

Thailand Sees Danger in U.S. Viet Withdrawal

Bangkok

Premier Thanom Kittikachorn told government workers here recently that United States withdrawal from Vietnam would increase "the danger to Thailand" because "the Communists will intensify their war of insurgency against us."

That war's potential was underlined some 48 hours later. Five Thai soldiers were killed when insurgents ambushed a truckload of troops in the Kra Isthmus of southern Thailand. The same day, border policemen clashed with a Communist group on Thailand's frontier with Laos hundreds of miles to the east.

Nevertheless, American military and diplomatic officials believe the premier's fears and the two incidents should be seen in the perspective of the largely successful counterinsurgency campaign waged by the Thai government for the last six years. They do not expect massive expansion of the insurgency after the withdrawal from Vietnam. Even if such expansion develops, the Americans believe the Thais can handle it.

MODEL

Thailand's success in containing insurgency is considered by Americans to be a working model for the Nixon doctrine elsewhere in the world. The doctrine sees allied nations assuming the primary burden of their defense.

The United States, which has air bases here, has not been directly involved in Thailand's counterinsurgency operations. Thailand has provided the bulk of the training, the material, the money and the men for the campaign.

Communist insurgency

Drug Raids In Kansas

Lawrence, Kan.

Nearly 200 state and local law officers conducted coordinated raids in 15 Kansas communities yesterday, arresting 37 persons on a variety of drug charges.

Two of the biggest hauls of drugs were seized in Lawrence and Council Grove; officers said severalthousand dollars of hashish was seized in one house in Lawrence and a large quantity of marijuana in a Council Grove home.

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here began in 1965 after the Chinese foreign minister, Chen Yi, announced that there would soon be a people's war of liberation in Thailand. The movement has concentrated on three areas: the northeast along the Laotian frontier, the north, where Thailand thrusts between Burma and Laos, and the southeast, in the mountains on the east side of the Kra Isthmus. Most insurgents are Thais trained at the insurgency school of the Communist party of Thailand at Hoabinh near Hanoi.

ACADEMY

The government's first response was to organize a district officers academy. Students were taught modern social and economic development programs. They were instructed to take an active interest in the population's needs and to be honest in their dealings. Today 70 per cent of the district officers in the northeast are graduates of that school.

The government's most effective countermeasure in

the northeast was a road-building program. In 1965 only 17 per cent of the people of the area were within a day's journey of a main road. Today the figure is 87 per cent.

As feeder roads crept out from the main highways to isolated villages, farmers were able to bring products to market and to buy consumer goods. The region changed slowly from a subsistence economy to a prosperous agrarian one.

CHARACTER

The insurgency in the north differed in character. An estimated 400 Thais and Thais of Chinese origin have organized about 2000 Meo hillmen to seize areas in the mountains. From these recruiters are sent into the valleys.

Bangkok's first reaction was punitive expeditions. Massive fire power, however, produced only floods of refugees.

The government then turned to the social and economic tactics used successfully in the northeast. Military operations since then have been restricted in size to company strength.

The southern insurgency represents the smallest threat. The Thai Communists there cooperate with Malaysian terrorists, who were driven into Thailand by the British and Malayan forces in the 1950s.

In all three areas the government has established bureaus for accelerating rural development, mobile medical teams and trade training units, vocational schools and farmers clubs. The United States has supported some of these with funds and advice but has not been directly involved in their operation.

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