purpose and did not reflect a more general goal of the promotion of world revolution. That this was so will become even clearer when Sino-Thai relations in the 1970's are examined. To begin with, though, this paper will turn to an examination of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand in the late 1950's and 1960's.

Footnotes

¹ Lin Piao, "Long Live the Victory of the People's War," in Samuel B. Griffith, Peking and People's Wars. (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 51 - 114.

² See for example, Griffith's analysis of the speech in his Peking and People's Wars, pp. 3-48 passim.

³ Liu Shaoqi in Donald S. Zagoria, "Some Comparisons between the Russian and Chinese models," in A. Doak Barnett (ed) Communist Strategies in Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Governments and Parties. (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 17.

⁴ Lu Ting-i in Zagoria, "Some Comparisons between the Russian and Chinese Models," p. 17.

⁵ Mao Tse-tung, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," in M. Rejai (ed) Mao Tse-tung: On Revolution and War. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), p. 151.

⁶ Lin Piao, "People's War," p. 71.

⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸ An example of this can be found in, Mao Tse-tung, "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," in Rejai, (ed.) Mao Tse-tung: On Revolution and War, pp. 138 - 143. In this article, Mao outlined the various classes in Chinese society and assessed their political positions and how likely they were to support or oppose the revolution.

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Chinese Foreign Policy towards Thailand, 1958-1984:
From Revolution to Cooperation.

by

Ronald Garson B.A. Honours in Political Science
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
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July 10, 1984

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1958-1984: FROM REVOLUTION TO COOPERATION"

submitted by Ronald Garson, Hons. B.A.
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ABSTRACT

Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand has reflected Chinese concerns with the security environment in Southeast Asia. The promotion of revolution in Thailand in the 1960's reflected Chinese concerns with Thai cooperation with American policy in Indochina. It did not reflect a genuine Chinese desire to spread revolution to Thailand. Security concerns continued to underlie China's Thailand policy in the 1970's and 1980's; however, a changed security environment in Southeast Asia necessitated a change in Sino-Thai relations. A diminishing American presence, combined with growing Soviet influence, in the region led China to seek improved relations with the Thai Government while downgrading relations with the Communist Party of Thailand. The rise of Vietnamese influence in Southeast Asia accelerated this trend. Thus, while the appearance of Chinese policy towards Thailand changed dramatically in the period studied here, the end of that policy, namely the protection of Chinese security, remained largely constant.

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Introduction

Over the past twenty-five years, China's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia has undergone a marked change. Where once China promoted subversion of established governments, she now expresses support for the existing order. Nowhere is this shift in policy more apparent than in China's relations with Thailand. During the mid and late 1960's, China frequently advocated the overthrow of Thai Governments and expressed support for organizations intent on accomplishing that task. Yet, by the end of the 1970's, the Chinese Government was disowning the same organizations it had once supported and expressing support for the government it had once seemingly sought to overthrow.

It is the purpose of this paper to explain the factors behind this shift in Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand and in doing so to shed some light on the sources of Chinese foreign policy and the role of revolution in Chinese foreign policy. Thus, this paper seeks to explain why China first promoted revolution in Thailand in the 1960's and why this course was eventually abandoned in the 1970's.

It is the contention of this paper that, aside from the brief aberration of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand has been motivated primarily by security concerns and that this preoccupation with national security has remained at the heart of Chinese policy towards Thailand in both the 1960's and the 1970's. Thus, security

concerns and not ideological concerns were the primary determinants of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand throughout most of the period examined here. In other words, while the appearance of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand has changed considerably, the end of Chinese foreign policy has remained largely constant.

China's foreign policy towards Thailand has been chosen for study because of the importance Thailand has assumed for China in Southeast Asia throughout this period. During the 1960's, Chinese coverage of the insurgency in Thailand rivalled that of the Vietnam war. Moreover, since the improvement of relations between China and the ASEAN states in the 1970's Thailand has developed the closest ties with China of all the ASEAN states. Thus, Thailand provides a vivid picture of China's changed relations with Southeast Asian countries in general.

The period 1958-1984 was chosen for study in order to encapsulate the two periods of increasing hostility and cooperation between the two countries. The year 1958 was not chosen arbitrarily as a starting point; rather, it marks a year of increasingly poor relations between China and Thailand due to political developments within Thailand.

Finally, the paper has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter discusses existing literature on the role of revolution and ideology in Chinese foreign policy, as well as the particular brand of revolution preached by the Chinese, and ends with an explanation of the approach

towards Chinese foreign policy adopted in this paper. The second and third chapters are mainly descriptive surveys of China's foreign policy towards Thailand for the period 1958-1984 with the second chapter covering the period 1958 to 1969 - including, though, a brief discussion of pre-1958 Sino-Thai relations - and the third chapter dealing with the period from 1970 to the present day. Both chapters will discuss China's relations with Thailand at the state-to-state and the party-to-party level, although, because of the changing nature of China's relations with Thailand, the second chapter will focus on party-to-party relations and the third chapter on state-to-state relations. In addition to discussing Sino-Thai relations, the two chapters will also examine the security environment in Southeast Asia and the development of the insurgency in Thailand for the respective time periods. Lastly, a fourth chapter will analyze Chinese foreign policy for the entire period and present this paper's conclusions on the motivations behind Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand.

Chapter One

Revolution, Ideology, and Chinese Foreign Policy.

In September, 1965, the New China News Agency published a speech by Lin Biao entitled, "Long Live the Victory of the People's War."¹ In this speech, Lin Biao glorified the Chinese Revolution and urged Third World countries to emulate the Chinese example and throw off the yoke of American imperialism. By doing so these countries would each contribute to the piecemeal destruction of American imperialism and usher in a new socialist world-order.

While Lin Biao's speech was received with great alarm in some circles,² its message was not atypical of many previous Chinese statements. Indeed, Chinese Communist leaders have long displayed a tendency to hold up their successful revolution as an example for others to follow. For example, in 1949, Liu Shaoqi, in an address to a group of trade unionists, noted the relevance of China's revolutionary experience for other Third World countries.

The road taken by the Chinese people in defeating imperialism and in founding the Chinese People's Republic is the road that should be taken by the peoples of many colonial and semi-colonial countries in their fight for national independence and people's democracy... This is the essential road on which the Chinese people marched to achieve victory in their country. This road is the road of Mao Tse-tung. It can also be the basic road for liberation of peoples of other colonial and semi-colonial countries where similar conditions exist. [3]

China's trumpeting of the relevance of her revolution for the Third World also contained within it an anti-Soviet

element. The Chinese did not merely confine themselves to the claim that their revolution was relevant for much of the Third World; instead, they argued that the Chinese Revolution was more relevant for the Third World than was the Russian Revolution. "The classic type of revolution in colonial and semicolonial countries is the Chinese Revolution."⁴ Moreover, as Sino-Soviet differences intensified, the Chinese only proclaimed more loudly the need for colonial and semi-colonial countries to follow the Chinese road.

Lin Biao's speech and the writings of Mao himself provide one with a detailed description of the Chinese model of revolution or people's war. The first and perhaps the most distinguishing feature of a people's war is that it must rely on the peasantry for its support. The reason for this is that, like China, most Third World countries have predominantly rural populations, hence, there is no real urban proletariat upon which a revolution can be based. Thus, in such rural societies, the peasantry provides the most numerous and reliable ally for an insurgent movement. "The poor peasants have always been the main force in the bitter fight in the countryside. They... are the most responsive to the Communist Party leadership. They are deadly enemies of the camp of the local tyrants and evil gentry and attack it without the slightest hesitation."⁵

Moreover, the rural nature of these societies also

dictates the type of strategy one uses in a people's war.

"Since the base of a people's war is the countryside, the strategy of people's war is "to rely on the peasants, build rural base areas, and use the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities."⁶

While the peasants are the most reliable and numerous allies of a revolutionary movement, an effort should also be made to enlist other groups into the struggle through the means of a united front.

