

U.S. PAYS THAILAND 50-MILLION A YEAR FOR VIETNAM AID

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Terms of Secret Agreement
of 1967 on Troop Subsidy
Disclosed in Senate

HAWK MISSILES GIVEN

Bangkok Also Got 30-Million
More in Military Funds
for Two-Year Period

By JOHN W. FINNEY

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WASHINGTON, June 7—Senate testimony disclosed today that under the secret agreement entered into in 1967, the United States has been paying Thailand \$50-million a year for sending a combat division to South Vietnam.

To encourage Thailand to assign the 11,000-man unit, the United States also agreed to increase its military assistance by \$30-million for two years and to supply Thailand with a battery of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles.

The broad outlines of the arrangement were made public in testimony of State and Defense Department officials published by the subcommittee on United States security agreements and commitments abroad of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The testimony, taken last November and made public after State Department censorship, traces the deepening American military involvement in Thailand in the last 20 years and, in turn, the increasing commitments and assistance demanded by Thailand.

Earlier Reports Unconfirmed

While there have been recurring reports of American assistance to the Thai force in Vietnam, they have never been

confirmed, until the publication of the Senate testimony, by the State Department. Furthermore, the newspaper reports have been denied by the Thai Government.

In a statement issued last Dec. 16 following one of the reports, the Thai Foreign Ministry asserted there "has been no payment from the United States to induce Thailand to send its armed forces to help South Vietnam defend itself against Communist aggression."

The effect of the testimony is also to challenge a recent statement by Premier Thanom Kittikachorn of Thailand as well as to raise questions about what American assistance will be provided to the "volunteers" from Thailand now being sent to assist the new military Gov-

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ernment in Cambodia.

In announcing last week that Thailand was preparing to send volunteers of Cambodian ethnic origin to assist Cambodian troops against the Communist forces, Mr. Thanom was quoted by the Bangkok radio as having said: "Unlike the volunteers for Vietnam whose expenses are paid by Thailand, the volunteers for Cambodia will be armed and equipped from aid supplied by the United States."

Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, the subcommittee chairman, cited today that Thanom statement as well as the conflicting testimony of State Department officials in demanding to know what arrangements the United States had entered into with Thailand for sending troops to Cambodia.

In a letter to Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Senator Symington asked the State Department to provide the Senate subcommittee with detailed information on the American aid that would be given to the Thais for agreeing to send troops to Cambodia:

After the Thanom announcement, the State Department indicated that the United States would provide arms and equipment for Thai forces going to Cambodia. Left unclear by the Nixon Administration thus far is whether the aid will go beyond weapons to include financial assistance similar to that given Thai troops in Vietnam.

Administration Opposes Curb

The only indication of the Administration's intention has come in its opposition to certain provisions in the Cooper-Church amendment on Cambodia now before the Senate. While permitting the supply of arms, the amendment would prohibit the United States from providing any financial aid, such as extra pay, to foreign troops fighting for the Cambodian Government.

President Nixon has objected to this prohibition on the grounds that it would interfere with implementation of his

Guam doctrine of helping Asians to defend themselves against Communist insurgencies or aggression.

Appearing on the Columbia Broadcasting System on the program "Face the Nation" today, Secretary of State Rogers said the United States could be expected to pay "a substantial part" of any cooperative effort of Asian nations to come to the defense of Cambodia.

In the case of the Thai troops sent to Vietnam, the American assistance included not only equipment but also training, logistic support and extra pay and allowances, according to State Department testimony. The United States, for example, agreed to pay overseas allowances to the Thai troops, mustering-out and death benefits as well as "representation," or entertainment, funds for the Thai troops in Vietnam.

Thais' Pay Doubled

The effect of the American-paid overseas allowances was to more than double the pay of the Thai troops in Vietnam. A Thai private who received a base pay of \$26 a month, for example, received \$39 in overseas allowances, and a major with a base pay of \$98 was given \$180 in overseas allowances.

The State Department expressed some uncertainty over the exact cost of the American support to Thai forces in Vietnam. In a statement given the subcommittee, the Department said:

"United States support to Thai forces in South Vietnam, when averaged over the years during which Thai forces have been deployed to South Vietnam, is estimated at approximately \$50-million a year. This would total \$200-million for the period since their arrival in 1966."

During the closed-door testimony, two American Ambassadors to Bangkok portrayed the dispatch of the Thai division as a "Thai decision" reached in response to a request from the South Vietnamese Government. But in different ways both indicated that the United States had taken the initiative, starting in 1966, and that Thailand would not have agreed without

the assurance of American financial help.

In explaining the 1967 agreement, Leonard Unger, the present American Ambassador in Thailand, said, "We have tried to make it possible for them to send this force to Vietnam without adding to their financial burden."

Later in the testimony, Graham A. Martin, the American Ambassador from 1963 to 1967, said, "The Thais sent the troops to Vietnam because they were requested to by the Government of Vietnam and by the Government of the United States."

Out of the 300 pages of testimony before the subcommittee emerges a pattern of interaction between the American military presence in Thailand and commitments to the Thai Government. The primary justification offered by the two Ambassadors for the American military presence was to help Thailand protect her independence against Communist China. But as the American military presence grew the Thai Government, in turn, became more concerned about the threat from the Communist side and demanded greater assurances and commitments from the United States.

Involvement Began in 1950

The American military involvement in Thailand dates from 1950 when a military aid program was agreed upon. The United States military pres-

ence in Thailand increased from 300 men early in 1960 to 48,000, largely from the Air Force, in mid-1969.

In 1954, shortly after the signing of the Geneva accords on Indochina, Thailand joined the United States and six other countries in the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty, in which the signatories agreed to meet the "common danger" of armed attack in accordance with their constitutional processes.

In 1962, as the situation in neighboring Laos was deteriorating, Thailand was given new assurances of her protection under SEATO. A communiqué issued in March, 1962, by then Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, said that the United States did not interpret its treaty obligation to Thailand as depending upon approval of all SEATO members since "this treaty obligation is individual as well as collective."