

# Two Nations Arm Laos, Thai Reports

From News Dispatches

BANGKOK, July 21—Moscow and Hanoi are arming the Communist Pathet Lao in Laos with scores of patrol boats, rockets and heavy weapons, the Thai ambassador to Laos charged yesterday.

"The Pathet Lao is now supported and supplied by both the Soviet Union and North Vietnam, and there is no way we can fight them," Ambassador Svet Komolbhuti said at a news conference here.

Last week the Laotian government launched 40 well-equipped patrol boats on the Mekong River that forms the Thai-Laotian border, Svet said. He charged that Laos is planning to launch an additional 30 such boats and install heavy weapons throughout the country. Already some rocket launchers have been installed, Svet said.

Three months ago the Pathet Lao struck a Thai patrol boat on the Mekong River, which flows for some 400 miles along the border.

Svet, in Bangkok for consultations, said he had recommended that the Thai government settle that incident through diplomatic channels. He urged Thailand to "avoid any kind of border conflict."

Last week the Laotian government ordered Thailand to close three consultates in Laotian towns because it was unable to guarantee Thai officials' safety. He added that Laos promised to let the consultates reopen eventually, but that it planned to keep closed the consultates of the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom.

"Now the Pathet Lao are an-

gry at the Thai government, because they believe that we and the United States are supporting (Lao exile) rightist military officers and politicians and are encouraging them to return to Laos to regain power," Svet said.

He said that 20 Pathet Lao officials searched the Thai consular office in Savannakhet last week, but were unable to discover any evidence linking it with rightist elements.

The ambassador returned to Bangkok on Friday to report on the situation in Laos to the Thai government.

Meanwhile, Thai Prime Minister Kukrit Pramog said yesterday his country's efforts to diversify its foreign relations should not be interpreted as "an attempt to seek new friends at the expense of old ones."

Kukrit, in Manila for a four-day state visit to the Philippines, spoke at a dinner given in his honor by President Ferdinand Marcos. Thailand and the Philippines recently established diplomatic relations with China.

Kukrit said he believed that the Association of Southeastern Asian Nations (ASEAN) "would emerge as the main organization through which Thailand and the Philippines could continue to intensify their efforts in the promotion of peace, harmony and security of our region."

Marcos called on the five-member ASEAN states to begin immediately a regional economic scheme such as an Asian common market as a guarantee of their region's stability.

"A more vigorous push toward larger forms of cooperation is required if the ASEAN is to realize its full potential," Marcos said.

Elsewhere in Asia there were these developments:

- Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk is expected to return to Peking soon from North Korea where he has been a guest of President Kim Il Sung, according to a Cambodian diplomat. Peking sources said the prince is expected to travel to Tientsin for a medical check-up shortly after his arrival to make a long-awaited return to Cambodia in August. Sihanouk, the nominal Cambodian head of state, has lived in Peking since he was overthrown in a 1970 coup.

- The Joint Political Council, the top policymaking body in Laos that is headed by Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouyong, has postponed the opening of its annual session until October, informed sources said in Vientiane.

The delay was to allow the situation in the country to stabilize following popular uprisings in the past two months, these sources said.

## Thousands Stranded In South Vietnam

sands of foreigners are immobilized in South Vietnam because there are no airplane flights to take them home.

The new Communist government said yesterday they might have to wait another month or two. The bulk of the 10,000 or more foreigners who wish to quit the country are French or Chinese.

An official notice in Saigon's Liberation Daily said foreigners issued exit permits this month could expect to remain at least another month "because of a lack of transportation."

Only one flight—a Roayl Air Laos DC4—has left Saigon in the past three weeks. There have been no scheduled commercial flights from Saigon since April 29 and no official sign has been given of when they will resume.