an overt Chinese or other threats for nascent Southeast Asian regionalism or for individual nations (e.g. Cambodia) where the U.S. has interests but no commitments.

In relation to East Asia and the Pacific Area. To the South, Singapore possesses in the form of one of the largest and most modern non-American naval bases in the world—airfields, and ship and aircraft maintenance facilities—assets that could be used to support military forces in East Asia and the Indian Ocean.

A continued British and Australian presence in Singapore would probably preclude the hostile use of these naval facilities as well as provide a barrier to aggression across the Straits of Malacca. If Thailand were neutral or under Communist control, the U.S. would have the option of basing its own forces at Singapore in addition to the British and Australian presence.

About 800 Free World ships each month pass through the Straits of Malacca, but this route is of primary economic importance not to the U.S. but to Japan, which is the world's largest importer of oil (90% of which comes through the Straits). Even Japanese interests would not be seriously endangered if the Straits were closed as oil tankers could pass south of Indonesia.

Indonesia itself constitutes a major U.S. security interest in East Asia, although it is doubtful that a neutral or hostile Thailand would significantly alter Indonesia's² determination and capability to remain non-Communist.

² A notation next to this underlined passage (from 'doubtful' through 'Indonesia's') reads "nuts! Heartland of SE Asia."

In the Pacific area, as long as Indonesia remains independent, there is no direct link between the security of Thailand and the defense of Australia, New Zealand or other Pacific powers friendly to the U.S. Nor is there any direct link between Thailand's security and the security of the U.S.

Foreign Policy Interests: SEATO and the Problem of U.S. Commitments—To the extent that other powers gauge U.S. intentions on the basis of the U.S.'s performance vis-à-vis Thailand—for example, our willingness to honor our commitment to Thailand—our actions in Thailand will have wider repercussions in Asia, particularly for those Asian nations such as Korea, Japan, and Taiwan that rely on the U.S. to balance the influence of China.

The same is true, although to a lesser extent, world-wide. While Thailand may not be considered an area of vital U.S. interest, and the Thai may be able to deal with their internal security problems on their own (or at least without U.S. combat troops), the U.S. has an interest in demonstrating fidelity to its international commitments. As the only mainland Asian subscriber to SEATO, Thailand ranks with South Korea and Taiwan as an area where the credibility of the U.S. commitment in Asia could be put to the test.

Thus, the U.S. commitment and involvement in Thailand are an element of the Asian balance of power. The size and nature of our role can vary significantly in relation to alternative estimates of the extent of U.S. involvement required to maintain regional stability in the face of the likely threats. While the present equilibrium in SEA may be acceptable to U.S. interests, other stable arrangements could also be compatible with U.S. goals. For example, in the post-Vietnam period a Thailand less dependent on the U.S. either as a result of *increased Thai military capability, diminished threats, or diplomatic realignment* or some combination of these three would not necessarily threaten the balance of power in Asia and thereby U.S. interests.

Political Interests—In addition to the SEATO relationship, informal or implied U.S. commitments to Thailand stem from communications and contingency plans relating to the formal commitment, implicit understandings regarding U.S. programs in Thailand, and from Thai cooperation in collective security actions in Asia, particularly in Vietnam.

The net effect of these informal obligations, over a period of twenty years, has been a considerable deepening of the intimacy of U.S.-Thai relations.

Therefore, while there are no historic U.S. ties of friendship with Thailand, there is a measure of intimacy that has resulted from a past close U.S.-Thai relationship, particularly through the Vietnam war.

Economic Interests—The U.S. does not have major economic interests in Thailand. U.S. investments amount to about \$200 million. Thai-

land is not an important trading partner of the United States; total U.S.-Thai trade in 1968 was \$267 million. Thailand is not an indispensable source of scarce resources for the U.S. It is not a major market for U.S. industry. However, U.S. access to Thai airspace and U.S. landing rights in Thailand are a decided convenience for the U.S.

Conclusion—Thailand is not of vital interest to the United States. Our greatest interest in Thailand derives from our foreign policy objective of bringing the Vietnam war to a successful conclusion.³

Beyond this, however, U.S. interests are not inconsistent with a new equilibrium in Southeast Asia resulting from either a change in the military balance or from diplomatic realignment. Whether U.S. interests would be served by such developments depends largely on *how the new situation is arrived at*. That is, if the U.S. acted precipitously in rejecting its alliance with Thailand, U.S. foreign policy interests in Asia and world wide could be seriously harmed.

On the other hand, if the threats to Thailand diminished as a result of action by China, the Soviet Union or North Vietnam, or if Thai actions increased Thailand's defense capabilities or improved its relations with Peking or Hanoi and thereby lessened Thailand's dependence on the U.S., such developments would not threaten U.S. interests.

The issue then is not whether U.S. interests can tolerate a Thailand less intimately linked to the U.S., but whether ways can be found to diminish Thailand's dependence and scale down the U.S. commitment to Thailand without: (a) jeopardizing our immediate goals in Southeast Asia, or (b) abandoning the Thai in a precipitous manner that would jeopardize U.S. foreign policy goals.

[Omitted here is Part III, Issues for Decision.]

³ A notation next to this sentence reads: "more a non-commie SE Asia."

83. Editorial Note

[text not declassified]

84. Memorandum From Richard T. Kennedy, Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., and John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, August 14, 1970.

SUBJECT

Banner Sun Reductions in Thailand

The Banner Sun package represents total reductions of about 10,000 U.S. personnel. This includes about 4,000 personnel associated with the withdrawal of F-105s and 6,000 other personnel including engineer and transportation units, and other miscellaneous personnel.

The package was "approved" by Packard and Johnson and Ambassador Unger was advised to inform the Thai by a cable in early July² (on what basis is not clear to us), but a hold was placed on this at Secretary Rogers' direction³ following his discussion with the President.

The Banner Sun package was discussed at the VSSG meeting in Los Angeles and subsequently in the WSAG meeting on August 4.⁴ In both cases the discussion turned on whether Takhli should be kept open. In Los Angeles the discussion was in the context of sortie levels. At the WSAG meeting the discussion centered on whether we should inform the Thai of our intention ultimately to close Takhli or whether we should agree to keep it open and manned until October 1971, deferring until early spring informing the Thai of our decision. At the WSAG meeting it was agreed that we would keep Takhli open through October 1971, would withdraw the F-105 units, and would defer until spring 1971 decision as to whether to continue our operation of the base after October 1971 or to turn over responsibility to the Thai and to inform them of our intention to do so. NSDM 77 confirmed the decision on Takhli and set sortie levels.

The draft cable which Alex Johnson used as a springboard for the discussion at the WSAG meeting,⁵ and which he left with you, authorized Ambassador Unger to inform the Thai of the full Banner Sun reduction package modified by the decision on Takhli, and to advise

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action.

² See footnote 2, Document 73.

³ See Document 74.

⁴ See Document 81.

⁵ Attached but not printed.

the Thai about September 1. (Our redraft taking into account your changes *but* still reflecting the Johnson/Packard "approval" of the entire Banner Sun package is at Tab A.)⁶

Both Ambassador Johnson and Mr. Packard are agreed that we should go forward on this basis, but we are unclear as to whether you agree or whether the reductions other than those associated with F-105s require further approval either by you or by the President.

We would appreciate your guidance.

Banner Sun approved in full with modification for Takhli⁷ (approve cable at Tab A)

Air Force reductions modified by Takhli approved but do Memo for the President on other reductions

⁶ Attached but not printed.

⁷ This option was checked.

85. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, August 14, 1970.

SUBJECT

Your Request for Chronology of Thai Moves in Providing Regular RTA Forces for Service in Cambodia

At Tab A is the chronology of Thai moves in providing regular RTA forces for service in Cambodia² as we have pieced it together from regular and back-channel messages.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Secret; Nodis; Khmer. Sent for information. The memorandum is unsigned.

² The 5-page chronology references the regular and backchannel messages that correspond to each Thai/U.S. move; attached but not printed.

In brief, I believe that these messages bring out the following points:

—In May, soon after the U.S./GVN operations began in Cambodia, the Thai became concerned about the implications for them of the Communist aggression in Cambodia and began to consider the possibility of deploying regular RTA forces into Cambodia to help prevent a Communist takeover.

—An initial Thai concept was to deploy a regiment of the Black Panthers from Vietnam into Eastern Cambodia, replacing it with other regular forces from Thailand. The Black Panthers would thus have stayed on in Vietnam.

—After State determined that we could not legally support the Black Panthers in Cambodia unless operations were confined to the sanctuaries (“fighting the Vietnam war in Cambodia”) and we discovered also that the Thai intended to cover a broad area of Cambodia with these forces, an alternative was considered of supporting Thai forces (two regiments) from Thailand moving into Western Cambodia.

—We then (about the end of May) spoke of upgrading the two regular Thailand regiments but retaining them in Thailand as “fire brigades” pending deployment of the Thai/Khmer regiments.

—At this point we also began to engage in discussions with the Thai—from the Thai standpoint the word “haggle” might be a better term—on how U.S. support for these activities might be provided. We offered various combinations such as prior-year Thai MASE, trade-offs from economic assistance, and increased PL 480. It may have appeared to the Thai from this that we were fiddling while Rome was burning.

—As the June 30 date for the U.S. withdrawal from Cambodia neared and no definitive arrangement for support of Thai forces in Cambodia was arrived at, the Thai began to consider the withdrawal of *all* Black Panther units from Vietnam to cope with dangers closer to Thailand, possibly by committing them to Cambodia.

—However, the Thai themselves began to have some second thoughts about too obvious a Thai military presence in Cambodia. Thai public opinion did not appear enthusiastic about involvement. Foreign Minister Thanat apparently exercised some influence on planning to assure that Thai contributions to Cambodia would be kept clandestine. In addition, a “high level political decision” was allegedly required before Thai troops would be committed. The Thai were also concerned that their moving into a military role in Cambodia would vitiate their influence as one of the three Djakarta Conference convener governments.

—Once again, misgivings about the level of U.S. support may have played a role in the Thai reservations. They have consistently found it very difficult to understand why the U.S. has not moved more vigorously to support them in coping with what they regard as clear and

present threat to Thailand, and have apparently not comprehended the legal, financial, and Congressional complexities with which we must deal.

—The Thai concept which finally began to emerge from the withdrawal of the Black Panthers (which has still not been formally announced) was not to use them as a fire brigade but as the trained nucleus of expanded Thai forces—apparently *not* for immediate use in Cambodia.

86. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Chronology of Moves in Connection with Provision of Regular Thai Forces for Service in Cambodia

You are aware that there have been numerous problems in putting into effect your strategy for Cambodia of mobilizing maximum U.S. and third country efforts to prevent the collapse of the Cambodian Government. As an illustration of these problems, the chronology at Tab A² summarizes the sequence of events surrounding a plan for deploying two regular Thai regiments in Cambodia, which has now been dropped by the Thai.

When the Thai first proposed this on May 22 they emphasized the need for [1 line of source text not declassified], and (b) the need for U.S. support essentially as provided for their forces in Laos and South Vietnam. These two regiments were to be in addition to the Thai Khmer regiments which we were already committed to support. At that time

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 562, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IV. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. Apparently drafted by Holdridge and Kennedy, as evidenced by their attached August 26 memorandum to Kissinger. There is no indication that the President saw this memorandum, and a notation in the margin of the Holdridge/Kennedy memorandum in Kissinger's handwriting reads "Al—I think this is probably OBE. What do you think? At any rate please put in the files (as well as my personal files)." A notation next to it in Haig's handwriting reads: "Agree."

² At Tab A, attached but not printed, is the same chronology as that mentioned in footnote 2, Document 85.

the Thai had agreed to pay the salaries and expenses of the Thai Khmer regiments after they were deployed in Cambodia. Our initial reaction was to go slow on the regular Thai regiments, getting them ready (contributing equipment and training support) but keeping them in reserve.

When the Thai persisted, we discussed with them the possibility of overcoming the complex problems of support for these units in Cambodia by employing them as an augmentation of the Thai Black Panther unit in Vietnam. Some of the Black Panthers would then have moved into the sanctuary areas.

Meanwhile, plans for the Djakarta Conference were advancing and a great deal of emphasis was being placed on “neutrality” and “non-alignment” in the Asian capitals. Our Embassies with State’s backing were taking every opportunity to remind governmental leaders of the need to protect their “neutral” credentials to (a) get the conference off the ground, and (b) assure a reasonable prospect for its success. This probably contributed to the Thai Cabinet’s decision to defer sending the Thai “volunteers” to Cambodia—the Djakarta Conference called for removal of all foreign troops from Cambodia.

Thai desire for moving at least a regiment of the Black Panthers waxed again in mid-June, but despite our offers of indirect help to make this possible, they began to temporize. (The military situation in Cambodia, which had seemed critical in early and mid-June had improved somewhat which may have relieved some of the pressures on the Thai to move.) The way in which our offers were couched may have contributed at this point to a general uneasiness on the part of the Thai. State continued to paint a picture of the legal complexities which we had to overcome in giving any support. The effect probably was to suggest to the Thai that we really did not favor their movement. At the same time we were pursuing in all capitals the need for a vigorous follow-up to the Djakarta conference—the inferences were “remember your neutral status” and remember the Djakarta declaration that all foreign troops should withdraw.

The net effect of all this seems to have been that the Thai doubted either our willingness or at least our ability to come through with the kind of financial support they wanted. Behind their desire for financial support was also a clear hope for a U.S. commitment on behalf of their military actions in Cambodia. On this aspect, too, there must have been growing doubts. Despite occasional suggestions that they might be willing to go ahead without substantial help from us, the weight of the evidence is on the side that they wanted support of a kind they already were receiving for their forces in Northern Laos and in Vietnam. Our “explanations” of the difficulties of providing such support in Cambodia probably led them to conclude that we would only reluctantly acquiesce in such support and might not continue it for long. There would be no commitment.

Thus our position probably may have been interpreted as comparatively negative. This led the Thai in turn to reach a "political" decision not to go ahead. It also reinforced their concern as to our future intentions in the region—our Vietnam withdrawals, our ground force withdrawal from Cambodia and our planned reductions in Thailand all added up to produce a growing sense of uneasiness in Bangkok. When we discouraged (with General Abrams' concurrence) the use of the Panthers in Cambodia and didn't come forward with a positive and simple solution to the support problems for the Thai regiments in western Cambodia, the Thai probably concluded that the better part of valor was to tighten their belts and bring the Panthers home to protect Thailand itself before we withdrew the support we were then providing.

Ambassador Unger continued to suggest to Washington his enthusiasm for the project. State's instructions, however, tended to imply some reticence to move ahead and left Unger to carry the ball without positive evidence of full support from the Department for the project.

As evidenced at the WSAG meetings neither Ambassador Johnson nor Ambassador Green were enthusiastic at the prospect of regular Thai forces in Cambodia. This accounts for the fact that most cables originally were drafted in negative tone.

87. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand¹

Washington, September 5, 1970, 1824Z.

146291. CINCPAC For POLAD.

1. Following is approved memorandum of conversation between Vice President Agnew and Prime Minister Thanom in Bangkok from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon on August 29, 1970.

2. Summary: Vice President had wide-ranging conversations with PM and other Thai leaders on situation in Thailand and neighboring areas and on political background of United States policies. Some specific problems related to US support of Thai efforts in Laos and Cambodia also discussed.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Box 449, President's Trip Files, Vice President's SEA Trip, Aug 1970. Secret; Nodis. Repeated to Vientiane, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Taipei, Rangoon, CINCPAC, and the White House.

3. Meeting opened with briefing by Dawee on insurgency in Thailand and situation in Cambodia and Laos. PM raised Souvanna Phouma's request for three Thai battalions in Laos and need for US support of these. Vice President discussed this in relation to domestic US political situation and danger of exacerbating opposition's obstructive actions by attempting to provide direct support to this type of operation. He emphasized need to find indirect means of compensating Thai for cost of such operations. Vice President went on to discuss background of political situation in United States, political pressures of forthcoming election and Senate attitudes. He stressed need to keep Thai-US disagreements "in the family" to avoid giving advocates of isolationist policy ammunition for use against administration.

4. Vice President spoke briefly on visit to Viet-Nam and Cambodia, stressing impressive performance of Lon Nol.

5. Vice President informed Thais that FANK trained in Thailand could be equipped out of Cambodian MAP, assuming this met with GOC approval. When Thais urged that US make decision to divert funds for this purpose, VP cautioned against expecting United States to act without consulting Cambodians or to put pressure on Cambodians on this kind of issue.

6. Thais referred to US press attacks on them, citing recent *Newsweek* article by Maynard Parker. Vice President urged them not to be too sensitive and not to mistake this type of criticism for voice of the US people. Thais complained of being described as "bending with the wind" when in fact they had taken strong position against Communism.

7. Thais expressed appreciation for US aid, including PL-480 offer. Thais made strong appeal to Vice President not to reduce aid in face of increased threat. Vice President pledged to so recommend. Vice President expressed gratitude for Thai commitment and assistance in many parts [garble].

8. Meeting ended with brief discussion of situation in Burma. End summary.

9. Participants on Thai side were Prime Minister Thanom, Deputy Prime Ministers Praphat and Pote, Air Chief Marshal Dawee, General Sawaeng (chief of PriMin's office), Dr. Renoo (Secretary General NEDS) and Service Chiefs of Staff Bunchoo (Air), Charoon (Navy) and Surakit (Army). On American side were Vice President, Mr. Sohmer, Brig. Gen. Dunn, Mr. Duemling, Mr. Houdek, Ambassador Unger, DCM Newman, COMUSMACTHAI Major General Seith and Political Counselor Pickering.

10. PriMin Thanom led off, saying Thai had no formal agenda but would simply try to provide VP with picture of latest developments in Thailand as basis for his report to the President. He said Thais would appreciate getting from VP report of US policy, VP said this was com-

pletely agreeable, that he wanted briefing on the situation in Thailand and on this part of the world. For his part, he would try to help them understand certain aspects of the complex political situation in the United States which he knew were difficult to comprehend. He said he hoped they would not be inhibited by the well known and much appreciated Thai courtesy, but would go to the heart of all matters. He said we are engaged together in a difficult war with a determined enemy and must be completely frank with one another about problems.

11. Situation in Thailand and Neighboring Areas: Dawee presented this briefing. With respect to North Thailand, he said Communists had limited capability because they were mostly hill tribes and received no support from lowland Thai. Only danger was that of linkup with Pathet Lao in Sayabouri. Chinese Communist road leading to Sayabouri indicates ChiCom intention to support insurgency in Thailand. Northeast now "under control" thanks to combined civilian police and military effort. Situation a "little bad" in mid-South, but only real danger is possible linkup between CTS in mid-South and those on Malaysian border who are residuals from Malaysian emergency. Later now recruiting and training Thai and some Malaysians.

12. In Laos, Dawee identified principal threat to Thailand as coming from Sayabouri and Champasak. Noted Thai assistance to RLG citing forces assisting Vang Pao and harassment and interdiction teams. Said Thai wish to help further but require support from US.

13. On Cambodia, Dawee praised US operation in sanctuaries, but said Communists now establishing new sanctuaries in area in Northwest Cambodia. He estimated that no more than 20 percent of people (including those in Communist-occupied areas) support Sihanouk or Communists. Rest loyal to Lon Nol.

14. Additional Thai Forces for Laos: PriMin Souvanna Phouma had asked for three Thai battalions, one to serve in Sayabouri and two in Campassak and Sithadone. They were to relieve Lao forces to move into other, more critical areas. PM said he understood Washington approved establishing six Thai SGU battalions, but noted they had a four-month training cycle and could probably not be deployed before January 1, 1971. He said Souvanna Phouma wants help immediately and therefore the three battalions should move in in the meantime. He asked US support.

15. VP said this is difficult because of the political problems in the US. We are working on means to provide assistance, but it may not take the traditional form.

16. The Ambassador referred to discussions held with the PM and others the previous day concerning this problem. He said we can help with SGUs for use in trail interdiction, but he expressed doubt as to how much we can do in connection with a requirement for regular

battalions in Sayabouri, Champassak, and Sithandone. However, we were seeking a complete answer on this from Washington.

16. The VP said the situation in Southeast Asia is so distorted in the press coverage that people do not get a clear picture of the nature of actions such as the assistance Souvanna is seeking. The Senate is focusing intensely on this type of action in a very hostile way. While we know it is needed and worthy of our support, that support cannot be provided in the usual way at this time. (At this point, FonMin Thanat (who has kept himself very closely informed on the various amendments which the Senate is considering) spoke to the PriMin in Thai for some time explaining some implications of the Cooper–Church, Fulbright, and other proposed amendments.)

17. The VP said that press is generally aware that there were some Thai forces in Laos, although we had not confirmed their presence. He said US support of additional Thai forces for Laos could cause a real explosion in US public opinion. Thus it was necessary to look for other kinds of assistance which would permit the Thais to transfer funds now allocated to other purposes to support such measures as Thai battalions for Laos.

18. Impact of Political Situation in the US on Southeast Asian Policy: Against this background the VP discussed further the pressures from the forthcoming elections and current attitudes in the Senate. He noted that Humphrey had recently come out in support of the McGovern–Hatfield Amendment. Many voices are now calling upon us to leave Asia now regardless of the consequences. The VP described the severe inflationary situation the President had inherited from the previous administration. Thus he had been forced to trim spending in an effort to reestablish a sane fiscal policy. Congress, however, had insisted on large education and housing appropriations, even overriding the President's veto, forcing the administration to trim the defense establishment by \$10 billion. This meant applying the knife heavily all over the world, and facing considerable resultant unemployment in the US. He said the present was as tough a period of national adjustment as we had ever had to cope with.

19. The VP said President Nixon understands that we should fulfill our role as a Pacific power and was determined that we would keep our treaty obligations. He said the President would not have sent him back after only seven months if he didn't think this part of the world was important.

20. The VP expressed the belief that if the administration gets through the off-year election without erosion of its position on the Hill, the situation would right itself. He said that in many key races the issue was not partisan politics but was drawn between isolationism and continuation of the administration's foreign policy. He noted the do-

mestic political importance of his ability to go back and report firsthand on the situation in Southeast Asia.

21. He said the mood of isolationism in certain parts of American society is directed strongly at Southeast Asia. He noted the contrast between Fulbright's position on the Middle East and that on Southeast Asia. It is politically tempting to appeal to people who are tired of the war, to students and to the media who want immediate withdrawal from Asia.

22. He appealed to the Thai leaders not to construe our actions as lessening support for them or weakening of our resolve. That would cause the administration further difficulty in the US.

23. He said if our allies seem to be complaining and criticizing all the time, people may get sick of it and go along with those who demand that we get out. This would make it impossible for the President, the real advocate of helping our friends. We must face the fact, he continued, that we cannot say things in the same way or operate in the same way as before. Even the limited statements he had made in relation to Cambodia, for example, had attracted criticism. He said the US faces an absolute crisis in government, and that the administration cannot operate without Congressional support. He concluded these remarks by noting that Ambassador Unger would help find less direct ways to meet the needs of the situation.

24. Impact on Vietnamization of Situation in Neighboring Countries: The PriMin said that he agrees with the program on Vietnamization and the need to strengthen the Vietnamese ability to stand on their own feet. However, he emphasized that if we do not assist victims of Communist aggression such as Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, and if they are weakened and lack support, it will be difficult for Vietnam itself to stand on its own feet.

25. The Vice President agreed, recalling his observations to newsmen concerning the effect on our withdrawals from Vietnam should Cambodia fall to the Communists. Administration policy is to do exactly what the PriMin suggests but unfortunately that is not the policy favored by some in the legislative branch who believe that countries of Southeast Asia can be allowed to go Communist without any serious repercussions.

26. The Vice President said he would like to see assistance accelerated, especially in light of the troop withdrawals we are making, but we must have appropriations to do this and these are under pressure in every respect. He noted that the DoD appropriation today is the lowest in terms of percentage of GNP since 1950. Even so, there are members of the House and Senate who would cut it further. They seem to want complete abandonment of our foreign obligations and total focus on our domestic problems. They apparently assume that Communists have suddenly become benign.

27. In sum, while the administration wants to assist countries of this area, it must play a cautious game so long as public opinion remains in its present state.

28. The PriMin commented that if dove views prevail there will be great danger in due course not only to this part of the world but to other parts as well. The Vice President agreed.

29. Thailand and the Future of the Nixon Doctrine: The PriMin said Thailand agrees with the Nixon Doctrine and is trying to implement it as it had been described to them by the President. They do not require manpower, but must have material assistance or the doctrine could not be implemented. He suggested that Congress may destroy or negate the Doctrine.

30. The Vice President said a fight is going on for the confidence of the American public. At stake is the course we will take in foreign policy. He said he thinks the administration will win this fight. He asked them not to attach too much importance to the gloomy picture he had painted because he regularly looks at the darker side so as to be prepared for the worst. He believes that when the full importance of our material and economic assistance is better understood, and as we reduce our armed forces in the area to acceptable levels, public opinion can be turned around. He believes people will ultimately understand that the cost of preventing the war from spreading is vastly less than that of fighting it after it expands.

31. The Vice President said he recognized the necessity of finding the means of turning the tide politically so that we can carry out our policy for this area directly and proudly as it should be carried out. He said many people had been sold a bill of goods to the effect that people of this area want communism.

32. He again appealed to the Thais to recognize the difficulties the President faced and not let disappointments go beyond the family to the point where they were exploitable by isolationist politicians and others who would say our allies want only our money and endlessly criticize us.

33. Press Attacks on Thailand: The FonMin said that Thailand was attacked less by the Communist side than by the "Eastern Seaboard Establishment" and "The Washington–New York Axis." He then read from the recent *Newsweek* article on Thailand. He said millions of people would read this and be influenced by it.

88. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, September 10, 1970, 4:05–4:40 p.m.

SUBJECT

Cambodia

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

Mr. U. Alexis Johnson

Mr. Marshall Green

Mr. Thomas Pickering

Mr. James Wilson

Defense

Mr. David Packard

Mr. Dennis Doolin

CIA

Mr. Richard Helms

Mr. Thomas Karamessines

Mr. William Wells

JCS

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John Vogt

Lt. Gen. Melvin Zais

NSC Staff

Mr. John Holdridge

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Mr. D. Keith Guthrie

[Omitted here is the Summary of Conclusions.]

Thai-Khmer Units

Mr. Johnson: The Cambodians have now decided they don't want the Thai Khmer units, and the Thais are in the process of disbanding them.

Dr. Kissinger: Are they already disbanding them?

Mr. Johnson: They will start very shortly. There would be an advantage in converting the Thai Khmers into SGUs, which could be used in Laos, where they are needed. We prepared a draft message—which is now being circulated—suggesting to Ambassador Unger that he discuss this possibility with the Thai. In the meantime, Unger has come in with a similar proposal. I would like to move that we dispatch our cable.

Mr. Packard: What does the cable say?

Mr. Johnson: It tells Unger to talk to the Thais about turning the Thai-Khmer units into SGUs.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Nodis. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

Dr. Kissinger: If these troops are partially Khmer, will they be enthusiastic about fighting in Laos?

Mr. Johnson: We have raised this question in our draft cable. It can be pointed out to the Thai Khmers that they would be helping in the defense of Cambodia. The pay will also be an inducement. Of course, some of them may nevertheless drop out. We also ought to take into account that we already have the money available for the SGU program.

Mr. Packard: I think these operations in Southern Laos are useful.

Dr. Kissinger: That may be true; but before the year is out, we may be hard pressed in Cambodia and may be wishing we had two regiments to put in. I am reluctant to see our assets disappear. We should also keep in mind the President's view that he does not want Cambodia to go down the drain without some effort on our part.

Mr. Packard: In Southern Laos the units will be doing just as much good for Cambodia.

Mr. Johnson: Possibly they will be more helpful if used there.

Dr. Kissinger: If that is the case, why didn't we think of putting them there in the beginning?

Mr. Packard: Our concern then was about the immediate problem of bolstering the capabilities of the FANK. Since that time, they have given evidence of having some staying power.

Mr. Green: Also, the Cambodians won't integrate the Thai Khmer units into the FANK sufficiently to make it possible for us to employ Cambodian MAP funds in the program.

Mr. Johnson: The SGU operation is undoubtedly more pertinent to the present situation.

Mr. Green: If the Thai Khmer units are needed later in Cambodia, they can be relocated.

Lt. Gen. Vogt: The Thai Khmers can be used right now. They have equipment and ammunition. They will be a wasted asset unless we make some use of them now. Placed astride the enemy supply lines in southern Laos, they can make a real contribution to the defense of Cambodia.

Dr. Kissinger: We were going to establish the SGUs anyway. Using the Thai Khmers won't add anything to our total assets.

Mr. Johnson: It will mean that those assets will be more immediately available.

Mr. Karamessines: Actually, the Thai Khmers will add to the total of SGUs.

Dr. Kissinger: Then the Thai Khmers would be in addition to the SGUs earlier planned for Southern Laos?

Mr. Karamessines: Yes. There would eventually be a total of eight Thai SGUs. In addition, we have been having difficulty finding personnel for the proposed Lao SGUs. Using the Thai Khmers will permit us to move ahead immediately.

Mr. Green: Then we will end up with eight Thai and four Cambodian SGUs.

Mr. Karamessines: That's right.

Mr. Wells: One of the Cambodian SGUs is at Pakse now. The second is in training, and the third and fourth will be coming in at the end of the month.

Adm. Moorer: (to Kissinger) I feel the same frustration you do with the Thais. On the other hand, Lon Nol has had more success than we anticipated.

Dr. Kissinger: And possibly more than he can sustain.

Mr. Karamessines: We will be significantly assisting Cambodia if we choke the enemy supply lines.

Dr. Kissinger: If Lon Nol knew that the present Cambodian MAP might be supplemented, do you suppose he would continue to refuse the Thai Khmers?

Mr. Helms: Basically, he doesn't like having Thai troops in his country.

Mr. Karamessines: The Cambodians have had a lot of trouble with the South Vietnamese troops. They would rather do without foreign troops now that their needs are less pressing.

Mr. Johnson: I think there is no doubt that using the Thai Khmers in southern Laos is the best way to help Lon Nol.

Lt. Gen. Vogt: CINCPAC thinks so too.

Mr. Helms: I agree.

Dr. Kissinger: We will probably never see any Thai troops anyway.

Mr. Wells: We still have one problem. General Praphat is concerned about pay scales. This has been holding up the SGUs for four weeks. Praphat says that it isn't possible to have Thai units in Laos on two different pay scales.

Mr. Johnson: How much is the difference?

Mr. Wells: It is significant. The SGUs are much cheaper. An SGU costs us \$1,250,000 a year. The three artillery batteries and three battalions in Long Tieng cost about \$25 million.

Mr. Johnson: Couldn't we take the position in dealing with the Thais that we can't have SGUs being paid at varying rates?

Mr. Wells: We already have pay differentials among SGUs.

Mr. Green: It would be much better to allow a dual pay scale continue for a short period.

Mr. Karamessines: Praphat's proposal is eventually to have all Thai units in Laos be SGUs.

Dr. Kissinger: Did he think that up himself?

Mr. Karamessines: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Why did he suddenly come up with the idea? Everyone has told me that having units in Long Tieng has been financially very advantageous to the Thais. Why should they give this up?

Mr. Wells: General Praphat is looking forward to the return of the dry season. He doesn't want to have regular Thai units exposed to a major North Vietnamese offensive.

Dr. Kissinger: Has there been a rainy season offensive by our side?

Adm. Moorer: There has been some action in connection with Operation Leapfrog.

Mr. Holdridge: There is another explanation for Praphat's proposal. It would mean putting a substantial portion—thirty-eight battalions—of the Thai Armed Forces on the US payroll.

Dr. Kissinger: Is everyone satisfied with this state of affairs? Let me take a look tonight at Alex's proposed telegram.² Are you sure that we won't just be creating a complete vacuum everywhere by replacing the Thai units at Long Tieng?³

[Omitted here is discussion of Operation Prairie Fire and AK-47 ammunition for Cambodia.]

² See Part I for the record of the WSAG discussion in the Middle East which immediately preceded the discussion of Cambodia. [Footnote in the source text.]

³ Kissinger was evidently not satisfied with the idea of shifting the Thai Khmer regiments to SGUs in southern Laos. In a draft memorandum to the President, attached to a September 14 covering memorandum, Kissinger identified the following "serious risks: The Cambodians probably will need all the help they can get two or three months from now." He also noted that the SGU battalions "would not be readily available—they would be dispersed and hard to redeploy." Finally, he claimed that "there is no assurance that the personnel of the regiment (who volunteered for Cambodia) would be willing to accept the SGU role in Laos. We run the risk therefore that in pursuing this course we may in fact be acquiescing in the disbanding of the unit." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V)

89. Memorandum From K. Wayne Smith of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 18, 1970.

SUBJECT

George Tanham's Priorities for Thailand

You are probably aware that a strongly held view in the State Department is that the U.S. should not urge the Thai to deploy ground forces outside Thailand, e.g., in Laos and Cambodia, except perhaps on short-term cross-border operations.

Those who favor this "Fortress Thailand" view do so for a variety of reasons, including a fear that Thai ground operations outside Thailand will provoke a retaliatory response from Hanoi or Peking. One of their strongest arguments is that the limited Thai military capabilities that are available should be deployed against the insurgent threat within Thailand.

Marshall Green has called your attention² to the views of George Tanham, one of the proponents of the view just described, and suggested you might want to talk with him. (The Green and Tanham memoranda are at Tab A.)³

Tanham, who until recently served as Ambassador Unger's Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency, argues as follows:⁴

—The RTG does not take the insurgent threat seriously enough and is not devoting adequate attention or resources to its insurgency problems. For example, RTG units deployed against the insurgents are poorly trained and undermanned.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Secret. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum in Kissinger's handwriting reads: "They have proven their contention ad nauseum."

² In a July 17 memorandum to Kissinger, Green recommended Tanham as "one of the foremost authorities on insurgency problems, particularly in Thailand."

³ Attached but not printed.

⁴ Although Smith summarized Tanham's two main points, the latter made numerous other observations in his June 1970 memorandum. Some of his points are specific, e.g. "too many young officers in Bangkok," while others are more general. For example, in his speculation concerning the reason for Bangkok's "probably complacent" attitude towards the insurgency, Tanham theorizes that "their successful experience in maintaining their independence," their "leaders' belief in the basic loyalty of the Thai people," and "an inadequate understanding of the real threat of communist revolutionary warfare" all played a part.

—Efforts by the U.S. to involve the Thai outside Thailand indirectly divert Thai attention from their internal problems. Moreover, in responding to U.S. requests to deploy “forward,” the Thai may believe that such deployments increase the U.S.’s obligation to help Thailand meet its insurgent threat.

Tanham’s reasoning drastically simplifies an exceedingly complex problem. Thai decisions on out-of-country deployments turn more on their view of their security interests than anything else, although financial inducements play an important role. Furthermore, the NSSM 51 study has found no one-to-one trade-off between RTG capability to meet the external versus the internal threat. It is more likely that the Thai will:

—meet neither threat if they do not reform their forces or receive appropriate U.S. assistance, or

—meet both threats if they do take the necessary reform actions and U.S. assistance is provided intelligently.

NSSM 51 lays out several options designed to promote Thai force effectiveness against the internal and external threats and weighs the advantages and disadvantages of external deployments as a separate political and strategic military issue.

90. Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Bangkok, September 18, 1970.

RE

Bangkok 149, 18 September 1970

1. We received a cable this morning from [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Bangkok discussing preliminary negotiations with the Thais on the conversion of the Thai Khmer regiment and the formation of SGU’s. Ambassador Unger asked that this information be

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 410, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages—1970, Southeast Asia. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. An attached September 21 memorandum to Kissinger requested that this and other messages to Johnson and Green also be forwarded to Kissinger.

passed to Under Secretary Johnson, Assistant Secretary Green, and Ambassador Swank. Following is the text of the cable:

"2. At ceremony on morning of 18 September, Ambassador Unger raised general subject of what to do now in Laos with Surakij and Praphat in which climate established for working level exploration to see what might be done. Ambassador emphasized that Washington has not agreed any specific plan.

"3. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] followed up in working skull session with Surakij on afternoon 18 September. Following are results of this meeting, all of which subject to specific agreement between Ambassador Unger and General Praphat that these arrangements are desirable after some more working level negotiation.

"4. General Surakij agreed our understanding of the principle of 'one pay scale' for Laos and said it could be at the SGU rate. He accepted the desirability of an eventual 13 Thai SGU's to include Long Tieng replacements. He had some reservations that Thais might not be able to recruit and train 13 in end of year timeframe, but he did not raise this as an objection. Finally, he agreed in principle that the 13 could be used 'anywhere' in Laos after consultation; and he endorsed the current [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] pattern of operation, agreeing that the arrangements for command and control of the Thai regulars currently at Long Tieng are not really satisfactory.

"5. Surakij's problems grew out of the conversion of the TKV regiment to three SGU's. First, he had in mind that agreement with the Cambodians that these troops would be held in some sort of ready reserve in case the call came from Phnom Penh. Second, he saw problems with morale inherent in the conversion which he would prefer to avoid.

"6. Surakij expressed desire to have first Thai SGU deployment put in Champassak, Sithandone, and Sayaboury. He went on, however, that the units would not be irrevocably tied to these locations. First, these areas would be considered rotational; and second, if no NVA/Pathet Lao presence established, units would be moved to areas where needed.

"7. Wish reiterate that all of above is exploratory with both sides carefully repeating that no decisions have been made and in particular Washington has not given approval for any specifics." (End of Message)

"8. This information was passed [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] at Phnom Penh for delivery to Ambassador Swank in the field.

91. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 7, 1970, 2:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand
Henry A. Kissinger
John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT

Thailand Foreign Minister's Comments on Southeast Asian Developments

After expressing pleasure at seeing Dr. Kissinger again, Foreign Minister Thanat asked about the President's European trip and whether it had been regarded as useful. Dr. Kissinger replied that the trip had been very good, considering what had been attempted. Its purpose had been to demonstrate U.S. power in the Mediterranean, and as an old friend of the Foreign Minister, Dr. Kissinger could tell him that we had achieved what we had wanted. Even in a Communist country such as Yugoslavia, President Tito had found it more important to remain and talk to the President than to go to Cairo for Nasser's funeral. Foreign Minister Thanat remarked that he had been glad to watch the effective way that the trip had been conducted.

Dr. Kissinger said that the President had specifically asked him to convey his, the President's, personal respects to Foreign Minister Thanat and to inform him of the high regard in which he was held by the President. The Foreign Minister then declared that the people and the government of Thailand consider the President their friend. This also applied to the people of Asia as well. Some unfortunate developments may have occurred in the U.S.-Thai relationship, but on fundamental things the relationship between the two countries remained firm.

Dr. Kissinger asked for Foreign Minister Thanat's frank opinion with respect to one question. Last April and May, there had been talk of putting two regiments of regular Thai troops or two regiments of Thai Khmer volunteers into Cambodia. Since then endless discussions had ensued. Was it because the Thai had become distrustful of our bureaucracy that their interest in sending their forces into Cambodia had

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 102, Country Files—Far East, Thanat, (Foreign Minister), [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. According to a memorandum from Holdridge to Kissinger, October 9, this memorandum of conversation was drafted by Holdridge and approved by Kissinger. The meeting was held in Kissinger's office.

cooled? The Foreign Minister said that he would give a frank and straightforward reply. There were a number of reasons as to why the Thai had not sent in their forces. First, long debates had been held in Bangkok in which some people, particularly the military, had wanted to send Thai soldiers to Cambodia; others, however, had felt that this would not have been desirable because if the Thai had sent in two battalions or two regiments, the Communists might have sent in the same number or more.

Continuing, Foreign Minister Thanat said that in the second place, the mood in the U.S., as far as could be judged from the press and from Congressional comment, was very hostile toward Thailand and not appreciative of its role. Therefore, he had thought that nothing should be done to aggravate the situation and increase the President's political burden. Dr. Kissinger remarked that the trouble was some liberals here disliked the U.S. so much they felt that any country which appreciated the U.S. had to be punished. They talked about what Bangkok should and should not do, and not about Hanoi. Foreign Minister Thanat observed that despite all, "you're with us and we're with you."

Foreign Minister Thanat mentioned as a third consideration in the Thai judgment on sending troops into Cambodia the fact that they had worked out an arrangement with Prime Minister Lon Nol during his visits to Bangkok whereby the Cambodians could ask for Thai troops if they were in great need of them. In such a case, Thai forces stationed along the Cambodian border would join with the Cambodians in task forces to "beat up the Communist side." This arrangement was one of the reasons which had prompted the Thai to bring back some of their troops from Vietnam. These troops would be moved to the Thai-Cambodian frontier.

Dr. Kissinger declared that if the Thai received any advice from our people to the effect that the Thai should not be there on the frontier but rather in the Northeast, this would be a violation of the intentions of the President and the Foreign Minister should get in touch with Dr. Kissinger about it. We wanted Thai forces to be stationed near the Cambodian frontier. The Foreign Minister remarked that he was not aware of anyone on the U.S. side who wanted Thai troops in the Northeast. Dr. Kissinger went on to say, however, that if any such advice was actually given to them they could tell the advisers what the President's intentions were. He could assure the Foreign Minister that he spoke for the President. The stationing of Thai troops on the Cambodian frontier was exactly what we were looking for.

Commenting further on the plan to bring Thai troops back from Vietnam, Foreign Minister Thanat said that this move would cost less than raising new units. New units might cost millions of baht, require an increase in taxes, and create a political tempest. The Vietnam situation did

not appear so urgent now as to require the whole Thai complement, and it was felt that “some” of the Thai troops could be brought back.

Dr. Kissinger said that we welcomed this Thai move. We thought that the situation in Cambodia could deteriorate, and it was comforting to know that there were forces available which might be able to do something. Foreign Minister Thanat confirmed that the Thai were prepared to act in Cambodia, but not on a permanent basis. Dr. Kissinger mentioned in passing that the Thai troops in Long Tieng had made a big difference. Referring again to the Thai rationale on troops in Cambodia, Foreign Minister Thanat recalled at the Djakarta Conference Thailand had pledged in the joint communiqué along with the other participants to support a call for the withdrawal of all foreign forces in Cambodia. Accordingly, if Thai troops had been sent in, the spirit of the joint communiqué would have been violated. Thailand felt that it had assumed a moral obligation under this communiqué. In the light of all these circumstances, the Thai believed that they would gain advantages on all sides by bringing some troops from Vietnam, and stationing them on the border in agreement with the Cambodians. Dr. Kissinger endorsed this as a good solution.

Foreign Minister Thanat then asked if the U.S. could support Thailand logistically if Thai troops went into Cambodia. Dr. Kissinger replied affirmatively. We had tremendous legal problems because of Congressional actions, but believed it would be possible for us to replace in Thailand those stocks of military equipment which the Thai used in Cambodia. The Thai could employ the stocks which they had on hand at present. In response to a question from Foreign Minister Thanat as to whether it would be possible for the U.S. military representatives in Thailand to tell the Thai this, Dr. Kissinger said that if the Thai talked to our Ambassador, he would give five million reasons as to why there was a problem. However, he could assure the Foreign Minister that if Thailand had to go in, we would find a way to give support. It was hard to say now just how this would be done. It would be best to use the stocks Thailand presently had on hand and we would replace them. We would need to figure out just how this would be done.

Foreign Minister Thanat asked in what way this matter could be undertaken—supposing that Thailand was seized with a request from Cambodia, could he get in touch with Dr. Kissinger personally? If and when the needs arose, could he let Dr. Kissinger know? Dr. Kissinger referred to the private channel which existed between the Foreign Minister and himself, and said that if it turns out we couldn't help he would tell the Foreign Minister. He reminded him, though, that we had kept our promises to the government in Bangkok, and had not given up any territory to the Communists. We did not want Cambodia to go under.

The President was not like Senator McCarthy, who had wanted to abandon South Vietnam. We had a massive internal problem, but if we were lucky, we would have an easier time after the November elections.

Foreign Minister Thanat asked if the election prospects were good, to which Dr. Kissinger replied that he was not a domestic expert and couldn't say too much. While this was an off-year election in which everyone in the House had to run for reelection and in which the Administration party usually lost seats, there would be no problem here and we expected some losses. In the Senate, it was possible that the Administration might gain two or three seats. It might not seem like this would make much difference, but many votes had been running close to 50/50, and three seats more would make a significant difference. If the Administration gained seven seats, it could organize the Senate and get rid of Senator Fulbright. In this case it would be in great shape and could do a lot of things for Thailand which were not now possible. Arithmetically, the prospects were in our favor. Lots of Republicans had lost in 1964 because Goldwater had been running for President and had taken them down with him; hence there were more Democrats in the Senate now than would normally have been the case. Unfortunately, to speak frankly, in two big states we had poor candidates. In California, Senator Murphy had cancer but was resisting all efforts to induce him not to run, while in New York, Senator Goodell had decided to run to the left of Fulbright. We were not supporting him. Nevertheless, even though our gains were limited to only three seats, this would make a lot of difference. 51 to 49 votes against the Administration would be reversed.

Foreign Minister Thanat expressed the hope that Dr. Kissinger's prediction would come through. Dr. Kissinger said he felt that we had the Democrats on the defensive over a lot of issues. For example, in May they thought they could defeat the Administration on Southeast Asia, but today we had the public on our side. The Foreign Minister thought that the President had indeed handled the Vietnam question very well, and was interested in knowing anything Dr. Kissinger could tell him about what the President would say that evening. Dr. Kissinger was surprised that the Foreign Minister had not yet been informed as to what the President would say, and gave a quick run-down on the President's five points.²

In connection with U.S. troop withdrawals, Foreign Minister Thanat asked if we were going to set a withdrawal deadline. Dr. Kissinger's reply was "absolutely not." In principle we were willing to

² For President Nixon's Southeast Asia peace proposals put forward in his television speech on the evening of October 7, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 825-828.

withdraw completely and give a fixed deadline, but not before all other issues were settled. This would be conditional on everything else, including a North Vietnamese withdrawal. When questioned by the Foreign Minister about elections, Dr. Kissinger declared that we were willing to have the North Vietnamese participate in the electoral process and gain their support in elections to which they were entitled, but would not accept their demands for a coalition government.

Foreign Minister Thanat remarked that he had made a suggestion in his UN General Assembly speech that if the four great powers could join together for a Middle East settlement, they might also work with the Asian countries toward a settlement in Asia. Dr. Kissinger noted that the exception would be the French, who were not steady. The Foreign Minister said on this point that it would be necessary to work for their support, since they claimed to play a role. He had felt that the French were not entirely negative, and cited a speech by Schuman as containing some positive elements. In any event, the difference between the Middle East and Southeast Asia was that the four powers were working alone in the Middle East, while he did not want this to apply to Southeast Asia but preferred that they worked together with the local people. Dr. Kissinger declared that this was the reason why we wanted a larger conference on Indo-China. The U.S. had done well to get a cease-fire in the Middle East, and a similar situation might be attained in the Far East working in concert with the nations of the area. The Foreign Minister stressed that he wanted these nations to play a more effective role. He also was wondering about the possibility of reaching an agreement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.—if the Soviets stopped supplying Hanoi with the sinews of war the fighting would end.

Dr. Kissinger asked the Foreign Minister for his views on the situation in Vietnam. The Foreign Minister stated that he had last been in Vietnam for the July TCC meeting and had been impressed with the improvement in the situation and in the general appearance of the country which had occurred since his previous visit. It was his belief that the enormous amount of U.S. war matériel available should enable the South Vietnamese to take over a good part of the defense of the country once they were trained to handle this matériel. Dr. Kissinger observed that we thought the same thing. The Foreign Minister then cited his Prime Minister as believing that Vietnamization alone would not have a lasting effect if the Communists could use Laos and Cambodia—if these countries were available to them, they could launch new attacks on South Vietnam and offset the improvements which had taken place there. The present situation in Vietnam would be only temporary if the military balance in Laos and Cambodia could not be improved.

Dr. Kissinger asked if the Foreign Minister thought we were being as active as we could be in operating against the Ho Chi Minh trail. The Foreign Minister referred to the problem of supply, noting that the U.S. seemed to be finding it increasingly difficult to assist local forces in terms of economic and logistical support. He went on to refer to a lack of agreement on the use of local forces in Laos. The Thai would prefer to have forces of countries closest to the scene conduct the operations. Dr. Kissinger agreed with this, and pointed out that we had already undertaken to train 2,000 Cambodians for operations in Laos. Foreign Minister Thanat indicated that he knew of this, and noted also that at the time of his departure there had been discussions about sending Thai forces "far into Laos" to fill up the vacuum while the Cambodian troops were being trained. Dr. Kissinger expressed some surprise, and wondered when the Foreign Minister had left Bangkok. Foreign Minister Thanat said his departure had been three weeks earlier, at which time the U.S. had wanted to send Thai forces to the extreme southeast region of Laos beyond the Bolovens Plateau to a point close to the Cambodian frontier. The Thai had disagreed. They were in agreement on stationing Thai SGUs in Sithandone and Champassak, but the other area was too far east. Dr. Kissinger referred to the difficulties which the bureaucracy had created over the Thai troops, and said that this issue of the Thai SGUs would be put on the agenda for the next WSAG meeting. In the ensuing discussion, the Foreign Minister made it clear that he was not opposed to the recruiting of six Thai SGUs for use in operations against the North Vietnamese LOCs along the Se Kong River and in the Bolovens area of South Laos, but would object to any plans which would call for deployment further east. It was pointed out to him that we were in general agreement on this concept as well as with the Thai concept of stationing some of their SGUs in Sayaboury, Sithandone, and Champassak.

Dr. Kissinger inquired about the use of the Thai Khmer volunteers for service as SGUs in South Laos. Foreign Minister Thanat said that there would be no major difficulty regarding this concept.

Foreign Minister Thanat asked if Dr. Kissinger had any plans to come to the Foreign Minister's part of the world, or if the President had any further travel plans. Dr. Kissinger replied that he personally would be delighted to go back, but did not know when he could get away. The President would not be making any more trips until next year. The main thing he wanted the Foreign Minister to know was that everything the President had ever said concerning Thailand could be believed. The President had a great admiration for the Foreign Minister, and for selfish reasons was very glad that he had been elected to the Thai Parliament last year. Foreign Minister Thanat assured Dr. Kissinger that the Thai for their part hadn't changed. What he personally had said with respect to some critics of Thailand did not affect Thai-U.S. friendship.

He had felt it necessary to defend the honor of his country, and hoped that the President would understand. The Thai government had no problems with the President or with the Administration. With the U.S. press, though, there were indeed some problems.

Dr. Kissinger concluded by urging the Foreign Minister to keep in close contact with him through the special channel. If the Thai decided the time had come to move into Cambodia, he should get in touch and we would work out the modalities.

92. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 7, 1970, 3:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Southeast Asia and Peace Prospects

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman
Thai Ambassador to U.S. Sunthorn
Thai Ambassador to U.N. Anand
Mr. Birabhongse, Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister
William P. Rogers, Secretary of State
U. Alexis Johnson, J, Undersecretary of State
John B. Dexter, Country Director, EA/TB

The Secretary took advantage of a previously scheduled call by Foreign Minister Thanat to brief him on the Southeast Asia peace proposals that the President intended to put forward in a television speech that evening.² After he had heard the outline of the President's proposals, Thanat expressed the cautious judgment that it would be a useful initiative.

Thanat's first question concerned the concept of an enlarged conference that the Secretary had mentioned. He was relieved to know that we did not have a "Geneva-type" conference in mind. He then went on to comment that there were a number of Asian nations who would probably be willing to assist in cease-fire supervision measures.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 THAI. Secret. Drafted by Dexter and approved in S on October 21. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office.

² See footnote 2, Document 91.

He mentioned Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Burma and Malaysia. He commented that the Japanese would want to participate only through civilians and that he supposed that, if the Pakistanis participated, the Indians would also wish to do so. Thanat then noted the importance of the Soviet role in any peace negotiations. He said that if the two super powers can agree, then peace can be obtained. He went on to say that in New York he had been talking with other Asian leaders such as Romulo and Malik about a plan to appeal to the big powers, especially the Soviets, to work for peace in Southeast Asia.

