

Thailand Says She'll Withdraw All 11,000 Soldiers in Vietnam

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 — Thailand has informed the United States that she intends to withdraw her 11,000-man force from South Vietnam, the State Department said today.

A press officer, John F. King, said that Thailand had advised the United States of her "decision in principle" to pull her forces out of Vietnam. He said the details and timing of the withdrawal were to be worked out.

He said the United States had "raised no objections" to the Thai decision, which was communicated to the United States Ambassador in Bangkok, Leonard Unger, about 10 days ago.

"The United States understands the reasons cited by the Thai Prime Minister for the withdrawal," the spokesman said. He added that United States approval was not required for the decision, but that the Government expected to be "fully informed and consulted" on the details.

On Wednesday, Premier Thanom Kittikachorn said in Bangkok that Thailand needed most of the division now stationed

in South Vietnam to help defend her borders with Laos and Cambodia.

He said he wanted to pull out "as many as possible, if not all," of the Thai troops in South Vietnam.

Despite the Premier's remarks, diplomatic sources here tend to believe that the decision is more the result of the Thai concern about the changing United States role in Southeast Asia.

The sources point out that the decision comes at a time when Thailand is undergoing an intensive review of her own foreign policy as a result of the United States intention to reduce its commitment in the region. Perhaps more than any other ally, the Thais have been

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alarmed by the Administration's enunciation of the Nixon doctrine, which stresses the need for Asian countries to assume greater responsibility for their own defense.

As a result of that concern, the Thais are thought to be anxious to assume a position more independent of the United States.

The Thais' decision to withdraw their forces may also be related to the growing criticism in Congress over the degree of United States financial support provided to foreign troop contingents serving in South Vietnam.

Just last week the Senate passed an amendment that would prohibit the United States from paying larger allowances to allied troops in Vietnam than it paid to American soldiers.

If the measure becomes law, it would result in substantial pay cuts for the Thai troops, whose allowances for combat and overseas pay have averaged about double those paid to United States soldiers of comparable rank.

The Thai soldiers in Vietnam will receive a bonus when the withdrawal is carried out. As part of the agreement between the two countries, each soldier is entitled to United States mustering-out pay of \$400 a man.

Thus, the United States, which has paid \$50-million a year to finance the Thai expeditionary force, will have to pay \$4.4-million in addition to send the troops home.

State Department sources said that about half the Thai troops now in Vietnam arrived there only a few months ago as part of the periodic rotation of forces.