Monsoon Season Soon To Bring Halt To Southeast Asia Military Activity

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Editor's note: UPI Foreign News Analyst Phil Newsom, who has covered the news on five of the seven continents, is on the scene in Thailand to report on the crisis in Southeast Asia. In the following dispatch he describes the American military buildup in Thailand.

By PHIL NEWSOM
UPI Foreign News Analyst

Bangkok, Thailand – (UPI) – Heavy monsoon clouds are piling up over Bangkok's canals and temples, and soon drenching rains will halt most major military action throughout Southeast Asia for the next three months.

But meanwhile, the United States has given the Communists an impressive demonstration of its ability to deliver troops, backed by the enormous fire power of the Air Force and their own new weapons, to any area in this part of the world.

A tiny restaurant on Bangkok's dockside hardly had time to realize a new-found prosperity before U.S. Marines had come and gone, their equipment unloaded and their new campsite established seven miles east of the important junction town of Udorn.

Ready To Move

Udorn is 35 miles south of the Laotian administrative capital of Vientiane on the Mekong river. It probably is no accident that the Marines are in a position to drive swiftly northward should Washington and military authorities decide emergency action is required.

The reinforced battle group of the 27th Infantry of the 25th Army Division is stationed temporarily just south of Korat, about 150 miles northeast of Bangkok, near important rail and road junctions.

The Marines are backed by their own fighter bombers and helicopters and a squadron of F100s from the 13th Air Force's base at Clark Field in the Philippines. These support planes are stationed at Ta Khli, the super-secret air base built for Thailand's air force.

These forces are clear evidence of the American intention to help Thailand defend its borders, although the only combat so far has been with elephants competing with the First Battle Group for water supplies, and the only casualty a Marine bitten by a cobra.

The forceful United States action, which is drawing increasing fire from Chinese, North Vietnamese and North Korean propaganda outlets, has been joined by Australia and New Zealand who are sending token forces. Others may come from the Philippines and Britain.

The Army's 27th Infantry, the famous Wolfhound outfit which distinguished itself in the Korean War, is taking considerable satisfaction in having landed ahead of the Marines.

"We welcome the Marines," said Col. William E. McKean in a crack hardly designed to soothe traditional rivalry between the two services.

The American forces in Thailand are under the command of pistol-toting Gen. James Richardson, who conferred Wednesday with Bangkok officials regarding the final disposition of his men.

The idea that the United States is planning a long haul operation in Thailand is suggested by the presence of an unusual number of officers of general rank for the size of the present 5,000-man force.

This has been taken as a hint that other forces may be assigned here in the future.

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Dick and Billie Sol Are Nothing Unusual in Names for Texans

By DICK WEST

Washington–(UPI)–A number of my colleagues, who lack the advantage of having been born in Texas, have come to me for clarification of the Billie Sol Estes case. It is not so much that they are confused by the complexities of his grain storage and cotton acreage operations. Anyone in Washington can find more complex things than that to be confused by.

West

What puzzles them is how Estes came to get a name like Billie Sol.

Some have suggested that his affairs would never have attrated so much public attention if he had been christened Mortimer, or Outer-Bridge, or something of that sort.

Such an assumption implies that Billie Sol is an unusual name, which, of course, it isn't. At least, not in Texas.

If it is regarded as a curiosity in the other 49 states, that is because the other states are somewhat provincial.

Estes and I are natives of the same region, and to me his name sounds as commonplace as mine would to him. We are both products of a custom which I regard as wonderfully logical.

It takes cognizance of the fact that if you name a boy Robert, Alan, Joseph, Thomas, James, Samuel, Albert, Ernest, Philip, Henry, Kenneth, Edward, Benjamin, Michael or Stephen, he will likely be called something else.

So why not just name him Bob, Al, Joe, Tom, Jim, Sam, Ernie, Phil, Hank, Ken, Ed, Ben, Mike or Steve and be done with it?

Since the woods already are full of Bobs, Toms, Jims, etc., some parents take the next logical step and give their sons double names to aid in identification.

My own parents decided a single name would suffice, but I grew up with an assortment of Bobby Toms, Billy Bobs, Jimmy Joes, Sam Jacks and Tommy Rays.

As for Billie Sol, if I am not mistaken he is the nephew and namesake of a doctor whose first name was Sol.

The only drawback to this system of nomenclature is that if you ever move to some less enlightened area, you're in trouble.

I have spent a goodly part of my adult life explaining to credit offices and tax investigators that my name isn't my nickname. But they still seem to think that I am trying to pull a fast one.

My other difficulty is with people who arbitrarily change my name to what they think it ought to be. This has required a lot of straightening out over the years.

Texans who have these simplicified names will find that life is much easier if they (1) stay in Texas and (2) stay out of the fertilizer business.

Northwest Power Intertie Opposed

Washington –(UPI)– A Pennsylvania private power company official today urged Congress not to approve construction of a federal powerline connecting the Pacific Northwest and California.

Charles E. Oakes, chairman of Pennsylvania Power & Light Co., appeared before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee to urge it to cut a $500,000 budget request by the Bonneville Power Administration for preliminary engineering of an extra-high voltage intertie.

He said several companies in the area had expressed "some concern" over the plan.

Oakes identified the companies as Washington Water Power, Puget Sound Power & Light, Portland General Electric, Pacific Power & Light, Idaho Power Co., Montana Power Co., Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison.

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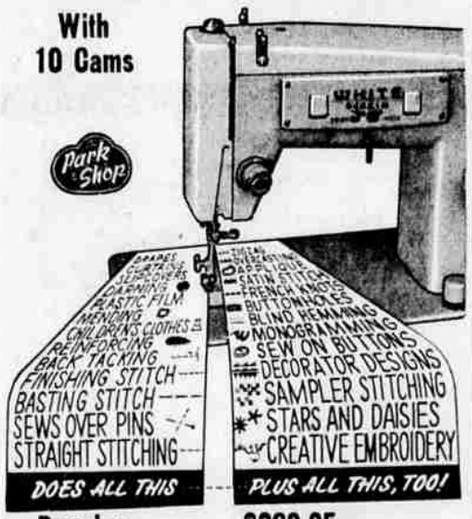

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