A COMPARISON OF THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE
UNITED STATES AND CHINA: 1965-1975

THESIS

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This thesis compares Thailand's relations with the United States and China from 1965-1975. The realist assumes that the structure of power in the international system determines overall relations between states. First, this study describes the power situation in southeast Asia in 1965. The next steps are concerned with the study of Thai-U.S. relations and Thai-Chinese relations.

The thesis finds that Thailand's relations with the United States and China are determined by the structure of power. When a major power like the United States changes its policies to accommodate China, Thailand, which is a small country, turns to be more friendly with China. These attitudes correlate with the realist assumption.
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CHAPTER I

THE REALIST MODEL AND THE STRUCTURE OF POWER IN SOUTHEAST ASIA 1965

The realist model assumes that the structure of power in the international system determines overall relations between states. Thailand has traditionally prosecuted a foreign policy of accommodation with the dominating power in the region in order to protect her territorial integrity and national sovereignty and to reduce to a minimum the possibility of outside interference in her domestic affairs. This was the case when the Thai kingdom had to deal with the colonial powers of Europe in the nineteenth century and with Japan during the Second World War, and it has continued into the postwar period in the form of an alliance with the United States. The establishment of SEATO to compensate for Chinese power comports with realist assumptions. Bangkok became the headquarters of SEATO, Dulles' instrument for resisting Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. The Thais fostered a close relationship with Taiwan, which became the third largest foreign investor in Thailand after Japan and the United States.¹

However, as the United States withdrew from Vietnam and the U. S. Government announced the Nixon Doctrine, and as China re-entered world politics after the Cultural Revolution, the realist thesis would have predicted a relative adjustment of position by a state like Thailand. If U. S. protection was not available, then a possible realignment of Thai policy in the direction of a more friendly relationship with China should have occurred. The purpose of the thesis is to examine this proposition by a selective examination of Thai-U. S. relations and Thai-Chinese relations. The first part of this study is concerned with the structure of power in southwest Asia. The second and third steps concentrate on the study of Thai-U. S. relations and Thai-Chinese relations. The contrasting of friendly and unfriendly statements and acts between each country over time is used to indicate the change of national policy and attitudes when the structure of power in this area is changed. This historical study should help answer the question: Where are we after twenty years of academic criticism of realism in international relations?

The Realist Model

Realism is a reaction to utopianism. Much of international relations literature is the product of the political realists or of their critics. Realism is normative and
policy oriented.\textsuperscript{2} The study of history has been used to generalize about international behavior. Relaism considers the nation state as the principal unit of analysis. There is no essential harmony of interests among nations. As a result, the capabilities of nations are crucial. According to the realists, national capabilities include military forces, geographical factors, levels of technology, population, national resources, form of government, political leadership, and ideology.\textsuperscript{3} Concerning human nature, realism holds that humans are evil, sinful, and power-seeking. Reinhold Niebuhr believed that people are tainted by original sin and capable of evil.\textsuperscript{4} George F. Kennan, a Princeton professor, maintains that human nature is "irrational, selfish, obstinate, and tends to violence."\textsuperscript{5} Almost all realists agree that balance of power is an important tool in managing power among nations.

The assumption of the realist model of international politics is that power is a determinant of international behavior. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, international

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{2}James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations (New York, 1971), p. 65.
\item\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 65.
\item\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.
\item\textsuperscript{5}George F. Kennan, Realities of American Foreign Policy (New York, 1966), p. 11.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
politics is a "struggle for power." Power is "man's control over the minds and actions of other men." In the power struggle, nations follow a combination of three policies: to preserve the status quo, to achieve imperialistic expansion, or to gain prestige. "A political policy seeks either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power." Robert Strausz-Hupe emphasizes that international conflict stems largely from the human "power urge" which is "derived from the more basic urge of self-aggrandizement or self-assertion." Nicholas J. Spykman holds that power is the ability to move people through "persuasion, purchase, barter, and coercion."

Realist writers generally agree with the idea that conflict is more typical of international relations than of intrastate relations. Each state considers national interests as a crucial part in forming a foreign policy. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, statespersons "think and

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7 Ibid., p. 36.
9 Nicholas J. Spykman, America's Strategy in World Politics (New York, 1942), p. 11.
10 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, op. cit., p. 72.
act in terms of interest defined as power."¹¹ International politics is a process in which national interests are adjusted. All nations identify national interests with national survival. Nevertheless, Morgenthau suggests that nations ought to return to the pursuit of limited national interest in order to attain a more peaceful world.¹² Frederick L. Schuman, professor of government at Williams College, thinks that the ultimate objective of each state is self-preservation. For this reason, national power or military strength is important. Schuman says that the only rationally justifiable policy in a system is "to be preserved against threats, to be maintained against contingencies, and to be enlarged and extended when opportunities present themselves for so doing without unreasonable risk."¹³

Most realist writers base their realism upon geographical concepts. A nation's location affects its national capabilities and its foreign policy orientation.¹⁴

¹¹Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 5.
¹²Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories, p. 79.
¹⁴Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories, p. 66.
Strategically, geographical positions provide some nations with more vulnerability than others to foreign conquest. According to Nicholas J. Spykman, geography is a conditioner of a country's foreign policy. Robert Strausz-Hupe also views that geography is an important factor in the power equation.

Because of the lack of success in achieving peace through international law and organization, most realists agree that balance of power is the most effective device for managing power. For Reinhold Niebuhr, the balance of power is the organizational device for achieving a semblance of justice.

Some balance of power is the basis of whatever justice is achieved in human relations. Where the disproportion of power is too great and where an equilibrium of social forces is lacking, no mere rational or moral demands can achieve justice.

According to Frederick L. Schuman, the most important regulator mechanism in the international system is the balance of power. The member will unite to maintain self-defense in case of any potential menace to all. Each nation retains its independence while the equilibrium

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15 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, op. cit., p. 73.

is established. In this kind of balance system, small states can preserve their independence by taking part in alignment.\textsuperscript{17} Hans J. Morgenthau also views balance of power as the most effective technique for managing power. This system is built upon the international consensus in order to preserve international peace. Such a consensus "kept in check the limitless desire for power, potentially inherent, as we know, in all imperialisms, and prevented it from becoming a political actuality."\textsuperscript{18} Arnold Wolfers, former professor at Yale and Johns Hopkins Center for Foreign Policy, viewed the balance of power as "an equilibrium or a roughly equal distribution of power between two opponents, the opposite, then, of hegemony or domination."\textsuperscript{19} It is a technique for management of power.

In preserving peace, diplomacy also plays the crucial role. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, diplomacy has to meet four conditions in order to make it an effective technique for managing power: (1) diplomacy must be divested of the crusading spirit; (2) foreign policy objectives have to be defined in terms of national interest and have to be supported with adequate power; (3) nations must view foreign

\textsuperscript{17}Frederick L. Schuman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 273.

\textsuperscript{18}Morgenthau, \textit{Politics Among Nations}, p. 214.

policy from the point of view of other nations; (4) nations must be willing to compromise on issues that are not vital to them. 20 George F. Kennan, a Princeton professor, also views diplomacy as an effective tool in mitigating international conflict. It plays the major role in adjusting differences and leads to peaceful change in the international system. 21 For Henry Kissinger, diplomacy is "the adjustment of differences through negotiation. It becomes possible only in the international system where legitimacy obtains." 22

In realist thinking, moral principles cannot be applied without qualification to political actions. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, "the universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in their abstract, universal formulation, but that they must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place." 23 George F. Kennan also considers the pursuit of moralistic principles incompatible with the pursuit of limited policy objectives. Thus, consistent realism limits the applicability of moral judgment. Political theory is deduced from political practice and from historical experience.

20 Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 541-548.
21 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, op. cit., p. 83.
23 Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 10.
In sum, the realist model considers the structure of power in the international system as the determinant factor of overall relations between states. Therefore, it is important to indicate the structure of power in Southeast Asia in 1965 before considering the Thai-U.S. and Thai-Chinese relations.

The Structure of Power in Southeast Asia in 1965

Southeast Asia includes Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Most of them are newly independent except for Thailand, which is the one country in the region which never lost its sovereignty to a western power. The nine states of the region are in the throes of nation-building. They are laboring under handicaps and problems common to all the economically less developed countries aspiring to a better future. Moreover, there is the shadow of Communist China looming over the region.

The decline of western colonial rule in southeast Asia has greatly altered the power status of the area. In many respects it has returned to the precolonial era of weak and sometimes contesting states that do not often work together. In other words, there is a "power vacuum" in this area. Moreover, its geographical location and economy give it special importance in the world balance. Southeast Asia
has been faced with problems of the development of responsive and stable political processes and the prevention of external efforts to exploit the failure, temporary or otherwise, to achieve such political stability and solutions. Vietnam epitomized both of these difficulties. For most of the 1960's, southeast Asia meant Vietnam and its war. The United States confronted its Communist adversary in this country. Even the fall from political favor of Indonesia's long-time dictator, Sukarno, who had been leading his country down an increasingly pro-communist path, was overshadowed by the political-military struggle in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{24} Thailand's search for a satisfactory set of political and other solutions to her problems was compromised by Communist Chinese, Vietnamese, and Laotian efforts to exploit these difficulties. Malaya's expansion in 1963 to include Singapore, Sarawak, and Sabah was only an international solution to alleviate various internal difficulties.

