

New Thai Government Seated; U.S. Ambassador Is Reassigned

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21 — The reassignment of the American ambassador, a controversial figure because of his military and intelligence background, was announced here today as King Phumiphol Aduldet formally appointed a two-party minority Government.

The United States Embassy said that Ambassador William R. Kintner, who arrived here late in 1973, would return to Washington next month to head a high-level government study of American policy interests in the Pacific region.

But the timing of the announcement aroused speculation that the United States was moving to de-emphasize the military aspect of American-Thai relations with the advent of the first elected Thai Government in more than 25 years.

The new Premier, Seni Pramoj, the 69-year-old leader of the Democrat party, presented his Cabinet list to the King this afternoon, nearly a month after the Parliamentary elections of Jan. 26. The King then signed a royal proclamation announcing the formation of the coalition, which includes the Social Agrarian party.

The two coalition parties together hold 90 of the 260 seats in the lower chamber of Parliament, the House of Representatives. A total of 22 parties won seats in the Jan. 26 elections, but none has a working majority.

Test Set Next Week

The first major test for the new Government is slated for next week when it must submit its policy proposals to a vote of confidence in the House. The coalition is then likely to come under strong pressure from a group of right-wing military-backed parties, and it is considered by no means certain that it will be able to win the confidence vote.

At his first new conference after being named Premier earlier this week, Mr. Seni said that the first priority of his government would be to tackle the rising cost of living.

He made it clear there would be no major foreign-policy initiatives. Asked about the continued presence of about 25,000 United States troops and 350 United States Air Force planes in Thailand that has attracted criticism from Thai students and liberal and left-wing parties in the new Assembly, he said: "In principle an independent country should not have foreign troops on its soil, but the treaty authorizing the presence of United States troops has to be carried out according to the Constitution. We will continue the gradual withdrawal of United States troops."

Ambassador Kintner arrived here 16 months ago, shortly after the previous Thai military Government, headed by Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, collapsed in October, 1973. Mr. Kintner's arrival, however, was marred by a furore over the ac-

tivities of the United States Central Intelligence Agency in Thailand.

A C.I.A. agent had written a letter purportedly from a Thai insurgent leader asking to discuss a cease-fire with the Government. The purpose of the letter was said to be to produce dissension and defections among the insurgents, but the letter found its way to the offices of an English-language Bangkok newspaper, which traced it to the C.I.A. and published it.

Vigorous Student Protest

The incident stirred vigorous Thai student protests against interference in Thai affairs. Ambassador Kintner made numerous apologies for the letter. He was accused of being a C.I.A. agent. He denied this charge and any responsibility for the letter, but he acknowledged having worked with the C.I.A. during his military career in the nineteen-fifties.

Mr. Kintner, who had retired from the U. S. Army with the rank of colonel, was a political science professor at the University of Pennsylvania before being appointed to the Bangkok Embassy. He was also director of the university's Foreign Policy Research Institute.

The new Thai Cabinet, which succeeds the King-appointed interim Government headed by Sanya Dharmasakti, consists of 14 ministers—seven Democrats, two Social Agrarians and five nonparty members. Two of these are being held over from the Dharmasakti Cabinet.

The acting supreme commander of the armed forces, Gen. Kris Sivara, earlier told the press that the army would insist on a military man as defense minister, and it seems likely that General Kris had a large say in the choice of the retired army general, Tawit Seniwongse Na Ayuthaya, for this post.

Most of the new ministers are veteran politicians with little government experience. Mr. Seni, however, was Premier once before — during a three-month period in 1947, at the end of which he was forced out by a military coup. His Democrats have been the token party of opposition during the subsequent quarter century of military rule.

In the next few days, Mr. Seni and his Cabinet are expected to fly to the northern Thai city of Chiangmai, where the King is recovering from pneumonia, to take the formal oath of office.

The new Government's appointment follows weeks of jockeying between the main parties here and negotiations in which only the Democrat and Social Agrarian parties were able to reach an accommodation. Several other small parties said they would support a Democrat-led coalition, but could not join it because of fundamental policy differences.