

THAI CALLS ELECTION AT LEAST 4 YEARS OFF

Prime Minister-Designate Says It May Be a Decade Before Full Democratic Rule Is Restored

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BANGKOK, Thailand, Oct. 13—The Prime Minister-designate said tonight that it would be at least four years before democratic elections were held in Thailand and as much as a decade before full democratic rule might be restored.

For days officials of the military junta that seized power in a coup last Wednesday had been predicting a quick return to at least a semblance of normality.

The disclosure, by Thanin Kraivichien, came today as the junta placed a 10 P.M.-to-4:30 A.M. curfew in Bangkok amid widespread reports of potential unrest by left-wing students on the one hand and senior military leaders on the other. Because of the rumors of potential action by leftists, the Government ordered the closing of all primary and secondary schools, which had opened Monday. Universities remain closed.

In a nationwide broadcast that ended 15 minutes before the start of the curfew tonight, Prime Minister-designate Thanin said that what was needed for Thailand was a series of "new steps, long-run and carefully programmed, a Thai-style democracy."

Gradual Increase in Democracy

For the present, the Prime Minister said, Thailand would be governed by a legislative assembly "appointed from all professions and regions of the country," with the junta, which calls itself the Administrative Reform Committee, acting as an advisory body.

Until the appointment of this legislature, however, the junta will continue to act as one and will choose the deputy prime minister, defense minister and deputy minister of defense. It will have the "right to object" to the Prime Minister's appointment of the other ministers, although it is considered unlikely that the right will be frequently invoked because their views virtually coincide.

No elections would be held until the start of the second four-year phase, Mr. Thanin said, and even then the elective body would be subordinate to an appointed senate. In later four-year phases—taking the country through 16 years—the powers of the elective body would be increased until finally full democracy would be restored, he said.

"Throughout these phases we must emphasize long-run education and training in democracy for the people," Mr. Thanin said. His address was a thoroughly researched and carefully worded presentation that drew praise from many quarters—like many of the decisions he has rendered in his years as a supreme court justice.

It came, nevertheless, as a surprise. Only this afternoon, at the first news conference granted by the junta, Gen. Kriangsak Chamanand refused to speculate on the timetable for a return to democratic rule. And earlier this week, a Thai newspaper, *Dao Siam*, was banned because it carried a front-page banner headline predicting a six-month to four-year wait for democratic elections.

A Day of Wild Rumors

The announcement of both the curfew and the sudden exile to Japan of Gen. Vithoon Yasawas, deputy chief of staff of the army, came after a day of wild rumors. The one that seemed to cause the greatest concern said that left-wing students, enraged by the police action last Wednesday at Thammasat University that left more than 40 dead, hundreds wounded and 3,000 jailed, planned to kidnap scores of young students.

As the rumor spread through Bangkok, parents rushed to schools to get their children. The national radio interrupted broadcasts this afternoon to repeat the rumor, deny it and plead for calm.

Thailand's internal security operations command and some Western intelligence agencies had reportedly been receiving word that leftists planned terrorist actions tonight in Bangkok.

Tomorrow is the third anniversary of the revolution of October 1973 in which students overthrew the dictatorship of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and established a democracy. It was Marshal Thanom's return from exile last month that led to the student demonstrations that gave the military a reason for stepping in last Wednesday.

Instructions to Editors

Following this afternoon's news conference, reporters were given sealed envelopes for their editors that instructed them not to publish news of General Vithoon's exile or about any actions that leftists might take. Foreign correspondents were told that the ban applied only to the local press.

News of the curfew spread quickly. As soundtrucks moved through the streets, shops began to close shortly after nightfall. In the major tourist hotels, notices went up warning guests to stay inside and advising them that planes of the international airlines would not be landing in the country.

Huge traffic jams developed on roads leading out of the city as Bangkok residents headed home earlier than usual, preparing to settle in for the first extended curfew in years.