\textbf{The United States in Southeast Asia}

In the post-war period, the United States began to develop economic and military assistance programs for southeast Asia. In 1950 the sudden outbreak of the Korean War led President Truman to aid French forces fighting the Viet

Minh in Indochina and to seek a single comprehensive security system for the Far East, including Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Japan. The United States had a bilateral Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines, and bilateral treaties in force with Australia since 1951 and New Zealand since 1952.  

After the armistice in Korea in 1953, the United States had a feeling that the communists might shift their aggression to southeast Asia. Therefore, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles worked for the collective defense of southeast Asia. The "domino theory" became known for the first time. It was believed that the tumble of one domino would be followed by the fall of a whole series of neighboring "dominos." If Indochina were to fall, for example, it would be followed by the fall of Thailand. Then Burma would go in turn, succeeded by Malaya and then Indonesia. Such a sequence of losses would create vital strategic problems for the United States. Under the "domino theory," the defensive island chain of Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand would be greatly endangered. India would be cut off from communications with east Asia and the Pacific.  

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25 Kenneth T. Young, Jr., The Southeast Asia Crisis (New York, 1966), p. 43.
According to this strategic policy, SEATO was formed with the United States' ratification of the southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty in 1955. Besides, the United States government also decided to do everything possible to deter aggression in southeast Asia, to back the State of Vietnam in 1954, to provide military and economic assistance unilaterally to Cambodia and Laos, and to join in a public pledge of the SEATO countries to support those three states under the protocol of the SEATO Treaty.\(^{26}\) President Kennedy and President Johnson continued to develop this strategic policy.

Concerning the commitment and use of power in southeast Asia, the United States constituted almost the only major barrier to the accomplishment of Chinese Communist objectives in this area. The strong communist military capability and pronounced southeast Asian weakness required the maintenance of substantial American forces in the western part of the ocean, adjacent to the coast of mainland Asia. The Eisenhower Administration was conditionally prepared to commit and use U. S. military power in southeast Asia in 1954. When the situation in Vietnam became worse, President Eisenhower decided to approve American military action with certain conditions:

\(^{26}\)Ibid., p. 44.
(1) The United States should not undertake to counter Chinese Communist aggression unilaterally; (2) if the nations of the southeast Asia area were completely indifferent to the fate of Indochina, the United States should undertake a reappraisal of its basic security policy in the region; (3) the southeast Asian nations could not disclaim responsibility for their own safety and expect the United States alone to carry all the burdens of Free World security; and (4) if the President found it necessary to ask Congress for authority to intervene militarily in Indochina, he wanted to assure the Congress that the United States had allies such as Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and the bulk of the Vietnamese people ready to join the United States in resisting Chinese Communist aggression. 27

When John F. Kennedy became President of the United States, his administration resorted to diplomacy at the Geneva Conference to obtain an agreement on neutrality. In the spring of 1962, the Communists undertook military operations when it appeared that an agreement might not be forthcoming in Geneva. President Kennedy decided to deploy American combat forces in Thailand and to prepare for the operations in Laos, if need be. Even though the Geneva Agreement was concluded six weeks later, the United States made arrangements to leave all the necessary combat and logistic equipment ready in Thailand for another deployment. In 1965 the United States government began using its own military forces in Vietnam, North and South, and in Laos,

for operations against the North Vietnamese Communist forces and military installations, to counter aggression.28

**Communist China in Southeast Asia**

The thrust of Communist China in southeast Asia appears to be motivated by both traditional reasons of state and by ideological ambition to spread its own version of revolutionary socialism.29 Most observers agree that Communist China has a series of objectives in southeast Asia. The first is protection of the southern frontiers and boundaries of China from the sea all the way into the Himalayan Mountains. Its second objective is to restore the old boundaries of the Chinese Empire, which also includes southeast Asia as the tribute mission to Peking in imperial times. The third one is to regain paramount political influence and political control over the new states in this area.

The Chinese desire for predominance in southeast Asia created a confrontation with the United States.30 The American presence in this area was the major obstacle to the Peking policy to force the United States out. Peking started to exclude the United States with the elimination of alliances with Washington, a neutrality of southeast Asia, and

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28Kenneth T. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
30Young, *The Southeast Asia Crisis*, p. 29.
reduction of American access to the mainland of southeast Asia. Moreover, China had also attacked regional and international cooperation, particularly SEATO.

No state in southeast Asia is beyond the influence of one or more of Communist China's instruments of policy, if only through the existence of overseas Chinese in all the countries of the region. The diplomacy of Peking has to be flexible, coping with countries of widely varying international outlook. In attempting to control Asia, Peking has devised a new political strategy, "aggression by seepage." This strategy consists of two interdependent parts: the methodical, planned establishment of privileged sanctuaries within Chinese control, and the careful organization of proxy parties outside China. Communist agents would select the individuals from each country and train them in Laos, North Vietnam and Tibet, or China. They would return home as an underground force. The Communists openly declared a "war of national liberation" in Thailand and started operations in 1965. This kind of war is also in Nepal, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The addition of a nuclear capability to this combination may well become a major problem in a regional equilibrium

31 Fifield, op. cit., p. 45.
32 Young, Southeast Asia Crisis, p. 30.
for southeast Asia. This power and capability will bring to Peking the additional option of threatening to hold the capitals of southeast Asia, south Asia, and Japan in potential hostage.

**The Soviet Union in Southeast Asia**

The Soviet role in questions of policy, power, and law for southeast Asia is much less distinct and even less consistent than that of the Chinese People's Republic or the United States. The existence of Sino-Soviet split has brought about a fundamental change in its role in southeast Asia and in the triangular relationship of Moscow, Peking, and Washington with respect to war and peace there. The differences have turned into rivalry and bitter competition for the allegiance of the communist parties of North Vietnam and Indonesia. This situation had complicated the path of politics in southeast Asian countries.

**SEATO and Collective Security in Southeast Asia**

The members of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization were Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Thailand. SEATO was formed in 1954, followed by the ratification of the

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34 Young, op. cit., p. 38.
Treaty in early 1955. It was conceived because of the common fear of a continuation of Communist aggression by invasion across frontiers or by major infiltration underneath them into South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia. It was designed to deter that aggression, especially a military attack by conventional armies and air forces against the states of southeast Asia. SEATO established a group of permanent offices and operations with its headquarters in Bangkok. The Council of Ministers met every year while the Treaty was in force. In addition to the military activity, SEATO also organized various committees on economic and cultural cooperation.

There were also the "Protocol States," Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, which agreed to be under the protection of SEATO. However, Cambodia has since officially rejected any such protection and receded from SEATO protocol. In 1962, Laos was removed from the so-called SEATO umbrella by the Geneva Agreement on the neutrality of Laos.

Until the crisis in Laos in 1961, the United States looked upon SEATO as a collective organization which would take military action, with all eight members participating

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36 TIAS 3170, op. cit.
37 Young, op. cit., p. 56.
in the action as well as the decision. When the crisis occurred and France refused to participate, it revised its interpretation. The United States in 1962 made a significant and unilateral interpretation of its obligations under Article IV. It declared that its obligation under the Treaty to assist Thailand in the event of "communist armed attack" was "individual as well as collective and not dependent upon prior agreement by all the other SEATO members."

38. Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the Parties or against any State or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety and agrees that it will in the event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. Measures taken under this paragraph shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations.

2. If, in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the treaty area or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article from time to time apply is threatened in any way other than armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense.

3. It is understood that no action on the territory of any State designated by unanimous agreement under paragraph 1 of this article or on any territory so designated shall be taken except at the invitation or with the consent of the government concerned.

TIAS 3170, op. cit.
The Nixon Doctrine

The International Environment

In the international environment, new realities have emerged. These are as follows.\(^39\)

1. Europe and Japan, which had been destroyed in the Second World War, recovered, and they should share with the United States the burden and the responsibility of protecting the free world.

2. The monolithic structure of the communist world has changed. The communist world is now disunited and disintegrated. Moreover, the Soviet Union and China have become bitter enemies.

3. Revolution in technology and warfare is changing the power structure in the world. New types of weapons are invented. The United States and the Soviet Union are no longer the only major powers. China and Europe are going to be nuclear states also.

4. The young need deeper purposes and look for new idealism and ideas.

5. The Third World countries are trying to control their own destinies.

The preliminary outline of the new policy was revealed at Guam in July of 1969,\textsuperscript{41} when President Richard M. Nixon was enroute to a meeting with leaders of the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. The President's first address on the subject over radio and television was made on November 3, 1969. He had made three points in explanation of the Guam statement.

1. The United States will keep all its treaty commitments.

2. The United States shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with the United States or of a nation whose survival it considers vital to its security or to the region as a whole.

3. In cases involving other types of aggression, the United States will furnish aid and economic assistance when requested in accordance with its treaty commitments, though the United States shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the military power for its defense.\textsuperscript{42}


2. **Strength: The United States should strengthen itself to take a strong position as long as there are those who would threaten the United States or its allies by using force;**

3. **A willingness to negotiate: In this era of the 1970's, America should negotiate to secure peace.**

Nixon's first step in his approach was partnership which was basically issued to apply to southeast Asia. In the late sixties a new trend and tendency toward isolation was advocated. What made this attitude stronger were the Vietnam War and the involvement in other parts of the world. The United States spent billions of dollars and lost thousands of American lives in the war without victory, so that the more the United States spent in Vietnam, the more these internal voices criticized the government. At the same time there was also questioning of the benefit of this war in the first place. By 1969-1970, it was necessary to solve the problem of commitment. Any solution would not work successfully without challenging American involvement outside. In addition, originally it heralded a departure from the Johnson administration's determination to win the war in Vietnam at all costs. The Nixon administration indicated its willingness to deemphasize direct U. S. participation in the war through phased withdrawal and the introduction of a new policy.
6. There has been a proliferation of new states and on anti-colonial revolution. Many nations are fighting for their independence and then joining international organizations such as the United Nations. They are forming regional organizations among themselves for their own benefit.

