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Kukrit Says U.S. Sees No Problem in Cutback

The United States told Thailand yesterday that it saw no problems in a Thai request for the withdrawal of all American troops, Prime Minister Kukrit Pramroj said.

After a 45-minute meeting with Philip Habib, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Asian and Pacific affairs, Kukrit told reporters he had stated his government's wish to have all American troops out of Thailand.

"They said there would be no problems," Kukrit said. Earlier this year U.S. administration officers proposed a cutback to 10,000 men.

About 7,500 U.S. servicemen are due to be pulled out this month, leaving fewer than 20,000. The Thais want them out within a year. All 17 remaining B-52 bombers and 81 F-111 fighter planes also will fly out by the middle of the month.

Kukrit said they had dis-

cussed ways of improving Thai-U.S. relations, which had shown signs of strain in recent weeks, following the collapse of U.S.-backed governments in Cambodia and south Vietnam and the unauthorized use of Thai bases by Americans during the military confrontation with the new Cambodia government after it seized the freighter Mayaguez.

Kukrit told newsmen he informed Habib that Thailand considers South Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees who fled to Thailand under U.S. auspices as America's responsibility. He said Thailand would like them removed to the United States or some other country as soon as possible.

In Vientiane, Laos, American sources said the cutback in the number of U.S. officials was being speeded up "to reduce the number of potential

hostages." About 150 American officials remain in the country following a sharp cutback ordered when the U.S. aid program came under violent attack. Before the protests there was about 830 U.S. officials in Laos.

U.S. sources said there would be substantial reductions made this week. The U.S. mission is expected to be down to 50 persons by the end of this month.

In Algiers, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, foreign minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, said that nothing prevented North and South Vietnam from discussing reunification.

"Our ultimate aim is to unify an independent and prosperous Vietnam," she said. "The peoples of the two zones will discuss it and decide when."