

# U.S. Readies 7th B52 Airbase in Thailand

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The Pentagon said today it is preparing to open a seventh air base in Thailand for possible use by American planes in the Indochina air war.

Sources reported, meanwhile, that nine more B52 heavy bombers were flown from U.S. bases yesterday to Southeast Asia. This brings to nearly 160 the number of these eight-engine stratofortresses committed to the air war.

The sources said additional B-52s will be going but the number was not disclosed. Last week the Air Force placed more than 40 of these planes on alert for possible use in the war.

The latest air base to be reopened is at Nam Phong located in the northeastern corner of Thailand. It once served as an emergency field for U.S. planes at the height of the air war between 1965-68.

#### Long Runway

A Pentagon spokesman, Air Force Brig. Gen. Daniel James, said the field could

be used by the B52s, which require a long runway. He said the facilities there were limited and that improvements are needed.

One officer, explaining the need to reopen Nam Phong, said, "There's just getting to be so many planes there in Thailand, there's no place to park them."

In the past month nearly 5000 U.S. airmen have arrived in Thailand to handle the new buildup of combat aircraft.

Tahkli Air Base, 100 miles north of Bangkok, was reactivated last month. Built by the U.S. government, it was closed in 1971 as part of the Nixon Administration's troop withdrawal program.

#### Short of Peak

In addition to Tahkli, U.S. airmen in Thailand are stationed at Udorn, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom and Korat, all in the northeast, and at Uta-pao, 90 miles south of Bangkok.

Over-all, the United States now has nearly 1000 bombers and fighter-bombers in Southeast Asia, only about

2000 short of the peak committed earlier in the war.

The planes operate from bases in Guam, South Vietnam and Thailand, as well as from Navy carriers offshore.

Thai-based planes, including B52s and Phantom fighter-bombers, have been flying round-the-clock missions against Communist targets throughout Indochina.