

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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**\*NSC & OSD Reviews Completed\***

March 9, 1974

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Deputy Secretary of State  
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: U.S. Deployments in Thailand

May we please have your agencies' comments on the political and intelligence implications of the Defense Department proposals concerning U.S. deployments in and the turnover of U.S. equipment to Thailand, as contained in the January 22 memorandum from Secretary Schlesinger and the March 1 memorandum from Deputy Secretary Clements (attached).

Attached also for your background information are a memorandum from Deputy Secretary Clements of October 13, 1973, and a memorandum from Secretary Kissinger to Secretary Schlesinger of November 21, 1973, on this subject.

We would like to receive your comments by close of business Wednesday, March 13.

*J. Davis*  
Jeanne W. Davis  
Staff Secretary

Attachments

SECRET/GDS

13 OCT 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL  
 SECURITY AFFAIRS  
 DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE  
 DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
 DIRECTOR, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

SUBJECT: NSSI-171 Follow-on -- Analysis of U.S. Deployments  
 in Thailand

The attached paper responds to the 28 August 1973 request from Dr. Kissinger for an analysis of U.S. deployments in Thailand. The analysis includes options for both short-and longer-term deployments. A decision on the short-term deployments is needed in the near future as this decision will affect the withdrawal of forces from Thailand between now and end FY 74. However, a decision on longer-term deployments can be deferred until the military situation stabilizes.

*H. P. Clement*

Enclosure

COPY TO:

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Deputy Director (RP)

CLASSIFIED BY: [REDACTED]  
 DECLASSIFY ON: [REDACTED]

See Def Cont No. [REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS  
SUBJECT: U.S. Deployments in Thailand (U)

(S) To comply with the President's decision to maintain the current U.S. force level in Thailand through the FY 74 dry season (November-April), I have prepared a plan with reductions commencing in May 1974. The initial withdrawals will be completed prior to the FY 75 dry season, with further reductions to reach the end FY 75 level delayed until May 1975 in order to protect an FY 75 dry season capability. However, I am prepared to withdraw some unessential, non-strike aircraft at any time if pressures on the RTG make some redeployments necessary.

(S) The withdrawal scheduled to begin after the FY 74 dry season will reduce our forces in Thailand from the current level of 36,000 personnel, 16 tactical air and gunship squadrons, and 50 B-52s to one which has no more than 32,200 personnel, 10 tactical air and gunship squadrons, and 17 B-52s. In addition to the 17 B-52s in Thailand, 25 B-52s would be returned to Thailand from Guam if a decision were made to employ the B-52s during the FY 75 dry season. The FY 75 dry season force level in Thailand will be held through April 75, at which time I plan further reductions to reach an end FY 75 level of 24,700 personnel, 5 tactical air and gunship squadrons, and 15 B-52s.

(S) Throughout this entire period we plan to maintain as a minimum one carrier either on-station or on 96 hour readiness for South Vietnam, one within one week's sailing time, and a third carrier within two weeks' sailing time. When a carrier is not deployed to the Indian Ocean, then one carrier would be on-station off Vietnam, one would be available within four days, and a third carrier would be available within one week.

(S) Through FY 75 I plan to maintain an SEA surge capability that will permit us to fly, indefinitely, as many as 11,500 tactical air and 1,800 B-52s sorties per month. While our current munitions inventories and programmed production will permit us to fly these surge levels for up to six months without additional funding, munitions production should be increased if bombing is resumed so that our stockpiles would not be dangerously lowered. Supplemental funding of \$32 - 42 million per month to support additional munitions procurement would be needed at the time a surge was started.

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SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED  
AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 12/31/81

(S) The personnel levels, sortie capabilities and surge levels available from now through FY 75 are summarized in the following table. Between the dry season periods (November-April) shown in the table the capability declines to the next lower level.

U.S. Forces and Capabilities in SEA

Timing	Thailand		Carriers (sorties/month)
	Military Personnel (000)	B-52 Tac Air a/ (sorties/month)	
FY 74 Dry Season	36.0	1,200 8,500	2,100
FY 75 Dry Season	32.2	1,000 5,100	2,100
End FY 75	24.7	300 1,900	2,100
Surge Capability Through FY 75		1,800 7,000	4,500 <u>b/</u>

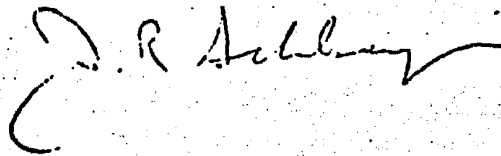
a/ Includes 400 gunship sorties per month.

b/ In addition to a minimum of one carrier on 96 hour alert, two carriers are available within two weeks which could raise the sustained Navy capability to 3,300 sorties per month. A fourth carrier would take one month to reach SEA and enable the Navy to sustain the 4,500 sortie per month surge capability.

