

Agnew Assails U.S. Critics Of Military Aid to Thailand

By Jack Foisie
Los Angeles Times

BANGKOK, Jan. 4—The Thai government, which has always decried American criticism of some aspects of Thai-American military cooperation, gained a new supporter today in Vice President Spiro Agnew.

Meeting with Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn for two hours today, Agnew declared: "Some people back home are so anxious to make friends of our enemies that they even seem ready to make enemies of our friends."

The quote was approved for attribution to the Vice President by American officials who sat in on the closed session.

It was the second time on his Asian trip, now in its second week, that Agnew had renewed his criticism of television and newspaper reporting, and of the people who do not wholly support American involvement in the Vietnam war.

His comment could also apply to Sens. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) and Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), who have questioned the extent of U.S. commitments to Thailand. Other Senators have opposed use of U.S. troops in Thailand or Laos without congressional approval.

Both American and Thai accounts of the Thanom-Agnew talks said that most doubts had been dispelled about the "Nixon doctrine" of gradual de-escalation of American political and military presence in Asia.

Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman told reporters that Agnew "strongly asserted there will be no change in



Associated Press

The Agnews tour grounds of the Bangkok Grand Palace

American policy, and no lessening of U.S. commitments to Thailand and Southeast Asia." American versions were much in accord with Thanat's

They said Agnew declared the United States had no intention of avoiding its responsibilities as a Pacific power. See AGNEW, A12, Col. 4

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There was discussion, with Agnew the questioner, about the Thai government's reported desire to withdraw its 12,000 troops from Vietnam. This would be at least partly in retaliation for a Senate report which, although not yet published, has been privately circulated and says Thai soldiers in Vietnam are American-paid mercenaries.

The Americans in the meeting got the impression that, despite their pique, the Thais were not considering an immediate withdrawal.

There was no specific discussion of American troop levels in Thailand, indicating that the Thais are not upset over a very slow reduction of U.S. troops here, which now number about 45,000. They are mostly airmen engaged in bombing the enemy-held portions of Laos — as an adjunct to the Vietnam war.

The American officials, while not indicating how it played a part in the talks, defended the American noninvolvement position in Thai internal affairs. They said when the Thais sought U.S. helicopter support for Thai counterinsurgency troops trying to suppress low-level but tenacious Communist activity, the Americans turned down the request.

The meeting apparently did not entirely remove Thai suspicions concerning American opinion-making about Thailand. One official said, "The Thais feel there has been a definite campaign in the United States to create the impression that Thailand was another Vietnam."