History shows that when confronted by ruthless imperialist aggression, a Communist Party must hold aloft the national banner and the patriotic and anti-imperialist people who form more than 90 per cent of a country's population so as to mobilize all positive factors, unite with all the forces that can be united, and isolate to the maximum the common enemy of the whole nation. [7]

The correct use of the united front is a crucial element in a people's war. A communist party, using the principles of Marxism-Leninism, must correctly identify the major enemy of the people and determine what groups in society can be rallied to oppose that enemy.⁸ Hence, the correct use of the united front enables a communist party to broaden its support while simultaneously isolating the enemy and denying them potential allies or, at the very least, possible neutrals in the struggle.

Once the principal enemy of the people has been defeated, the communist party will bring forth a new definition of the situation and a new principal enemy will be identified and set upon by a reconstituted united front. This process will continue until all enemies of the people have been

defeated and the communist party emerges triumphant. Given such a strategy, it is apparent that, in a united front, "the Communist Party must maintain its ideological, political and organizational independence and initiative, and insist on its leading role."⁹

A third crucial ingredient in a people's war are the particular types of military tactics it employs. A people's war is a protracted guerrilla war or, in other words, a war of attrition. Large-scale confrontations with a superior enemy in the initial stages of the war are to be avoided in favour of limited attacks when conditions favour the guerrillas. "We fight when we can win and move away when we can't."¹⁰ Or, in the more famous slogan of Mao: "The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue."¹¹ It is only in the latter stages of the armed struggle, when the guerrillas are facing a demoralized and weakened enemy and have themselves become much stronger, that more conventional tactics such as full-scale, fixed position confrontations will be used.

A final important element of a people's war is that a revolution must be self-reliant. "The liberation of the masses is accomplished by the masses themselves - this is a basic principle of Marxism-Leninism. Revolution or people's war in any country is the business of the masses in that country and should be carried out primarily by their own efforts; there is no other way."¹² This is not to say,

however, that successful revolutionary régimes should deny any support to struggling movements in other parts of the world. On the contrary, "[t]he peoples of the world invariably support each other in their struggles against imperialism and its lackeys. Those countries which have won victories are duty bound to support and aid the peoples who have not yet done so. Nevertheless, foreign aid can only play a supplementary role."¹³ Thus, some Chinese aid would be given to revolutionary movements, but the Chinese commitment to such movements would be limited.

While "Long Live the Victory of the People's War" is mainly concerned with matters of correct strategy in wars of national liberation and with extolling the wisdom of Mao's path to power, a brief attempt is also made to apply the people's war strategy at a global level. "Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called 'the cities of the world,' then Asia, Africa, and Latin America constitute 'the rural areas of the world.' ...In a sense, the contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas."¹⁴ Thus, Lin Biao suggested that the people's war strategy had not only domestic but international applications as well. At the international level, people's war could be used to hasten the demise of capitalist countries and end their domination and exploitation of the developing world. Successful revolutions in the Third World - or countryside- would result in the downfall of the capitalist

world - or cities - just as surely as the control of the countryside and encirclement of the cities in a guerrilla war would ensure a victory for revolutionary forces.

Exactly what type of strategy would be used to capture these "encircled cities" was not made clear. Nevertheless, Lin Biao did attach great importance to these rural areas. "The whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population."¹⁵ Thus, according to Lin Biao, the locus of world revolution had shifted from the class struggle in capitalist countries to national liberation struggles in the Third World.

Lin Biao's views of the role of the Third World in the anti-imperialist strategy were by no means original. In fact, before the success of the Chinese Revolution, Mao had expressed similar views on the Third World's role in revolutionary strategy. In his 1946 conversation with Anna Louise Strong, Mao had expressed the view that prior to any attack on the Soviet Union, the United States would have to subjugate the "vast zone which includes many capitalist, colonial, and semi-colonial countries in Europe, Asia and Africa"¹⁶ that lay between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. However, Mao predicted that these countries would eventually rise up against the United States: "I believe it won't be long before these countries come to realize who is really oppressing them, the Soviet Union or the United States.

The day will come when the U.S. reactionaries find themselves opposed by the people of the whole world."¹⁷ Thus, Chinese predictions of revolution in the Third World predated their own successful revolution.

While Chinese leaders have repeatedly voiced their support for revolution in other countries, there is much debate among scholars as to how seriously their rhetoric ought to be taken. To many, Lin Biao's speech was proof enough of China's aggressive and subversive tendencies. In the words of Dean Rusk, "the Chinese Communist leaders are dedicated to a fanatical and bellicose Marxist-Leninist-Maoist doctrine of world revolution. Last fall, Lin Piao, the Chinese Communist Minister of Defense, recapitulated in a long article Peking's strategy of violence for achieving Communist domination of the world."¹⁸ Rusk's apocalyptic views were shared by the American writer on Chinese military strategy, Samuel B. Griffith, who likened Mao's strategy to that of Genghis Khan who had also "once hoped 'to roll up All-under-Heaven like a mat, and put the four seas in a bag'"¹⁹ and warned ominously that "the Chinese are masters of espionage, propaganda, agitation, subversion, bribery, blackmail, and selective terror, and they will apply these methods in target countries to create 'storm centres of world revolution.'"²⁰

A.M. Halpern²¹ also argued that the Chinese pursued a policy of support for revolution in other countries but that that support was much more calculating and pragmatic

than was supposed by Rusk or Griffith. According to Halpern, China's attitude towards insurgents in various parts of the world was determined by her assessment of the global balance of power. Thus, when China perceived herself to be in a subordinate position to the West she played down her support for foreign revolutions and focussed instead on her own defence and internal problems. However, when China felt that the West was on the decline she accordingly increased her support for revolution in order to hasten the demise of the capitalist world.

According to Halpern, the increasing Chinese support for revolution in the late 1950's and early 1960's was linked to Chinese perceptions of a change in the global balance of power. The launch of Sputnik 1 signalled to the Chinese the decisive shift in world power from the West to the East. According to the Chinese view, the West was now on the decline and the socialist countries could safely and securely mount an offensive against imperialist outposts in the Third World. For Halpern, "the publication immediately after the Quemoy incident of 1958 of Mao Tse-tung's 'Imperialists and All Reactionaries are Paper Tigers' was one of the clear signs of the Chinese belief that the Western world was now vulnerable to a world-wide offensive against imperialism."²²

Moreover, Chinese statements during this period indicate that the importance of the Third World increased for the Chinese. According to Zhou Enlai, "Asia, Africa and Latin

America, which used to be the imperialist rear, have now come to the forefront in the fight against aggression and colonialism."²³ Moreover, said Zhou, "[w]e are ready to give support and assistance to the full extent of our capabilities to all national independence movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America."²⁴

Halpern's view, then, is not substantially different from that of Rusk's. Both see a China bent on the spread of revolution and socialism through the process of armed struggle. However, Halpern points to the simultaneously pragmatic and revolutionary nature of Chinese foreign policy. Revolution is not a policy promoted mindlessly and continuously by the Chinese. Instead, it is used or neglected according to larger considerations than ideological purity, namely, the global balance of power. Nevertheless, the end of such a policy remains the promotion of revolution and socialism.

Other observers have argued that, in fact, Chinese rhetoric cannot be accepted at face-value and that the Chinese have actually been quite cautious in their support for revolutionary movements. For example, in his paper, "People's War: Vision vs. Reality,"²⁵ Hammond Rolph argued that Chinese statements in support of foreign revolutions usually did not translate into more tangible forms of support.