(S) To insure efficient manpower management a decision to modify this withdrawal plan should be made at least three months in advance. While the plan can be changed on very short notice, the three-months' planning for personnel reassignments is the decision factor with the longest lead time.

(S) In addition to 25 EB-66s which have redeployed, if required, I am prepared to withdraw on short notice 8 EC-121s, 7 C-130s, and 38 O-2s, although the O-2s are under consideration for possible turn-over to the RTG. Approximately 1,290 personnel would also be withdrawn when these non-strike aircraft were redeployed. It should be noted that these aircraft and personnel do not include dedicated national intelligence collection assets.

(S) A reply to your requests for (1) our review of equipment which could be turned over to the Thai, and (2) our recommended manning levels for headquarters in Thailand will be forwarded to you in the near future.



cc:  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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1 MAR 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Turnover of U.S. Equipment to Thailand (U)

(S) Your memorandum of November 21, among other things, relayed the President's directive that we review the equipment of U.S. forces to be withdrawn from Thailand through FY 75 to determine to what extent we can respond to Thai equipment requests.

(S) On a number of occasions the Thai have requested significant amounts of U.S. equipment in addition to that which we are financing in the Military Assistance Program (MAP). A list of equipment requested by the Thai, for which the first year's cost of the major items of equipment is over \$400 million, together with the equipment and support for which DoD believes there is a valid military need are shown in the Enclosure. The five-year cost of the DoD program is now \$310 million, of which over 40% is FMS Credit. The size of the Thai request precludes serious consideration, although many items requested by the Thai are in the approved POM. For the most part, this equipment would upgrade and modernize the Thai armed forces to a much greater extent than I believe necessary for their security requirements.

(S) There is a significant amount of equipment and valuable facilities which we would be willing to provide the Thai between now and end FY 75. During that period we plan to withdraw about 10,000 military personnel from Thailand, return Takhli and either Ubon or Korat airbases to the Thai, placing the other in caretaker status. However, listings of the exact items which can be made available will not be known until the time of the withdrawals and base closings.

(S) Nevertheless, there are some major items of equipment which can be identified now for turnover. In fact, since receipt of your November 21 memorandum we have given 6 F-5As and an AU-23 to the RTG. A destroyer escort (DE) and an LST are currently on loan to the Royal Thai Navy. We are exploring the possibility of transferring the DE to Thailand on a no-cost basis and are in the process of extending the loan on the LST. There are also as many as 34 O-2s and 5 EC-47 aircraft which

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could be given to the Thai, plus some medical equipment (less than \$10,000). In addition, I believe discussions should be initiated with the Thai to determine their interest in and capability for assuming control of a Single Integrated Military Telecommunications System (SIMTS) to serve U.S. and RTARF requirements. Although this would not provide turnover of the communications equipment to the RTG by the end of FY 75, discussions initiated at this time could lead to equipment turnover beginning in FY 76. However, SIMTS is not in the FY 75-79 MAP for Thailand and its costs have not yet been determined.

(S) In order to insure the capability for rapid re-introduction of our forces into Thailand, it is desirable that, if necessary, we be able to reacquire the facilities which we turn over to the Thai. However, we do not have RTG assurance that these facilities would be made available nor that they would be in operating condition.

(S) Rapid re-entry also requires that mobility equipment and supplies needed for direct support of an aircraft or its weapons systems be redeployed with the units. Therefore, except when not cost effective, this equipment should be redeployed with the unit.

(S) A factor in the turnover of equipment to the Thai is the impact of the annual \$150 million world-wide legislative ceiling on foreign excess Defense articles and facilities which need not be chargeable to MAP appropriations. Although this legislative ceiling does not appear to be a constraint, equipment turnovers must be considered in light of turnover actions elsewhere to insure that the ceiling is not exceeded. Also, there are no prior agreements regarding disposition of equipment and property at Thai bases, and disputes may arise over whether property is part of the real estate which belongs to Thailand or whether it is U.S. property.

*H. P. Clement*  
Deputy

Enclosure

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Military Assistance for the RTG

The following compares the U.S. security assistance program for Thailand in the FY 75-79 Security Assistance POH. The identified first year costs for the RTG request is \$400 million; the U.S. program has a five-year cost of \$310 million.