**The Nixon Doctrine**

In this changing international environment, the Nixon administration tried to redefine American goals in the 1970's and achieve these goals within a certain framework. Within this framework, the administration looked for durable peace that could be achieved by getting to the causes of the problem or the crisis to solve it. President Nixon gave his new definition of peace, the durable peace: "Peace must be far more than the absence of war. Peace must provide a durable structure of international relationships which inhibits or removes the causes of war."\(^{40}\)

So President Nixon proposed to approach foreign policy for the 1970's guided by three principles:

1. Partnership, or the Nixon Doctrine, which meant that obligations, as well as benefits, must be shared among friendly nations;

\(^{40}\)Ibid.
By that Nixon presented new criteria for assistance.

1. The President declared that the nature of U. S. assistance to the threatened nations by internal subversion would depend on the realities of each separate situation.

2. In some cases, assistance in economic and political development might be enough.

3. Aid in the form of training and equipment might be necessary to replace the American withdrawal.

4. Insurgency wars would be conducted by the government itself.

5. Large scale intervention from abroad would have to be considered against the backdrop of the total obligations and interests of the American people. 43

Thus, the United States started to apply the policy of Vietnamization. President Nixon stated that "in his administration we are Vietnamizing the search for peace." President Nixon criticized the previous administration's handling of the Vietnam problem: "The last administration did not stress the goal of strengthening the South Vietnamese; it fought the war instead of them." 44


The Impact of the Nixon Doctrine

China.—China is not on a par militarily with the United States or the Soviet Union, but she is a super power potentially. In the United States' favor, she is also an effective deterrent to Soviet power in Eurasia. After the withdrawal of U. S. military from southeast Asia, Red China had the potentiality to fill this power vacuum. Consequently, from the Nixon-Kissinger point of view, it was appropriate to have open communications with this rising power and to strengthen the U. S. bargaining position with the Soviet Union.

Nixon's visit to China in February of 1972 was interpreted as "dramatic statesmanship to service notice of deideologization and changes in the American global conception and to open the gateways to a Sino-American relationship of mutual respect."45

From the Chinese point of view, it was the time to contact the American government after twenty years of no direct negotiations. It would give them an added stature in global affairs, and the Russians second thoughts about any aggressive moves. In addition, the Peking trip was not intended to represent more than an additional step on the road to Moscow. The negotiations with Peking were

only intended as a beginning; the talks with Moscow were supposed to be the crowning achievement. 46

The Soviet Union.--The visit to Moscow was more essential. The Strategic Arms Limitation Agreements were mutually beneficial. More importantly, the United States intended to open the continuing dialogue as a means of solving differences in preference to confrontation policies which created the mutual distrust in this area. The United States' hope was to prevent the chronic factionalism in Moscow from veering Soviet policy in directions which were dangerous to the United States. 47

Western Europe and Japan.--While the Nixon Doctrine called for a greater effort on the part of Japan and western Europe to share a greater portion of the burden of their defense, the Nixon administration was quick to assure all of the U. S. allies of the United States' intention to honor all existing military and trade agreements, even to the point of reassuring them of U. S. willingness to provide a nuclear umbrella to protect U. S. friends if it should come to this point.

47 Hahn, op. cit., p. 368.
NATO.--The United States considered this area to be vital and felt that the troops should remain the same as long as U. S. adversaries did not reduce their troops. President Nixon declared that the United States would maintain and improve its forces in NATO. Senator Barry Goldwater believed that the United States should increase its troops there instead of decreasing them, because the U. S. troops were already less than the Warsaw Pact troops.

Asian Reaction

Prior to 1969, Asia was split into three parts: the America-following nations deeply committed to cold war dogmas, the communist states behind the wall of containment, and a handful of countries that tried to be neutral. From the promulgation of the Guam Doctrine in 1969, Asian leaders had assumed a period of readjustment lay ahead. Although they had begun to accept the Nixon Doctrine as the emerging reality of U. S. foreign policy in that part of the world, their reception had been diverse and questioning. The "hawk" nations of South Vietnam, South Korea, the Nationalist regime on Taiwan and Thailand were disturbed at this implied weakening of American support. A quick series of visits—


Secretary of State Rogers, Defense Secretary Laird, and Vice President Agnew—calmed their fears. They assured them that the United States would live up to its defense treaty commitments.

Asia's neutralist nations were deeply shocked by the collapse of Prince Silhanouk's neutralist regime in 1970. They tried to combine their diverse outlooks in a new definition of neutrality. Even though their effort failed, it did serve to erect a more unified position for neutralism. Besides, the British military withdrawal from the area also served to lend to southeast Asian neutralists a new sense of their own uniqueness.

The Asian nations were staggered by the defeat of a South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. It indicated that Vietnamization—by extension, Asianization—of defense forces was a weak plot. There was the fear that Cambodia and Laos would sooner or later be left to the communists. Furthermore, the economy in this area was declining. Asian nations began to take new stock of their political position vis-à-vis Red China and several initiated discreet moves toward détente after the American-Chinese rapprochement.

The inevitable political result was the unseating of Chian-Kai-Shek's government on Taiwan from the United
Nations and the embracing of Red China. Then China proclaimed itself the leader of the Third World. One thing that seemed to bother the small countries in Asia was the Chinese support of revolutionary movements. These countries were willing to make deals with Peking if they could hope to be dropped from the war of liberation agenda. Malaysia, for example, stated bluntly that it would have traded with Red China if the Chinese insurgents operating along the Thai border were denied Peking support.

One of the impacts of the Nixon Doctrine was the decline of democracy. In South Vietnam, President Nguyen Van Thieu discarded the nation's four-year old constitution in his one-man re-election bid in October, 1971. Thailand dumped its pretense of a parliament, and Lon Nol did likewise in Cambodia.

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51 Ibid., p. 223.
CHAPTER II

U. S.-THAI RELATIONS, 1965-1975

History of the U. S.-Thai Relations

United States policy towards Asia and Europe in the immediate post-war period was to assist them to achieve a viable independence, stable enough to prevent Communist domination. The establishment of Communist China and the Sin-Soviet alliance at that time might have soon threatened the independent existence of all the new, non-communist nations in these areas. For this reason, prevention or containment of the communist expansion became part and parcel of the policy of blocking communist advances in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East.¹

Thailand was politically oriented toward the West prior to World War I, especially the United States and Great Britain. Relations between the United States and Thailand rested on a long and cordial basis. The first treaty ever negotiated between the two countries was made in 1833 by the Thai King, Rama III, and Edmund Roberts, a diplomatic envoy sent to southeast Asia by President Andrew Jackson. King Chulalongkorn at the beginning of

the twentieth century had employed advisors from the Harvard Law School to assist the Kingdom in abolishing the extraterritoriality and other "unequal treaty restrictions." During the following century, the Thai often looked to the United States for moral support in their struggles with the British and the French, and many Americans voiced their admiration for the only small country in Asia to remain independent from European colonial rule.² In 1920 the United States negotiated a new treaty with Thailand that abolished most extraterritoriality restrictions; this treaty was instrumental in ending extraterritoriality privileges of all western nations by 1927.³

American influence in Bangkok reached a low point in 1942 when the Thai government, responding to Japanese demands, declared war on both the United States and Great Britain. America's mild reaction to the Thai declaration of war was conditioned in part by the refusal of the Thai ambassador in Washington, M. R. Seni Pramoj, to deliver the declaration on the ground that it was unrepresentative of Thai public opinion, and therefore, dubious validity. By cooperating with the emerging "Free Thai Movement,"


Washington was able in time to establish useful intelligence contacts reaching into Bangkok itself. In the immediate post-war period, the United States played a major role in helping Thailand return to its former position in the international community. In particular, the United States opposed punitive sanctions against Thailand proposed by the British after the war. Bangkok's declaration of war was ignored, and Thailand's entry into the United Nations was supported by the United States government. 4

The Thai government, in a pragmatic assessment of world politics, gave particular attention to the strengths and goals of the great powers. One of the major guiding principles of Thai foreign policy has been to adjust to "the world as defined by the great powers." 5 The expanding interest of the United States in southeast Asia coincided with Thailand's rising alarm over the growth of communist power in China and Vietnam. These fears encouraged the Thai leadership to bolster its security through arrangements with the United States. A mutual defense assistance agreement and an economic and technical assistance agreement between Thailand and the United States was concluded in the


fall of 1950. In the spring of 1954 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles approached the Thai ambassador in Washington with a plan for a collective defense arrangement in southeast Asia. The result of this consultation and many discussions with other nations was the formation of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization on September 8, 1954. The organization comprised the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Thailand's concern about its security was increased by the Laos crisis of the early 1960's and the second Vietnam war. As the situation in Laos became worse, the United States dispatched to Thailand a small force of about 1,000 combat troops prepared to meet special situations. On March 6, 1962, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman issued a joint communiqué which stated that the United States considered its commitment to Thailand under the SEATO Treaty to be bilateral as well as multilateral. By May 1962, 10,000 U. S. ground and air force personnel were stationed in Thailand. Withdrawal of U. S. troops from Thailand began in July 1962, and all the ground forces had left by the end of the year. As the situation

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6 U. S. Congress, op. cit., p. 23.
7 Ibid., p. 24.
8 U. S. Congress, Political Science in Thailand, p. 16.
in both Laos and Vietnam was increasingly threatening by mid-1964, Thailand and the United States agreed to engage in bilateral contingency planning. Also, during 1964 both countries agreed to certain measures to upgrade the logistical complex in Thailand the certain air deployment.