In response to a question from the Secretary, Thanat characterized relations with the GVN as quite good. He said in connection with the Thai forces in South Vietnam, the GVN wants the Thai to leave a token force there.

Further concerning Thai troops in Vietnam, he said the Thai want them back in Thailand as a back-up force along the Cambodia/Laos border. He said that they did not think it desirable now to send forces into Cambodia but that it was necessary to have troops ready nearby to take action in Cambodia if necessary. To send troops in now on a permanent basis would give rise to problems of financing,³ friction with the Cambodians and charges that the Thai were "mercenaries".

After a brief discussion of Thai domestic affairs (Thanat commented wryly on the Parliamentary Opposition's desire to "overthrow the Government"), Thanat inquired about conditions in the Middle East. The Secretary responded with comments indicating that he thought prospects for peace there were somewhat improved. Thanat observed that the most helpful sign was the apparent fact that the US and the Soviet Union were both willing to work for peace. This he saw as a lesson for Southeast Asia. He said that he was convinced that, if the Soviets would give the word, the North Vietnamese would accept peace.

Thanat then mentioned the Djakarta Conference and the follow-up actions of the Committee of Three. He said they had reached a dead-end and there was now need for a new initiative. He said, "We can't sit down and twiddle our thumbs."

³ In a memorandum to Rogers, October 5, Green noted that the Fulbright amendments to the 1971 Military Procurement Appropriations Act excluded "the use of any such funds to support Vietnamese or other free world forces in actions designed to provide military support and assistance to the Governments of Cambodia or Laos." This amendment was approved by the Senate-House conference committee and was awaiting the President's signature to become law. Green added that although the legal advisers were "reviewing the language," "it appears that it will preclude U.S. support from the DOD budget of Thai forces in Cambodia or Laos except for operations which persuasively could be said to be for the defense of Vietnam." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 15-1 THAI)

The Secretary suggested that the Djakarta Three could make use of the President's proposals and give their support to them. Thanat said that they would have to determine this after they had studied the speech. He said he would be seeing Malik and Romulo the next few days in New York and would discuss it with them. He added that he had asked Malik and some of the other Asian leaders to work on the Russians. Malik had agreed to talk with Gromyko during the UNGA session.

93. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Washington, October 9, 1970.

SUBJECT

Proposed WSAG Consideration of Thai SGU in Laos

We have, as you know, authorized Ambassador Unger to commence discussions with the Thai on the proposals for supporting up to 13 Thai SGU's in Laos, of which eight would be for the South (two for Champassak/Sithadone) and four for North Laos to replace the present Thai RCT and SR-IX. A fifth is under consideration for North Laos for Sayaboury but this has not yet been agreed upon by all parties. We have wanted to consider this overall question as two separate projects, i.e. as a "Thai-in-South Laos proposal" and a "Thai-in-North Laos proposal". Unger's discussions with the Thai on the Thai-in-North Laos proposal was conditioned only upon a budget review to assure that presently available funds would be adequate.

Messages were sent to Ambassador Unger on September 23 telling him we wanted to go ahead with these two proposals (see State 156373 and State 156387)² but subsequently the Fulbright Amendment to the Defense Procurement Act has given rise to a new problem with regard to the Thai-in-North Laos proposal. The Fulbright Amendment would in effect prohibit use of DOD funds for Thai troops in Laos except for

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, DEF 19 THAI-LAOS. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Dexter, cleared by Wilson and Corcoran (EA), and approved by Green.

² Both dated September 23. (Ibid.)

those associated with interdiction of NVN infiltration to South Vietnam. Senator Stennis has advised Director Helms and Deputy Secretary Packard that this would permit DOD funding of Thai troops in South Laos but would not cover those in the North. CIA believes there is an outside chance that it would be acceptable legally for CIA funds to continue to be used for this purpose in North Laos and, if so, the two projects could both go forward. All that would be required is a shifting of funds to put the Thai SGU's in the South under DOD funding and those in the North under CIA, for which Bill Wells assures us their funds would be adequate. However, the legal authority for this is extremely shaky and I believe it would be hazardous to proceed without a green light from the Hill.

In the meanwhile, it does not seem advisable to commence talks with the Thai on the South Laos project independently. To do so would inevitably open the question as to our intentions with respect to North Laos, where we and the Thai will soon have to make important decisions about the future of RCT and SR-IX. As you recall, one reason for shifting to SGU's in North Laos was to put all Thai forces in that country on the same footing with regard to command and control and pay and allowances. While we would like to keep the two projects separate for planning purposes here, we agree with Ambassador Unger that it would be unwise to start talking with the Thai about the South before we are prepared to talk about the North as well.

I therefore recommend that this problem be brought up at the WSAG meeting scheduled for next Tuesday and that WSAG consider how to resolve the legal uncertainty regarding support for the Thai in North Laos.³ This is an urgent matter because the proposed changeover in Thai units will have to take place in January and we will need all the time we can get in the meanwhile for recruiting and training of the new SGU's.

³ In a meeting on October 16, the WSAG reviewed [*text not declassified*] plans for the use of Thai Special Guerrilla Units (SGU) in northern and southern Laos. The consensus was that these activities should continue to be justified to Congress on the basis that they constituted a continuation of programs already under way and that they served to protect U.S. troops in Vietnam by attacking enemy supply lines and sanctuaries. The WSAG also agreed in principle to the proposal to replace Thai regular units in Long Tieng with SGUs. However, the Departments of State and Defense were tasked with studying whether this would degrade "friendly military capabilities in Northern Laos." Finally, the WSAG was reminded by Kissinger "that in considering the question of Thai military involvement in Cambodia, the President's deep interest in insuring that all feasible measures must be taken into account." The October 16 meeting summary of conclusions states: "In this connection, it is essential to obtain as soon as possible Thai agreement to contingency plans for employment of Thai ground and air forces in Cambodia as required." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969 and 1970)

94. **Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Helms to President Nixon**¹

Washington, October 23, 1970.

SUBJECT

Report on Southeast Asia Survey Trip: 7–22 October 1970

I. Purposes of the Trip.

1. This memorandum constitutes my report to you on my 7–22 October 1970 trip to Southeast Asia. On this trip, I had three major objectives.

a. To survey the situation in Indochina and Thailand at first hand and to form my own estimate of the probable course of events in that area through personal observation augmented by direct conversations with people themselves directly involved on the ground. This latter group, as outlined in the Annex,² included [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] State Department officials, senior U.S. military officers and local political and military leaders in the Indochina area.

b. [5 lines of source text not declassified]

c. [13 lines of source text not declassified]

II. Conclusions and Findings.

A. The Situation in Southeast Asia: Dynamics and Prospects.

[Omitted here is discussion of Southeast Asia.]

25. *Thailand.* Though Thailand is not technically part of Indochina, the Thai are directly involved in the Indochina struggle and Thailand's leaders are deeply concerned about its outcome. Not surprisingly, this concern is viewed through the prism of what its leaders regard as Thai-

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Job 80–B01086A, Executive Registry Files, DCI Eyes Only Files 1970, Box 9 of 16. Top Secret; Sensitive.

² Helms noted in the Annex that he “carefully reviewed the Thai situation [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] including programs involving Cambodia and Laos, [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] with Ambassador Unger and his senior associates.” He also stated that he had official meetings with Thanom, Praphat, Dawee, and the King, and that he had lunch with Thai National Police General Chamras. Helms added that he also attended “an instructive, informal dinner hosted by Thanom which included Praphat, Dawee, General Surakit (Chief of Staff of the Royal Thai Army), Generals Bunmag and Sawaeng (of the Prime Minister’s staff) and General Dhep (who runs [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] the organization that controls all Thai regular and irregular troops in Laos).” He also stated that he spent a day at Long Tieng “making a thorough survey on the ground of the situation there.” “I looked carefully into the role, performance and functions of the Thai troops and personally surveyed their emplacements and disposition.” Attached but not printed.

land's own vital interests, and these tend to focus on Laos. There the Thai are particularly concerned about the trans-Mekong border provinces of Sayaboury, Champassak and Sithadone. These provinces used to belong to Thailand, a fact that lends a strong emotional coloration to the views of the Thai leaders, who feel that Vietnamese Communist control over any Lao territory on the west bank of the Mekong would be tantamount to an invasion of Thailand. The King made this clear in our conversation when he pointed out that France had deliberately wrested these three provinces from Thai control in the 19th century in order to point "a dagger at our heart." General Praphat and other senior Thai leaders expressed similar sentiments. This attitude about the border provinces obviously colors the whole Thai approach to the utilization and disposition of Thai regular and irregular forces in Laos, including the Thai-Khmer Volunteers and the Thai SGU's. The Thai want to make sure that Sayaboury, Champassak and Sithadone are adequately protected before they discuss use of Thai resources in other areas of Laos which they consider of less immediately urgent importance to Thailand itself.³

26. While the Thai welcome the Nixon doctrine, they are inclined to interpret it quite literally. Believing that they have already done much to aid us in providing bases in Thailand, sending troops openly to Vietnam, and deploying them [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in Laos, the Thai feel that if they provide the human resources for additional activities against North Vietnam, the material and economic costs of raising and supporting these assets should be borne by the United States. Their bargaining position is framed accordingly. But the Thai do recognize that this is a common struggle and are far from indifferent to its outcome. They are convinced that a North Vietnamese victory in Indochina would leave them boxed on the north and east by borders under hostile Communist control, Chinese or Vietnamese. Under such circumstances, they feel that external support to the already troublesome but presently manageable insurgency threat within Thailand would rise sharply and the Thai government would find itself faced with serious internal problems. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the Embassy officials with whom I talked believe that in such an eventuality, the whole political complexion of Thailand and her international posture would promptly change to a left-leaning neutralism.

³ In paragraph 35 of his memorandum to the President, Helms noted that his "personal inspection and conversations [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]" had convinced him "that without the Thais, Long Tieng would have fallen last March. The Thai artillery whose emplacement I surveyed and the stiffening of Thai forces—regulars or SGUs—are both essential to MR II's defense and will have to be provided, if MR II is to be held." Attached but not printed.

27. Barring a North Vietnamese victory in the Indochina struggle, however, U.S. officials believe that Thai politics will probably continue on their current course without radical change. Thanom is planning to retire, but the path to a reasonably smooth succession by Praphat appears to be well paved. If Praphat should disappear from the scene, all bets are off.

28. [16 lines of source text not declassified]

[Omitted here is discussion of the Indochina area.]

Dick

95. Letter From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger)¹

Washington, October 27, 1970.

Dear Len:

You will recall that when I was in Bangkok you suggested that it would be helpful for me to write you to give you the benefit of the President's thinking on issues of concern to you. In this light, I am passing on the President's interest in doing everything that we can to assure that third-country assistance to Cambodia is made available. He has issued specific directives concerning Thai air and ground actions in Cambodia if the need should arise.

First, the President wants everything possible to be done prior to the end of the rainy season to mobilize our own and third-country as-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Country Files, Box 563, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive. An attached October 22 memorandum from Holdridge and Kennedy to Kissinger reads: "Following the WSAG meeting on October 16 you asked that a letter be drafted from you to Ambassador Unger to make it clear to him what the situation is here with respect to the emergency employment of Thai air and ground forces in Cambodia. A draft letter for your signature is at Tab A." The approval line of the memorandum is checked next to a recommendation that reads: "That you approve transmittal of this letter by back-channel message to Bangkok." A notation on the memorandum in Kissinger's handwriting reads: "urgent for dispatch." A notation at the end of the memorandum reads: "Dispatched. Rec'd in Bangkok 10:15 on the 27th."

sistance to Cambodia to enable that country to survive an anticipated intensification in North Vietnamese attacks after the rains. He communicated this personally to senior officials of the Government in a meeting last June.

Second, the President has now directed that contingency plans be prepared for employment of Thai air and ground forces in the event of an NVA/VC offensive in Cambodia when the dry season begins. These might include: (a) the stationing of Thai forces along the Thai-Cambodia border in preparation for deployment in Cambodia, (b) use of Thai air support in Cambodia up to 900 sorties per month, to include areas beyond the present 30 kilometer zone agreed to by the Cambodians, (c) use of the Black Leopard units redeployed from South Vietnam as appropriate, and (d) provision of U.S. funding and matériel support for the Thai deployments including the use, as appropriate, of trade-off economic programs. These plans are to be completed and submitted to the Washington Special Actions Group for review no later than November 5.

Third, the President has further directed that the United States Ambassadors in Bangkok and Phnom Penh be instructed that the development of contingency plans to match our own by the Governments of Thailand and Cambodia be given their high priority attention.

I have the impression that we may have misled you in some of the cables which we sent to you by giving you a welter of technical details which obscured the imperative nature of the President's concerns. I want to assure you that he considers the situation in Cambodia to be extremely urgent, and wants all of us concerned to bend every effort to see that the assistance which Cambodia may need shortly on an emergency basis will be provided. This of course requires full understanding on the part of our Thai and Cambodian allies as to our thinking and as to the kinds of support which we are prepared to offer. There should be nothing left undone either by them or by us which actions on our part could have avoided.

Warm regards,

Henry

96. Briefing Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Brown) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Washington, November 19, 1970.

SUBJECT

Thai SGU's for Laos

Attached is a memorandum [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]² reporting the status of negotiations with the RTG concerning the SGU program. The main points to which we would call your attention are that the RTG is now committed to recruiting and assisting in the training of 14 Thai SGU's (13 infantry and one artillery), of which two are to be primarily composed of former TKV's. Of these 14, it is anticipated that two SGU's (the TKV's) will be ready for deployment to Laos in mid-December, six others will be ready in early March and the final five, including the artillery SGU, should be ready in April.

The availability timing is determined by factors of recruiting and training. A twelve week training program is planned for all except the two "TKV" SGU's who will require only a few weeks training in addition to what they have already received. Those TKV's, we understand, are now available in sufficient number for the two battalions. In addition to these, we understand that there are about 2200 volunteers already signed up who will man the next batch of six SGU's. So far as we know, the RTG does not yet have volunteer enlisted personnel for the last six.

Initially, there appears to have been a problem in recruitment. The RTG wisely sought to get volunteers with previous military experience and other high qualifications, but apparently were not very successful on the basis of the pay and allowance scale initially proposed. Recent negotiations in Bangkok [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] resulted in an agreement to raise subsistence and per diem allowances

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 19 THAI–LAOS. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Dexter and Brown and cleared by Wilson.

² The [*text not declassified*] November 18 memorandum [*text not declassified*] to Kissinger, Johnson, Packard, and Moorer, is attached but not printed. It noted that on November 16 "the Royal Thai Army Commander-in-Chief General Praphat confirmed to Ambassador Unger his concurrence with the final negotiated agreement (on the Thai SGU program) with only one exception—the composition and size of the Thai artillery SGU. Praphat indicated that he was prepared to implement the SGU program as soon as he had a formal request in writing from the Lao Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma."

and [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] the recruiting problem has been solved.

Another problem has arisen with regard to training facilities. There are now three sites in Thailand being used for SGU's and these are adequate for the first eight battalions, but we understand could not accommodate any more. [1 line of source text not declassified] this problem can be resolved by establishing an additional training facility, and the matter is under negotiation through COMUSMACTHAI in Bangkok. A final decision on the matter is expected about the end of this month when General Surakij returns from his present visit to Australia.

The [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] memorandum does not discuss the timing question in relation to the RTA, RCT's and Sierra Romeo now in Laos. We have been told, however, that in negotiations with the Thai it is being made clear that those forces will not be removed from Laos until the SGU's, fully trained and equipped, are ready to replace them.

In general, the SGU training program is not split in terms of future assignments to north or south Laos. However, it is understood that the first two battalions, the TKV, will go to Champassak/Sithadone and that the highest priority for the next batch will be Sayaboury. The reason for Sayaboury's priority is that the Thai cadre for Project Sayavong are being drawn down for the SGU program and the Thai feel that an SGU battalion should be sent in to fill the vacuum. Deployment of the rest of the SGU's will be determined by circumstances at the time their training is completed.

97. Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)¹

Bangkok, November 20, 1970.

Dear Marshall:

[1 paragraph (4 lines of source text) not declassified]

I agree that the [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] role in Thai counterinsurgency operations should be limited to training and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 30 THAI. Secret; Official-Informal.

advice designed to improve Thai institutional capabilities to deal with this problem. This principle, I assure you, is reflected in the Mission CI Guidelines and governs our activities here. I am particularly alert to this principle because of my testimony before the Symington Committee when I assured the Committee that US personnel do not participate in counterinsurgency operations in Thailand.

The importance of adhering to this principle has been repeatedly reviewed with the senior personnel [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], and I have stressed the need to err on the conservative side in such matters. On the other hand, I want to be very careful that in the interests of maintaining this principle we do not imbue [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] personnel with a frame of mind and attitude that becomes too restrictive and unintentionally limits their performance in their advisory role with the Thais [*1 line of source text not declassified*].

From time to time it will probably be necessary [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to undertake specific [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] operations within general program approvals that I have given them to satisfy requirements that have been levied by Washington. Such operations may become involved with some aspect of the counterinsurgency effort of the RTG. When this type of situation can be foreseen I have asked [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to bring these specific operations to my attention so that I can determine whether we should go beyond the role we have set for ourselves in the counterinsurgency field.

Finally, I wish to assure you that I have and will continue to do my utmost to see that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] agencies leave the initiative in the counterinsurgency field to the Thais and that our activities here are such that there is no question in anyone's mind about our non-involvement in Thai counterinsurgency operations.

Sincerely,

Leonard Unger

98. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, November 20, 1970, 10:44–11:19 a.m.

SUBJECT

Cambodia and Laos

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

Mr. U. Alexis Johnson

Mr. James Wilson

Defense

Mr. David Packard

Mr. Dennis Doolin

JCS

Lt. Gen. Richard T. Knowles

CIA

Mr. Richard Helms

Mr. William Nelson

NSC Staff

Mr. John H. Holdridge

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Mr. D. Keith Guthrie

Summary of Conclusions

1. *Thai SGUs in North Laos.* A decision on whether to replace Thai regular forces in North Laos with Thai SGUs will be deferred until the Thai SGUs complete their training in March, 1971.

2. *Thai Khmers.* [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] will provide data on the number of Thai Khmers who volunteer to join the Thai SGUs.²

3. *Economic Trade-offs for Thailand.* The WSAG agreed in principle that negotiations should proceed with a view to reaching agreement with Thailand on providing PL-480 assistance to offset increases in the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

² In a November 23 memorandum to Kissinger, Johnson, Packard, and Moorer, [text not declassified] stated that Bangkok had advised "that 704 out of 1320 Thai Khmers from the Thai Khmer volunteer regiment had volunteered for the SGU program." With reference to the replacement of the Thai regulars in north Laos, [text not declassified] noted that he had been advised that "the following statement was included in the final draft of the agreement given to the RTA: 'The replacement of the 13th RCT and SR IX will be accomplished only after all parties have had an opportunity to assess the then existing military situation and the state of proficiency of the SGUs.' [text not declassified] reports that the RTA staff concurred with this statement but noted the possible problem of keeping the units beyond the agreed service of one year. [text not declassified], however, that General Surakij had previously agreed to extend SR IX beyond the one year if necessary and they believe he will also be willing to extend the RCT in circumstances where insertion of the SGUs would involve unacceptable risk." (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V)

Thai defense budget made necessary to prepare Thai forces for operations in Cambodia. The State Department will prepare a plan covering provision of PL-480 support in return for Thai agreement to bring up to strength regimental combat teams earmarked for operations in Cambodia. The Defense Department will investigate the feasibility of providing military equipment and supplies to Thai forces under the terms of the Supply and Logistical Agreement with Thailand of 1963.

4. *Armored Vehicles.* The WSAG noted that all agencies were agreed on going forward with supply of 25 M-113 armored personnel carriers to Cambodia.

The WSAG agreed that Australia should be encouraged to provide Ferret and Saladin vehicles to Cambodia. The Defense Department will continue discussions with the Australians on this subject; and if an Australian offer is forthcoming, the NSC staff will solicit agency views before a final understanding is reached with the Australians.

(Mr. Johnson and Mr. Wilson were not present at the opening of the meeting.)

[4½ pages of source text not declassified.]

[Omitted here is discussion of APCs for Cambodia.]

99. Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Bangkok, November 27, 1970.

Dear Alex,

The recent bombing of North Vietnam targets by US aircraft is yet another in a series of cases that found me totally unprepared to tell the RTG anything about operations from Thai bases involving a significant departure from existing policies and practices as they know them. While fully appreciating the sensitivity of the subject, I strongly feel that my inability to communicate some of this information—at least at the top level—has prevented me from discharging commitments and responsibilities to the RTG that form an important part of the arrange-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret; Official–Informal.

ments and understandings under which US forces were permitted to operate from Thai bases. Initially, you will recall, they asked for advance information on our operations. Our present arrangement of giving them post-strike summaries is predicated on the assumption that we will keep them informed of unusual operations, especially when the deviation from established practice has political dimensions of interest to the Thai.

I am enclosing a brief list of Thai-based operations² that took place this year without our knowing in advance or being able to inform the RTG except after the fact.

As far as last weekend's strikes against North Vietnam are concerned, despite my urgent inquiry to Washington,³ I was again unable to offer the RTG any information about the involvement of Thai-based USAF resources beyond what had already appeared in the papers. The Prime Minister's first question when I introduced General Clay was about this operation. Had Thanat been present, he would surely have probed more deeply and perhaps gotten off one of his barbs about our failure to consult. To compound the problem, Secretary Laird's November 23 statement about the helicopter rescue operation (which I was instructed to convey urgently) was sent only Priority, did not arrive here until after lunch, and could not be conveyed before the RTG read it in the afternoon papers. In view of today's press stories that the helicopters used Thai bases, we may yet have some inquiries about this one.

I strongly feel that the requirement to keep the RTG fully informed on operations of Thai-based aircraft is fundamental to the smooth conduct of air operations from Thai bases. It has a direct bearing on the continuation of the operational freedom we have enjoyed here and which I presume it is desirable to maintain.

I know you will share my growing concern over these disturbing episodes and hope you will find opportunities to take them up at appropriate levels in DOD, perhaps by drawing Dave Packard's⁴ and Tom Moorer's attention to them. With every understanding for the need for operational secrecy, I believe our policy of dealing out the RTG (whose

² Attached but not printed.

³ Telegram 14761 from Bangkok, November 22. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V)

⁴ In a December 4 letter to Packard, Johnson enclosed a copy of Unger's letter and commented: "I feel that his points are very well taken and, as we draw down in the area and the Thai look to what they feel are the policy implications for themselves, I feel that we should no longer necessarily expect the same degree of Thai complaisance in our use of bases in Thailand." (Ibid.)

record on security has been excellent) is short-sighted and someday may boomerang. Informing the RTG after the fact, and then only incompletely, simply will not do!

Looking forward to seeing you soon in Washington.

Sincerely,

Len

100. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon

Washington, December 1, 1970.

[Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 29, President's Daily Briefs. Top Secret; Sensitive; Codeword. Excerpt—1 page of source text not declassified. A notation in President Nixon's handwriting in the margin of this memorandum reads: "K—a disturbing report—Perhaps we need a stronger Ambassador."]

101. Diplomatic Note From Secretary of State Rogers to the Ambassador of Thailand (Hongladarom)¹

Washington, December 10, 1970.

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of Thailand and has the honor to inform him² as follows.

With regard to the proposed PL-480 sale of rice to Indonesia,³ the American Embassy in Bangkok has relayed to the Department of State

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AID (US) 15–8 INDON. No classification marking. Drafted by West and cleared by Alexander Shakow (AID/EA/I), Malcolm H. Churchill (EA/IND), and Elizabeth M. Denham (S/S).

² The note was delivered by Barger on December 10 during his meeting with Thai Ambassador Sunthorn. (Telegram 202614 to Bangkok, December 11; *ibid.*)

³ The Department had advised Thailand of the planned sale in a diplomatic note of November 20. (*Ibid.*)

a request, received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,⁴ that the United States consider buying a portion of the rice from Thailand in a manner similar to Japan's purchase for Indonesia. Should this be impossible the message suggested that the proposed sale be delayed until the end of April.

At the December 1969 meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) the United States pledged to contribute a fair share of the \$140 million estimated food aid requirement for the 15-month period ending March 31, 1971. This assistance is still considered vital not only for its direct impact in conserving foreign exchange and stabilizing prices but also because of the local currency generated for support of the development program. Although Indonesia had anticipated that the United States would provide up to 450,000 tons of rice and had in fact requested a greater quantity, the total to be provided is not expected to exceed 400,000 tons. This would include 240,000 tons from the April agreement, the proposed sale of 110,000 and a possible additional 50,000 tons early next year. Any delay in arrival of PL-480 rice beyond March 1971 would fail to accord with understandings reached at the December 1969 IGGI meeting.

With regard to the suggestion that the United States buy Thai rice as has been done by Japan, it is regretted that this would not be feasible in view of availabilities of United States rice and the United States balance of payments considerations. It is understandable that Japan, which has a large surplus in its bilateral payments with Thailand, should wish to find measures to ease this imbalance. On the other hand, the United States is still a net contributor to Thailand's balance of payments.

Although the assistance provided by the various countries has helped to improve the situation following the serious financial strains which led to formation of the international assistance group in 1966, Indonesian recovery and development requires that foreign exchange resources allocated to food purchases be kept to a minimum. However, as a result of this assistance Indonesia has had the resources to purchase commercially on the average as much or more rice than was possible in 1965 when no rice imports were obtained under the United States PL-480 program. In supplementing Indonesia's resources and enabling them to continue to make commercial purchases of rice as well as other vital commodities this Government believes that the program, on the whole, has been helpful rather than harmful to Thailand.

⁴ Telegram 15262 from Bangkok, December 6, relayed the Thai request. (Ibid.)

102. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 15, 1970, noon.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Leonard Unger
Henry A. Kissinger
John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT

Dr. Kissinger's Conversation With Ambassador Unger on US-Thai Relations

Dr. Kissinger expressed his pleasure in seeing Ambassador Unger. He went on to say that he had developed a number of obsessions about Thailand. One of these involved the use of Thai troops in Cambodia. After he had sent his letter to Ambassador Unger² he had come to believe that they both were on the same track;³ on the other hand, for many months he had the strong impression that Unger's colleagues wanted the Thai troops to stay in Thailand, especially in the Northeast, and not get in trouble in Cambodia. Somehow, by hook or crook, Thai units intended for Cambodia would disappear. Because Ambassador Unger probably didn't know the origins of the interest here in having the Thai prepared to go into Cambodia, he, Dr. Kissinger, wanted to provide some of the background. He had to deal with the President, who would repeatedly telephone about this. One evening the President had called about the two regiments of Thai regulars which were supposed to be a strategic reserve, and said that he wanted them in Cambodia. Dr. Kissinger noted that he had then gone back to the WSAG to say that these regiments should be sent in.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. Drafted by Holdridge and forwarded to Kissinger on December 17 for approval under cover of an attached memorandum with the notation: "Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, no further distribution appears warranted." The meeting was held in Kissinger's office.

² See Document 95.

³ In a December 14 memorandum to Kissinger, however, Holdridge stated that Unger had only partly "gotten" the President's desires with respect to the Thai helping out in Cambodia. Rather, he noted that Unger "has been inclined to push his own ideas first, notably in trying to focus upon the counterinsurgency requirements in Thailand as first priority. He probably shares the general State view that 'Thai troops should serve in Thailand,' as well as State's concerns over possible U.S. military involvement along with the Thai via our SEATO relationship. Thai in addition favors direct U.S. military assistance to Thailand in support of Thai activities in Cambodia, even though this is legally not possible—he wants the laws changed." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V)

He happened to be a member of the school of thought, Dr. Kissinger continued, which believed that a Presidential order should be carried out. He referred to the complicated sequence of events involving the two regiments of Thai regulars which were supposed to go into Cambodia, the forces which were to be sent from Thailand to Vietnam to free units of the Thai forces in Vietnam for service in Cambodia, and then the plan to train two regiments of Thai/Khmer volunteers. We had ended up with no Thai regulars in Cambodia, no units sent to Vietnam, and no Thai/Khmer regiments. Ultimately, the Thai decision was to pull out from Vietnam, leaving nothing in reserve. This had not looked like the most enthusiastic compliance with the President's orders.

Dr. Kissinger observed that Thai military planning now appeared to be coming along satisfactorily. However, if the occasion ever arose for the Thai to move, we should give the impression that we were really behind them rather than engaging in discussions over the details of our aid. This would give them the wrong impression. Ambassador Unger said that he felt our negotiations with the Thai on support were now proceeding satisfactorily, and that if we could carry these negotiations through we would have Thai units prepared and in place ready to move out for operations in Cambodia this dry season. Nevertheless, if the Thai went into Cambodia we would have a big financial problem in paying for the ordnance (bombs and ammunition), POL, and other supplies which the Thai would need. Ambassador Unger added that nobody had told him where these funds were to come from. He assumed that Dr. Kissinger probably remembered the last frank message from Bangkok in which he had pointed out these difficulties. Dr. Kissinger asked if Ambassador Unger had suggested any solutions, and Ambassador Unger replied that he hadn't offered any because he had been knocked down on using Thai MASF, and had also been informed that Cambodian MAP was unavailable because it was over-committed. Dr. Kissinger noted that the situation as to Cambodia MAP was now remedied by the supplemental appropriation.

Ambassador Unger stated that he wanted Dr. Kissinger to know his, Unger's, thinking. When the question of the Thai operating in Cambodia through South Vietnam had arisen, he had thought this was a great solution. However, it had been knocked down somewhere in Washington. The question was apparently how deeply into Cambodia the Thai should operate. The Thai had been ready to go, but somebody back here had killed the idea. He understood that it had been knocked out as a practicable possibility over the issue of how funds could be used, and also because of the possibility of Congressional flak. With respect to the Thai/Khmer idea the question was where the money would come from when the troops moved into Cambodia. Funds couldn't come from Thai MASF, or from Cambodia MAP either (although this might now be changed).

Ambassador Unger explained that the situation he had just described was why he had jumped on the SGU idea for using trained people—the two SGU battalions formed out of the Thai/Khmer volunteers—against the Ho Chi Minh trail. He understood that these units had just taken off from Korat for commitment to the Bolovens. Dr. Kissinger asked Ambassador Unger's opinion of the capability of these troops, to which Ambassador Unger replied that the units ought to be good because they had been well-trained. Because of this, the judgment had been made to put them into the Bolovens area, but we wouldn't know until later how well they would do. Thai troops were good on the defensive, although not so good on the offensive. Ambassador Unger cited Thai regulars in North Laos as an example of effective Thai performance on the defensive, noting that although they had recently been hit very hard and had suffered substantial casualties, they had held very well. He believed that the situation in the Bolovens was also one in which the Thai would do well. SGUs were a better kind of unit than the regulars, since they were more mobile. He hoped to see all the Thai troops in Laos eventually put into the SGU mode, with the RCT pulled back. It could also help defend Long Tieng and Sam Thong. Going back to the South Laos picture, if all went well and the situation didn't get out of hand, we would work out a smooth transition for putting in SGUs.

Dr. Kissinger declared that he was willing to go along with this since we had an assessment that the SGUs were as good as the RCT. The Joint Chiefs did not think so. Ambassador Unger remarked that the test would come soon in the South.

Dr. Kissinger then asked Ambassador Unger why the Department of State was so interested in SGUs instead of Thai regulars. Ambassador Unger replied that General Praphat had told him that the Thai could not have their soldiers fighting side by side at different rates of pay, and that types of units and pay scales should be standardized. In addition, the Thai were hesitant to put in RCTs except in places where they could be covered up. This was so as to avoid the appearance of violating the Geneva Accords. Ambassador Unger observed that his own conclusion was that the SGUs were preferable because they cost less and were more suitable for the type of fighting involved. Did Washington feel that the cost was an important factor?

Dr. Kissinger stated that what the President wanted was success—he wouldn't care about an additional \$10 million if success was assured. There was a school here which interpreted the Nixon Doctrine as favoring a semi-neutralist Thailand. This was a brilliant theory, except for the fact that it didn't meet the President's ideas. The President did not want to encourage a semi-neutralist Thailand, or a defeat in Laos. When the chips were down, Thai regulars would be pulled in

anyway. The President wanted reports on what Ambassador Unger believed, not reports on what Ambassador Unger believed conformed with the views of the White House. We then would proceed to give definite instructions. Dr. Kissinger suggested that every once in a while Ambassador Unger should sum up what he really thought for his, Dr. Kissinger's, use.

Ambassador Unger reiterated the belief that over the long run SGUs were the better deal. Dr. Kissinger said that he had no brief for the SGUs over the RCTs except that we knew that the RCT had worked in North Laos. What we would do was to put the SGUs in when they were trained, which would be at the beginning of the rainy season. Ambassador Unger told Dr. Kissinger that he would so inform Praphat, who wouldn't simply pull out the RCT but would keep it there in order to maintain his assets. Dr. Kissinger remarked that this was very important.

Ambassador Unger said that the Thai were not planning to put an RCT into South Laos, to which Dr. Kissinger commented that he did not see the need for an RCT where one was not already in place. In the Long Tieng situation we had waited a long time after being told the Thai regulars were needed before deciding to go ahead. The President had made the decision, which obviously had made all the difference. Ambassador Unger mentioned that he had no complaint over this decision, only over the fact that he had not been brought in on all of the preliminary communications. Dr. Kissinger explained that back channel messages had been used only because we had wanted to make sure before hand that the Thai were willing to go. There was no sense here that Ambassador Unger was doing anything but loyally carrying out his instructions. The difficulty was in making sure that the President's policy and wishes filtered through.

Ambassador Unger noted that there were misunderstandings among the Thai, too. He was now speaking to them on an entirely different basis from what he had been saying two years ago. Nevertheless, the Thai understood the Congressional problem, and knew that what Congress said was not necessarily the President's policy. Dr. Kissinger expressed understanding of the difficulties the Thai faced, recalling some of the problems which the President's advance men had caused prior to the President's trip last year.

Ambassador Unger declared that in our relations with the Thai we should not overlook small but important issues such as the Son Tay raid. The aircraft involved had all taken off from Thai bases, but he had been given absolutely nothing which he could pass along to the Thai about this. Dr. Kissinger stated that the problem here did not lie with Ambassador Unger or himself, but was due to the fact that when the decision had been made Secretary Rogers had not agreed to a

suggestion from him that others in State such as Ambassador Johnson and Ambassador Green should be brought in. He personally had been prohibited from talking, and had called Ambassador Johnson over against orders to tell him about the raid while it was in progress. This was of course too late, and we should have had Ambassador Unger talking to the Thai about that same time. Ambassador Unger asserted that even an hour of advance notice would have been helpful. Only today, with the help of Secretary Rogers, he had gotten Secretary Laird to clear an anodyne message which could be given to the Thai.

In conclusion, Ambassador Unger mentioned that there were two issues which caused him considerable concern: first, the matter of close-in air support for the Thai if they went into Cambodia, and second the matter of our longer term commitment to Thailand under these circumstances and the relationship of the Thai actions to SEATO. Dr. Kissinger agreed that these were important issues, and instructed Mr. Holdridge to see that they would be put before the WSAG for consideration.

(*Note:* After the meeting Ambassador Unger elaborated on the close-in air support issue to Mr. Holdridge, saying that he believed the Thai air resources were inadequate to maintain the authorized sortie rate of 900 per month, and that in any event the Thai had no real experience in providing the kind of close-in support which might be necessary in Cambodia. There was also the related matter of how to provide logistical support.)

103. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Embassy in France¹

Bangkok, January 5, 1971, 1233Z.

130. Paris For SecDef. Subj: Thai Assistance to Cambodia. Ref: Bangkok 125.²

1. Thailand's long-standing security concerns have been compounded by Communist aggression in Cambodia. However, initial Thai receptivity to sweeping requests for assistance from Lon Nol was tempered not only by reserved response by U.S. concerning support, but

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23 THAI. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Repeated to the Department of State and to CINCPAC.

² Dated January 5. (Ibid.)

also by serious assessment of their priorities and capabilities in light of existing troop commitments in Vietnam and Laos and requirements to meet mounting insurgency problems at home. Moreover, after it became evident that RTA ground combat presence would raise number of touchy issues (including command and control), Cambodians indicated to Thai that there was no immediate requirement for their troops and Cambodians also limited that airforce operations, thus reducing number of sorties RTAF could fly in support of Cambodia.

2. In response Washington directives to discuss with Thai measures to meet dry season emergency in Cambodia, we and Thai costed out their contingency plan for western Cambodia (Chakri Plan). We have recommended to Washington our moving ahead at this time only with package of readiness measures drawn from Chakri Plan for: RTAF operations of 900 sorties per month; preparing five regiments for combat; command and control; and activating reserve division. Total one-time costs of these packages would be about \$36 million to achieve readiness; continuing O&M and personnel costs to maintain readiness would be \$1.6 million per month. We would not intend to finance personnel costs of these packages and Thai have agreed in principle to assume them. One-time personnel costs are \$2.66 million and continuing personnel costs are \$1.8 million per month.

3. While consideration has been given to deploying Black Leopard units returning from RVN to Cambodia, if requested by Cambodia, this is not practicable since Black Leopards cease to exist as units shortly after returning to Thailand; about 40 percent of the personnel are volunteers for Vietnam and under the law must be released from active duty in accordance with their contracts; the other 60 percent (RTA regulars) normally return to their former units, and are badly needed there to bring forces up to acceptable strength levels.

4. Pending an answer from Washington on our recommendation (see para 2 above), we have not resumed dialogue on readiness measures with Thai. We expect Thai will take occasion of SecDef visit to inquire into status of project (which was undertaken at our initiative) and U.S. views on Thai assistance to Cambodia. Thai may also raise questions about U.S. support if in fact deployment to Cambodia should be required. This would include our help with logistics and air support as well as with greatly expanded costs for material in actual combat conditions.

Unger

104. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, January 11, 1971, 0909Z.

384. Subject: Secretary's Meeting with Thai Leaders.

1. Summary: In after-dinner meeting January 7 with Secretary Laird, Adm. Moorer, and their aides, and US mission reps, Thai leaders stressed following: their support for Nixon Doctrine and Vietnamization, but concern that success of latter may be gravely impaired by continued enemy capability mount threat in Laos and Cambodia; recognition that SEA nations must make growing contribution to their own defense, especially in manpower; determination to assume full responsibility for their defense needs without US troops, but requirement for continuation of US military assistance; need for helicopters, ammo, T-28's and excess equipment that can be used to develop Thai forces; rice problem (reported Bangkok 276)². Secretary gave forceful presentation of Nixon Doctrine (including assurance of continued regular military assistance and fullest exploitation of excess program), stressed need for regional cooperation and will of regional countries to make effective use of their resources. In response to Thanat's expressed doubts whether the administration will be able to carry out the programs underpinning the Nixon Doctrine, Secretary explained importance of recent vote of defense appropriations and stated his conviction that President will get the support to carry through his program. Thai leaders did not seek additional meeting, evidently feeling that they got their main problems off their chests. End summary.

2. Following is uncleared account of Secretary's after-dinner discussion with RTG leaders. Present were: PriMin Thanom, DepPriMin Pote, FonMin Thanat, ACM Dawee, Gen. Jira (military advisor to PriMin), RTA C/S Gen. Surakij, Dep C/S Supreme Command (fwd)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF THAI-US. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² Telegram 276 from Bangkok, January 8, noted that "Thai leaders (especially FonMin Thanat) made impassioned plea to SecDef for U.S. reconsideration of PL-480 rice shipments to Thailand's traditional markets." It noted that Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for National Development Pote Sarasin told Laird that "U.S. deliveries were cutting into Thailand's most important source of income. This applied especially to Indonesia which normally buys Thai rice. If U.S. were to compete in open market and at a fair price, the Thai would not mind, but PL-480 sales not made under competitive conditions." (Ibid., AID (US) 15-8 INDON)

Gen. Kriangsak, and FonMin's Secretary Dirabongse. Secretary Laird was accompanied by Amb Unger, Adm. Moorer, Asst. Secretaries Nutter and Henkin, Dep Asst. Secretary Doolin, DCM, COMUSMACTHAI, and PolMil Counselor. Gen. Praphat had to be absent to manage budget debate; Gen. Sawaeno also originally on guest list was not present.

3. PM opened with brief review of instances of Thai cooperation with free world (Korea, Laos, SVN, basing of US forces in Thailand). He expressed full support for Nixon Doctrine and understanding for US troop reductions, but argued that these reductions be planned carefully, taking into account assessments of communist strength and action. Communist threat to SEA was still great as the small countries here were developing their own defenses while simultaneously trying to improve living standards. All sea nations should bear responsibility for their own defense, but continued substantial US assistance was required. Concept of Vietnamization should be broadened to "Southeast-Asianization."

4. In commenting on implications of US troop withdrawals, Thai leaders several times stressed danger that as war in Vietnam winds down, threat to Laos and Cambodia (and thus to Thailand) could well increase. In their view, success of Vietnamization depended on how well the US could manage situation in Laos and Cambodia. Thanks to US and other SEA assistance, Cambodia had resisted much better than anticipated, but "some sort of US guard must be maintained; otherwise Vietnamization will fall flat" (Thanat). Saigon was still the enemy's principal target, but he is now attempting to get at it through Laos (where he is building up LOCs in the panhandle) and Cambodia.

5. Secretary several times stressed theme of regional cohesion, coordination and self-help. Enemy capabilities and intentions are not the only factors being considered in US troop reductions; willingness and capability of our friends to use their energies effectively and well were also very important. SVN forces were now much larger and more capable while enemy capabilities had declined since 1968. Secretary said in applying Nixon Doctrine we will give as much help as possible; while we are terminating our combat role, we will continue other important roles such as air, logistic and artillery support; we not fully withdrawing now, but only reducing and cutting back particularly in our direct involvement in combat.

6. Secretary made several inquiries about the insurgency, most of which brought little substantive response; Dawee stated however, government was successful in keeping insurgents from moving into villages, but Hanoi-trained Meo were operating in several provinces in the north; particularly disturbing aspect of the trouble in the mid-south was that the terrorists were ethnic Thai. Recent operations by 700 young

Chinese refugees (Dawee rejected term kmt) in the process of resettlement in the north had resulted in discovery of larger stores and facilities than had been anticipated, including a 300–500 man reception center for trainees and infiltrators from NVN and Laos. Throughout the meeting, PM, Dawee, and also Thanat stressed that Thailand wants to take care of its own defenses; it will do its own fighting and wants no US forces (presumably US ground combat troops); but it needs US material support to subdue threat before it is too late. Secretary said he got the message on US forces which Thais appeared to mean to apply to Cambodia as well.

7. Thai made strong plea for excess equipment left behind by US forces. Secretary explained legal requirements for transfer of excess items; if RTG could meet necessary criteria it would have priority on excess items located in country. Secretary stated that increase in military assistance effort was important aspect of Nixon Doctrine and that excess program offered in some ways better vehicle than direct appropriation; Thai should identify their needs and explain how they proposed to use items so one could move ahead with excess program.

8. In response to Secretary's query re RTG's assessment of possibility arriving at some sort of arrangement with NVN as result recent Thai contacts with NVN Red Cross repatriation delegation, Thanat stated that talks had not yielded any results. (*Note:* In context Secretary's query he presumably referred to political results, not question whether some repatriation may in fact take place.) Thanat said only one member of NVN team was bona fide Red Cross; others were intelligence types. He interpreted NVN initiative largely as probing action. Even though several subjects, including POWs, had been touched upon, there had been no real communication or signal.

9. Thanat said in his personal opinion NVN were using Paris Talks as propaganda forum and no results should be expected there. To the NVN, the real meaning of Vietnamization is how long the US can stand behind SVN, since they are confident of their ability to dispose of GVN once US departs scene. Referring to situation in Laos and Cambodia, he expressed doubt whether successful implementation of Vietnamization in 1972 was possible unless situation those two countries could be contained; despite expressed intention of President Nixon and his administration, he was not certain whether in light of Congressional opposition these measures could be taken and whether American people were really behind Nixon Doctrine.

10. Secretary stressed legislative debate was often misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented; he pointed out that though Vietnamization was first major thrust of Nixon Doctrine, it was only small part of it and should not be taken in isolation. He then explained im-

portance of recent positive Senate vote on defense appropriations, stressing administration had done well on every test vote. Thanat conceded recent success but insisted there will continue to be opposition to President's program. Secretary said he thought President meant what he said.

11. Dawee briefly referred to Thai defense plan (Chakri), saying that costing exercise carried on with help of MacThai had demonstrated tremendous defense costs which Thailand unable to bear with its limited resources. Secretary said he aware of planning effort which now being considered in Washington in light of this back to RTG in next few weeks.

12. Dawee said RTG planning for a new division in 1973 which meant equipment requirements being developed now. Thai needed helicopters to replace combat attrition; they were running ammo war reserve down to dangerously low level due to high expenditure rates in Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand; and speed-up of T-28 delivery would be most desirable. (Secretary held out no hope that this last was possible). Dawee stressed RTAF purchase of OV-10s as example of Thai modernization effort without US assistance.

13. Bangkok press Jan. 8-9 gave frontpage coverage to Secretary's visit. Stories highlighted his references to Nixon Doctrine; his "Promises of US military aid for next decade" (*world*) and "Aid Increases" (*post*); and his undertaking to convey to President Thai concerns about PL-480 rice shipments.² Thanat was reported as having stated that US had agreed in principle to "speed up" transfer of US arms and military equipment now being used by US forces in Thailand. Press also emphasized Secretary's remarks on regional cooperation and statement in his toast that differences between friends (US and Thailand) should make bonds of friendship stronger rather than weaker.

14. Dept may wish repeat CINCPAC for Secretary Laird and Embassies Phnom Penh, Vientiane.

Unger

105. Memorandum for the President's File¹

Washington, January 18, 1971.

SUBJECT

Meeting Between The President, Secretary Rogers, Secretary Laird, Admiral Moorer, Director Helms and Dr. Kissinger (10:55 a.m.–12:00 noon and 12:42 p.m. to 1:36 p.m.)

The meeting was convened at 10:55 a.m. in the President's Oval Office so that the President and his principal advisors could hear a personal report from Secretary Laird and Admiral Moorer on their trip to Thailand and South Vietnam with stop enroute in Paris.

After a brief discussion of the professional football championship game (Superbowl) which took place the preceding day, the President asked Secretary Laird to provide the group with a report on his trip to Southeast Asia and Paris.

[Here follows discussion of the Paris Peace Talks.]

Secretary Laird then stated that in Thailand his team had met with all of the principal Thai leaders and had participated in a dinner and an extensive after-dinner working session. The Thais made the following points to Secretary Laird:

—They complained bitterly about U.S. PL 480 rice sales to Indonesia and other Thai market areas. (Secretary Laird said that he avoided substantive comment.)

—Thai officials were not as concerned about the counterinsurgency problem in Northeast Thailand as Secretary Laird thought they should be. (The Secretary stated that two large insurgent base camps had been developed in Northeast Thailand, with the most serious problem being the camp located at the projected end of the Chinese road complex.)

—The Thais asked for assurances of continued U.S. military assistance, emphasizing they wished us to maintain our bases in Thailand but that they would have no need for U.S. ground power.

The President remarked to Secretary Laird that his past discussions with the Thais suggested that they were very much concerned about internal insurgency. Secretary Laird replied that the threat had

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Boxes 83–87, Memoranda for the President. Top Secret; Sensitive.

actually increased over the past 12 months and that the Thais had few forces involved in this role.

The President stated that if the Thais felt we would be in deep difficulty because of our treaty arrangements and, therefore, we will have to push them on the insurgency issue. More importantly, we are going to have to assure that they get all the military assistance in terms of equipment and funds that they need. Dr. Kissinger stated that an additional problem was the fact that the Thais have forces in Laos and that while the insurgency in the Northeast may be a problem, the viability of Laos and Cambodia is the decisive factor in terms of Thailand's future. It is essential that they not pull their forces out of Laos.

The President then commented that he had been encouraged by the recent report on the performance of Thai forces in Laos.² Admiral Moorer stated that this was the first SGU battalion that had been formed by the Thais. He noted that the conduct of the battle was well executed by the Thais, who permitted the enemy to get inside their positions and then inflicted great damage on them.

The President then remarked that he had recently read an excellent press story on Cambodia and that these were the kinds of stories which would insure the proper attitude in the U.S. Mr. Helms stated that the Cambodians have certainly demonstrated an outstanding will but that now their requirement was to learn how to operate their forces.

Secretary Rogers reopened the question of insurgency in Thailand and asked Mr. Helms to comment on the seriousness. Mr. Helms replied that action programs are initiated each year with the anticipation that they will succeed but that at the end of the period it always appears that there has been further deterioration. Secretary Laird indicated that he had raised this issue on three separate occasions with the Thais but that they had appeared to want to avoid the issue. The President then reiterated that because of our treaty commitments, it was important not to permit the situation to deteriorate. He directed that necessary spending be undertaken now rather than to find ourselves involved in another massive insurgency in the future.

Secretary Laird stated that he sensed the need by the Thais for continual hand-holding with respect to our presence in Thailand and our

² The President had recently sent Prime Minister Thanom a message, in telegram 6319 to Bangkok, January 14, stating that "I want you to know how impressed I have been with the performance of the Thai personnel who are assisting the Lao in the common defense interests of Laos and Thailand, first in successful actions at Long Tieng and Sam Thong, then at Ban Na and now at Ban Houay Sai. I wish in particular to commend the irregular forces at Ban Houay Sai who recently inflicted very heavy casualties on three regular North Vietnamese battalions with the loss of only one Thai." (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL THAI-US)

assistance program. For this reason, the Secretary provided additional assurances to the Thai leadership. Secretary Laird added that we have already cut our forces by 16,000 in Thailand and that further reductions should be avoided. He expressed special concern about the retention of our naval base and the air base at Utopa.

The President confirmed that he wanted our bases retained in Thailand. The slight draw-downs accomplished thus far were acceptable but the bases must be retained. The President stated that the Thais have always needed constant reassurances and suggested that it might be of value to include a visit by the King on this year's state visit schedule. Secretary Rogers interjected that he agreed that this would be a good idea.

The President then stated that specific assurances should be given to the Thais after our next troop withdrawal announcement. He pointed out that the Symington Subcommittee hearings had done great damage to our overall relationships with the Thais and that this damage had to be rectified. Secretary Laird remarked that the Thai Foreign Minister was the principal problem in Thailand. The Secretary had emphasized to the Prime Minister that the supplemental vote in the U.S. Congress represented a major victory for those who supported strong U.S./Thai relations.

The President stated that he wanted it clearly understood that the U.S. was on a razor's edge with respect to the Nixon Doctrine in Southeast Asia. While we have made our policy clear, the press has consistently distorted it to our disadvantage. The President stressed that we must retain our presence in Thailand, and in all Southeast Asia, to include the Philippines, South Vietnam and Korea. The idea that the Nixon Doctrine constituted a formula for reducing our presence to zero was neither true nor in our interest. The President emphasized that it was important that we reassure our allies in this respect. Secretary Laird remarked that military assistance was the essential element since our Asian allies have the manpower resources.

In continuing his discourse on our relationships with our allies, the President stated that this same philosophy applied worldwide. That was why Senator Percy had been so much in error. We need a continued presence in Europe and in terms of our worldwide position, we cannot permit ourselves to slip into a weak conventional force posture. We need a strong conventional posture abroad. We should now be thinking about permanent U.S./Asian and European force deployments. Our Soviet and Chinese friends watch this issue intensely and they draw great comfort and attach great significance to reductions in our force levels abroad.

Secretary Laird remarked that we have to sell this issue to the American people. He commented that a 1½ war strategy was not

saleable but rather we should sell it on the grounds of a realistic deterrent consisting of adequate conventional, tactical nuclear and nuclear forces.

The President commented that Congressional proponents were the first to complain when we cut bases here in the U.S. if they involved their constituents. Mr. Helms stated it was obvious that the Thais must have continued reassurance from us and that they had already started to refurbish their lines with the Chinese Communists. The President restated that we should bring the Thai King on a visit to the U.S. The President instructed Secretary Laird, Admiral Moorer and Dr. Kissinger, as appropriate, to bring Senators in and to talk about the importance of Thailand and the need to avoid future hearings such as those conducted by Senator Symington.