There has always been a wide gap between Peking's aspirational and operational foreign policies - the former typified by Lin Piao's 1965 speech and the unceasing

publication of inspirational messages from Mao to "revolutionary peoples" in every corner of the globe, the latter demonstrated by the relatively restrained measures China actually takes toward realization of the grandiose concepts.[26]

Rolph felt that China's lack of assistance to various insurgencies throughout the world could be largely explained by China's lack of the logistical capabilities required to supply material to far corners of the globe. Thus, Western fears of China's exporting revolutions to all parts of the world betrayed an unrealistic assessment of actual Chinese capabilities. Moreover, Rolph predicted that future developments might lead to a de-emphasis of people's war in Chinese foreign policy. First, as the Chinese acquired a nuclear weapons capability, people's war would gradually be abandoned as a defensive strategy for China itself with the possible spin-off result that people's war would also play a less important role in Chinese foreign policy. Second, Rolph noted the possibility that a more pragmatic leadership might emerge after the death of Mao and favour conventional over revolutionary diplomacy. Finally, Rolph argued that people's war had not proven to be as invincible as was once supposed and that as a consequence of the failures of many insurgent groups, the Chinese might abandon efforts to promote revolutions in foreign countries. Thus, for Rolph, the Chinese had not displayed a marked tendency to export revolution throughout the world and, moreover, it was quite possible that revolution would, in the future, become

an even less significant part of Chinese foreign policy.

Like Rolph, Peter Van Ness adopted a more sceptical approach towards Chinese pronouncements on revolution than did Halpern.²⁷ According to Van Ness, the Chinese did little over the years to assist foreign insurgencies and instead "restricted their assistance to foreign revolutionaries primarily to vocal moral support broadcast by the Chinese radio and published in the official press."²⁸

Van Ness cites several factors that contributed to Peking's lack of support for foreign insurgencies. First, China lacked the resources to support many insurgencies. Second, China feared that promotion of a conflict in another country might draw in a major power that China lacked the capabilities to deal with. Finally, the Chinese themselves believed that revolutions had to be self-reliant, hence, China was not obligated to send large quantities of aid to foreign insurgencies. Thus, in addition to practical restrictions on Chinese aid-giving, there was also an ideological restriction on China's promotion of revolution.

This is not to say, however, that the promotion of revolution had no place in Chinese foreign policy. On the contrary, revolution had an important and practical part to play in Chinese foreign policy. According to Van Ness, the threat of revolution was used by the Chinese as a bargaining lever to punish anti-Peking governments or to prevent countries from becoming too closely allied

with an enemy of the PRC.

[T]he Chinese use of support for wars of national liberation might be best described as an international power politics approach. Peking would support virtually any revolutionary organization, regardless of its leadership, ideology, or strategy, if the Chinese wanted to oppose the government, which that organization was seeking to overthrow. On the other hand, Peking would not support pro-Chinese CP-led revolutionary organizations adopting the correct Maoist ideological and strategic policies if the Chinese did not want to oppose the government which that organization was attacking.[29]

In fact, for the year Van Ness studied, 1965, he found that "the primary factor in Peking's decision [to support a revolution] [was] the nature of the policy pursued by the government of a particular country with respect to the People's Republic of China. The likelihood of the country's being endorsed as a TR [target of revolution] varies according to important aspects of its government's relative official friendliness or hostility toward Peking."³⁰

Van Ness did not wholly discount the influence of ideology in Chinese foreign policy; in fact, he saw ideological factors as being important concerns of Chinese foreign policy during the Cultural Revolution. However, Van Ness' general assessment of Chinese foreign policy was that it "was first and foremost concerned with the preservation and security of the state and the development of its power and prestige."³¹

The approach adopted in this paper most closely resembles that of Van Ness. That is, it will be argued that Chinese foreign policy toward Thailand, throughout the period under study here, reflected Chinese concern

over threats to her security. Thus, the promotion of revolution in Thailand will not be seen as a Chinese attempt to spread socialism to other countries but as a response to a perceived threat to Chinese security. Similarly, the increasingly friendly relations between China and Thailand in the 1970's and 1980's will be shown to be a byproduct of the changed security environment in Southeast Asia. This approach has been adopted not simply because a study of Sino-Thai relations seems to justify it but also because of the nature of foreign policy-making in general.

Those who stress the role of ideological goals in Chinese foreign policy generally tend to see "foreign policy as internally developed"³² and view "China as primarily an active initiator of events rather than as simply reacting to them."³³ This is not to say, however, that Chinese foreign policy is immune to the pressures of the international environment. Obviously, Chinese foreign policy-makers could not remain impervious to external developments but those holding to this view of Chinese foreign policy would argue that "any changes in China's foreign policy that might take place in response to external developments would be conceived of by Peking as merely tactical adjustments to exploit fresh opportunities or to take account of new circumstances, with no alteration of long-term strategic aims."³⁴ Hence, changing fortunes, shifting alliances, and international crises would not alter

China's long-term ideological goal of promoting socialism in other countries. Thus, decisions would always be made with the objective of how best to further the cause of socialism in other countries. Retreats might be required but they would be tactical retreats and would not reflect an abandonment of the strategic goal of spreading socialism.

The ideological view of Chinese foreign policy reflects a misunderstanding of the role of objectives in foreign policy-making. While it is true that decision-makers do pursue objectives when making foreign policy, it is doubtful that the promotion of world revolution can ever be the core objective of any state's foreign policy. To illustrate this, it is useful to conceive of foreign policy objectives in terms of three categories.³⁵ The first category consists of what one might call core objectives. In the present international system of competing sovereign states, the core objective of any state is the preservation of national security and the protection of territorial integrity. Until this objective is achieved no other objectives can be attained.

Second are middle-range objectives such as the promotion of trade, the establishment of diplomatic relations, and the distribution of foreign aid. Third are long-range or ultimate objectives, "those plans, dreams, and visions concerning the ultimate political or ideological organization of the international system, rules governing relations in that system, and the role of

specific nations within it."³⁶ Hence, the promotion of world revolution can be considered to be a long-range or ultimate objective.

What is argued here is that the nature of the international system and of foreign policy-making will restrict decision-makers to pursuing core and middle-range objectives while abandoning long-range or ultimate objectives. Decision-makers may have hopes of creating a new world order but such objectives are rarely operative in their actual decision-making.

To begin with, policy-makers operate in an environment that they can neither avoid nor control. They are continually bombarded by external pressures - i.e. the foreign policy-decisions of other states - that they must respond to but their knowledge of these pressures is imperfect and the amount of time they have to assess the import of these pressures and to formulate an appropriate response is limited. Given such a situation, it is likely that policy-makers will only attempt to achieve what is essential or feasible and will postpone the pursuit of ultimate objectives to a later date. Thus, core and middle-range objectives will be the operative objectives of foreign policy-makers.

Further, as policy-makers become preoccupied with pursuing core and middle-range objectives, one can assume that the ultimate objectives will become more and more the stuff of platitudinous foreign policy speeches. In the

words of one political scientist, "concentration on short-range objectives and adjustment to political realities has...caused the means to eat up the ends."³⁷

This tendency to sacrifice ultimate ideological objectives to more pressing concerns such as national security is a common feature of the international system. It is common for revolutionary movements to assume power full of hopes of extending their revolution to other countries, but soon learning that the defence of the nation-state comes first of all. For example, shortly after the Russian Revolution Lenin expressed the view that world revolution was more important than Russia itself. "We are creating a socialist state. From now on Russia will be the first state in which a socialist regime has been established. Ah, you are shrugging your shoulders. Well, you have still more surprises coming! It isn't a question of Russia. No, gentlemen, I spit on Russia! That's only one stage we have to pass through on our way to world revolution!"³⁸ The implication of Lenin's statement is that ultimate long-range objectives are more important than more traditional objectives such as national security, yet Lenin was soon to learn that the protection of national security had to be a core value of Soviet foreign policy, a position maintained by later Soviet leaders.³⁹ Indeed, since that time the Soviet Union has often demonstrated a willingness to cultivate relations with ideologically hostile regimes when it served state interests.⁴⁰ Thus,

it is almost an iron law of international politics that long-range ideological objectives must be sacrificed to the interests of the state.

