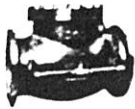


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THE

NATION

Vol. 2 No. 249

BANGKOK, Friday Morning, October 21, 1977

Thanin Govt ousted in quick takeover

COUP D'ETAT

- Elections by next year
- Pledges Press freedom
- Martial law remains

A "REVOLUTIONARY PARTY" led by Admiral Sa-ngad Chalaw-yoo seized power at 6.00 pm yesterday and promised elections next year.

Dissolving the year-old Thanin Kraivichien Government, Constitution and the National Administrative Reform Assembly, the Revolutionary Party announced that martial law will remain in force.

Citing growing disunity among government officials and the people since the current constitution was promulgated after the October 6, 1976 takeover, Admiral Sa-ngad explained that the Thanin Government's plan to develop democracy in 12 years was "unnecessarily too long and not in accordance with the wishes of the people."

He also said the Revolutionary Party, comprising the armed forces, police and civilians, had decided to seize power because the country's economy had deteriorated and foreign investment had dropped.

"If the situation is allowed to continue, it would be too difficult to rectify later on," the coup leader said.

In a televised speech, Admiral Sa-ngad also said all armed forces commanders, police and civil service chiefs remain intact.

Admiral Sa-ngad appeared on television last night with Supreme Commander Gen Kriangsak Chammanan, Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Serm Na Nakhonn, Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Amorn Sirakaya, Air Force Commander-in-Chief Air Chief Marshal Panang Kantarat and Police Director General Montchai Pankongthuen.

He said the Revolutionary Party will uphold the Monarchy, Nation and Religion.

The Revolutionary Party also banned movements of military and police personnel except at the instruction of the Revolutionary Party's Leader.

Prohibition was also imposed on assembly of more than five persons for political purposes. Offenders are liable to six-month jail term or fine of 1,000 baht.

The Revolutionary Party also warned merchants from hoarding goods or jack up prices of commodities.

Troops moved in to guard key installations



Leader of the Revolutionary Party, Adm Sa-ngad, delivers his speech on television after the takeover last night.

INSIDE:

P 2 — • Overconfidence led to downfall • Sa-ngad's biography • October is a jinxed month • The one year reign • Chronology of coups

P 3 — • Revolutionary Party Announcements and Orders

P 12 — • Sa-ngad's speech • How the Thai Press covered the coup • Back door exit for ousted leaders • and, what our team of reporters encountered at the scene of happening — the Government House



Infantry soldiers guard the Government House minutes before the coup.

Gen Kriangsak made peace-keeping chief

SUPREME Commander Gen Kriangsak Chammanan has been given another vital role as National Peace-Keeping Director by the order of the Revolutionary Party late last night.

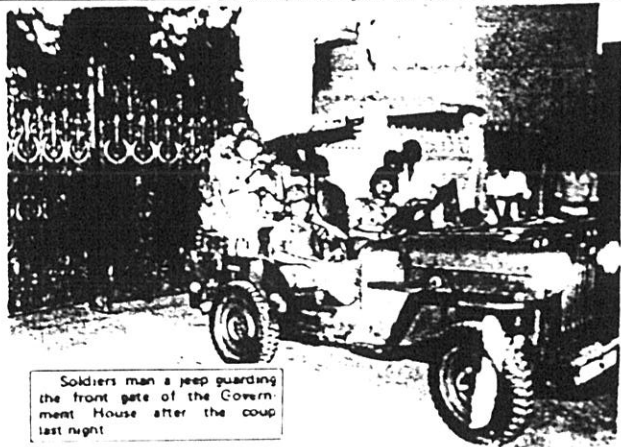
Gen Kriangsak, according to the Revolutionary Party Order No 8, will be given full

officials for public order in the same order signed by Admiral Sa-ngad Chalaw-yoo, leader of the Revolutionary Party. Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Serm Na Nakhonn has also been appointed Peace-Keeping Director in charge of Bangkok and suburban provinces of Samut Prakan, Nonthaburi and Pathum Thani.

The order was announced through radio and television around midnight.

