

## Famine Reported in Saigon, Cambodia

# U.S. Speeds Up Thai Exit

From News Dispatches

The United States will withdraw another 87 planes and 4,000 troops from Thailand by the end of June, the Thai supreme command announced yesterday.

The stepped-up schedule will reduce American strength in Thailand to about two-thirds of what it was when the pullback began earlier this month.

The U.S. force before the withdrawal began was 23,000 men and 300 aircraft. Before yesterday's announcement 3,500 men and 48 planes had gone or been scheduled to go.

In other developments, Gen. Vang Pao, former chief of the American-supported right-wing "secret army" in Laos, left Bangkok for Paris en route to the United States, and another right-wing Laotian general, Souchay Vongsavanh, was reported to have fled to Thailand after his troops defected to the Communist Pathet Lao.

South Vietnam's Giai Phong press agency reported that thousands of people in Saigon are fighting against a famine, which it blamed on the United States, according to a dispatch monitored in Hong Kong.\*

The agency said relief rice had been granted to hundreds of thousands of persons. Hunger, the agency said, "is an inevitable consequence affecting a consumer city where more than 3 million persons, mostly nonproductive, were herded by the Americans."

Famine is ravaging Cambodia, according to some relief officials and Western diplomats in Bangkok, Thailand.

They estimate that more than 1 million Cambodians — an eighth of the country's population — may die of starvation or hunger-related diseases in the next 18 months.

A United Nations official predicted a major disaster in Cambodia unless the country receives food aid and is able to distribute it.

A report in Tuesday's London Daily Telegraph said starving Cambodians are eating jungle berries, roots and all available animals. The report said cholera has reached epidemic proportions and transportation has halted because of a lack of fuel.

When the Khmer Rouge took over in mid-April, half the provinces were out of rice and many other areas had not been planted because of poor security. U.S. officials then said Phnom Penh had only enough rice to feed its 2 million people for little more than a month.

In Saigon, the official newspaper Liberation Daily reported that American officials plotted with South Vietnamese generals to overthrow President Thieu in the weeks before the South Vietnamese government fell. The newspaper, quoting former Saigon generals who have surrendered to the new government, said the United States ruled out a direct coup but brought

pressure that forced Thieu's resignation on April 21.

Communist guerrillas ambushed a joint Thai-Malaysian border survey team yesterday, killing 17 persons, in their most damaging raid since a 12-year state of emergency ended in 1960, military sources in Kuala Lumpur said.

\* SEE WXP 21 JUN