This is not to say, however, that ideology plays no role in a nation's foreign policy. While long-range ideological goals are unlikely to play a role in any country's foreign policy, ideology does play a role in shaping decision-makers' perception of the world around them. Thus, it provides decision-makers with a definition of the situation which in turn influences the decision-makers' response to the external environment. In this sense, all foreign policies have an ideological content to them. Secondly, there are middle-range goals that reflect ideological objectives. For example, irredentist claims can be seen as ideological goals, although strategic or economic motives may also underlie them. In addition, the Soviet Union and China compete for the ideological support of other communist parties for ideological, not national security reasons.

Thus it is not the intent of this paper to argue that there was no ideological content in China's foreign policy toward Thailand. Rather it is to demonstrate that while ideology did play a role in Chinese foreign policy toward Thailand, the core value of China's policy has been the protection of her national security and that the promotion of revolution in Thailand was designed for that

purpose and did not reflect a more general goal of the promotion of world revolution. That this was so will become even clearer when Sino-Thai relations in the 1970's are examined. To begin with, though, this paper will turn to an examination of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand in the late 1950's and 1960's.

Footnotes

¹ Lin Piao, "Long Live the Victory of the People's War," in Samuel B. Griffith, Peking and People's Wars. (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 51 - 114.

² See for example, Griffith's analysis of the speech in his Peking and People's Wars, pp. 3-48 passim.

³ Liu Shaoqi in Donald S. Zagoria, "Some Comparisons between the Russian and Chinese models," in A. Doak Barnett (ed) Communist Strategies in Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Governments and Parties. (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 17.

⁴ Lu Ting-i in Zagoria, "Some Comparisons between the Russian and Chinese Models," p. 17.

⁵ Mao Tse-tung, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," in M. Rejai (ed) Mao Tse-tung: On Revolution and War. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), p. 151.

⁶ Lin Piao, "People's War," p. 71.

⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸ An example of this can be found in, Mao Tse-tung, "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," in Rejai, (ed.) Mao Tse-tung: On Revolution and War, pp. 138 - 143. In this article, Mao outlined the various classes in Chinese society and assessed their political positions and how likely they were to support or oppose the revolution.

- 9 Lin Piao, p. 68.
- 10 Ibid., p. 83.
- 11 Mao Tse-tung, "A Single Spark can Start a Prairie Fire," in Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung. (Vol. 1), (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), p. 124.
- 12 Lin Piao, p. 85.
- 13 Ibid., p. 88.
- 14 Ibid., p. 95.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Mao Tse-tung, "Talks with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong," Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung. (Vol. 4) (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961), p. 99.
- 17 Mao, "Talks with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong," pp. 99 - 100.
- 18 Dean Rusk, "United States Policy Toward Communist China," in Franz Schurmann & Orville Schell (eds.), Communist China: Revolutionary Reconstruction and International Confrontation. (New York: Vintage, 1966), p. 510.
- 19 Griffith, Peking and People's Wars, p. 11.
- 20 Ibid., p. 12.
- 21 A.M. Halpern, "The Foreign Policy Uses of the Chinese Revolutionary Model," in King C. Chen (ed.) The Foreign Policy of China. (Roseland: East-West Who? Inc., 1972), pp. 115 - 131.
- 22 Halpern, "The Foreign Policy Uses of the Chinese Revolutionary Model," p. 122.
- 23 Zhou Enlai, in Halpern, p. 123.
- 24 Ibid.

²⁵ Hammond Rolph, "People's War: Vision vs. Reality," Orbis. Vol. 14. (1970 - 1971), pp. 572 - 587.

²⁶ Rolph, "People's War: Vision vs. Reality," pp. 585 - 587.

²⁷ See: Peter Van Ness, Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); and Peter Van Ness, "Mao Tse-tung and Revolutionary 'Self-Reliance,'" Problems of Communism. Vol. 20 No. 1 - 2 (January - April, 1971), pp. 68 - 74.

²⁸ Van Ness, "Mao Tse-tung and Revolutionary 'Self-Reliance,'" p. 71.

²⁹ Van Ness, Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy, p. 232.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 169.

³¹ Ibid, p. 197.

³² J.D. Armstrong Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 56.

³³ Armstrong, Revolutionary Diplomacy, p. 56.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ The following categorization is taken from K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis. (second edition) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 136 - 143.

³⁶ Holsti, International Politics, p. 142.

³⁷ Barrington Moore, Jr., quoted in Samuel L. Sharp, "National Interest: Key to Soviet Politics," in Erik P. Hoffman & Frederic J. Floron, Jr. (eds.) The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy. (New York: Aldine Pub., 1980), p. 113.

³⁸ Lenin, quoted in Holsti, p. 139n.

³⁹ See, Alvin Z. Rubenstein, Soviet Foreign Policy since World War Two: Imperial and Global. (Toronto: Little, Brown

and Company, 1981), p. 9.

40 Two examples of the Soviet Union pursuing good relations with ideologically hostile regimes are her relations with Nasser's Egypt and, more recently, the former military government of Argentina.

Chapter Two

China and Thailand: 1958 - 1969.

Before examining Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand in the period 1958-1969, it would be useful to sketch in the pattern of Sino-Thai relations in the preceding years. By doing so it can be shown that China did not pursue a uniformly hostile policy towards Thailand throughout the 1950's and, moreover, an understanding of Sino-Thai relations throughout the 1950's will help in understanding the reasons for the increasingly hostile relations between these two countries after 1958.

Sino-Thai Relations Prior to 1958.

At the level of party relations, the exact nature of the ties between the two countries remains obscure. Indeed, both the origins of communism in Thailand and China's relations with communist groups in Thailand prior to the 1940's remain shrouded in mystery and subject to conflicting accounts. Nevertheless, an attempt should be made to reconstruct the confusing history of this period.

The earliest communist activity in Thailand was not directed at reforming Thai society but at other countries in the region.¹ For example, Ho Chi Minh was sent to Bangkok in 1928 as a Comintern agent for Southeast Asia where he was reportedly active among Thailand's 30,000 Vietnamese residents.² It is also likely that the Indonesian communist, Tan Malaka, was active in Chiang Mai

province in Northern Thailand in the mid - 1920's.³ As for the Chinese, it has been alleged that in the 1920's the Far East Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party sent six members to Thailand to create a communist party among Thailand's Chinese population.⁴ Thus, initial communist activity in Thailand was oriented towards events outside the country and was not a reflection of political or social conditions within Thailand.

The actual origins of the CPT itself are somewhat obscure. A Communist Party of Siam seems to have existed in the early 1930's and it is possible that its members had attended a meeting of South Seas communist parties in October 1924.⁵ However, this party eventually vanished from view and the most prominent communist party during the 1930's was the Chinese Communist Party of Thailand (CCPT), a party based largely among Thailand's Chinese population.⁶ According to the testimony of one of the members of the CCPT, Major Chiu Chee, there was a Thai Communist Party existing at this time led by Prasert Sabsunthorn, but it was not affiliated with the CCPT.⁷

Thus, it is possible that an indigenous communist party existed in Thailand during the 1930's.⁸ Nevertheless, the CPT itself claims it was founded on 2 December 1942.⁹ A second party congress, probably held in Beijing, took place in 1952. CPT activities during these years remained insignificant, though, and there were probably never more than a few hundred communists in Thailand during this

period.¹⁰ Thus, the CPT was limited to the occasional clandestine distribution of leaflets in Bangkok and internal organizational work.¹¹

The CPT's lack of success in Thailand during these years can be attributed to several factors.¹² First, Thai Governments have traditionally acted to suppress any activities they considered to be communist, regardless of whether or not they were in fact communist.¹³ Thus, the CPT had to be content with mere survival rather than expansion for most of its existence prior to the 1960's. Second, unlike Vietnam for example, Thailand did not experience massive colonial intervention in her own affairs, thus depriving communists of a base of nationalistic resentment to draw on. Third, the predominance of Chinese and Sino-Thai in the CPT¹⁴ as well as the CPT's preoccupation with China's problems further denied them nationalist credentials.