Secretary Rogers commented that he was convinced the situation in the Foreign Relations Committee was now a great deal better. Secretary Laird added that the Committee was now obviously split and that the Son Tay operation had been largely responsible for this. Secretary Rogers stated that the Department of State was also breakfasting with members of the Committee and that this had improved communications immeasurably. Secretary Laird remarked that the Department of Defense was also working with the Committee on a regular basis.

[Omitted here is discussion of Vietnam.]

Alexander M. Haig, Jr.³
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

106. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, January 25, 1971, 1230Z.

1108. Subject: PL-480. Ref: A. State 012354;² B. State 012350.³

1. I made presentation to Prime Minister this afternoon following closely reftel A. PriMin was accompanied by FonMin Thanat and Minister in Prime Minister's office General Sawaeng. I was accompanied by political and economic counselors.

2. In my presentation, I laid particular stress on: a) joint interest of our two governments in Indonesia's economic and financial stability. This importantly furthered by IGGI efforts, in context of which U.S. PL-480 and other assistance provided. b) Opportunity for additional commercial sales which may be presented if GOI decides to forgo 50,000 tons of PL-480 rice in favor of other PL-480 commodities; and c) Evidence that our activity has not been disruptive of commercial opportunities provided by fact that 400,000 tons of rice commercially imported by Indonesia in their FY 1969-70 (almost double the 1965-66 total).

3. Thai side argued extensively with all three of these points, with Thanat carrying the attack.

4. PriMin did not argue against aid to Indonesia, but made one point in this respect which he held to politely but persistently—the U.S. should aid Indonesia, but with commodities other than rice or with cash. He said that the amount of money involved in 400,000 tons rice sale meant little to the U.S., but was fundamentally important to Thailand.

5. Thanat, nominally acting as interpreter but in fact presenting most of the argumentation himself, said "the IGGI has nothing to do with U.S. Simply because it is a member of IGGI, the United States cannot arrogate to itself the right to take actions seriously detrimental to this country." He said Thailand is trying hard to stand on its own feet, as Marshall Green in a recent speech was quoted as saying they should do. Then he added their ability to do so is seriously affected when the United States unfairly disrupts its markets for its principal export, rice.

6. I said that the U.S. had not disrupted Thailand's market, but that our actions had greatly helped Indonesia, a country badly in need.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 15-8 INDON. Secret; Priority.

² Dated January 23. (Ibid.)

³ Dated January 23. (Ibid.)

Like Thailand, Indonesia was a very important country in Southeast Asia, its security, stability and financial health was very important to the area, including to Thailand, as well as to the U.S. Therefore we were working with others to try to restore Indonesia's economic health, at the same time minimizing the ill effects on the export markets of others. I said the fact that Indonesia's commercial imports were up showed both that the program was in fact contributing to the health of the Indonesian economy and that our program had not interfered with commercial markets. (Thanat picked this point up somewhat later.)

7. A second point stressed by PM was that if we had to use rice as a commodity in aid program for Indonesia, we should do as Japan did, i.e., buy some of the rice in Thailand to give to Indonesia. Thanat added that Japan had much larger rice stocks than the U.S., yet found it possible to take account of the interest of countries such as Thailand and to forestall the ill effects of its "politically motivated" sales.

8. I said I was happy that the Japanese had been able to take this action. I said that in making comparisons with this action and that of the U.S., however, we must remember that Thailand's heavy trade imbalance with Japan, which was not offset in any other way, contributed importantly to Thailand's balance of payments problems. By contrast, the total effect of U.S. activities and direct assistance made an important positive contribution to Thailand's overall balance of payments. Thus I could understand why the Japanese would be especially concerned to compensate at least in some small measure for the overall effect of their role.

9. Thanat then said that if we are going to compare Japan and the U.S., we must remember that Thailand is not extending the same cooperation to Japan and opening the same facilities to Japan that it is to the U.S. He said the Thai contribution to the security of this area and to U.S. interests in particular was persistently overlooked by some in Washington. I said I did not in the least minimize the Thai contribution, but that if we were going to look at the matter in the perspective he had suggested we should also round out the picture and recall the enormous expenditures which the U.S. had made and the enormous role it had played in other respects in Southeast Asia to contribute to the security of the countries of the area.

10. On the question of the commercial opportunity being open to Thailand, Thanat was thoroughly scornful of the 600,000 ton figure originally requested by the Indonesians ("Only a bargaining figure"; "They may just as well have asked for a million tons"). He was equally scornful of the possibility of a further 50,000 ton increase from the 400,000 ton planning figure. He said that 50,000 tons of rice was "an almost ridiculous amount," and said that if we were to say we were cutting that 350,000 tons had already been shipped or was in the late

stages of preparation for shipping and therefore the 50,000 tons were all that could be cut from the program. He said (referring to the Vietnamese case of last year) that “ships can be diverted”. He asked “What makes you think they will buy the 50,000 ton balance from us anyway?” I replied that they have been pressing us for more rice, and that we will be supplying other kinds of needs if they decide to forgo the rice which should free the necessary foreign exchange. Thus the possibility seemed good.

11. Picking up my point about the 400,000 tons of commercial sales in FY 69–70, he denied that Indonesia had purchased that much, saying he did not question that I had been told that, but that I had been “misled” by Washington. He said in any case it was “specious reasoning” to say that commercial imports of rice had gone up as the result of our PL–480 sales. I responded firmly that I had not argued that, but had said that the total effect of our activities, including the PL–480 sales, had obviously not been disruptive when commercial purchases by Indonesia were double the 1965–66 level. I said we thus saw no evidence that our activities had been disruptive. He said if we would stop our sales we would see immediately how disruptive they had been because Thai export sales would immediately rise. I responded by raising again the question of why Thailand had not obtained more of the rising commercial purchases Indonesia was making. Thanat then challenged me saying did I mean to say that PL–480 has not disrupted normal commercial sales: what about sales which Thailand in the past has been on the point of making which were cancelled at the last minute because of this program. I said I was addressing the present case of Indonesia.

12. Thanat again spoke of “intrusion into a perfectly normal market”. I asked why Germany and others couldn’t just as well use such an argument to prove that we were “interfering” with their market in Thailand for equipment, weapons, etc. He simply said that was up to the Germans to raise with us. He said it was up to us to prove we were not causing disruption, not the other way around. He said everyone in Thailand, including the people on the streets, knew that disruption was being caused. I said these people were of course guided by what they were being told by the newspapers and others. I said I knew there was a problem, but the question was why. In the face of the large Indonesian commercial imports in the past year, I was still uncertain why Thailand did not get more of that market. Thanat again took the position that our figures were simply wrong.

13. I said our actions have shown that we do mean to work closely with the Thais to avoid damaging their interests. I said the USG has many commitments, including to Indonesia, but we attempted to discharge them without disrupting the markets of others. I recalled again the two reductions already made in the figure for PL–480 rice for Indonesia, and that we were now proposing another.

14. Thanat denied that we had taken their interests into account. He said we had not really consulted them, but simply presented them with faits accomplis. He said Ambassador Sunthorn has been treated with "arrogance" in his talks on this subject in Washington. I said I was very surprised to hear him say that, pointing out I had seen no reflection of it in my talks in Washington.

15. Thanat then said the U.S. does not raise rice for consumption but only to dump on the markets of the world, and asked why we don't do something about production. I pointed out that we had increased rice production to meet a grave world shortage starting in 1965, and that we had thereby saved many people from starvation. We recognized that the supply situation had changed and we had cut back acreage in the past two years, but such an adjustment takes time. He said I was "evading" the U.S. domestic political element. I said of course that element was there, but it was there largely because of the investments American farmers had made to gear up production where it was needed. He said the American economy could adjust more quickly than it was doing.

16. At the end I agreed to report the views I had heard to Washington and again urged them to be prepared to follow up on the commercial opportunity that might open. This earned a scornful "thanks" from Thanat.

17. *Comment:* While Thanat carried the ball and did most of the talking, Thanom obviously agreed with him on at least a couple of basic points, i.e., that Thailand is being hurt, and that they got previous little from us in response to his appeal through SecDef.

18. It is worth noting in particular that to reinforce one point about PL-480 rice sales Thanat cited (and obviously endorsed) a highly critical Malaysian comment about our rubber disposal program.

19. We are withholding any press release or comment until we see how RTG plays that aspect but are preparing for a substantial effort to get our side of story told if they go on the offensive again.

Unger

107. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, February 2, 1971, 1003Z.

1492. Subject: PL-480 Rice.

1. In informal, wide ranging session with Deputy Prime Minister Praphat and two of his close aides and advisors (General Surakit Mayalarp and Dr. Malai Huvanandana), subject of PL-480 rice assistance to Indonesia came in for extended discussion. I ran through all of our principal arguments and found that he had been well briefed on them in advance by staff members to whom we had earlier provided background material.

2. All of our efforts, however, went for little because of the fact that he has also been informed that, when Thailand was negotiating for a commercial sale with Indonesia, the Indonesians, who at first showed considerable interest, later broke off the negotiations and told the Thais they had learned that the U.S. would be supplying Indonesia's rice needs through a PL-480 deal. In light of this, he said it was of no use to try to "prove" that our program did not interfere with Thai exports to Indonesia.

3. He went on to make it quite clear that he regards this issue as potentially damaging in the extreme to the long standing friendship between the Thai and American peoples—to him it is not just a government-to-government matter. He said that virtually every Thai person knows about this issue and believes that it strikes at the very heart of Thailand's economy, its rice production and trade. He said this was an issue which could easily put placard-bearing students on the march and which could get out of hand to the point where Americans could not appear on the streets of Bangkok "without getting their heads broken." All this was said without any personal rancor on his part and in fact with explicit recognition of the political and economic problems we face at home and in full knowledge of the steps we have taken to try to ease the situation from Thailand's point of view.

4. I think we must take this as a very serious indication from our friends in the RTG, in this case a most important one, that while they are prepared to accept the fact that nothing can be done about our rice shipments to Indonesia during the present Indonesian FY, they do not

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 15-8 INDON. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Repeated to Djakarta.

feel it will be possible to face a similar outcome next year without it spilling over to the serious detriment of our general relations with Thailand. (I am not sure myself that we will not feel those consequences a good deal sooner.)

5. With this in mind, I would appreciate the earliest possible indication of our planning with respect to the IGGI food aid package for the coming Indonesian FY, as well as our other plans for PL-480 rice programs in the region.² With that information in hand I will come in with recommendations (a) as to how we should handle consultations with the RTG, and (b) for a broader economic strategy for Thailand in the context of which the PL-480 problem can hopefully be presented more successfully.

Unger

² In telegram 23361 to Bangkok, February 10, the Department agreed "that Praphat's remarks are a significant indication of how seriously RTG leaders have taken PL 480 program" and shared "your concern about future relations." It noted, however, that "we have little flexibility as to what we can do with respect to U.S. rice shipments. Although it may not be possible completely to avoid untimely PL 480 sales, we hope that future agreements which involve Thailand's traditional markets will not be signed during the November-April period when Thailand is searching for markets for its new crop and prices are particularly vulnerable." (Ibid.)

108. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Commanding General of the U.S. Air Force in Thailand (Evans)¹

Bangkok, February 24, 1971, 1121Z.

2566. Subject: ARC Light Capability. Ref: 7/13AF 230900Z Feb 71.²

1. PoMil counselor conveyed to Air Chief Marshal Dawee this morning on urgent basis our plan bring additional nine B-52's into U-Tapao to support maximum air effort in SEA. Dawee made note of fact that this would bring total number of B-52's to 51 and that five combat lightning K-135's would be removed. He asked how soon RTG approval was required. Counselor did not reveal fact that aircraft were

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, ISP/P Files: Lot 72 D 504. Top Secret; Priority; Limdis. Repeated to the Department of State, CINCPAC, and SAC.

² Not found.

at this point already airborne but said he hoped approval could be granted on the spot. Dawee did so, saying he would immediately inform PriMin.

2. While Dawee indicated full support for currently ongoing operations to cut enemy lines in Laos and expressed understanding for urgency of B-52 deployment, he clearly registered point that RTG approval was required for this deployment.

3. Ambassador subsequently touched base on B-52 deployment with Prime Minister who had already been informed by Dawee.

Unger

109. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, February 24, 1971, 1205Z.

2569. Subject: PL-480 Rice Sales. Ref: (A) Bangkok 2359;² (B) State 029914.³

Summary. In preliminary consultations concerning PL-480 aid to Indonesia during coming year, Thanat stressed gravity of Thailand's rice problem at present, above all depressed price, and concern that US and Japanese activity would leave little room for commercial sales to Indonesia. Our willingness to begin consultations this early and our commitments re timing of agreements are major new positive factors, and were acknowledged as such by Thanat. End summary.

1. I told Thanat at meeting on February 23 that Department had authorized me to open preliminary consultations with him concerning PL-480 portion of our aid to Indonesia for coming year. He was evidently appreciative of our willingness to begin process this early in the game. He said the rice problem, particularly severely depressed price, was a matter of deep concern to the RTG. This concern was shared by the King, he said, who was taking the closest interest in the problem. In all fairness, he said, they had to accept that there were a great many

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 15-8 INDON. Secret; Priority.

² Dated February 20. (Ibid.)

³ Dated February 23. (Ibid.)

factors other than PL-480 which contributed to the problem. However, the latter did aggravate the problem at a time when it was already extremely serious. He said the RTG might well have to adopt a highly expensive price support program for rice this year to avoid widespread and serious hardship and dissatisfaction in rural areas. He said that the timing and magnitude of our PL-480 sales, while only one factor, could be an extremely important one.

2. I then spoke as outlined in ref A as authorized and modified by ref B. I stressed that what I had given him and the fact that I had been authorized to open these consultations at this time was in further response to the Prime Minister's request to the President made through Secretary Laird. Thanat took note of this and instructed his secretary (Birabhongse) to record the facts so that the substance of my presentation would be passed to the Prime Minister's office.

3. Commenting on the substance of our presentation, he noted that our planning figure of 350,000 was half of the minimum estimate of Indonesian requirements. Considering that the Japanese would be active in this market with non-commercial sales as well, he expressed concern that there would be precious little left for commercial sellers. He asked whether we knew what Japan was planning to do this year. I agreed to find out what if anything the USG held on that. (Thanat mentioned, incidentally, that RTG had also complained to GOJ concerning its rice program for Indonesia.)

4. In discussion of level of commercial sales in past years, Thanat acknowledged that there were other competing suppliers, including Italy and Egypt. However, he said Thailand was much less concerned about them, considering their competition as commercial in contrast to that of US and Japan.

5. *Comment:* It would be helpful to be able to go back to Thanat as promptly as possible with whatever information we can provide concerning Japanese intentions. This will of course have a bearing on the position RTG will take concerning the 350,000 ton figure. In any case, our commitment with respect to timing, which was obviously responsive to one of the primary concerns Thanat expressed prior to my presentation, will be of major help.

Unger

110. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, March 11, 1971, 0957Z.

3380. Singapore For Amb. Kennedy. Ref: A. State 034153;² B. Bangkok 2928³ and previous.

1. Late yesterday afternoon Amb. Kennedy was received in audience by Their Majesties the King and Queen; also present were Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Whittle, Mrs. Unger and myself. Amb. Kennedy at the outset explained President Nixon had asked him to convey his greetings to His Majesty, reaffirm his high regard for Thailand and close interest in developments here, his determination to continue working closely with countries in this region to assure their security, and to solicit any message which His Majesty would like to convey to the President through Amb. Kennedy.

2. The President's letter of invitation to Their Majesties was then presented.⁴ His Majesty was obviously pleased but expressed his doubt about leaving his country this year in view of the many pressing problems and unsettled situation here. Amb. Kennedy made it clear that the President hoped that if this year were not possible, next year might be. (I arranged with His Majesty's aide to get the King's more considered reply for transmittal to the President as soon as it is ready.)

3. The remainder of the discussion between His Majesty and Amb. Kennedy was taken up in a lengthy and intense discussion by the King of several critical issues now facing Thailand. First on the list and obviously of profound concern to His Majesty was Thailand's severe internal and external economic problems deriving from the depressed price of rice and the important contribution to this problem made by U.S. PL-480 sales, above all to Indonesia. His Majesty's review of the problem was along familiar lines but I think we must not underestimate the strength of his feelings on this matter and his conviction that the rice problem will have not only mounting economic consequences but serious political repercussions as well, potentially very damaging to U.S.-Thai relations. Without going into detail His Majesty also alluded to the problem of disposal of rubber surpluses.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 US/KENNEDY. Secret; Priority. Repeated to Singapore.

² Dated March 3. (Ibid., POL 7 THAI)

³ Dated March 3. (Ibid.)

⁴ The approved text of the letter was transmitted in telegram 38103 to Bangkok, March 5. (Ibid., POL 7 US/KENNEDY)

4. The other major topic was a review by His Majesty of the growing insurgency problem. Here his principal emphasis was laid in the first place on the need for equipment (above all helicopters) for the border patrol police who should receive support largely according to the same criteria as the military forces since their role is largely a military one. He also made clear his dissatisfaction with inept administration and even oppression by public officials as a contributory factor to the growth of the insurgency.

5. At the close of the audience His Majesty expressed appreciation for the President's having sent Amb. Kennedy and the opportunity it provided for him to convey his messages in return.

6. Amb. Kennedy has approved this message.

5. [*sic*] foregoing message classified Exdis because ref A. Unless Dept. sees objection suggest it be reduced to simple confidential.

Unger

111. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, March 16, 1971, 1105Z.

3136. The following telegram sent action Singapore March 12, 1971 is h/w being repeated for Dept's action and Djakarta's info.

"Subject: Ambassador Kennedy's Call on PM Thanom.

1. Summary: Ambassador Kennedy's call on Prime Minister, who had with him four cabinet members and DG of National Economic Development Board, was used by Thai officials for emphatic presentation their views on PL-480 rice sales. They returned to this subject almost to exclusion all other topics raised by Ambassador Kennedy. In Thanat's absence atmosphere was more friendly than when same subject raised previously, but seriousness of Thai concern and unanimity of all top officials was presented even more effectively. Thai presentation focused on RTG's efforts to help itself, essential role of exports in Thailand's economic viability, central position of rice in this regard, and impossibility shift from rice to more diversified exports in short

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 US/KENNEDY. Confidential; Priority. Repeated to Djakarta.

run, say next two years. New element was repeated request that United States lend Indonesia funds for rice purchases in Thailand. Request was presented in fashion reflecting, for first time, full recognition and appreciation of great value of IGGI program and US contribution not only to Indonesia, but to Southeast Asia as a whole and to Thailand in particular. Ambassador Kennedy expressed appreciation for informative presentation and assured Prime Minister of US intention give full consideration to Thai concerns. End summary.

2. Ambassador Unger yesterday took Ambassador Kennedy to call on Prime Minister Thanom who had with him Minister of National Development Pote, Minister of Finance Serm, Minister in Prime Minister's office Sawaeng, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sanga (representing FonMin in Thanat's absence), and Secretary General of Nedb Renoo. Pote acted as Thanom's interpreter and principal spokesman.

3. Ambassador Kennedy opened discussion with brief explanation of his Presidential mandate. In his response Thanom immediately turned to Thailand's balance of payments problem. Thailand was still a low income country depending for economic viability heavily on a few export commodities. Rice was by far the most important export. Current trends toward self-sufficiency in neighboring countries, which constituted Thailand's markets, were seriously reducing export opportunities and depressing price. This problem was intensified by PL-480 sales. Besides rice, the important rubber market was weak, and the surplus disposal issue is a depressing effect. Tin, although of somewhat less importance to Thailand, was another export commodity whose price was declining. Ambassador Kennedy briefly commented on the importance of agricultural diversification in coping with excessive dependence on one or a few export commodities, but Thanom, speaking through Pote, returned to his theme. Diversification required both time and markets. For Thailand rice was now and would inevitably remain for some time the principal export commodity. For the US, rice was a marginal product. Thailand was able and prepared to compete even in the present depressed market on normal commercial terms, but was unable to compete against concessional terms offered to its traditional customers. Thailand's problem was intensified by the increasing financial burden of essential security measures and need to expand development activities just to keep even with population increase. Security was a precondition for economic development, and economic development without security would be meaningless.

4. Ambassador Kennedy said the United States was anxious to be helpful in assisting Thailand in working its way out of its present predicament. Among the major tasks with which we might be able to be helpful were the development of expertise and education, and particularly with diversification and market development. DepFonMin

Sanga immediately returned to the theme of rice, saying that the biggest single problem in finding a market for the rice available for export was Indonesia.

5. Ambassador Kennedy expressed understanding of the importance of this problem, and asked whether tourism was expanding. Pote replied that the number of tourists was increasing, but money was getting scarce and the hotels were suffering. Returning to rice, he said that Thailand had considered subsidizing the Thai farmer, but there was really no way to do this which the country could afford. Sanga added that current prices were far below last year's. Ambassador Unger said that, recognizing Thailand's concern about this matter, we wanted to be extremely careful regarding next year's PL-480 program. We would consider what the ministers had told us, continue our consultations, which had already begun, both here and in Washington and avoid, in particular, timing of sales which would fall within Thailand's principal marketing period.

6. Pote, for the first time raising a subject other than rice, said tourism was very important to Thailand. Thailand was providing all possible incentives for its expansion. He was, therefore, concerned about reports that PanAm was taking its 747's to Singapore and hoped that they would not bypass Bangkok. He and Ambassador Kennedy then briefly discussed character of tourist industry here.

7. Returning to rice Pote said the RTG hoped that the United States might be able to lend money to Indonesia on favorable terms to buy rice from Thailand. Ambassador Unger explained that American rice to Indonesia was in effect not supplied on a loan basis but as outright aid. In a sense it did double duty: the rice itself met an urgent immediate requirement in foreign exchange field, and the rupiahs paid for it were channeled into development. Pote said he understood well that the American program was very helpful to Indonesia, and Thailand 'could not make too much noise about it.' Indonesia needed rice and had no foreign exchange to buy it. But even if the US lent money to Indonesia for only two years to purchase this rice from Thailand, this would help Thailand get over the worst of its readjustment to the new situation. The Minister of Finance commented that for the same reason Thailand warmly welcomed other US assistance to Indonesia, including American investment in Indonesia. The inflow of American resources in turn enabled Indonesia to purchase other requirements from Thailand. Ambassador Kennedy said part of the problem was that Indonesia's problems were long-term. It took the IBRD and other international lenders to work out an approach that seemed appropriate to the Indonesian situation, and this type of solution was not addressed to Thailand's short-term problem. He was most anxious to understand Thailand's problem and to have this opportunity to discuss it with Thai leaders.

8. Thanom, speaking through Pote, said Thailand was happy to know that the US helped Indonesia which has turned toward the free world. This assistance helped in strengthening the whole region. Thanom wanted this help to continue, and was only concerned that it should not create problems for Thailand's own endeavors to help itself.

9. Ambassador Kennedy said he was here to learn and appreciated the friendship extended to US over many years. It was the President's personal determination to build strength throughout the region and to work together with Thailand. It was his conviction that a good potential for a stronger economy existed throughout the whole area. He was also well aware of the fact that sometimes we ourselves were slowing down deliberately and tightening our budget in a manner that made itself felt in many contexts, in particular in our aid programs and in American tourism.

10. Thanom raised the question of special funds. The Asian Development Bank had substantial resources by now but its terms were such that Thailand did not appear able to receive much help from it. Ambassador Kennedy said that the administration had been unable to obtain Congressional approval for special funds for the ADB. It had been his own endeavor to have the United States make a contribution to ADB's special funds equal to that which the Japanese were making. This position which envisaged a US contribution of approximately \$100 million had the firm support of the executive, and had been included in a bill providing for appropriations for other international lending institutions. Even though special funds for the ADB had been deleted by the Congress, the request will be resubmitted. The ADB, which had been slow in getting started, was nevertheless now in a better position to contribute to the development of the region.

11. Pote asked whether the US could help Indonesia with commodities other than rice. Was the US discouraging farmers from growing rice? Ambassador Kennedy said technological progress such as use of fertilizers sometimes permitted increases in yields even though acreage was restricted. Ambassador Unger referred to the recent discussion of our Indonesian aid program in Bangkok and Washington and pointed out that we had in fact offered to substitute other commodities this year for some rice scheduled for Indonesia. Indonesia needed a great deal of rice at certain times, and he repeated the hope that by beginning consultations on this complex problem early our efforts to reduce or eliminate an unfavorable impact on Thailand would be as effective as possible. Pote repeated that the Prime Minister wanted to stress the key importance of rice to Thailand. Indonesia constitutes a traditional market for about 300,000 tons of rice. With a disposable surplus of about 1 million tons, and with few other large markets (such

as Hong Kong), sales to Indonesia were critical. He wished to repeat the suggestion that the US assist Indonesia by lending to it, perhaps through banking channels, an amount corresponding to the present level of American assistance. This would help solve Thailand's problem and satisfy everyone. Thailand itself would need PL-480 assistance and was looking forward to further talks about this matter.

12. Ambassador Kennedy expressed his deep appreciation for the opportunity to meet with his hosts and to explore these important problems with them.

13. *Comment:* In addition to underlining once more the central position of rice in this country's economy and therefore the sharply adverse impact of US PL-480 rice transactions on our relations, the discussion between Ambassador Kennedy and the Prime Minister and his group (heavily weighted on economic side) also strongly suggested that we will be adding another serious problem to US-Thai relations if surplus rubber disposal is not handled exceptionally carefully.

14. Ambassador Kennedy has approved.

Unger"

Unger

112. Minutes of 40 Committee Meeting¹

San Clemente, California, March 31, 1971, 10:26-11:55 a.m.

SUBJECT

Various—see summary of conclusions

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

Mr. U. Alexis Johnson

Defense

Mr. David Packard

¹ Source: National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, 40 Committee Files, Minutes, 1971. Top Secret; Nodis; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Western White House. A notation on the minutes indicates Nelson, [*name not declassified*], and Blee of CIA were not present for the entire meeting.

JCS
Lt. Gen. Richard T. Knowles
CIA
Lt. Gen. Robert E. Cushman
Mr. Thomas Karamessines
Mr. William Nelson
Mr. [name not declassified]
Mr. David Blee
NSC Staff
Mr. Frank M. Chapin
Col. Richard T. Kennedy
Mr. Keith Guthrie

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed to:

1. Approve a proposal for employment of Thai SGUs in Sayaboury Province in Laos. (pages 2–3)
2. Use gunships stationed at Udorn, Thailand to provide cover for medical evacuation flights in North Laos. (pages 3–4)

[Omitted here are summaries unrelated to Southeast Asia.]

Dr. Kissinger: I take it you have been discussing Thai deployments to Sayaboury.

Mr. Johnson: Yes. We have just now received some new information which changes Dave Packard's and my views on this.

(Mr. Johnson showed the telegrams to Mr. Kissinger.)

Gen. Cushman: This group would be composed of regulars and would count against the total of regulars projected for SGUs. No extra money would be required for this program, since these troops would proceed into SGU programs. The regulars are part of the 1,174-man cadre already planned for the program.

[6 paragraphs (6½ lines of source text) not declassified]

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, why not go ahead and do it?

Mr. Johnson: There is a second item that was a late starter for this meeting. This is medevac for Ban Na. We were talking this over before the meeting and agreed that there would be great difficulty in stationing gunships in Laos. The Joint Staff is going to CINCPAC to see if it would not be possible to put the gunships in Udorn, realizing that they might have to refuel in Laos. There are two questions: whether we have the necessary assets and whether they should be stationed in Udorn.

Dr. Kissinger: Weren't Air America pilots to be used for this?

Mr. Packard: We were talking about gunships.

[1 paragraph (1 line of source text) not declassified]

Gen. Knowles: We were talking about gunships other than Cobras. I will ring out CINCPAC to see what is available.

Gen. Cushman: Cobras are not available.

Gen. Knowles: We will check this out, but it is unlikely that we can get any Cobras.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me see if I understand what has been agreed. We are going to station gunships in Udorn.

Gen. Knowles: We are going out to CINCPAC to see, first, if we can station gunships (probably of the UHB type) at Udorn and, second, whether they can be provided with range-extension kits or whether we can put some bladders in Laos for refueling. The B-type gunships have greater utility, since they can also do some medevac.

Dr. Kissinger: We can find out if it is feasible. If it proves to be feasible why not go ahead and do it?

Mr. Packard: We decided that we should not base the gunships in Laos. We can approve a program that bases them in Thailand but provides for refueling in Laos.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't see what more we can learn once we determine whether this is technically feasible. Is everyone agreed that we should go ahead if this proposal is feasible?

All agreed. [1 line of source text not declassified]

Dr. Kissinger: Now let's turn to the regular 40 Committee agenda. [Omitted here is discussion of Laos and other countries.]

113. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, April 4, 1971, 0549Z.

4528. Saigon Pass General Abrams. Subj: General Praphat's Concern over Lam Son 719.

1. Summary. Deputy Prime Minister Praphat on April 1 expressed grave concern about outcome of Lam Son 719. He has heard from Vietnamese that poor US support made retreat inevitable. He is generally worried about what he sees as evidence of uncertainty in US about concrete support to strengthen Thailand and other sea countries. Discussion demonstrated need urgently a) to move ahead with effective

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 15-1 THAI. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Repeated to Phnom Penh, Saigon, Vientiane, and CINCPAC.

STAFD² program and b) if possible, to offer DPM chance to discuss Lam Son 719 with top level military officer from Vietnam. End summary.

2. Evening Thursday, April 1 I had a long, highly informal session with Deputy Prime Minister Praphat over drinks. He had only RTA Chief of Staff Surakij and his civilian adviser Malai with him. I was accompanied by political counselor.

3. It soon became clear that the DPM was in generally gloomy mood about situation in this area. After brief and very general discussion of problems that had arisen during two decades of US military assistance to Thailand, and somewhat more specific reference to problems and ambiguities in US support for Thai operations and contingency plans in recent months, General Praphat said he was deeply worried about the uncertainties that had arisen concerning US support for the countries of Southeast Asia in the future. He said the US seemed to be wavering in its commitment to this area because of domestic politics—he referred to pledges to strengthen countries in the region but didn't see evidence of this in Thailand. He said he and the other RTG leaders were strongly committed to continue cooperation with the US, but that if the uncertainties about US intentions were allowed to deepen no one could tell when the Thai people, or Asian people generally, would feel obliged to change their attitude toward the US.

4. He then introduced the subject of Lam Son 719, and it was quickly apparent that this had contributed greatly to his disturbed frame of mind. Reiterating several times that he was giving us an "Asian view" as a close friend, he said he was extremely worried about what he characterized as the premature withdrawal from the route 9 area of Laos. He said he had heard from South Vietnamese sources that their retreat was made necessary by poor US support—the source claimed some units were not even kept supplied with basics such as ammunition. He expressed the view that if we were not prepared to stay in key parts of the trail area until the end of the dry season, it would have been much better not to go in at all. He compared the action to striking a bee hive with a stick, which makes the bees go out and sting everyone, but which does not prevent their return, leaving everything as before. In fact he said the enemy would be even better prepared next year to meet attempts to block their efforts, attempts which would have even less US support than the present ones had. He said it appeared that political considerations had prevailed over military in this operation. He expressed concern that the intent may have

² STAFD was the acronym for the Strengthening Thai Armed Forces for Defense program.

been merely to keep the situation in the South quiet so as to permit continued US withdrawals that would leave the countries of the area to cope with a worsened situation afterwards.

5. I said I was quite certain he was misinterpreting the purpose of the operation and not giving enough credit to its achievement. I noted that from the beginning it had been said publicly and privately that the intent was to destroy and to disrupt the flow of supplies and ammunition, not to hold territory. The strength of the enemy reaction seemed to have been a factor in determining the length of the operation, but indications were the ARVN generally fought well. As for our support, I said that weather was always a problem in connection with air operations, especially helicopter operations. I said the President had to be realistic about what he could do on a continuing basis since this could be done only with the support of the American people, and therefore could not put US ground forces in Laos in support of the Vietnamese troops. But I said our air and logistic support had been massive and unstinting. With respect to the effect of the operation, in addition to the casualties inflicted and the impact on supplies, it seemed almost certain now that the operation had given the Cambodians another year in which to train and equip their forces. By next dry season they should be a much more significant factor in the picture. Likewise other friendly countries in the area would be stronger by then so that the outlook was by no means bleak in spite of the fact that US troop withdrawals from Vietnam would be continuing.

6. While he took note of and understood my arguments, it was perfectly clear that he still believed the friendly forces should have gone in to stay until the end of the dry season, or not have gone in at all. With respect to strengthening the countries of the area, he did not question this with respect to South Vietnam and Cambodia, but he asked how much stronger will Thailand really be by the end of next year. He said old plans we had begun on had not been completed, and new plans have been discussed but implementation has not begun. He reminded me gently that he has been waiting for months to hear from me concerning plans and preparations which we asked them to begin making for Cambodian contingencies. Meanwhile he said he gets constant requests for his armed forces to loan equipment to others, and to provide training to others who "arrive naked" looking to Thailand to supply them from the ground up. While we have promised to replace what Thailand is giving he has seen little evidence so far that we will do so. Meanwhile Thailand is getting more pressure from the enemy, with new and heavier weapons being used against them, especially in northern Thailand.

7. *Comment:* The need to get on with discussion of the STAFD package is too evident to need further stress and I told the DPM that

I expected to be able to begin useful discussions with him soon concerning plans to improve the capability of their forces in a truly meaningful way.

8. On Lam Son 719, in view of the weight Praphat's views carry in RTG councils I consider it important to expose him to a well-informed assessment of Lam Son by one of our top military people from Vietnam. I am currently trying to work something out with Saigon.

Unger

114. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, April 8, 1971.

SUBJECT

PL-480 Rice Sales

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Suthi Nartworathat, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Economic Affairs;
Mr. Vicharn Nivatvong, Director-General, Department of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs;
Mr. Herman H. Barger, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State;
Mr. Laurence G. Pickering, Political Counselor, Embassy;
Mr. Konrad Bekker, Economic Counselor, Embassy;
Mr. Norman L. Smith, Economic Officer, Embassy;
Mr. Victor L. Tomseth, Political Officer, Embassy.

During the course of a wide-ranging luncheon conversation on Thailand's present rice marketing difficulties Mr. Barger reviewed actions the United States has taken or is prepared to take with respect to our PL-480 food assistance to Indonesia. He noted first that this past year the total amount of U.S. PL-480 rice provided to Indonesia totaled 350,000 tons as compared to their original request for 600,000 tons. He said that part of this reduction—50,000 tons—had been in direct response to an appeal made by the Prime Minister to President Nixon.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 15-8 INDON. Confidential. Drafted by Tomseth with the concurrence of Bekker and Barger, and approved by Pickering. The meeting was held at the American Embassy.

Moreover, we began early consultations with the Thai on next year's program. Such consultations have been virtually continuous on this subject between the State Department and the Thai Embassy in Washington and Thai and American officials in Bangkok since the problem was originally raised several months ago. Out of these consultations had come our decision to stay out of the Indonesian market during the peak period of Thai rice sales. This had come at the specific request of the Thai Government and we had duly informed the Foreign Ministry of our willingness to cooperate. Mr. Barger also said that the U.S. would try to avoid piecemeal sales and attempt to cover all PL-480 rice sales to Indonesia for the year under one agreement. Furthermore, the U.S. was willing to discuss at the IGGI a "Usual Marketing Requirements" provision in agreements with the Indonesians. This would guarantee that Indonesia would then procure a fixed proportion of her rice import needs on the commercial market.

At various points in the conversation Mr. Barger pointed out that the real problem facing Thailand stemmed from the "Green Revolution" and the desire of almost all countries to be self-sufficient in rice. The essential task is to come to grips with this phenomenon but the issue of U.S. PL-480 rice sales has tended to divert Thai attention from it.

Mr. Suthi said that the U.S. decision to stay out of the Indonesian market during the period immediately following the Thai harvest, which is the time when the bulk of Thailand's commercial sales abroad are made, was really meaningless since the Indonesians would attempt to avoid buying from Thailand during that period. First, he said, the Indonesian warehouses were full then, making it impossible to import more rice at that time. Moreover, they wanted to know the size of their own harvest before making any decisions on import requirements. They would then seek to cover as much of their deficit as possible through aid. Even if they were finally forced to make some commercial purchases the effect of their waiting would have been to force down the price of Thai rice. Mr. Barger said that the Thai Government's view as expressed to us through the Foreign Ministry was that it *was* important for us to stay out of the Indonesian market during Thailand's peak trading period.²

² Telegram 5615 from Djakarta, June 30, reported the sale of 100,000 tons of Thai rice to Indonesia and emphasized "how crucial our numerous representations with Indonesians (President Suharto, Fonmin Adam Malik, Widjono and others) were" to that success. It added that the "Indonesians were not disposed to buy rice from Thais against whom they harbor resentment for what they consider past price gouging. This resentment could be exacerbated if Thais again agitate about U.S. supply of PL 480 rice to Indonesia during critical period of Indonesia's development (apparently Thais have at Indonesian insistence agreed desist for one year.)" (Ibid., RICE 17 INDON-THAI)

At another point Mr. Vicharn said the new principle of the World Food Organization was that food aid should not only benefit the recipient country but should also help the other developing countries that could supply that country's needs. He said that it was in accordance with this principle that the Japanese had agreed last year to purchase part of the rice it had undertaken to supply to Indonesia from Thailand. He said that Thailand would be very pleased if the U.S. could also adhere to this principle in supplying Indonesia with rice.

Mr. Barger pointed out that there was a significant difference between the U.S. and Japan in this instance. The U.S. is already supplying Thailand with considerable aid in other forms. Moreover, Thailand does not have a payments deficit with the U.S. Finally, since the U.S. has balance of payments problems of its own and a rice surplus the U.S. Congress is hardly likely to provide money for rice purchases in Thailand. Mr. Vicharn said that the amount would not have to be large whereupon Mr. Barger said that if Thailand was only interested in a cosmetic effect it could be done with a pencil; all that would be necessary would be to make a slight adjustment in the accounting procedures we are now using for the aid we are already providing to Thailand.

Comment. Suthi's comment should not be regarded as overly significant. In the first instance it probably reflects the usual lack of Thai interministerial coordination. Beyond that it is indicative of the Thai frustration over their lack of success in capturing a significant proportion of the Indonesian commercial market during the last few years. Suthi was right to the extent that U.S. activity in the Indonesian market whenever it may occur is not likely to affect Thailand's lack of competitiveness. Vicharn's proposal was certainly not new. He realizes, however, that political considerations effectively eliminate such action from the realm of possibility. His advancement of it was more in the way of a pro forma plea rather than as a serious proposal.

115. **Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)**¹

Bangkok, April 19, 1971.

Dear Marshall:

Our projection of future developments in Thailand involves us at the very outset in consideration of developments in United States policy. The major developments in Thai foreign and defense policy which are now taking place are a direct reaction to changes and anticipated changes in U.S. policy toward Southeast Asia. These changes have been most apparent in the context of the Indochina war, particularly in our reaction to events in Laos and Cambodia. In addition, over the past year the insurgency has grown in terms of the strength of the insurgents, the areas affected and in the impact on national life. Furthermore, the Thai have become alarmed over adverse trends in their economic situation. Their economic difficulties have given stimulus to a new nationalist and restrictionist outlook, and have placed additional strains on the fledgling parliamentary system. Thailand faces a difficult period of adjustment over the next few years, and Thai leaders face difficult decisions if they are to meet urgent defense requirements without sacrificing development needs. While we are not, on balance, pessimistic in our general projection, we recognize that our ability to influence Thai decisions on these important issues is declining with the shift in U.S.—and Thai—policy. In reading what follows it should be borne in mind that there are differing trends and currents in the Thai leadership's thinking and the issues identified are not necessarily seen in the same light by all.

Thai-U.S. Relations

Thailand is taking the first reluctant and tentative steps toward a partial disengagement from the close relationship with the U.S. which she has maintained over the past two decades. This process is painful to the Thai, but will doubtless continue—at a rate, I believe, closely related to the reduction of the American presence in Southeast Asia and of the credibility of the American commitment to Thailand.

Thai leaders have accepted the Nixon Doctrine as a reasonable and responsible statement of U.S. policy, but they are increasingly doubtful that the President will be able to carry out his policies in the face of political and especially Congressional resistance. As Deputy Prime

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files, 1966–1972: Lot 73 D 323, Folder 943. Secret.

Minister (and heir apparent) Praphat remarked when I presented him a copy of Secretary Rogers' Foreign Policy Report 1969–70, Thai leaders find no fault whatever with statements of U.S. Policy—it is the implementation which sometimes troubles them.

Changes in U.S. policy, as they affect Thailand, have been revealed to the Thai most clearly in the context of the Indochina war, particularly in Laos and Cambodia, where the Thai see the U.S. ability to prosecute the war increasingly hedged in by Congressional restrictions. These restrictions alter the security situation for Thailand in basic ways, and have led the Thai to question the validity of the American commitment to Thailand.

In forward defense of their homeland, the Thai have been willing to commit forces in Vietnam and, covertly, in Laos. However, their involvement was undertaken with full U.S. backing and assistance, and with the expectation of U.S. support in the event the conflict should spread to threaten Thailand directly. This concept—of American support to enable a Southeast Asian country to go to the defense of a neighbor—had to be discarded when, after the conflict spread to Cambodia, the USG was legally constrained from supporting Thai military operations in Cambodia. As a result, the Thai increasingly question the possibility of our past partnership's continuing. Although they still attach great value to the alliance, I think that in the future they will view with increasing care and skepticism any new American proposals for cooperative actions which would expose them to a potentially dangerous situation, unless they receive concrete evidence that adequate American support will be forthcoming.

On military matters, U.S.-Thai relations continue to reflect a high degree of cooperation, and I expect that this will generally continue to be the case with activities which the Thai consider to be directly related to their security. They recognize that U.S. military and economic assistance are needed to meet Thailand's development and security problems. They also recognize the importance to Thailand of U.S. efforts to bring the Indonesia war to an acceptable conclusion, and in this context the still considerable U.S. military presence continues to be only a relatively minor source of friction. It will in the future be increasingly difficult, however, to secure Thai cooperation in nonmilitary areas, and even in some U.S. military activities in which the Thai do not consider that there is a mutual benefit. We are already feeling the effects of an increased Thai nationalism in our dealings with civilian branches of the RTG, and we expect that these frictions will increase. This could lead to acute issues between us and the RTG over the status of U.S. military personnel still stationed here.

Another rapidly emerging problem is that of drugs. We can expect strains in our relations as accusations are levelled at Thailand from the

U.S. because of frustrations there over this tragic U.S. domestic problem and as we work with the RTG to try to control the traffic in drugs.

New Foreign Policy Directions

Disillusionment with the 20-year old relationship with the United States has led the Thai to consider new foreign policy directions—they are moving cautiously toward expanded trade and other relations with the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries, they have made tentative overtures to initiate some kind of dialogue with Peking, and they have attempted exploratory talks seeking some way of reducing the hostility of North Vietnam. The Thai are, however, too realistic to abandon the protection which the remaining U.S. presence in Southeast Asia affords them, as the price of a risky accommodation with Peking.

We expect that the Thai will continue their role of active leadership in moves toward regionalism, especially in economic and social matters. I believe they will also emphasize the political aspects of regionalism, in an attempt to gain for Southeast Asia a measure of influence in international councils which can be attained only by joint action. On security issues, the essential and continuing Thai view is that, without the support of a major power, the military effectiveness of the nations of Southeast Asia would not be enhanced significantly through a regional alliance. They recognize that Japan is unlikely, in the foreseeable future, to play a major security role, although they view the expanding Japanese influence and participation in Southeast Asian affairs as largely inevitable and, on balance, in Thai interests.

Economic Prospects

Increasing pressures on the Thai economy will also be a key factor influencing Thai foreign policy, U.S.-Thai relations, Thai internal politics, and Thailand's defense capabilities.

Thailand's very substantial rate of economic growth during the decade of the 1960's obscured from the Thai Government the pressing need to make changes in law and policy, and in its economic development strategy, if it were to sustain the rate of growth. Since 1965, however, earnings from some major commodity exports—principally rice, tin and rubber—have stagnated because of falling external demand and/or falling prices. By mid-1969 the softening markets for Thai exports, lower U.S. military expenditures, and reduced net inflows on capital account, together with a continuation of the heavy demand for imports which built up during the booming 60's, combined to produce a sizeable balance of payments deficit and a consequent drawdown in Thai foreign exchange reserves. We anticipate continuing depressed markets for traditional Thai exports, and continuing reductions in U.S. military expenditures; thus we foresee no relief from the balance of payments disequilibrium for some time.

The Thai economy continues to be basically sound, but there is a growing urgency for government action to maximize inflow of foreign investment capital needed to spur industrial development, to maximize foreign exchange earnings, and to spur and diversify agricultural production. The immediate challenge is to accomplish this sufficiently within the next one or two years to reverse the downward trend in foreign exchange reserves, or at least stabilize them at a level above a danger point. The longer range challenge, of course, is to sustain growth so that Thai economic capabilities can support Thai defense needs and the educational, social and other developmental programs required, given the very high rate of population growth.

While the need for corrective action by the Thai Government is becoming increasingly urgent, we find that our ability to influence their decision is declining. This results from a number of factors including Thai attitudes toward the United States discussed above, increasing nationalism, and a scaling down and refocusing of our aid programs and other U.S. inputs into the economy.

Rice, rubber and tin, major Thai exports which are now suffering from depressed international markets, are all commodities on which U.S. Government actions—PL-480 sales and stockpile disposals—threaten (at least in Thai minds) to reduce Thai export earnings. Needless to say, it is extremely important for us to bear in mind not only the real economic effects our actions may have on Thailand, but also the effects such actions may have on overall Thai cooperation with us.

Political Evolution

While the past two years have brought experience and increased self-confidence in their ability to work within a parliamentary government, the Thai have hardly begun to develop the political parties and other institutions needed to make a workable democratic political system. The parliamentary process frequently has been a source of irritation to the military men who still dominate the Council of Ministers, and few of them show a real understanding of its workings. However, the desire to be counted among the democratic countries of the world, shared by virtually all important groups and leaders in Thailand, continues to encourage leaders to work within the democratic process and to inhibit impulses toward drastic solutions.

Over the next two or three years, the economic difficulties Thailand is encountering will place increasing pressures on the parliamentary system. Members of Parliament are growing more vocal in their criticisms of government performance on economic problems, particularly the problems of the rice farmers who constitute over 80 percent of the Thai population. The issue will inevitably become more heated as the 1973 elections approach, and political considerations will weigh

heavily in RTG decisions on economic problems. Thus political and economic pressures on the RTG will combine in a way likely to increase the irritation potential of the Thai parliamentary process, and this may inhibit rational economic decisions by the government.

The top leadership of the RTG will inevitably undergo some changes during the next few years. All of the key men are very near the same age and will soon reach sixty, the mandatory retirement age in both the military and civil service. It is virtually certain that Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn will not be Prime Minister after the elections in early 1973, and he may step down before that date. Deputy Prime Minister General Praphat Charusathien now seems to be the unchallenged heir apparent but he too is getting older. General Kris Sivara is waiting in the wings but age would make his tenure at most a brief one. Beyond that the picture is less clear. While any change of leadership is bound to involve a certain amount of maneuvering, the present leaders appear to have put trusted general and field grade officers into the key military positions, thus greatly reducing the uncertainties as to what group—if not which individual—is likely to succeed them.

Future difficulties, arising possibly from a depressed economic situation or an internal or external threat to Thai security, could at some point affect Thailand's internal political stability. However, I believe the likelihood is that the changing of the guard that must come before too many years will be relatively smooth.

The Insurgency

Communist insurgent capabilities and organization accelerated sharply over the past year. The most significant CPT gains have been the establishment in both the north and northeast of reasonably secure base areas for supply and training purposes, and the substantial upgrading of insurgent weaponry from external sources. These bases will facilitate more rapid insurgent expansion.

In the northeast, Communist cadre have undertaken a systematic expansion of party influence and control by organizing more formal village militia units, providing full-time presence in about 100 villages, and providing a recruiting and training ground for subsequent promotion upwards into local units and thence to hardcore regular "Thai People's Liberation Armed Forces" (TPLAF). Government efforts to counter the insurgency have been weakened by lack of vigorous national policy direction, diversion of the leadership's attention to threats to Thailand's security from Cambodia and Laos, frictions between the major responsible elements of the RTG, lack of integrated planning and resource allocation, and—in some instances—poor performance on the ground because of inadequate training and leadership. Government countermeasures will probably limit CT growth to some extent, but

will not contain it unless radically new measures of government organization are undertaken, and more consistent top-level attention is given to the insurgency.

Sincerely,

Len

116. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 20, 1971.

SUBJECT

Strengthening Thai Forces for Defense

At Tab A is a telegram from Ambassador Unger² reporting his April 15 conversation with Thai Prime Minister Thanom and his senior advisors. Unger was called in by the Prime Minister to clarify questions that had arisen during the Thai Government's consideration of our proposal.³ The main points of Ambassador Unger's message follow:

—The Thai questioning centered on the relationship of the proposed PL-480 program to on-going military and economic assistance programs and revealed considerable Thai misgivings on the proposed program.

—The Thai challenged what they considered to be the requirement for "double consultation" (on both the economic and military sides) for the same fund contribution. Unger was subsequently told that Thanom has decided to set up separate civilian and military groups to plan implementation of the proposal with us. Discussions will start next week.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VI. Secret. Sent for information. Kissinger initialed the memorandum, indicating that he had seen it.

² Telegram 5202 from Bangkok, April 16, reported on the "RTG's consideration of STFD proposal." Attached but not printed.

³ The U.S. proposal consisted of allocating new increased PL-480 funds to Thailand for its social and economic programs, with Thailand thus able to divert funds from its budget to handle the increased military expenditures that the United States was encouraging. The proposal and the Thai reaction to it are described in telegram 5202.

Comment: Ambassador Unger believes that the Thai understand the dimension of our proposal. Their attitude toward the size of the new resources available and toward the complications of the interlocking military and economic programs was reserved but Unger believes that Thai suspicions and concerns, at least in part, are due to the difficulty they are having in grasping the new concept of *indirect* assistance.

The Thai view that the new program constitutes a double intrusion into their budget process is also an obvious irritant. However, Unger believes that in practice the Thai will adapt to this system and he hopes that this new military assistance tool, Baht resources, will enable the U.S. to get the program under way.

117. Memorandum From Richard T. Kennedy and John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

Washington, April 22, 1971.

[Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VI. Secret; Sensitive. 1 page of source text not declassified.]

118. Telegram From Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State¹

London, April 28, 1971, 0545Z.

Secto 29/3878. Subject: SecVisit SEATO: Secretary's Bilateral Conversation with Thanat.

1. In a private conversation between the Secretary and Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, the latter said that he was satisfied with the outcome of our discussions thus far on the PL 480 rice question.

¹Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, SEATO 3. Secret. Repeated to Bangkok, Taipei, Hong Kong, and USUN.

Thanat indicated however that he felt it important that in the coming year we avoid handling the matter as we did over the past fall and winter.

2. In a much more extended discussion on the China question, the Secretary told Thanat that we still have under consideration the choice of continuing our present policy or adopting the principle of universality: no decision has been reached as yet. The Secretary did make clear that whichever way we move, we cannot accept the expulsion from the United Nations of the Republic of China, something which would generate a very strong dissent in the United States and could undermine our support of the United Nations.

3. After a discussion of the various options available, Thanat recommended against proceeding at all this coming fall with the “important question” approach. He is persuaded that this will surely be defeated and in the aftermath the Republic of China will be put out of the United Nations. Instead of that formula, he and the Secretary discussed one which would be more positively based on seeking approval for the admission in the United Nations to the People’s Republic of China. Thanat felt such a tactic offered better possibilities of avoiding the expulsion of the GRC which Thailand also opposes. In the course of this discussion with Thanat the related question of representation in the Security Council was not raised.

Rogers

119. Memorandum From the Country Director for Thailand and Burma (Dexter) to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)¹

Washington, May 12, 1971.