Both Gen Kriangsak and Gen Serm were among top military and police officers who appeared on television together with Revolutionary leader, Admiral Sa-ngad, last night.

Three other prominent officers were Air Force Commander-in-Chief Air Chief Marshal Panang Kantarat, Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Amorn Sirakaya and Police Director General Montchai Pankongthuen.



Soldiers man a jeep guarding the front gate of the Government House after the coup last night.

Rumours, denials... but it's all over now

CHRONOLOGY

FOLLOWING is the chronology of yesterday's events leading to the coup.

Morning: Rumour, which had been rife since the previous day began once again that the entire Cabinet had resigned when it was learnt that Cabinet had been holding an emergency meeting all day the previous day. Most of the ministers, however, were

Certain key personnel of the military were called for consultations at their respective headquarters, including the Police Department.

that the government is still in power and running the country as usual.

4:30 p.m. The police is put on full alert. The grapevine is buzzing when some wives of cabinet ministers receive telephone calls from

BUSINESS AS USUAL

MOST entertainment places in the city including leading hotels and theatres continued business as usual last night.

Executives of most hotels said they received no cancellation on earlier reservation for social functions in their hotels.

"Some guests had asked whether they could leave the hotel premises but

PAG COM

YESTERDAY's cc had been expected to optimism, by some caution. But the air cleared the air and we new direction will now

Elections next year stroke the Revolution of Thailand into its established a medium people and the author

One positive factor government-by-rumour chosen Government we calling itself a "gover noble and lofty idea government in the wor ideas.

It could have wor have produced result whole and to individ alienated itself total vision through self-en because Thanin and they had the mass in control, they could enemy and sag its ed by closing down and thereby acquiring public opinion.

The Revolutionary Officers Advisory B has wisely opened a ty with the people in good stand in the s

Overnight the Re- acclaim and goodw proof of the pudding Words can win goo respect and continue

It is also a challe possible it can act cisms it can put for been given a role to ward and it must in vouched in it.



Gen Kriangsak, Supreme Commander and by-appointed National Peace-Keeping Director

New Gillette GI

2 precision blades to give you the most comfortable shave

OBSTINATE OVERCONFIDENCE LED TO DOWNFALL OF THANIN'S GOVERNMENT

THE "SHELL" DISCORDED the "oyster" yesterday in a move which had apparently been forced on the "shell" itself.

The parody sounds paradoxical today. The Thanin Government, which had all along described itself as the "oyster" operating under the firm protection of the military Prime Minister's Advisory Council, chose to ignore the "request" of its protector to reshuffle the Cabinet to improve its image -- and forced a showdown.

The result of the confrontation is now history.

The signs had come out clear -- in a subtle way, wrapped in longue-in-cheek statements from leading members of the Advisory Council.

The insistence and emphasis on "unity" expounded repeatedly by the Thanin Government was tell-tale enough. Thai people used to such well-coated implications, knew that when "unity" was stressed too often, it often means that it wasn't there.

The honeymoon between the Thanin Government and his military advisers could have lasted longer had Thanin and some of his outspoken Cabinet members, not developed that sense of over-confidence to the point of arrogance which became embarrassing to the very group of people who put them in po-

wer on Oct 22, last year.

Apparently taking a more liberal line than the civilian ministers, the military leaders became impatient when the "government of reform" took on an extreme line in almost all major policies.

When Thanin chose to stress the obvious in his policy and failed to come up with concrete positive achievements, particularly in the economic field, their confidence began to waver. The advisers simply could not afford to risk "backing the wrong horse" too long.

Attempts were made to take corrective actions while the split was just emerging. But the advisers soon found that they were dealing with a government which was intent on following its own line of action. In other words, the advisers began to feel that the Thanin Government was taking them just as "advisers" whose advice may or may not be taken up.

With the unrelenting tough line taken by the Thanin Government, things began to burst in from several walks of life from the government ended up with more dissatisfaction among the people.

The Press, suffering long and hard pressure, began to chime in. And the muted Press began

to make it plain that the Thanin Government thinking of some way of pushing for gradual changes in the Cabinet.

In other words, the government considered all kinds of criticism from the Press, or any individual for that matter, intolerable.