Also important is the resistance of Thai values to Marxism. As many authors have noted, Thai Buddhism (Theravada Buddhism) stresses individual responsibility and "'salvation' through individual accumulation of merit."¹⁵ One is responsible for one's own fate and not for the fate of others.

By oneself is evil done;
By oneself one suffers;
By oneself evil is left undone;
By oneself one is purified;
Dhamapada [16]

Thus the notion of social obligation and responsibility

for the plight of others that is inherent in Marxism is inconsistent with Thai individualism. Finally, the economic structure of Thailand has not bred the sort of conditions that promote opportunities for Marxism. A large urban working class remained non-existent because of Thailand's lack of significant industrialization and an expanding bureaucracy absorbed an educated class that might otherwise have become alienated from Thai society. Moreover, the masses in Thailand have generally remained estranged from and uninterested in participating in the politics of the country thereby hindering the development of mass-based organizations that could translate economic or social grievances into political action.¹⁷ Thus, Marxism has encountered very infertile ground in Thailand.

The nature of relations between China and the CPT during this period is somewhat obscure. It appears that, before the 1960's, China was largely unconcerned with the fate of the CPT. Links between the CCP and the CPT were suggested, though, "when a principal leader of the TCP, Prasert Sabsunthorn, fled to China after the coup in Thailand in 1947."¹⁸ Moreover, as was previously noted, it is likely that the second session of the CPT's Central Committee was held in China in 1953.¹⁹ It has also been reported that, in the late 1950's, a small number of Thais were taken to China where they received political indoctrination.²⁰ Nevertheless, the CPT did not receive a great deal of Chinese attention during the 1950's, either from

Chinese policy-makers or the Chinese media. "A few CPT statements were broadcast by Radio Peking, but such attention was both sporadic and undramatic."²¹

This lack of concern also manifested itself in China's state-to-state relations with Thailand. When the Chinese did pay attention to Thailand it was usually because of American activity there or Thai mistreatment of the local Chinese population.²² Otherwise, China was content to ignore Thailand as a rather small and unimportant state in Southeast Asia.

It was not until the mid-1950's that China began to express more interest in her relations with Thailand. This burgeoning interest in her relations with Thailand resulted largely from China's desire to stem growing American influence in Southeast Asia, and especially in Thailand and Indochina. On September 8, 1954, Thailand had signed the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, along with the United States, France, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Thailand had been one of the most forceful proponents of this treaty and SEATO itself was headquartered in Bangkok. By the terms of this treaty, each member-state would take whatever measures it deemed appropriate to its constitutional processes to aid a fellow-member threatened by external aggression or subversion.²³ The Chinese viewed this treaty as being obviously directed at China, a view reinforced by the

blustery anti-China speeches emanating from American statesmen.²⁴

Chinese concern with Thailand did not restrict itself to Thailand's membership in SEATO; China was also worried about the possible role Thailand might play in the event of American intervention in Indochina. With the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the Chinese feared that the United States, with Thai cooperation, might intervene massively in Vietnam.

In early 1954, Peking charged that the United States was working out a war plan for Thailand. And the government in Bangkok was accused of making war preparations. After the fall of Dien Bien Phu [May 7] and the commencement of the Geneva Conference, Peking accused the United States of turning Thailand into a base for aggression.[25]

It would be mistaken, however, to see Thailand's alignment with the US during this period as reflecting an aggressive policy toward China. Indeed, one might argue that the Thais were just as apprehensive of the Chinese as the Chinese were of the Thais. In 1953, the Chinese had established a Thai autonomous region in Yunnan and the Thai Government feared that this region would be used to train and equip subversives who would then be returned to Thailand to carry out guerrilla activities.²⁶

Just as alarming was the appearance in Beijing in July, 1954, of a former Thai leader, Pridi Phanomyong. Pridi Phanomyong had been active in Thai politics since the early 1930's when he served in the government that had overthrown the system of absolute monarchy in Thailand.²⁷ During the

Second World War, Pridi, unlike the Thai Government, chose to oppose Japanese power in Southeast Asia and helped organize the Free Thai resistance movement. With the end of Japanese influence in Thailand after the war, Pridi emerged as the dominant force in Thai politics until a 1947 coup forced him to flee Thailand. Although Pridi had played an important role in Thai Governments both before and after the war, he was distrusted by conservative Thais. In the early 1930's, Pridi had proposed an Economic Plan for Thailand that called for the nationalization of all farm land and government control of the production and distribution of rice.²⁸ Conservative Thai politicians branded Pridi a communist, a charge that lingered on in conservative minds for years afterward.²⁹ Thus, it was with great trepidation that the Thai Government greeted his call from Beijing "for the people of Thailand to wage a struggle against their rulers, who were deemed puppets of U.S. imperialism."³⁰ As far as the Thai leaders were concerned, this was proof enough of Beijing's subversive intentions in Thailand.

The Thai were also uneasy about their Chinese population, fearing that the overseas Chinese might serve as a fifth column for Beijing.³¹ Thai leaders had traditionally distrusted the role of the Chinese in Thailand - a distrust exacerbated by the communist victory in China in 1949³² - and were made more suspicious by the fact that the CPT

leadership was comprised mainly of Sino-Thai cadres.

Despite the prominence of the Sino-Thais in the CPT, it would be wrong to view Thailand's Chinese population as consisting mainly of CPT supporters and agents of the PRC. In fact, the Thai have been quite successful in assimilating their overseas Chinese. In 1949, the Thai Government drastically reduced the number of Chinese immigrants being admitted into Thailand, thereby isolating the Sino-Thai from "a perpetual renewal and reminder of 'Chinese-ness' by the flow of incoming migrants."³³ At the same time, the Thai Government sought to restrict the freedom of Chinese schools in Thailand and to channel the overseas Chinese into Thai schools. Thus the majority of third and second-generation Chinese have attended Thai schools. Intermarriage between Chinese and Thai, as well as the adoption of Thai names by many Chinese, has further accelerated the assimilation process. Finally, the success of the Chinese in business and the bureaucracy has militated against greater Chinese involvement in revolutionary activity. As successful businessmen and bureaucrats, the Chinese have a strong interest in maintaining the status quo. Nevertheless, the Thai Government retained its distrust of the ethnic Chinese and continued to watch carefully for any untoward ties between that community and the PRC.

During the mid-50's, China sought to defuse Thai fears- and, for that matter, Southeast Asian fears- of Chinese intentions in the region. This phase of Chinese diplomacy,

commonly known as the Bandung period (after the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian Nations), marked an effort by China to improve its relations with all countries, but especially those in the developing world.³⁴ Through the use of conventional diplomacy, China sought the international recognition she had been denied and also sought to diminish American influence in Asia. Thailand, as a member of the developing world and as an Asian friend of the United States was naturally a target of Chinese diplomacy. China sought to woo Thailand away from the United States by stressing the costs of Thailand's relationship with the United States and the benefits that could be derived from better relations with the PRC. The Chinese argued that the United States' relationship with Thailand was essentially exploitive and unequal and that the Thai economy had been harmed by the trade embargo on China. Thus, the Chinese argued, a friendlier Thai position towards China and a more distant one from the United States would be beneficial for Thailand.³⁵

The Bandung Conference itself provided China and Thailand with an opportunity to express their concerns to each other and to seek some sort of reconciliation between the two countries. Prince Wan, Thailand's Foreign Minister at that time, expressed his government's concern over the possible Chinese motives in establishing the Thai autonomous region in Yunnan, the activities of Pridi Phanomyong in

this region, and the role of the ethnic Chinese in Thailand itself. "In short he politely said Thailand fears both invasion and subversion by the communist world, affirming that Thailand's adherence to SEATO was purely defensive and that war for self-defence was just."³⁶

Zhou Enlai sought to reassure Prince Wan that China was not intent on subverting the status quo in Thailand by inviting Thailand to send a delegation to the Thai autonomous region and assured Prince Wan that Pridi was not involved in any subversive activities in the Thai autonomous region. In addition, Zhou offered to settle the question of overseas Chinese in Thailand by means of a treaty similar to one successfully negotiated with Indonesia just before the opening of the Bandung Conference.³⁷

Thailand was somewhat receptive to China's overtures. SEATO had failed to provide the firm security guarantees Thailand had sought, hence, an accommodation with China was seen as a way to ease Thai security concerns. In addition, Thai leaders were not as enamoured with the United States as they had once been because the United States had refused to support large aid projects in Thailand. Thus, the Thais felt that much could be gained by improved relations with the PRC.

