

# U.S. Suspends Plane Removal

## Bangkok

The United States yesterday temporarily stopped repossessing aircraft flown to Thailand by fleeing south Vietnamese, after transferring the most valuable planes to an aircraft carrier at sea.

North Vietnam denounced Thailand for acting "in complicity with the looters and said, "Washington has blatantly pillaged the South Vietnamese people's properties."

A U.S. embassy spokesman said acting ambassador to Thailand Edward Masters had agreed to a "temporary suspension" of the plane removal operation.

The suspensions followed Thai objections spurred by claims of the new Communist government in South Vietnam that it should be given the planes.

Premier Kukrit Pramoj emerged from a cabinet meeting before the suspension and said the government had decided to keep in Thailand all 129 planes flown from South Vietnam in the days before the Communist conquest of that country.

Even as he spoke, the aircraft carrier Midway was sailing out of Thai waters with millions of dollars of jet

fighters and bombers aboard.

Sources familiar with the operation of American bases in Thailand said despite the apparent confusion over the matter the planes would not have been removed without consultation between the two governments.

The sources implied that the statement by Kukrit was part of a diplomatic charade aimed at mollifying the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

U.S. sources said the Midway carried off from the U Tapao air base all but a few modern C-130 prop-jet transports and a collection of obsolete planes of World War II and Korean war vintage that probably would have been scrapped anyway.

They said helicopters lifted jet F-5 fighters and jet A-37 attack bombers aboard the Midway after it arrived in the Gulf of Siam over the weekend.

The Thais fear trouble with North Vietnam, which supplies and trains Communist insurgents in northern Thailand. Bangkok has announced it will have all American troops off its soil by next March.

*United Press*