SUBJECT

Thoughts on US-Thai Relations

As Vietnamization proceeds, and as the US military presence and capability in East Asia declines in the coming years, Thailand’s role in

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI-US. Secret; Nodis. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that Green saw it. Copies were sent to Wilson, Masters, and Corcoran.

regional affairs will become increasingly important as an issue in United States policy. The "Nixon Doctrine" enunciates some general principles that are relevant to Thailand but the Doctrine is compatible with a wide range of policy options and needs more precise definition.

We have in essence a choice between two general roles that we might want Thailand to play in Southeast Asia. In one, Thailand would serve as an agent of the United States, while also defending its own security interests, through a primarily military posture of defense and deterrence against further Communist expansion in the region. This role would envisage a line drawn somewhere in Indochina which would represent the perimeter of US balance of power interests and would correspond with our assessment of what we could expect to hold, relying in part on Thai manpower resources and probably also on our use of Thai bases for supportive US air operations. That line would also represent a Thai forward defense perimeter, though it would lie well beyond the vital zone that the Thai would be willing or capable of attempting to hold without US subsidy and support. The line would of course contain within it other political regimes (e.g. non-Communist regimes in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) which we felt it essential to back indirectly, without U.S. ground combat forces, and which the Thai could be persuaded to support directly, with our aid, in its own security interests. This role for Thailand would be consistent with those portions of the Nixon Doctrine which emphasize US fidelity to our security commitments, US willingness to support the defense capabilities of friends and allies, and US interest in promoting regional cooperation—in this case military cooperation involving Thai assistance to its neighbors.

A major argument in favor of US support for Thailand in the role sketched above is that, if Thai forces proved effective, it would help to keep the Communist threat away from Thai borders and therefore would reduce the risk of armed attack that could bring into play our SEATO commitment. While we are pledged to uphold that commitment, we obviously do not want to have it tested because we wish to avoid the choice between further US fighting in Southeast Asia and renegeing on the commitment.

On the other hand, it is questionable whether this militant role for Thailand is feasible in the current political atmosphere in the United States and in light of the proclivities and capabilities of the Thai themselves. Successful implementation of this concept would be heavily dependent upon the willingness of Congress and the US public to back it, both in funding Thai military forces (and associated economic assistance requirements) and in the security reassurances that the Thai would seek if they were asked to continue exposing themselves in this fashion to Communist military power in areas forward of their own

vital security zone. It would also be dependent on Thai confidence that US promises of support and US commitments would remain firm over a relatively long period of time. It could have serious consequences if the Thai should be ineffective in their military role or if the US, because of political and legislative developments at home, should have to have to cut off support for the Thai after starting them down this path.

As an alternative to this role for Thailand, we could see that country confining its security attention to Thailand itself, though with due concern for certain adjacent border areas of truly vital interest to Thailand, and seeking to settle its affairs with both North Vietnam and Peking by political rather than military means. In this role, the Thai might use the possibility of their intervention in support of neighboring non-Communist regimes (and the fact of their current presence in Laos) as a bargaining tool in attempting to reach an understanding with North Vietnam. The US security commitment and the actuality or possibility of Thai bases being used by the United States could also be helpful for this purpose and to strengthen Thai hands in working for accommodation with Peking. The US would confine its assistance to developing Thai strength economically and militarily for defense and internal security. We would terminate as soon as possible our subsidization of Thai mercenaries in Laos and desist from further planning on U.S. support of Thai forces in a regional role.

This alternative role for Thailand would, like the first, be compatible with the Nixon Doctrine, especially with the Doctrine's emphasis upon local initiative and a reduced American "profile" in Southeast Asia. It would, on the other hand, call for us to downplay the security commitment element of our relationship with Thailand and to reduce Thai dependence upon that commitment. It could lead to a "neutral" Thailand, with SEATO eventually reduced to a dead letter. This alternative would be consistent with present trends in US public opinion and legislation which do not favor subsidizing Asians to fight Asians in support of US interests—or in support of our SEA friends' interests as we see them. This alternative would also be compatible with traditional Thai methods of dealing with the outside world and with a strong current of opinion within RTG political circles which is pressing for moves to accommodate with Hanoi and Peking.

While it may be argued that the first alternative role for Thailand would have the advantage of insulating the US SEATO commitment, the same argument can be made for this second alternative. There is little evidence today that either North Vietnam or the PRC have any intention in the foreseeable future of attacking Thailand. There is little reason to suppose that they would expand their ambitions and develop such an intention if North Vietnamese forces should come nearer to

Thai borders. On the other hand, should Thai military forces, at US behest and with heavy US subsidy, become a major obstacle to North Vietnamese objectives *within Indochina*, North Vietnam and the PRC could well be provoked into a more hostile attitude toward Thailand and even into military threats. Such threats would probably cause the Thai to turn to the United States for further reassurances, possibly including deterrent military actions to support our SEATO commitment. The second alternative would probably be preferable to the first in reducing the risk of having our SEATO commitment put to the test in this manner as a result of Thai provocation.

There are of course limits to the degree the United States can determine Thailand's role in the region and further limits to what the Executive Branch in the United States can do in the face of current American political trends. To the extent that we can rationally plan US policy and exert influence on Thailand however, our interests would be best served by a policy which pushed Thailand in the direction of the second alternative described above. The first alternative would lead, without real hope of success, toward continuation of the Cold War divisions in Asia of previous decades. The second alternative would contribute to a more flexible US diplomatic posture that will be appropriate to the multi-power system that we now see emerging in East Asia. Most important, this role for Thailand would be compatible with current US assessment of our real interests in Southeast Asia, with our national reluctance to become involved again in ground combat in that theatre and with our desire to expand and normalize relations with the Peoples Republic of China.

120. Letter From the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Bangkok, May 28, 1971.

Dear Alex:

You may remember a rather special operation which was conducted here in 1968 and early 1969 on a very limited basis, [2 lines of

¹ Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Thailand, 1972–1975. Secret; Eyes Only; Nodis; Special Handling.

source text not declassified]. Most correspondence with Washington was carried on [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], with a code word [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] and I can give you in that connection a specific reference to my close-out message on the subject which was [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] of about February 10, 1969.²

The reason I am raising this matter is because [*name not declassified*] has again come to me with a request [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that we engage in a similar operation, involving about the same magnitude of funds and serving the same general purposes. In this case, the purpose is not quite so immediately related to the elections which are not due to take place here until 1973, but rather to building up of the government political party, the Saha Pracha Thai (United Thai People's Party), having those elections, of course, ultimately in view.

[*name not declassified*] reviewed many of the same considerations he had put forward before, such as that [*1 line of source text not declassified*] do not want the government party to become beholden to wealthy businessmen for funds lest they run into the kinds of problems currently faced by, among others, the Philippines. Neither do they want to make improper use of RTG budgeted funds. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*] said he has and would continue to be putting some of his own money into this as would the others who were able to do so; however, the requirements were beyond their resources.

[*name not declassified*] emphasized how enormously useful our help had been previously. On the political side he said that [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*], the government party can provide stability in Thailand for some time to come. He referred to many years of close cooperation with the U.S. and the assurance that this would continue and the strong implication that our interests would also be served by the continuing dominance of the local political scene by the government party.

Obviously [*name not declassified*] approach raises two questions: Do we have a means of providing help [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], and do we consider it in the U.S. interest to do this? The first point can only be answered in Washington. As for the second, I have my doubts.

In the first place, this is a very delicate business to be engaged in and should it ever become public knowledge there would be acute em-

² See Documents 2 and 3 for discussion of [*text not declassified*] program.

barrassment [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. It is quite true that the last time the matter was handled successfully without any leaks whatsoever, but you can never be sure. In the second place, I strongly suspect that if money is really needed, some of the well-heeled government party supporters [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] could find the money without getting it from us. Finally, I think it is probably inadvisable for us at this time to be making such an implied political commitment to the government party. To be sure, our close working relationship is of great importance to us, particularly as long as we have thousands of servicemen still in-country and the need to use Thai bases. I don't, however, see our cooperation as hanging on whether we do or don't provide this help, nor do I think this help is likely to be critical to the success or failure of the government party in the next election.

[*name not declassified*] asked me [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to support his request in Washington. I told him only that I would report it, mentioning that I would probably be in touch with you in the first instance. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*] I would appreciate at least your preliminary reaction at an early date. I am sending copies of this to Marshall Green [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*];³ you will know whether or not you wish to discuss it with the White House.

Yours,

Len

³ Johnson forwarded copies of this letter to the 40 Committee principals under a June 10 covering memorandum.

121. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Consulate in Hong Kong¹

Bangkok, May 28, 1971, 1131Z.

7419. Deliver at the opening of business. Hong Kong for S/S only. Subject: Report of Under Secretary Irwin's Talk With Foreign Minister. Ref: Bangkok 7415.²

1. Immediately after call on PriMin May 27, Under Secretary Irwin met with Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman. Also present were Assistant Secretary Green, Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan, Ambassador Unger, FSO Colebaugh, and Thanat's Secretary Birabhongse Kasemsri.

2. Thanat said the Thai look on US troop reductions in the region as implementation of the Nixon Doctrine. President Nixon said the prime American objective was to keep from using American manpower. The Thai agreed and are using their own men and resources, but they need outside help—economic, technical and logistical help. But now it appears that there will be no American manpower and no economic support either. The Under Secretary explained that the problem arises from anti-war elements who want to move in every way to stop the war immediately. However, the administration believes in building up our allies in Europe, Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

3. Thanat commented that the problem is deeper than just the anti-war groups, it is also a struggle between the Executive and Legislative branches of the US Government. Under Secretary Irwin agreed, but pointed out that the struggle arose over Vietnam and desire of Congress to curb the war powers of the President, and Ambassador Sullivan commented on the make-up and tactics of the anti-war movement.

4. Replying to a question on the NVN position during the recent talks on repatriation of Vietnamese refugees, Thanat said that NVN

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI-US. Secret; Immediate. Repeated to the Department of State.

² Telegram 7415 from Bangkok, May 28, reported on Irwin's May 27 meeting with Prime Minister Thanom. Irwin, who visited Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand May 19–27, told Thanom that "he came with no specific purpose or message, but rather to become better informed." The Prime Minister expressed concern about the situation in Laos and had General Surakij describe the North Vietnamese and Chinese threats there. Irwin described positive developments with the South Vietnamese but "then mentioned the lack of progress at the Paris peace talks." (Ibid., ORG 7 U) Irwin's more closely held conversations with Thanom are in Documents 122–123.

continued to accuse others of intervention while refusing to talk about their own. There is not much hope that they will argue reasonably. Assistant Secretary Green said there are two kinds of negotiations, the kind we are conducting in Paris, the kind the Thais are conducting here. In the second kind, one side takes tacit steps and then awaits response of the other side. Taking Cambodia for example, Green noted that Thailand uses minimal force in providing tactical air support to Cambodia, but holds its deterrent force on Thai territory. This appears to have kept the war from Thailand's borders. Thanat remarked that the Thai are looking for ways to open reasoned discussions to reduce hostilities. In this regard, Chinese appear more flexible than North Vietnamese.

5. The Under Secretary then explained the background behind recent moves in US-China relations. The US does not expect China to change her goals, but hopes that by coming out of isolation and resuming contact with rest of the world, China will begin to conduct herself according to internationally accepted modes of conduct. Thanat commented that President Nixon would have a better chance to improve relations with China if Congressmen and Senators were not hampering his efforts. Under Secretary Irwin pointed out that President Nixon's position on China has majority support.

6. The Foreign Minister asked if the US has taken a firm decision on China policy. The Under Secretary replied that no decision has been made, but one is expected soon. Assistant Secretary Green noted the belief encountered in Cambodia that ping-pong diplomacy might have some damaging effect in Southeast Asia, particularly on their own situation. Thanat said he and the Prime Minister understood what the United States purposes were even if some politicians were critical. Green said that there is not likely to be any change soon, that gradually over the long term contact with the outside should lessen China's sense of alienation from the world. He cited the recent prompt return of the hijacked Philippine aircraft and of a yacht which had strayed into Chinese waters, as examples of the new approach taken by China.

7. Thanat said the Thai will try to persuade the Chinese to stop providing arms to Communist insurgents in Thailand, and to stop infiltrating men. He noted that Communist propaganda has diminished, but has not ceased. If the Chinese really changed their policy, for example, by a change of position in the Paris negotiations, Thailand will get the message that Communist China plans to play its part in the area. Thailand hopes eventually to involve China in a Bandung-type conference, which Thanat thought would mean that Communist China had shifted back to a foreign policy similar to the pre-Bandung period.

8. Assistant Secretary Green raised the issue of Chinese representation at the United Nations. Thanat remarked that this is a very difficult problem for Thailand, especially because the Republic of China is inflexible on the subject. In response to comments from the Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary that the GRC is aware it must change tactics, Thanat remained firm in his view that the GRC is inflexible and thinks in very simplistic terms. Thanat noted that Thailand has not changed its policy on China—"not yet, anyway." It was agreed that we will keep the RTG in touch with our thinking on the question through Ambassador Unger.³

Unger

³ After meeting with Thanat, Irwin met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for National Development Pote Sarasin for 15 minutes. Irwin discussed the concern expressed at the U.S. East Asian chiefs of mission conference about the lack of Japanese aid in Southeast Asia. He stated that it was felt that what the Japanese called aid "appears to be largely commercial credits." Pote observed that the Japanese should be able to do more and that the Thai looked on the Japanese as "ghosts." (Telegram 7420 from Bangkok, May 28; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL THAI-US) According to telegram 7441 from Bangkok, May 29, which reported on all three of Irwin's meetings, the Under Secretary "expressed U.S. concern that Japan live up to her commitment to contribute one percent of GNP to genuine aid and be prepared to take measures to reduce the great imbalance of trade between the Southeast Asian area and Japan." "Pote generally adhered to line that Thailand's bargaining position with Japan is very weak due to lack of trade items." (Ibid., ORG 7 U)

122. Telegram From the Consulate in Hong Kong to the Department of State¹

Hong Kong, May 29, 1971, 1630Z.

3515. Subject: Report of Under Secretary's Talk with Prime Minister: Thai SGU Units.

1. Following is cleared record of Under Secretary's conversation May 27 in Bangkok with Thai Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn on Thai SGU units in Laos.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files, 1966-1972: Lot 73 D 323, Withdrawn Box 14/15, Folder 943. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by James L. Carson (S/S), cleared by Nicholas A. Veliotis, and approved by Green. Also sent to UNSTO and repeated to Bangkok and Vientiane.

2. After general discussion of security situation in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand, Under Secretary raised question of Congressional restrictions on use of funds. Because of these restrictions funds have been provided through [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to support Thai SGU units in Laos. The Under Secretary asked for Thai views on the issue, noting that Senators Case and Fulbright have raised the SGU publicly, and that it may be necessary for Assistant Secretary Green to testify before Congress. In such event, and although in executive session, the Assistant Secretary would have to testify truthfully and candidly. Under Secretary Irwin expressed gratitude for what the Thai have done, and regret for the publicity.

3. Foreign Minister Thanat commented with irony that everything had come out already, and attributed this to fact that two former Foreign Service officers, Lowenstein and Moose, had unearthed the information for the Senate. (After the meeting, Assistant Secretary Green and Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan pointed out to Thanat's private secretary, Birabhongse Kasemsri, our inability to control the actions or statements of Lowenstein and Moose in their present status.) The Under Secretary again stated the regret of President Nixon and Secretary Rogers for the publicity. Thanat again remarked that, as virtually all has been revealed already, Assistant Secretary Green's testimony shouldn't have a great deal more impact. Under Secretary Irwin explained that anti-war elements in the U.S. will try to prove that funds have been used illegally, and Assistant Secretary Green explained how his testimony may well have to go beyond what has already appeared in the press and cover in specific detail some of the arrangements which are not now public knowledge.

4. Ambassador Unger called attention to the manner in which the RTG has heretofore explained the presence of Thais in Laos, i.e., that there are individual Thai fighting in Laos as volunteers with the RLG forces but no regular Thai forces are there. He suggested that this provided a satisfactory general basis for our answers to queries. Thanat responded that he has used this formula, and that no regular Thai troops are in Laos. He emphasized that such RTA cadre as are with the SGU units have officially signed resignations from the Thai army, and that all persons now in Laos are "volunteers" [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

5. Assistant Secretary Green pointed out that there are two sides to the issue—a legal side and a political side. Leaving aside the legal aspect, it is important to argue the question on the basis of why the SGU units are used, in terms of the protection of US forces in Vietnam and the fact that the countries of the area are helping one another in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine. Green said that this should also carry a signal to the other side, and asked the Foreign Minister if such

a signal acted as a deterrent to NVN. Thanat did not reply directly, but remarked that both the Chinese and the North Vietnamese had accused the Thai of enlarging the war. These accusations have been made not only in propaganda attacks but from private sources speaking on behalf of the Chinese and North Vietnamese.

6. This meeting also provided an opportunity to call attention to General Sanga's remarks (Deptel 93462)² and counsel against any comments which might suggest that regular Thai military are in Laos.

Irwin

² Not found.

123. Telegram From the Consulate in Hong Kong to the Department of State¹

Hong Kong, May 29, 1971, 0730Z.

3516. Subject: Report of Under Secretary's Talk With Prime Minister: Narcotics.

1. Following is cleared record of discussion of narcotics problem which took place during call by Under Secretary Irwin on Prime Minister Tham Kittikachorn May 27. Other topics covered in meeting are reported septels.

2. At close of call on Prime Minister, the Under Secretary expressed appreciation for Thai cooperation during the recent visit of BNDD director John Ingersoll, and noted U.S. concern over the increased availability of heroin to our troops in SVN. He noted that the major sources are in Burma, Laos, and Southern China, and that major traffic routes run through Laos and Thailand. Congress and those opposed to the Vietnam War will also use the drug question to arouse further opposition to the war. The Prime Minister responded that ever since the President and Vice President visited Thailand, the Thai have done what they could to help. He noted, however, that when even a big, powerful country like the U.S. has a problem controlling drugs,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, ORG 7 U. Confidential. Also sent to UNSTO and repeated to Bangkok.

Thailand with its limited means finds it very difficult to control. Under Secretary Irwin expressed our understanding of the problem for the Thai. He also mentioned the joint U.S.-Thai committee on which DCM Newman will be the U.S. representative² and expressed the hope that it would be able to do effective work.

Irwin

² Telegram 7155 from Bangkok, May 25, reported on Ambassador Unger's meeting with Thanom that morning on "the alarming increase in drug traffic." Unger mentioned "the repeated evidence of movement through Thailand and some processing in this country." He also cited "the apparently reliable reports about ships, ostensibly engaged in fishing, that leave Thai ports daily and rendezvous with other traffickers offshore from Hong Kong." Unger stated that Thanom "acknowledged what I had said and indicated his unqualified agreement on the need for effective action." (Ibid.)

124. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State (Irwin) to President Nixon¹

Washington, June 9, 1971.

SUBJECT

Visit to Southeast Asia, May 19 through May 27

My trip to Southeast Asia strengthened my belief in the value of the Nixon Doctrine, not only as the best means of pursuing U.S. policy objectives in Asia, but also as a formula for developing self-reliance and determination in the Southeast Asian nations.

Those themes emerged again and again in conversations with government leaders in Viet-Nam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. They all emphasize the continuing need for U.S. military and economic assistance, but most seem prepared and even anxious to do more for their own defense and development. They also seem somewhat more willing to face the internal and international implications of drugs and corruption, particularly as those issues bear on the willingness and the ability of our government to sustain its effort in their behalf.

[Omitted here is discussion of Vietnam and Laos.]

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files, 1966-1972: Lot 73 D 323, Folder 943. Secret.

Thailand

Thailand has a special importance in the security of Southeast Asia, both for its own sake and for the assistance the Thai are providing and may be able to provide to the defense of Laos and Cambodia.

As you know, Thai regular army troops have all been replaced in northern Laos by Thai Special Guerrilla Units (SGU's). Vang Pao speaks of the effectiveness of these SGU's primarily in a defensive or consolidating role, thus freeing Meo and Lao SGU's for offensive operations. The Thai, along with U.S. air power, have been a key factor in resisting North Vietnamese attacks on Long Tieng. There are at present 10 Thai SGU battalions (approximately 3,500 men) in northern Laos with 4 more battalions now being trained.

Although the Lao need and want the help of the Thai, they show some concern about the long-term objectives of Thailand regarding those areas of Laos which once were Thai. We heard occasional comments to the effect that the Thai may be eventually almost as difficult to evacuate from the country as the North Vietnamese.

The Cambodians too view the prospect of Thai troops in their western provinces (which also once were under Thai rule) with some apprehension. At the same time, they have welcomed the limited air support provided by the Thai.

In both Laos and Cambodia, the Thai appear to be concerned about the risks of direct confrontation with Hanoi. While desiring to avoid direct confrontation, they are hoping that the use of their SGU's in northern Laos and their limited air sorties in Cambodia will signal to the North Vietnamese the seriousness with which Thailand views Hanoi's approach to Thai borders. During my meeting with Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn, General Surakit Mayalap, Chief of Staff of the Royal Thai Army, gave a briefing on the military situation in which he stressed the serious Thai concern over Hanoi's approach to Thai borders.

While the Thai need encouragement to continue their support to Laos and Cambodia, we should be alert to avoid the development of a situation vis-à-vis the North Vietnamese that might prompt the Thai to invoke our SEATO commitment at a time when public and Congressional attitudes inevitably raise a question as to our ability effectively to meet that commitment.

The Thai and North Vietnamese have been engaging in negotiations in Bangkok for some months, ostensibly with respect to the repatriation of Vietnamese who have settled in northeastern Thailand, but undoubtedly touching on wider issues. Foreign Minister Thanat told us frankly that the Thai have been trying to feel out both Hanoi and Peking, and acknowledged that Thai actions in Laos and Cambodia

have been designed in part as a tacit negotiating process in which the Thai have been attempting to signal Hanoi. Although the repatriation talks have now been broken off and the North Vietnamese delegation has returned home, it would seem that the Thai, in traditional fashion, remain willing to cover their bets by talking with North Viet-Nam or China when an opportunity arises.

Heroin

In all conversations with government officials in Viet-Nam, Laos and Thailand, I stressed the deep concern of the U.S. Government over heroin and its impact on U.S. troops and the imperative need for action by the governments of the three countries. In Viet-Nam and Laos, the groups involved in the heroin trade seem to have high level protection and often to be more or less immune from local police enforcement. On the other hand, the leaders with whom we met gave the appearance of understanding the seriousness of the drug traffic and evidenced a desire to act to suppress it.

In Viet-Nam, President Thieu has taken initial steps toward better enforcement in response to representations made by Ambassador Bunker. In Laos, after Ambassador Godley and I spoke to Souvanna Phouma, he assured us that new legislation aimed at controlling the trade in opium and its derivatives would be passed by the National Assembly in the near future. In Thailand, at the instigation of our Embassy, a joint U.S.-Thai planning group is to be formed to develop plans to control the drug traffic in that country.

In spite of the attitude expressed by Thieu, Souvanna Phouma and Thanom, it seems unlikely, given the high level involvement in the drug traffic in both South Viet-Nam and Laos, that domestic forces alone will be sufficient. If some external police authority, perhaps under the cover of an international body such as the United Nations or Interpol were feasible, it might offer additional hope for positive action. The Department will explore this idea. In selected cases, the United States might also consider encouraging the use of guerrilla forces against identified processing facilities.

[Omitted here is discussion of China and Japan.]

John N. Irwin II

125. Memorandum From K. Wayne Smith of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 9, 1971.

SUBJECT

Thailand: The Latest Charade

The purpose of this memorandum is to:

- inform you of the latest charade in the bureaucracy's conspiracy to screw up our relations with Thailand;
- seek approval of a hold on and reconsideration of STFD (our currently proposed assistance package to Strengthen Thai Forces for Defense) with the idea that we should extract ourselves from this apparently doomed and ineffective proposal and face the issues of Thai force effectiveness head on;
- provide you with talking points for conversation with Under Secretary Irwin to set in motion a reconsideration of our assistance to Thai forces.

Background

STFD was initiated by State and DOD in response to the President's guideline to the agencies (NSDM 89 on Cambodia, October 26, 1971) that, in recognition of possible dry season threats, "contingency plans should be developed with Thailand for the possible deployment of Thai forces to aid in the defense of western Cambodia."

Proposed to the Thai in April (five months after the NSDM and well into the dry season we were concerned about), the STFD package contains the following principal elements of program assistance:

—*Foreign Military Sales Credit*—We would provide up to \$12 million in credit to finance Thai purchases of military goods from the United States. Most of these goods, consumables, would be in support of Thai air force operations in Cambodia.

—*PL 480*—We would provide \$20 million of agricultural commodities over the next two years. This assistance would save Thai foreign exchange expenditures. The foreign exchange savings would offset the Thai purchase from the U.S. of ammunition and other consumables under the foreign military *sales* credit program. DOD and State layers contend that this complicated arrangement is necessary because military *grant* assistance could not legally be given to Thailand

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VI. Top Secret. Sent for information.

for use in Cambodia. The local currency receipts from the Thai sale of the commodities would support increases in the Thai defense budget to meet increased local costs (e.g., for airfield construction).

—*MASF add on*—Imports in the amount of \$10–15 million in addition to those already provided or programmed for FY 71 and FY 72 MAP, i.e., \$60 million annually, would be financed. Such imports would provide equipment and military consumables for the RTA and RTAF in Thailand, and as such could be covered by the regular MASF grant.

The proposal has not been accepted. The prospects for agreement as reported by the Mission (see cable at Tab B)² are “only fair.” The RTG is balking because it is:

—uncertain about the benefits of military deployments and preparedness which we have linked specifically to Cambodia when Thai concern is much more focused on the insurgency and on developments in Laos;

—confused about the complicated assistance trade-off and offset mechanism associated with the proposed assistance imposed by our legal restrictions.

The STFD proposal was poorly conceived from the beginning. We have received the very distinct impression that the motivation of some individuals involved in its design, who are against any external role for the Thai, was simply to provide a “sop to Henry,” perhaps knowing all along that the proposal would bring little or no results. It is, at best, one more illustration of the ad hoc piecemeal manner with which we provide assistance to Thailand. The White House guidance on the program was consistently of the “we don’t care about the details—get on with it” variety.

The Real Issues

The STFD proposal does not deal with serious manpower shortages in the RTA/MC and the Thai budget constraint on more rapid additions of trained and skilled personnel to the force.

It does not provide the Thai with any indication of our long-run intentions with respect to Thai defense support. *In effect nothing has been done to implement the Nixon Doctrine in Thailand.*

² Attached at Tab B but not printed was telegram 7581 from Bangkok, June 2. Unger reported that it was suggested to Irwin and Green during their visit to Thailand that “substantial reduction in expenditures required (of the Thai for munitions for RTAF sorties in Cambodia) would be very helpful in gaining Thai acceptance of STFD.” Unger suggested that this reduction could be justified by reduced number of sorties forecast for RTAF in Cambodia (from 300 to 60 per month).

The real issues are:

—(1) *The Threat*. The overriding consideration that bears on the content or timing of STFD or alternative proposals is that the RTG is capable of sustaining probably no more than the equivalent of ten battalions in combat—the approximate force currently operating against the insurgents. With this limited capability the RTG faces:

—*Expansion and consolidation of insurgent forces*. A fifty percent increase over the last six months in armed insurgent strength in the North (including for the first time recruitment of ethnic Thai in the North) and strengthening of organizational infrastructure in the Northeast signal mounting difficulties for the RTG in containing the insurgency. (Excerpts from mission reports on the insurgency are at Tab C.)³

—*Encroachment by NVA/PL forces into areas of Thai security interest in Laos*. Enemy pressure and advances in Laos, particularly in Sayaboury province in the North, raise the RTG's perception of threats to its national security.

—*Allied requirements for greater participation in regional defense and military support for Vietnamization as the U.S. withdraws*. Souvanna Phouma has asked for regular Thai battalions in the South to contest NVA/PL advances in the Bolovens plateau area (the RTG has decided not to meet this request) in addition to the irregular Thai forces already deployed in North Laos. The Thai could, with the South Vietnamese, deploy to interdict supply movements in the panhandle and divert NVA/PL forces from targets in Cambodia and South Vietnam as in Lam Son 719. But in my opinion a principal obstacle to Thai deployments is the paucity of Thai ground force capability.

—(2) *Deployment Sustainability*. Thai deployments out-of-country in Vietnam and in Laos have been sustained by U.S. personnel giving direct logistics support as well as financial assistance. By itself the RTG at present could probably sustain no more than 8–10 battalions in combat out-of-country and then only at the sacrifice of deployments against the insurgents in-country. Thus, while we may be able to buy additional Thai deployments, the price will be an expansion of the American logistics support presence in Thailand or a reduction in Thai deployments against the insurgents. If we or the RTG are unwilling to pay this price, then additional out-of-country deployments can only be obtained with improvements in the Thai's own deployment capability, e.g., extensive manpower recruitment, training and advancement, and logistics infrastructure improvement.

—(3) *Local Currency Support for the Thai Military Budget*. Shortages of personnel, particularly trained officers and NCOs appear to be a binding constraint on increases in the Thai defense capability. To over-

³ Attached at Tab C but not printed was telegram 4862 from Bangkok, April 9, and Airgram A-175 from Bangkok, April 23, which reported increased numbers and aggressiveness of armed insurgents in northern Thailand.

come these shortages, large increases in local currency expenditures in the military budget will be necessary. Without a substantial U.S. contribution, it is unlikely that the Thai will undertake these expenditures because of the declining economic situation. Inasmuch as our programs in the past have been for military imports rather than local currency support, improvements in Thai defense capability will require a major program change for the U.S. and significant increases in U.S. costs, e.g., U.S. costs for Thai ground forces in FY 72 including financing for additional imports could reach \$150–200 million compared to about \$50 million in FY 71.

—(4) *Alternatives to Irregular Deployments*. In lieu of support for the current irregular Thai deployments, the U.S. could offer to support [2½ lines of source text not declassified].

—The irregular deployments siphon off scarce trained personnel and financial resources from the RTA/MC and thus slow the development of a self-reliant Thai defense capability.

—Regular force deployments are difficult on political grounds both in Thailand and domestically.

Alternatives

STFD has not provided us with any substantial progress with the Thai on improvement or deployment of their forces. We are again faced with the necessity to consider the issues of Thai preparedness and force deployment in the broad context of overall policy and program options for Thailand and to prepare reasonable alternative assistance packages on this basis. The Thailand interagency analysis provides the framework within which this can be accomplished. Delayed last fall at Kennedy and Holdridge's request in support of Marshall Green and delayed again because of State pressure for STFD instead (after I reviewed it with you in San Clemente) the interagency analysis will finally be ready for review by the VSSG next week.

We are confronted with basically two alternatives:

—(1) *Persist with STFD*, continuing to offer some or all of the proposed assistance with the knowledge that we are buying little or nothing in the way of increased Thai defense capability or deployments.

—(2) *Extract ourselves from STFD*, minimizing the political costs as necessary. Inform the Thai that we are re-evaluating our assistance proposals in the context of recent developments in Cambodia and Laos, and in their insurgency. And tell them that we will be ready to discuss with them, in the near future, additional U.S. assistance in FY 72 and beyond to help build a more self-reliant Thai defense capability.

Recommendation

I recommend that you opt for alternative 2, *Extract ourselves from STFD*. If you approve, I urge you to raise the appropriate issues at your

upcoming luncheon with Under Secretary Irwin.⁴ Talking points to accomplish this are at Tab A.⁵

⁴ Not found.

⁵ Attached but not printed.

126. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, July 5, 1971, 6:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Deputy Prime Minister Praphat of Thailand

General Sirikit

Dr. Malai Huvananda, Advisor to Minister of Interior

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Mr. John Holdridge, Senior Staff Member, NSC

Mr. Leonard Unger, Ambassador to Thailand

Mr. M. J. Wilkinson, Political Officer, American Embassy, Bangkok

SUBJECT

General Praphat's Comments on U.S.-Thai Relations

Dr. Kissinger began by commenting on the improvements in the security situation in South Vietnam. General Praphat said that he had received similar reports from the Thai soldiers in Vietnam. He noted that the first members of the Thai contingent which was returning from Vietnam had arrived that day and that the main body would be returning on July 22.

Dr. Kissinger asked General Praphat about the status of the insurgency in Northeast Thailand. General Praphat stated that things were going quite well, and that the Thai forces were now able to han-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Holdridge and approved by Kissinger on August 5. Davis sent an August 5 covering memorandum to Kissinger in which she noted that the "State Department has inquired in a low key as to whether and/or when they might receive copies of the memcons from your Far Eastern trip." At the same time Kissinger approved the memcons (including Documents 127 and 128), he also initialed his approval that the copies be provided to the Department of State. Attached but not printed. The meeting was held at General Praphat's residence.

dle the insurgents. Ambassador Unger wondered if General Praphat's estimate included the Chieng Rai area. Had the situation there quieted down? General Praphat replied that things had been better during the past month.

Dr. Kissinger requested General Praphat's views on the situation in Vietnam. According to General Praphat, everything seemed to be quiet, but this made him suspicious. He anticipated that if the U.S. negotiations with the Communists were not successful, the Communists would undertake a new act of aggression. The North Vietnamese had the capacity for this.

Asked by Dr. Kissinger for his estimate of developments in Laos, General Praphat said that the situation there depended very much on the situation in Vietnam. If there was peace in Vietnam, then the same condition would apply to Laos. Dr. Kissinger said that he was not so sure—if things were quiet in Vietnam, the Communists would be able to shift forces to Laos. It was too early to tell about the negotiations. What the Communists had proposed was unacceptable. They were asking us to stop all aid to the Government in Saigon, which we could not do. We would not overthrow the government with which we had been working for so long. General Praphat asked if cessation of aid meant both military and economic assistance, and Dr. Kissinger replied that this was the implication of their demand. They were phrasing their proposals in a very complicated way, speaking like oracles to every Congressman who went to Paris; these then thought they had the road to peace. The North Vietnamese were speaking to them in ambiguities.

General Praphat said that he didn't know the detailed language of the Communist proposals, but from what he had heard and read in the newspapers he did not have the impression that the seven points would include a limitation on aid. Dr. Kissinger explained that they were putting their proposals in a complicated way. Their requirement that we cease all aid to the Thieu Government was interpreted by us as meaning that we had to stop all economic and military assistance. General Praphat remarked that after reading the newspaper articles about the seven points, he had thought the U.S. would accept them. He felt that we had an obligation to accept them quickly. Dr. Kissinger described the Vietnam situation as being extremely complicated, and foresaw the possibility of serious negotiations later on this year. He felt that General Praphat was correct, however, in sensing that the Communists were in a slightly better bargaining attitude now than in the past. General Praphat said that, speaking as a military man, long negotiations were undesirable because the enemy would gain more time to prepare for an attack against Thailand. Dr. Kissinger agreed, but noted that unfavorable negotiations would also be undesirable.

General Praphat wondered if the United States was considering reducing its military strength in the area. Dr. Kissinger noted that we had some difficult domestic problems. There was no question but that we had a number of Senators who were making a great deal of noise and were behaving in a way which made the conduct of foreign policy difficult. Nevertheless, the President was convinced that we had to maintain our military posture in Asia. In Dr. Kissinger's opinion the domestic situation had improved, and opposition to the Administration's policy had reached a high point. There was every possibility that we would not be in a better situation.

General Praphat said that negotiations were one thing, but after the rainy season the situation in Cambodia and Laos might be a good deal worse. Dr. Kissinger noted our judgment was that the South Vietnamese would be able to hold out in Cambodia against the North Vietnamese and would be stronger than the North Vietnamese. However, the situation in Laos was different. Whenever the North Vietnamese wanted to put more troops in they could advance. Therefore, in Laos we had to work with the Thai SGUs and with the Lao Government forces. We attached great value to what the Thai SGUs were doing and strongly supported this effort.²

General Praphat remarked that he had some doubt about the South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia, which were not too effective because of the way that they had been put in, pulled out and put in again. Dr. Kissinger declared that he didn't debate military strategy with a General, because the General might start debating academic points with Dr. Kissinger as an academician. We believed, though, that during the rainy season there was not much sense in leaving the South Vietnamese in Cambodia. They had established a line along Route 7, from which they would push north when the dry season arrived, although they would not go farther than the line of the Mekong. General Praphat observed that this strategy might be good for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam, but still left the Cambodians with the requirement to fight west of the Mekong. Dr. Kissinger said that this was true, but the North Vietnamese had a supply problem in maintaining their forces west of the Mekong in heavy strength and at the same time fighting

² According to a July 3 memorandum of conversation, U.S. Ambassador to Laos Godley told Kissinger that "the successful defense of Long Tieng" was due "to the performance of the Thai troops. The Thai were very good at digging in and fighting defensively. These forces were all SGU's, there were now no regular Thai officers and NCO's with the SGU's." Godley praised the Thai battalion which had defended Ban Houei Sai (killing 138 enemy by body count while losing only one Thai soldier) and which was now dug in "and spoiling for a fight." (Ibid., Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VII)

the South Vietnamese east of the Mekong. So far, they hadn't been able to do this and probably couldn't do it next year, either.

General Praphat said he assumed that the North Vietnamese would be able to use the Ho Chi Minh Trail to supply their troops in Cambodia and South Vietnam. Dr. Kissinger observed that they indeed could do so, and had expanded the Trail. General Praphat said that SGUs could not defend against this, neither the Thai SGUs nor the others ("neither ours nor yours"). Dr. Kissinger expressed the view that the SGUs could at least do something to harass the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

General Praphat stated that the Thai would be unable to sustain their SGUs without aid from the U.S. side, and for this needed "total support". In response to comments from Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Unger that we felt on our side we were rendering such support, General Praphat commented that a great deal of time had been wasted in bargaining. Furthermore, there had been difficulties in receiving U.S. air support and medivac. With some bitterness, he said that Thai wounded had waited for five days for medivac, and none had arrived until he had made a special plea to Ambassador Unger. There was a problem also for the Thai to fight. Dr. Kissinger noted that we hadn't heard of these problems in Washington. We wanted the Thai to succeed and he, Dr. Kissinger, would look into the situation as soon as he returned.

General Praphat continued by outlining a few more difficulties in receiving air support. Requests had been put in on the ground which had gone to Ambassador Unger, who had in turn said the requests should have been presented to the U.S. military in Laos and to the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] group. What had been sent was not enough. Ambassador Unger declared that no one had asked him to take care of the wounded, and if this issue had been raised he would have handled it. Dr. Kissinger assured General Praphat that this matter would be looked into, and that Ambassador Unger and Washington were in full agreement on the SGU program.

General Praphat remarked that he understood the political problems which the U.S. faced, but that the Thai had a political problem in their country, too. There was the question of economic support, and also that of the attitude of the Thai Parliament. Some politicians had wanted to pull all Thai out of Laos.

Returning to the subject of medivac for the Thai in Laos, Dr. Kissinger said that he thought this had been approved and that no problem existed. Ambassador Unger noted that all he had known of the medical problem was that there had been a large number of Thai wounded who had been taken care of at Udorn. There was a field hospital there which had been scheduled for closure; he had stopped the closing and had kept the facility open for a considerable time to take

care of the wounded. He had not heard of the medivac difficulties. General Praphat said that this had been but one example of the difficulties the Thai had faced. He and General Sirikit jointly explained that another difficulty had been encountered over artillery support—they had needed and asked for 155s, but had received 105s; they had wanted six guns per battery and received four instead; they had requested an ammunition supply, but had been told to draw ammunition from Thai Army depots. There had been many complications. This is why they had spoken of needing full support for the SGU program. Dr. Kissinger once again said that he would look into the matter, and that he had not been aware of these details. He was under the impression the Thai had been getting everything they asked for. Who were they dealing with? Ambassador Unger said that questions such as these were normally handled [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] not through Thailand. He wanted to know whenever things were not going well, however, because he wanted to give his full support. Dr. Kissinger added that he would talk to responsible people and make sure that all the various complaints were looked into. General Sirikit remarked here that he hoped all this wouldn't appear in U.S. newspapers.

On the score of press and public opinion in the U.S., General Praphat questioned whether the U.S. people were actually supporting their country. Dr. Kissinger expressed the view that the people were behind the Administration, it was just the intellectuals and a few Senators who were causing the trouble. He discounted an observation by General Praphat that the morale of the U.S. people was poor. The popular morale was good.

General Praphat made what he called "a final plea" with respect to U.S. aid to Thailand: that there be no reduction in this aid. Thailand remained a staunch friend of the U.S., and unlike the situation in other countries, the U.S. Embassy in Thailand had never been stoned. The Thai Government was working very hard to improve U.S.-Thai relations. Dr. Kissinger declared that he was very conscious of the pressures on Thailand. The President urgently wanted Thailand to be helped, and was committed to maintaining close ties. In this respect, he, Dr. Kissinger, was aware of the problems which had developed in our program for providing close assistance to the Thai in strengthening their defenses. (General Praphat agreed that such problems did, in fact, exist.) He would promise that when he went back to Washington in July, a package would be developed which would please the Thai. The President wanted this. We wanted to provide the maximum aid possible, but had to employ many different ways to provide our aid because of the legal restrictions imposed upon us. Nevertheless, a program different from what we and the Thai had been discussing would be developed.

General Praphat expressed his thanks for Dr. Kissinger's offer on providing maximum help. He again referred to Thai efforts to gain the support of public opinion in Thailand for working with the U.S. This was occasionally difficult, for when the U.S. made moves toward improving relations with Red China, the people became confused. The people were also upset about the rice situation—they worked very hard to produce rice, and then the U.S. came along and took their markets.

Dr. Kissinger concluded by saying that we definitely understood the Thai problems. He normally would check with the President on matters such as had been discussed this evening, but he was so close to the President's thinking on aid to Thailand he knew that we could move ahead.

127. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, July 6, 1971, 9 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Prime Minister Thanom of Thailand
 Foreign Minister Thanat
 Air Marshal Dawee
 Lt. General Sawaeng
 Lt. General Sirikit

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 Mr. John H. Holdridge, Senior Staff Member, NSC
 Mr. Wayne Smith, Senior Staff Member, NSC
 Mr. Leonard Unger, Ambassador to Thailand
 Mr. M. J. Wilkinson, Chief of Political Section, American Embassy, Bangkok

SUBJECT

Prime Minister Thanom's Comments on U.S.-Thai Relations

Prime Minister Thanom opened by discussing the situation in Laos. Military conditions seemed to have improved with the arrival of the rainy season. Thailand would continue to send SGUs to help out in various places at the request of the RLG. Presently there were eight infantry battalions in MR II and one artillery battalion; one infantry battalion was in Sayaboury; and two infantry battalions were on the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Holdridge and approved by Kissinger on August 5. The meeting was held at Government House.

Bolovens. It therefore appeared appropriate to bring the number of SGUs up to the total number which had been requested. Dr. Kissinger verified that this meant 36 battalions. He agreed that the situation in Laos had improved, noting that Vang Pao's offensive in Northern Laos had captured a considerable amount of equipment. Possibly this was due in part to the arrival of the rainy season. In South Laos the situation was not as good. We of course strongly supported the Thai SGU effort. Was the process of recruiting and training proceeding at the fastest rate? Prime Minister Thanom and Air Marshal Dawee agreed that the process was being carried out at a rapid rate and that there was no problem in training or recruitment. Nevertheless, units could not be trained in a matter of weeks and advance preparations needed to be made to take care of filling out the full 36 battalions.

Dr. Kissinger noted that we had made a firm agreement to support 24 SGUs, and wondered when the decision would need to be made to proceed with the additional 12. Air Marshal Dawee said that the Thai would need to know before October when the last of the 24 would complete training. Dr. Kissinger stated that the decision would be made this summer and certainly before September. We were very sympathetic toward the Thai SGU program.

Dr. Kissinger wondered whether the Thai were planning to put some additional SGUs into South Laos. General Sirikit replied affirmatively. Units would be put into the Champassak and Sithandone areas. According to Air Marshal Dawee, this area appeared to be a new sanctuary for Communists infiltrating into Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. They had even developed hospitals there. Prime Minister Thanom described the Sayaboury area as being another dangerous spot where SGUs were needed. The program for raising 36 SGUs would provide units for these areas and also for North Laos. Ambassador Unger added that units would also be sent to the Bolovens. An operation was planned for July to retake Paksong and set up a strong protective shield east of the Mekong.

Dr. Kissinger wondered whether the Thai would have enough time to recruit and train if the decision on the 36 SGUs was made before September. Foreign Minister Thanat said that the time would be adequate provided there was no interference from Administration critics. On this, Dr. Kissinger commented that Foreign Minister Thanat and the Administration faced the same problems. Prime Minister Thanom referred to the very heavy burden which the Thai had to bear in the security field and hoped that the U.S. Government and people would show understanding and not be critical. According to Dr. Kissinger, Administration critics would be just as unhappy with 24 SGUs as with 36, and their attitude was related to the facts of the matter and not to the number. With respect to the defense of Thailand, the President has

been personally interested in our working out a satisfactory arrangement. He, Dr. Kissinger, had had a long discussion the previous day with the Deputy Prime Minister on this matter. Mr. Smith of his staff would stay behind in Bangkok and work out a program with the Embassy which hopefully would be a satisfactory arrangement for the Thai. He wanted very much to show his appreciation for the Thai contributions in Laos.

Prime Minister Thanom expressed some apprehension that despite certain improvements in the military situation in Indo-China, the Communists might concentrate their efforts against the north and northeast of Thailand, and even further south. Dr. Kissinger expressed the view that Hanoi had been severely weakened by the war, and would need several years after a settlement to recover. While there was no doubt that the Communists would like to intensify their activities, they wouldn't be making peace initiatives now if they were not under some pressure themselves. However, in the long term the Prime Minister was right in anticipating a step-up in Communist efforts against Thailand. Prime Minister Thanom explained that the reason the Thai felt this way was that while the Communist resources were depleted in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, this was not true in Thailand. Here, the other side could fight much better. Dr. Kissinger said in response that taking on Thailand directly would be a formidable undertaking for them, and they would probably try instead to encourage the insurgency in northern and northeast Thailand. Our experience was that the best time to fight an insurgency was in its early stages when the enemy hadn't consolidated his bases.

According to Prime Minister Thanom, the Communist side had increased its efforts and was waging a political and propaganda campaign against the loyalty of the people in the north. On the government side, it was necessary to show that the government would cater to the people's needs by offering direct benefits such as schools, roads, and economic aid. Thailand's resources were affected by the price of its export commodities. On the one hand, exports were decreasing, while on the other Thailand's needs were increasing; accordingly a better balance of resources on the economic side was required. If PL-480 assistance in the neighborhood of \$30 million over a two-to-three-year period could be obtained, this could be of some help. General Sawaeng had already discussed a PL-480 agreement with Ambassador Unger. Dr. Kissinger said that he would review matters such as this on his return, and would report to the President not only on his general impressions but on specific issues. The President had a special interest in Thailand and the Thai could be assured that he was most sympathetic with respect to the Thai needs. He, Dr. Kissinger, knew that the Thai had a special situation, and he hoped that we could respond economically. The PL-480 matter would be looked at in particular.

Prime Minister Thanom wondered if Dr. Kissinger was aware that the Lao Government had more or less decided to negotiate with the Pathet Lao? Dr. Kissinger replied that he was aware something was going on, but was not aware of the Lao attitude—did they really want to settle, or were they doing this because it was expected of them? Prime Minister Thanom remarked that Prince Souvanna had previously insisted that all North Vietnamese troops had to be taken out but now had “relented.” Dr. Kissinger said his impression was that Souvanna didn’t really expect any results. Prime Minister Thanom thought that the talks might lead to an agreement on a cease-fire. Dr. Kissinger asked if this meant just the Plaine des Jarres area, or all of Laos? What about the bombing of the Trail? Would they ask us to stop? Our Ambassador in Laos had said “no” to all these questions. Prime Minister Thanom agreed, saying that as long as the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces were attacking, he didn’t think Souvanna would ask the U.S. to stop bombing.

Ambassador Unger explained Souvanna’s position as being that he didn’t have authority over south and southeast Laos and couldn’t control what was happening there. He had not advocated ending the bombing. Dr. Kissinger agreed, adding that if Souvanna did accept a bombing halt, a very difficult situation would be created for the U.S. The war was divided into two parts, the North and the South. In the North, it was conceivable that the North Vietnamese would stop attacking and agree to a cease-fire. However, there was a different situation in the South. In response to a question from Prime Minister Thanom on whether or not a stand-still cease-fire was possible in Laos, Dr. Kissinger replied that it would be easier in the North, since the situation was subject to Souvanna’s influence. There was a different problem in South Laos, though, since this area was related to the war in Vietnam.

Prime Minister Thanom asked whether during Dr. Kissinger’s meeting with Vice President Ky, Ky had said anything about the North Vietnamese proposals being acceptable to him. Dr. Kissinger explained that Ky had not actually spoken in such terms. He had simply said he had gone through these proposals and that those dealing with the U.S. withdrawal were acceptable so long as U.S. military assistance could continue. His position was that U.S. forces were not needed except for air power. Ky’s statement was somewhat ambiguous—he didn’t say all seven points were acceptable, just the point on the withdrawal of the U.S. forces.

Continuing, Dr. Kissinger said that what was important in these proposals was how we should interpret the demand that we cease support for the GVN. If the Communists meant we must stop all economic and military assistance, there would be a problem. Another problem

concerned the cease-fire. If the cease-fire would apply only to the U.S., then the Communists could put in all their forces against the South Vietnamese. We couldn't accept this. It would be dishonorable for us if we withdrew in safety while the Communists attacked our friends. However, it would be acceptable if all forces were included in a cease-fire. We had proposed such a cease-fire on October 7. If the two issues of aid and the cease-fire could be settled, the element of a fixed deadline would still not be acceptable to us, however.

Prime Minister Thanom asked if the Communists had made any reference to the withdrawal of their own forces. Dr. Kissinger said that they had simply said that this would be settled "in a spirit of national concord." The South Vietnamese believed they could handle the North Vietnamese forces as long as they could get continued U.S. military assistance. This was probably true. The Communists formerly had denied they had any forces in South Vietnam and were now implying they now did have forces there on the basis of settling military problems in all of Vietnam. But their forces in the South were not very strong any more, and they hadn't won a battle in the South for several years because South Vietnamese firepower was so superior.

Prime Minister Thanom asked what Dr. Kissinger felt about the prospects of the three presidential candidates. Dr. Kissinger discounted his ability to know the right answers about Vietnamese political affairs but observed that most people thought that in a two-man race between Thieu and Minh, Thieu would win; in a three-man race involving Ky as well, Ky would take votes from Thieu, but Thieu would still win. Minh had some popularity. He, Dr. Kissinger, had spoken to all three candidates to establish his impartiality.

Prime Minister Thanom expressed the view that if Thieu won, the situation would be satisfactory, but if one of the others won, stability would be affected. Dr. Kissinger said that he had met no one who thought Ky had a chance, and the general assumption was that Ky was preparing for the 1975 elections. If Minh won, he had already said he wanted to prosecute the war and had said yesterday that he was absolutely opposed to a coalition government and didn't want the Communists. There would be a change in the top administrator, though. The big question was whether Minh would be a competent administrator, not that there would be any change in policies. If Minh proved not to be a good administrator, there might be some military actions. The Thai had had Minh in Thailand for four years—what did they think? Foreign Minister Thanat simply observed that Minh had kept very quiet while in Thailand.

Dr. Kissinger said that Minh had told him he was against a coalition government and opposed to the PRG seven-point program, which he felt was a trick. Therefore, his views were not radically different

from those of Thieu. However, he wanted a broader-based government which would, for example, bring the Buddhists in, and also wanted a program of "social justice". Dr. Kissinger observed that opposition candidates were not usually distinguished by the precision of their formulations.

Dr. Kissinger requested Prime Minister Thanom's views on policy toward Communist China and on the U.S. position. Prime Minister Thanom said that if contacts between the U.S. and Chinese should result in a lessening of China's expansionist tendencies and support for wars of national liberation, the situation in Southeast Asia would be improved. Foreign Minister Thanat remarked that the Chinese had reaffirmed their support for national liberation movements a few months ago, and had also attacked the U.S. The GRC Ambassador had given him their statement to this effect. He, Thanat, had told the Prime Minister that there was not much difference between the Chinese and Soviet policies.