As a result, China's diplomacy of compromise began to bear fruit. Thailand hinted that it might change its policy of non-recognition of the PRC and might even recognize China the moment it entered the United Nations.

In 1956, Thailand announced "that Thai merchants would be permitted to visit China and that normal trade relations except in strategic goods could be resumed."³⁸ From this moment onwards Sino-Thai relations became increasingly friendly. Beginning in January 1956, with the visit of the Thai People's Mission for the Promotion of Friendship and carrying through to 1958, a stream of unofficial delegations consisting of trade unionists, journalists, and sports and cultural figures visited the PRC. Once in the PRC they were feted by government officials and treated to homilies on the non-aggressive nature of China's policy towards Thailand. "The theme of all trips was peace and friendship, the pacific nature of China's position, the advantages to be gained by good relations with China and the condemnation, implicit or explicit, of close relations with the United States."³⁹

This period was also marked by a high degree of political liberalization and free debate within Thailand. In particular, the foreign policy orientation of Thailand was increasingly questioned by those favouring a more neutralist foreign policy. In January, 1957, a Socialist Front was created by a number of neutralist and leftist parties. "The foreign policy of this front called for a neutralist stance on the basis of peaceful co-existence, denounced the United States and SEATO, and called for diplomatic relations with China."⁴⁰ The Socialist Front hoped to gain power in the February 1957 elections; however,

the elections were rigged⁴¹ and, altogether, leftist candidates won only 21 of 160 seats.⁴²

While the election was a disappointment to leftist and neutralist hopes, what was even more damaging to them was the military coup that followed the election. In September, 1957, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat staged a coup that overthrew the newly installed government of Phibun Songkram and eventually appointed Thanom Kittikachorn as Thailand's Prime Minister. This coup was followed in October 1958 by a second coup which further consolidated Sarit's power. Sarit justified his coups by claiming that Thailand was threatened by communist subversion. Internally, the increasing criticism of Thailand's alliance with the United States was seen as proof of communist subversion while, externally, the stepped-up activities of the communist Pathet Lao in Laos and the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia on 22 July 1958 were seen as creating security threats to Thailand.⁴³ Under the new Sarit regime, "leftist politicians were arrested, neutralist newspapers were closed down [and] a total ban of Chinese imports was soon instituted."⁴⁴ China's Bandung diplomacy towards Thailand appeared to lie in ruins.

The Deterioration of Sino-Thai Relations.

For the Chinese, this sudden reversal of their carefully cultivated ties with Thailand must have been particularly galling. Yet, the Chinese reaction to Sarit's new policies was surprisingly mild. The initial reporting

of the ban on the import of Chinese goods was very factual and free from any invective against or condemnation of Thai authorities.⁴⁵ While the Chinese media characterized the ban as "an extremely unfriendly act,"⁴⁶ the Chinese used a carrot rather than a stick to persuade the Thai authorities to repeal the trade ban. An official of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade "pointed out that the U.S. imperialists don't want a growth of friendly relations between China and Thailand, that the Thai government is doing just as the U.S. wants and this will certainly do no good to Thailand."⁴⁷

The Chinese reaction to the Sarit regime's harassment of overseas Chinese in Thailand was similarly mild.⁴⁸ The Chinese Government expressed a desire to live in peace with the Thais and called for an end to the persecution of the Chinese population in that country. No call for struggle against the Thai authorities was issued and the Chinese even suggested that the Thai Government was not fully responsible for their actions. "It [the persecution of Chinese] derives from the fact that the Thailand authorities, under the pressure of the United States have gone a step further in following U.S. policy [of sowing discord between China and Thailand]."⁴⁹

That the Chinese did react so mildly to the actions of the Sarit regime reflects their unwillingness to risk irreparable damage to their relations with Thailand. It is likely that the Chinese believed that, as long as they

reacted calmly and reasonably to the Thai regime's hostile actions. Eventually, friendly relations might again be restored. Thus, blame for the deterioration in Sino-Thai relations was attributed to American machinations and pressure and the Chinese sought to persuade the Thais to alter their course by appealing to their self-interest rather than by resorting to threats.

While the Chinese were understandably perturbed at the failure of their Bandung diplomacy in Thailand - and for that matter, in the rest of Southeast Asia - they were even more concerned about the shift in Thailand's foreign policy towards the United States and Indochina under the Sarit regime and those that followed. Under Sarit, Thailand aligned itself more closely with the United States and even began demanding more American involvement in Indochina, and especially in Laos.⁵⁰

The Sarit years - he died in 1963 - marked the deepening of U.S. involvement in Thailand. This increased involvement resulted partially from Sarit's own inclination towards the United States and also partially reflected the continuation of a long tradition in Thai foreign policy. Thailand has traditionally allied herself with a major power in the region in order to safeguard her security and independence. For example, when France began exerting pressure on Thailand's eastern spheres of influence in Laos and Cambodia in the late nineteenth century, Thailand sought - rather unsuccessfully - British help in halting French expansionism.⁵¹ During

World War II, Thailand preserved vestiges of her independence - and recovered lost "Thai" territory in Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Malaya - by allying with Japan and declaring war on the Allied powers. Thus, the move towards the United States in the 1950's reflected a continuation of the past Thai policy of securing the support of a major power in the region to guarantee Thai security and independence.

This shift towards the United States in Thai foreign policy was also aided by a changed American perception of Thailand's importance in Southeast Asia. The United States had long considered Thailand a valuable non-communist friend in Asia;⁵² however, in the early sixties, Thailand assumed a more important role in U.S. strategic thinking. Whereas the United States had previously been mainly concerned with keeping Thailand non-communist, "after 1961, these limited objectives were replaced by a more ambitious design with a much broader regional impact: Thailand was to become the major U.S. strategic base on the Southeast Asian mainland, and the focal point of American plans to influence events on the Indochinese peninsula."⁵³

Concrete signs of increasing American interest in Thailand soon followed. Vice-President Johnson visited Thailand in May, 1961, and "emphasized in several formal speeches...that the time had come for implementing the United States desire to help safeguard free nations against communist aggression."⁵⁴ Johnson also raised the possibility of placing U.S., and perhaps SEATO troops in

Thailand and agreed that U.S. military assistance to Thailand should be stepped up to counter "intensified communist pressure from the direction of Laos."⁵⁵ In March of the following year, the Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, and the American Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, signed a joint statement on Thailand in which the United States reaffirmed its commitment to Thailand.

The Secretary of State reaffirmed that the United States regards the preservation of the independence and integrity of Thailand as vital to the national interests of the United States and to world peace. He expressed the firm intention of the United States to aid Thailand, its ally and historic friend, in resisting communist aggression and subversion. [56]

The joint statement also reaffirmed that the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty provided "the basis for the signatories collectively to assist Thailand in case of Communist armed attack against that country."⁵⁷ Just two months after the signing, in a portent of things to come, U.S. marines landed in Thailand and for the first time American troops were permanently stationed in Thailand.⁵⁸

The Chinese media betrayed a noticeable concern over the progress of events in Thailand and Indochina. An article in Renmin Ribao noted that "nearly all the major conspiracies conducted by the United States in Laos were closely related to Thailand and not a few of them were carried out by the country."⁵⁹ As a mark of the deteriorating relations between the PRC and Thailand, the Thai Government was now referred to as "the reactionaries of Thailand"⁶⁰ and were warned that "[t]hose who play with fire will get

themselves burnt."⁶¹

While the Chinese were concerned about Thai activities in Laos, of greater concern to the PRC was continued Thai involvement in SEATO and the growing military co-operation between Thailand and the United States. During this period, China was concerned about the United States' growing influence throughout Southeast Asia and felt that the thrust of American policy in the region was essentially anti-Chinese. As far as the Chinese were concerned, the United States was engaged in a campaign of military encirclement of China.⁶²

...the U.S. maintains 390,000 troops in the Far East and the West Pacific Areas, over 100 military and guided missile bases around China and two naval fleets in the Pacific, of which the 7th Fleet has remained in the Taiwan Straits for a long time to threaten China with war. Since September 1958, the U.S. has intruded into the territorial waters and air space of China on 162 occasions...[63]

The Chinese media spoke of American plans to open up a second front in Asia⁶⁴ and noted that "various indications show that the United States was stepping up manoeuvres for extending its military adventures in Southeast Asia through the SEATO aggressive bloc, particularly its intervention in South Vietnam and Laos."⁶⁵

It is from this perspective of growing American involvement in Southeast Asia that China's policy towards Thailand in the 1960's must be understood. While the 1958 coup and the subsequently hostile Thai posture towards China undoubtedly contributed to worsening relations between

the two countries, Sino-Thai relations were ultimately poisoned by Thailand's collaboration with American policy in Southeast Asia. As was noted, the Chinese viewed American policy in the region as a threat to Chinese security and countries, such as Thailand and the Philippines, that aided the American effort in the region naturally became the target of China's wrath. The deterioration of Sino-Thai relations, then, must be considered in the context of the security environment in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the following pages will examine the growing American presence in Thailand and Thailand's deepening involvement in American policy in Indochina and illustrate the effect this had on Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand.

Chinese statements in the late 1950's and early 1960's betray a keen awareness of growing co-operation between Thailand and the United States. In 1959, the Peking Review reported that "early in February, U.S. and Thai ground forces conducted combined atomic warfare manoeuvres in the northern part of Thailand. Later in the first week of March, massive air manoeuvres of the SEATO countries were staged in Thailand, with China regarded openly as the potential enemy."⁶⁶ The arrival of American troops in Thailand was regarded by the Chinese as "part of the U.S. aggressive moves against the whole of Southeast Asia"⁶⁷ and, moreover, these aggressive moves were viewed as "a serious threat to the security of China. The Chinese people cannot remain indifferent to this."⁶⁸

The initial Chinese response to these perceived threats to her security was, at first, not remarkably strident. China's response to U.S.-Thai collaboration came mainly in two forms. First, the Chinese sought to appeal to Thai self-interest by alleging that the United States had entered into an alliance with Thailand with the intention of economically exploiting Thailand. The Thai people, the Chinese claimed, were forced to live in dire poverty because huge military expenditures crippled the Thai economy while "U.S. capitalists...raked in huge profits through the plunder and exploitation of Thailand."⁶⁹ The deleterious effects on the Thai economy of the embargo on trade with China was also a common theme..

The second type of Chinese response to U.S.-Thai collaboration consisted of predictions that this collaboration would not be universally approved of within Thailand and would generate resistance among the Thai people. "There is no doubt that the broad masses of the Thai people, who cherish independence and freedom, will absolutely not submit to oppression and bullying by U.S. occupation forces without resistance."⁷⁰ It is important to note here that, while this statement was not a direct threat against Thailand, it certainly implied that China would begin to support anti-government groups in Thailand if the Thai Government did not cease its co-operation with the United States. Thus, the threat to aid dissident elements in Thailand was to be used by the Chinese as lever to effect a change in Thai

foreign policy.

By 1961, it was apparent that China's predictions of instability in Thailand were beginning to materialize, albeit at a minor level. "In 1961, the TCP held a meeting of representatives of the party at which it was decided that the people should form their own groups to fight the enemy." This meeting, which may have been held in Peking, marked the first call ever of the TCP for armed struggle.⁷¹ A year earlier, rumours began circulating in Thailand that communists had begun infiltrating the hill tribes of Northern Thailand⁷² and, according to one source, in July, 1962, 68 people from Thailand, including Thai, Sino-Thai, Vietnamese-Thai, and a small number of Meo, began training at the Hoa Binh training school in North Vietnam.⁷³ An organizational structure was also reportedly laid down in 1962 to support the impending insurgency. "In 1962 a Northeast Region Jungle Headquarters was established to direct the planned insurgency, and a Farmers Liberation Association was formed in the Northeast to support the jungle guerrillas. Similar organizations were initiated in the West Central and Mid-South areas, though they were less advanced than the Northeast groups."⁷⁴

However, communist activity during this period remained at an organizational and training level and the level of Chinese involvement appears to have been negligible. As was noted, the PRC provided a haven for Thai exiles and were thus apprised of their plans. Nevertheless, it is

unclear how much assistance the Chinese provided beyond that minimum level. One example of Chinese support was the clandestine radio station, 'Voice of the People of Thailand' (VPT), which began broadcasting in 1962. While its location has never been definitively ascertained, it is quite reasonable to suppose that it was located in China, perhaps in Yunnan.⁷⁵ In addition, in 1962, "a peddlers' invasion of communist-oriented teams and individuals was discovered in the northeastern provinces bordering the Mekong River."⁷⁶ It is possible that this caravan originated in China.

Overall, though, Chinese involvement in the fledgling Thai insurgency appears to have been insignificant. Thus, one must be careful not to view the Thai insurgency as entirely an invention of the PRC, that could be turned on or off at the PRC's bidding. Indeed, the regions later to be most affected by the insurgency- the North, Northeast, and South - had their own reasons to be alienated from the Thai Government in Bangkok. The Northeast, although the largest and most populous region of Thailand, was the poorest region of Thailand with a per capita income only 65 per cent that of the national average.⁷⁷ Moreover, the residents of this region were ethnically distinct from other regions, being mainly Thai-Lao in origin. Thus, their allegiance to the Thai Government was somewhat tenuous. Indeed, many Thai leaders feared that the Thai-Lao sought to secede from Thailand and join with Laos to create a greater Lao nation.⁷⁸ Finally, the region had a long

history of producing politicians who challenged the status quo; hence, dissent in the region was not simply a reflection of Chinese subversion.

Much the same held true in Northern and Southern Thailand. Northern Thailand is populated by various hill tribes, the predominant one among them being the Meo. These hill tribes had little affection for the Thai Government and those living in the lowlands and these feelings of hostility were returned by the Thais.⁷⁹ Competition for farmland between hill tribes and lowland Thais and Thai Government efforts to put an end to Meo swidden agriculture and opium cultivation also led to poor relations between the hill tribes and the Thais. These relations were further damaged by the questionable national status of these hill tribes. Many were treated as illegal immigrants entitled to no government services and those that did deal with the Thai Government had to do so in Thai, a language few could read or write. This lack of facility in the Thai language also meant that "avenues into government or even public education [were] virtually closed."⁸⁰ Thus, alienated and disgruntled hill tribes in the North provided a fertile ground for CPT recruitment.

