

Thais, Hanoi

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Show Advance On Relations

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BANGKOK, May 29—The Thai government and visiting North Vietnamese delegation ended eight days of talks today with indications of progress toward normalization of relations between the former antagonists.

North Vietnamese Vice Foreign Minister Phan Hien, leader of a 13-member delegation, declared:

"The two parties agreed on many important questions but there are still a few outstanding problems that need further discussions. The talks . . . contributed to the normalization of relations . . ."

Thailand's foreign minister, Maj. Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan, is to visit Hanoi, perhaps within a month, as part of the bending with the wind since the defeat of pro-western governments in South Vietnam and Cambodia and the resulting reduction of U.S. influence in the region.

Vice Foreign Minister Phan indicated in a remark at the airport that diplomatic relations could be established within three months.

Thai Foreign Ministry sources said this country wants first to open relations with China—probably within three months—to give it a greater sense of security in the move toward Hanoi.

The Thai military has always considered North Vietnam to be its main political and military threat.

Phan said at the airport, "For people who want to see normalization of relations, three months is too long, but for people who work hard to this end, it is a short time."

The chief snag is Hanoi's past demand that Thailand

first remove all American military personnel and air bases. The new civilian government pledged on taking office that the remaining 25,000 U.S. servicemen and four airbases would be withdrawn by next March. [A fifth base, Ubon in eastern Thailand, will close in June, Reuter quoted the Thai foreign minister as saying.]

Pham said on this issue: "Our consistent position is that U.S. forces should be completely withdrawn from this area because U.S. imperialism has caused many aggressions, wars and sufferings to the people of Indochina. Therefore, we have to remove these causes of suffering."

Despite claims by Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj and the local press, leaks from sources close to the negotiations indicate the outcome was not all that the Thais had hoped.

The North Vietnamese reportedly made initial demands for war reparations as well as the return of the remaining 50-odd U.S.-supplied aircraft flown to Thailand by South Vietnamese pilots as the Saigon government collapsed last month.

A delegation from the new Saigon government came two weeks ago to discuss the planes and was told the government would have to weigh the issue as the U.S. had also claimed the planes.

According to the sources, both the demand for planes and the claim for war reparations eventually were dropped by the North Vietnamese, who turned to regional affairs.

Prompt agreement was not expected in this area, because for several years before the 1973 cease-fire accord in Laos, Thai and North Vietnamese forces were fighting against each other as they aided opposing Laotian factions.

The reparations claim turned on Thai responsibility for U.S. use of bases here for its massive bombings in Indochina.

"That is in the past . . . let bygones be bygones," Phan remarked through an English-speaking member of his delegation.

The question of reparation of the 50,000 Vietnamese refugees in northeast Thailand was also discussed. Many of them fled into Thailand when the French reoccupied Indochina after World War II. Others entered in the early '50s. One Foreign Ministry source said the refugees would all be repatriated within the next two years. But Phan said at the airport that the refugees should obey Thai laws and way of life, and this was taken to indicate that Hanoi does not want them all to return.

Recently there have been widespread anti-Vietnamese riots in the area.