<u>I. Equipment</u>	<u>Thai Request</u>	<u>Proposed U.S. FY 75-79 Program</u>
<u>Aircraft</u>		
OH-58	27	25 (FMSCR)
UH-1H	40 + 10/year <u>a/</u>	55 (MAP)
O-1	10/year	-
T-41	10/year	11 (MAP)
U-17	2/year	6 (MAP)
OV-10	32	-
F-5E	27	12/19 (MAP/FMSCR)
C-123K	8	-
HH-53	25	-
EC-130	8	2 C-130s (FMSCR)
A-37B	-	17/22 (MAP/FMSCR)
<u>Ships and Boats</u>		
PGM (165')	3	-
PGM (100')	1	-
MSI	2	-
PCF	9	-
LCU	2	-
PBR	55	-
DE	-	1 (no cost)
<u>Weapons</u>		
Up to 75 mm <u>b/</u>	1,500	13,092/204 (MAP/FMSCR)
Over 75 mm	174	150/360 (MAP/FMSCR)
M167 Vulcan	-	144 (FMSCR)
<u>Command &amp; Control <u>c/</u></u>		
AN/TRC-90	7	-
Torn Tape Relay Equip	6	-
Radios	-	1,481 (MAP)

- a/ The RTG has indicated a one time request for 40 UH-1s (for RTM and RTAF), as well as 10 per year for the RTA.
- b/ The RTG specified 1,500 M-16 rifles for Thai Marines. In addition, the Thai have also made less definitive requests for smaller caliber weapons: (1) modernize AAA battalions, (2) improve combat readiness of three special forces groups, (3) provide equipment for 7,000 security force troops and security of four bases, (4) military equipment support for volunteer organizations, and (5) equipment support to bring all RTA units to full TOE.
- c/ In addition to the items specifically requested, the RTG also indicated a need for: (1) replenishing and modernizing RTA communications equipment and (2) the U.S. communications network in Thailand for joint U.S./RTAF use.



**II. Support**

The RTG also requested the following types of support:

- Two years repair parts for aircraft requested for RTA.
- Ammunition support for war reserves.
- Increased ammunition production support.
- Increased maintenance capability for aircraft communications equipment, air defense radars, and combat support equipment.
- A general support field hospital.

During the period FY 75-79 the U.S. program, while not addressing the specific RTG requests, does contain the following support funding (in addition to the equipment noted above).

Support for RTG: FY 75-79  
( \$ millions )

<u>Type of Support</u>	<u>MAP</u>	<u>FMSCR</u>
Aircraft	2.6	12.2
Ship	3.5	-
Supporting Equipment	21.1	13.8
Training	7.4	-
O&M	66.6	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>101.2</b>	<b>26.0</b>

The approved FY 75-79 Security Assistance POM is the best estimate of RTG requirements, but is subject to Congressional authorizations and appropriations. Additionally, the FY 75-79 POM does not reflect the impact of FY 74 funding reductions nor program changes resulting from the President's FY 75 budget decision to give the RTG \$15 million additional grant aid in lieu of an equal amount of FMS credit. At the present time field agencies are preparing an updated POM for FY 76-80.

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## Future U.S. Deployments in Thailand

### I. Introduction

Since 1964 the level of U.S. presence in Thailand has been determined largely by our requirements for air support in Southeast Asia (SEA), as the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has permitted the U.S. to fly combat sorties from air bases in Thailand. The personnel needed to fly these sorties, as well as those for other military requirements in Thailand were to be kept within the military manpower ceiling authorized by the RTG.

Concurrent with our withdrawal from South Vietnam and as a result of North Vietnam's offensive in the Spring of 1972, we expanded our forces in Thailand. To accommodate this expansion the RTG temporarily relaxed the U.S. manpower ceiling. Our force grew from 32,200 personnel (the ceiling authorized by the RTG at the time), 12 tactical air and gunship squadrons and 42 B-52s, to 42,000 men, 22 tactical air and gunship squadrons, and 50 B-52s prior to the initial withdrawal which was completed in mid-September (although at one point we had even more aircraft and 45,000 military personnel in Thailand).

Since the cease-fires in Vietnam and Laos and especially since the bombing halt throughout Southeast Asia, requirements for U.S. forces based in Thailand have decreased. The forces which previously had an active combat role, now are a symbol of U.S. presence and resolve in Southeast Asia, and act as a deterrent to increased North Vietnamese military activity.

The purpose of this paper is to assess both the military and political implications of deployments in Thailand during FY 74-79 as they relate to U.S. military strategy in Asia and as they impact upon the developing relationships among the Asian nations. Included in the discussion are options for both short- and longer-term deployment levels.

### II. Sortie Capabilities of the Current Force versus Previous Sortie Activity

#### A. Current U.S. Force

As a result of the recently completed withdrawal (Increment 1 of a three increment OCS plan), U.S. forces in Thailand have been

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reduced to 16 tactical air and gunship squadrons and 43 KC-135s.\* There was no reduction in the number of B-52s which remains at 50 aircraft. Also remaining in Thailand are about 30,500 U.S. military personnel, with about 31,000 of these personnel directly related to U.S. air activities.

The tactical air forces now in Thailand are capable of generating about 8,500 sorties per month. Additionally, three CVAs in WESTPAC can sustain 3,300 tactical air sorties per month, for a total SEA capability of 11,800 tactical air sorties per month. The B-52s in Thailand can generate 1,200 sorties monthly and those on Guam can fly 1,320 more sorties monthly.

### B. Past Sortie Activity

The table below compares current sortie capabilities with activity levels at selected times in the past.

#### SEA U.S. Attack and B-52 Sorties a/ (sorties/month)

	<u>Current</u> <u>Capability</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>Apr-Jun</u> <u>1972</u>	<u>Dec 72</u>
Tac Air/Gunship	11,800	31,100	10,200	13,500	17,700	11,700
B-52	2,520	1,715	1,050	2,370	2,280	2,770

a/ Includes sorties flown from RVN, Thailand, carriers and Guam.

Although our current tactical air capability of 11,800 sorties per month would be able to sustain only one-third the levels flown in 1968 (when sorties were flown from bases in RVN and Thailand and from carriers in support of U.S. operations), it represents a capability comparable to the average sorties flown in December 1972 (the month encompassing Linebacker II) and in 1971-1972. Current B-52 capability has not decreased significantly below the monthly averages of the periods shown above.

\*Not considered in the discussion are other support and maritime patrol aircraft.

### III. Resurgence Capability

In addition to and independent of the capabilities of the forces remaining in Thailand or offshore, we have been maintaining a capability to return additional air assets to SEA and resurge our sortie capability to as much as 20,000 tactical air and 3,000 B-52 sorties monthly in the event emergency activity prompts such a need. However, in conjunction with our reduced SEA air requirements the Secretary of Defense has proposed to lower the surge capability to 11,500 tactical air and 1,000 B-52 sorties per month for the remainder of FY 74 and for FY 75. Ammunition sufficient to sustain the surge until the resupply pipeline could be established must be pre-positioned in Thailand, on Guam and aboard ships deployed in WESTPAC.\*

Our current deployments and base availability permit all of the B-52s and the majority of the tactical air capability needed for the surge to be available within one week, with the remainder available in no more than two weeks. However, the speed with which the surge can be implemented at any time in the future will depend on the number of bases that are open or in a caretaker status.\*\* Nevertheless, it is estimated that the full surge capability would be available within 30 days regardless of the force levels in Thailand and on Guam, or the number of carriers deployed in WESTPAC.

There are costs associated with maintaining the resurgence capability. Munitions are a significant part of these costs as it is estimated that protecting the lower surge capability through FY 75 will cost about \$70 million in added munitions procurement (actually implementing the surge would increase this cost; the size of increase dependent on the duration of the surge). Keeping bases open or in a caretaker status to insure that the surge is achieved in less than a month is also costly. For example, maintaining a base in Thailand with active forces costs approximately \$20 million per year, although holding a base in a caretaker status reduces the cost to about \$2 million annually.

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\*Currently there are sufficient air munitions stored in or enroute to the Pacific theater to support the higher surge level for 45 days or the lower level for 90 days. At present sufficient munitions are being produced to sustain the higher surge; however, after December 1973 planned production will support only the lower surge levels.

\*\*A base maintained in a caretaker status can be fully operational within two weeks, whereas 30 days may be needed for a base which has been closed to become fully operational. However, the time to restore a closed base to operational status could be much less depending upon the condition of the base and the use being made by the RTAF.

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IV. Short-Term Redeployment Considerations

Currently U.S. presence in SEA is in a transitional state, going from the level required for active combat to those forces needed to attain our longer range objectives. The manner in which military and political implications influence the transition will determine how we redeploy our forces from Thailand.

A. Military Implications

Now that U.S. combat air activity in SEA has been terminated, there is no longer a military requirement for as large a force as we have been maintaining in Thailand. This factor taken in isolation suggests that a rapid withdrawal of our forces from Thailand would be appropriate. However, the rate of withdrawal is also governed by the stability of the military situation in SEA. In this regard, lack of knowledge concerning Communist intentions, especially those for the 1973-1974 dry season (November-May) will influence the pace of the transition.

There are other military reasons for keeping our forces in Thailand. Its strategic location in relation to the PRC and Indochina makes Thailand valuable for intelligence collection purposes, and its proximity to the Indian Ocean makes it a useful basing location for our air operations to include anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations there. Additionally, so long as we continue our assistance to South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, air bases in Thailand are the closest point on mainland Asia from which we can airlift logistics support to these countries.

A factor arguing for immediate withdrawal<sup>2</sup> of at least some forces is the JCS desire to remove these forces in Thailand on a temporary duty status. Keeping forces there on temporary duty, especially when they have no combat requirements, creates major personnel problems. Other JCS considerations which opt for the early withdrawal of forces excess to requirements are: the extension of the personnel pipeline with associated training, TDY and PCS costs, maintaining forces in an active status which would otherwise be inactivated, and the denial of air assets to other areas where they are needed.

B. Political Implication

In the immediate future U.S. forces in Thailand tend to act as a deterrent to increased North Vietnamese activity. Although prior to our Increment I withdrawal there was some Thai pressure for U.S. force reductions, the Thai now appear willing to permit us to withdraw our forces on our own timetable.

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U.S. presence in Thailand contributes to regional security and stability in Southeast Asia. The Thai believe that their security is insured by a close relationship with the dominant power in the region, and they believe that, at least for the present, the U.S. is that dominant power. How long the Thai will continue to regard the U.S. in this manner will be influenced by developments in Indochina and by the degree to which the U.S. continues to appear willing and able to influence events there. Other factors which make the U.S. presence advantageous to the RTG are the economic impact of U.S. military spending in Thailand (some \$170 million in FY 72) the levels of U.S. economic aid (\$15 million in FY 72) and military aid (\$93 million in FY 72, the last year of MASF), and our security commitments to Thailand. Adversely affecting the tolerance of a U.S. military presence are domestic pressures and the evolving Thai relationships with the PRC and NVN.

An additional political implication is the impact on the PRC of any precipitous U.S. withdrawal from Thailand. While PRC intentions for Southeast Asia are unclear, it is understood that China is uneasy about a power vacuum that would exist if the U.S. were to withdraw completely and rapidly from Thailand. This concern of the PRC cannot be neglected in our forthcoming withdrawal plans.

#### V. Short-Term Redeployment Options

The Secretary of Defense has tentatively endorsed a plan that, while reducing the force, would retain significant air capability until Communist intentions for the 1973-74 dry season are known. In this proposal there would be no change in the present level of 50 B-52s, but there would be a reduction to 10 tactical air and gunship squadrons by March 31, 1974 (requiring about 33,000 personnel), with a further reduction of two tactical air squadrons and 8 B-52s by end FY 74 (somewhat less than 32,200 military personnel would remain in Thailand). If the RTG presses for a more accelerated withdrawal, the 32,200 personnel level could be achieved sooner by withdrawing support units and personnel, or by adopting the alternative plan described below as Option II.

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As tentatively planned by the Secretary of Defense, the ceiling of 32,200 personnel would be reached by end FY 74, with reductions occurring in four increments as shown in Table 1 as Option 1. However, the personnel level could go even lower -- perhaps to 30,000 if additional support elements are removed and a base is closed.

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It should also be noted that tactical air and B-52 redeployment increments need not be carried out concurrently, and the withdrawal of the B-52s scheduled for Increment 4 (during the last quarter of FY 74) could be accelerated if deemed to be in the best interest of U.S./Thai relations.\*

An alternative plan shown at Option 2 in Table 1 is recommended by the JCS and ISA. It would start in October 1973, and complete the withdrawal of aircraft to the pre-augmentation level by the end of November 1973 (2nd Qtr FY 74). A streamlining of combat air support assets would bring U.S. military strength to the 32,200 personnel ceiling agreed to by the RTC six months sooner than in Option 1. In Option 2 additional withdrawals would be made so that by end FY 74, 5 tactical air and gunship squadrons, 15 B-52s, 17 KC-135s and 24,700 military personnel remain in Thailand. Although not shown in Table 1, Option 1 would not reach this level until a year later (by end FY 75).

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\*In either of these plans a phased withdrawal of all B-52s based on Guam, except the squadron needed for SIOP alert, could begin immediately.

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Type

Force Prior to Redeployment (Completed) (2nd Qtr FY 74) (3rd Qtr FY 74) (4th Qtr FY 74)

OPTION 1

<u>Tactical Air</u>	22	16	12	10	8
AF Tac Air Sqdns	(18)	(15) <u>b/</u>	(11)	(9)	(7)
AF Gunship Sqdns	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Marine Sqdns	(3)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
<u>B-52s</u>	50	50	50	50	42
<u>KC-135s</u>	53	43	43	28	28
Military Personnel	42,000	38,500	36,600	33,000 <u>c/</u>	32,200 <u>d/</u>
Monthly Thailand Sortie Capability (Tac Air/B-52)	11,000/1,200	8,500/1,200	6,400/1,200	5,100/1,200	4,100/1,000
Bases (Open/caretaker/closed)	7/0/0	6/0/1	6/0/1 <u>e/</u>	6/0/1 <u>e/</u>	5/0/2 <u>e/</u>

OPTION 2

<u>Tactical Air</u>	22	16	10	8	5
AF Tac Air Sqdns	(18)	(15) <u>b/</u>	(9)	(7)	(4)
AF Gunship Sqdns	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Marine Sqdns	(3)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
<u>B-52s</u>	50	50	42	42	15
<u>KC-135s</u>	53	43	28	28	17
Military Personnel	42,000	38,500	33,000 <u>c/</u>	30,000	24,700
Monthly Thailand Sortie Capability (Tac Air/B-52)	11,000/1,200	8,500/1,200	5,100/1,000	4,100/1,000	1,900/300
Bases (open/caretaker/closed)	7/0/0	6/0/1	6/0/1 <u>e/</u>	5/0/2 <u>e/</u>	3/1/3 <u>e/</u>

- a/ Withdrawals also include transport, ELINT, and other support aircraft which are not shown in the table.
- b/ In addition, 12 F-111s have been redeployed reducing the number of aircraft per squadron.
- c/ The 50,000 manpower level could be reached at the end of the Increment if sufficient carrier air support assets are withdrawn.
- d/ Although initial bases had some reductions in support personnel or base closures (other than in Increment 1), the force remains at the end of Increment 4 could be supported at five open bases thereby permitting a reduction to about 20,000 personnel.
- e/ Estimated to support the minimum level of 7,000 tactical air sorties per month from Thailand, and the force level indicated for the increment.

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## VI. Longer-Term Redeployment Considerations

Longer range plans for force levels in Thailand during the FY 75-79 time-frame would depend upon the stability of the military situation in SEA, as well as the political climate existing between the U.S. and Thailand and the other Asian nations.

The aircraft (including five tactical air and gunship squadrons, 15 B-52s and 17 KC-135s) which would remain in Thailand at the end FY 74 (Option 2) or FY 75 (Option 1) is the minimum force level which provides a balanced capability for a wide variety of combat missions.\* These aircraft would be capable of generating 1,500 tactical air, 400 gunship and 300 B-52 sorties per month. The three carriers deployed in WESTPAC could provide an additional 3,300 attack sorties per month. Also remaining in Thailand would be the requisite long range maritime patrol, reconnaissance, search and rescue, ELINT, and transport capabilities. Approximately 24,700 military personnel would be needed in Thailand to support these forces and the other intelligence, logistics, communications, and military assistance missions.

However, the remaining forces would be intended more as a symbol of U.S. presence and resolve in SEA than as representative of the U.S. capability available for SEA. As noted previously, if needed, U.S. air power could surge in no more than one month -- perhaps sooner than Congress would approve a renewal of combat activity -- to levels much greater than that of the forces in SEA as outlined in Options 1 and 2, provided that munitions are available.

### A. Military Considerations

From a military capability standpoint, U.S. forces forward deployed in Thailand enhance our ability to carry out our strategy in SEA as defined by NSCM-27 and the Defense Policy and Planning Guidance.

With respect to the need to rapidly deploy air and ground forces to counter a conventional attack in SEA, maintaining some forces in Thailand improves our deployment capabilities, particularly

\*This minimum balanced capability would include:

- 2 F-4 squadrons for an SEA-wide air-to-air and air-to-ground capability of 1,200 sorties per month.
- 1 AC-130E squadron for a day/night gunship capability of 400 sorties per month.
- 1 F-105 Wild Weasel squadron for SAM suppression in support of the F-4s or the residual force of 15 B-52s.
- 1 A-7 SAR support squadron for cover and support of SAR missions, and which also could provide an additional 250 close support sorties per month.

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those for the deployment of tactical aircraft. Also, strategic and tactical aircraft based in Thailand would be available immediately to fly combat sorties. If enough forces remain in Thailand to maintain adequate airbases in caretaker status, full operational capability for the forces we plan to redeploy could be insured within two weeks; whereas about 30 days would be needed to initiate full operations from a base which had been closed.

B. Political Implications

In the foreseeable future the present RTG leadership probably will allow the U.S. continued use of bases in Thailand. However, a sizeable U.S. presence at some point in the future might make Thai accommodation with China and North Vietnam difficult, although the PRC is not now making an issue of the U.S. presence. In fact, the RTG probably realizes a political benefit from the U.S. presence, as it provides Thailand some bargaining power which could be used in reaching a satisfactory relationship with the PRC. The value of the U.S. presence to the RTG will last at least until the military situation in Southeast Asia is stabilized and the political and military implications for the other SEA countries become more clear.

Nevertheless, there may come a time when Thailand will elect to sacrifice its close security relationship with the U.S. for closer relationships and understandings with the PRC and the NVN. If and when such relationships and understandings develop a total review by the U.S. of its policies and presence in Thailand would be in order.

In addition to an RTG request, the withdrawal of U.S. forces could be hastened by the insurgency problem in Thailand. Although the insurgency does not pose a serious threat at this time, it could develop to a point where the security of U.S. bases would be in jeopardy. We might then wish to remove forces from affected bases both to insure their security and to avoid being drawn into an internal Thai conflict. On the other hand, the PRC and DRV could seek to trade their support for the insurgency against the U.S. military presence, possibly forcing the RTG to ask for our withdrawal.

Military requirements notwithstanding, our presence in Thailand also gives us political flexibility in dealing with other Asian countries. For example, SEA countries such as Indochina and Singapore view a U.S. presence in Thailand as an added buffer to their defenses. Also, the views of the PRC regarding the adverse impact of a U.S. withdrawal on the power structure in the area cannot be overlooked as a political benefit of our presence.

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Thus, there is political leverage associated with remaining in Thailand since the withdrawal of all U.S. forces in the next several years would undoubtedly be regarded in various quarters as (1) creating a power vacuum, (2) a loss of security, and (3) a degradation of the U.S. commitment to SEA. Conversely, as SEA nations improve their relations with the PRC, and if current neutralization proposals gain ground, our presence in Thailand may become an obstacle to neutralization in the area.

### VII. Longer-Term Deployment Options

The longer-term (FY 75-79) U.S. deployments in Thailand will depend on the military and political implications such as those outlined above. Therefore, the peacetime forward deployed forces might remain as high as the level reached at the conclusion of the short-term redeployments (five tactical air and gunship squadrons, 15 B-52s, 17 KC-135s plus associated support elements and 24,700 personnel), or they could be reduced to only those personnel needed for MACTHAI/JUSMAGTHAI and SEATO activities.\* Under present plans two of the tactical air squadrons in the high force level are contained in the nine squadron peacetime forward deployment posture in WESTPAC.

In addition to the high and low levels noted above, a possible intermediate force level would be one which retained a reconnaissance squadron and elements of tactical air and airlift squadrons -- plus intelligence gathering, military assistance, communications, logistics support, and maritime patrol aircraft capabilities -- requiring from 6-8,000 personnel. The actual number of personnel, as well as the phasing of a drawdown from 24,700 personnel to a lower level, would depend on requirements at the time of the drawdown.

The table on the following page summarizes the three longer-term deployment force postures for Thailand described above and compares them with the forces in Thailand before the recent withdrawals.

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\*From all indications it is not likely that Thailand would completely sever all military ties with the U.S. by FY 79.

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Longer-Term U.S. Forces in Thailand

<u>Presence Options</u>	<u>Squadrons</u>	<u>B-52s</u>	<u>Air Bases</u>		<u>Military Personnel</u>
			<u>Operational</u>	<u>Caretaker</u>	
(Before Incr 1 Redeployment)	(22)	(50)	(7)	(0)	(42,000)
High	5	15	3 <u>c/</u>	1 <u>c/</u>	24,700
Medium	a/	0	1	0	6-8,000
Low	0	0	0	0	300 <u>b/</u>

- a/ A tactical reconnaissance squadron and elements of tactical air, maritime air patrol and airlift squadrons would remain.
- b/ Estimated personnel associated with PACTHAI/JUSMAGTHAI and SEATO. This is approximately one-half the number of personnel currently in these activities.
- c/ Estimated to support in place forces and a 7,000 sortie per month resurgence level.

