

Thai Parliament Is Ended; Leaders Seize Full Power

Citing 'Dangers' to Country, Thanom and Aides Abolish Constitution—Pledge to Maintain Foreign Policies

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BANGKOK, Thailand, Thursday, Nov. 18—A group of military and other leaders headed by Premier Thanom Kittikachorn seized power yesterday to deal with "the dangers that have been threatening Thailand."

Organizing themselves as a "revolutionary" council, they announced in a nationwide broadcast that they had abolished the Constitution, dissolved Parliament, disbanded the Cabinet and established martial law.

They pledged to continue Thailand's foreign policy, which has been strongly anti-Communist and pro-American and which has included the sending of a contingent of troops to South Vietnam. Thus the change in regime would apparently not affect the United

States air bases in Thailand, which have been used to support operations in Indochina.

[In Washington, United States officials said they were confident that the change would not imperil American interests in Thailand.]

The coup, which ousted Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman and other officials but kept many key leaders in power, came suddenly and without violence.

A few tanks appeared here, and some paratroops arrived to aid regular police patrols, but the capital appeared calm.

Bangkok residents learned from their radios that constitutional rule was over. To many, however, it did not seem

Continued on Page 14, Column 5



Camera Press

Thanom Kittikachorn



The New York Times

Thanat Khoman

Thai Leadership Abolishes Charter, Tal

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

that any great change had taken place, since in practice power had long resided in the leaders that have now announced a take-over as members of the revolutionary council. The council, which is composed of military, police and some civilian elements, said in an announcement issued in the name of the Premier that internal strife and a threatening world situation had made it necessary to seize control.

The announcement cited Communist insurrection in northern Thailand, student demonstrations, obstruction by members of Parliament, strikes, terrorism and subversion. It said there had been a clear danger that "the system of national administration" might be changed to one that would be hated by King Phumiphol Aduldet and by the people.

Therefore, the announcement concluded, effective action had to be taken to protect the King and the people.

Meet With U.S. Envoy

Shortly after seizing power, the Premier and other leading members of the revolutionary council met with Leonard Unger, the United States Ambassador. Then shortly before midnight the leadership went to the royal palace to explain the reasons for the takeover to the King. The Thai radio said he had given his approval.

The leadership group includes Gen. Praphas Charusathien, who had been Interior Minister. He has generally been considered the strong man of Thailand, while Field Marshal Thanom, though Premier, De-

fense Minister and head of the armed forces, has been viewed as No. 2. There has been no indication of any discord between the two.

Thailand has had only brief experiments with parliamentary rule in her history. Until 1932, the country was the absolute monarchy of Siam. A military coup established constitutional government, and seven years later the country's name was changed to Thailand.

Many Coups After War

After World War II, during which the country was occupied by the Japanese, the country went through a succession of military coups, with Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, known as the patron of Field Marshal Thanom, seizing control in 1958. At the death of Field Marshal Sarit in 1963, Field Marshal Thanom replaced him and ruled by decree until elections were held in 1969.

Yesterday's power move by the revolutionary council was similar to the 1958 Sarit coup.

The Constitution abolished yesterday dates from June 20, 1968.

Among the difficulties that the Thai leadership has had with Parliament was in getting it to vote last year's budget. However, after an army alert was ordered, the legislators acted.

The recent admission of Peking to the United Nations stirred unrest here both in the Government-backed United Thai People's party and in the Opposition. Thailand abstained in the vote that expelled the Nationalist Government and admitted the Communist Government.

There have been calls for the establishment of relations with

China, and minor parties in Parliament urged this week that Thailand withdraw from the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and in general disengage itself from United States policies.

While Thais started to re-appraise their views of China they assert that China is behind the insurgency in the north. Foreign Minister Thanat had sought more than two years ago to arrange talks with Peking, but there has been no announcement of any response.

Divisions in the Cabinet over policies toward China were reported to have caused concern among the nation's military leaders. Some reports say that these leaders were also worried about the two million Chinese in the country especially in view of the fact that Chinese control much of the nation's business.

Thanat Counsels Calm

BANGKOK, Nov. 17 (UPI)—Foreign Minister Thanat, who was attending a dinner at the foreign correspondents club tonight when the take-over was announced, said he doubted that China could do anything to do with the coup.

"It was an internal thing," he went on. "It was due to