

## THAILAND -- WHERE'S THAT?

In all the furor and controversy over the war in Vietnam there has been a tendency to overlook the significance of recent events in Thailand, Vietnam's neighbor in S.E. Asia. Thailand has become a stronghold for U.S. economic interests and, as a consequence, has become a country of increasing diplomatic concern for the industrialized nations.

"The raw materials that enable the rich countries to grow richer must increasingly be bought from the poor. The industrialized nations are using these basic materials in geometrically increasing quantities . . . We are . . . forced to scour the world to find other sources—iron ore in Liberia, Brazil, or India; copper in Chile and Zambia; petroleum wherever it can be found on land or under the sea."

So said H. E. Robison, Vice President of SRI-International, at the 22nd Annual Meeting of the SRI Associates at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel on December 14, 1967.

Some of his listeners, notably chief officers of Union Oil, Utah Construction and Mining, Union Carbide, and the far flung Kaiser empire, might have thought to add Thailand to his list.

Stanford is not only involved in Thailand's politics, through SRP's counter-insurgency work, but in its economics as

well, through corporations whose board members sit as Stanford trustees or SRI directors.

According to Investment, Licensing and Trading Conditions Abroad, the February, 1962, Industrial Investment Promotion Act of Thailand created "one of the most liberal incentive programs in the Asian area." The Thai government encourages foreign investment in export industries which use native raw materials and "help the country cut imports."

Hundred percent foreign-owned corporations are allowed, though the rule is jointly owned Thai-foreign limited companies. Investment between 1959 and 1966 was 47 per cent Japanese, 10 per cent U.S., six percent United Kingdom and West German, with other heavy investment by overseas Chinese, especially from Malaysia.

A pending Thai-American tax treaty lowers corporation taxes, royalty taxes, and taxes on dividends for Americans by

20 to 25 per cent. American nationals employed in American firms are exempt from Thai income taxes, and Agency for International Development investment guarantees for convertibility and transfer of capital earnings are available to American companies.

Besides this, the Thai government places no restrictions on the entry of capital, transfer of profits, or repatriation of capital. There is complete price freedom, and "anti-trust is not a worry for businessmen."

Thai "incentive" policy seems, in fact, to encourage monopoly by issuing "promotion certificates" in limited numbers to firms willing to put a high amount of capital into an industry making high use of local resources. With these certificates, a corporation can have restrictions put against competitive imports and be exempted from import duties on machinery, parts, and construction materials.

Listed among the firms which have been taking advantage of the incentives extended by the Thai government are the following SRI associates: Castle and Cook, Inc. (Trustee Ernest Arbuckle is a director), Union Carbide and its subsidiary Union Ore, Co., Union Oil (Union President Fred Hartley is an SRI director, and Trustee Arthur Stewart is a Union director), and Kaiser Industries. Utah Construction and Mining, whose president, Edmund Littlefield, is a Stanford trustee (Trustee Arbuckle is also a Utah director), has also expanded its Thailand operations and is partner in a three-way joint venture to build an airbase suitable for B-52's at Nam Phong.

The effect of the U.S. economic invasion of Thailand has resulted in increasing UNDERdevelopment and economic backwardness in the country. The concessions granted in the incentives program have made it possible for foreign firms (primarily U.S.) to drain off in profits the capital resources which would otherwise have been available for the internal development of Thailand.

While U.S. firms extract high profits and the natural resources necessary to sustain a high level of industrial production at home, the people of Thailand (not the government, but the PEOPLE) become poorer. The people rightly connect their continually worsening economic condition with the exploitative economic involvement of the industrialized nations. They see that economic development and imperialist domination by the capitalist countries are mutually exclusive. There is, thus, in Thailand a rising nationalist sentiment, a desire on the part of the people to protect what is rightly theirs and to develop their resources for the benefit of the Thai people.

The industrial invaders, however, do not look at the rising nationalist movement in the same way. For them nationalism means RED, i.e. the end of profits extracted through monopolistic exploitation and the end of an almost unlimited supply of natural resources for U.S. industry. Naturally the big industrialists want to eradicate the nationalist threat to their own economic security. To achieve this end they use their influence in powerful institutions (eg. government) and research facilities to direct efforts to suppress the nationalist movement.

Stanford University has gone to war in Thailand on the side of the elitist military dictatorship and is preparing the way for large-scale U.S. intervention should it "ever be called for."

Through its wholly owned subsidiary, the Stanford Research Institute of Menlo Park, the University is aiding in Thai-American counter-insurgency operations and in research and weapons development for American counter-revolutionary policy in Thailand, Vietnam, and the Third World generally.

SRP's participation in the Thai war ranges from testing "devices" which "sniff an enemy's presence," to writing ethnographies of revolutionary areas, analyzing military and paramilitary communications requirements to repress

"medium-level insurgency" in the north-east, and confidential reports on the "communist terrorist camps" in the south.

Begun in 1962, SRP's Bangkok program is a part of the Advanced Research Project Agency's "Project Agile," the Pentagon's world-wide counter-insurgency research program. According to H. E. Robison, Vice President of SRI-International, the purpose is "to provide a multi-disciplinary vehicle for research into counter-guerrilla, counter-insurgency, and communications operations in Southeast Asia.

Robison affirmed Stanford's wholehearted approval of the U.S. government's foreign policy at the Dec. 14 meeting of the Stanford Research Associates in San Francisco.

"The Institute," he said, "supports the foreign involvements of our government, and many projects are designed to help foreign governments create for their citizens a climate of freedom and enterprise."

In his printed text, but omitted from his speech, Robison discussed SRP's involvement "in the struggle to maintain another Asian bastion of strength for the free world (Thailand)."

At its outset the primary objective of the ARPA program in Thailand was research and development for Vietnam.

But according to a Dec. 19, 1966, article in Technology Week Magazine, "with the recent increase of guerrilla activity in Thailand" the program has concerned itself with building counter-insurgency research and development capabilities in

