

CAPO

# THAIS TO ASK U.S. FOR SPEEDIER EXIT

MAR 4 1975

Cabinet Announces a Plan  
to Set 18-Month Deadline  
for Troop Withdrawal  
**NYTimes**

Special to The New York Times

**BANGKOK, Thailand, March 3**—The new civilian minority Government announced plans today to set an 18-month deadline for the withdrawal of United States forces from Thailand.

This development, which came as a surprise in view of the recent pro-American statements of Premier Seni Pramoj, was regarded as an appeal for support for the vote of confidence that the Government faces in the lower house of Parliament on Thursday.

The declared intention to set the 18-month deadline is included in the policy statement the Government is making to Parliament, and it reportedly is the minimum price the coalition must pay for liberal and left-wing support for a majority. The Government, a coalition of the Premier's moderate Democratic party with the Social Agrarians, commands only 91 of the 269 seats in the house.

American spokesmen said they knew of no consultations between the new Government and United States officials over the issue before the announcement was made.

## 25,000 Now at Bases

According to military sources, the American force in Thailand numbers about 25,000 servicemen and 350 Air Force planes, most of them at four bases—Udon, Korat Nakhon Phanom and U Taphad. At the height of the Vietnam war, the figures were more than 45,000 Americans and 600 planes.

The decision to set an 18-month deadline was "thrashed out" at a Cabinet meeting today, according to one minister who attended.

The policy statement decided upon reportedly says:

"This Government will take action to have foreign forces that have been stationed in this country according to previous commitments withdrawn from the country as quickly as possible. This will be done in steps to be worked out according to the national interest.

"In any case, the time for withdrawal will be not greater than 18 months."

A high Government source said the projected withdrawal would be carried out in stages to lessen the impact on the 25,000 to 30,000 Thais working for the American forces and to allow time for negotiations with the United States.

## Rightist Opposition

In the confidence vote, the Government faces strong opposition from a group of right-wing military-backed parties that are eager to take power.

Some Thai military men are said to favor withdrawal by the United States on the ground that its military presence is of no more use to Thailand. Others say the worsening situation in neighboring Cambodia could become a pretext for slowing or halting any withdrawals.

After the elections of Jan. 26, Premier Senni said to reporters that he would not ask the United States to hasten its withdrawal from Thailand.

"After all the Americans have done for Thailand," he said, "why should we be in a hurry to make them leave?"

It was thought after the coalition was formed that it would favor the process of gradual withdrawals without a public deadline.

## Activities Described

According to United States military spokesmen, American personnel and planes are in Thailand on a training mission to maintain preparedness, but it is well known that planes fly reconnaissance missions over Indochina from Thai bases, Cambodian air crews sent by the Lon Nol Government in Phnom Penh are trained by the United States in Thailand, and until last October Air Force personnel flew ammunition, food, and fuel to Cambodia from Thailand.

These supplies are now flown in by civilian contractors in an airlift from U Taphad. Civilian pilots belonging to Bird Air Company carry hundreds of tons of ammunition into Phnom Penh in some 30 flights a day of unmarked, unarmed Air Force C-130 transport planes on loan from the United States Government.

Starting tomorrow, two of these planes are due to carry only petroleum products, and a DC-8 belonging to Trans-international Company is to join the airlift to keep ammunition supplies flowing in at the same level.