Dr. Kissinger said that U.S. policy toward China was *first*, that we had two common enemies, the USSR and Communist China, but didn't see why we needed to support the stronger against the weaker. We wanted contacts with both so we could moderate the policies of both, rather than to let Moscow act as a spokesman. *Second*, we also wanted to induce the Chinese to moderate their policy with respect to Southeast Asia, which we believed we could do if we could focus Chinese attention on the Soviet Union. We had no illusions about the Chinese and would expect them to affirm their support for national liberation movements. *Third*, we wanted to see if the Chinese might possibly want to withdraw their opposition to a settlement in South Vietnam. We were very unsentimental in our approach to China and looked at the problem from the standpoint of what we could do with respect to Chinese relations with the surrounding countries. We had no illusions that people who were revolutionaries all their lives would be charmed by little gestures such as trade, travel and ping pong teams.

Prime Minister Thanom said that he felt there was a greater relaxation and flexibility in Chinese policy, possibly including a policy toward the UN. In addition, their increasing concern about the Soviet Union could create a better balance in Peking. So far as the U.S. establishment of contacts with the Chinese were concerned, the results were not yet in. There was a possibility that Chinese might use trade to further their objectives. Dr. Kissinger declared that there was no question but that the Chinese would look at everything from a political standpoint. They could create difficulties in Southeast Asian countries having large Chinese populations. From the U.S. point of view, we would do what we could to improve the situation. The Chinese could use trade as a weapon, for example, against Malaysia. But the

Soviet forces along the border with China were twice the size of the Soviet forces in Europe, which was a somewhat unsettling factor for the Chinese. Therefore, there was some possibility that they would moderate their pressures against some countries such as Vietnam and Thailand. Over the long run, we had a special problem in that all of the Chinese leaders were 70 or above, and nobody could know what would happen when the present leadership disappeared.

Prime Minister Thanom asked if the Sino-Soviet border was very long, and Dr. Kissinger noted that the total distance was 7,000 kilometers even though the Chinese didn't recognize all of it. It was difficult to speculate about Chinese developments, and certainly we were going to proceed deliberately to see what the future would bring. We did not have much expectation about U.S. trade with China. Our lifting of trade restrictions had more of a symbolic purpose than anything else.

To a remark by Foreign Minister Thanat that the Soviets and the East Europeans appeared to have changed a bit, Dr. Kissinger wondered if the Thai thought they could increase their trade with East Europe. Thanat's reply was affirmative. The Soviets, the Hungarians, the East Germans, and the Rumanians were all interested in buying various Thai commodities.

Dr. Kissinger said he appreciated very much the opportunity to exchange ideas with the Thai, and wanted to assure Prime Minister Thanom again how firmly committed the President was to Thailand. The Thai should remember that those people who made all the noise did not formulate U.S. policy. We would get decisions on the SGUs and would see if we could adjust the framework of support for the Thai defenses. Our proposals would be reasonable. There was, in addition, one other problem which need not be discussed at this level—that of narcotics, which was causing the U.S. great concern. This had such emotional interest in the U.S., and was of such importance domestically, that any assistance from Thailand would be greatly welcomed.

On another point, over the long term he had heard interpretations of the Nixon Doctrine to the effect that we would withdraw from Asia. He had seen a great deal of the author of the Nixon Doctrine, who did not have any such impression.

Prime Minister Thanom expressed concern over the Supreme Court decision allowing the printing of secret papers. Dr. Kissinger commented jokingly that at a recent press reception in the State Department he had accused the Soviet Ambassador of being present to complain over having to pay for what the U.S. newspapers were getting free. The Supreme Court decision had not been that the act was legal, only that if documents were stolen the government recourse had to be through criminal prosecution and not through an injunction.

Therefore the U.S. would need to proceed against the criminal, and not against the newspapers. We would also adopt new procedures to restrict the circulation of documents to a much greater extent and not embarrass other governments. Prime Minister Thanom declared that making confidential decisions public would put the Executive in a difficult position because it set a precedent for the press in other countries. Dr. Kissinger remarked that there was no question but that this had been a very unfortunate incident. However, it was not likely to be repeated because it had taken place in a moment of hysteria.

128. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, July 6, 1971, 10 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Mr. Leonard Unger, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand

Dr. K. Wayne Smith, Senior Staff Member NSC

Mr. John H. Holdridge, Senior Staff Member NSC

Mr. M. J. Wilkinson, Political Officer, American Embassy Bangkok

SUBJECT

Dr. Kissinger's Discussions with Foreign Minister Thanat on Vietnam and Chinese Representation

Dr. Kissinger referred to the just-completed discussions with Prime Minister Thanom and other senior Thai leaders, and noted that many important matters had been covered. We would want to continue to discuss the questions of US defense support for Thailand and support for the Thai SGU's.

Dr. Kissinger went on to say that with respect to US policy toward China and the Vietnam negotiations, we would try to keep the Thai fully informed so that they could have complete confidence in what direction we were going, and would not be confronted with any drastic surprises. We were not planning any such surprises. Foreign Minister Thanat wondered if speedy contacts with the Chinese might be

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Holdridge and approved by Kissinger on August 5. The meeting was held at Government House.

included among the list of surprises, and Dr. Kissinger observed that he was talking more about developments connected with Vietnam. The Thai had no doubt been surprised on one or two occasions over our troop withdrawal decisions.

Foreign Minister Thanat asked Dr. Kissinger for his thoughts about the Paris talks. Dr. Kissinger replied that, speaking candidly, he did not expect much to happen over the next two months. We couldn't be sure about the purpose of the PRG proposal and would have to see how to interpret it. It could have been designed either to exploit US public opinion and increase pressure on us, or to mark the beginning of real negotiations. There was a chance that the North Vietnamese had decided to engage in serious negotiations because pressures on themselves and developments vis-à-vis the Soviets and the Chinese made them believe that this was a good time to settle. On the other hand, they could be waiting for next year's US elections. We simply didn't know. Their proposal contained slightly more forthcoming language. It was consistent with what they had said before, but also consistent with what they might say if they were opening up. We would get word to the Foreign Minister about our reaction.

Foreign Minister Thanat asked, would the South Vietnamese make a counterproposal? Dr. Kissinger replied that we and the South Vietnamese had not decided how to handle the question of our response. This would depend to some extent on the President's judgment following his, Dr. Kissinger's, return. He was going to Paris to meet Ambassador Bruce—he would not see Mme. Binh, though—and would review the situation with Bruce, but not do any negotiating. Perhaps we would make a counterproposal, but within the framework of the President's October 7, 1970 position. We would not accept a cease-fire for us and none for our allies, and could not stop economic and military aid to these allies while the North Vietnamese received such assistance from the Chinese and the Soviets. On the question of our withdrawals and the timing, we were withdrawing anyway, but the December 31 date was unacceptable. We had not set a deadline because we wanted to relate this issue to the negotiations.

Foreign Minister Thanat called attention to the fact that all countries having troops in South Vietnam had said that they would withdraw, but the other side hadn't said anything about reducing its forces. This was a strong point for our side. Ambassador Unger agreed that the other side was setting a double standard which could be exploited. Dr. Kissinger stated that we would review the situation. We had a problem with public opinion in that many people didn't care what was fair—the radicals did not complain over the North's invasion of the South, but would put up great cries of indignation if the South threatened to invade the North. Foreign Minister Thanat surmised that this was because people didn't want the US to become involved.

Dr. Kissinger cautioned Foreign Minister Thanat not to expect anything much in Paris. We would move very slowly, and spend the next two weeks pointing out the negative aspects of the PRG proposal. At the time he had left Washington, we had no idea that this proposal was forthcoming.

Foreign Minister Thanat asked about the US decision on the Chinese representation issue in the UN, and Dr. Kissinger expressed the view that it would be made before the end of the month. Our problem was how to say something constructive which would not infuriate both Chinas. We had discussed with the Thai and others various formulae, such as a two-thirds vote for expulsion and a simple majority for admission. Foreign Minister Thanat's idea of voting on the expulsion issue first before that of admission was intriguing, and he, Dr. Kissinger, would explore this when he returned. There were of course a number of combinations, including sticking to our present policies.

Foreign Minister Thanat suggested that the two resolutions for requiring a two-thirds majority to expel Taiwan and admit the PRC by a simple majority might be put forward at the same time, or within a few hours of one another. These would be two separate resolutions, but expulsion would come first. He was not sure, though, what the rule was if somebody wanted to alter the order. Admittedly, it might be difficult to put one slightly ahead of the other. This matter could be left to the "arm twisters."

Dr. Kissinger said that he was impressed by the Foreign Minister's concern. Would it be possible to vote by paragraph (on the Albanian Resolution) in such a way that the expulsion issue would never arise? Foreign Minister Thanat thought that this could be done very easily. Ambassador Unger thought that this procedure would need to be agreed upon by a substantial majority. Foreign Minister Thanat said that even if the (Albanian) expulsion resolution came first, we could ask for a two-thirds vote, which could be approved by a simple majority.

Dr. Kissinger reiterated that the President would make his decision before August 1, and it would probably be some variation of these ideas. We would inform the Thai, and Mr. Newman would take this up with the Foreign Minister. Foreign Minister Thanat declared that the Thai would go along with the President's decision.

Dr. Kissinger wondered what the Foreign Minister thought about sticking with the present formula? Foreign Minister Thanat said he did not believe this had any chance. Dr. Kissinger asked if it still might not be possible to get a majority for the Important Question? Foreign Minister Thanat said that he didn't know the answer to this. Dr. Kissinger suggested that if we could get a majority for that, we could postpone the matter for another year even if there was a bigger majority for the

Albanian Resolution. Foreign Minister Thanat observed that this would happen only if the people who wanted the PRC in the UN relented. Ambassador Unger interjected to say that if the people who wanted the PRC in felt that it would be satisfactory to the PRC, then they might relent. Dr. Kissinger added that if these people thought that the PRC wouldn't come unless Taiwan were expelled, Taiwan would be expelled anyway and then we would have paid a price. This would be the worst possible case. Foreign Minister Thanat mentioned that the strength of those who were willing to have the PRC in the UN without pushing Taiwan out needed to be established.

Dr. Kissinger declared it was his instinct that the US would move to some position such as that which they had been discussing. There had been no final decision as yet as to making expulsion a two-thirds vote. When this decision was reached, we would make sure that the Thai were informed ahead of time. Foreign Minister Thanat remarked that those who wanted the PRC in were just about the same in number as those who wanted Taiwan in. Dr. Kissinger concluded by saying that was just about our own estimate.

129. Letter From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) to the Chargé d'Affaires in Thailand (Newman)¹

Washington, July 9, 1971.

Dear George:

I am sure you are aware of Len Unger's letter to me of May 28² concerning Pote Sarasin's approach to him for a repeat performance of the 1968-69 "Project Lotus." We will have a chance to talk to Len directly about this when he is in Washington for consultation next month, but I thought you should be acquainted with the Washington view at this stage.

The matter was discussed at a 40 Committee meeting recently and Len's position, as described in his letter, was unanimously supported. All of us share his distaste for this kind of an operation. However, a suggestion was made at the meeting that we have a look at the possi-

¹ Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Thailand, 1972-1975. Secret; Eyes Only; Nodis.

² See Document 120.

bility of using this type of funding in some manner in connection with our efforts to generate more effective RTG actions in the narcotics field. We do not have any clear or specific ideas as to how this could be done. We would, of course, not contemplate using such funds in lieu of assistance that might more appropriately be provided for mutually agreed narcotics measures using overt funds such as AID. More important, we would want to avoid creating an impression on the Thai side that they could expect or demand a “payoff” for actions they ought to be taking anyway or for which we could influence them by more conventional and regular approaches. Finally, we must avoid setting a precedent for periodic under-the-table contributions to Thai political leaders for any purpose.

Notwithstanding these reservations and with full acceptance of Len’s persuasive reasoning, we feel that the urgency and importance of the narcotics problem in Thailand makes it incumbent upon us to keep our minds open to any possible course of action, however unorthodox, that might advance our objectives. Please give the matter some thought and let me know if you can see any possibilities.

Sincerely,

Alex³

³ Printed from a copy that indicates Johnson signed the original.

130. Backchannel Message From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger)¹

Washington, July 20, 1971, 10:03 p.m.

WH 10764. Subject: Thai Force Improvements: STFD Proposals.

To follow up my visit, I want to move as rapidly as possible to obtain an acceptable force improvement package for consideration by the President. I have found mission proposals transmitted to my staff in Saigon most valuable. I would like to have Mission comments by Mon-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 410, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1971, Southeast Asia. Top Secret.

day² on the proposal spelled out below which represents our best synthesis of the variety of proposals available to us.

While the proposal outlined below continues to provide assistance for Thai efforts to increase RTARF readiness with respect to possible deployments [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], its principal focus is on accelerating the improvement of general RTARF capabilities.

The concept is that this proposal should be viewed by the RTG as the first of two steps in gauging U.S. assistance to support RTG efforts to improve the capabilities of its military forces. The second step would reflect decisions in the context of NSSM 99 and the performance of the Thai in meeting the conditions of the agreement proposed for negotiation now.

The proposal includes an assistance package made up of two elements:

- a) A two year \$30 million PL 480 program, \$15 million per annum.
- b) A \$15 FY 1972 MASF add on.

For this combined assistance package of \$45 million the RTG will agree that

—the baht proceeds from the PL 480 sales will be allocated in consultation with the USOM to agricultural development activities.

a) No more than \$10 million of PL 480 revenues will be used to undertake additional development activities.

b) The remaining baht proceeds from the PL 480 sales less the \$10 million for agricultural development, approximately \$17 million, will be used to offset additional expenditures for improvement of Thai forces. (An initial repayment of \$3 million to the USG is assumed, thus accounting for the \$30 million PL 480 total.)

—Expenditures for pol as agreed upon in earlier negotiations and for consumables directly related to RTAF sorties [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], 60 sorties/month, which cannot be legally covered under MASF will be financed by Thai foreign exchange.

—Up to 300 RTAF sorties/month [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] would be flown if required.

The principal activities which will be financed from the additional baht expenditures for RTARF are

—1) initiation of RTA manpower augmentations above those currently budgeted for maneuver and logistics units. (Augmentation

² In telegram 158, July 24, Unger "wholeheartedly" endorsed the Thai STFD force improvements proposed in WH 10764. He added that "the military activities and amount of assistance proposed will be a fair test of Thai willingness to upgrade their forces to meet security threats they now face." (Ibid.)

should include filling to 90 per cent TO&E 3 RCTS and their associated logistics support units.)

- 2) expansion of training programs.
- 3) increases in the level of CI operations.
- 4) upgrading of logistics facilities.

Our support for the expanded five division force should be made clear, the PL 480 and \$15 million MASF is initial assistance to help the Thai move in that direction.

The principal activities for which equipment will be financed from the \$15 million MASF add on are:

- 1) upgrading of maneuver and logistics units.
- 2) expansion of training operations.
- 3) increases in the level of CI operations.

Mission comments and specific program details consistent with the above proposal should be sent via this channel so as to arrive opening of business Monday, 26 July. Keeping in mind that basic objective is to improve capability of Thai forces, Mission comments on significant differences between this proposal, and Mission and Renoo's alternatives passed to Sansom would be particularly useful.

Also await Mission views, pursuant to discussions in Saigon, on Thai para-military force development and on manpower tradeoff problems between Thai regular and SGU forces.³

³ In telegram 208, August 2, Unger discussed the SGU program in detail, and reported Thai "concern over drain on RTA manpower (especially officers and NCOs)." He noted that if the SGUs were expanded to 36 battalions as planned then there would be a further drawdown of 126 officers and 417 NCOs from the regular Thai army, however, he concluded "it does not appear that the BC (SGU) program per se has or will seriously affect the RTA." (Ibid.)

131. Memorandum for the Record¹

Bangkok, August 5, 1971.

SUBJECT

KMT Irregulars and Their Involvement in the Opium Traffic

1. On 5 August Chargé Newman [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] lunched with General Kriangsak to follow up the discussion which the Ambassador and the DCM held with Marshal Dawee as reported in Bangkok Embtel 9071 of 1 July.² Newman filled in Kriangsak on the consultations which have taken place between the Embassy and the Royal Thai Government on the subject of suppressing drugs and narcotics, the establishment of a joint USG/RTG committee to work on the problem headed by General Nitya and Chargé Newman, and emphasizing the mutual interests of both of our governments in addressing this problem aggressively and expeditiously.³ Newman then recalled the conversation with Dawee and the latter's request that we follow up with Kriangsak to explore the possibilities for utilizing the KMT irregulars to help suppress the trafficking of opium from the Shan States in Thailand.

2. Kriangsak summarized the efforts in which he has been engaged for the past year to re-settle KMT irregulars in Thailand in areas where they could cultivate crops and raise livestock as an income substitute for trafficking in opium on condition that irregulars turn in their arms and submit fully to RTG authority. Part of the agreement of course involves first the clearance by the irregulars of areas controlled

¹ Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Country Files, Thailand, 1972-1975. Secret. [*text not declassified*] Forwarded to Under Secretary Johnson under an attached August 7 cover letter from Newman.

² Not found.

³ In a July 27 letter to Under Secretary Johnson, Newman welcomed the news that the 40 Committee supported Unger's position on the political money (see Document 129) and informed Johnson, in response to the "other suggestion in your letter," that he [*text not declassified*] had been "looking over the field for possibilities." He recommended that intelligence be provided Police Major General Chompon Lohachala so that the latter could go after the drug traffickers. He stated that the Embassy planned to do this [*text not declassified*] "in the near future on a test basis." In his August 7 cover letter to Johnson, (see footnote 1 above) Newman stated that he [*text not declassified*] planned to see General Chompon later that week "to make some information on drug traffickers in the North available to him and to encourage him to move against these individuals." However, he noted, due to "jurisdictional concerns and departmental politics within the Thai National Police Department, we are moving cautiously on this front."

by the Communist insurgents, and after security is established they are supposed to turn in their arms to RTG controlled storehouses. The RTG is to provide tea tree seedlings and farm equipment as well as some livestock and advice and assistance in animal husbandry. KMT irregulars are also obliged to get out of the opium business. When this agreement was negotiated in the latter half of 1970, Generals Li and Tuan asked that the embargoes on KMT engagement in the opium business be deferred until after the 1971 crop had been disposed of. Li and Tuan pleaded that they would need this additional income during the period of re-establishment. Though Kriangsak never flatly so stated, it is clear that he felt obliged not to interfere with the KMT opium trafficking during the past few months when this year's harvest was being moved. Newman cited facts and figures, drawing on the attached brief,⁴ indicating that Generals Li and Tuan control the movement of a significant amount of the opium crop in the Shan States to Thailand and also engage in refining it in Chiang Mai Province. Kriangsak made notes on the most recent shipments in June 1971 (see page 3 of attachment). Kriangsak was impressed with our information on the KMT opium smuggling activities and made no effort to dispute our information; in fact, he noted that it is difficult for him to obtain reliable information of this kind and solicited our assistance. I promised to give him a summary of our information on this subject, if possible by next week. I cautioned him, and he agreed, that in his use of this information there would be no reference to the fact that he obtained it from the Americans. Kriangsak seemed to be particularly interested in getting information on where the irregulars are operating their refineries.

3. Kriangsak was quite candid in his admission that he and the RTG cannot be certain that Generals Li and Tuan will honor fully and sincerely their commitments to the RTG. Kriangsak suggested that if they do not, the RTG will be forced to consider appropriate disciplinary action. He is trying very hard to provide enough assistance so that the irregulars can re-settle with their families, earn an adequate living, and exist as law-abiding Thai nationals.

4. Newman [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] expressed admiration for his program and his efforts and asked whether he thought the next step could be taken, namely, the utilization of the better fighting elements of the irregulars to disrupt and hopefully prevent the movement of opium to refineries in Tatchilek, Laos and Thailand. We noted that it is not enough to get the KMT out of the opium busi-

⁴ Not attached.

ness since there are plenty of others who will be happy to move in. A force will be needed to attack caravans under the protection of Shan insurgents and Burmese self-defense forces and hopefully destroy the opium before it reaches the refineries. In this connection we asked Kriangsak whether the KMT irregulars now in Burma would be moving to Thailand to re-settle with the others already here. Kriangsak said that they are free to do so until the end of this rainy season. If they reject the Thai offer, they will presumably join the other bands in Burma if they can. In thinking about the problem, Kriangsak also commented that if KMT irregulars were sent into Burma on opium-destroying missions it would be necessary to have a few Thais with them to make certain that we are not double-crossed. He concluded by agreeing to consider the matter further, after which he will be back in touch with us. Newman reiterated the urgency of developing plans in the near future in order that effective action can be taken against the next crop which will be planted this fall. Although no specifics were mentioned and none were requested, Newman advised Kriangsak that the American mission would attempt to support the RTG if a realistically feasible plan can be developed.

[name not declassified]

132. National Security Decision Memorandum 126¹

Washington, August 11, 1971.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Director, Office of Management and Budget

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Top Secret. The memorandum was signed by Kissinger. Copies were forwarded to the Chairman of the JCS, the Director of the CIA, and to the Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs.

SUBJECT

Additional Assistance to Thailand

The President has directed that a \$45 million special assistance package be negotiated with the Government of Thailand in order to strengthen the Thai economy and the defense capabilities of Thai forces. The purpose of this package is to accelerate the improvement of general Thai armed forces (RTARF) capabilities and to assure that they are capable of meeting likely contingencies.

The package will be composed of a \$30 million PL 480 commodity loan to be made available over the two year period FY 1972 and FY 1973 and a \$15 million addition to the FY 1972 Thai MASF program. This assistance will be provided to the Government of Thailand in accord with the following guidelines:

—The local currency proceeds from the PL 480 loan will be allocated to agriculture and education development.

—At least the equivalent of \$20 million in Thai expenditures, additional to those currently budgeted, will be allocated to agreed military activities.

—The additional \$20 million in Thai military budget expenditures and the \$15 million MASF grant will finance the following principal activities:

- a) RTA manpower augmentations above those currently budgeted for maneuver and logistics units.
- b) expansion of RTA training programs.
- c) increases in the level of counterinsurgency operations.
- d) upgrading of logistics facilities.
- e) improving Thai Air Force capabilities to conduct sustained operations under likely contingencies.

The U.S. Mission in Thailand should advise the Thai government that:

—This package is an immediate measure to assist Thai military force improvements. While the U.S. will support the formation of a fifth division, this support is not provided for in this package.

—The U.S. government requires assurances, including access to the Thai military budget, that actual incremental expenditures in the identified areas have taken place.

—As a follow-on to this decision, the U.S. will give consideration to other additional measures to assist Thai forces and the Thai economy. Implementation of such additional measures will be in part contingent on Thai performance and the establishment of adequate procedures for the implementation of this package, as well as on the availability of funds from the Congress.

In implementing the foregoing decisions, the Secretary of State in coordination with the Secretary of Defense should insure that:

—Negotiations with the Thai government begin immediately on the program as described herein.

—A report is provided, with a program budget by September 15, 1971,² to the President on the final package negotiated including the specific actions to which the Thai have agreed.

After review of the NSSM 99³ options for further adjustments in Thai assistance, the Senior Review Group should provide alternatives to the President by October 1, 1971, on additional assistance to Thailand. These alternatives should encompass both economic and military assistance.

This and the subsequent NSSM 99 decision on military and economic assistance to Thailand should be reflected in the proposed FY 1973 assistance program. This FY 1973 program will be submitted to the Senior Review Group and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget by November 1, 1971.

Henry A. Kissinger

² Eliot reported in a memorandum to Kissinger, September 16, that "a number of problems on the Thai side" had "delayed conclusion of agreements on all details and have made it impossible to meet the September 15 deadline for reporting to the President." Eliot stated that Embassy Bangkok had reported in telegram 12380, September 10 (a copy of which was attached to his memorandum), that "the major problems yet to be overcome relate to RTG budgeting for the required \$20 million increase in the Thai defense budget and to certain important details in the proposed PL 480 program." (Ibid.)

³ For discussion of NSSM 99 on Southeast Asia, see Document 82, footnote 1.

133. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, August 25, 1971, 0904Z.

11653. Subject: Additional Assistance to Thailand. Ref: Bangkok 11605.²

At departure ceremony today for Princess Ubol, Prime Minister asked me to express to President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger his appreciation for the proposal I had outlined to him yesterday. He again pointed out that in many of the areas we wish to see increases in defense expenditures the Thai Government had already budgeted significant

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (US) 15 THAI. Secret; Priority; Exdis.

² Dated August 25. (Ibid.)

increases for 1972. I replied that we were aware of these increases but believed that the additional 20 million dollars in baht that we are proposing as their part of the package was fully justified in view of the threat. As he aware from [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] briefing, the insurgency threat in the northeast was increasing and becoming more sophisticated and difficult to counter. We felt this was equally true in other regions. Consequently, we were suggesting that there should be significant increase in level of operations by the RTG against the insurgency. This could be accomplished by the additional 20 million dollars in defense expenditures and the 15 million dollar MASF add-on. The Prime Minister replied that he had asked Marshal Dawee to see what could be done practically and that Dawee would be in touch with our side on the details. He added that in many ways what was happening in northeast Thailand was reminiscent of South Viet-Nam 5–10 years ago and the Thai Government needs to move vigorously to prevent the insurgency from taking hold here as had been the case in Vietnam.

Newman

134. Memorandum From Robert Hormats of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Washington, August 26, 1971.

SUBJECT

Relief for Thai Textile Exports to the U.S.

State (Tab A)² has asked that HAK instruct the Interagency Textile Advisory Committee (ITAC) to permit the entry of 52,000 dozen cotton pajamas from Thailand into the United States and to permit Thailand to export an additional 17,000 dozen pajamas during the next nine months. State believes this would be consistent with the President's wish to improve U.S.-Thai relations.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VI. Confidential. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum in Kissinger's handwriting reads: "OK HK."

² Attached but not printed.

Under the Long-Term Arrangement on Cotton Textiles (LTA), textile exports to the U.S. are limited. Thailand, which has just begun to produce cotton pajamas, was told by us on April 30, 1971 to limit exports to the U.S. to 17,000 dozen pajamas over the succeeding twelve months and asked to consult with us. (This number was derived according to a formula contained in the LTA.) Subsequent to that time, however, the Thai speeded up production and exported 31,000 dozen pajamas in the month of May alone. Because of the apparent neglect by the Thai of our representations and the large number of pajamas exported, Commerce, Labor and other agencies (except State) argue that the Thai should not be permitted to import into the U.S. an amount in addition to the 17,000 dozen prescribed by the LTA, although these agencies would probably be willing to allow a one-time exception were the Thai to reach a voluntary restraint agreement for subsequent exports—which the Thai do not wish to do.

State's memorandum is, therefore, an attempt to bypass the ITAC. Doing so not only raises bureaucratic hackles but approval would mean our approving for Thailand imports of cotton textiles greater than the LTA prescribed level. Other exporters could be counted on to swiftly protest against this action on the grounds that it is discriminating against them and request increases in their own allotments. Also being a domestically sensitive product, cotton textile imports in excess of previously prescribed levels would incur serious domestic criticism. I have therefore asked that this matter be considered formally by the ITAC and that a memorandum containing the views of all concerned agencies be submitted.

135. **Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State**¹

Bangkok, September 15, 1971, 0745Z.

12551. Subject: High Level Discussion with Thais Regarding Volunteer Program. Ref: State 166094.²

1. In order to transmit to the RTG ref decision authorizing our support for 36 volunteer battalions³ and to review the present status of the program, I met yesterday with Prime Minister Thanom, Deputy Prime Minister Praphat, Marshal Dawee, and Generals Phaithun and Boonchai (standing in for Surakij who is out of country). With me were Minister Newman [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. I recalled the Prime Minister's discussion of a 36 volunteer battalion force level with Dr. Kissinger during the latter's visit to Bangkok in July⁴ and noted our understanding that Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma had recently reiterated his request to the RTG that it undertake such an expansion of the program. I informed the Prime Minister that we are prepared to support 36 battalions subject only to the necessary legislative authorization of funds.

a. Having carefully reviewed since my return the slippage in the recruitment and training of the already authorized 24 battalion force and the severe losses by resignation, etc., among deployed battalions, I provided the Prime Minister with a rather detailed summary of the status of the program as we understand it. I explained to him that one of my purposes in doing so was to determine whether it is realistic and feasible at this time to engage in military and budgetary planning premised on the eventual availability of a 36 battalion force. My other purpose was to see that everything possible was being done to assure

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Repeated to Vientiane.

² Attached but not printed was telegram 166094 to Bangkok, September 10, which requested Unger to inform the Thai Government that the U.S. Government would support 36 Thai SGU battalions for Laos and to urge them to accelerate recruitment of these forces so that they would "be of service during 1971–1972 dry season." The telegram added that Unger should inform them "that implementation is contingent upon our continuing to have the necessary legislative authority," noting that "restrictive amendments (concerning Thai volunteers in Laos) have been proposed in FY 72 defense procurement bill."

³ The decision to support 36 Thai SGU volunteer battalions for Laos was made at the August 10 WSAG meeting, when all agreed to Kissinger's suggestion to "go ahead with the 12 additional Thai SGUs in the last quarter of this year." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-082, WSAG Meeting Laos, 8/10/71)

⁴ See Document 127.

that we will be in a strong position to meet the anticipated heavy enemy pressures in Laos in the coming dry season.

3. I recalled that our mutually agreed schedule developed early in 1971 provided for 24 battalions to be deployed by the end of this calendar year. The last of these units were to go into training in October. There are now only 17 battalions in the field (actually the 17th will be deployed within the next several days); none are in training although we have been advised that two more battalions may start training later this month. If the original schedule is to be maintained, five more battalions must commence training before the end of October. This schedule, of course, was developed to assure the maximum possible force to repel the enemy's effort in the upcoming dry season campaign.

4. The situation with respect to the actual on-board strength of units currently deployed is even more disturbing. The average on-board strength of deployed battalions is only about 55 percent of the authorized strength; approximately 7 percent are on authorized leave and expected to return; an additional 6 percent have been lost to battle casualties. More than 30 percent of the volunteers have resigned from their units or have gone AWOL. In sum, the units deployed in Laos are short more than 4,500 men. To replace these losses and to commence the training of five battalions before the end of October will require a drastic effort to meet what now appears to be a shortfall numbering approximately 7,000 men.

5. In this connection I noted that at the beginning of the last dry season campaign, before any of the irregular battalions were deployed, Thai forces organized into three regular battalions plus the Thai artillery units numbered about 3,000 men. Today the 8 volunteer infantry and two artillery SGU battalions available to General Vang Pao have a total strength of only slightly more than 2,800 (today there are also other Thai forces in Laos, of course). Considering the attrition that Vang Pao's forces have suffered and the expected all-out effort on the part of the North Vietnamese during the coming dry season, there is deep concern that the forces available in MR2 will be woefully undermanned unless dramatic action is taken soon.

6. I suggested that it is not realistic for either of us to think in concrete terms of the formation and deployment of 36 battalions unless it is possible before the end of October to obtain enough volunteers to commence the training of the 24 battalions previously agreed to and in addition to providing replacements in the deployed battalions in sufficient quantities to bring these units up to at least 80 percent of their authorized strength level.

7. At this point I took note of the Prime Minister's interest in developing a bonus system for men who have completed their tour of duty in Laos as an inducement to help with the recruiting program and

to reduce the number of losses through resignation and other absenteeism. Discussions between [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Bangkok and Vientiane on the one hand and the RTA staff and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] on the other have resulted in the development of a scheme for a two part bonus system—one part to be paid to the volunteer for completing his duty and the other to be paid after reenlistment for a second tour. Though the funding of this proposal has not yet been completed, we are attempting to obtain expeditious action.

8. It has been our understanding that the tour of duty for each volunteer was 15 months after training. Recently we were advised that RTA headquarters has revised the tour length to be one year after training. The effect of this is to shorten the tour of duty by about 3 months. Since this might further exacerbate the recruitment problem and add an additional training burden, I inquired whether this decision to abbreviate the tour could be reconsidered.

9. Noting General Praphat's concern that an adequate medevac capability be assured to handle the casualty problem during the next dry season campaign, I advised the Prime Minister that action has been taken to assure the availability of six helicopter gunships to escort medevac lift operations. We are now awaiting the identification of Thai helicopter pilots so that we can plan and institute as quickly as possible a training program. The identification of these pilots must be accomplished if they are to be gunship qualified by the time they are needed.

10. Finally, I called attention to the decision taken some time ago to man the Korat Friendship Hospital with sufficient RTA personnel to handle the major portion of Thai volunteer casualties. According to our information, the staffing of this hospital is going rather slowly and I requested that the problem be examined on the Thai side to make certain that adequate preparation is being made to assure proper medical support for the Thai volunteers.

11. In his response, the Prime Minister admitted that they had had a number of problems with the Thai volunteer effort. Morale among the volunteers has not been very good and one of the reasons for this is that the the men in the program see no future for themselves. The pay has been low and the fighting has been tough. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the effort to get the bonus system approved. He feels this is essential to help keep the men in their units and to give a boost to the recruitment effort. For example, he noted that many of the volunteers from the Black Panthers returning from Vietnam are interested in the volunteer program but they are not attracted by the lower pay and loss of the other benefits which they had been receiving, including their mustering out payment at the end of their duty in Vietnam.

12. The Prime Minister praised the RTA for its efforts and said it is doing its best to recruit, but he expressed his regret that it has been unable to maintain the recruitment schedule and replace losses. He went on to say, with General Praphat nodding agreement, that the RTG would redouble its efforts and that it will have 24 battalions by the end of this calendar year. He needs help from us in obtaining prompt approval of the bonus system, but with that assistance, he feels certain that this target can be met. The Prime Minister, again with General Praphat in agreement, concluded this part of his comments by asking that we continue to plan and program for 12 additional battalions (36 battalion total) saying, "I guarantee we will do it." I inquired whether a further boost to recruitment and retention of the program might be achieved by offering to those volunteers who perform successfully an opportunity for a career in the RTA. Dawee replied that they have been working on this and have already announced the performance, experience, and educational criteria for volunteers who wish to join the RTA. In order to open this opportunity to more men, the educational requirement has been reduced from Matayom Hok to Matayom See (equivalent respectively to 10th and 8th grades).

13. Dawee said that the Supreme Command is issuing an order to the various Thai services and will provide us very shortly with the identity of the pilots for gunship training.

14. The Thais strongly resisted our request to reconsider the decision already taken concerning the length of duty tours for volunteers. They noted that the men are kept on the line with little relief or leave. As Dawee said, "We can't expect to keep them in the foxholes longer than 12 months." A move now to restore the 15 month tour of duty after training would aggravate rather than help solve the recruitment and training program. In view of their strong feelings, I did not press this further, but pointed out that it made it even more essential to pursue recruiting with real vigor.

15. Finally, concerning the medical treatment of casualties, Praphat assured us that orders have gone to the RTA Surgeon General who is responsible for developing surgical and medical teams which can move quickly to Korat or elsewhere as needed. The RTA suffers from severe shortages in this field and it cannot man the Korat Hospital beyond the level of current needs. However, steps are being taken to identify and prepare the medical teams to move rapidly when the situation requires.

16. *Comment:* The atmosphere throughout the session was constructive and forward looking. Though my brief was implicitly critical of the shortcomings of Thai performance, it was received without re-primation and the spirit of the meeting evidenced Thai determination to solve their problems and meet the 36 volunteer battalion goal. General Praphat did note in passing at one point that in the early stages

of the program there had been some shortages in support on the American side but he had no complaints concerning the current level of support, and his comment was made in the context of the need for mutual understanding of the problems that exist on both sides in an effort to make this program succeed.

17. I do not think that we should expect any miraculous recovery of the slippages which have already occurred. Unquestionably, however, Thai leadership is impressed and grateful for our continued support of the volunteer program and for our decision to expand it to the 36 battalion level if funds become available. Their success in the course of the next six to eight weeks in identifying and placing into training the remainder of the previously authorized 24 battalions should provide a pretty good index of their ability to reach the 36 battalion level in 1972. In the meantime, it is quite essential that we authorize promptly the bonus system as developed [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. It is my understanding that this can be accomplished within currently authorized program levels since it is quite clear that the average number of volunteers deployed is unlikely to exceed 80 percent of their authorized strength.

Unger

136. Memorandum From the Chief of the Far East Division of the Directorate of Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Nelson) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) and the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)¹

Washington, September 16, 1971.

SUBJECT

Conversation with General Kriangsak on Measures to Discontinue Chinese Irregular Forces Involvement in Opium Traffic

REFERENCE

[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] (TDCSDB-315/05276-71)

¹ Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Country Files, Thailand, 1970–71. Secret; Sensitive.

1. Attached herewith is a copy of a message from Bangkok, dated 14 September 1971, relating to a meeting held between Deputy Chief of Mission and [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] Lt. General Kriangsak Chamanan, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command. The report referred to in this message is TDCSDB-315/05276-71, a copy of which has been disseminated to you.

2. While the account of the meeting with General Kriangsak is very interesting, we are highly skeptical that the Chinese Irregular Forces, which have existed for many years primarily on the revenue obtained from opium traffic, will give up this lucrative trade. We note that under this plan, the 1971 opium crop would not be affected. This cycle could be repeated for the 1972 crop for one reason or another. There is also the good possibility, because of the current public concern over the drug problem, of the American interest or hand surfacing. While we have not yet examined what the repercussions of such event would have on Burmese/U.S. relations, we must assume they would be adversely affected. Additionally, such disclosure would only give credence to Burmese past and present claims and charges of U.S. support and involvement with the Chinese Irregulars.

For the Deputy Director for Plans:

Thomas H. Karamessines²

Attachment

Message From Bangkok

REFERENCE

[less than 1 line of source text not declassified] (TDCSDB-315/05276-71)

1. The Deputy Chief of Mission [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] meeting with General Kriangsak to determine his progress in resettling the Chinese Irregular Forces (CIF) of Generals Li and Tuan and to press him to take appropriate action to discontinue CIF involvement in opium traffic. In early August, General Kriangsak reported that he had a commitment from both Generals Li and Tuan that their involvement in the opium traffic would cease after the 1971 crop had been disposed of. Last week he reported that he had reconfirmed this commitment with General Tuan which action is supported by the reference report. General Kriangsak stated that he was unable to see

² Karamessines signed for Nelson above Nelson's typed signature.

General Li during his August trip to the north but that he intends to follow up again with Li later in September.

2. [5 lines of source text not declassified]

3. In response to our query as to whether Kriangsak had any thoughts on how the refineries in Tachilek could be put out of business, Kriangsak suggested that he attempt to persuade Li and Tuan to undertake this task. He agreed to sound them out on this possibility at the time of his next trip. Kriangsak asked that we clear this informally with Dawee; this was accomplished on 9 September. He noted that there must be no leak to Li or Tuan concerning American interest or support and we assured him that we are as interested as he in maintaining strict security. Although we did not discuss the specifics of compensation to Li and Tuan for a successful operation, Kriangsak noted that he would wish to relate it to other assistance he is providing for the resettlement of the CIF. In addition, it will be necessary to promise death and disability benefits.

4. The foregoing may sound far fetched in view of the well earned reputation of the CIF for their heavy involvement in opium trafficking over the years. We are in no position at this point to provide a reliable assessment of Kriangsak's chances. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] reporting over the past year has reflected Kriangsak's efforts to bring the CIF under control and to regularize their status in Thailand. Though Kriangsak himself remains skeptical about their long term intentions and motivation, he feels that he has made considerable progress in bringing these forces under greater RTG control and that in the process of doing so, his leverage has increased. Tuan and Li have been promised Thai citizenship and their forces will receive permanent resident permits. In return for this and other assistance, the CIF has performed a useful role against Communist insurgents. We believe that Kriangsak's interest in using CIF against the Tachilek refineries should be encouraged and, if appropriate, assisted if this can be accomplished without any disclosure of the hand of the United States Government. We recognize that if successful, the effort will probably be required on a continuing and not just a one-time basis. Kriangsak appreciates this, too, but rightly wants to approach this cautiously, avoiding long-term commitments pending step-by-step evaluation of the results.

5. Messrs. Gross and Minnick have been briefed on this possibility and feel we should pursue its feasibility. [1 line of source text not declassified]

6. Please bring the foregoing to the attention of U. Alexis Johnson and Marshall Green.

137. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, September 17, 1971, 0300Z.

12650. Subject: Counterinsurgency: Communist Insurgent Threat in Thailand and the RTG Response.

1. At a meeting with Prime Minister Thanom, General Praphat, and Marshal Dawee on 14 September, I took the occasion to comment on the growing insurgent threat in selected areas of Thailand in order to press for a more vigorous Thai counterinsurgency response.

2. [4 lines of source text not declassified] This briefing was translated by them into Thai and, we have subsequently learned, read with care by the Prime Minister who instructed that it be given broader distribution to key officials of the Royal Thai Government (RTG). The thrust of the briefing was to call RTG attention to the expanding covert village infra-structure which the CPT has built in the Phuphan Mountain area in the northeast, particularly in the Nakae District of Nakhon Phanom. Though our intelligence in the north is less detailed than in the northeast, attention was also given to the growing numbers of insurgents and more sophisticated weaponry in the north and the expanded activity on the part of the CPT cadre working out of the highland into lowland Thai villages.

3. After noting that since my return I had reviewed developments in the insurgency situation during my absence, I commented on this rather discouraging picture—discouraging to the extent that the situation in these areas has continued to deteriorate during the past year. Recently, the CPT has been able to organize its covert village infra-structure in the northeast to foment at least 8 demonstrations against government officials—demonstrations clearly organized to press Communist interests and not the normal needs of the villagers. At least in this area, the Communists have the capability to manipulate public opinion and stir up the villagers against the government's counterinsurgency efforts. It is a dangerous new feature of the insurgency.

4. I observed that the progress which the CPT has made serves to highlight the need for a more intensive and aggressive RTG response. For one thing, greater cooperation on the part of civil, military, and police forces is urgently required. A number of instances were cited where differences among these various elements had prevented or weakened an effective RTG response. In other cases, there have been problems of

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23 THAI. Secret; Exdis. Repeated to Vientiane, Saigon, and Phnom Penh.

inadequate support and attention from Bangkok resulting in district and province level positions being left unfilled, delays in making budgeted funds for counterinsurgency operations available, etc. a more concerted police effort is needed in some of the most critical areas. Many military patrol, reconnaissance and hunter-capture operations are effective while they last but are not run on a sustained basis. This gives the insurgents an opportunity to regroup and restore their access to the village population.

5. I emphasized that one of the reasons for the new AAT program is to provide additional assistance to the RTG to intensify their counterinsurgency operations. We realize the RTG is making every effort within its own budget to respond to this growing threat and we hope that additional assistance provided in the AAT proposal, by relieving budgetary pressure in other sectors, will enable it to do more than it would otherwise be able to do within present RTG budget limitations.

6. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the intelligence exchanged and for our interest, advice, and support in the entire range of counterinsurgency programs and operations. The RTG is trying, he said, to get the various elements of the government working together more closely, and he cited as an example the recent seminar of governors of the insurgency-infested provinces held in Bangkok under CSOC sponsorship with military, police, and dola participation. Every effort is being made to increase the budget for counterinsurgency operations. Dawee said that in 1970, 600 million baht was allocated for these operations; 650 million in 1971; and for 1972, despite the many cuts made elsewhere, over 800 million baht is budgeted for counterinsurgency. General Praphat said that the military intends to run more operations such as Operation Phalad in the north and that these will be prolonged, not so limited in time as was Phalad. Apparently, the RTA is now planning such an operation in Petchabun for which funds are being sought from lower priority requirements. Also, more intensive reconnaissance and hunter-capture operations are planned for Nakhon Phanom.

7. I expressed my satisfaction and interest in this evidence of increased activity and again asked that in their review of our AAT program, they look for other opportunities for striking hard against the Communists in ways that are not possible within their present budget. The Prime Minister closed with a strong statement of appreciation for the critically important assistance provided by the U.S. Government, noting that the Thais cannot now handle the problem without material aid from us. Praphat echoed this with a statement reflecting his recognition that a more powerful thrust is needed against the internal Communist threat.

138. **Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand [text not declassified]**¹

Bangkok, October 29, 1971.

24202. 1. At General Kriangsak's initiative, we met with him 27 October 1971 on further developments outlined ref. Kriangsak stated that he met earlier that day with CIF Generals Li and Tuan. Generals told Kriangsak that their present raw opium stocks total 14,000 choi. After Kriangsak determined size of stock, he informed Generals that RTG considering purchasing total stock on one-time basis for medicinal purposes. Price for stocks to be determined by current market price. Generals Li and Tuan said they would accept RTG offer, and Kriangsak then ordered them not to move any of these stocks without his personal approval. Kriangsak emphasized to Li and Tuan that RTG purchase, if approved, would be a one-time buy and no more. Further, Kriangsak added, he extracted commitment from Li and Tuan that they will not engage in opium traffic in future.

2. At current market of about 1,200 per choi, preemptive buying of total stock would be close to USD one million. Kriangsak asked that we consult with appropriate USG authorities seeking approval for this preemptive purchase. We reminded Kriangsak that per previous statements [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] this proposal had already been forwarded to Washington for consideration. We added that as of now, however, policy decision had not been communicated to mission in Bangkok.

3. Kriangsak commented that he starting to resettle CIF personnel and dependents in about December. In the meantime, he paying cost for feeding and housing CIF families which held in five or six locations in Fang district along Thai-Burma border. It appears clear that Kriangsak strapped for funds in his resettlement program and that preemptive buying of opium stocks will alleviate partially Li and Tuan's needs for funds.

4. Amb. Unger briefed on above 29 Oct. Amb. requests that substance of above be passed to Assistant Secretary Green together with statement that he endorses favorable action so that we can begin specific discussions with General Kriangsak in near future on conditions and means of carrying out this action.

¹ Source: National Security Council, Country File, Thailand, 1971. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. In an October 29 memorandum to Green, [*text not declassified*] stated that this message was [*text not declassified*] also being provided to "General Haig at the White House and Mr. Ingersoll in BNDD."

139. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, November 3, 1971, 0324Z.

Conto 24/14775. Subject: Connally Visit; East Asia—Secretary Connally's Calls on Minister of Finance Serm and Prime Minister Thanom.

Summary: Secretary Connally affirmed that the United States will honor its commitments to countries of SE Asia and that U.S. military presence as well as economic assistance will continue while a need exists. Secretary Connally also assured the Thai that the President's visit to the PRC would not jeopardize the interests of Thailand or other third countries. The major concern of Prime Minister Thanom was China and the threat posed to Thai security. He urged the U.S. to maintain a strong position in SE Asia while trying to improve relations with the PRC.

1. Secretary Connally called first on Minister of Finance Serm Vinichayakul. After initial pleasantries, Connally asked for Serm's comments on the U.S. economic program. Serm said he understood the factors which prompted the U.S. to take this action. The fact that the dollar was not devalued, Serm felt, was important to countries such as Thailand with substantial dollar reserves. Secretary Connally assured Serm that the U.S. program took interests of developing nations into account. The administration believed that objectives of the program would be mutually beneficial to U.S. and developing countries. The U.S. looks to Southeast Asia as vital participants in world trade, suppliers of essential raw materials, and important trading partners. U.S. interest in this area will continue, Secretary Connally said.

2. At the conclusion of the meeting, Serm escorted Secretary Connally and the Ambassador to a meeting with Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn. Other persons present for the meeting were Deputy Prime Minister Pote Sarasin, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, Lt. General Sawaeng Senanarong, Minister of the Office of the Prime Minister and Deputy Minister Econ Affairs Prasit Kanjonawatana.

3. Secretary Connally opened with a forceful declaration of U.S. commitment to Thailand and other countries of SE Asia. President Nixon, he said, had asked him to affirm that the U.S. will maintain its military and economic presence in SE Asia as long as the need ex-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/CONNALLY. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Received at 4:17 a.m. on November 4.

ists. In accordance with the Nixon Doctrine, Thailand can be assured of continued U.S. assistance to help meet its economic and military needs. Despite the recent defeat of the Foreign Assistance Bill by the U.S. Senate, the administration is vigorously seeking interim means of continuing assistance until the question can be favorably resolved.

4. In response, Thanom (speaking in Thai with Thanat interpreting his remarks) thanked the Secretary for the assurances which he brought from the President. Thanom said that U.S. military forces and assistance must play a vital role not only in Vietnamization but also "Southeast Asianization" to assure the future security of the region. He pointed out that Thailand had cooperated closely with the United States in realization of mutual objectives and that Thailand was fostering SE Asian unity by participating in regional programs.

5. Turning to the question of China, Thanom said that Thailand, like the US, believed that the time was ripe for the People's Republic of China to become a member of the United Nations, and had supported the U.S. position at the UN. Secretary Connally expressed his appreciation for Thai support. The U.S. realized that the question of admitting the PRC to the UN was of vital importance to countries "only a stone's throw from mainland China."

6. Secretary Connally said that the purpose of President Nixon's visit to the PRC was to seek an improved relationship with the PRC. He emphasized that the U.S. had modest expectations for the results of the meeting. The President, he said, feels a responsibility to try to bring the PRC into the community of nations in a peaceful fashion. However, the U.S. would not cultivate new friends at the expense of old. The issues discussed at the meeting in China would be bilateral problems between the U.S. and the PRC; third countries need not fear that their interests would be jeopardized.

7. Thanom said that the China question was, of course, of great concern to Thailand. He urged the U.S. to maintain its "military/economic/political umbrella" over SE Asia at the same time that it tried to improve relations with the PRC. Diminished U.S. interest in SE Asia could result in a power vacuum which Peking might try to fill. He mentioned the Chinese road building program in Laos and Burma and expressed apprehension about the ultimate purpose of these roads. Secretary Connally, in response, restated that the U.S. would continue to maintain its strong posture in SE Asia while the need existed.

8. *Comment:* The major concern of the Thai was the question of Communist China. Secretary Connally effectively outlined the objectives of the President's visit to the PRC, hopefully allaying Thai fears that the visit might be injurious to their interests. Secretary Connally also took the initiative in explaining that the administration is working

hard to avoid any disruption in military and economic assistance which might occur as a result of the defeat of the Foreign Assistance Bill by the Senate. The Thai did not question his assessment of the problem or his assurance that it would be resolved.

Unger

140. Memorandum From Secretary of Commerce Stans to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, November 12, 1971.

SUBJECT

Thai Cotton Textiles

I have read carefully the State Department's memorandum of October 29² recommending that we release from embargo the Thai cotton apparel awaiting entry.³ The grounds for this recommendation after acknowledgement by State that the Thai Government has handled the matter badly, are that "a political decision (is necessary) permitting the entry of the embargoed goods, not further consideration of the problem as a purely textile matter"

This is probably the worst possible time for the Administration to make textile import decisions on policy grounds such as these. We have just concluded four understandings on wool and man-made fiber textiles with our principal Asian suppliers. These understandings need to be converted into agreements, notes exchanged, and the agreements implemented. The President has reaffirmed to the domestic textile industry that he intends to implement these agreements effectively to

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 563, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. V. Limited Official Use.

² The Department of State memorandum to Kissinger, October 29, stated that the embargo of the 50,000 dozen pair of cotton nightwear "is now damaging our overall relationship with Thailand." It stated the Department's belief that "the political realities of the present situation require immediate release of the nightwear in exchange for a Thai promise to negotiate." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, INCO-COTTON 17 US-THAI)

³ See Document 134.

hold imports from these countries within the terms of the agreements. This means that we will need to implement these agreements in purely textile terms. If we allow policy considerations such as those suggested by State to intervene, the Administration will lose the confidence of the industry and call into question our intentions with regard to the implementation of the new Asian agreements.

The Thai Government has indeed handled the matter badly.

1. It neglected to advise its industry that the U.S. had invoked the provisions of the Long Term Cotton Textile Arrangement (LTA).

2. It permitted shipments to continue without control during the 60-day period provided for consultations so that significantly more than the restraint level specified in our April 29 note to the Thai Government was shipped subsequent to the receipt of our note.

3. It did not avail itself of the opportunity to consult until the last day of the 60-day period specified for consultations in the LTA.

4. Its official representative assured us that further shipments would cease as of August 1, but our records show that shipments continued into September. (October data are not yet available.)

