

Viet-Nam, and the Thai Government recently announced its decision to send, in addition, a ground combat unit to Viet-Nam. It is worth noting that when the Thai Government called for a thousand volunteers for this unit, more than 30,000 Thai young men responded.

Another great contribution which Thailand has made to the Allied war effort in Viet-Nam is the use of Thai military installations and facilities by United States military forces. The military installations and facilities are made available by Thailand as a member of SEATO and are critically important to us as we carry out our part of the war effort. U.S. Air Force planes flying from Thai bases at Takhli, Udorn, Korat, Ubon, and Nakorn Phanom are of immeasurable importance in meeting the aggression against South Viet-Nam. The completion of the air base at U Tapao and the Thai Government's decision to permit its use by B-52's will greatly increase the effectiveness of our air operations.

When the President was in Bangkok last October he acknowledged that the Thai contribution to the common defense involved risks for Thailand. At that time the President said,<sup>2</sup>

Let me assure you in this regard that Thailand can count on the United States to meet its obligations under the SEATO treaty. The commitment of the United States under the SEATO treaty is not of a particular political party or administration in my country, but of America as a nation. And I repeat to you: America keeps its commitments.

Thailand has made other great contributions to security and stability in the area. Its determination to defeat through its own efforts the attempts by Peking and Hanoi to create insurgency in Thailand is wholly admirable. Despite this costly and difficult effort, the Thai have achieved remarkable internal economic growth and development. And they have been a leader in the movement to create institutions of regional cooperation

<sup>2</sup> For President Johnson's toast at a state dinner at Bangkok on Oct. 28, 1966, see BULLETIN of Nov. 21, 1966, p. 767.

which manifest the new spirit of hope that is growing in Asia today.

Thailand, which is known the world over for its devotion to its national independence, can take special pride in its contribution to fostering this new spirit of hope.

By its action today, Thailand has shown once again that it knows, as does the United States, that it is by standing together as allies that we preserve our own independence and freedom.

## **Pacific Islands Trust Territory**

### *White House Announcements*

#### **PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER NORWOOD**

*White House press release (Guam) dated March 21*

The President met on March 21 with High Commissioner William Norwood and other officials of the government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Commissioner Norwood and his associates came to Guam at the President's invitation to brief him on conditions and prospects in the territory, which is administered by the United States under the supervision of the United Nations. The territory consists of more than 2,000 islands in the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall groupings.

The discussion centered on economic and social progress. Commissioner Norwood gave the President a detailed account of recent advances in such critical fields as health and education. He also discussed the important role in these efforts being played by the Peace Corps, which has nearly 500 volunteers now at work in the territory.

The President also congratulated Mr. Norwood and his colleagues on the quickening pace of political development reflected in the formation of the Congress of Micronesia and in the increasing numbers of Micronesians who are assuming responsible positions in the government.

The President expressed the full support of the American people for these encouraging developments. He urged Commissioner Norwood to press forward with the government's consideration of an economic development plan for the territory. He cited as evidence of U.S. support the recent Senate passage of the administration-proposed bill lifting the ceiling on financial support to the territory. He expressed confidence that the House would also act favorably.

In thanking Commissioner Norwood for his presentation, the President said:

"Although I very much regret that time won't permit a personal visit to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, I believe that Commissioner Norwood's impressive analysis has given me a vivid sense of the progressive spirit now at work in Micronesia. Under his inspired leadership, I am confident that the people of the trust territory can look forward to new victories in the never-ending battle against poverty, ignorance, and disease.

"Mr. Norwood has the support of every American in this noble cause."

#### **ALLOCATION OF DISASTER FUNDS**

*White House press release (Guam) dated March 21*

The President on March 21 declared a major disaster for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands because of damages caused by Typhoon Sally. He made available Federal funds in the amount of \$750,000 for disaster assistance in the affected areas.

Koror and Babelthuap are two small islands in the Palau District of the trust territory, located approximately 250 miles southwest of Guam. These islands suffered severe damage when typhoon winds roared through the island on March 2.

Emergency mass care services are being furnished by the trust territory government assisted by the military and the American National Red Cross. The Department of Agriculture has provided large quantities of surplus foods to feed disaster victims.

The President's major disaster declaration

and allocation of funds will permit Federal assistance for the recovery and rehabilitation of the devastated areas. These funds will be used for the repair or replacement of public facilities damaged or destroyed in the disaster.

This program of assistance authorized under the Federal Disaster Act (Public Law 81-875) is administered by the Office of Emergency Planning. The OEP Region 7 office in Santa Rosa, Calif., is coordinating Federal disaster relief activities in the trust territory.

#### **U.S. Mission Chiefs in Europe Meet at Bonn**

The Department of State announced on March 24 (press release 65) that a 4-day conference of chiefs of American diplomatic missions in Europe would be held at Bonn, Germany, from March 28 to 31. The meeting brought together American ambassadors from 30 diplomatic posts in the European area.<sup>1</sup>

Vice President Humphrey attended a part of the conference sessions on March 29-30.

Under Secretary Katzenbach left Washington March 29 to chair the last day of the conference. The earlier sessions were chaired by John M. Leddy, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs.

The meeting is one of a series of regional meetings called periodically in different parts of the world by the Department of State to permit American ambassadors abroad to discuss questions of mutual interest and exchange views with senior Washington officials. The last such conference of all American ambassadors in Europe was held at Bonn in 1963. A meeting of U.S. ambassadors to NATO countries took place at The Hague in 1965.

<sup>1</sup>For a list of the chiefs of American missions in Europe, see Department press release 65 dated Mar. 24.