

# Thai Group in Cambodia for Aid Talks

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BANGKOK, Thailand, May 27 — A high-level Thai Government delegation, dominated by military leaders, flew to Cambodia today for a critical conference to decide the amount and kind of aid — including possibly even combat troops — that Thailand will give her embattled neighbor to the east.

Although the decision might include the dispatch of some military personnel, such a commitment would probably not be announced by the Thais. Instead, it would probably be carried out in secret, as the Thais have apparently done in the case of their other eastern neighbor, Laos, in the fight against the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces there.

Reports persist that the United States, through Ambassador Leonard Unger, has been pressing Thailand here to provide major help to Cambodia in her war against the Communists. Both Thai and American officials refuse to comment on the reports.

The Americans, however, do say they would be pleased at any assistance for Cambodia from nations in the region, in line with President Nixon's so-called Guam Doctrine calling on Asians to assume greater responsibilities for Asian defense.

## Speculation on Aid Cited

This is the theme being sounded by the United States Information Service here. The leading article of the U.S.I.S. Bulletin of two days ago stressed the Nixon Doctrine and cited "press speculation" on aid to Cambodia through "a possible combination that would include military equipment and advisers from Thailand, South Vietnamese support for Cambodian forces and even a military advisory presence from Indonesia and perhaps other Asian nations."

Since almost all of Thailand's arms come from the United States, and executive approval from Washington would be needed before any

could be sent to a third country, this mention by a Washington agency of the possible sending of Thai military equipment to Cambodia seems significant.

The Thai Government's mood has changed markedly in the last few weeks — from one of gratification when American and South Vietnamese troops attacked the Communist sanctuary areas in eastern Cambodia to one of anxiety now that some of the North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops have retreated, or simply moved, further westward toward the Thai border.

"They were elated when the Americans went into Cambodia," said one Western diplomat here. "Now they're beginning to read the fine print."

Thai officials, particularly the dominant generals, have issued reports of attacks by Communist forces in Cambodia very close to the border, and all Thailand's border troops have been placed on full alert. Reinforcements have reportedly been moved into the area across from Cambodia's Battambang Province and the Cardamom Mountains, where the Communist border activity is said to be heaviest.

Although the reports that North Vietnamese regular forces have moved into Cambodia's westernmost reaches in large numbers seem clearly exaggerated, a few such units may have reached the border areas. And in any case, the Thais often do not make any distinction between the Vietnamese Communists and the Khmer Rouge, the Cambodian Communist guerrillas, who have stepped up their insurgency since the allied operation began, particularly in the Cardamom Mountains.

One apparent purpose of the generals' overdrawn reports about border activity is to arouse a greater awareness here about the potential threat and thereby make a stronger case for more American military aid to Thailand and for heavy Thai support of Cambodia.

The Chief of Staff of Thailand's Supreme Command, Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullas-

pays, met with Ambassador Unger last week to ask for a speed-up on the delivery dates of American arms and ammunition for Thailand. One specific request was said to be for early delivery of a battery of Hawk surface-to-air missiles, now scheduled for arrival next year.

The most outspoken of the military leaders is Gen. Praphat Charasuthiara, Deputy Premier and Commander in Chief of the Army, who heads the 30-man delegation that left for Pnompenh today.

## Transfer of Arms Authorized

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WASHINGTON, May 27 — State Department officials disclosed today that the South Vietnamese and Thai Governments would be empowered to turn over to the Cambodian Army military equipment that had been supplied by the United States.

The officials said that such transfers could be authorized by the Administration as an executive act under the defense treaties with South Vietnam and Thailand. Authorization from Congress is required only when weapons are given to foreign countries under the military assistance program.

Some minor deliveries of such equipment as ammunition and uniforms may have already taken place, the officials said.

The Administration has been encouraging the governments of Cambodia, South Vietnam and Thailand to make joint defense plans. The Administration was believed to have assured Saigon and Bangkok that American weapons transferred to Cambodia would be replaced by the United States.

The present plans are reported to be for South Vietnamese troops to stay in Cambodia, with such American logistical and air support as may be required, to shore up Premier Lon Nol's regime. But officials here would not exclude the possibility that in addition to arms Thailand may also send troops into Cambodia, particularly if Communist operations continue to develop close to Thai borders.