The State Department has not handled the matter well either.

1. In January 1971 Embassy Bangkok was requested in a State Department message cleared by the Interagency Textile Administrative Committee to alert the Thai Government about the possibility of action under the LTA on the items now in dispute. The Embassy chose not to do so.

2. In August 1971 when the Thais came to Washington to consult on this matter, Commerce proposed that we suggest to the Thais the negotiation of a bilateral agreement together with the outline of arrangement and the dates for such a negotiation. State did not concur.

3. In September 1971, Commerce proposed that one of its senior officials could undertake such a negotiation while he was in Hong Kong the last week of that month. State did not concur.

4. In October 1971, Commerce proposed that we ask the Thai Government to enter into a memorandum of understanding—just as was done with the four major Asian suppliers of wool and man-mades—that would contain the key points of a bilateral agreement. We offered to release the embargoed goods immediately thereafter when the Thai delegation came to Washington to negotiate an agreement and before an agreement was negotiated. State did not concur.

Despite my clear negative reactions to the State Department memorandum and the difficulty I have in seeing how the embargoed pajamas can be such an adverse factor in our relations with the Thai Government, we have proposed another approach to resolve this problem which has been accepted by State, Treasury, Agriculture, Labor, and STR. It involves releasing a portion of the embargoed goods if the Thai Government will agree to begin the negotiation of a bilateral agreement on a date certain in the near future and, if no agreement is reached,

the quantity so released will be charged against the level for the second year the restraints are in effect. The amount of goods to be released is equal to the second year's restraint level. State is proceeding to communicate with the Thai Government along these lines.

Maurice H. Stans

141. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, November 16, 1971, 1207Z.

Johto 2/15421. From Ambassador. Subj: Under Secretary Johnson's Audience with His Majesty the King.

1. This morning Undersecretary Johnson, accompanied by myself and John Getz, was received in audience by His Majesty the King. The discussion ranged widely over various aspects of the current situation in Thailand, particularly in the field of economic development, noting forward progress particularly in the northeast since the period when the Under Secretary was Ambassador here.

2. Under Secretary Johnson then expressed concern about the worldwide narcotics problem and noted with satisfaction the progress that was being made toward the development of a Thai/U.S. program in this field. He referred specifically to my appointment with General Prasert earlier this morning. The Under Secretary then mentioned the problem of finding an economic alternative to opium production for the hill tribes in northern Thailand and said that he understood His Majesty was sponsoring some useful work in this field.

3. The King responded readily and talked at length about the experimentation going on with a number of crops (for example, peaches, soy beans, vegetables, and coffee). He explained the need for proceeding carefully, "unofficially," and sometimes at greater cost to be sure that the hill tribesmen would be won over and would become willing participants. He discussed the importance of being sure there was a market (His Majesty advocated cooperatively organized rather than commercial canning industries) and the need for transport to market. Not unexpectedly, this led His Majesty to emphasize the heavy requirement for aircraft, particularly helicopters and stol planes.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, ORG 7 U. Secret; Limdis.

4. Discussion was very friendly and constructive throughout, and His Majesty made none of the critical and pessimistic comments about the RTG or the situation in Thailand which had so strongly marked some earlier conversations with American visitors.²

5. Under Secretary has seen and approved this message.

Unger

² One such conversation was Secretary Connally's with the King on November 3 at Chitralada Palace in Bangkok, as reported in telegram Conto 30/9579 from Djakarta, November 5, in which Unger reported that the King "found the government's efforts inadequate and its performance in some cases deficient." (Ibid., Conference Files 1966-72: Lot 70 D 387, Box 526)

142. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, November 17, 1971, 0643Z.

15497. 1. Tonight at 2010 I met at his request with Prime Minister Thanom. With him were Deputy Prime Ministers Praphat and Pote and Marshal Dawee and General Kriangsak. Prime Minister informed me that since 1900 hours there had been effected a coup d'état carried out entirely under his control. Thanom said that this has been done for the sake of the security of Thailand "both externally and internally" as an alternative to letting things go to ruin in the country because of inaction. The decision had been taken to move rapidly and stop an unacceptable deterioration.

2. The Prime Minister, with contributions from others present, then described the deplorable situation that has grown up because of the actions of the members of Parliament since the inauguration of the Parliament in 1969. They cited difficulties with Parliaments in earlier Thai history but said the problems had never been so acute as in this case. In particular, the Parliament has interfered in a totally unacceptable way in the administration of the country and obstructed essential actions in many fields. Furthermore, collectively and individually Parliament and its members have attacked the government for its

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 15 THAI. Secret; Immediate; Exdis.

performance and also made many personal attacks and have spread among the people a growing lack of confidence in the government. There have been serious budgetary delays this year as in previous years so that money for the country's development is available only six months out of each year; members of Parliament are obstructing appropriation of funds for essential government purposes including national security and want money to be diverted instead to funds which would be spent in their districts for pork barrel purposes. The National Economic Development Board's five year plan is held up because of parliamentary inaction and there was specific reference made to World Bank President McNamara's statement that economic development in Thailand in the sixties was more rapid than it is today. The government is unable to take advantage of World Bank loans because the Parliament refuses to enact the necessary legislation.

3. The Prime Minister and General Praphat both referred to activities of members of Parliament with labor groups, students and others whom they were seeking to turn against the government. For their own purposes they were stirring up discontent and unrest and misunderstanding in complete disregard of the stability of the government and the country. According to Pote there was a concentrated move to stir up students to seek to take the universities away from the government and run them independently and to take advantage of student immaturity to turn them into instruments against the government.

4. Reference as then made to a certain number of members of Parliament who had Communist leanings, were very happy to have the PRC in the UN and were insisting that the RTG rush into establishing relations with the PRC immediately without giving any consideration to the dangers that could ensue. Praphat clearly attached special importance to this issue, commenting on the dangers of certain Chinese-born who were not Thai in spite of having been born here. The Communists were now trying to install in such people a feeling of the greatness of the new China. Pote also emphasized this point, saying that there is considerable recent evidence of Chinese in Thailand becoming hostile to the Thai—although the PRC admission to the UN is certainly not the cause of the problem it has complicated it.

5. Marshal Thanom added the degenerating situation as far as public safety was concerned and the rapid increase in crime. Actions being taken now would make it possible to move much more effectively against criminals and make it possible to restore law and order. I said that I was aware of the conditions they were describing but was surprised that they found them so critical as to oblige them to take this action. After the several present again reviewed the budgetary and other problems they had mentioned before, Marshal Thanom concluded that discussion with his insistence that the action was taken out of no motivation except for the security and well-being of the country.

6. Thanom went on to say that the principal well-established Thai institutions and laws will continue to be observed and above all, the institution of the monarchy. When I asked if His Majesty had been informed of the action they said that Marshal Thanom had just sent him a letter explaining their actions. They did not feel it right to seek in any way to involve the King in their action and if they turned out to be wrong, it was on their head. Marshal Thanom went on to state that Thailand will uphold all its treaty obligations and that their action should have no effect on relations with friendly countries. They said that I was the only Ambassador they were calling in to inform personally and they hoped in particular that there would be no change in Thailand's relations with the US. (Reference was made to our recent active discussions, presumably on narcotics and AAT.) They insisted that their action was entirely an internal one and need have no effects or repercussions outside. (They also asked me not to mention my meeting with them since no other foreign representative was being called in.) General Praphat asked me whether I thought there should be some change in their foreign policy. I first told them that was for them to decide, not for me. I then said that we were generally happy with the foreign policy of the Thai Govt as it has been conducted over many years, particularly the close cooperative relations we have enjoyed. We also realized that in times of change like the present, it made good sense for the Thai Govt to be broadening its relations with other countries outside the circle of its close friends and particularly concentrating on strengthening its ties with its neighbors.

7. Since the group appeared to have completed their explanations for the actions taken, I then told them very frankly that I was sure their actions would be greeted around the world with considerable strong criticism. I said that also in the US they must anticipate expressions of disappointment at least, and in the press and probably in the Congress some sharply adverse comment about returning to dictatorship, etc. Marshal Thanom acknowledged this but said that their decision had been that regardless, for the good of Thailand they must proceed. Dawee expressed the fear that without strong direction there was danger that Thailand might go the way of Vietnam. Gen. Praphat said that while they respected the principles of democracy and had attempted to put them into action, it was clear that in Thailand today democracy doesn't work.

8. I acknowledged their comments but asked whether they did not feel that dissolving of the Parliament and their other actions might not in fact make more trouble for them internally with the Chinese groups, students and insurgents. They insisted that groups like the students, farmers and laborers would under normal circumstances be well behaved and support the government but they were now being instigated by those individuals, including members of Parliament, who

were stirring up opposition to the government for their own benefit. Under the revolutionary group it was anticipated that the government could deal more effectively with agitation and subversive activities. They anticipated that there would be a rather prompt return to an orderly situation and one that would be generally acceptable to the people. I said I hoped that this would be the end result and that they did not find that they had created more trouble for themselves by their action.

9. I then asked what would be their next steps. The Prime Minister said that he could not say what would follow but it was explained that for the time being, with the Cabinet having been dissolved, there would be a caretaker arrangement, ministries would operate under their Under Secretaries and policy questions would be referred to the head of the revolutionary group, Marshal Thanom. Thanom himself said that he anticipated that in about two to three months a regular government with a cabinet would again be formed. In reply to my question they confirmed that various of the revolutionary party orders which were first put into effect in 1958 would again be enforced, including Article 17, having to do with security.

10. General Praphat returned to the public relations problem, recognizing that the revolutionary group's purposes and reasons for its action must be effectively explained abroad. We talked about the possibility, as a longer run matter, of the Thai securing professional advice in this field. Somewhat later I returned to this point with Marshal Dawee and emphasized the importance of the purposes and their reasons for taking this drastic action being fully and effectively explained. At this time I also mentioned that it would be important if they could make clear their intention of returning to constitutional government at some point.

11. This entire discussion was carried on in a friendly, almost relaxed atmosphere, the Thai present appearing calm and confident of the rightness of their action. I, of course, committed myself to reporting in full everything they told me so that my government would be aware of their reasons for action. While I made clear that I realized they were alone in a position to make decisions about Thailand's Government, it was my judgment that they must anticipate encountering considerable criticism abroad. As for the consequences at home in Thailand, I expressed my personal doubts but acknowledged they were obviously the best judges.

12. I learned later that Marshal Thanom, Praphat, Pote, Dawee and General Prasert (Director General TNPD) went to explain in person to His Majesty the King the actions they had taken. According to Dawee the King listened sympathetically and wished them well.

143. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, November 17, 1971.

SUBJECT

Ambassador Unger's Report on Coup in Thailand

Ambassador Unger has telephoned to State (Assistant Secretary Green)² a report of his meeting with the leaders of the coup in Thailand. This report provides significant details of the reasons for the coup and on the make-up of the new leadership structures, as follows:

—The leadership group consists of Field Marshal Thanom (now known as "Head of the Revolutionary Council" rather than Prime Minister), General Praphat, Pote Sarasin, and Air Marshal Dawee. These say that there are no differences among them. Thanom will be in charge of the Revolutionary Council for an undetermined period, and the country will be under martial law.

—The coup was undertaken in order to dismiss the Parliament and suspend the Constitution. This was done in response to what was described to Unger as a "deteriorating situation" in the country caused by the failure of the Parliament to measure up to legislative requirements such as the budget and other badly-needed pieces of legislation. Moreover, some members of the Parliament were undermining the Government by working with groups in the country seeking to broaden instability.

—One of the failures of the Parliament had been to impose restrictions on the terms offered for a World Bank loan, which made acceptance of this loan impossible.

—No foreign policy issues were involved in the coup, and there will be no change in Thai foreign policy.³ The coup leaders are hopeful that cordial relations with the U.S. will continue. When Unger pointed out that a critical reaction in the U.S. and around the world might be expected over this lapse from democracy, the leaders said that they had anticipated a reaction of this kind, but felt their move was necessary on the grounds of internal security and in order to assure decisive action with respect to internal development. (Unger suggested

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VII. Secret. Sent for information. Haig signed for Kissinger. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

² No record of this telephone conversation has been found.

³ The President underlined this sentence and wrote: "K—This is what matters."

that as a public line we should express disappointment that the Thai effort to reestablish representative government had run into difficulties, note however that these are difficult times, and then hope for an early restoration of constitutional government.)

—There is now no Cabinet. Thanat, in meeting with a foreign correspondents group, called himself “Mr. Thanat.” Unger thought that this might be temporary, and is reserving his judgment on Thanat’s position.

—The King has been informed, but it is too early for his attitude to be made known. The Revolutionary group is taking full responsibility for the coup, making it plain that the King is not involved.

—It is also too early to know the reaction of the public and the press. Unger feels that there will be a mixed reaction, but that people will be cautious in commenting. There is no evidence of public unrest.

—Unger is the only foreign ambassador who has been called in to meet the new leadership and this fact has not been publicly made known.

Comment

As indicated by Ambassador Unger, there should be no change in Thai relations with the U.S. The leaders of the Revolutionary Council are in fact essentially the same ones with whom we have been dealing all along, and we can anticipate that our programs in Thailand will continue without interruption. One possible leadership casualty, however, is Thanat, whose moves to make contacts with Peking have drawn some criticism from more conservative leaders such as Praphat. Praphat also had reservations about Thanat’s proposal to favor an endorsement of neutrality for Southeast Asia at an ASEAN meeting scheduled for November 25 at Kuala Lumpur.

Praphat may in fact turn out to be the new strong-man, since the coup could not have been undertaken without the military forces which he commands. Thanom was planning to step down as Prime Minister in 1972 and Praphat was considered likely to replace him; the new situation may thus have simply moved up Praphat’s succession to power even though Thanom may remain as titular head of the Revolutionary Council for some time.

I believe that we should be very cautious about commenting on the coup along the lines suggested by Ambassador Unger. There will be criticism enough on the Hill and in the media—with resulting pressure on legislation—without the Government adding to the uproar. Press guidance so far has been to say “no comment.”

144. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Bangkok, November 18, 1971, 9:30–11:05 a.m.

SUBJECT

Under Secretary Johnson's Visit with NEC Leaders

PARTICIPANTS

Thai—Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn
 General Praphat Charusathien
 Pote Sarasin
 ACM Dawee Chullasap

American—Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson
 Ambassador Leonard Unger
 John Getz, Special Asst. to Under Secretary Johnson
 George F. Muller, Politico-Military Counselor
 Laurence G. Pickering, Political Counselor
 Harlan Y. M. Lee, Political Officer

The American contingent arrived at Government House at 9:30 a.m.

Pote Sarasin first came in alone to talk to the Under Secretary and Ambassador Unger. Pote said that there was no coup but simply a change. He said that doing business through the Parliament had become "in fact impossible," and they felt there was no other way but to change the structure of the government.

He spoke of three things that he believed were most important in bringing about the decision to change the government. First was that the economic plan would be impossible to implement under the existing system. (Parliament obstructed international loan policy by refusing to make their funds available). Second, problems within the government party itself could not be resolved. Third, there was the problem of the Chinese in Thailand and the possibility of subversion of the Chinese community.

In response to Ambassador Johnson's question, Pote said there would be no problem of political prisoners as in the Sarit days, although he had earlier spoken of stern measures to be taken against any opposition. He said, "the people were dissatisfied and something had to be done." He hopes that the new government will be decisive. His greatest fear is not that Thanom will be too harsh but that he will not be firm enough and then the change will be for naught.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 15 THAI. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Embassy Political Officer Harlan Y.M. Lee and approved in J on December 21. The meeting was held at Government House.

The meeting then shifted to the main conference room where the Thai side comprised Field Marshal Thanom, General Praphat, Air Marshal Dawee and Pote.

Under Secretary Johnson opened the conversation by saying that he had been to Laos yesterday and had visited Long Tieng and the Plain of Jars and a battery of Thai volunteers. He said the Thai were doing a good job.

Pote asked about the Cambodian situation. Under Secretary Johnson said that on the whole he felt that Cambodia in the last 18 months had done very well. General Praphat expressed concern about the morale of FANK and commented that the Cambodians changed leaders or commanders too often. Under Secretary Johnson said that at the top there had been little change and that Lon Nol's health continued to improve; he was impressed by their strong sense of nationalism.

Field Marshal Thanom said that last night he had invited the Ambassador and Under Secretary Johnson to meet with him. Regrettably the Under Secretary was not available but the Field Marshal assumed that the Ambassador had briefed Mr. Johnson. He said the Revolutionary Group had had a note sent to all Embassies explaining the reasons for the takeover. He said there was no change in Thai foreign policy.

Under Secretary Johnson said it was naturally up to the Thai Government to decide what must be done, but they should be aware that their action will have unfortunate effects abroad, especially in the United States. He expressed particular concern about its effect on the debate on economic and military assistance at this particularly critical time.

Field Marshal Thanom said that one of the reasons they undertook the change of government was that they felt they could then more effectively proceed with programs the U.S. has advocated, such as providing the counterpart funds necessary to AAT. The government had set aside this money, but the Assembly would not have agreed to its being spent for defense. He agreed that this should not be cited in public as a reason.

Under Secretary Johnson referred to the strong opposition in the U.S. Senate to the foreign aid bill and to assistance to Thailand in particular. This latest move will strengthen the hand of opponents of such assistance and the immediate question is what can be done to reduce the damage to the Thai program. He said that realistically the Thai must anticipate some reduction in U.S. aid in any case. He expressed the fear that riders will now be attached to the bill aimed specifically at the Thai program. He made clear that the Administration did not want this but it could well happen.

Reiterating that the Thai must make their own decisions, the Under Secretary ventured certain suggestions. First, he said that the phrase coup d'état creates an extremely bad impression and brings to mind soldiers shooting up the government and this obviously is not what had happened. But the phrase had been used and would be picked up by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Washington Star*. He emphasized the press aspect in the U.S.

Field Marshal Thanom said that there were not only military but also civilian leaders in the new government and he hoped that the foreign press would pick up the local press coverage. Under Secretary Johnson noted that the local English-language *Nation* headlines had been "coup d'état" and that was what would be picked up in the foreign press.

The Under Secretary then said that a statement as soon as possible to the effect that the intention of the group is to return to a constitutional government would help. If it contained dates as to when this would be done, that would be even better. Field Marshal Thanom said they were considering what type of constitution would be suitable for a permanent constitution for Thailand. Pote said that they would make a public announcement regarding the constitution, but he did not know when this would be done.

Under Secretary Johnson said that the change will be made that a military dictatorship has taken over, with all the bad connotation that has in the United States, recalling events in Greece and Brazil.

General Praphat said that the people of the United States do not understand what "military dictatorship" means in Thailand, and that we think of it in terms of Latin American governments. He said the Americans in Thailand should help to make it clearer to Americans in the U.S. that what is called "military dictatorship" here is greatly different from the Latin American type. The Prime Minister said that the Thai preserve the institution of the Crown, for example, and do not attempt to set themselves up as Chiefs of State. He said the leadership after announcing their takeover met with the King, and the King gave his blessing to the change.

General Praphat said that perhaps the Thai should invite newspaper men and politicians to Thailand to see for themselves what the situation is like. Under Secretary Johnson said that would be helpful in the longer run but the immediate problem was what statements were to be made.

Air Marshal Dawee said that they had to terminate the power of the MP's, that MP's were promoting student riots and inciting labor and others, which led to the present situation. If nothing were done, the situation would become so bad that even if the U.S. gave a billion dollars in aid to Thailand there would be no country left to defend.

The Under Secretary said talking about executive-legislative relations would not help much in the U.S. Pote said that the press and Congress will always interpret things the way they *want* to and that Fulbright and Mansfield will never be won over. Most important to Thailand is what the leadership does in the months to come to bring about stability, security, and to assure the people's welfare. If the people are satisfied, this will vindicate the action. He said they know the problems caused by their action and know that they must live with these problems.

Under Secretary Johnson agreed that what the leaders did would be important but said again that his immediate worry is the short term. He himself must go before Congress soon to defend the aid program for Thailand. Pote asked the Under Secretary to help explain to Congress and the people in the U.S. that the situation in Thailand is different from that in the U.S.

Ambassador Unger said that the immediate problem to be addressed now is that certain things must be said regarding the change and that it is important that they be said in the right way. He suggested that it should be emphasized that this was not a bloody coup but a peaceful takeover by the same men who led the previous government, and that they are looking to the day when they can return to constitutional processes.

Air Marshal Dawee said the leaders will not keep power forever and that they also want to work toward democracy. He said that the Under Secretary could explain that he saw himself the takeover was quiet and there was no bloodshed.

Field Marshal Thanom said that he believed actions in the next few weeks and months were more important than statements that could be made now. Ambassador Unger said there was no reason why the leadership could not do both. Pote said they would do that. They would have to consider what could be said. They were not saying "no" to the suggestion.

Under Secretary Johnson returned to the comment concerning those such as Fulbright who would always be opposed to assistance to Thailand. He said he was really concerned about the middle group that would be prepared to shift depending on how this matter was handled in the next few days.

Thanom said that it was fortunate that Under Secretary Johnson was here at this time and could explain what had happened and say there was no bloodshed. Dawee observed that children went to school as usual, and there were the usual traffic jams and most everything was proceeding as if nothing happened. Pote also said that Under Secretary Johnson could help Thailand by stating that things were normal; he had confidence that Johnson's words had great weight. The Under

Secretary said that because he is known as a friend of Thailand his statements may be discounted. Ambassador Unger said all U.S. official statements will lack in persuasiveness.

Under Secretary Johnson said that when the coup of 1958 occurred, Thailand was not in the public focus, but because of what has happened in Southeast Asia in the intervening years Thailand was much more in the news and that people in the U.S. were more interested in Thai affairs.

The Under Secretary made the additional suggestion that it would be helpful if the Thai would emphasize the civilian and non-military aspects of the government. The press will seize on the fact that General Prasert is to be the administrator for the civilian side. People will not notice that Prasert is now Police Director General but only that he is a General. Field Marshal Thanom said that civilian Under Secretaries are not acting in place of ministers in all except the Ministry of Defense.

Under Secretary Johnson said that to an American having a Parliament is good and abolishing Parliament is bad, that nothing can really change this attitude. However, the way the press is handled can help, and the RTG cannot afford to ignore press relations, or expect the Americans to do the job for them. He suggested that the Thai, if they have not already done so, should consider hiring a full-time public relations man, a Thai, to handle press relations for them. Pote then said to the Under Secretary, "You find such a public relations man for us and we will hire him." Ambassador Unger said that in the U.S. we usually use newsmen or those familiar with and acceptable to the working press to deal with this type of thing. Pote asked who there is in Thailand who can do this for the group. Ambassador Unger answered that the Americans can't name anyone but that he should look for someone, perhaps working in the English-language press, who has good foreign connections as well as being effective in Thailand. Under Secretary Johnson said that they should have a first-class press man in the Prime Minister's office and who would be responsible for all statements issued by the Revolutionary Group.

The Under Secretary asked whether the Thai leaders ever held press conferences. Pote said formerly the Prime Minister and he had weekly press conferences but the reporters "never printed what they said." Under Secretary Johnson noted that Thanat's speech last night was helpful.

The conversation again turned to Cambodia, the Under Secretary's next destination. General Praphat said there were certainly more headaches there than in Thailand. Part of the problem in Cambodia was that a number of people were competing for the leadership. In Thailand, he said, there was no competition among the leaders of the

Group, that they worked shoulder to shoulder despite the attempts to create dissension.

Under Secretary Johnson asked the Thai if they had any advice they wanted to give us on Cambodia. General Praphat said the best thing the U.S. could do in Cambodia is to assist people who could bring stability to the country. Thanom and Praphat and the others agreed that the two who could do this were Lon Nol and Sirik Matak.

Under Secretary Johnson noted that at the time the Khmer Government had announced the dissolution of their Parliament, they had announced at the same time that they were establishing a Constituent Assembly. This had greatly dampened down reaction in the U.S. to the dissolution of the Parliament.

Field Marshal Thanom asked Under Secretary Johnson to convey to President Nixon his good wishes. He expressed the hope that the President will understand that the actions taken by the Revolutionary Group have been carefully considered and were taken to assure the security and well-being of the people. He stressed their attachment to the Constitutional Monarchy.

Under Secretary Johnson noted that there was in fact stability in Thailand, but it is up to the Thai Government to get this across to the public abroad. Pote asked again that Under Secretary Johnson help to get this point across to Congress.

The Prime Minister closed with the hope that the close relationships between our two countries would be maintained. The Under Secretary assured him that that was also his goal.

The meeting ended at 11:05 a.m.

145. Memorandum From Robert Hormats of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Washington, December 1, 1971.

SUBJECT

Progress on Thai Cotton Textiles

As you will recall, Dick Kennedy indicated several weeks ago that we had put the pressure on the bureaucracy to resolve the Thai textile issue without going to the President. Happily, the bureaucracy came up with a compromise solution which was acceptable to the Thai. Accordingly, we are releasing from embargo 18,000 dozen pairs of cotton pajamas, and the Thai are sending a representative to Washington to negotiate a bilateral textile agreement. Once that agreement is reached, we will release from embargo additional 50,000 dozen pairs of pajamas, which will be charged against Thailand's negotiated quota next year.

I shall continue to follow this.

¹Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VII. No classification marking. Sent for action. Drafted and initialed by Hormats, with the concurrence of Colonel Richard Kennedy. A notation on the memorandum by Haig reads: "Great job by all around. AH" At the bottom of the page another notation in Kennedy's handwriting reads: "AI: The above added to encouraging news on the AAT suggests we may have pulled it off. Hopefully we'll have the AAT wrapped up very shortly—the Thai have agreed to everything—only a few minor technical problems remain and are being worked out now. Embassy has already drafted a proposed exchange of notes concluding the agreement. RTK"

146. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

Washington, December 14, 1971.

[Source: National Security Council, Intelligence Subject Files, Country File, Thailand. Secret; Eyes Only. 2 pages of source text not declassified.]

147. Editorial Note

A meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) was held on December 23, 1971, in the White House Situation Room to address the emergency situation created by the North Vietnamese attacks in the Plain of Jars in Laos in the early morning of December 18. The North attacked much earlier in the season and took advantage of bad weather, which prevented U.S. tactical air forces from effectively supporting Meo and Thai forces. The North Vietnamese also used “highly accurate artillery fire” with the heaviest artillery pieces (Soviet-made 130 mm field guns) they had ever used on the Plain.

The main NVA thrust was made at Fire Support Bases Mustang and Lion, which were defended by Thai SGU battalions. William Nelson of the CIA described what happened. Nelson said that the Thais had about 2,700 men deployed on December 15 and that they had suffered an estimated 400 killed and 170 wounded. According to Nelson, “The Thai 609 battalion, at Fire Support Base Lion, was the worst hit. At one time 200–300 enemy bodies were laying in the perimeter defense wire, while Sting Ray Fire Support Base from Phou Seu provided covering 155 mm fire to within 50 meters of their outposts. During the night of the 19th, elements of the BG 609 requested permission to withdraw. Permission was denied, and they were told to hold their position and that reinforcements were en route. During the night of December 19–20, radio contact was lost with the BG 609, while hand-to-hand combat activity was underway.” Nelson said that they fought “very well,” and that the base had held until the “loss of the supporting Meo position allowed enemy forces to employ direct fire weapons on the base, destroying ammunition supplies, pinning gun crews and security troops down.”

Thai troops at Fire Support Bases King Kong and Panther (Thai SGU battalions 606–608) “fought a constant battle” through December 20 and into December 21. They were told to abandon King Kong on December 20. Nelson said that the “Thais put up a good fight. They withdrew in good order.” He then described how three Meo and three Thai battalions, about 4,780 troops, had arrived at the Ban Na/Pha Dong resistance line. He said that the CIA didn’t know “where three other Thai battalions are,” that Ban Na/Pha Dong was “a very porous line,” and that all the friendly forces artillery had been lost on the Plain of Jars, although some of it was being replaced. He added that three Thai irregular battalions (SGUs 616, 617, and 618) of 1,403 men had been taken out of training and had been airlifted into Long Tieng on December 20 and 21.

When President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger asked whether regular Thai troops were available as reinforcements, Nelson supposed that they were, but said that “it’s a question of paying for them.” Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson then ex-

plained that "we are not permitted to support them. Symington's ceiling, as you know, is \$350 million. One thing we have to do today is decide how we are going to handle the ceiling."

Nelson then described how enemy activity in South Laos had been light. The only critical area was around Paksong, where two Thai battalions had been hit very hard 10 days before and "rendered ineffective." Still, he said, the "strength is with the Thais." Kissinger said that the high option for the defense of Laos was "to continue to defend the Long Tieng area and to undertake the defense of the area at the junction of routes 7 and 13," and asked whether "we have the forces for the high option." The State Department's William Sullivan replied: "No, not unless we get Thai regulars. And unless the Thai Government pays for the regulars, we don't have a Chinaman's chance of getting them. (to Dr. Kissinger) Excuse me for mentioning your friends."

To Kissinger's question as to whether the Thai military program (meaning the AAT) had been agreed to, Johnson replied that it was "close to agreement. The last meeting was yesterday, and there are no outstanding issues." Nelson then added that "I understand that the Defense view is that there is no way to beat the ceiling and that we should be honest and forthright with the Congress. The feeling of the Secretary is that we should be honest and ask Congress for more money."

Kissinger eventually decided to obtain President Nixon's guidance on what steps, if any, to take to overcome the problem caused by the Congressional ceiling of \$350 million for expenditures in Laos in FY 1972. There was also considerable discussion of providing more U.S. air support for the Meo and Thai forces in Laos.

In the end, the Thai volunteer SGU battalions, combined with extensive U.S. air forces support (including B-52 bombers) permitted the U.S.-backed forces in Laos to survive this North Vietnamese assault and to hold key positions such as Long Tieng. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-115, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1971)

148. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand¹

Washington, December 24, 1971, 1050Z.

230898. Ref: Bangkok 17212.²

1. Following is text of letter from the President to be delivered to Marshal Thanom soonest. Further instructions contained in immediately following septel.

2. "Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I am pleased that you took the initiative to write me about the current situation in North Laos. You can be assured that I fully share the concern which you have expressed and agree that urgent action is needed to meet this increased threat. The reports which I have received make it clear that the Thai irregular units in the Plaine des Jarres were courageous and effective under intense attack and that they made the North Vietnamese pay dearly for their gains.

The three specific objectives for our air effort, which you have outlined, accord completely with our own estimate of the most urgent requirements in that field. I have directed that all necessary steps be taken to meet these objectives. I hope that as the weather improves we will see positive results in the next few days.

In addition to the measures which can appropriately be taken from the air, there remain significant problems on the ground. The losses suffered in both manpower and equipment will require urgent corrective action. In this connection, I have directed the accelerated delivery of the equipment, especially artillery, which will be needed for effective ground defenses.

Meanwhile, the manpower and deployment needs generated by the current situation are matters to which you, together with Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, will wish to give urgent attention.

I am asking Ambassador Unger to discuss these matters with you in greater detail and report promptly to me. Sincerely,"

Rogers

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VIII. Top Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Repeated to Vientiane and Saigon. Drafted at the White House, cleared by Haig and Sullivan, and approved by Johnson.

² Attached but not printed is telegram 17212 from Bangkok, December 20, which transmitted a letter to Nixon from Thanom, requesting urgent U.S. air support and additional U.S. arms aid for the battle in Laos.

149. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, January 17, 1972, 0423Z.

680. Subject: Insurgency in the North.

1. During my trip last week to the North, CG Third Army (LTG Samran Petyakul) emphasized to me the special advantages enjoyed by the insurgents in his region. Among them, he gave greatest weight to Communist control of contiguous areas in Laos, which affords secure hinterland for the "liberated areas" in Thailand. To my suggestion that friendly guerilla forces in Laos act as blocking forces for Third Army initiatives, he observed that the former are heavily engaged elsewhere.

2. I took the occasion to stress that dealing with the insurgency is above all a Thai responsibility and a vital Thai national interest. The US can help, but only as a supplement to what basically has to be a Thai effort. I emphasized the vital necessity for Thai commanders to use their resources effectively and energetically against the insurgents.

3. Samran accepted this, and replied by describing important operations—using both Third Army elements and forces from the Central Reserve—which are about to be undertaken in the current dry season, as well as paramilitary programs under development. Armed operations by the RTG have proven necessary in the North (as contrasted with the preferred "psychological operations" approach), because insurgent operational bases are strongly held and inhabited by non-Thais. Hill people share neither language, religion, nor loyalty to the King with the Thai, and RTG campaigns against opium growing are also exploited by the Communists: hill populations therefore are particularly vulnerable to Communist propaganda and recruitment efforts. Nevertheless, RTG suppression efforts are selective, and accompanied by efforts to win hill tribe loyalty. (The Thais have, in fact, developed good plans and organization to deal with the problem: implementation is now the issue.)

3. Although Samran emphasized the loyalty of the lowland Thai, I was struck by his comment that about five percent of the valley population (especially migrants from the Northeast) may be cooperating with the Communists. He also agreed with my point that effective loyalty is often a function of the government's ability to extend

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-7 THAI. Secret. Repeated to Vientiane and CINCPAC.

protection, which is frequently difficult to do under conditions prevalent in the north.

4. This visit strengthened my impression that the insurgency in the North is a serious and growing threat: I hope that I was able to strengthen Samran's resolution in dealing with it.

Unger

150. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, February 16, 1972.

SUBJECT

Communist Insurgency in Northern Thailand

The Chinese-supported Communist insurgency in Northern Thailand has been steadily gaining strength. The number of armed Thai Communist insurgents (CT), estimated in 1968 to be some 250, is (according to CIA) now over 3,100—2,300 full time and 800 village militia. Moreover, their weaponry has improved and now reportedly includes mortars, machine guns, flamethrowers, grenade launchers and anti-personnel mines as well as numerous AK-47s and SKS carbines. It is not known whether these weapons are coming direct from China or are from stockpiles in Laos and North Vietnam.

In addition, the CT have made major improvements in their politico-military organization and have formed some small battalions. While most of their indigenous support has come from the various hill tribes, the CT are beginning to make inroads among lowland Thai in the North.

The number of CT-initiated incidents in the North jumped from none in 1966 to 947 in 1969, dropped to 589 in 1970, and then rose to well over 1,000 in 1971. A January 2 NCNA report proclaimed that "the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VIII. Secret. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum in Kissinger's handwriting reads: "AI—Let's get CIA assessment. HK" Another notation in Holdridge's handwriting reads: "done 2/20." Haig wrote on the memorandum: "Tom Latimer see me."

fighting efficiency of the Thai Peoples Armed Forces markedly increased in 1971.”

Ambassador Unger believes that the southward expansion of the Chinese road (and Chinese military presence) in Laos and Communist military advances in Laos are closing the gap between the external and internal threat to Thailand. He believes these developments suggest that China continues to apply indirect but growing pressure upon Thailand as a matter of policy, not merely “as casual encouragement of what has been erroneously characterized as a chronic, low-level dissidence.” Unger further believes that if these developments proceed on their current course, they could eventually diminish Thai ability to play a significant role in the stabilization of Laos, and undermine the internal development and stability of Thailand.

Peking's Role

The leading Chinese role in the Thai insurgency is ill-disguised. The insurgency radio, the “Voice of the People of Thailand,” broadcasts from China and has unabashedly extolled the virtues of “Mao Tse-tung thought.” CT cadre adhere strictly to Maoist ideology. The Thai Communist Party and its “NLF,” the Thai Patriotic Front, seem to be led by exiles now resident in China.

The Chinese road building operation in Laos—now involving over 30,000 construction and anti-aircraft troops—seems to have little purpose other than to provide direct access to Thailand from China and North Vietnam (See map at Tab A). Significantly, these roads point to the area where the CT are strongest (See map at Tab B). Since roads such as these are not needed to meet present CT resupply demands, it seems likely they are intended to support a considerably increased insurgency in Thailand.

Hanoi's Role

Hanoi is also involved in supporting the Thai insurgency; but its role is strictly secondary to that of Peking and is largely confined to North-eastern Thailand. The North Vietnamese (and perhaps the Pathet Lao) have trained Thai cadre and have helped supply the CT. Many of the 40–50,000 North Vietnamese living in Thailand are under Hanoi's influence and constitute a serious potential fifth column. Recently Hanoi-controlled media claimed that Thai insurgents are actively supporting their comrades in Indochina and cited as evidence the January sapper attack on our B-52 base at U Tapao. Hanoi has, of course, strongly attacked the presence of Thai troops in Laos as well as Thai-Cambodian cooperation.

Thai Countermeasures

The Thai Government has become increasingly concerned about the growing insurgency in the North and Northeast and plans a

major counterinsurgency effort this year. In fact, a major military campaign has just recently been launched against CT strongpoints.²

In any case, insurgency in Thailand has reached the stage where it also deserves increased attention on our part.

² In telegram 2039 from Bangkok, February 12, Unger reported on his conversation with NEC Chairman Thanom, in which the former stressed the importance of “an effective RTG response to the evident insurgent decision to stand and fight regular Thai forces in operation Phu Kwang.” Unger told Thanom that the “new situation created by insurgent resistance and strength indicates requirement on RTG part to apply complete campaign plans with necessary support and continuity to get the job done.” (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–7)

151. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 22, 1972, noon.

SUBJECT

Thai Request for Consultation on Future Vietnam Peace Proposals

PARTICIPANTS

H.E. Sunthorn Hongladarom, Thai Ambassador to the United States
Winthrop G. Brown, Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Alf E. Bergesen, Acting Director for Thailand/Burma Affairs, EA

Summary

Ambassador Sunthorn came in on instructions to deliver what he characterized as the most important message of his tour in Washington, the request of his government that it be consulted before any further modifications to the eight-point US peace proposal for Vietnam are made. End summary.

Ambassador Sunthorn came in on instructions with what he described as a very serious request.² He realized that high US officials were concerned with the security of Thailand as a whole and that they

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI–US. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Bergesen on February 23, and approved by Brown and Lange Schermerhorn (S/S–S) on February 26. The meeting was held in Ambassador Brown’s office.

² According to telegram 2458 from Bangkok, February 22, Unger met on February 21 with Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Charunphan (who replaced Thanat as head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under NEC Thanom after the November coup) and received the same basic message as that delivered by Sunthorn. (Ibid.)

were interested in its problems. The President's eight-point peace proposal was acceptable in principle to the Thai Government as an attempt at a solution to the long term problem. However, whatever the outcome of the present difficulties in North and South Vietnam, Thailand's security would be affected. The Chairman of the National Executive Council (Thanom) felt that Thailand should have been consulted in connection with the eight-point program. The NEC now expected that there may be a new US proposal for Vietnam which would have the effect of involving or even endangering Thai security. As an ally and deeply involved, Thailand should be consulted.

Ambassador Brown asked whether this meant that the Thai wished to be consulted on any future proposal that we might make in Paris. Ambassador Sunthorn said yes. Ambassador Brown pointed out that we did not know what the outcome (of the eight-point proposal) will be nor whether there will be any new proposals. We would wish to think over what the Ambassador requested. There were many people involved. Would a similar approach be made to Ambassador Unger? Sunthorn said he thought so. His government felt the eight-point program had already made substantial concessions to North Vietnam. Any further concession would be detrimental to the interests of Thailand and the United States.

Ambassador Brown asked what worried the Thai especially. Sunthorn said his government had not specified, but they were particularly concerned about anything affecting the security of Laos and Cambodia, which would automatically affect Thailand's security. They wished to see nothing occur which would let North Vietnam control the whole of those two countries. Ambassador Brown said that we had no interest in seeing Thai security unfavorably affected or North Vietnam's taking over Laos and Cambodia. We appreciated very much what Thailand had already done. Ambassador Brown suggested that the problems of Laos and Cambodia would be dealt with after Vietnam was settled.

Sunthorn said yes, he thought it was a package deal. A stalemate, especially in South Vietnam, might lead to increased North Vietnamese action in Laos and Cambodia. Ambassador Brown said we would see what could be done to bring the Thai more into the picture. He would consult with Ambassador Sullivan and the Secretary on the latter's return.³ Sunthorn said this was an important request which his government had asked him to make. They tried not to bother us—they recognize that we have many problems—but he regarded this as the most important message that he had had to deliver to this government.

³ Telegram Tosec 76, February 23, reported the Brown-Sunthorn meeting to Green, who was travelling with the Presidential party on a state visit to China, along with Rogers, Kissinger, and others.

**152. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the
Department of State (Eliot) to the President's Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, February 29, 1972.

SUBJECT

U.S. Assistance to Thai Program for Resettling CIF Opium Traffickers

Summary

We have agreed to give the Royal Thai Government (RTG) \$1 million to support Thai efforts to resettle the Chinese Irregular Forces (CIF) of Generals Li and Tuan against the latter's promise to cease trafficking in opium, and to turn over about 28 tons of opium, now under their control, to the RTG for destruction.²

Background

In 1949–50 KMT (Kuomintang–Chinese Nationalist) troops under General Li Mi were driven out of Yunnan into Burma, where they settled despite the protests and military efforts of the Burmese to dislodge them. In 1953–54 and again in the early 1960's many of these KMT's were evacuated to Taiwan, and the Government of the Republic of China no longer has any control over those who stayed behind. The remaining forces, now mostly in Thailand, have gradually assumed a more local character through recruitment but have remained an effective military force, probably the best in the tri-border area. Now known as the "Chinese Irregular Forces" (CIF's), they are under the leadership of Generals Li Wen-Huan and Tuan Hsi-Wen.

Over the years the CIF's have acquired control over most of the illegal opium traffic from eastern Burma and northern Thailand to Bangkok. Operating in terrain they know better than the government forces, profiting heavily from "protection" and trade in opium, and fighting when they have to, the CIF's became a law unto themselves.

For the past year or two the Thai Government, faced with an increasing Communist insurgency in the north and recognizing the bad effects the opium trade was having on Thailand's reputation, has sought to settle the CIF's and make useful residents out of them. To this end the Thai promised that if the CIF's would turn their forces

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VIII. Secret; Nodis.

² The suggested text of the agreement was transmitted to the Embassy in Bangkok in telegram 231185, December 27, 1971. (Ibid.)

against the insurgents they would provide land, some supplies and eventual Thai citizenship. The RTG's relations with the CIF have been carried out by General Kriangsak, Deputy Chief of Staff of Supreme Command, who has been well and favorably known to us for many years.

The Opium Trade

Recognizing the increasing problem of the illicit opium trade, the Thai Government sought to get the CIF's out of the business. Li and Tuan said they were willing to give it up, but they needed 20 million baht (equivalent to \$1 million) to dispose of their obligations and opium procurement agreements and to settle their followers. While the RTG was able to put aside some funds for resettlement purposes, they could not allocate this additional amount, so General Kriangsak approached us for assistance. After careful consideration in Bangkok and Washington, agreement was reached on the form and amount of U.S. assistance. An essential consideration from the Thai point of view was that Li and Tuan were not to be aware that the USG was the eventual source of funds. U.S. funds are to be provided from AID Development Loan funds transferred to the BNDD.

The U.S./Thai Agreement

On February 1, General Kriangsak and the U.S. BNDD director in Bangkok signed a letter³ which provided essentially as follows (full text attached):

In the interest of assisting RTG efforts to resettle the CIF's, the U.S. would contribute 20.8 million baht in two installments on a grant basis against the CIF surrender of 16,000 choi of opium (about 28 tons).

Disposition of the opium is to be by agreement between the RTG and the U.S. (the RTG insists on destruction of the opium).

The U.S. assistance is provided on a one-time basis.

In separate agreements between General Kriangsak and the two CIF leaders, the latter have agreed to turn over their stocks, to get out of the opium trade entirely, and to subject themselves and their forces to Thai law for any future offenses.

³ The February 1 letter to Lieutenant General Kriangsak Chomanan was signed by William T. Wanzeck, Narcotics Attaché of the Thai Embassy. In the letter Wanzeck repeats the language of telegram 231185 almost verbatim. He states that the U.S. Government is "particularly pleased with the provisions in this program that would remove these forces permanently from the illicit trade in opium which has international ramifications, and would turn them instead to agricultural pursuits or other legitimate means of earning a livelihood." Attached but not printed.

Conclusion

While we recognize that it is unlikely that our support of Thai efforts to resettle the CIF's will put a complete stop to opium trafficking in northern Thailand, the U.S./RTG agreement will enable us to hold Kriangsak and the RTG responsible for any violations by the CIF's. The removal of 28 tons of opium from illicit channels and its destruction will have a major impact on the quantity available for consumption outside the indigenous market. The resettlement scheme if successful may make productive citizens out of a group of several thousand freebooters. Finally, the possibility of further use of the CIF's as a force against the Communist insurgents in northern Thailand will be enhanced.

James Carson⁴

⁴ Carson signed for Eliot above Eliot's typed signature.

153. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, March 10, 1972, 0540Z.

3318. Kuala Lumpur For Assistant Secretary Green. Subject: Assistant Secretary Green's Call on NEC Chairman Thanom.

Summary: In cordial but deeply serious meeting with NEC Chairman Thanom and other top Thai leaders, Assistant Secretary Green described background of President's Peking trip, assuring the Thais that there was no change in U.S. commitments to them and emphasizing the positive benefits that will accrue to them if our diplomacy succeeds. Green stressed that continued U.S. strength and close bonds with allies such as Thailand are essential to success of our diplomacy.

He also emphasized that this diplomacy, which enjoys broad support at home, will give the President enhanced ability to carry out the Nixon Doctrine and thus put U.S. policy on a firm and steady course on which allies can rely. The Thais were deeply appreciative of this

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/GREEN. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Received at 6:59 a.m. Repeated to Kuala Lumpur, Phnom Penh, Saigon, and Vientiane.

consultation and of the reassurances that Green was able to give. Thanom expressed deep concern about the growing level of insurgency in Thailand and Chinese support thereof, and asked if latter would continue. Green discussed possibilities but said we must await results to see if our diplomacy affected this. Thais obviously will be watching this one closely. Thanom also stressed heavily the need for continuing U.S. economic and military assistance in face of the massive aid the other side is receiving from its backers, and his concern about Congressional attitudes on this question. He also reiterated his earlier appeal for consultations prior to any U.S. decisions on matters affecting Thai security. *End summary.*

1. Assistant Secretary Green met with NEC Chairman Thanom to discuss President's Peking visit beginning at 2:00 p.m. March 8, Thanom was accompanied by Deputy Chairman Praphat, Assistant Chairman Pote Sarasin, Air Marshal Dawee, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Charunphan, and Director of Southeast Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asa Sarasin (Pote's son). Green was accompanied by Ambassador Unger, Mr. Holdridge, DCM and POL counselor.

2. Field Marshal Thanom, with Pote interpreting, expressed great pleasure at opportunity to received President's special representative and his appreciation of opportunity to hear at first hand about the Peking talks and especially about the effects these talks would have on Thailand and Southeast Asia. Green responded by conveying to the Thai leadership from the President the latter's warmest wishes and highest regards and esteem, as well as those of Secretary Rogers. He then outlined briefly the role that he and Mr. Holdridge had played in the talks and the mandate the President had given him in connection with his present mission.

3. Green went on to describe briefly the steps taken by President Nixon leading to his Peking trip, beginning with the article in *Foreign Affairs* of October 1967. He stressed that the President had succeeded in removing barriers between the U.S. and the PRC so as to permit the establishment of a dialouge with Peking without sacrificing our relations with the ROC or anyone else. He recalled that all our defense commitments including that to the ROC, were specifically and publicly reiterated in Shanghai at the time the Communiqué was released.

4. Green emphasized the responsive chord which the President's diplomacy had struck among the American people, who strongly desired that some opening for peace be sought. Successful China diplomacy would greatly strengthen the President's hand in all respects and reinvigorate U.S. foreign policy across the board. Better relations between Washington and Peking could in turn open a real opportunity to move the world in a better direction. However, he said this could

come about only if the U.S. remains strong and retains its close bonds with its allies to whom the U.S. must continue to provide adequate support. He said the PRC was interested in a better relationship with us because of our power and influence in the world.

5. He explored the reason why the Chinese wanted to hold these talks, which they strongly desired. He noted however that it was very important to avoid public speculation about these reasons, which could interfere with the achievement of the goals of our China diplomacy with no offsetting advantage. He cited a) Chinese fear of the USSR, reflected *inter alia* by widespread construction of air raid shelters; b) deep-running Chinese worry about the possibility of resurgent Japanese militarism; and c) great internal change and past turmoil in China, in the wake of which the general move had been away from extremism. Green produced a chart dramatizing this point which the Thais found most interesting.

6. The result, we believe, had led the PRC to realize, even though it would not say so, that it is not in its interest to have the U.S. withdraw rapidly from Asia. They do not want a vacuum created into which the USSR might move. They may be coming to realize that Japanese militarism (which we feel the Japanese will reject) is less likely to reemerge if a U.S.-Japanese relationship continues. Noting that their rhetoric may not always reflect this change of attitude, Green stressed the importance of encouraging them in positive acts without stopping to examine too closely their motives or being too concerned about their rhetoric.

7. Green described the process of drafting the communiqué. The Chinese had put up positions on certain controversial issues which we answered point by point. There was no attempt to paper over the differences, some of which were very fundamental. In addition to this, however, there were areas where agreement could be expressed, including the necessity to avoid the outbreak of war; opposition to hegemony or spheres of influence; and adherence to the “five principles” which go back to the Bandung period. He noted that when these latter were first enunciated, it was in an undesirable propaganda context which led Secretary Dulles to refuse acceptance of them. In fact, however, the points were in themselves unexceptionable. We now have a joint PRC–U.S. commitment to them on the record and intend in the future to hold this commitment before the PRC. He noted that we also expressed the hope for better conditions for the Chinese people which in our view will help further to move the PRC away from extremism.

8. Green stressed that no secret deals had been made, that there were no negotiations except on the communiqué and no attempt to deal with third country problems.

9. To sum up, he said the U.S. side has no illusions, but feels that some opening for peace has been made which can successfully be ex-

ploited in close concert and consultation with our friends. He emphasized again that we must speak from strength, extending a friendly hand but remaining on guard. He said he would upon his departure from Thailand make a stronger statement of reassurance than he had made or would make in any other country he was visiting.

10. Marshal Thanom expressed sincere thanks for this background. He noted that at a meeting with the Japanese Chief of Staff, who is currently visiting Thailand, he had expressed the view, completely in agreement with that of Assistant Secretary Green, that Chinese fear of Russia and Japan had motivated them to take part in these talks.

11. Thanom posed the question of whether the U.S. or the PRC initiated the talks. Green said the initiative had really come from both sides. As he had noted, the President's indications of desire for a dialogue went back to 1967, and the Chinese since then had increasingly found reasons which made it desirable from their point of view. In the end, after portraying Americans as devils for 20 years, the Chinese had come to the point where pictures of Chairman Mao smiling at President Nixon were carried on the front pages of all their newspapers.

12. Thanom noted that there was nothing in the communiqué on Thailand, and said he presumed therefore that there was no change in Thai-U.S. relations and that the SEATO commitment and the Rusk-Thanat communiqué remained in effect. Green confirmed this. He said none of our alliances or commitments were mentioned in the communiqué. He recalled that we took up in the communiqué only those controversial items the PRC mentioned. The PRC did not raise either the SEATO commitment or Thailand. However, Green said Marshal Thanom was entirely correct in assuming that all UMS commitments to Thailand remain in effect and unchanged.

13. Thanom asked specifically whether the Chinese had raised the question of U.S. use of Thai bases. Green replied that they had not.

14. Thanom recalled that in 1969, President Nixon during his visit to Thailand had described to him the Nixon Doctrine as it affected Thailand. He said he had found this extremely reassuring and assumed from what had been said that there was no change in this policy. Green confirmed that there was no change.

15. Thanom then asked whether Project Taksin also continued in effect. Ambassador Unger noted that while it is still in existence, Project Taksin is a military plan which takes a political decision to make it operative, not a commitment per se. Therefore it is in a different category from the other matters mentioned.

16. Green said he planned to stress in his departure statement that he recognize that our own interest required maintenance of our commitments to Thailand and our other allies and continuing contributions

to the strength of our allies through economic and military assistance. He said he would also stress our readiness to consult closely with Thailand and our commitment not to negotiate behind its back.

