

Aides Say U.S. Will Keep Strong Force in Thailand

by James P. Sterba  
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Bangkok, Thailand, Nov. 24 - The United States and Thailand have agreed to the maintenance of a substantial American military presence - mainly air power - on Thai soil for an unspecified period after a Vietnam cease-fire, according to senior officials here.

Precise arrangements will depend on the outcome of negotiations in Paris on a Vietnam settlement, but key elements, said to represent the wishes of both Washington and Bangkok, include the following:

[] A "significant American military presence able to respond in an armed way" throughout Indochina to violations of a peace accord would be continued. ....

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There are about 15,000 more American military men in Thailand at present than there are in South Vietnam.

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According to both Thais and Americans, a United States military reduction in Thailand will depend solely on a successful Vietnam settlement.

"If anything goes wrong," an American official said, "all bets are off."

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