Friendly Statements and Acts: 1965-1975

Johnson Administration

Military and economic commitments.—In 1965 the contingency plan between Thailand and the United States was signed as the secret agreement. It provided for the possibility of at least nominal Thai command of U. S. forces in Thailand and for the possible occupation by such forces of parts of neighboring Laos in the event of Communist operations from that country. In other words, the agreement allowed the United States to build and operate seven major air bases which were under the command of a Thai army officer. The large military construction program which supported the war effort began in building air bases at Udorn, Don Muang, Ubon, U-Tapao, Korat, Takhi, and Nakhon Phanom. The Navy program also began building a deep water port and a depot at

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9 This agreement concluded in 1966.

Sattahip. Adjacent to Korat was Camp Friendship, which acted as Headquarters, United States Army Support, Thailand.\(^{11}\)

After the attacks on Pleiku, in South Vietnam in early 1965, the United States began bombing North Vietnam. Additional strike aircraft including rescue helicopters were then deployed to Thailand. Tactical reconnaissance aircraft were also deployed to support the strike force. By the end of the year, there were over 9,000 USAF personnel and about 200 aircraft in Thailand.\(^{12}\)

The year of the greatest Air Force expansion was 1966. In early February the Royal Thai government approved the deployment of the 606th Air Commando Squadron to train the Royal Thai Air Force in counterinsurgency. By December of 1966, the Air Force numbered about 25,000 and the aircraft inventory was about 400.\(^{13}\)

The most significant deployment during 1967 took place when the Thai agreed to the stationing of B-52s at U-Tapao RTAFB. Other USAF units in country were augmented by both

\(^{11}\) U. S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad: Kingdom of Thailand, Hearings, before the sub-committee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, United States Senate, 91st Congress, 1st Session (November 10, 1969), p. 622F.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 615.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
men and machines, and by the end of 1967, there were approximately 33,369 personnel and 527 aircraft in Thailand.\textsuperscript{14}

During 1968 the U. S. ambassador approached the RTG to approve a net increase of 62 aircraft that included additional B-52s, A-1s, AC-130 airborne command and control aircraft. In October the RTG approved the deployment that made the number of the aircraft based in Thailand increase to 600 at the end of the year.

In 1969 the USAF and the RTAF had a joint use and Air Defense Operations Agreement which was concerned with jointly used facilities and with coordinating air defense operations.

During this period the major function of Thailand in American Southeast Asian strategy was to serve as a center for air operations in the military conflict in South Vietnam. Besides the bases, other important logistical and support facilities were constructed; and Bangkok served as a major rest and rehabilitation center for the United States soldiers on leave from Vietnam. In addition, Thailand agreed to send ground forces to South Vietnam. In September 1964, Thailand sent a small air lift unit to serve there which totaled 45 men. This was increased to 11,000

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 616.
men by mid-1967.\textsuperscript{15} To support Thai forces in Vietnam the United States spent about $200 million.

During the Vietnam war many observers in southeast Asia believed that the United States commitment in Thailand had become somewhat permanent. More than 40,000 American soldiers were stationed in Thailand, and more than $300 million were spent to equip Thai bases and other military facilities. The Sattahip complex constructed by the United States provided Thailand with a second port which was much bigger than the port at Bangkok. The United States also assisted Thailand in building a road network that opened up the interior.\textsuperscript{16}

These major economic and military aid programs were designed to meet communist infiltration as well as to provide a base for American military operations in southeast Asia. The United States' commitment was sizable and had the appearance of being long-term. The consensus was that Washington had no choice because Thailand was essential to the whole American strategy in southeast Asia, and particularly to the war effort in South Vietnam.


SEATO.—As the war continued, the United States government kept insisting that its commitment to South Vietnam and the military buildup in Thailand was compatible with the SEATO pact. But the treaty involved no specific American pledge to the South Vietnamese government, which was not and could not be signatory. A protocol to the treaty did provide a formal basis for America's military assistance to South Vietnam. However, the United States justified its military intervention there more on the basis of its direct commitments to Saigon than on the basis of its commitments to SEATO.17

Unlike other signatories to SEATO, who would not agree that the treaty's vague language could possibly be interpreted as a general commitment to the South Vietnamese government,18 Thailand responded favorably to the interpretation made by the United States. From past experience, the Thai government reasoned that Thailand had a security interest to which SEATO seemed to respond.19 SEATO provided

17 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Testimony, before a subcommittee on Foreign Relations, House and Senate, 89th Congress, 2nd Session (February 18, 1966), p. 596.


19 The SEATO system itself was very Thai oriented. Its headquarters were in Bangkok, and many of the ablest Thai
an important framework for the bilateral accords between
Washington and Bangkok.

Under the shadow of American troop presence in Thailand, the governments of Thailand and the United States issued separate announcements concerning the agreement between them for the stationing of United States forces in Thailand. The communique issued by the Thai government on May 15, 1962, cited the communist-led movements in Laos and also the pro-communist forces in South Vietnam as constituting a threat to the security of the country. Citing the Rusk-Thanat statement of March 6, 1962, the Thai government reaffirmed its obligation under the SEATO treaty to cooperate with the United States in "defending and preserving the peace and security of Thailand." The United States President's statement issued on the same day said that the joint consideration by the two governments concerning the situation in southeast Asia resulted in the "invitation" from the Thai government to the U. S. to deploy its troops in Thailand. It asserted that this defensive act on the part of the U. S. was wholly consistent with the United Nations Charter.20

Regional cooperation.—Thailand represented more than a site for bases in the Vietnam War, for that can be only

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20"President Sends Troops to Thailand; U. S. Policy Toward Laos Unchange," Department of State Bulletin, XLVI (June, 1962), 904-905.
temporary. More important to Americans in the long run may be Thailand's role in helping to bring about cooperation among southeast Asian nations as part of the large task of the United States to achieve long term stability in Asia.\(^2\)

It endeavored to institutionalize international relationships within this sensitive strategic region, so that bitter conflicts among small regional countries would not readily escalate into large scale confrontations between the major powers.\(^2\)

Much of the credit on this score belonged to Thailand's Foreign Minister since 1959, Thanat Khoman. Not only was he instrumental in creating the Association of Southeast Asia (A.S.A.), representing the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia in 1961, but he also served as an intermediary when the other southeast Asian governments quarreled. Thailand became a leading supporter of the Asian and Pacific Council (A.S.P.A.C.), a multinational group established in 1966.\(^2\)

This was particularly important to those American leaders who saw in Asian regionalism an important way to help small


\(^2\)Gordon, *op. cit.* , p. 53.
and weak southeast Asian nations build an effective barrier against China.\textsuperscript{24}

The deescalation of American military power in the Vietnam war and the possibility of a retrenchment in American policy in southeast Asia during 1968 aroused a growing sense of doubt and uncertainty among officials in the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The concern began when President Johnson announced on March 31 that he was reducing the level of American military involvement in Vietnam and taking steps toward a negotiated peace settlement with the Hanoi government.\textsuperscript{25} As the American presidential and congressional election campaigns progressed, elements in Bangkok became increasingly fearful with numerous demands from critics of both major political parties for a disengagement of American power from southeast Asia, urgent appeals for a "unilateral withdrawal" of American troops from Vietnam, a specific claim that the United States had only a limited obligation in Thailand and other nations in southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{26}

In order to counteract any major reduction in U. S. commitments to the Kingdom, Prime Minister Thanom sought

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 16.


\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.
assurances from the Johnson administration during his official state visit to Washington in May that the United States would not abandon its obligations to defend following a settlement of the Vietnam war. At the same time, Pote Sarasin, the Minister of National Development, headed a 38 member trade mission to New York appealing for more private American investment in the Thai economy. Offering attractive trade and investment incentives, Thailand promoted an expanded economic program with the hope that American efforts for peace and stability in southeast Asia would continue to stress economic development through both public and private channels following the end of the Vietnam conflict.27

The joint communique issued on May 9, at the conclusion of the two-day talk between Johnson and Thanom, reiterated America's determination to uphold its treaty commitments in Thailand and elsewhere in southeast Asia.

The Nixon Administration

The United States under President Nixon still reaffirmed its security commitment to Thailand under the SEATO pact. President Nixon in his foreign policy message to the Congress on February 9, 1972, stated that "we have reaffirmed our

intention to continue our aid and maintain our SEATO security commitment."^{28}

Thailand and the United States had reached an agreement in March of 1972, known as "the Ramasoon Agreement." This agreement provided Thailand with additional military assistance to accelerate improvements in the internal security and defense capabilities and readiness of Royal Thai Armed Forces to meet contingencies and to help the RTG to continue its economic development efforts.^{29} The Thai government had approved the program on March 14, 1972.^{30}

The two countries in 1971 also continued cooperation in narcotics control. They signed a joint statement in Bangkok on August 25, and a memorandum of Understanding on Narcotics Controls in Washington on September 28. The United States and Thailand reaffirmed their intention to cooperate in actions against international traffic in illicit drugs, including efforts to eliminate illicit agricultural production of poppies. They agreed to

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^{29}U. S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Political Situation in Thailand, Hearings, before the subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, House of Representatives, 93rd Congress, 1st Session (October 24, 1973), p. 84.

cooperate in the search for viable economic alternatives for the hill tribes, who in remote and mountain areas of northern Thailand, continued to cultivate opium as their principal cash crop. 31

Concerning the United States presence in Thailand, the large majority of U. S. military personnel in Thailand in the period since 1970 were U. S. Air Force elements. Following the North Vietnamese offensive in South Vietnam in April, 1972, the Thai government agreed to a U. S. request to reopen Takhli which was closed as some operations were cut back, and to reopen an air base in Nam Phong. In December, 1972, Thailand gave approval to a U. S. request to establish a new military headquarters in Nakhon Phanom following the termination of MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) headquarters in Saigon. The Seventh Air Force Command was also located in Nakhon Phanom. 32 In addition to these non-Thai related activities, there was also the U. S. Special Forces battalion, called the U. S. Military Assistance Command Thailand (COMUSMACTHAI), which was involved in a variety of activities including intelligence.


32U. S. Congress, op. cit., p. 91.
The new Thai government, after the student uprising in October, 1973, made no move to change its policy of supporting U. S. policy in southeast Asia. The Thai government, in a major foreign policy statement in mid-January of 1974, indicated no change in the U. S. role, but said that it sought the gradual withdrawal of U. S. military forces. And even the press, which had become increasingly critical through 1974 about U. S. operations in Thailand, defended Bangkok's continued membership in SEATO, on the grounds that it was the only treaty organization that would protect the country against an act of open aggression.

Unfriendly Statements and Acts: 1965-1975

Johnson Administration

Johnson's announcement of the de-escalation of American power in Vietnam raised doubts and underyainty among Thai officials. Elements in Bangkok became increasingly fearful that government policy, which had been followed for almost twenty years in close cooperation with U. S. efforts to contain communist expansion in southeast Asia, might be coming to an end. However, the extreme uncertainty among certain Thai officials appeared somewhat

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34 Bangkok Post, editorial, March 4, 1974.
unjustified as U. S. policy makers maintained a genuine interest in Thailand's security and prosperity.  

Nixon Administration

On September 30, 1969, the United States and Thailand announced that they had agreed that 6,000 U. S. Army and Air Force personnel should be withdrawn from Thailand by July 1, 1970. The reduction in the American troop level in Thailand resulted from discussions held between Ambassador Unger and Foreign Minister Thanat. On August 20, Thanat formally proposed to the American Embassy that the process of immediate evacuation of the 49,000 U. S. troops commence. On August 22, Thanat called for talks on withdrawal of U. S. forces from the country. The talks began on September 1, There was still considerable resentment over the unilateral way in which the Americans seemed to be trying to liquidate the war in Vietnam. President Nixon's September 17, 1969, announcement of a further withdrawal of 35,000 U. S. forces from Vietnam without any consultation with Thailand was not reassuring that Thailand was still a United States ally.

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The Thai also objected in early September to the brief bombing halt that followed the death of North Vietnamese President Ho-Chi-Minh. It was apparently felt in Bangkok that the very brevity of the halt was suggestive of a certain indecisiveness in the U. S. approach to Vietnam, and inferentially, towards the rest of southeast Asia.39

Ambassador Unger and Foreign Minister Thanat renewed their talks concerning the reduction of American forces on August 22, 1970. On September 8, a U. S.-Thai statement announced that 9,500 (7,300 Air Force and 2,500 Army) American military personnel would be withdrawn from Thailand by July 1, 1971. This would reduce the U. S. troop level to about 32,000.40 The buildup in personnel began in 1972 because of the North Vietnam's offensive in South Vietnam. The United States and Thailand in August, 1973, completed an agreement whereby 3,550 troops and more than 100 aircraft would be withdrawn.41 Units withdrawn under the August Agreement included Air Force units at Takhli and Marine units at Nam Phong.42 In early October the United States agreed to suspend temporarily the withdrawal, according to

39 Bangkok Post, September 15, 1964.
40 U. S. Congress, op. cit., p. 54.
Premier Thanom Kittikachorn, because of the continuing uncertainty of the military and political situation in Indochina.\footnote{The \textit{New York Times}, October 10, 1973.}

The new government continued to discuss further withdrawal with the United States. The announcements on January 3, 1974, indicated that more than 2,000 support troops had been pulled out since September, and the immediate withdrawal of an Air Force squadron would reduce U. S. forces there to 35,000 men and less than 600 planes. Officials in mid-January indicated that the United States and the Thai government had agreed on a goal of 32,000.\footnote{The \textit{New York Times}, January 17, 1974.} This level might be reached by the end of June. Most of those remaining were members of the Air Force squadrons used in the bombing campaign in Indochina, while the United States had a combat role there.

In the meanwhile, Thai students, at present a potent political force, had protested various aspects of the U. S. presence, and demonstrations against the U. S. ambassador or the presence of the Central Intelligence Agency followed
The New York Times, January 6 and 8, 1974, and Washington Star-News, January 6, 1974. The new U. S. ambassador, William R. Kintner, presented his credential on November 29. Student militants have been critical of Ambassador Kintner's military background, with some denouncing him as a CIA agent. The contents of a letter written in November by a CIA agent to the Thai government, which contained a false cease-fire offer in the name of a Thai Communist insurgent leader, was recently made public by several Bangkok newspapers. Following this, the U. S. Embassy on January 5 acknowledged the sending of the letter, called it a "regrettable, unauthorized initiative," and said the incident had been discussed "with the appropriate Thai officials." The Embassy said that Ambassador Kintner "has directed categorically that no American official be involved in any activity which could be interpreted as interference in Thai internal affairs."

May 19 expressing regret over misunderstandings that arose over use of a Thai base to recover Mayaguez and its crew.⁴⁸

On July 28, Thai Premier Kukrit Pramoj, calling military agreements with the United States no longer valid, set March 20, 1976, as the deadline for withdrawal of all U. S. forces from the country. He also said that while Thailand was still a SEATO member, the treaty was meaningless and SEATO should be dissolved.⁴⁹ Thailand-U. S. military commands said on November 25 that the United States had agreed to close Korat airbase and remove 4,500 American service personnel and 50 aircraft by the end of February, 1976. The withdrawal would leave fewer than 7,000 personnel and 100 aircraft at U-Tapao airbase. All U. S. forces were scheduled to be out of Thailand by March 20. Thai leaders had asked the United States to maintain 300 U. S. military advisors to train Thai military personnel.⁵⁰


CHAPTER III

THAI—CHINESE RELATIONS

History of Thai—Chinese Relations

The relations between Thailand and the People's Republic of China are conditioned by important historical, geographical, and social facts. Thailand has no border with China. Mountainous parts of Burma and Laos separate the two countries. Parts of North Thailand are about 100 miles from the nearest Chinese border, and areas in the northeast some 300 miles. There is no scope for boundary disputes. Although there is some communication overland, in recent centuries most of the contact with China has in fact been by sea. Nevertheless, China has loomed large in Thai thinking on two accounts: as a center of political, economic, and cultural influence and as a prolific source of migrants.¹

Until 1853, Thailand was a more or less faithful tributary vassal of the Chinese empire. The tribute traffic began to decline in the early nineteenth century. Thirty years later, in response to increasing French and British pressures upon Burma and the states of Indochina, the imperial government in Peking attempted to re-establish the tributary

ties which had bound Siam to China. However, this move was vigorously resisted by the Thai monarchy.  

The question of diplomatic relations was of little concern on either side until the establishment of the Kuomintang Republic undertook negotiations and sent various missions to establish diplomatic relations. The Thais demurred on the grounds that official relations would only complicate their problems in dealing with the overseas Chinese. During the 1920's and 1930's the Kuomintang gained support among the Chinese in Thailand. Although the Chinese Communist Party existed in Thailand, at the same time it seemed to have been greatly overshadowed by the much more popular Kuomintang.

In 1938, the essentially anti-Chinese attitude and relatively mild anti-Chinese policies became those of aggressive repression and containment, in part owing to the rise to power of a group of young Thai politicians who were vigorously nationalistic and in part because of Premier Philbun

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3 George Modelski, op. cit., p. 351.

4 Robert A. Scalapino, The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements (New Jersey, 1969), p. 15 and Lovelace, op. cit., p. 15. According to Robert Scalapino, the first communist party in Thailand (probably the CCPT) was formed in 1929. The CPT's origins are variously listed as either in 1935 or 1942, although Scalapino claims the latter date is really that of the first party congress. From the outset, the major characteristics of both parties seemed to have been their ineffectiveness and lack of mass support.
Songkhran’s decision to support the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War.  

After the Second World War, Thailand could no longer avoid diplomatic relations with China. The new Thai regime led by Pridi Phanomyong moved to settle the issue of relations with China. In 1946, official relations were finally established with the Nanking government, and trade was resumed once more. With the retreat of Chiang-Kai-Shek to Taiwan, Bangkok authorities at first adopted a "wait and see" attitude, and then decided to seek their security guarantees from the U.S. rather than from the People’s Republic of China.  

Prior to the PRC’s swing to a more moderate line after 1952, Thailand, like the other nations in the region, was at the receiving end of Peking’s tirades. Thai Premier Phibun Songkhran’s government was variously labelled as "criminal," "facist," and "lackey of Wall Street." The U.S.-Thai Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement of September, 1950, and the dispatch of Thai troops to Korea were cited.

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6 Lovelace, op. cit., p. 28.  
8 Wilson, op. cit., p. 154.  
by Peking as examples of Thailand's subservience to western imperialism.9

After the PRC's turn to a policy of moderation, anti-China feeling began to wane in Thailand. A Thailand Peace Committee was formed which advocated the adoption of a neutral Thai foreign policy. The career of the Thailand Peace Committee came to a rather abrupt end in November, 1972, when the government arrested many of its members.10

The formation of SEATO in 1954, and the subsequent choice of Bangkok as the headquarters, brought a storm of threats and warnings from China. SEATO was described as an alliance "chiefly directed against China" and "designed for war." Thailand was labelled "a base for U. S. war preparations." More importantly, SEATO was viewed as an American attempt to reduce Chinese influence in southeast Asia.11

A new Chinese diplomatic offensive aimed at Thailand began with the Bandung Conference of April, 1955,12 Thai policy toward China relaxed noticeably following Bandung. Criticism of the government was permitted and a thaw in Sino-Thai relations became evident. During this period, cultural contacts and trade between the two countries markedly increased. Peking continued to emphasize two primary themes

12 Lovelace, op. cit., p. 31.
in its Thai-directed propaganda: the disadvantages of Thailand's cooperation with American imperialism; and the potential benefits of friendly relations with the PRC.

The drift towards neutralism was arrested by the army coup of October, 1958. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat's new government took firm measures against the leftist politicians, newspapers, and the Chinese community. Contacts with the PRC were discouraged at all levels, and in 1959 Thailand banned the import of goods from China. Sarit moved Thailand firmly into the western camp. Thanom Kittikachorn, who assumed the leadership after Sarit's death in December, 1960, continued his predecessor's policy.\textsuperscript{13}

Throughout 1960 the dominant theme of PRC propaganda and conventional media concerning Thailand was "Thai intervention in Laos." This theme continued to be prevalent in 1961, but was gradually rivaled by the issue of Thailand's military cooperation with the United States. After a joint Thai-U. S. communique in May, 1962, and the Thai permission to the Americans to build bases and to maintain troops in Thailand, Peking charged that Thailand was following a dangerous road because if its involvement with "intensified U. S. military adventures" in southeast Asia,\textsuperscript{14} The year 1962 also

\textsuperscript{13} Ali, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 194.

witnessed the first major overt signs of communist supported organizational and propaganda activity in Thailand.  

During 1963 there were continuing indications of subversion in Thailand's northeastern provinces. While training of Thai cadres in North Vietnam and China proceeded and a revolutionary structure was being created throughout Thailand, the political framework was being evolved in accordance with the Maoist model of a national-democratic revolution. Nevertheless no violence (other than that initiated by the Thai police) had been reported by the end of the year.

The year 1964 may be considered the major point of departure for serious and coordinated insurgent operations in Thailand. During the first part of the year, several clandestinely distributed CPT leaflets appeared in Bangkok. But in October the Communist Party of Thailand received its first official attention from China in many years. NCNA (New China News Agency) carried a message from the CPT to the Chinese party on the occasion of Chinese National Day. The message appealed for the cooperation of all anti-government elements in "patriotic democratic united front." Also, in October

15 Lovelace, op. cit., p. 44.
16 Taylor, op. cit., p. 290.
18 NCNA, October 1, 1964.
it was announced that the new Peking School of Foreign Languages, which opened in September, would teach, in addition to English and Japanese, a three-year course in Thai. On November 1, the formation of a new organization was announced from Peking—the Thai Independence Movement (TIM).

Friendly Statements and Acts: 1965-1975

Prior to the Nixon Doctrine

From 1965 to 1969, the government of Thailand believed that security would be best served by relying on military alliance with the United States. At the same time, the Thais also believed that a policy of isolation from the PRC was both possible and desirable—for internal as well as external reasons. From the Chinese point of view, Thailand was the instrument of the U.S. imperialists. This strong anti-U.S. and anti-Thai government attitude continued through mid-year 1969.

After the Nixon Doctrine

The Thai government was seriously concerned when its supposedly powerful and reliable American patron began to indicate on March 19 an apparent intention to reduce its military involvement in Vietnam and the rest of southeast Asia: The Nixon Doctrine of 1969 was of course a still more

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19Lovelace, op. cit., p. 47.
positive affirmation of this intention. Bangkok's response was an effort to render itself less dependent on the United States, to improve its relations with the non-Communist southeast Asian countries and with the ASEAN nations\(^{20}\) in particular; and to establish private contacts with Peking aimed at a lessening of Sino-Thai hostility.\(^{21}\) In addition, Thailand, which had established diplomatic relations with the USSR after the end of the Second World War, also began to improve its ties with the Soviet Union. In early 1970, Bangkok signed its first trade agreement with Moscow.\(^{22}\)

At first, China and the Maoist parties in these countries\(^{23}\) charged that these moves toward better relations with the Soviet bloc were aimed at stifling the communist movement and colluding against China.\(^{24}\) Most worrisome for China were public expressions by some of the pro-western leaders of interest in the Soviet proposal for a "collective security" arrangement for Asia. China also became increasingly

\(^{20}\)Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand.


\(^{22}\)Jay Taylor, China and Southeast Asia, p. 333.

\(^{23}\)Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines also began to improve ties with Moscow.

concerned about the Japanese role in the area. Peking feared that Japanese economic influence was bound to lead to political interests and ultimately to a Japanese role in the security of the area. By 1969, Chinese absorption with the Soviet menace, the diminishing U. S. threat in Indochina and U. S. military retrenchment throughout Asia, increased Chinese concern with expanding Japanese influence in Asia, signs of a breakdown in the isolationist policies of the governments of southeast Asia, and the rise of the moderate faction in Peking, all resulted in the beginning of a shift in Chinese policy back toward a broad united-front peaceful-coexistence line.25

In February, 1969, the Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, proclaimed that Thailand was ready to sit down for discussions with the Chinese Communists and that a stable settlement for southeast Asia would require the agreement of China.26 Thanat spoke of "carrying the offensive for peace and stability to Peking,"27 and of negotiating a trade pact with China.28 The president of the Chamber of Commerce went further in saying that there was an "urgent need" for trade with China.29

25 Taylor, op. cit., p. 335.
26 Straits Times, February, 1969.
28 Bangkok World, April 17, 1969.
29 Hsing Hsien Wan Pao (Bangkok), March 31, 1969.
In early 1970, as the Chinese-built road in Laos edged nearer the Mekong River, and as Thai troops were fighting in Laos, Khoman called for another Bandung Conference and a "revival of the Bandung formula with necessary modifications." If the smaller nations could cooperate, he said, they might convince China at such a meeting to come to terms with its neighbours." 30

In keeping with Chou's approach to other insurgent movements, China at this time began to alter its propaganda support of the "Thai people's struggle," While NCNA continued to originate its own articles—as well as to carry VPT (Voice of the People of Thailand) broadcast—on the guerrilla war in Thailand, references to China's support for the revolution began to drop off in 1970. 31

In May, 1971, after Sino-U. S. pingpong diplomacy had begun, Thanat sounded optimistic about Sino-Thai relations, claiming that through third parties China and Thailand had made indirect exchanges leading to mutual understanding. 32 As the Post reported, Thanat then referred to Communist China for the first time as the "People's Republic of China." 33

Premier Thanom Kittikachorn was, however, not entirely pleased, because of Peking's continuing support of the insurgency

30 Straits Times, February 26, 1970.
33 Ibid.
in Thailand. After a June visit to Kuala-Lumpur, he expressed serious doubts about the success of neutralization. In July he reportedly informed his cabinet that he opposed commercial or other contact with the PRC until Peking stopped its sponsorship of insurgency in Thailand.

The communist activities, which were still "alarmingly active," supplied some of the reasons for concern expressed by Thai authorities. They helped explain why Thailand favored dual Chinese representation in the United Nations, but was unwilling to recognize Peking diplomatically.

After the annual U. S. supported resolution failed in 1971, Thailand, for the first time, abstained, rather than voting against the Albanian resolution to seat Peking in the United Nations and oust Taipei. In addition, the Thai withdrew their candidacy for one of the vacated seats on the U. N. Economic and Social Council after Peking expressed a desire to become a member. Personal contact between diplomats of the two governments also began at the U. N. when the Thai and Chinese ambassadors each attended receptions given by each other. China's victory in the U. N. brought forth an increased swell of pressure in Thailand for a new China policy.

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34 Taylor, op. cit., p. 351.
36 Yuan-li Wu, The Strategic Land Ridge; Peking Relations with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia (Stanford, 1975, p. 25).
37 Jay Taylor, Communist China and Southeast Asia, p. 352.
Under Thanat's prodding and public pressure, the Thai government in early November took some tentative steps toward improving relations with Peking. The Thai National Security Council decided to remove the ban on trade with Peking, to relax existing anti-communist laws, and to permit visits to Peking by sport and non-political missions.\(^\text{38}\) The Ministry of Economic Affairs explained that the trade with Peking would be on a government-to-government basis through a public corporation. The Council also was said to have ruled against establishing diplomatic relations with Peking in the near future and against permitting political figures and others to visit the PRC as individuals.\(^\text{39}\)

At the beginning of 1972, Bangkok still believed that Thailand's security very much depended on the defeat of the communists in Indochina and that U.S. bases in Thailand were essential to this objective. As long as this situation existed, the Chinese, while ready to improve state relations, were likely to continue to pressure the Thai government through its support for the communist insurgency because of Thailand's continued role in the Indochina conflict.\(^\text{40}\)

Nevertheless, efforts were made by Peking and Thailand to develop official relations at a different level. It took the form of an invitation by the executive committee of the

\(^{38}\) *Bangkok Post*, November 4, 1971.


\(^{40}\) Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 354.
Asian Table Tennis Union to the Table Tennis Association of Thailand for Thai participation in a ping pong match in Peking in September, 1972. The advisor to the Thai team was Prasit Kanjanawat, deputy of the Directorate of Finance, Economy, and Industry of the ruling National Executive Council.

Very soon after the Prasit visit to Peking, the PRC, through the Thai trade commission in Hongkong, officially invited a Thai trade delegation to visit the Canton Trade Fair opening on October 15, 1972. This was hailed in Bangkok as another forward step by Peking.

The defeat of the Thanom-Prathat government by a student revolt in October, 1973, was initially hailed by the Peking government as a return of power to the people. By late 1973, the PRC had followed its initial sports activities with an offer to sell crude oil to Thailand and a promise to stop offensive radio broadcasts. In 1974, the post-Thanom caretaker government under Prime Minister Sanya Dharmasakti resumed the probe of Peking's intentions which had begun under the previous regime by sending Air Marshal Dawee to Peking in his

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41 *Bangkok Post*, May 19, 1972.
capacity as head of the Thai Olympic Committee. Upon his return, Dawee reported that Chou-En-Lai had told him that the PRC was no longer supporting communist insurgents in Thailand, Laos, and other southeast Asian countries.\textsuperscript{46}

The new Thai regime elected in January, 1975, which was led by Premier Kukrit Pramoj appeared to be moving closer to Peking. The Thai government required the withdrawal of U. S. forces from Thailand by March, 1976. The fall of Cambodia and South Vietnam to the communists in April, 1975, accelerated the Thai policy of disassociation from the United States. In June, 1975, five member Thai Foreign Ministry delegation led by former Thai ambassador the the United States, Amand Panyarachun, was sent to Peking for diplomatic talks aimed at smoothing out a few "problems" in preparation for formal recognition.\textsuperscript{47}

On June 30, 1975, Premier Kukrit Pramoj traveled to the People's Republic of China to establish diplomatic relations. On July 1, Thailand and the People's Republic of China established formal diplomatic relations. Premiers Kukrit and Chou-En-Lai signed a joint communique to agree that each country could respect the internal affairs and sovereignty of the other and work for development of trade, cultural, and economic exchanges.\textsuperscript{48} This communique provided that

\textsuperscript{46}The New York Times, February 17, 1974 (AP report from BK)
\textsuperscript{47}The New York Times, June 21, 1975,
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., July 1, 1975.
Thailand immediately break diplomatic relations with the Chinese Nationalist government on Taiwan. China, in what was seen as a political move, reportedly agreed to buy 200,000 tons of Thai rice despite the expectations of surplus Chinese crops. 49

Unfriendly Statements and Acts: 1965-1975

Prior to the Nixon Doctrine

In January, 1965, the PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi reportedly told a visiting European diplomat that he hoped for a "guerilla war in Thailand within a year." 50 The organizational structure for this national liberation war was soon formalized. On January 22, the VPT broadcast a January 1 statement inaugurating a new all-embracing front organization, the Thai Patriotic Front (TPF). The leaders of the TPF later outlined a six-point program which included the cancellation of economic and technical agreements with the United States, the withdrawal of Thailand from SEATO, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Peking. 51,

With the commencement of the regular bombing of North Vietnam in February, 1965, and the introduction of large numbers of North Vietnamese and U. S. troops into South Vietnam

49 Ibid., July 18, 1975.


51 Peking Review, VIII (February, 1965), 25.
in the spring and summer, respectively, incidents of assassination of local officials in northeast and south Thailand began to increase—an increase of 30 per cent over corresponding 1964 estimates. Warnings and threats from Hanoi and Peking directed at the Thai government also gained in intensity. By October, Jen-min-Jih-pao (JMJP) commentaries were threatening the Thai government with "punishment for its collaboration with the American war effort" and promising that as such cooperation continued, the more widespread and intensified will become the patriotic struggle in Thailand. By November, 1965, the TIM had agreed to "continue to struggle in the same manner as before, and at the same time become a member of the TPF and follow its political leadership." This was manifested by the content of the TIM announcement, which made numerous references to the "patriotic masses" and the need for "heroic struggle."

In its New Year's message, the TPF formally proclaimed that armed struggle was under way in the northeast and in the central and southern provinces, and proclaimed itself as "the center which united all patriotic forces." Throughout 1966 subversive activity grew steadily in intensity. Assassinations, ambushes, and armed propaganda campaigns in the villages all

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52 JMJP, October 7, 1965.
54 NCNA, January 14, 1966.
increased throughout the northeast. The VPT began broad-
casting in Laos to the northeast provinces, and the Chinese
press and radio enthusiastically reported on the progress of
the "raging people's war."  

During 1967, the U. S. State Department estimated that
Thai insurgent strength reached between 2,000 and 2,200, with
about 1,500 guerrillas in the northeast and approximately
500-700 along the TDai-Malaysia border. This same report
offered a numerical estimate of CPT membership as between
1,300 and 1,500 persons. By October 15, 1967, insurgent
activity had so increased that General Praphat announced
that the Thia army would henceforth be entirely responsible
for the control of communist forces in the south and the north-
east. On December 1, martial law was tightened in several
central and southern Thai provinces.  

Guerrilla operations spread further throughout Thailand
during 1968. The center of struggle shifted to the northern
provinces. There were also the growth of the combined actions
of the Malayan Communist Party and Thai people's armed forces
along the Thai-Malayan boundary and the attack on the U. S.


56 U. S. Department of State, Work Strength of the Commu-
p. 96.

57 Richard Allen, ed., Yearbook on International Commu-
base at Udornthani. The U. S. State Department now placed Thai insurgent strength at between 2,000 and 3,000.58

The PRC continued to support the insurgency by using Thai-language, Peking Radio broadcasts and the press attacked the RTG. In late 1968, the CPT issued a new "policy" of ten points, which with Bolshevik candor was called the "short-term policy."59 In comparison with the six-point program of the Thai Patriotic Front issued in February of 1965, the ten points paid slightly more attention to social reform. This "short-term" policy which was another version of the Maoist "New Democracy" was endorsed by the CPT. 60

The Thai armed struggle reached a new stage in January, 1969, with the announcement of the creation of the Thai People's Liberation Armed Forces (TPLAF) under the "absolute command of the CPT."61 Simultaneously, a "Supreme Command" was established to provide "unified and effective" direction of the fighting in Thailand.

During the Cultural Revolution, China's support for the Thai communists assumed an important ideological function. The radicals in Peking apparently saw the revolution in Thailand not only as a verification of their own militancy but

59 Voice of the People of Thailand (VPT), December 6, 1968.
60 Ibid., February 4, 1969.
61 Ibid., January 1, 1969.
also as leading eventually to the establishment of a Peking-oriented communist regime in Bangkok. From 1967-1969, their view predominated over those Chinese leaders who took a more opportunistic approach to the communist movement in Thailand.62

In the 1967-1969 period China's coverage of the Thai "national liberation war" intensified in volume and language. The role of Thailand in the Vietnam War and the U. S. build up of Thailand were, of course, major themes. The Peking Radio and the VPT occasionally emphasized the theme of Thailand's alleged potential role as a U. S. "aggressive base" aimed at the "underbelly of China."63 NCNA and People's Daily commentaries regularly praised the Thai armed revolution, which was said to be led by the CPT and inspired and guided by Mao-Tse-tung's thoughts. But official government and party pronouncements from Peking still avoided any direct commitment of assistance.

After the Nixon Doctrine

Thailand changed attitudes toward the PRC after the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine with the hope that Peking would stop its sponsorship of insurgency in Thailand. However, there was relatively little movement in the position of either side from mid-1969 to spring of 1971. Though the NCNA and the

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62 Jay Taylor, China and Southeast Asia, p. 296.
63 NCNA, April 3, 1967.
clandestine VPT, Peking continued to call upon the "Thai people" to expand their struggle against the Thai government, which it denounced in the name of the "people of Thailand" for having turned over Thai territory to the "U. S. imperialists" as a military base in the Vietnam War. This was the official Peking and Thai communist attitude as late as mid-February, 1971.\(^64\)

As the plot of U. S.-Peking reapproachment began to thicken during 1971, Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman tried to contact the PRC. However, the Thai communists and Peking itself did not let up their attack on the government; nor did insurgent activities and the government's suppression operation slacken. On April 27, 1971, Bunchana Atthakorn, Economic Affairs Minister, told the Bangkok Post that Peking had not stopped its radio attack against Thailand and was supporting insurgency in the country. The VPT continued to address the Thai government as the "Thanom-Praphat clique" that had "sold out independence to U. S. imperialism,"\(^65\) and to report "brilliant victories" of terrorist operations.\(^66\) On May 24, the Post was to report that a "go-slow" policy was ordered by Prime Minister Thanom on approaches to Communist China until Peking's support of insurgency in Thailand had ceased. Premier Thanom was concerned about increased

\(^{64}\)NCNA, February 15, 1971

\(^{65}\)Bangkok Post, May 9, 1971.

infiltration into Thai territory by communist terrorists from Laos and about the Communist China-build road from Yunnan to PakBen and the Mekong River in Thailand.\textsuperscript{67} This explained his cool reception of the Malaysian proposal that the United States, and Soviet Union, and Communist China guarantee the neutrality of southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{68}

The establishment of the new political framework under Thanom and Praphat after the self-administered "coup" that took place on November 17, 1971, did not alter communist perceptions of Thailand's official policy. The clandestine VPT described the National Executive Council heads\textsuperscript{69} as the "traitorous, piratic, fascist, dictatorial Thanom-Praphat clique."\textsuperscript{70} Throughout November and December of 1971 attacks were reported on government positions in the northeast and the northern region. While intensified insurgency and the government's response to it were by no means solely a function of Peking's aid to the guerrillas, both Peking and the Thai government apparently saw each other in the role of opponents.

