

Thais Said to Vow War Aid To Cambodians if Needed

U.S. Sources Report Reaction to Signs of Impatience in Pnompenh—Limited Help So Far Has Excluded Weapons

By HENRY KAMM JUL 11 1970

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PNOMPENH, Cambodia, July 10—United States sources said today that Thailand had assured the Cambodians her willingness to come to their defense if necessary.

Influential Cambodians have voiced impatience over the apparent reluctance of the Thais to carry out public commitments to rush extensive assistance to the Government of Premier Lon Nol to counter the Vietnamese Communist onslaught.

The American sources disclosed that Thailand had agreed to begin the training of 8,000 to 10,000 Cambodian soldiers on Thai territory soon and had already begun delivering uniforms, boots and other equipment — but not weapons — for 50,000 men.

The Thais, who have also been sending badly needed

medical supplies, will soon send four physicians, six nurses and some medical corpsmen to deal with military and civilian wounded in Cambodia.

The limited scale of the Thais' assistance so far, according to the American sources can be attributed to their own insurgency problems, to their long frontiers and to the size of their army—about 100,000 men, of whom about 12,000 are in South Vietnam.

That means, the sources said, that Thailand should engage her troops in Cambodia only when Cambodian troops cannot cope with Communist pressure in regions close to Thailand, which they have been able to do so far.

In the present situation Thailand's most useful deployment

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in support of Cambodia, the sources added, is to concentrate as many troops as possible in border regions with Cambodia. The sources said that this was being done and that Thai troops had regularly crossed the border in patrol strength.

Such a policy on the employment of foreign troops corresponds to the view consistently expressed by Premier Lon Nol: that Cambodia wants to fight her own battle against the Communist invaders as much as possible with her own troops and wants other countries to help mainly by sending arms.

Thailand's possible military role is limited also by the fact that most of her military equipment has been furnished by the Americans and is restricted by United States law to use on Thai territory. Defense and State Department lawyers are studying the possibility of an interpretation that would define an engagement in Cambodia as essential to the defense of Thailand.

U. S. Studies Replacement

Administration officials are also studying the possibility of guaranteeing to Thailand that the United States will replace all military goods expended or destroyed in Cambodia. They stress that in the present mood of Congress this cannot be done by subterfuge but must be clearly legal.

In case of a Communist offensive in western Cambodia, the expectation here is that Thailand would immediately commit her air force in tactical support of Cambodian ground forces.

In general the United States and South Vietnamese Air Forces jointly provide air cover in eastern and central Cambodia while the west is Thailand's responsibility. Thai planes fly regular reconnaissance in the west and have established three air-control centers in Cambodia.

The Thais are recruiting and training in Thailand approximately 2,500 ethnic Cambodians who will be incorporated

into the Cambodian Army. They will be armed by the United States, according to the sources.

The United States is already arming and supplying 3,800 ethnic Cambodians from South Vietnam who were mercenaries for the American Special Forces. They now form the elite unit of the Cambodian Army and are paid by Cambodia.

Thais Guard Cambodian Site

PNOMPENH, July 10 (UP)—Thai troops were reported today to be guarding the 700-year-old Temple of Preah Vihear on the Thai-Cambodia border west of Laos.

Cambodian Government sources in Pnompenh said that Thai units moved across the border to help Cambodia forces defend Preah Vihear, which was the subject of a case between Thailand and Cambodia. The court awarded the hilltop shrine to Cambodia in a decision that led to a break in relations between Bangkok and Pnompenh in 1961.