

JUN 3 1970
JUN 3 1970**The New York Times***Published every day by The New York Times Company*ADOLPH S. OCHS, *Publisher 1896-1935*ARTHUR HAYS SULZBERGER, *Publisher 1935-1961*ORVIL E. DRYFOOS, *Publisher 1961-1963***Thailand Joins the Fray**

Thailand's decision to send volunteer ground forces as well as gunboats and other military aid to Pnompenh may in the short run bolster the shaky Lon Nol regime and help to speed the promised withdrawal of American forces from Cambodia this month. In the long run, however, this latest extension of the Indochina conflict is more likely to add to the problems of the Cambodians—and the Thais—and to complicate the task of extricating American forces from Southeast Asia.

The Thai move is almost certain to provoke a reaction from Communist forces already operating inside Thailand and along the long, porous Thai border with Laos. It could, in time, lead to a more substantial extension of the Indochina war to Thailand itself.

For the Cambodians this fresh promise of "help" from another traditional foe is at best a doubtful blessing. It means a further intensification of the fighting on Cambodian soil, with all the destruction and loss of civilian life that entails. It will add weight to the nationalist appeal of ousted Prince Sihanouk who has already gained recruits for his Communist-backed fight to regain power as a result of South Vietnam's heavy-handed intervention on behalf of the Lon Nol Government.

It could even lead to the dismemberment of Cambodia, with the Thais indefinitely occupying western areas of the country, some of which they have long claimed; with the South Vietnamese taking over effective control in the southeastern region where their forces are operating, and with Communist forces holding firm in the northeast where they are entrenched.

As initiator of the whole risky adventure, the United States will be under heavy pressure to back up its two Southeast Asian allies with lavish financial and arms aid—and with more direct assistance if things do not go well on the Cambodian battlefields or on the home fronts in Thailand and South Vietnam. There already are signs that the diversion of Saigon forces to Cambodia has weakened the allied posture in South Vietnam. This is no way to speed Vietnamization.

The ominous implications of this wider proxy war far outweigh any temporary gains from the more limited sanctuary operations which the President may claim in his report to the nation tonight. A sounder way to "save" Cambodia and to speed the withdrawal of American troops from Indochina lies in more vigorous diplomatic efforts to reconvene the Geneva Conference, as urged by the French, by the recent Jakarta conference of eleven Asian nations and by United Nations Secretary General Thant.