17. Thanom noted that the PRC had reiterated its policy of supporting wars of liberation. To Thailand, he said, "liberation" means terrorism and disruption of public administration and public safety. He noted that the Communist terrorists in Thailand are using Chinese equipment including modern anti-tank weapons, rockets and small arms. He asked whether that could continue.

18. Green recalled that the President has said we can only judge by results. He noted again that the Chinese have now expressed themselves publicly along with us against interference in other sovereign countries. In the future, to involve themselves in such activities will expose them to charges of bad faith, and we must hold this commitment before them. He anticipated that the PRC will continue to use the jargon of wars of national liberation, but he believes their real concerns have turned in other direction. He foresaw no dramatic immediate change but if our general diplomacy succeeds their support of such activity may diminish. Even before the visit, we had concluded that their policy would move in the direction of greater caution, of attempting to "exploit external and internal contradictions" of other countries, i.e., a shift to "talk-talk" tactics. This trend is currently manifesting itself in the slogan "long live Chairman Mao's revolutionary diplomatic line." He said the Chinese know that Thailand is a close friend of the United States. China wants a better relationship with us. This may give us some additional leverage on their actions vis-à-vis Thailand.

19. Thanom asked about the current relationship between the PRC and the DRV. Green said that two or three years ago, the PRC simply wanted us bogged down in Vietnam until, on a wave of disillusionment in the U.S., we would be swept out of Asia entirely. Now they are coming to see a continuation of the Vietnam War as redounding to the benefit of the Soviet Union, not to their own benefit. He said that as the war continues, the USSR as the supplier of the more advanced weaponry needed by Hanoi becomes more and more identified with Hanoi's goal of victory and will be the principal beneficiary if the goal is achieved. The Chinese seem more interested now in seeing the war end fairly soon.

20. Holdridge expressed agreement with this. He said the PRC had voiced support for attainment of Communist "goals" in Southeast Asia without defining the latter beyond expressing agreement with the PRC's 7-points and the two-point elaboration. They at no time became more specific than this and they lent no additional weight to Hanoi's positions. The impression left was that their assistance to Hanoi would continue in order to avoid leaving the field entirely to the Soviets but

that they would not support any expansion of the conflict. Implicit in it all was that the U.S. role in Indochina would not stand in the way of a developing relationship with the PRC, and that the PRC was more interested in Northeast Asia, particularly the Soviet Union, Japan and Taiwan, than in Southeast Asia.

21. Thanom expressed the view that the North Vietnamese were afraid of being inundated by Chinese advisors, which was another reason which led them to turn to the Russians for more assistance. But he noted that while heavy equipment was coming from Russia, small arms, uniforms, etc. were coming from China.

22. Returning to the Thai insurgency problem, Thanom said Chinese equipment had showed up in every region of Thailand where insurgency existed. Since the talks in Peking were agreed to, the RTG has carried out extensive operations in the North and Northeast destroying Communist base camps. In connection with these they had intercepted communications from the enemy requesting more equipment, weapons, medicine and food from China by land and by helicopter. He said the Chinese are deeply involved and so far have shown no signs of stopping or reducing their involvement. Green recognized this to date and repeated that we can only await results but our diplomacy may offer a road to an easing of the problem.

23. Green said that he wanted to make it explicit, as he had done yesterday in Phnom Penh and Vientiane, that we are not aligning with China against the USSR, or getting involved in the Sino-Soviet split. He recalled that the President would visit Moscow to seek a better dialogue with the Soviets. In this connection, he noted that before the President went to Peking, Gromyko was visiting Tokyo. At that point the Chinese eased their hostile anti-Japanese propaganda line. Adding that he did not believe the Japanese would move into the Soviet orbit, he said the net result might be an escalation toward peace. He said the U.S. goal was to further this kind of phenomenon, to establish a better relationship among the great powers from which all nations can benefit.

24. Thanom said it was at one time understandable that the Vietnamese should be "liberated" from the French, and the other former colonies from the metropolitan states, but the Thais are puzzled as to whom they are to be liberated from. Green said the Chinese leadership, after a life-time of struggle, take struggle as the normal condition of life. The rhetoric of "liberation" has become second nature to them. In a case such as Thailand, which has always been independent, the rhetoric and slogans may increasingly be exposed as empty and meaningless. Our aim must be to turn the Chinese leaders around in practice without worrying too much about their rhetoric.

25. Thanom reiterated that the terrorist movement in Thailand is an extremely serious danger to Thailand today. Thailand would help

itself and would not need U.S. ground forces. But so long as the aggressors are being given outside support, Thailand would need support, including economic aid. Yet Congress now seemed inclined to cut aid to Thailand. This concerns them greatly. Green agreed to report this concern² and to support their request for continued assistance.

26. Thanom asked whether it was true that the North Vietnamese had sent people to Peking to meet with the Americans while the President was there. Green said this was a pure canard.

27. Green noted that Sihanouk had gone to Hanoi during the President's visit which further identified Sihanouk with the North Vietnamese and thus further hurt himself with his own people.

28. Green referred to the open letter which appeared in the Bangkok *Nation* on the day of his arrival (Bangkok U.S. info 071150Z Mar). This was quickly and emphatically disclaimed by the NEC. Green said that among the many errors in the letter was the assertion that the U.S. has accepted a "One China" policy. He said both Peking and Taipei claim that there is only one China of which Taiwan is a part and that we have simply noted and do not challenge these positions. The Chinese themselves must resolve this matter. We will not pressure Taipei one way or the other. He expressed the view that the PRC would show some patience and that it was now even more unlikely that it would resort to force in seeking to take over Taiwan.

29. Thanom noted that the commitment to ultimate withdrawal of forces from Taiwan was linked to a reduction of tension in the area; he found this very reassuring. Green noted also that with respect to the Indochina area the commitment to ultimate withdrawal was conditional, being tied in the case to self-determination for the countries of Indochina. With respect to the use of the term "region", Green said that was intended to indicate that forces providing support to countries in Indochina from outside could also be reduced.

30. Thanom recalled the approach he had recently directed to be made concerning the RTG's desire to be consulted before decisions are made affecting its security (Bangkok 2458). He said this could be done through our Ambassador here with the Foreign Office or directly with him, or through the RTG Ambassador in Washington. The important thing was that true consultations be held in all cases where Thailand's security interests are involved. It was not enough to be informed of

² Green met with President Nixon on March 23 to report on his meetings with Southeast Asian leaders about the President's trip to China. In regard to Thailand, Green said that Thanom, Dawee, Pote Sarasin, the King, and others had "all expressed their support, although they all were concerned about PRC support for the insurgency in Thailand. They felt they were under pressure. The King (see Document 155) had been particularly strong on the need for continued U.S. aid to cope with the insurgency." (Ibid.)

major U.S. moves an hour or so in advance. Green said he fully understood and would convey this point to Washington highest levels.

31. Marshal Dawee, recalling that Thailand has 3–4 million Chinese residents, asked about the future of the Republic of China. Green said that, while he of course could not predict the future, following his talks with the leaders in Taipei, particularly Chiang Ching-Kuo, they seemed to feel much more assured. He noted that their economy is doing well and that they have strong links of trade with many countries around the world which will continue. Noting again that our commitment to withdraw is highly conditional, he said we expect to draw down our forces in Taiwan from 8,500 to 2,000 in connection with Vietnamization, but he expected that the latter figure would be held to for the indefinite future pending resolution of the Taiwan issue.

32. Green recalled that, like the Thai leaders, the President has been effectively combating Communist aggression for many years and that he is very realistic. The President knows that strength and continued close ties with our allies are a prerequisite to our ability to deal successfully with Peking. But the President had also concluded that the time had come when traditional diplomacy had to give way to inspired action in order to make a breakthrough which would be in the interest of all. Green said that this thirty years of diplomatic service led him to the conviction that this was the kind of effort which would win worldwide support, convincing people that things can improve. He felt that this was particularly important with respect to our younger people.

33. Green said that the principal purpose of the Nixon Doctrine was to reverse a feeling widely shared by Americans that the U.S. is over-involved around the world, in order to avoid a reaction which would lead to under-involvement. In other words, the President sought to put U.S. foreign policy on a steady course which allies could bank on and on which they could base their own planning. In terms of reductions in U.S. forces, however, the President has concluded that the point had now been reached where there must be a pause (except for Vietnamization). He quoted from Secretary Rogers's recent report concerning this matter.

34. Following a brief exchange about press handling (see Bangkok 3298 for RTG announcement),³ Marshal Thanom thanked Assistant Secretary Green warmly for the assurances he had brought from the President to the Government and people of Thailand. These assurances he said would make them more confident of their security and of their relationship with the United States.

Unger

³ Not printed.

154. Telegram From the Embassy in Malaysia to the Department of State¹

Kuala Lumpur, March 10, 1972, 1425Z.

836. Eyes Only For The Secretary and Dr. Kissinger From Asst. Secy Green.

1. Following NEC Chairman Thanom's dinner for our party March 8, I drew Chairman Thanom aside (with Pote Sarasin interpreting and Ambassador Unger also present) to mention a particularly sensitive point which I wished he would not share with anyone else in his government. I referred to his conversation of January 14 with Ambassador Unger² in which Thanom had asked that we take up in our Peking talks Thailand's concern over PRC support of insurgents and terrorists against lawful government and innocent people of Thailand, and to point out that RTG had stopped its anti-Peking broadcasts and wanted to have better relationships with PRC on basis of non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

2. I said Secretary Rogers specifically mentioned this point in one of his meetings with FonMin Chi Peng Fei. Chi's response had been along the lines that (a) China had historically maintained good relations with the Thai people but, after Chiang's troops had fled to Thailand the latter had made use of these troops, relations had deteriorated; (b) Thailand had opposed China and the Communists including interference in Indo-China and hence there were no diplomatic relations now; (c) new Thai Government pursues the same old policies but we (PRC) do not interfere in internal affairs of Thailand; (d) people of Thailand want revolution and PRC hopes that it will come to have normal state relations on basis of five principles. Chi had added: "We hope you will convey this to your good friends in Thailand." Chi then said, I continued, that as for Thai charges about Peking supported guerrillas in Thailand, PRC admits some Thai guerrilla leaders are in Peking but how the guerrillas carry on in Thailand is their affair; we don't interfere.

Chi had ended by saying that U.S. and Thailand have their principles, and PRC has its own; nevertheless we can work for an improvement of state relations.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/NIXON. Secret; Nodis.

² A report of that conversation was transmitted in telegram 597 from Bangkok, January 14. (Ibid.)

3. Thanom and Pote Sarasin expressed great appreciation for Secretary having taken this up and commented that Peking's response was pretty much as expected. Thanom felt that, to the extent the U.S.-PRC relationship improved and China moderated its course, this could prove in time to be of real benefit to Thailand. I agreed.

Lydman

155. Telegram From the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State¹

Djakarta, March 13, 1972, 0515Z.

2452. For The Secretary From Ambassador Unger. Subject: Marshall Green and John Holdridge Call on King of Thailand. Ref: Bangkok 3318.²

1. On March 9 Assistant Secretary Green was received by His Majesty the King. Also present were the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Charunpan, the King's Aide-de-Camp, Admiral Diskul, Mr. Holdridge and myself. Our conversation lasted about one hour and forty five minutes.

2. After conveying the appropriate expressions to His Majesty from President Nixon, Green proceeded to describe at length the President's visit to China and the discussions which took place there in terms very similar to those of the previous day before the NEC, which meeting is recorded in reftel. Emphasis was put on those points which I had identified to Green as being of particular interest and concern to the King.

3. His Majesty showed immediate understanding of the importance of the trip in the light of the situation in the U.S. and particularly the attitudes of young people there. He saw the value of the trip to the President in establishing better understanding with some alienated groups in the U.S. and therefore providing support for the President to enable him to carry out his larger programs. The King understood the value this also could have with regard to U.S. programs in Thailand.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 US/GREEN. Secret; Exdis. Repeated to Bangkok.

² Document 153.

4. Otherwise, however, the King tended to minimize the possibility of this reopening of contact between the U.S. and the PRC having any beneficial effect on the policy or actions of the latter. He discussed at length his view about Chinese intentions, particularly in Southeast Asia, where he feels that the Chinese are determined to establish their dominance. He cited maps which are a standard item in Chinese schools which show Thailand as an integral part of China and he is persuaded that the Chinese are not likely to be deterred from trying to make it so. Whatever might be our good intentions, he professed to be virtually persuaded that Thailand will be gobbled up. The King insisted that while the Chinese had very good understanding of Westerners, the reverse was not the case and he implied that our reestablished contact with the PRC may lead us to some false conclusions and unrealistic expectations.

4. In respectful terms but in firm tones Green challenged the implication that the U.S. would stand idly by and let her allies be taken over, pointing out that the U.S. has been second to none in the world in standing by its friends, he also insisted that we are in fact looking at the matter of reestablishing relations with the PRC entirely realistically and without false illusions. Moreover, we have a number of individuals who are exceptionally well informed about China and have worked almost all their lives on this one subject. He cited Mr. Holdridge as a case in point. Somewhat chastened, his Majesty made conciliatory comments to the effect that he recognized the desirability of the President's initiative on China in terms of the interests of America's friends as well as of the United States itself.

5. Most of the remaining discussion related to U.S. assistance to Thai armed forces and police in the field of helicopter and Stol aircraft, a subject which His Majesty has raised with me innumerable times in the past. After indicating his reluctant conclusion that the U.S. would not be providing further aircraft to the Thai National Police His Majesty then also commented on our apparent unwillingness or inability to provide a substantial additional number of UH-1H aircraft for the RTAF. He did not mention the large number of UH-1Hs which are in the program for the RTA, nor did he accept the explanation that the Thai Armed Forces themselves are not seeking additional helicopters for the RTAF. Under the circumstances His Majesty asked whether we would be prepared to sell to the RTG around 25 of the UH-1Hs now in surplus in Vietnam and awaiting shipment elsewhere. I said we would look into this immediately and also mentioned that we are seeking helicopters from that source ourselves to accelerate considerably the delivery already scheduled for the RTA, as well as a few additional helicopters for the RTAF.

6. In the course of this discussion the King commented that he could understand that the Ambassador might be afraid to press for

some of these urgent needs of Thailand for fear of risking criticism in Washington. I replied that if I ever felt that I was unable or unwilling to report things from Thailand as I saw them, or make recommendations according to my best judgment, I would ask to be transferred the next day. His Majesty said perhaps he had gone too far but he was again critical of the bureaucratic complications and trials in meeting what he saw as urgent needs for his country in a deteriorating security situation. In the course of this discussion the King, on a number of occasions, was also sharply critical of the present Thai government, and armed services.

7. *Comment:* This was at times an uncomfortable audience, although I was not greatly surprised. I have had a number of lengthy discussions with His Majesty over recent months, particularly on the subject of U.S. aid programs and some of his favorite projects for which he expects prompt and full support. The King's frustration with his own government is understandable and may be aggravated by his dissatisfaction with his own status in the absence of a constitution. There are some delays and shortfalls on our part which also can be justifiably criticized. On the other hand, the strong and sometimes even intemperate nature of his comments probably arises in part from his lack of experience with criticism from his own people and limited opportunities for full and frank discussion with his subjects. I believe he appreciated the effort to convey to him our impressions and conclusions growing out of the President's visit to China and while he, and most other Thais, are very skeptical of seeing an end to Chinese interference in Thailand's internal affairs, he probably accepts the usefulness of the resumption of communication between the PRC and the U.S.

Galbraith

156. Memorandum From Robert Hormats of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 21, 1972.

SUBJECT

Conclusion for Textile Negotiations for Thailand

After a history of frustrating negotiations and discussions marked by misunderstanding on the part of both sides, we have concluded a highly successful agreement with Thailand which will result in their voluntarily restraining the amount of cotton textiles they export to the U.S. The Thai are extremely satisfied with this agreement as is the U.S. domestic textile industry. This may be one of the few times in history that such an unlikely and mutually satisfactory outcome has been arrived at! For this reason alone, I believe it appropriate to send the letter at Tab A to Pete Peterson² complimenting his department and his negotiator Stanley Nehmer.

There is also another reason for doing so. Commerce will play a key role in enforcing the textile agreements worked out by David Kennedy with Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand and South Korea. Our ability to delicately and discreetly importune them to be flexible in these negotiations could be extremely important in foreign policy terms. The letter, by complimenting Nehmer on his outstanding job in reconciling foreign policy and domestic interests will be helpful in any future efforts we may make in importuning him to apply a similar measure of flexibility in the future.

Recommendation

That you sign the letter to Peter Peterson at Tab A.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VIII. No classification marking. Sent for action. A notation on the memorandum in Haig's handwriting reads: "HAK—this was a result of earlier HAK-Haig-Kennedy push. AH."

² A copy of the letter, signed by Kissinger and dated March 28, is attached but not printed. In it Kissinger compliments Nehmer and states: "I understand that the Thai are extremely pleased with the agreement, and that it was also completely acceptable to our domestic textile industry."

157. Editorial Note

On March 23, 1972, Assistant Secretary of State Marshall Green reported to President Nixon on his trip to East Asia, including his talks with Thai Prime Minister Thanom and other Thai leaders in Bangkok on March 8, 1972. (See Documents 153 and 154 for reports of Green's conversations with Thai leaders.) The meeting was held in the Oval Office from 4:08 p.m. to 5:02 p.m. The following is an excerpt from the tape recording of that meeting:

Nixon: "Tell me, now what, what about, did you—Thailand, you know, give a little deal on that. We have a [unclear]."

Green: "Thailand, the big problem there, of course, is all this insurgency going on—"

Nixon: "Right. And they blame the Chinese."

Green: "And they know the Chinese are involved . . ."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Green: "How active they are. They're unable to, perhaps, catalog it with—"

Nixon: "Were you able to have a private talk with Thanom or . . .?"

Green: "Thanom? No, because he was a monk and that was a holy day. I wanted to. I tried to, but I couldn't make contact with him."

Nixon: "I understand, but on the other hand who'd you see?"

Green: "I know it's a big problem, though, because I talked with Thanom. Boy, this I talked with Praphat, and Dawee—"

Haig: [unclear]

Green: "You haven't had touch with [unclear]?"

Nixon: "Foreign Service [unclear]"

Green: "And then I [unclear exchange]."

Nixon: "I know some of them. I know those others, the old hands, like [unclear]."

Green: "Mr. President, when I left town they made a very favorable statement. The Government of Thailand made a very favorable statement. The reports we've had out of our Embassy have all been favorable as a follow up. Now they would say, 'Well, the Chinese say they believe in these five principles but we know damn well they don't.' And I said, 'Well, we're not saying that we think they've reformed but now we have at least mutually accepted standards to hold them by.'"

Nixon: "Well look, you could—I interrupt—I know, too, you probably assured them that you know Nixon and—"

Green: "Yeah."

Nixon: “—he’s not one that stands by.”

Green: “That’s right, I know it’s [unclear]”

Green: “Yeah, I told him what we’re dealing with and [unclear] President Nixon. He’s been around. There’s no President that’s come into office here who’s had more background in foreign affairs. He’s not being difficult. He’s practical, and his approach to this problem is, as a matter of fact, to the extent that we can make progress [unclear].”

Nixon: “Sure. The world would be a hell of a lot safer out there for those people if we had some stroke with China rather than if we had to have our stroke against them. That’s my opinion.”

Nixon: “Suppose that we just—suppose the Chinese thing made a run at Thailand. And suppose the Thais said, ‘Look, we have a treaty with you.’ Do you see an American President going down to the Congress and saying, ‘We’re going to declare war on China to keep our treaty commitments with Thailand?’ Huh? We’ve got to let them think that. I mean we can’t say that our treaty commitments are not going to be kept, and the Chinese better think they’re gonna be kept. But the practical problem, that’s what we’ve got to face, is that at the present time, except for Western Europe there are damn few places where you would get support. You wouldn’t even get it now on Israel. Not today.”

Haig: “That’s right.”

Nixon: “And then influence them, try to ameliorate their aggressiveness.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Recording of conversation among Nixon, Green, Haig, and Holdridge, March 23, 1972, 4:08–5:02 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 692–3) The editor transcribed the portions of this conversation specifically for this volume.

158. Letter From the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green) to the Ambassador to Thailand (Unger)¹

Washington, April 4, 1972.

Dear Len:

This letter is in reply to your telegram 4552² on the subject of Thai interest in the US-PRC discussions.

I think that about all we can tell the Thai, even privately, is something along the following lines—which you can attribute to me if you wish: “We expect that the Ambassadorial talks in Paris will move rather slowly. They will be dealing with bilateral matters, centering on US-PRC trade and on travel between the two countries. If there is anything of interest to the Thai we will keep them informed.”

For your information only, we are working out with PRC Ambassador Huang the ground rules for the discussions, and we hope to get agreement or at least acquiescence that we will keep some friendly countries informed in general terms of the progress of the talks, on a confidential basis. Until the PRC has reacted to this suggestion, I am reluctant to go farther than the above in promising to inform the Thai or any other friends.

With warm regards,
Sincerely,

Marshall Green³

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Marshall Green Files: Lot 74 D 471, Box 13826, Department Correspondence, April 1972 Folder. Secret; Eyes Only; Official-*Informal*. Drafted by Hummel.

² Telegram 4552 from Bangkok, April 1, reported Asa Sarasin’s request that the RTG “be kept informed of developments in continuing U.S.-PRC talks, such as those being conducted in Paris. Asa recalled that Chairman Thanom had mentioned to Marshall Green during his recent visit Thailand’s concern about Chinese support for the insurgency in Thailand (see Document 153) implying that the Thai may at some point ask that that be raised in U.S.-PRC discussions.” (Ibid., Central Files 1970-73, POL CHICOM-US)

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

159. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand¹

Washington, April 6, 1972, 0003Z.

58624. For Ambassador.

1. We believe it is important for you to give Thai leadership an authoritative impression of the President's view of the current situation in South Viet-Nam and the United States response to that situation. We wish you to seek appointment with Thanom, Praphat, and such others of Thai leadership whom you may consider appropriate to give them that impression as soon as possible.²

2. You may tell them that we regard this North Vietnamese attack as a clear-cut invasion across the DMZ, in which they have thrown away any pretense of "people's war" tactics. Because they have committed their forces so heavily, we assume this is an all-out effort to discredit Vietnamization, to demoralize both the Vietnamese and the U.S. public, and to create a favorable military position from which they will hope to dictate favorable peace terms. We take this threat seriously, but we regard it as vulnerable on both political and military grounds.

3. From our initial assessments, we believe the South Vietnamese forces are reacting with confidence and with an effective plan to contain this initial thrust, while positioning themselves for additional attacks which they expect elsewhere in South Viet-Nam. Their civilian services are coping with the refugee flow and the other disruptions resulting from this attack.

4. President Nixon is determined that the North Vietnamese plan shall not succeed. He has already ordered a significant reinforcement of U.S. air and naval forces in the area. He is reviewing the situation carefully to determine what other actions may be necessary.

5. You may inform the Thai leaders that we appreciate the steadfast attitude they have displayed in the face of this threat to our common interests. You should express particular appreciation for their

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI–US. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Sullivan, cleared by Kissinger, Rush, and Robert M. Miller (S/S), and approved by Johnson. Repeated to Saigon.

² Telegram 4792 from Bangkok, April 6, reported that Unger met with Thanom, Praphat, and Dawee that day to deliver the message from the President. (Ibid.)

rapid and favorable responses to our requests for deployment of additional U.S. forces in Thailand.³

6. FYI: The President has just approved a recommendation for the deployment of additional U.S. air units (fighter-bombers) from the continental United States to Thai bases. You should not mention this fact to the Thai leaders but should stay in close touch with U.S. military authorities in anticipation of such action. End FYI.

7. We would welcome any views Thai leaders wish to express and will hope to continue consultations with them as the military action develops.

³ In the WSAG meeting of April 10, called in response to the North Vietnamese attack, Admiral Moorer stated that the United States had "all types of aircraft in Thailand—tankers, B-52s, F-104s and F-105s." CIA Director Richard Helms then called Thailand "the seventh carrier." (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1972)

160. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge and Richard T. Kennedy of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 6, 1972.

SUBJECT

Performance of Thai Irregulars

Previously the performance of the Thai irregulars in Laos has been spotty.² But recent reports from [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Ambassador Godley [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in Vientiane indicate marked improvement. A recent [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] report recounts a series of incidents in the Sam Thong–Long Tieng area during 18–30 March in which the Thai fought with courage and determination, often in hand-to-hand combat

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VIII. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information.

² For a previous discussion of the performance of the Thai irregulars in Laos, see Document 147.

with NVA infantry. They have withstood almost constant artillery and mortar bombardment and have destroyed four enemy tanks, one with grenades and small arms after it penetrated their perimeter.

The recent, excellent Thai performance probably results from their year of combat experience and a growing confidence that they can stand up to the best NVA units. If it continues, this improvement could prove most significant for events in both Laos and Thailand, for many of these men will return to the Royal Thai Army.

161. Memorandum From the Country Director for Thailand and Burma (Bergesen) to the Staff Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Westmore)¹

Washington, April 10, 1972.

SUBJECT

Developments in U.S. Relationships with Thailand (and Burma)

Additional Assistance to Thailand (AAT)

On March 13 and 14 our Mission in Bangkok completed an exchange of letters with the Thai on the military elements of the Additional Assistance to Thailand agreement. General Evans, (COMUSMACTHAI), and Air Chief Marshal Dawee were the signatories. A PL 480 agreement was signed with the Thai on March 17 as part of the AAT package. It provides for \$14 million in tobacco and wheat during CY 1972–73. Negotiations continue on a supplement to provide an additional \$16 million in cotton. The Thai asked that the agreement be split in this fashion to give them additional time to bring their cotton producers and textile manufacturers into the picture.

Thai Textile Agreement Concluded

On March 16 we signed a five-year cotton textile bilateral agreement with Thailand permitting an aggregate annual level of exports to the U.S. of 15 million square yards. Shortly thereafter the embargoed Thai nightwear was released without being charged to the new Thai quota. All involved were pleased and relieved.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI–US. Secret; Exdis.

Residual Thai Forces

On February 4, the last major Thai combat forces were withdrawn from the RVN. By the end of April the Thai intend to pull out the remaining few men (some headquarters and LST personnel) of the RTAFV. A contingent of about 35 men will be sent as members of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Representation—Vietnam (RTAFRV). We are arranging to provide some minimal support for this Thai representational group for one year only (FY 73).

[Omitted here is discussion of Burma.]

162. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, April 25, 1972, 0934Z.

5703. Subj: Deputy Assistant Secretary Hummel's Call on Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn

1. Deputy Asst Secy Arthur W. Hummel on April 24 paid approximately a one-hour call on Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn accompanied by Ambassador Unger and FSO Colebaugh. Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullasapya, who interpreted for Thanom, and Under Secy of State for Foreign Affairs Charunphan Isarangkun were also present.

2. After initial formalities Deputy Asst Secy Hummel expressed the USG's great appreciation for cooperation of RTG in the deployment to Thailand of additional US forces to meet increased threat in Vietnam War. Amb Unger noted that there has been an increase to about 33,300 men or 1100 over the ceiling. He described the increase as temporary though of unknown duration.

3. In response to a question from Dep Asst Secy Hummel, Thanom stated that the insurgency in Thailand is "under control." Thanom noted increased government activity against the CT's and said that the recent Phu Kwang operation was possible due to increased funds available to the RTG through expanded US assistance.² He also confirmed

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, ORG 7 EA. Secret; Limdis.

² See the March 24 memorandum of conversation for further detail concerning the Thai insurgency. Thanom noted that the Phu Kwang 10-day operation cost approximately 4 million baht and that a number of Communist insurgent camps had been captured in the North. Thanom mentioned that several CT camps had been captured in the South. He also claimed that public opinion had turned against the Communists there. Finally,

plans for increased coordination of civilians and police with military and unified command of operations, and mentioned more and better use of VDS–VSDU.

4. Thanom repeated a comment previously made to the press that NVN was extremely lucky to be supported by both the USSR and Red China who seemed to be competing with each other in their support of the North Vietnamese. He observed that without hesitation these two powers are “pouring” supplies into the north.

5. Dep Asst Secy Hummel raised the problem of narcotics trafficking and said the USG is interested in cooperating with the RTG in suppressing such trafficking. He particularly noted the recent well-publicized burning of 26 tons of opium and said this act has gone a long way in stilling criticisms of Thai efforts. Thanom said the RTG is sincerely trying to control drug trafficking and has been cooperating with the US and the UN. Dawee observed that harsher penalties for drug traffickers are in the works.

6. Thanom said he has received reports suggesting the Red Chinese are actively involved in drug trafficking. Dept Asst Secy Hummel expressed US interest in receiving any evidence of such involvement, but told Thanom that the US has never found hard evidence to support this.

7. The Amb also specifically raised with Thanom the drug problem at International School Bangkok, noting the considerable increase in the use of heroin among students at the school. He mentioned the great concern felt by everyone in the US community over this problem. Amb Unger said that he would act rapidly in all cases which came to his attention and that some people have already been returned to the US. Thanom said the drugs are being introduced not by young people but the older persons, also citing US and European “hippies” who travel here as tourists. He said he is considering banning such persons from entering Thailand. The Amb again noted that the USG appreciates the help that has been given so far, but said he would like to request special help from the police in cleaning up the sources of these drugs.

8. The Amb also told Thanom he has received a copy of an anonymous letter addressed to General Praphat Charusathien alleging in-

“Thanom mentioned the problem of the North Vietnamese refugees in the Northeast. He said there are some 30,000 Vietnamese who could fight against Thailand and said an estimated 12,000 are ‘real Communist.’ When asked if there was evidence to support an active role by the North Vietnamese refugees in the insurgency, Thanom listed several examples of North Vietnamese fund-gathering efforts. Ambassador Unger observed that while there is ample evidence of their fund-gathering activities he was aware of little evidence the Vietnamese refugees are actively engaged in the insurgency against Thailand.” (Ibid., POL 23 THAI)

volvement in narcotics trafficking and corruption by police. Thanom acknowledged receipt of the letter³ and said he had already talked about it with police DG General Prasert.

9. Dep Asst Secy Hummel asked about plans to promulgate a constitution and form a cabinet. Thanom observed that the problems which had brought about the November 17 coup have not yet been solved. In this regard, he specifically noted the need for governmental reorganization and security. Thanom said the NEC is working to solve these problems before returning to constitutional rule "so we will not have to have a coup again." Thanom said the governmental reorganization will be the subject of discussion at the NEC meeting scheduled for April 25. He noted that continuation of these problems does not mean that there will be a wait of "20 years" before returning to constitutional government, but he declined to predict exactly when the change may take place.

Unger

³ [text not declassified] telegram 29786 from Bangkok, dated April 4, reported the Embassy's suspicions of drug corruption concerning Police Colonel Pramuan Wanikaphan and described its efforts to "neutralize" him through a fabricated accusatory letter to Praphat, Thanom, the American Embassy, and others, ostensibly written by an anonymous victim of Colonel Pramuan's extortion. This plan evidently was put into effect. (Department of State, INR Historical Files, Country Files, Thailand 1972-1975)

163. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, May 12, 1972, 1201Z.

6616. Ref: State 082969² and 082970.³

1. I am profoundly concerned about Jack Anderson "revelations" reported in refelts. Earlier stories based on charges by Congressman Wolff and others have been unfortunate but we have at least been in

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23 THAI. Confidential; Immediate; Limdis.

² Telegram 82969 to Bangkok, May 11, reported Anderson staffer Whitten's report that he had documents that indicated Operation Phu Kwang was jointly planned by U.S. and Thai Governments, failed despite commitment of "crack" first division, and that General Evans had gone to Unger conveying Thai request for B-52 strikes to support RTA operations but that Ambassador had "wisely" declined. (Ibid.)

³ Telegram 82970 to Bangkok, May 11, reported Anderson's allegations that some top Thai Government leaders were involved in drug trafficking and corruption. (Ibid.)

a position to present our side of the story as I recently did in a public release with regard to narcotics (Bangkok 6400). While Thai Govt was and continues to be deeply disturbed about press and Congressional accusations and finds it hard to make distinctions between Congress and administration, nevertheless we have managed thus far to avoid serious damage to our working relations.

2. New “revelations”, however, appear to be unmistakably attributable to Executive Branch documents or conversations with Executive branch personnel privy to this and other missions’ reporting on events and conversations in Thailand. I realize that this should come as no surprise to me since apparently Jack Anderson has access to whatever he wants in Washington today. I hope, however, Department appreciates what impact of coming stories likely to be on our relations here and on our capacity to influence RTG actions and programs and to secure RTG acquiescence or cooperation in programs essential to us.

3. I also question whether, given Anderson’s motivations and mode of operation, we can afford to seem to be acknowledging “rumors implicating high Thai officials” and to be asking for substantiation. Actually, some months ago I asked all elements of this mission to give high priority to investigating rumors that top Thai leaders were involved in narcotics traffic. No evidence has come to light implicating any one at the NEC level. We are continuing to collect evidence on lower level⁴ involvement but even here we lack much firm information.

4. I hope Whitten was given facts to put Anderson “information” on narcotics in perspective and also effort was made to persuade Whitten that “revelations”, particularly if they seem to be attributable to U.S. intelligence agencies and U.S. missions abroad, are virtually certain to jeopardize working relations laboriously developed with RTG and which are only means we have to bring about effective control of narcotics traffic.

5. “Revelations” about Phu Kwang, including judgments about Thai performance, snide comments about Praphat, reference to internal Mission discussions about B-52s and CS which have been contained for the most part in Secret or Top Secret, Nodis or Exdis messages will persuade Thais against any possible effort on our part to dissuade them that their conversations with us and the confidential information they provide us about their own situation and actions are available to the press. It will also convince them that this Mission holds views of such a critical and unfriendly nature that frank and friendly relations characteristic of our past association will be hard, if not impossible, to continue. Consequences of this when we are daily asking RTG for new favors and privileges should be clear to anyone.

⁴ See Document 162 and footnote 3 thereto.

6. Action requested:

A. Explain to Whitten, and if necessary to Jack Anderson, the situation regarding the narcotics traffic and that the Thai, in cooperation with us, are taking steps to restrict that traffic; that we have no information on the alleged atrocities in para 2 of State 082969; that the U.S. did not help plan Phu Kwang; that CS is a normal MAP item; and that this operation, despite its problems, has its positive side.

B. Keep out of the hands and away from the ears of the U.S. press sensitive communications from this Mission.

Unger

164. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Embassy in Japan¹

Bangkok, May 13, 1972, 1005Z.

6634. VP Only. For The Vice President From Unger. Subject: Thai-U.S. Relations and Your Visit to Bangkok. This message provides background on current Thai-U.S. relations and, where needed, talking points for use in your discussions with the Thai leadership.

1. Vietnam

Background

A. Thai leaders fully support the measures taken by the President to meet the crisis created by the North Vietnamese invasion. They have shown this through public and private statements as well as their readiness to open their bases to our USAF buildup.

B. The Thai remain extremely concerned about the current military situation in South Vietnam. They see the future independence of Laos and Cambodia hanging in the balance along with that of South Vietnam. Thus they know their own security will be deeply affected by the outcome of the present campaign.

C. Thai leaders have readily accommodated our urgent needs for redeployment of U.S. forces to Thailand despite their full realization of the risks involved as public attention progressively shifts from RVN to Thailand as the major base for U.S. combat activities in Southeast Asia.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL THAI-US. Secret; Immediate; Exdis; Nodis. Repeated to the Department of State.

They recognize the increased danger of retaliatory attack against Thai bases. The redeployment also has created an increased sense of the U.S. commitment to South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, including continued air support for the defending forces in Indochina. Further, it has heightened Thai expectations of military and economic assistance.

D. Thai realization of their increased exposure will also heighten the bitterness of their reaction if we make concessions at the negotiating table which they regard as inconsistent with their own basic security requirements. They have repeatedly asked to be consulted by us before fundamental changes are made on our negotiating position. These requests have been transmitted to the President. Since the President's speech of May 8, they have sought clarification particularly on our stance concerning a ceasefire, i.e. whether we are now prepared to accept continued North Vietnamese presence in Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam.

E. Talking Point: It would be particularly useful if you could discuss with RTG our negotiating posture in light of the President's offer of May 8 especially clarification of the ceasefire offer. The Thai will also deeply appreciate whatever assessment you feel able to give them of the current military situation in SVN and of our program of severing NVN's supply line.

2. U.S. Military Deployments to Thailand

Background

A. In 1970–71 we reduced U.S. military forces in Thailand from a peak of 48,000 to a U.S./RTG agreed level of 32,200. Eighty percent of these were USAF units engaged in the air war in Indochina. Major combat units operating from five Thai bases (Utapao, Korat, Udorn, Ubon and Nakhon Phanom) included one SAC wing (B-52's and tankers), eleven tactical fighter squadrons, mainly F-4s, and gunships, as well as support aircraft of many types.

B. Recent large USAF deployments associated with developments in Vietnam increased our in-country strength to approximately 40,000 and required the reopening of a sixth base (Takhli) which we previously turned back to the Thai Air Force. In the course of these deployments we added nine B-52's (making a total of 50) and nine F-4 squadrons as well as many tankers. Additional aircraft may be moved from Danang to Thailand. This would require a buildup at a new operating location and could add as many as 4,000 additional U.S. personnel to Thailand.

C. Talking Point: Express the administration's appreciation for all the Thai have done and are continuing to do in furthering our mutual interests in Indochina. Recognize the RTG's immediate approval of the large U.S. air buildup in Thailand required as a response to increased enemy initiatives throughout Southeast Asia.

3. U.S. Politics and the U.S. Commitment

Talking Point: They will want your appraisal of the current political situation in the United States, both in terms of the Congress and the forthcoming election, and its implications for our continuing ability to carry out a foreign policy of collective security in Southeast Asia.

4. U.S. Military Assistance to Thailand

Background

A. U.S. service-funded military assistance to Thailand, including special supplements, have averaged \$72 million a year since FY-68. The FY-72 level (provisional) is \$83.5 million. This includes a \$15 million grant to enable the Thai to improve its counterinsurgency capability in the military services, and be prepared for contingencies. In FY-73 military assistance to Thailand will shift from MASF to MAP, funded by security assistance legislation, and thus particularly vulnerable to scrutiny in the Senate and by the SFRC.

B. U.S. military assistance was used in earlier years to equip a general purpose, conventional military force. Force modernization continues to be a program goal. More attention is now being given to developing forces adapted to the carrying out of counterinsurgency operations, including providing relevant equipment such as M-16 rifles and helicopters, and converter sets for gunships.

C. Thai leaders have fully endorsed the Nixon Doctrine and have accepted the principle that U.S. forces should not become involved in Thailand's security problem. They have been encouraged to expect that the U.S. will continue MAP at or near present levels. In January 1971, Secretary of Defense Laird stated in Bangkok that under the Nixon Doctrine the level of U.S. military assistance to Thailand would remain the same or even increase.

D. Talking Point: Thai leaders are likely to seek assurances of continued military assistance and may point especially to requirements for helicopters. In responding, you should assure Thais that we will be as responsive as possible to their requirements, but take care not to raise their expectations for specific dollar-levels of MAP. As to specific items, such as helicopters, we will consider these in context of Thai needs and capabilities to operate and support; we do in fact expect to deliver to the RTA this calendar year 32 Hueys (UH-1M) and two to the RTAF.

5. Economic Assistance Program

Background

A. U.S. economic aid to Thailand declined steadily from a peak of \$54 million in 1967 to \$23 million in FY-1971. This fiscal year obligations will total approximately \$17 million in aid funds plus \$14 million from PL-480. Our program emphasizes support of RTG counterinsurgency activities, but includes assistance aimed at some of

Thailand's longer term economic problems, particularly in the agricultural area. The \$14 million of PL-480 assistance is the first part of a \$30 million loan which is aimed at preventing the increased RTG security expenditures from threatening development programs.

B. Talking Point: Thai leaders may ask for assurance on future aid levels. Suggest you respond that the President places great importance on continuing to provide needed assistance to countries which are endeavoring to meet their own development and security needs. We have requested from Congress, and expect to receive, funding that will permit programs in Thailand to continue at the present level.

6. Insurgency

Background

A. Communist-directed insurgency in Thailand has continued growing in past year despite increased RTG efforts to deal with it. Number of main force insurgents rose about 20 percent last year to estimated 7,000. There has also been considerable improvement in quantity and quality of their weapons supplied primarily by Chinese through Laos. Most disturbing has been expansion of Communist political infrastructure in villages. Total number of incidents, including those initiated by RTG forces, increased to 3,500 in 1971, up about 50 percent from 1970. In 1971 1,481 Thai officials were killed or seriously wounded fighting the insurgency. This is double the figure for the previous year.

B. RTG has responded by putting more troops into counterinsurgency operations in field along with police and civilian paramilitary forces. It has also increased its defense budget this fiscal year and next by a total of about \$20 million as part of a U.S.-Thai cooperative program to improve RTG capability to counter its insurgent threat. Main problem areas, which were highlighted in recent major CI operations, involve coordination among different organizations engaged in CI activity and effective implementation in field of well-conceived CI plans. Small unit training and leadership leave much to be desired. Our assistance to the police is a major element in our economic aid program.

C. Talking Points: Inquire about progress of the insurgency and RTG countermeasures. Encourage Thais to meet insurgency threat now before it becomes more difficult to handle. To any inquiry on assistance levels for Thai police, suggest you respond that you understand police presently have under consideration our proposal for a comprehensive program which reflects our best estimate of what is needed. This provides opportunity for RTG to register desire for helicopters if these are considered to be a priority need. Considering the dangers of a ground attack on U.S. Air Force elements stationed on Thai bases and engaged in the Vietnam War, you may wish to express appreciation for RTG cooperative efforts thus far, and suggest that even greater defensive patrolling and intelligence collection now by Thai civilian, police and mil-

itary components would be helpful. (Thai forces are responsible for protection "outside the wire" of USAF assets.)

7. Narcotics

A. We have made a major effort to improve the suppression effort against the illicit narcotics traffic through Thailand over the past year. The Thai leadership has been forthcoming in statements and actions concerning the problem. We negotiated a memorandum of understanding on the subject in September 1971 and we have under way a number of programs aimed at increasing enforcement capability of the RTG. Our main problem in implementing the programs lies in the fact that the Thai view narcotics as essentially a U.S. problem and that top-level RTG undertakings have not always been translated into firm orders down the line.

B. Major results thus far include creating a special mobile task force in Northern Thailand, and RTG cooperation in breaking a number of major links in the narcotics traffic. The RTG also acquired (and destroyed) 26 tons of opium from Chinese Irregular Forces (former KMI) in return for offering land on which the Chinese can settle permanently. The RTG also extracted a promise by the Chinese Irregulars to end their involvement in illicit narcotics traffic, an agreement which the RTG will monitor. Although the fact is highly sensitive and not publicized the RTG arrangement with the CIF was partially financed from aid funds.

C. Criticism of the Thai narcotics suppression effort such as that voiced by Congressman Lester Wolff, and that presented in the NBC television special "The Thai Connection," is widely publicized here and creates a good deal of resentment. We have explained publicly that we do not agree with those charges and appreciate RTG cooperation.

D. Talking Point: Express appreciation for Thai cooperation and for their increased efforts to suppress narcotics traffic. At the same time, you should stress to them that only improved performance will really answer the inevitable critics, just as in our handling of the problem in the U.S.

8. Laos

Background

A. For years, Thai military units have played a key role in the defense of Laos, especially Gen. Vang Pao's stronghold at Long Tieng southwest of the Plaine des Jarres. A total of 22 Thai volunteer battalions (funded by the U.S.) are currently committed in Laos. Their support was crucial during the heavy dry season offensive launched by the Communists just before Christmas. Only the combination of Thai volunteer units and U.S. Air Force support (including the B-52's) permitted the friendly forces to survive and hold key positions such as Long Tieng under heavy enemy attacks earlier this year. The intensity of the DRV focus on the offensive in South Vietnam has eased the situation in Laos.

165. Telegram From Vice President Agnew to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, May 18, 1972.

Vipto 31. Subj: Memorandum of Conversation: Vice President's Meeting with Chairman Thanom and NEC Leaders, May 17, 1972.

Participants:

US—The Vice President, Ambassador Unger, Mr. Sohmer, General Dunn, Mr. Reynders, Mr. Masters, Maj. Gen. Evans, Mr. Pickering.

Thai—Chairman Thanom, Deputy Chairman Praphat, Assistant Chairman Pote, Supreme Command Chief of Staff Dawee, Supreme Command Deputy Chief of Staff Kriangsak, Army Chief of Staff Surakit, Under Secretary Charoonphand, MFA America Division Chief Thep Diskul, MFA Southeast Asia Division Chief Asa Sarasin.

Time: 3:00–4:30 p.m.

Place: National Security Council Headquarters.

[Omitted here is discussion of Japan, Vietnam, and Cambodia.]

16. Thanom referred to Moose–Lowenstein report and its references to Thai volunteers. He asked VP what effect this report would have on Thai/U.S. relations. VP said he was not too worried about this. Today's Senate vote will cool somewhat ardor of dovish elements in Congress. President is firmly committed to a course of action in SEA and will do whatever necessary to see it through. Thanom said he concerned because RTG has consistently maintained that, while it trains Lao forces in Thailand, only volunteers from Thailand serve in Lao forces. RTG concerned reports such as this will give impression that RTA forces are or will serve in Laos. VP said some elements of the press have behaved irresponsibly but public opinion surge he had described will discredit to some extent this kind of sniping. However, we must not expect a cessation of anti-war activism in U.S.

17. On VP's invitation to discuss priority matters to be conveyed to President Nixon, Thanom said insurgency situation in North, North-east, and South is worsening. RTG is taking measures to suppress insurgency and frustrate enemy's effort to win over the people, but continued U.S. assistance is needed. Dawee said priority needs are

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files, 1971–1972: Lot 73 D 323, Visit of Agnew to Asia. Secret; Immediate; Priority. Repeated to Bangkok and Saigon. Printed from a copy with no transmittal time; a handwritten notation at the top of page 1 reads "CINCPAC # 1822212 May 72," and later telegrams reference this number. However, no copy of CINCPAC 1822212 has been found.

additional communications equipment, helicopters, and wheeled armored vehicles. Often Government forces know where enemy forces are but cannot get to them before they disappear. Government forces often encounter land-mines. More helicopters and armored vehicles would allow RTG forces to do better job and also boost their morale. VP said President Nixon pleased with recent RTG action to suppress insurgency. He would convey request for equipment.

18. On narcotics question, Thanom said Thai are deeply upset that Congressman Wolff is calling Thailand the center of opium trade and belittling its suppression effort. Recent NBC T.V. program used picture of Deputy Chairman Prapass to imply he involved in opium traffic. Thais very concerned about this. Drugs destroy lives of Thai youth too, and they wish to eradicate this menace. William A. Wanzeck and Jack Greene of BNDD being considered for Thai decorations for their role in suppression activities. Allegations that Thais not cooperating completely untrue as record of seizures and destruction of opium show. Thanom asked VP to make statement reassuring U.S. public on Thai effort. General Praphat made several interjections during presentation, obviously intent that VP understand seriousness with which Thais view subject. VP said President Nixon fully aware of Thai cooperation in this field, had asked VP to convey appreciation for efforts of Thai leaders. Some politicians use this kind of attack as personal launching pad, and media sometimes unfortunately support such efforts, as in case of misleading documentary on Thailand. VP assured Thais such criticism does not square with prevalent U.S. view of Thailand, personally regretted incident and expressed willingness to state support for Thais on this subject.

19. Thanom said Thailand is taking strong actions to eliminate opium traffic. Some of those caught have been executed. RTG has program to help hill tribes shift from opium to other crops. VP again gave recognition to Thai efforts, and said he knew Wolff had tried to show that his recent intervention had produced programs which in fact are result of long-standing cooperative effort.

20. Thanom asked VP to convey to President Nixon hope that President will continue vigorous and determined policies in SEA which are so important to morale of small countries making an effort to maintain their independence and freedom. Thailand will continue to defend its independence against communist attack, but needs military assistance in form of equipment from U.S. Enemy is equipped with foreign armaments, and as a developing country Thailand cannot afford equipment needed to match enemy. Thailand wants to avoid being caught short, as was GVN with NVN's 130 mm artillery.

21. VP promised to convey this message to President, added he will get information from Ambassador Unger to help refute false

charges concerning narcotics. VP expressed thanks to Thais for speaking frankly on all issues as friends can and should do.

22. Thanom again thanked VP for visit, and President, VP and Secretary Rogers for their understanding of Thai problems. He hoped President will appreciate that Thailand asks for assistance only because it truly and urgently needed. VP agreed to convey this message, said U.S. has no more dependable friend in Asia than Thailand.

Agnew

166. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, May 24, 1972, 10:05–11:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Major Gen. Alexander M. Haig

State

U. Alexis Johnson

William Sullivan

DOD

Kenneth Rush

Armistead Selden

Major Gen. David Ott

JCS

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Capt. Kinnaird McKee

CIA

Richard Helms

George Carver

[*name not declassified*] (only stayed for
Mr. Helms' briefing)

NSC Staff

Richard T. Kennedy

John H. Holdridge

Mark Wandler

[Omitted here is the Summary of Conclusions and Discussion of Vietnam.]

Gen. Haig: Let's turn now to the problem of putting more B-52s into Thailand. We all realize this is a big problem.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, it is. I would like to have a good discussion of it here today. Tom [Moorer]² and I spoke about it yesterday. (to Gen. Haig) Have you seen the cables from Unger?³

Gen. Haig: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: The first thing to consider is the physical problem—just getting space for the planes. Then we have the problem of the political approach to the Thai. We've been nibbling away at the Thai on a piecemeal basis. Unger feels, and rightly so, I think, that when he makes his next approach to them, they will ask us what our plans are. They will want to know how much more we plan to send to Thailand.

Also, Unger feels the Thai will want to have some sort of a discussion about our strategy and our thoughts for the future concerning Southeast Asia. As you know, we have not given anything along this line to Unger to pass on to the Thai.

On the physical side, we have had quite a few exchanges. Another cable came in from Len [Unger]⁴ this morning. The major question is how many more B-52s—if any—have to go to U Tapao? All other questions, it seems to me, flow from that.

Concerning personnel, we are fast approaching the point where we may have as many, if not more, people in Thailand than in Vietnam.

Adm. Moorer: And bear in mind, too, that we will have to start moving out of Danang if we want to withdraw the 196th Brigade—and meet the 49,000 ceiling.

Mr. Johnson: To the degree that it appears to the Thai that we are choking their facilities in order to maintain the Vietnam ceiling, they will not be receptive. This is a major problem which we have to face up to.

When we go back to Unger, I would like to have a full package for him, together with a rationale which he can present to the Thai. I've done the first draft of such a message, I think we should all take a look at it. If Unger can go to the Thai with this kind of a package and a rationale, he will be able to make an effective approach. If we keep going in piecemeal, though, the Thai will probably get their backs up.

Mr. Rush: I agree.

Mr. Johnson: The approach I outlined is what we have in mind.

Adm. Moorer: Unger says: "In my judgment, we are reaching the point where the tactical advantages of securing additional temporary

² Brackets in the source text.

³ Telegram 7207 from Bangkok, May 23, and previous. (Ibid., Box H-088, WSAG Meeting, Vietnam, 7/24/72)

⁴ Brackets in the source text.

aircraft accommodations in Thailand will be clearly outweighed by political liabilities of pushing the Thai too far. Accordingly, we must establish some clear limits beyond which we will not go in our deployment requests.”

When we move out of Danang, we will put even more aircraft into Thailand. We’ve already started preparing Nam Phong for the Marines.

Mr. Johnson: I was speaking to Bangkok on the telephone earlier today, and I was told that the Thai don’t want any public statement about the opening of Nam Phong.

Adm. Moorer: That’s all right. Incidentally, when the F-4s go there, we will need more tankers for them because they will have greater distances to fly. This is entirely separate from the B-52 problem, too.

While we’re speaking about problems, I might mention the bomb problem. Quite naturally, our bomb expenditure has greatly increased as the B-52 force has been augmented. If we send more planes, the expenditure will obviously go up even more, too. In order to solve this problem, we must surge with bomb production. With 235 B-52s and all the Tac Air we have out there, we could very easily run out of bombs. We are dropping the bombs faster than we make them.