\textsuperscript{67}\textit{Bangkok Post}, June 1, 1971

\textsuperscript{68}\textit{Ibid.}, June 17, 1971. This proposal, advanced by the Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdul Rasak, was discussed with Premier Thanom during the latter's visit to Kuala Lumpur in June of 1971.

\textsuperscript{69}Field Marshal Thanom established a National Executive Council in place of his government he had headed.

\textsuperscript{70}\textit{VPT}, November 22, 1971.
The insurgent activities increased during 1972 in various parts of the country, including the north, the northeast, and the south. Widespread military action was the government's main form of counter-insurgency effort.

In dealing with Thailand, Peking used the "two-level" relationship: exhibiting friendliness as the official level, while simultaneously plotting the overthrow of its government.\(^71\) On the one hand, military operations by both government and the insurgents continued through the year. On the other hand, signals emanating from Peking in the summer of that year were read by Thai authorities as a possible softening of the PRC's attitude toward Thailand. The year ended with a stand off because the Thai government was not prepared to accept Peking's two-level approach: official "friendship" accompanied by unofficial support of subversion and revolution.

To the Thai communists, overthrow of the Thanom-Praphat government on October, 1973, by the student revolt would not by itself remove the basic reasons for insurgency or their need for Peking's support. The defeat of Thanom and Praphat was initially hailed by the Peking government as a return to power to the people.\(^72\) However, both the Thai communists and Peking soon changed their tune. They felt that the revolution must

\(^{71}\) Yuan-li Wu, *Strategic Land Ridge*, p. 31.

The communist-led insurgency still increased in the northeast and continued in areas in the north and the south even though Chou-En-lai had told Thai Defense Minister, Dawee Chunlasap, in February of 1974 that Peking would cut the support for Thai insurgents it had been aiding for the past ten years. The state-to-state relations improved, there had been some reports of a disenchantment with Peking on the part of the Thai Communist Party and the possibility of its turning more to Hanoi for aid. Professional observers generally acknowledge two separate insurgencies in north and northeast Thailand in any case: one in the north, dependent upon Peking and supplied via the Chinese-built highway in Laos, and the other in the northeast, heavily dependent on North Vietnam's assistance.

73 The VPT, October 21, 1972.
74 The Nations, February 17, 1974.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Since the Second World War, the relationship between Thailand and the United States has been based on a long-standing policy of friendship and cooperation. Two national objectives have determined the pattern of U.S.-Thai relations: Thailand's national security and the United States' role as a Pacific power. The United States engaged in both economic and military commitments in Thailand during the Johnson administration. These major economic and military aid programs were designed to meet communist infiltration, as well as to provide a base for American military operations in southeast Asia. The United States also engaged in SEATO in which Thailand played an important role.

Thailand was deeply concerned when the Nixon Doctrine was announced in 1969. Thai fears about the unreliability of the United States as a protector led them to look to other major powers such as Communist China, Japan, or the Soviet Union.

Adjustments in Thai-American relations began long before the final communist victories in Indochina during April of 1975. The final collapse of will and effort by non-Communist
government and U. S. assistance thereto, however, accelerated the process, and further convinced the Thai that they could rely only on themselves. With the decline in the importance of the United States–Thai security relationship, a more balanced relationship than that of a decade ago is developing. The United States no longer seeks, nor do the Thais desire, the previous degree of mutual dependence. The United States has an important general interest in a sovereign, independent Thailand, free of significant external influence inimical to the United States. Specific U. S. policy interests which have gained greater attention in the post-Indochina war environment include human rights, anti-narcotics cooperation, Thai support on multilateral issues of significance to the United States, general cultural and educational exchange activities, economic development, and U. S.–Thai trade. Thailand’s constructive role in regional (particularly ASEAN) economic cooperation and development is also of importance to U. S. interests, as well as to those of Japan, Australia, and the EEC, all of whom are consulting with ASEAN.

During the period of Indochina war, the Thai government believed that security would best be served by supporting the U. S. containment policy. Consequently, Communist China considered Thailand as the instrument of the U. S. imperialism and continued to support the insurgency in Thailand. The Sino–Thai relations in this period were characterized by hostility.
With the rapprochment between the United States and China, Thailand tried to render itself less dependent on the United States, and to improve its relations with the PRC in order to lessen the Sino-Thai hostility. Chinese absorption with the Soviet menace, the diminishing U.S. threat in Indochina and U.S. military retrenchment throughout Asia, increased Chinese concern with expanding Japanese influence in Asia, and the rise of the moderate faction in Peking, all resulted in the beginning of a shift in Chinese policy back toward a broad united-front peaceful-coexistence line. In 1975, formal diplomatic relations were established between Thailand and the PRC.

Uncertain over the probable extent of American disenengagement from southeast Asia and the course of events in the post-Vietnam war era, Thailand anticipated the creation of a power vacuum in Asia. It, therefore, increased its efforts to balance its relations among the greater powers by moving cautiously toward China, and to a lesser extent, toward the Soviet Union. In the next decade, Thailand would try to develop a cooperative relationship with the PRC and to achieve correct relations with the communist states in Indochina, while avoiding a pro-Soviet or Vietnam policy that would risk raising the ire of the Chinese, who are in a better position than the Soviets to make life difficult through insurgency.
The Thais hope that the Chinese will limit their material support to the Thai insurgents and encourage the Vietnamese to do the same. At the same time, Thailand would try to strengthen the concept of regionalism as a stabilizing factor in southeast Asia. ASEAN would be expected to grow in influence and stature as it maneuvers to achieve a stable distribution of power among the PRC, the Indochina nations, and ASEAN members.

The PRC is primarily concerned with the possible expansion of the Soviet political, if not military, "presence" in southeast Asia and has feared that such expansion would be inevitable with the U.S. withdrawal. But Peking is not likely to tolerate a higher level of influence for Vietnam in the region than China itself can obtain.

Before the Nixon Doctrine, the United States and the PRC confronted each other in southeast Asia. The United States felt that it was its responsibility to protect these countries from Chinese predominance. Therefore, the major theme during this period was the containment of Communist expansion. This led to the formation of the SEATO alliance. Thailand had a close relationship with the United States and supported the war in Vietnam by allowing the United States to use bases on Thai soil. Besides, Thailand seemed to be the most active Asian member in SEATO. These relations were
in line with the assumptions of the realist model of international politics that relations between states are determined overall by the structure of the power in the international system. Each country still considered its national interest as crucial in forming foreign policy: U. S. containment of the communist invasion, China's anti-imperialism, and Thai preservation of its independence by alignment with the United States.

Nevertheless, the move toward normalization of relations between the United States and China has changed the situation in southeast Asia. SEATO was considered to be an outmoded and outdated international agreement and was terminated in early 1977. ASEAN became more important, as regional cooperation was expected to be effective in both the economic and political fields. The profound changes that occurred in relations between the United States and China since 1971 resulted from a mutual understanding between two regimes—Nixon and Mao's—that they had more to gain from accommodation than from continued hostility. Implicit in this changed perception of national interests by both governments was a tacit understanding that neither should seek to impose its power and ideology on the nations of southeast Asia, but rather let these states work out their own destinies in their own ways. Besides, each country might use the other, for mutual benefit, as an effective political means of thwarting Soviet ambition.
Thailand, as a small nation, still considers the preservation of its independence as the most important factor in its national interests. Consequently, Thailand has moved to add even greater flexibility to its foreign policies vis-a-vis the Communist world. This development is in accord with realist expectations that there should be a realignment of Thai policy in the direction of more friendly relations with China if U.S. protection were not available.

Thailand became involved in the Vietnam war because of its leaders' perception of national interest of preserving independence through alignment with the United States. This cooperation caused China to increase its support to Thai insurgents for years. The détente era was the result of changes in leadership in each country. In the United States, the Nixon administration had a new perception of national interest that led to accommodation with Peking. Peking changed its perception because of the Soviet effort to expand its influence in southeast Asia. Both countries had a mutual interest in counter-balancing Soviet influence. The new government in Thailand has also changed its perception of national interest to preserve its freedom through accommodation with new distribution of power in the region—the PRC, ASEAN, the United States, the communist governments in Indochina, and the Soviet Union. Each nation turns to diplomacy as a contribution to peace through accommodation.

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