The "high" longer-term option would retain a capability for 1,000 tactical air and gunship sorties and 300 B-52 sorties per month. In addition, the command and control and other support functions now in Thailand would remain. If the military situation showed that a resurgence might be required we would also have sufficient airbases available to sustain 7,000 tactical air and 1,200 B-52 sorties per month (the Thailand portion of the proposed FY 74-75 surge capability), provided that munitions were available.

The "medium" option is a probable posture if military stability in SEA permitted the withdrawal of the majority of our combat forces. However, the degree of RTG accommodation with the PRC or North Vietnamese would affect whether the RTG would permit us to retain one active air base, as well as an adequate force for intelligence gathering and other support and advisory functions. The one active air base and a military presence is indicative of an RTG willingness to allow the re-entry of U.S. combat forces if they were needed. Since planning through FY 79 envisions the retention of U Tapao as the last U.S. air base remaining in Thailand, a B-52 re-entry capability would be available.

In the "low" option it is assumed that political and military considerations dictate a withdrawal of all military personnel except those needed for staffing SEATO and PACTHAI/JUSMAGTHAI. It is also assumed there are no U.S. bases nor combat air capability present in Thailand, nor would there be any assurance that the

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RTG would permit us re-entry rights. While this option assumes that Thailand would not yet be neutral, the Thai would have reached a degree of accommodation with the PRC or North Vietnam that precludes any U.S. force presence in their country.

For longer term planning purposes, then, the three illustrative forward deployment postures provide a range of force levels for consideration. Conclusions as to the military capability and political impacts of these force levels drive the decision as to what our longer-term posture will be.

It appears that the 6-8,000 personnel force is the most appropriate to adopt as a longer term peacetime forward deployed force planning objective. Maintaining this posture would likely be regarded by our SEA allies as an adequate symbol of a continuing, active U.S. commitment to security of the area, while not being a force level large enough to appear provocative to the PRC or the DRV.

Alternatively, one could chose a short-term redeployment option (Section V, Option 1 or 2) and defer a decision on a longer-term option until such time as the military situation stabilizes.

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November 21, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: U.S. Deployments in Thailand

After considering Deputy Secretary Clements' memorandum of October 13, 1973, the President has decided that, in light of the threat of a North Vietnamese offensive, there should be no U.S. force reductions in Thailand prior to the conclusion of the FY 74 dry season.

It is requested that the Department of Defense prepare a plan for withdrawal of forces to the force level goal common to both Options 1 and 2 of the Defense study. The withdrawals should begin at the end of the upcoming dry season and be completed by the end of FY 75. The timing of the withdrawals should take into account projected requirements for the FY 75 dry season. This plan should be submitted by January 31, 1974, and should include recommended sortie surge capabilities and the key decision points for modification of the withdrawal plan.

It is also requested that a contingency plan be prepared for the possible withdrawal of some unessential, non-strike capabilities (e.g. RB-66, EC-121, O-2) during the next few months on relatively short notice. This would provide some flexibility to withdraw forces should internal pressures on the RTG make this desirable during the coming dry season. This plan should be submitted by December 15, 1973. Neither of these plans should be discussed with Thai officials.

Directly related to these withdrawals is the question of the equipment which could be left behind for turnover to the Thais as the units are withdrawn. In order to determine the extent to which we may respond to Thai requests, the President has directed a review of the equipment of all U.S. forces to be withdrawn through FY 75. The review should be submitted by December 15, 1973, and should identify:

- Equipment which the Thai military would like to acquire.

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Equipment (of which DOD believes Thailand has a valid military need (particularly as regards counter-insurgency operations) and the capability to support and maintain, with explanations where DOD judgment differs from Thai desires,

- Equipment required to support U.S. capability for rapid reintroduction of forces into Thailand.
- Significant legal, operational, or budgetary constraints on turning the identified equipment over to the Thais.

It is also requested that the requirement for the numerous headquarters and support units in Thailand be examined. Recommended manning levels and timing of reductions where applicable should be submitted for each unit. Headquarters and supporting units should be eliminated or consolidated where possible. Special attention should be given to reducing excessive military presence in Bangkok. Recommendations together with supporting rationale should be submitted by December 15, 1973.

  
Henry A. Kissinger

cc: The Secretary of State  
The Director of Central Intelligence  
The Director, Office of Management  
and Budget

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