Mr. Rush: What about our worldwide inventory? Can we take some bombs from that?

Adm. Moorer: We are already drawing down the European inventory. However, if we step up production, we should be able to stop the drawdown and hold our own by January. The forthcoming rainy season in Vietnam will have some effect in cutting down the bomb expenditure because the planes won’t be able to fly as many missions as they are flying now. Still, we have to take some drastic actions with regard to bomb production. The B-52s pour out the bombs by the hundreds of thousands of tons.

The first question that has to be decided is whether the President wants to add thirty-four more B-52s—to get the one hundred he recently ordered?⁵ Or, will he be satisfied with the sixty-six additional B-52s?

Gen. Haig: I wouldn’t worry about the President being wed to the figure of one hundred additional B-52s. He wanted a dramatic step-up in the number of B-52s, and we have done that.

Adm. Moorer: If he will be satisfied with the sixty-six B-52s, the only problem we will have is getting the additional tankers in Thailand.⁶

⁵ According to the minutes of the May 30 WSAG meeting, Haig stated that “we got an okay to hold to the sixty-six additional B-52s for Guam.” (Ibid., Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1/3/72–7/24/72)

⁶ According to the minutes of the June 1 WSAG meeting, Moorer stated that everything was “ready to go” with the tankers in Thailand, including 46 for U Tapao, 20 for Takhli, and 13 for Don Muang, “most of which are already in place.” (Ibid.)

These tankers will be needed for the F-4s coming out of Danang, and I think we can arrange it with the Thai. They have already agreed to the transfer of the Marine F-4s from Danang.

Mr. Johnson: The Thai have also agreed to the reopening of Takhli, but they have not agreed about Korat.

Adm. Moorer: We plan to leave one alert squadron in Danang because we feel we can accept the hazard of keeping one squadron there after the 196th Brigade leaves. Abe, as you know, wants to pull the brigade out in order to get down to the 49,000 ceiling.

If the President wants the one hundred additional B-52s—that means thirty-four more than we are planning to send right now—we will have a big problem. We will have to force the Thai into agreeing that the tankers now at U Tapao should be moved to Don Muang.

Mr. Johnson: It will mean in effect that we have taken over Don Muang. We would have to close the second runway on the military side of the field and use it for parking space. And if we put forty-six KC-135 tankers into Don Muang, that will displace the Thai Air Force units there. As I said, we will have taken over Bangkok International Airport.

Adm. Moorer: We probably could lay a few more mats at Takhli and accommodate some more planes there. But that really isn't the solution. We've also looked at the possibility of stationing the tankers at Clark Field. Because of the greater distances involved, though, you have to put two and a half tankers into the Philippines for every tanker you take out of U Tapao.

Gen. Haig: It's clear that we should drop the option of putting more B-52s into Thailand unless we undertake crash construction projects on facilities we hold, rather than on facilities the Thai hold.

Mr. Johnson: I agree. Can we proceed on that assumption?

Gen. Haig: That's my feeling. But we have to give all the options to the President and await his guidance.

Adm. Moorer: We can start some construction work at U Tapao, but that will, of course, take some time.

Gen. Haig: Concerning the political problem of putting more B-52s in Thailand, the President isn't aware of the strain this move will have on the political fabric tying us to the Thai. And only a handful of B-52s is involved.

Adm. Moorer: I don't think it's worthwhile to court political trouble by asking the Thai to accept more B-52s. These planes can only carry twenty-six bombs, anyway. We already have over 200 B-52s in the theater—more than we've ever had out there before. In my judgment, we have an adequate number of B-52s in action right now. But if the President wants to send more, we will do it.

Mr. Johnson: Perhaps we can delay the redeployment of some units from Vietnam to Thailand, thus saving some space at Takli and Korat.

Mr. Rush: If we do that, it will certainly have an effect on the 49,000 ceiling.

Mr. Johnson: I know. Remember, though, that the President has always said he will make the necessary decisions based on the circumstances at the moment. If he has to maintain the ceiling, he will do it. Still, we can give him some options—such as deferring the redeployments and, thereby, saving space in Thailand.

Adm. Moorer: We have to get an answer to the basic question. Are sixty-six additional B-52s enough to meet the President's requirement? In three weeks, we will have sent sixty-six more B-52s to Guam. If this is enough to meet his requirement, then we can deal with the Thai on the basis of arranging only the redeployments from Danang. However, if it does not meet his requirement, and if he wants us to send another thirty-four B-52s, then we will have a great problem with the Thai.

Gen. Haig: As I said before, I don't think the President is wed to the figure of one hundred more B-52s. He wanted us to take drastic action, which we did.

[Omitted here is discussion of B-52 missions over North Vietnam.]

167. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, May 26, 1972, 1249Z.

7416. Joint Embassy/MACTHAI Message. Subject: Thai Military Equipment Request: Thanom's Comments to Vice President. Ref: A. CINCPAC 182221Z May 72 (Vipto);² B. Bangkok 7138.³

Summary: During recent visit of Vice President, FM Thanom asked Vice President for increased military assistance to Thailand, specifying helicopters, armored cars, and communications equipment. In response to call to DOD from Vice President's office, MACTHAI has been instructed through military channels to develop recommended package

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/AGNEW. Secret; Immediate. Repeated to the Department of Defense, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACTHAI.

² See Document 165 and footnote 1 thereto.

³ Not found.

of defense equipment of approximately \$15 million which might be given to Thais as special military assistance add-on. We feel this is opportunity to present constructive package which we have structure in four parts to be responsive to Marshal Thanom's specific requests as well as re-oriented high priority requirements and which we would relate to increased Thai performance in Thai security and counter insurgency programs. End summary.

1. In context of Field Marshal Thanom's request for more military equipment for Thailand to Vice President, during VP's recent visit to Thailand (see reftels), on May 24 MACTHAI received telephone request from OSD/ISA through CINCPAC to suggest items that might be provided to Thailand under military assistance if special add-on fund of \$15 million were to become available. OSD/ISA stated request in response to inquiry from Vice President's office.

2. In follow-up to Vice President's discussions with Thai leaders, including Ambassador's meeting with Marshal Dawee today, Mission has attempted obtain clearer idea what Thanom had in mind when he asked for additional helicopters, communication equipment, and wheeled armored vehicles (para 17, ref a). We conclude from three separate conversations with RTA Chief of Staff, General Surakij, during past week that Thanom wanted more helicopters (than Thais know are already in pipeline) delivered more quickly than projected delivery schedule. Thanom wants helicopters to fill out two existing RTA airmobile (helicopter) companies and to equip a planned third airmobile company. Although Surakij does not think Thanom sought helicopters for RTAF, need for more helicopters (including helicopters for RTAF and police) has been recurring theme in conversations with Thai leaders, from King on down.

While helicopter program recommended below should meet those needs if properly managed we will keep this question under study. We have invited Thai to explain needs as they see them but have also pointed to large MASF helicopter program over past few years and to management difficulties, including pilot shortage, which could arise by overloading. Regarding request for armored cars, Surakij felt a few such vehicles for RTA to evaluate new types would meet the requirements. He also addressed some RTA communication equipment needs, which are discussed further below.

3. In course of normal MASF/MAP dialogue before Vice President's visit, there have been several lower level RTG approaches regarding increased military assistance support to Thailand both for additional items of equipment and for increased level of support. Mission officers have responded to these requests by pointing out that military assistance funds are limited (and probably will continue to be), that US will do its best to assist Thais to meet their priority needs within these limits, and that mission will study each request very carefully.

4. Additional military assistance to Thailand would offer excellent opportunity to develop constructive supplemental program to meet real Thai needs. Add-on package could provide further incentive to move Thais to improve their own response to counterinsurgency. We feel assistance beyond basic program level should be negotiated with Thais in conjunction with actions which we feel Thais should take to increase effectiveness of their security and counterinsurgency programs (as in recent AAT/Ramasoon exercise, but less formally, considering short time available in FY 72). Although we believe that we should be responsive to each of Thanom's requests, pertinence to counterinsurgency including support for VDC and hill tribe volunteers should be a prime test of priority in expenditures for equipment in overall contemplated MASF add-on.

5. Mission has prepared a list of items which might be included in add-on, grouped by category without any priority having been assigned. We consider list, which follows as most desirable make-up of program for presentation to Vice President. This list of items recommended for possible add-on is necessarily tentative pending our submission of more final mission recommendations based upon further study and exploration of Thai desires.

[Omitted here is the list of items.]

Unger

168. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Thai Request for Additional Military Assistance

During Vice President Agnew's recent trip, the Thai asked him for additional helicopters, communications equipment, and armored vehicles.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 564, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. VIII. Secret. Sent for action. Drafted by Kennedy and Holdridge. The memorandum was attached to a June 8 covering memorandum from Kennedy and Holdridge to Kissinger. It was signed by Haig.

At your direction Vice President Agnew asked Secretary Laird to prepare a forthcoming reply to the Thai request.

Secretary Laird proposes that we provide the Thai with four major items and spares² at a cost of \$4.6 million (Tab B).

—12 rebuilt UH-1H helicopters (\$4 million). This would affect helicopter delivery to U.S. Army reserve units, but not to the active Army.

—Fourteen M-113 armored personnel carriers (\$.288 million to complete the Thai program of 221 APCs. These fourteen vehicles would have to be diverted from a shipment of 232 currently scheduled for delivery to Vietnam, but could be replaced in the Vietnam program during the first two weeks of September by briefly delaying delivery to FMS purchasers.

—Six armored cars (\$.323 million) could be delivered within 18 months from new production. To provide them earlier, we would have to take them from U.S. base security units in SVN and Thailand, which Secretary Laird and I agree should not be done.

—Speed up delivery of half the 1,000 tactical radios now in the Thai program for arrival in March 1973. They could be delivered in August by a temporary diversion from SVN of 500 radios (from the planned SVN delivery of 2,000) for about two weeks and brief adjustments in delivery times of other programs.

Thailand will be transferred from Service funding to MAP on 1 July 1972, and MAP funds are severely limited. Therefore, if we are to provide a special package to the RTG, the decision should be made immediately so that Service funds may be obligated before 1 July. Proceeding now with Secretary Laird's package would serve two purposes:

—It would demonstrate our responsiveness to the Thai request and evidence a forthcoming attitude in view of all they have done for us during our force buildup.

—It will provide a hedge against possible MAP cuts next year.

I recommend that you approve Secretary Laird's proposal. If you agree I will convey your approval by the memorandum at Tab A.³

² In a June 2 memorandum for the President, Laird forwarded the proposal for the four programs but seemed to indicate skepticism about the Thai request, stating that there "is not a compelling requirement for military hardware additive to our regular program for Thailand, so the primary motive for providing additional assistance would be political." Laird also noted that "everything that we can do for the Thai in the way of additional military assistance at this time has a direct and adverse impact on our current accelerated programs to satisfy combat requirements in Vietnam." Attached but not printed.

³ Attached at Tab A but not printed was the President's memorandum to Laird, signed by Kissinger and dated June 10. It noted that the President "has approved your recommendations," directed the provision of 12 rebuilt UH-1H helicopters, 14 M-113 armored personnel carriers, 6 armored cars, and 500 tactical radios to the Thais, and requested that delivery "be accelerated to the maximum possible extent."

Recommendation

That you approve my forwarding the memorandum at Tab A to Secretary Laird approving his proposed additions to Thai military assistance.⁴

⁴ Haig initialed the approve option for the President.

169. Telegram From the Consulate in Australia to the Department of State¹

Perth, June 30, 1972, 1322Z.

Secto 93. 1. June 28 Secretary Rogers met with Thai SEATO Council Member Pote Sarasin to review several points in US-Thai relations as well as bearing on developments in Southeast Asia of summit talks and subsequent US contacts with USSR and PRC.

2. Secretary Rogers thanked the RTG for their prompt and generous assistance in accommodating US forces required for the increased air activities in North and South Vietnam. Pote said Thailand regarded this as fulfilling its obligations under SEATO. He noted that in so doing Thailand encouraged considerable criticism from neutral countries and made it more vulnerable to communist hostility, as was evident from increase in insurgency.

3. Because of this increase the RTG had asked Vice President Agnew for additional assistance, a reply to which Pote said had been received promptly and in the affirmative. With the growing threat, the Thais were concerned about their arms and equipment being inferior to the enemy and he asked about continuing US assistance; he expressed particular concern about the Wolff amendment on narcotics which would cut off all aid. Secretary said he could understand the Thai concern on these matters but explained that these were manifestations of US politics particularly in an election year and he said he expected that we would be able to help with what was essential.

4. Pote then referred to the summit meetings and subsequent contacts in Peking and Hanoi and said that Marshal Thanom, NEC Chair-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files 1971–1972: Lot 73 D 323, Secretary's Trip to SEA. Secret; Limdis. Drafted by Unger on June 29, cleared by Lissy (S), and Pedersen (C), and approved by Rogers. Repeated to Bangkok.

man, had instructed him to ask the Secretary on a very confidential basis what bearing those conversations had had on the situation in Southeast Asia including an end to the Vietnam war. Secretary Rogers explained to Pote that in spite of the lengthy conversations there was not very much of a specific nature that could be cited although we do believe as a result of the talks that both the Russians and Chinese doubt the wisdom of an extended continuation of the war in Vietnam. After some further discussion on this point the Secretary made clear that we have left neither Moscow nor Peking in any doubt about our taking very seriously our continuing commitment to our allies and SEATO, which of course means above all our commitment to Thailand. We have felt that neither the Soviets nor the Chinese challenge this.

5. Pote volunteered that the Thais have been urging their neighbors to accept the expanding role of the Japanese in Southeast Asia even while carefully looking out for their own interests; he felt this was important in order not to drive Japan back into a militaristic frame of mind. He also volunteered that the Thai leaders will be forming a new, constitutional government quite soon, attributing the delay to some lack of decision on the part of Chairman Thanom and their desire to have thoroughly worked out beforehand the framework for future administration. Secretary Rogers said we well understood the Thai situation. He also referred to narcotics control, thanking the RTG for its close cooperation and urging them to do anything more that they can. Finally, he acknowledged the crucial role of the Thai volunteers in the defense of Laos over the recent dry season.

Rogers

170. Memorandum From the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Rush)¹

Washington, August 18, 1972.

MEMORANDUM FOR

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The Deputy Director for Plans, CIA

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Under Secretary Johnson Chronology Files: Lot 96 D 695, Box 25, August 1972. Secret.

SUBJECT

General Praphat's Plans to Expand the Thai Volunteer Program and to Use Thai Volunteers to Conduct Operations Throughout Laos

Mr. Karamessines' WSAG paper of 3 July² was most informative and reassuring about the Thai volunteer program and RTG intentions for the program. I agree that recruitment should be emphasized in order to bring deployed forces and replacement units up to full strength and keep them at that level. Additionally, the deployment plans voiced by General Praphat accord with our view, although the priorities among the areas mentioned by General Praphat are not clear. Of greatest interest as a potential problem area, however, were the comments on equipping the volunteers and sustaining them outside Laos temporarily should a cease-fire occur.

As you know, assistance to the Thai volunteers has been provided under the authority which permits military department appropriations to be utilized for military assistance to Vietnam and Laos. We have argued that the Thai volunteers are "local forces in Laos" as the words are used in the Defense Procurement Act. With assistance to Thailand now in the Military Assistance Program, the opportunity to mingle assistance to Laos and Thailand is further reduced. The points I wish to make are that:

—Equipment provided to the Thai volunteers is provided for the purpose of assisting Laos. This equipment may not be transferred by Laos to other governments or to persons not its officers or agents without US consent. This consent must be reported to Congress 15 days before given under Section 502, PL 91-441.

—Authority does not now exist to assist Thailand with military equipment other than by MAP.

—Under circumstances of cease-fire, it is doubtful that maintenance of the volunteer force in Thailand could be justified as assistance to Laos. Further, unless the forces under redeployment to Thailand were either part of the RTA or under control of Thai MOD, they would not be eligible for support under Thai MAP.

These constraints should be considered in our dealings with the RTG concerning the volunteer program. In particular, a review of the above assistance problems—especially the effect on Laos-related projects of MAP funding for assistance to Thailand—should be dispatched to the Embassies in Bangkok and Vientiane to apprise them of the situation.

Finally, the comments by General Praphat about the build-up to 36 volunteer battalions, together with the recent surge in recruitment, indicate that the RTG is making a determined movement toward the

² Not found.

36 battalion objective. I wish in this connection to draw attention to the agreed criteria that battalions should be deployed at 100% of authorized strength and maintained at a minimum of 80% of authorized strength. These criteria have not been met. Before supporting added units beyond the existing 25 numbered battalions, we should assure that these manning criteria are met. In pursuit of this goal I am directing CINCPAC to provide support appropriate for additional battalions when new battalions are at 100% strength and all existing deployed units are at 80% strength. I hope you will agree that this action is appropriate to provide field activities with the leverage needed to assure that our manning goals are met.

Kenneth Rush

171. Memorandum From President Nixon to Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, August 22, 1972.

SUBJECT

Determination and Authorization of the Grant to the Kingdom of Thailand of up to \$50 Million in Defense Articles and Services in FY 1973

In accordance with the recommendation in your memorandum of July 12,² I hereby:

A. Determine, pursuant to Section 614(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, (22 U.S.C. 2364), that the use of up to \$50 million of funds available in FY 1973 for the grant of defense articles and services, including excess defense articles, to Thailand, without regard to the requirement of Section 514 of the Act, is important to the security of the United States; and

B. Authorize, pursuant to Section 614(a) of the Act, such use of up to \$50 million of funds for the grant of defense articles and services, including excess defense articles, to Thailand, without regard to the requirements of Section 514 of the Act.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Chronological File, 1/1/72-12/21/72. Secret.

² Not found.

You are requested on my behalf to notify the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of my intention to take this action, in accordance with Section 652 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and to specify an effective date for this determination.

This determination shall be classified SECRET and shall not be published in the *Federal Register*. Such publication would be harmful to the security of the United States because it could jeopardize continuing use by the United States of Royal Thai Air Force bases by raising the issue of the nature of our defense relationship with Thailand.

Richard Nixon

172. Memorandum by the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Karamessines)

Washington, August 23, 1972.

[Source: National Archives, RG 59, Under Secretary Johnson Chronology Files: Lot 96 D 695, Box 25, August 1971. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. 2 pages of source text not declassified.]

173. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State¹

Bangkok, September 1, 1972, 1244Z.

12456. Subject: Status Report on Resettlement of CIF.² Ref: Bangkok 12010.

1. As of late August the RTG reports that 1153 CIF families have been permanently resettled, an increase of 343 since the May 31 report.³

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 9–5 CHINAT. Secret; Nodis.

² For a discussion of the resettlement of the CIF, see Document 152.

³ Telegram 12010 from Bangkok, August 24, reported allegations of violations by CIF Generals Li and Tuan of their resettlement/narcotics agreement with the Thai

The average family is allocated 15 rai (2.53 rai equals 1 acre) for its personal use (although ownership is not formally turned over to them). A total of approximately 5,000 individuals are involved.

2. In many cases, the families have been living for some time as squatters in villages in the area in which they have now been given refugee status and allocations of land. In these cases, the allocated land has quickly been put to use for crops and livestock. Several new areas are also being opened up. For example, 200 families are scheduled to be resettled in new areas of Chiang Rai Province (areas previously dominated by Communist insurgents). A number of settlers at these two sites are at work building houses and clearing land. Schools to be staffed by Thai teachers are being erected.

3. In addition to land allocated to families, the Government also intends to set aside large tracts as common land to be used for the economic good of the community as a whole.

4. From the economic point of view, the project is viewed as falling into two parts, one aimed at producing the quickest cash return and the second aimed at putting the CIF on a permanently viable economic basis.

5. The RTG has asked for assistance from Taipei in high elevation horticulture to assist in the rapid development of cash crops. Experimentation and research areas are being set aside to help determine which crops are most suitable. The longer term economic base is to be founded on production of tea, cattle, mining, fruit, and vegetable seeds.

6. Some setbacks have been encountered in tea cultivation. Only 50 percent of the 450,000 plants already set out have survived. The Government has hired tea propagation experts from Taiwan to advise the settlers and has ordered new and better cuttings to replace the plants that died. It will be five years before the plants will have matured and start producing. The Government will provide a tea processing plant capable of producing 2,000 kilograms of tea per day, with this level of production to be achieved within ten years.

7. The CIF have approximately 600 head of brahman cattle from Burma, and they plan to double the size of their herds within one year by additional purchases. The Government is providing grass seed more suitable for cattle raising and will train additional CIF in the technique of artificial insemination. Eight are already qualified but more are needed. The CIF hope to be able to export cattle by the end of this year.

Government, "sourced for the most part to persons of unknown reliability and undetermined access." It concluded that "none of the reports contain sufficient substance to lead us seriously to consider holding up the final payment," but promised to "continue to monitor situation most closely." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, DEF 9-5 CHINAT)

8. Antimony mining is scheduled to begin this year at Mae Salong in Chiang Rai. The Department of Mines is surveying the region to determine the best location for extracting the antimony. The Department of Mines must also give final approval before actual work can get underway.

9. General Kriangsak estimates that the CIF will be fully self-sufficient within two years.

10. The mobile development units in the area are training CIF personnel as mechanics to repair and maintain equipment which is being provided for use in agriculture in the common areas. Twelve mechanics from each group are to be trained initially. The mobile development units are also building roads in some of the newly opened areas.

11. At the present time, the CIF have been given refugee status under Thai law. If this program works out as planned, the Government plans to change their status progressively from refugees to temporary residents, to permanent residents, and finally to Thai nationals.

12. General Kriangsak told us this week that, with the insurgency problem somewhat quieter in Chiang Rai Province, the RTG expects to be able to devote more time and resources to the resettlement project. This will entail full time assignment of one or two RTG officers to each of the settlement areas (which are now visited periodically). This will not only speed successful resettlement, but will also enhance the RTG's capability to enforce the agreement to stay out of opium trafficking.

13. The RTG has expended a total of \$733,000 in support of its program to resettle the CIF.

14. I believe the RTG's performance in resettling the CIF constitutes a satisfactory execution of their commitment to us. They have carried forward the types of programs upon which we and they have agreed, they have expended more than \$700,000 of their own funds, and progress to date has been encouraging. I believe the RTG has also investigated seriously the allegations we have passed to them that Li and Tuan are not abiding by their commitment to get out of the opium trade. In a discussion with Brady and Boyer from the House Foreign Affairs Committee within the past few days, Kriangsak reaffirmed his government's determination to hold Li and Tuan to their promise. While a number of allegations against them have been made, none of these contains sufficient substance to warrant withholding our final payment. Basic situation remains as described reftel. I, therefore, plan to go ahead with final payment on September 6.

Unger

174. National Security Study Memorandum 159¹

Washington, September 9, 1972.

TO

The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of State
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Administrator, Agency for International Development

SUBJECT

U.S. Counterinsurgency Support for Thailand

The President has indicated his concern over the expanding insurgent threat to effective government control in a number of provinces in rural Thailand, particularly in the two areas bordering Laos in North and Northeast Thailand.

The President has requested a study addressing the following two issues:

—*RTG actions to increase its counterinsurgency effectiveness.* The repeated demonstrations of insurgent capability to thwart government efforts to counter the insurgent threat warrants an examination of alternative Thai programs and modes of operation which hold out the prospect of increased government effectiveness. The feasibility of such alternatives should be considered in the light of their impact on the balances within the Thai bureaucracy and their resource costs to the Thai government.

—*The U.S. role in promoting a more effective Thai counterinsurgency effort.* With limited security assistance resources and an uncertain ability to leverage even marginal changes in Thai direction, our assistance must be carefully organized and directed to ensure support for Thai actions which most effectively contribute to their counterinsurgency effort. Alternative adjustments in the U.S. counterinsurgency assistance program in terms of the allocation of our resources to various Thai programs and in our own management organization at all levels should be considered. The implications for RTG counterinsurgency efforts of either phasing out our counterinsurgency assistance or attempting to exert greater influence with increased levels of assistance should be assessed.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 365, Subject Files, National Security Study Memoranda, Nos. 104–206. Top Secret.

This study should draw on work already done in connection with the study directed by NSSM 51 but should focus on the specific issues for decision concerning the Thai counterinsurgency program. It should be prepared by an NSC interagency ad hoc group comprising appropriate senior representatives of the addressees and the NSC staff and chaired by the representative of the Secretary of State.

The study should be submitted not later than November 15, 1972,² for consideration by the Senior Review Group. It will be reviewed in conjunction with the study prepared in response to NSSM 51.³

Henry A. Kissinger

² The Embassy in Thailand provided its assessments in a series of telegrams in late November and December 1972, including Bangkok 16953, November 30 (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73. DEF 1–1 THAI-US); Bangkok 17264, December 7 (ibid., POL 23 THAI); Bangkok 17269, December 7 (ibid.); Bangkok 17354, December 9 (ibid.); Bangkok 17357, December 9 (ibid.); and Bangkok 17368, December 9 (ibid.).

³ See Documents 10 and 82 and footnotes thereto.

175. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Laird to President Nixon¹

Washington, September 16, 1972.

SUBJECT

Thai Volunteers and FY 73 Legislative Ceiling

During FY 1972, a number of US-supported Thai volunteer units provided valuable assistance in resisting the North Vietnamese dry season offensive in Laos. By June, 22 such battalions had been deployed in Laos. However, these units were manned at only 59 percent of their authorized strength, in violation of the Thai agreement to maintain deployed units at a minimum strength of 80 percent.

During the past three months, exceptional recruiting efforts have taken place in Thailand. The Thai volunteer force has expanded from 9,000 to over 19,000 men during this time, and three additional battalions have been formed.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 565, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IX. Secret; Sensitive.

On 28 August 1972, Ambassadors Unger and Godley jointly requested that the number of Thai volunteer units be increased from 25 to 30 battalions. This would represent an increase in FY 1973 expenditures of at least \$16 million. Interagency plans envisage a maximum force of 36 battalions at a cost of \$134 million per year. The 30 battalions requested by the Ambassadors would cost \$126 million.

You will recall that your 8 August 1972 letters to Chairmen Hebert and Stennis, as well as Department of Defense representations to the conferees, were all aimed at eliminating any ceiling on Laos expenditures. These efforts were successful *only* in raising the FY 1973 ceiling level from \$350 million to \$375 million. This ceiling is on total US assistance to Laos for FY 1973 and includes Defense, CIA and AID funding. We will incur at least a \$55 million overrun if spending continues at the planned rate.

In view of this new ceiling, we have tried repeatedly to get inter-agency agreement to scale down the Laos program to get within the \$375 million limitation. We have not been successful.

I view this new legislative ceiling as a serious matter and will assure that Defense operations are carried out at a level consistent with the \$375 million limit. As a first step, unless you direct otherwise, I am issuing orders which will prevent expansion of the Thai volunteer force beyond the present 25 battalions—at least until fiscal pressures abate.

Melvin R. Laird

176. Memorandum From Richard T. Kennedy of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 19, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your Breakfast Meeting with Secretary Laird, September 20²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 565, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IX. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action.

² No record was found concerning the substance of the President's breakfast meeting with Laird.

Phil Odeen has already given you Talking Points. There is one additional subject which you might wish to raise—Thai volunteers and the Laos FY 1973 ceiling.

Secretary Laird in a memo to the President dated September 16 (Tab A)³ expressed concern that we could not live with the \$375 million ceiling for Laos unless programs were tightly controlled. To this end he intends to limit the Thai SGU program to 25 battalions unless the President directs otherwise.

—Mr. Laird will argue that we cannot live within the ceiling unless the Thai SGU program is held at 25 battalions; the Thai are not all that good or necessary; and the threat of NVA activity is less this year than last.

—The Thai have done a creditable job, particularly in North Laos. The NVA are west of the PDJ and on the Bolovens this year giving them a head start for their dry-season push. The Lao forces are weaker now and we will probably need all the Thai forces we can get to hold this year.

—Early estimates suggest that total expenditures with 30 Thai SGU battalions would be about \$409 million—\$34 million over the ceiling (less than 10%). The significant effects of weather alone on levels of combat and thus on consumption of weapons, ammunition, and air support can result in significant variation from early estimates as our experience of the past two years has shown. Thus it is simply too early to assume that we will be significantly over the ceiling.

The Thai have finally produced recruits for the training program enabling us to man the existing 22 battalions at 80% strength, deploy an additional 3 battalions at full strength, and still permit us to move toward forming an additional 5 battalions. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] is geared up to get the training done and the battalions deployed. To cut back the program now could cause problems in our relations with the Thai, and deny us needed forces in the face of an uncertain NVA capability and intention for the coming dry season.

The Senate committee in reporting out the Defense Procurement Authorization Bill stated: “It is possible that adjustments will be required in the ceiling, depending on future events. Nevertheless, the committee believes a limitation should again be imposed to continue activities in Laos at approximately their present level.”

Thus we believe we should not foreclose, now, the possibility of going to the 30 battalion level. Meanwhile, we should caution Godley to keep a careful watch on expenditures as the situation develops over the next few months. We are continuing our efforts to refine our estimates, identify trade-offs and determine more precisely the effects of the ceiling on essential operations. If it appears by January that we have

³ See Document 175.

no alternative we should then be prepared to request an increase in the ceiling. Meanwhile, we should not impose artificial restrictions which may have the effect of giving the NVA the victory in Laos we have thus far denied them.

You might tell Mr. Laird:

—We need to continue our efforts to refine estimates and all agencies have been requested to do so.

—We should not foreclose now the possibility of moving to 30 Thai SGU battalions when the 25 existing units are filled out and replacements to keep them up to 80% strength are assured.

—We want to be sure that we make available whatever is needed to defend Laos; if that means a request for a ceiling increase later, we will have to consider it.

177. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 25, 1972, 3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Thai Security: Call on Under Secretary Johnson by Boonchu Rojanasathien

PARTICIPANTS

Boonchu Rojanasathien, Executive Vice President, Bangkok Bank
 Under Secretary for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson
 Alf E. Bergesen, Acting Director, EA/TB

After an exchange of pleasantries, Mr. Boonchu asked Under Secretary Johnson about his reaction to Thailand's sending a ping pong team to China. Ambassador Johnson said that he agreed that communication should be established with Peking and he had no problem with that.

Boonchu evinced considerable interest in Ambassador Johnson's views on the security situation in Southeast Asia. He asked about the Viet-Nam negotiations and was told there has been no break-through. He inquired whether Thailand could survive if its neighbors were taken over. Ambassador Johnson said yes, if Thailand's resistance was not just military but also political and economic. He noted his concern that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23 THAI. Confidential. Drafted by Bergesen and approved by U. Alexis Johnson on September 28. The meeting was held in Johnson's office.

every year, since 1965, it was reported that the RTG was doing better in its counterinsurgency efforts, yet every year there were more insurgents. Boonchu said that the news in the papers wasn't necessarily the same as the facts. He did not think the insurgency had gained stronger support or that it was gaining recruits. To Ambassador Johnson's inquiry whether Boonchu was referring to the north or northeast, Boonchu said the problem in the north was military; it appeared that he meant the northeast as the area where there was not much new recruiting. Ambassador Johnson noted that Operation Phu Kwang (note—in the tri-province area, Jan–April 1972) wasn't very well done. Boonchu attributed this to lack of experience on the part of the forces involved.

The Thai visitor then made a pitch for continued US material assistance to Thailand. Ambassador Johnson replied "you have plenty of military supplies." He emphasized the importance of police, that the only RTG official that the average up-country Thai sees is a policeman. If he has his hand out for bribes, it is easy to tell what the peasant's reaction to the RTG is likely to be.

Boonchu said military operations are expensive and the RTG is now increasing its military expenditures at the expense of development. Ambassador Johnson noted that it was not just a question of giving the Thai Government aircraft. At least as important was maintenance, up-keep and operations. It was not good for Thailand to depend too much on the US. However, Ambassador Johnson concluded, we have been helping Thailand and we will continue to do so.

Ambassador Johnson expressed his pleasure that Anand had become Thai Ambassador here. He described him as "first class". In response to an inquiry, Boonchu noted, laughingly, that Thanat was now engaged primarily in playing golf.

178. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, September 25, 1972.

SUBJECT

Thai Volunteers and FY-73 Legislative Ceiling

Secretary Laird has written you (Tab B)² expressing views about his intention to live within the \$375 million Lao ceiling and specifically about his concern that U.S. support of the Thai volunteer battalions, beyond the present 25, will put us over the \$375 million limitation. He mentions that the Thai volunteers provided valuable assistance in resisting the North Vietnamese dry season offensive in Laos, even though they were under their authorized strength, and that the Thai Government is now bringing these 25 battalions up to strength. Secretary Laird states, nevertheless, that we will incur a substantive overrun if assistance to Laos for FY-1973 continues at the present rate, and as a first step, unless you direct otherwise, he proposes preventing the expansion of the Thai volunteer force beyond the present 25 battalions—at least until fiscal pressure abates.

Although I fully agree with Secretary Laird that we must do all possible to live within the Laos ceiling, I feel our first priority must be to make available whatever is needed to defend Laos.

The Thai have done a creditable job, particularly in North Laos. The NVA are west of the Plaine des Jarres and on the Bolovens Plateau this year giving them a head start for a dry-season push if they want to mount one. The Lao forces, particularly Vang Pao's irregulars, are weaker than in previous years. Thus we will probably need all the Thai forces we can get to hold this year.

Early estimates suggest that total expenditures with 30 Thai SGU battalions would be about \$410 to 415 million—\$35 to 40 million over the ceiling (about 10%). The effects of weather alone on levels of combat and thus on consumption of weapons, ammunition, and air support can result in significant variation from early estimates as our experience of the past two years has shown. Thus it is simply too early to assume that we will be significantly over the ceiling.

The Thai have finally produced recruits for the training program enabling us to man the existing 22 battalions already in the field at over

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 565, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IX. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. Drafted by Kennedy. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

² See Document 175.

80% strength, fill three new full strength battalions, and still permit us to move toward forming an additional 5 battalions. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] is geared up to get the training done and the battalions deployed. To cut back the program now could cause problems in our relations with the Thai, who have expected us to move gradually to support of up to 36 SGU battalions and deny us needed forces in the face of an uncertain NVA capabilities and intentions for the coming dry season.

The Senate committee in reporting out the Defense Procurement Authorization Bill stated “It is possible that adjustments will be required in the ceiling, depending on future events. Nevertheless, the committee believes a limitation should again be imposed to continue activities in Laos at approximately their present level.”

Thus we believe we should not foreclose, now, the possibility of going to the 30 battalion level. Meanwhile, we should caution Ambassador Godley to keep a careful watch on expenditures as the situation develops over the next few months. We are continuing our efforts to refine our estimates, identify trade-offs and determine more precisely the effects of the ceiling on essential operations. If it appears by January that we have no alternative we should then be prepared to request an increase in the ceiling. Meanwhile, we should not impose artificial restrictions which may have the effect of giving the NVA the victory in Laos we have thus far denied them.

The memo at Tab A³ requests Secretary Laird not to foreclose now the possibility of moving to 30 Thai SGU battalions when the 25 existing units are filled out and replacements to keep them up to 80% strength are assured.

Recommendation

That you sign the memorandum to Secretary Laird at Tab A.

³ See Document 179.

179. Memorandum From President Nixon to Secretary of Defense Laird¹

Washington, September 28, 1972.

SUBJECT

Special Operations Report of Progress

I appreciate your efforts, as expressed in your memorandum of 16 September, to find ways to conduct our programs in Laos within the \$375 million FY-1973 ceiling set by Congress. I certainly share your view that we must treat this ceiling as a serious matter.

However, I am convinced that we cannot forego undertaking any reasonable steps to make certain that Laos is well prepared and able to meet the possible enemy threat against Laos in the coming months. Therefore, I request that you do not foreclose now the possibility of moving to support 30 Thai SGU battalions once the existing units are filled out and replacements to keep them up to 80% strength are assured.

In the meantime, I am sure that you will do whatever you can to find ways to make economies that will not in any way diminish our ability to provide the assistance which the Government will need to successfully defend against enemy attack during the coming year.

Richard Nixon

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 565, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IX. Secret; Sensitive.

180. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 2, 1972, 3 p.m.

SUBJECT

Thai Contact with the PRC

PARTICIPANTS

Pote Sarasin, Assistant Chairman, National Executive Council, Thailand

H.E. Anand Panyarachun, Thai Ambassador to the United States

Mr. Wichian Watanakun, First Secretary, Thai Embassy

The Secretary of State

Alf E. Bergesen, Acting Director, EA/TB

The Secretary asked Pote about the Thai contact with the PRC. Pote said they had had to refuse the initial invitation to China which, in any case, was non-governmental, because Thailand was not a member (note: of the Asian Table Tennis Union). A few days later word came that Thailand had been made a member and so it was decided to send a team. Prasit Kanchanawat, whom Pote described as “my deputy”, was sent with the team. When Prasit arrived the Chinese took special care of him, e.g., separate accommodations. His midnight meeting with Chou En-Lai was without any forewarning as to the personage involved. It was a correct and formal meeting. Chou sent best regards to His Majesty the King and Field Marshal Thanom. Pote noted as interesting one item that Chou mentioned, that the Thai must be very careful about Russian interest in the Kra Canal. The Chinese, Pote said, evidently tried to be very nice to the Thai visitors.

Prasit told the Chinese that the Thai were worried about terrorists. The Thai people, he said, assumed that the Chinese were supporting the insurgents. Chou said “we” had nothing to do with this but would continue to support freedom fighters. After the tournament there was a tour of south China for the team and its advisors and Chou again appeared at the farewell party. Pote said that the Thai were not yet certain of Chinese motives. The Chinese understood that Thailand had good relations with the U.S.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 THAI. Secret. Drafted by Bergesen and approved in S on October 6. The meeting was held in the Secretary’s office. The memorandum is part I of II. Part II notes the request of the Thais not to be taken by surprise if a negotiated peace was in the offing, and Rogers’s various reiterations that he had told them as much as he could and would let him know as soon as he could. The entire conversation is summarized in telegram 184763 to Bangkok, October 10. (Ibid.)

In response to the Secretary's query about Chinese support of liberation movements, Pote noted that Bangladesh was a liberation movement, but the Chinese did not support it. The Secretary said that in his conversations in Peking the Chinese told him they favored "liberation and turmoil." He wondered about Africa, which obviously needed peace and stability far more. Pote said that Prasit had noted that there was no case for liberation in Thailand and the subject was then dropped.

181. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, October 5, 1972.

SUBJECT

Meeting with Mr. Pote Sarasin, Assistant Chairman of the Thai National Executive Council (which since last November's coup has functioned as the Thai Cabinet)

I. Purpose

To reassure the Thai as to the constancy of U.S. support for Thailand and for our determination to continue to play a useful balancing role in the Asian Pacific region.

II. Background, Participants, Press Plan

A. Background. The Vice President, when he visited Bangkok in mid-May, emphasized the constancy of U.S. purposes in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the Thai leadership remains concerned over our long-term intentions in Asia, especially in view of our Vietnam withdrawal, our China initiative, and the growing internal insurgency in Thailand supported by Peking and Hanoi.

Partly in reaction to this, Bangkok in recent months began exploring in earnest the possibility of improving relations with the PRC. In August, talks in Peking between a senior Thai official who accompanied the Thai ping pong team and Chou En-lai indicated that the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 565, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IX. Secret. Sent for action. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

PRC is now sufficiently interested in getting relations with Bangkok onto a different track to allow Bangkok to set the pace in moving the relationship in that direction. With respect to our military presence in Thailand and Thailand's other support for the Indochina conflict, PRC officials mentioned this only indirectly. Thailand, however, intends to move slowly and prudently. The Government recently approved a small delegation to the Canton Trade Fair this fall.

Sarasin is third in the current Thai leadership lineup and is the ranking civilian. Although formally he is in charge of economic and financial affairs, he also functions as Foreign Minister.

To the best of our knowledge, you last saw Sarasin during your July 1969 visit to Bangkok, when he was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development. He was Thai Ambassador to Washington between 1952 and 1957. A biographic sketch is at Tab B.²

B. *Participants*: Sarasin, myself, and Thai Amb Anand Panyarachun*³

C. *Press Plan*. The White House photographer will take photos at the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Ziegler will brief the press after the meeting.

III. *Recommended Talking Points*

Your talking points are at Tab A.⁴

² Attached but not printed.

³ The Thai Ambassador's name was handwritten at the end of this sentence with an asterisk. Next to another asterisk at the bottom of this page a handwritten notation reads, "He presented his credentials to you on Oct. 2."

⁴ Attached but not printed.

182. Memorandum for the President's File¹

Washington, October 6, 1972, 10:30 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Khun Pote Sarasin, Vice Chairman of the National Executive Council of Thailand
Anand Panyarachun, Thai Ambassador to the United States
John H. Holdridge, NSC Senior Staff Member

SUBJECT

The President's Remarks to Pote Sarasin on U.S.-Thai Relations and Related Subjects

Khun Pote expressed thanks to the President for the latter's willingness to take the time from his busy schedule to see him. The President said that he always had time to talk to friends from Thailand, and went on to express the firm U.S. commitment to Thailand. Khun Pote expressed his appreciation for the President's remarks on behalf of the National Executive Council (NEC).

Khun Pote stated that he had been asked by Marshal Thanom, Chairman of the NEC, to raise with the President if an opportunity to meet him presented itself the question of the U.S. position with respect to the negotiations with Hanoi. Specifically, were we thinking only in terms of a ceasefire for Vietnam, or would we extend the cessation of hostilities to include Laos and Cambodia? This was important to the Thai because they had common borders with these countries. The President made it clear that our position had been from the outset that we wanted the ceasefire to include all of the countries of Indochina.

Khun Pote raised another question on behalf of Marshal Thanom: would it be possible for the U.S. to consult with Thailand on its position with respect to the North Vietnamese if a settlement seemed to be in the making? Thailand certainly did not wish to influence the U.S. position, but due to the role which they had assumed in the war—which they had taken willingly—the Thai hoped that they could be kept informed.

The President said that we had this very much in mind, and that we would certainly consult with the Thai² if a settlement appeared to

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 3, Memoranda for the President, Beginning October 1, 1972. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Holdridge.

² In an October 10 memorandum to Kissinger, Holdridge noted "the President's assurance to Pote that such consultations would be provided," and stated that "I have requested the Thai Ambassador to treat this conversation as a very sensitive matter and

be in the making. However, although the North Vietnamese had indicated in the Paris talks that they had an incentive to bring the war to an end (this was due to the effectiveness of our bombing and mining, and to the heavy North Vietnamese losses in the South) it did not now appear that a settlement could be reached prior to the U.S. elections. The President was confident, though, that a settlement would be reached in the not too distant future. He was optimistic about the military and political situation in South Vietnam.

Khun Pote mentioned that a group of Asian nations, including Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia had been attempting to work out a formula for ending the war and would continue these efforts.

Khun Pote informed the President that he, Pote, had met PRC Vice Foreign Minister Ch'iao Kuan-hua in New York the preceding day. Ch'iao had not made an issue out of the U.S. use of air bases in Thailand in connection with the war in Indochina. Although he had referred to them, he had taken the line that the U.S. presence would inevitably be removed from Thailand following the completion of the war. According to Khun Pote, he had made it very plain to Ch'iao that this was a matter which would be worked out between the Thai and the Americans, and concerned them alone. The President said that this position was exactly right. It was up to the U.S. and Thailand to determine what kind of U.S. presence, if any, would remain there after the fighting ended. Thailand would make its decision on the basis of its own interests, as it had in the case of the air bases used by the U.S. The President referred in this connection to Senator McGovern's position on U.S. forces in Thailand, in which only U.S. interests were considered.

Khun Pote said that the Thai were interested in following up the current more friendly attitude of the PRC toward Thailand, and he had sent his own assistant along with the Thai ping pong team to China to talk to senior PRC officials. However, while the assistant had been well received, Thailand would be very cautious in its dealings with the PRC.

Khun Pote noted that the Chinese antipathy toward the Soviet Union had figured in his conversation with Ch'iao Kuan-hua to a considerable extent. The President described the tenor of his own talks with the Chinese on the subject of the Soviets, and attributed the Chinese willingness to deal with the U.S. in large part to fear of the USSR—it was a matter of survival. As a consequence, the Chinese had not

to deal with the White House directly rather than going through State for any follow-up." He also requested that Kissinger approve the memorandum of conversation for the President's file "with no further distribution," which Kissinger did. (Ibid.)

made a great issue out of Taiwan in their conversations with us, nor of the U.S. presence in Thailand. The President then proceeded to describe the strategic factors which in his opinion influenced the Chinese in their attitudes toward the USSR, India, and the United States. The Chinese did not want us to pull out of Asia at his time, and we were not going to do so.

Khun Pote stated that he was very glad to hear the President say the U.S. was not going to pull out, because there were many people who felt that the U.S. was going to withdraw. The President then stressed that the Nixon Doctrine was not a means for getting us out of Asia but rather a means for enabling us to stay on. He was confident that with continued U.S. support, which we were going to provide (but which Senator McGovern wants us to remove) the free nations of Asia would be able to hold their own against Communism. The President declared he was optimistic that the free nations would do better than the Communist nations of Asia.

183. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Karamessines) to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)¹

Washington, November 29, 1972.

SUBJECT

Executive Action by RTG Forces to Eliminate the Communist Terrorist Threat

1. Our [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] reports that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] briefed Ambassador Unger in Bangkok and the Consul in Songkhla on recurrent reports [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] officers in south Thailand have picked up concerning instances of executive action by Thai counterinsurgency forces to eliminate captured Communist terrorists. These reports have not been given any other dissemination.

2. Ambassador Unger approved the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] recommendation that the matter be brought up with the Thais by [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the Consul [*1 line*

¹Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Country Files, Thailand 1972–1975. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation on the memorandum indicates that Green saw it.

of source text not declassified] at the next appropriate occasion taking the line that although summary activity against captured personnel might appear to be temporarily effective in helping to eliminate the terrorist threat, it is illegal, morally indefensible and in the long run discourages terrorist defection. The Thais are to be advised that greater counterinsurgency impact could be achieved by proper and detailed interrogation and follow-up psychological warfare action. A final point to be made to the Thais is that if information on their action came to the attention of sensation-seeking journalists, the matter could be highly embarrassing to the Thai Government internally and internationally and could also embarrass the U.S. Government's advisory position in south Thailand.

3. We have advised [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that we believe the recommended course of action is correct, adding that the approach to the Thais should be pursued vigorously rather than waiting for appropriate opportunities to bring it up.

4. Ambassador Unger has asked that the information in paragraphs 1 and 2 be brought to your attention.

For the Deputy Director for Plans:
William E. Nelson²

² Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

184. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge and Richard T. Kennedy of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, December 13, 1972.

SUBJECT

Message to the President from Field Marshal Thanom

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 565, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. IX. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates that Kissinger saw it.

Field Marshal Thanom, Chairman of the Thai National Executive Council, has sent a message to the President dealing with the situation in Indochina and U.S.-Thai relations (Tab A).²

The letter congratulates the President on his re-election and for the leading role which he and his staff have played in bringing the Vietnam conflict to the brink of a settlement³ in keeping with "peace with honor." Thanom then goes on to point out, though, that the continued presence of large North Vietnamese combat forces in Laos and Cambodia does not augur well for the prospect of immediate peace in Southeast Asia, notes the damage which the externally-supported Thai insurgency has caused to his country's national development, and speaks of Thailand's consequent "continual need of effective weapons and budgetary resources."

Thanom goes on to say that "with regard to the question of a general peaceful settlement of all conflicts in Southeast Asia, it is our opinion that if such a settlement were to be contingent upon the terms dictated by the aggressive forces then it is neither satisfactory nor in consonance with your noble goal of 'peace with honour'." He adds that a durable peace in Vietnam also requires that the questions of indirect aggression and externally supported insurgency in the immediate neighboring states must be properly dealt with and included in the terms of the eventual settlement.

Turning to the Thai role in support of U.S. actions in the Vietnam war, Thanom calls attention to Thai base facilities which have been made available "gratuitously" to the U.S. armed forces stationed on Thai soil—with consequent great savings to the United States—this despite grave risks and heavy criticism, including criticism from U.S. quarters.

In conclusion, Thanom expresses the belief that the U.S. continues to bear a great responsibility for the preservation of the power equilibrium in the Asian-Pacific region and for helping to bring prosperity to the nations of the region. Citing the "vital concern" to Thailand of the questions he has raised, Thanom declares that for some, preventive measures should be taken immediately; for others, exchanges of views are necessary. He therefore suggests that "confidential discussions at a high level between our two countries would be mutually beneficial," and asks that this suggestion receive the President's urgent attention.

² Attached at Tab A but not printed was telegram 17465 from Bangkok, December 12, which transmitted Thanom's December 12 letter.

³ The United States and North Vietnam reached an agreement on a cease-fire in late October, but ratification was put on hold due to South Vietnamese objections to the North Vietnamese being allowed to remain in place within South Vietnam. The agreement was not ratified until January 1973.

Comment

Clearly, the matters uppermost in Thanom's mind are:

—The nature of the settlement which will be worked out for the war in Indochina;

—Whether or not this settlement will safeguard Thai interests;

—The dimensions of the quid pro quo which the Thai should receive from the U.S. in return for the large contributions which they have made to the U.S. war effort.

These matters are indeed ones which we would expect the Thai to be concerned about, and to want to receive the President's urgent attention. Accordingly, Thanom will probably be considerably put out if the visit to Saigon by the Vice President and General Haig is not extended to include Bangkok. We believe that it in fact would be highly desirable for them to touch base with Thanom, even though additional consultations with Prime Minister Souvanna and President Lon Nol might then also be necessary.

185. Letter From President Nixon to Thai National Executive Council Chairman Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn¹

Washington, December 16, 1972.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I appreciated very much receiving your letter of December 12, 1972² in which you quite clearly laid out your views on the coming peace settlement in Vietnam. I have asked General Haig to deliver for me this reply to the questions you have raised and to outline for you the present status of negotiations.

May I first, however, thank you for your kind thoughts on my reelection and your hopes for my second term which were contained in your letter of December 12, as well as in your message of November 8. I was also moved by your generous compliments on our efforts to bring about a settlement of the conflict in Vietnam. We all hope that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL THAI-US. Secret; Nodis. It was delivered by General Haig on his late December–January trip to Southeast Asia.

² See footnote 2, Document 184.

this will be achieved soon on terms that will provide a stable base for peace in the region.

I appreciate your concern for the continued presence of substantial North Vietnamese forces in Laos and the Khmer Republic, as well as for the externally-inspired insurgency which you are confronting at home. I want to assure you that we too are concerned about these problems. I know that you are also greatly interested in the terms of a possible Vietnam peace settlement. It is in view of these wholly understandable concerns on your part that I have asked General Haig to discuss these matters with you at this important juncture.

As regards the question you raised concerning North Vietnamese forces in Laos and the Khmer Republic, I would note that the draft peace settlement contemplates the removal of these forces. May I also reiterate my gratitude for the vital assistance which the Thai irregular forces have given in coping with this problem in Laos.

As to the governing insurgency in Thailand, I am impressed by the increased attention which your Government is now giving to this substantial threat to your security and by the growing effectiveness with which you are meeting this challenge. You may be sure we will continue to do everything we can to provide the security and economic assistance necessary to assist you in coping with this insurgency.

I am keenly aware of the burdens which Thailand has willingly assumed to help defend the Republic of Vietnam against aggression from the north. Your earlier contribution of troops and your present provision of Thai bases have been invaluable in our combined effort to defeat this blatant attempt to take over South Vietnam by military force. I recognize the difficulties which your generous contributions have posed for Thailand, and want you to know that these are deeply appreciated. At the same time, I know that you recognize that the security of Thailand is a key to the stability of the region. Your efforts in Vietnam—and in Indochina as a whole—are a reflection on the importance of developments there to the security of Thailand. I want to assure you that the United States intends to stand solidly behind its longstanding security commitment to Thailand.

I hope you will share, in all candor, your concerns with General Haig. He will report these fully to me on his return, and I assure you that I will give them my closest attention.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon