

Marines Are

MAY 15 1975

Reported Out

Of Thailand

Bangkok

The 1100 U.S. Marines flown into Thailand were reportedly withdrawn early today in the face of strong Thai protests against their presence.

The movement of the Marines was connected with yesterday's efforts to rescue the merchant ship *Mayaguez* from Cambodian authorities.

A statement issued by the prime minister's office yesterday afternoon had said that if the U.S. Marines were not removed "immediately," relations between Thailand and the United States would be "exposed to serious and damaging consequences."

There was no immediate government reaction today to the White House an-

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nouncement that the U.S. Marines had already seized the ship in an operation that included men sent from here.

The Marines landed in apparent defiance of Thai Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj's warning that Thailand could not be used as a springboard for any U.S. retaliation against Cambodia.

Virtually all political factions here have denounced the presence of the Marines and student demonstrations are planned for this afternoon.

According to Foreign Office sources, the Marines were flown into Thailand from Okinawa and the Philippines. Utapao is the nearest American-operated base to the Cambodian coast.

The Thais have always maintained sovereignty over the bases they allow the Americans to operate, and the arrival of American Marines against their wishes has precipitated a diplomatic crisis.

Thai officials had expressed shock and amazement at the American action. "It put us in the same position as you are with the Cambodians," one official said to an American reporter. "How can we possibly overlook such a flagrant violation of our sovereignty?"

The new American ambassador here, Charles Whitehouse, arrived late yesterday afternoon to take up his post and was greeted by about 50 protesters carrying signs at the airport.

Thailand, which sent troops to fight beside the Americans in Vietnam and allowed her territory to be used as a base for the American bombing of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, has been profoundly shocked by the sudden collapse of non-Communist governments in Cambodia and Vietnam.

With the Communists now in the process of taking control of the coalition in Laos as well, Thailand faces the certain prospect of a long frontier with new and possibly belligerent Communist regimes.

Therefore, Kukrit's shaky civilian government has been trying to end hostility with the new regimes. The Provisional Revolutionary Government in Saigon is expected to send a delegation here tomorrow to take over the South Vietnamese Embassy in Bangkok, and diplomatic recognition has also been extended to North Vietnam and Cambodia.

The Thai government has already been embarrassed by the Americans taking away South Vietnamese planes which had landed at bases here. The PRG had insisted that all be returned to Saigon.

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