Meanwhile, the government's much-publicized claim of improved investment atmosphere, of more political stability and of blessing by implication by the advisers began to disintegrate.

The country began to fall into factions, as confirmed by Admiral Sangrad last night and most people feel that Thanin's 12-year dose of preparation for democracy was ridiculous if not outright unpalatable.

Added to the dwindling position of the government was the arrogance and uncontrolled hostile rhetoric from Interior Minister Samak Sundaravej who had virtually alienated most of the people who had played a part in placing him where he was.

Indirect warnings and pleas from the advisers did not help. The Thanin government began to grow too big for itself and, with the Government-Press war boiling up, the situation began to take a new turn.

The advisers had apparently been having second thoughts for some months but were

Under the heavy pressure of changes in the Cabinet.

Thanin wasn't going to budge an inch. It was to be a show-down. When he appeared on television on Oct 12, he sounded extremely confident. He even laid down the programme for the next three years.

But elsewhere things had begun to disintegrate. The bombing incident in the South earlier last month had provided the last straw -- worsened by Samak's remarks in the National Administrative Reform Assembly.

Then, he forced the lawmakers to move. Then, he angered the vocational students enough for them to come out publicly calling for his resignation.

It was only a natural course to take for the advisers who asked that the Cabinet be reshuffled if the government was to continue in office with a better image.

The "advice" did not flow smoothly enough. The advisers, according to informed sources sought change of 9 of the 17 Cabinet members. The response was cool and not too obliging. Then came the ultimatum.

Then came at 6 pm when patience, running dry for weeks, totally evaporated.



The tantalizing pile-up of rumours... and then the coup

OCTOBER IS A JINXED MONTH, one newspaper wrote about two weeks ago and them? Ed: "We are crowded with rumours. If you want I'll give you the largest circulation, yesterday morning quoted Navy Commander in-Chief Amorn Sirkaya as denying any knowledge of a change in the heavy pressure of rumours, there will always be ways who come out with their brand of madre humour. One of them

FORMER Prime Minister Thanin Kraivichien's tenure as Chief Executive of the Administration lasted one year and 12 days but his Cabinet, appointed on Oct. 22, last year, had 363 days in office. Relatively free of troubles in the first nine months of the tenure, culminated with the overwhelming passage of the record Budget for fiscal year 1978 in September, the Thanin Government began to feel the pinch soon after that. Here is the major events throughout the year-long tenure of the Thanin government:

when he took military coup to Prime Minister in order to improve the second over the reins performance last March 4, 1915, of the Naval series of naval ates for a number of the Armed was among the 1st National group of the Admiral Sa-ngad War in 1940, he Korean War Commander of of HMS Tong is named—in 3. :came Chief of Fleet and pro- of Staff of the 4, he was ap- f of the Royal ff in 1961 and the Royal Thai e peak of his e was appointed rmed Forces in icial retirement

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Nov. 10:—Pol Gen Sisuk again is transferred to a post in the Defence Ministry.
Nov. 20:—A total of 340 persons from various occupations were appointed to the newly-formed National Administrative Reform Assembly (NARA).
Nov. 22:—The National Administrative Reform Assembly unanimously voted Air Chief Marshal Harin Hongkul Speaker of NARA.
Nov. 29:—Thanin meets the Malaysian Prime Minister Hussein Onn in Penang for talks on border co-operation.
Dec. 1:—Thammasat University re-opens peacefully under tight security measures following nearly two months of closure after the October 6 incident.
Dec. 7:—The Public Prosecution Department decides to drop criminal charges brought against former strongman Thanom Kittikachorn, Prapas Charusathira and Narong Kittakachorn in connection with the October 14, 1973 uprising.
Dec. 9:—Mr Thanin leaves for a three-day visit to Indonesia as part of his plan to discuss regional co-operation with leaders of the ASEAN nations.
Dec. 8:—Former Deputy Prime Minister Field Marshal Prapas Charusathira flies home after three years in exile in Taipei.
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Thanin Govt's one year reign

Gen. Chahard Hiranyasari, and four other co-conspirators, Maj. Aswin Hiranyasari, Lt. Col. Sa-nga Kachornprasert, Maj. Boonlerd Kaewprasit and Maj. Visit Kongpradit.
April 13:—Army Commander in Chief Gen. Serm Nakara issues an order dismissing the four alleged conspirators in the abortive March 26 coup from active military duty.
April 22:—Leader of the March abortive coup attempt Chahard Hiranyasari is executed in Bangkok Prison on the order of Prime Minister Thanin Kraivichien who invokes Article 21 of the Interim Constitution.
April 29:—The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and its legislative body are dissolved. Chiang Mai Governor Chalaw Thammasai is appointed Governor of October 6 incident—22 of them girls—are released from Bangkok temporary detention centre.
March 26:—An abortive coup led by former Deputy Army Commander in Chief, Phya Bahol, staged a coup again to oust Siam's first Prime Minister, Phya Manopakorn Nitdhada. Phya Bahol took over premiership.
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doing something it deems unsuitable.
Aug. 31:—Thanin Kraivichien outlines the six most dangerous threats to the country in his address to a group of 75 high ranking local administration officials to be assigned to rural postings.
Sept. 2:—Thanin Kraivichien says Thailand cannot afford to hold general election now because the Communist will infiltrate the country similar to the chaotic situation before Oct 6 last year.
Sept. 30:—Interior Minister Samak Sundaravej replied to the interpellation submitted by MP Sa-ard Piyawan over the Yala explosion incident that if any person would like any member of the Cabinet to resign, just throw a bomb into the royal procession.
Oct. 5:—Red Gauris pray for King's safety at Wat Phut Khaew and file charges against the Interior Minister Samak Sundaravej at Dust Police Station for the remark he made at the NARA session.
Oct. 6:—The urgent interpellation of MP Sawad Kamprakob on the Yala explosion incident is not listed on the agenda of the NARA. Minister Samak Sundaravej did not attend the NARA meeting while MP Sawad and MP Watana Khiewvinnol demand the resignation of the Interior Minister. Lt. Col. Prachak Sawangchit requests a new interior minister.
Oct. 7:—Admiral Sa-ngad Chulavyoo, chairman of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council, lashes out at certain groups of ill-intentioned people spreading rumours to subvert national unity.
Oct. 11:—Education Minister Phyo Sathorn orders the dissolution of the Student Co-operation and Student Problem Solution Centre on the grounds that the centre is a duplication.
Oct. 13:—Thanin goes on nation-wide television and radio network to chart the course of his government's remaining three-year tenure during which the police force and bureaucracy will receive a major shakeup.
Oct. 17:—MPs led by Sa-ard Kamprakob and Watana Khiewvinnol submit an urgent interpellation over the Yala explosion incident and NARA accepts the interpellation.

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1957, September 16: Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat ousts Pibul from the premiership in a coup. Pote Sarasin becomes Prime Minister.
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1977, October 20: Adm Sa-ngad ousts the Thanin government in another coup.

1976
July 7:—National Administrative Reform Assembly member Narong Jittipoka submits a query to be placed on the NARA's agenda requesting the government to report on its progress over the past eight months.
July 25:—Thanin Kraivichien outlines his plan towards attaining a full-fledged democratic administration in his address to provincial governors and high-ranking officials at the Government House.
Aug. 20:—The draft bill to give Cabinet's power to ministers which was submitted by Thanin is over-whelmingly defeated.
Aug. 23:—Minister Dusit Suriwan of the Prime Minister's Office discloses two major groups of people, both pro-Communist and anti-Communist in nature are trying to topple the government.
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LOCAL NEWS

Human rights group pleads amnesty for all political detainees

632 signatures on petition

A HUMAN rights group yesterday petitioned the Revolutionary Party to grant an amnesty to all detained "political detainees" in the country.

The petition, signed by 632 people from all walks of life, was to be presented to the RP leader, Admiral Sa-ngad Chalawyo, by two coordinators, Paisal Vongvisith and Miss Vani Bangprapa, but they were told that Admiral Sa-ngad was not available because there had been no advance appointment.

Paisal is a third-year liberal arts student of Thammasat University while Miss Vani is a graduate from the Arts Faculty of Chulalongkorn.

The two will try to present the petition again today.

The petition was organized by the Coordinat-

ing Group for Religion and Society (CGRS) a small non-denominational group concerned over human rights in Thailand.

The petition said the group fully supported the aim of the Revolutionary Party to decrease tensions and create unity in Thailand.

"We believe that if the Revolutionary Party opens a chance for political suspects to use their ability to help solve the situation in the country, all tension will be relaxed," the letter said.

A spokesman said the group had three main categories of prisoners in mind in requesting the amnesty.

They were the 18

young Thais on trial in a Military Court on charges of treason and Communist activities arising from violence at Thammasat University on Oct 6, last year, some 20 sentenced under summary power by the previous government in connection with an abortive coup last March 26 and about 1,100 detained by police since Oct 6 last under decrees providing for the arrest of those considered "detrimental to society."

The petition said the previous Thanin Government had applied "oppressive measures" against persons who did not agree with the government's opinions.

THAI puts off Airbus trip due to RP ban

AN ORDER by the Revolutionary Party to government and state enterprise officials to suspend "unnecessary" trips abroad has resulted in the cancellation of Thai Airways International's introductory flight for the Press and honoured guests.

The national flag carrier had earlier scheduled to fly its first brand new wide-bodied Airbus A-300 B4 on November 5 to Manila and had invited more than 200 distinguished guests including the mass media and state enterprises officials on board.

According to the Vice President of THAI, Promna Thalang, the company has indefinitely postponed the introductory flight because "most of the invited guests will not be joining the trip."

Supreme Patriarch Somdej Phra Ariyawong

54 YRS FOR STEALING

AN alleged thief was sentenced by the Appeals Court to 54 years in prison yesterday for 168 thefts.

Pek sae Lim who appealed against the Criminal Court's earlier penalty of 105 years' imprisonment was charged with smuggling gasoline from the US base in Thailand for

Drug traffickers seized

TWO Laotian refugees who escaped from a refugee camp in Nong Khai were arrested in Bangkok Wednesday night on drug trafficking charges.

Police nabbed Khamphan Kaewkla, 32, who used the Thai name of Supachai Leesuan in a raid on a shophouse on Sukhumvit Road and seized 350 grammes of heroin No 3; estimated to be worth about 70,000 baht.

Khamphan confessed that the heroin belonged to



Kukrit Pramo

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Oct 29
1977
p. 1

Amnesty petition rejected

Revolutionary Party Chairman Admiral Sa-ngad Chalawyo yesterday categorically rejected an appeal for amnesty for the "Oct 6" 18 accused and those jailed in connection with the March 26 abortive coup.

Admiral Sa-ngad was referring to an appeal lodged on Thursday by a human rights group bearing 632 signatures asking for an amnesty to all detained "political detainees" in the country.

"The case of the 18 persons connected with the Oct 6 incident has already been sent to court. The Revolutionary Party cannot infringe upon the court's authority. Otherwise, we may have people resigning like the case in Japan," Admiral Sa-ngad said.

On the detention of the 20 persons jailed by an Article 21 order signed by former Prime Minister Thanin Kraivichien, Admiral Sa-ngad said: "That case has been closed and at the moment, we have not given any thoughts to it."

Asked about the enactment of a law of amnesty

Continued Page 3

her immediate neighbours. M.R. Kukrit, who passed through Hong Kong after a recent 10-day visit to China, was also quoted by the magazine as saying that general elections within a year would bring "complete chaos" in Thailand.

"What I am unhappy about is the imminence of general elections within a year (as promised by the military). I think that would be complete chaos and would bring all the undesirable things. We would be back to square one and democracy would again be destroyed," M.R. Kukrit was quoted as saying.

M.R. Kukrit predicted that if elections were held within a year, "the Democrats will win again. My brother (former Premier M.R. Seni Pramoj) will again become the prime minister and God helps us."

Australia names new ambassador

GORDON JOCKEL, Director of Australia's Joint Intelligence Organization (JIO), has been named Ambassador to Thailand, Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock announced yesterday in Canberra.

Peacock said Jockel, 57, has been director of JIO in the Australian Defence Department since 1972.

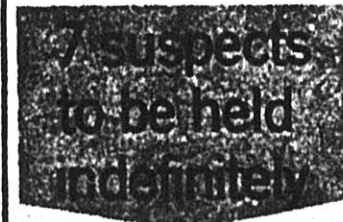
He was previously a career diplomat and was ambassador to Indonesia from 1969 to 1972.

Jockel will succeed Marshal Johnston, 54, the present Ambassador to Thailand, who will become ambassador to Iran.



Mr Thanin sends the shuttlecock on game at his Lardprao residence.

Civil dom gove



CHAIRMAN of the Revolutionary Party, Admiral Sa-ngad Chalawyo, yesterday granted police investigators the right to detain for an indefinite period seven suspects held on charges of drug-trafficking and kidnapping of a minor.

Police investigators had sought the permission to continue holding the suspects on the grounds that the probe into the two cases would require much more time as permitted under the law.

The four suspects held on drug-trafficking charges are Lao Phan sae Yang alias Phan Su Siang, Pricha alias Singa sae Chin, Sai

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'It's 'Art. 20' fro

IT WILL be "Article 20" -- no Article 17 as was the case before.

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standing and sympathy between Thailand and her immediate neighbours." This, in any case, was the direction which his Chinese hosts would like Thailand to take. The message that Kukrit got from Chairman Hua, Hao Teh-ching, Director of the People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (what Kukrit calls an alternate foreign ministry), and Han Nien-lung, Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of Southeast Asia, is that "China wants a firm friendly relation with Thailand and from that China would like to see peace in Southeast Asia." He confirmed that Peking had agreed to lend its "good offices" to work for peace between Thailand and its leftist neighbours Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos — "especially Cambodia."

NO MEETING: Kukrit denied he had secretly met the Cambodian Premier Pol Pot and said the presence of the two in Peking at the same time was just an "accident." He did admit to having learned about Cambodian thinking from the Chinese, who were confident that if China and Thailand became good friends the problem with Cambodia could be solved very easily.

While China would like to see a change of attitude in Bangkok, it also appears to have urged moderation on Phnom Penh leaders. Kukrit says that "during their visit to Peking both Pol Pot and Ieng Sary [Cambodia's Deputy Premier in charge of foreign affairs] probably had a kind of sensible talk with the Chinese leaders and it has given them some sort of change of view ... they probably received some very moderating influence from the Chinese leaders."

(In fact, on October 24, Radio Phnom Penh broke its nine-month silence on Thailand and mentioned the meeting between Ieng Sary and Thai Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariangkul at the United Nations. On its part, the new military regime has retained Upadit in the post despite the dismissal of the Tanin cabinet.)

As Kukrit sees it, the problem between Cambodia and Thailand is basically that of unmarked borders — a legacy of history. A good beginning was made, he says, when in 1975 Ieng Sary, sent by premier Chou En-lai, visited Bangkok, and established diplomatic relations. "We were all very friendly, very chummy and then Pichai [Rattakul] came and carried on with the good work. Everything stopped when Tanin, that funny little man, turned up." The deposed Tanin, he says, "is so absorbed in fighting communism that he does not know what he is doing. He mixes up foreign affairs, foreign relationships, with doctrinal struggle."

Kukrit says with a hearty laugh: "Tanin was made to be a Pinocchio of the army but he turned out to be Frank-

enstein's monster." He is confident that with Tanin gone, Thailand's relations with Indochina will improve rapidly — in particular, full diplomatic relations will be established between Bangkok and Hanoi "within the very near future." The border committee between Thailand and Cambodia at Poipet could also be revived.



Adm. Sangaad and Gen. Kriangsak (right): Good-humoured.

The military muscle in

By Richard Nations

Bangkok: After a year of Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien's crusading anti-communism, the same generals who backed him 12 months ago overthrew his government early on the evening of October 20 in the name of liberalism at home and detente abroad.

The first announcement by the new Revolutionary Party — almost to a man the 23 generals who seized power on October 6 last year as the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) — promised press freedoms, the lifting of martial law and return to open politics, general elections in 1978, and a new approach to the diplomatic deadlock with Indochina.

The tone of the coup was in sharp contrast to that of October 1976. None of the tension and fear that followed in the wake of the Thammasat University riots last year was apparent in this often nervous capital when 150 troops occupied Government House at 6 pm to detain the Cabinet. People in Bangkok were for the most part indifferent.

The first speech by Revolutionary Party Chairman, Rear Admiral Sangaad Chaloryu, read like a liberal counterpoint to the stern and doctrinaire tone of deposed prime minister Tanin's first nationwide address last year. Tanin then dwelled on the "dangers of communism which seeks to instil hatred and conflict

Kukrit also took a rather relaxed view of the recent Soviet delivery of 10 MiG-21 jet fighters to Laos. "I don't see anything wrong there." Then he added: "What can Laos do with the Soviet MiGs except to fly around? They have not got any petrol. I mean, after all Thailand is Laos' OPEC [Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries]!"

in society." Sangaad, however, emphasised that Tanin's 12-year timetable for a return to democracy was "too slow" and "not in accord with the wishes of the people."

The Revolutionary Party's first press conference, the following day, was marked more by good-humoured relaxation than hard questioning or apprehension.

Adm. Sangaad, who was chairman of the NARC and defence minister in the Tanin Cabinet, surfaced as the Chairman of the new party, with Supreme Commander General Kriangsak Chamanand (National Peace-Keeper) and army commander-in-chief General Sern Nakhorn (Peace-Keeper of Bangkok) completing the triumvirate.

This year's coup was no better planned than the last, and the ruling triumvirate that emerged from it was the result of an 11th-hour compromise which failed to resolve the conflicts in the military that kept Tanin in office far longer than most had expected.

This time, though, the conflicts in the military arose over not whether to remove Tanin, but how. A year of Tanin's McCarthyism at home convinced key generals that Thailand's elite would not long survive alienating the press, labour, students, politicians, and even the bureaucracy. Bloody border clashes

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with Cambodia, hostile propaganda from Hanoi, and a bad press in the US were ascribed to Tanin's cold-warrior posture towards communism. And his anti-corruption drive threatened the vested interests of some generals' cozy relations with corrupt bureaucrats and local big business.

But above all, Tanin had learned over the year to exploit the divisions within the military itself to force through policies which many on his Military Advisory Council thought ridiculous if not disastrous. The former prime minister's most embittered opponents were a group of field-grade officers who became known as the "young turks" because of frequent criticism and challenges to his Cabinet which Tanin faced down with support from Adm. Sangaad and the navy.

Even though Tanin alienated the army, King Bhumibol opposed an open military takeover for fear of demoting Thailand's image abroad to that of a "banana monarchy." Sources close to the Palace claim the King would only countenance smooth and constitutional changes of government. But the dictatorial 1976 Constitution had no provisions to allow Cabinet changes, and Tanin adopted the tactic of backing all his ministers so the Cabinet would have to stand or fall as one.

TWO POLES: The only way out seemed to be to embarrass Tanin into resigning. And after the military appointments at the beginning of October raised Gen. Kriangsak to Supreme Commander, two clear poles of power emerged. Privately, Gen. Kriangsak made no secret of his distaste for Tanin's policies. Personal quarrels between the two became more heated early last month. These differences at the top were reflected in small street demonstrations against Tanin in September and October. And the ultra-rightist activists, young turks and liberal newspapers aligned against Tanin in the name of the monarchy.

But the strategy of attrition was too slow for the impatient young turks who initiated the chain of events that led to last week's coup. On October 14, the Friday before the coup, a group of young officers led by Lieutenant-Colonel Prachak Swangchitr, the "hot spurs" of the young turks, met at Bangkok's 4th Armoured Division headquarters and drafted an ultimatum demanding the resignation of seven Cabinet ministers. Some sources say General Yos Thephasdin, deputy commander-in-chief of the army, carried the message to Tanin who rejected it. Over the weekend, army commander-in-chief Serm and Adm. Sangaad reportedly tried to persuade Tanin to bend. He refused.

None of the key power-brokers in the upper ranks of the army can afford to



King Bhumibol: Broke tradition.



Tanin: 'Quit or else.'

be on the wrong side of the battalion commanders who control the troops. In the past, however, Serm, Yos and Kriangsak have managed to evade the cleft between the young turks and the Palace over Tanin's resignation with a last-minute compromise. But this time the rupture between Gen. Kriangsak and Tanin was too deep.

Gen. Kriangsak backed the young turks' ultimatum by calling the Prime Minister to a heated session at the Supreme Command on Tuesday morning, October 18. Tanin was told either to reshuffle the Cabinet or resign. He refused. Unconfirmed reports say that Kriangsak then went to Tanin's office in Government House the following day, and warned him of the coup if he remained intransigent.

According to the same account, even Serm and Sangaad threw their support behind the coup when on Wednesday night the Palace refused an audience to Tanin. The gesture was taken as the King washing his hands of the matter.

Twenty-four hours later, Tanin and his Cabinet were deposed.

But the new power alliances in the army — Kriangsak, Yos and the young turks — were quickly camouflaged by an attempt to return to the old formula of a civilian leader — Sangaad is retired — with the military in the background. But the compromise appeased neither side and began to become unravelled within a week.

Sources close to the Palace say the King was unhappy with the coup. When Adm. Sangaad approached the Palace for the traditional post-coup blessing, he was received coolly. According to this account, the King turned his back on him and said simply: "I wish you all well."

Three days later, the King broke tradition by wearing a business suit to a royal ceremony honouring his ancestor, King Chulalongkorn. Protocol demands ceremonial half-dress. The gesture was interpreted by some of Thailand's well-informed aristocracy as a symbol of



Gen. Serm: Persuasion.

disapproval of the new authorities.

Nor are the young turks happy. Adm. Sangaad backed the Cabinet against them in past feuds and they fear he, too, will turn into another Tanin in time. On October 24, Prachak led another delegation to Gen. Serm's house in a bid to push the coup to its conclusion, remove all frontmen, and bring the army up front under a constitution that would ensure that the civilian cabinet would take orders from the military and not just accept "advice."

On the same day, the announcement of a civilian cabinet and an interim constitution was postponed and a "temporary" administrative reorganisation was set up. Adm. Sangaad remained leader of the Revolutionary Party, but Gen. Kriangsak was put at the head of a "secretariat" that grouped the government ministries under various "directorates." Informed observers viewed it as another compromise which was bound to crumble. All the vital questions raised by the

aking RP



take on a policy-making role behind an official announcement last night "Council's Office" as a new political body.

Order No. 20 making it possible for government officials to be appointed to political posts in the new government and legislative body.

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The Nation Review Nov-10, 1977, p.1

Military Court Act amended, defence and appeal allowed

THE Revolutionary Party yesterday amended the Military Court Act to allow more room for defence and appeal.

The amendments came in the 25th announcement of the Revolutionary Party. They will go into force a day after they are published in the Royal Gazette.

Under the amendments,

US ship to visit

The USS White Plains, a 16,500-ton US Navy supply ship, will make a three-day "routine" visit to Pattaya beginning today.

While there, members of the 437-man crew will be given liberty.

defendants facing trial in military courts on any charges, will be allowed lawyers. But defendants on court martial will not be allowed lawyers.

Either the plaintiff or the defendant can appeal the verdict of the military court operating in normal condition within 15 days after the verdict has been announced. But verdicts

of military courts operating in abnormal condition and verdicts of court martials cannot be appealed.

Appeals will be accepted from cases originally not allowed under the existing law even before the operation of the amendments if there had never been any verdict by any military court.

Constitution expected today

THE interim constitution is now expected to be officially promulgated today.

A source in the Revolutionary Party said last night that His Majesty the King had signed the interim constitution yesterday after the RP presented the draft through the Royal Secretary at the Phupan Palace.

The delay in official promulgation, earlier expected last night, was caused by the wait for the original draft to be returned to the RP in Bangkok from the Northeastern Palace in Sakhon Nakhon, the source said.

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