

Indochina - United States Emergency Aid to Laos and Thailand in the Face of Viet Minh Aggression: Statement by the Secretary of State at a News Conference, May 9, 1953 (1)

In view of the recent, rapid sequence of events in the Far East, I believe it would be appropriate to summarize for you our actions concerning developments in Laos and Thailand.

Communist Viet Minh forces began their movement toward the Royal Capital City of Luang Prabang in Laos on April 12.

Following an appeal from the Government of Laos on April 13 to the free world to condemn the aggression, the United States issued a statement of support and sympathy.(2)

The urgent need for cargo aircraft to aid French and Lao forces in meeting this aggression was discussed by me with French officials during our stay in Paris for the recent NATO meeting.(3)

Within 24 hours it was agreed at the highest level that such aircraft, if available, should be dispatched to Indochina. Within another 24 hours the aircraft were located with the Far East Command. Within another 24 hours civilian operators were located to fly the planes, because the French did not have crews accustomed to handle these planes and we did not desire that our military personnel should fly into the combat zone. The plan was actually put into operation within a few hours after our return from Paris, and the aircraft arrived at Hanoi on May 5 and were made operational immediately.

Three days prior to the arrival of the aircraft in Hanoi, we announced on May 2 (4) that we were maintaining close contact with the Governments of Laos and of France regarding the special requirements of the situation and that the Mutual Security Administration Mission in Laos had made arrangements to help ease the refugee problem by making available certain funds and supplies.

The Ambassador from Thailand, Pote Sarasin, came to my office at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday of this week, May 5, to discuss the problems confronting his country as a result of the Viet Minh invasion of Laos.(5)

The Ambassador expressed his country's urgent need for small arms ammunition and for various military items urgently required by the Thai Navy, Army, and Air Force, which requests had simultaneously been made through the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group and our Embassy at Bangkok. Within 24 hours of the Ambassador's request certain amounts of such ammunition were in the air on their way to Bangkok from the Pacific area, and action was taken to expedite delivery of the other military items.

These two instances illustrate a capacity for decision and performance and of cooperative teamwork between the Departments of State and Defense, which should, I believe, be gratifying to the American people. Also, they should be impressive to others, whether they be friends or aggressors.

(1) Department of State Bulletin, May 18, 1953, p. 708. [Back](#)

(2) Department of State Bulletin, May 4, 1953, p. 641. [Back](#)

(3) See the NATO Council communiqué of Apr. 25, 1953; supra, pp. 1631-1633. [Back](#)

(4) See Secretary Dulles' statement of that date; Department of State Bulletin, May 11, 1953, p. 678. [Back](#)

(5) See *ibid.*, May 18, 1953, p. 709. [Back](#)

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