Finally, in the South there was a substantial Muslim Malay population, again resentful of the central government and prone to secessionist appeals from some Muslims across the border in Malaysia. Government efforts to extinguish their language and culture and to replace

Islam with Buddhism led in 1948 to about 250,000 Thai Malays signing a petition "requesting the United Nations to preside over the secession of southern Thailand and its subsequent incorporation within the newly-formed Federation of Malaya."⁸¹ Thus, as in the North and Northeast, internal factors were important in fostering anti-government activity in the South.

It should also be noted that each of these regions displays characteristics favourable to guerrilla activity.⁸² Aside from being peripheral regions of Thailand and, therefore, not subject to firm central control, the mountains, hills, and dense vegetation in all three areas provide good cover for guerrilla operations. Moreover, the three regions, and especially the North and Northeast, allow access to supplies from, and possibly bases in, neighbouring countries. Guerrillas in the North would have easy access to China via Laos while those in the Northeast would have access to Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. Finally, insurgents in the South would have access to sympathetic supporters in Malaysia, though this support was made more problematic by joint Thai-Malaysian suppression operations along the Thai-Malaysian border in later years.

In sum, one cannot view the brewing insurgency in these regions as being entirely the work of the PRC. Disaffection and resentment of the Thai Government preceded China's hostility towards Thailand and it is likely that insurgents in these regions followed their own timetable

and not that of the PRC.⁸³ Thus, the Thai insurgency cannot be seen simply as an instrument of the Chinese with no aims of its own.⁸⁴

While Chinese involvement in the budding Thai insurgency during the early 1960's appears to have been rather insignificant, events within Southeast Asia and Thailand were to lead to a deepening of Sino-Thai hostility and to a more explicit association between China and insurgents in Thailand. The years 1964-1965 marked the beginning of an escalation of American involvement in Indochina and Thai collaboration in that involvement. Thailand's geographical position made her a valuable ally for the American effort in Indochina, providing the United States with a secure base for operations in neighbouring countries. Thus, the United States' first concern in Thailand in the mid-1960's was to build an infrastructure capable of aiding the war effort in Indochina. "In early 1964 the United States helped expand and build new Thai air bases which could be used if necessary by American aircraft operating over Vietnam."⁸⁵ Runways at Sattahip and Khonkaen were enlarged to handle B-52 bombers while the harbour at Sattahip was dredged and a 600 foot ammunition pier built.⁸⁶

This infrastructure was soon put to use. As early as September, 1964, the CIA was flying secret bombing missions from Udorn, Thailand, into Laos to bomb Laotian portions of the Ho Chi Minh trail. Many of the pilots on these

bombing missions were Thai.⁸⁷ In November, 1964, "the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended intensive air attacks on Laos and North Vietnam and discussions to be held 'with the Thais in securing authority for unlimited use of Thai bases.'"⁸⁸ In February, 1965, the United States began bombing North Vietnam and by April of the same year bombing missions into North Vietnam had begun originating in Karat in Central Thailand. By 1966, forty-five per cent of all bombing attacks against North Vietnam originated in Thailand.⁸⁹ As Thailand's involvement in the American effort in Indochina grew, so too did the American presence in Thailand. By July, 1966, over 25,000 U.S. servicemen were stationed in Thailand, double the number reported in January, 1965.⁹⁰

These activities did not pass unnoticed by the Chinese. Indeed, Chinese policy-makers were clearly distressed by the growing American presence in Southeast Asia. For the Chinese, the increased American involvement in Indochina demonstrated a larger American intention than merely saving South Vietnam; it demonstrated a change in America's global strategy.

Step by step U.S. imperialism is shifting the centre of gravity of its 'global strategy' from Europe to the Asian and Pacific regions. It already deploys more ground, naval and air forces in these regions than in Europe and the Atlantic region. It is certainly not for fun that U.S. imperialism is throwing so large a proportion of its military strength into the Asian and Pacific regions. It is undertaking an important strategic deployment of its forces, preparing to start an even bigger war of aggression in Asia. [91]

The focus of American aggression was also plain to the Chinese. Maps printed in Chinese journals portrayed China's encirclement by American bases and troop deployments.⁹² According to the Chinese media, "U.S. imperialism is tightening its military encirclement of China and preparing to launch an armed attack against it."⁹³ In order to achieve this goal, the United States was turning Asian countries into American bases and colonies and seeking "to line them up in its anti-China front and enlist them as pawns in its anti-China game."⁹⁴

While China was clearly, and understandably, concerned about developments in the region, she predicted defeat for American strategy in Asia. "Particularly in Southeast Asia, revolutionary storms are everywhere rising. U.S. efforts to put a lid on the Asian revolutionaries will only make the people's volcanoes explode with still greater force."⁹⁵ Even Zhou Enlai, the architect of China's Bandung diplomacy expressed a militant position towards the United States and her allies, promising Chinese support for all those fighting U.S. imperialism, although the form that support would take remained unspecified.

The Chinese mean what they say. In other words, if any country in Asia, Africa, or elsewhere meets with aggression by the imperialists headed by the United States, the Chinese government and people definitely will give it support and help. Should such just action bring on U.S. aggression against China, we will unhesitatingly rise in resistance and fight to the end. [96]

As might be expected, Thailand's role in American strategy in Southeast Asia did not pass unnoticed in the

Chinese media. The American military buildup in Thailand was duly noted and condemned⁹⁷ as was Thailand's May, 1966, decision to send naval and air units to fight in South Vietnam.⁹⁸ As before, but with increasing frequency, the Chinese media condemned Thai collusion with the United States and issued thinly veiled, but unspecific threats against the Thai Government.

As a cat's paw of U.S. imperialism the Thai authorities have tightly fastened themselves on to the American juggernaut of aggression against Indo-China. Meanwhile, they have set themselves up a police state to suppress the patriots. They will soon have to lie in the bed they have made for themselves. [99]

Thus, China's attitude towards the Thai Government remained fundamentally the same as before, although the hostility and frequency of her comments directed at Thailand increased considerably from 1964 to 1966. However, at another level, Chinese policy towards Thailand did exhibit an interesting and significant change. Whereas previous Chinese coverage of dissent in Thailand - for an insurgency had not yet developed by 1964 - had not referred to any specific organizations opposed to the Thai Government, the year 1964 marked a departure from this tradition. In 1964, China began to publicize the activities of subversive groups within Thailand and to express semi-official support for them. This development marked a new stage in the deterioration of Sino-Thai relations and reflected China's determination to punish Thailand for her cooperation with the United States. If Thailand was to continue aiding

American policy in the region then China would punish her for it by supporting dissident groups within Thailand.
China and the United Front in Thailand.

The first Thai organization to receive Chinese media attention was the Communist Party of Thailand. On 1 October 1964, the Central Committee of the CPT sent a message of greeting to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Aside from the praise of the Chinese Revolution and the policies of the Chinese Communist Party normally attendant upon such occasions, the CPT presented its analysis of recent developments within Thailand:

Subjected to U.S. imperialist aggression in the last few years, with the Sarit-Thanom clique pursuing a traitorous policy dictated by U.S. imperialism, Thailand has become a new type of colony and a most important military base of U.S. imperialism for aggression against the countries of Southeast Asia and for intervention against and suppression of the revolutionary movement of the peoples of these countries. Externally, the reactionary Thanom Government has become a slavish tool, is selling the country down the river, and is an accomplice of U.S. imperialism in the latter's aggression and intervention against Thailand's neighbours. Internally, it maintains a fascist dictatorship, and carries out unprecedented plunder and suppression of the people. [100]

The main issue concerning the CPT was the recent course of Thai foreign policy. The CPT condemned the Thai Government for adopting a hostile policy towards China and warned that "U.S. imperialists and the reactionary government cannot stop the Thai people, who are trying to break through all the various obstructions and maintain good relations with the Chinese people."¹⁰¹ The solution proposed by the CPT to deal with the reactionary policies of the Thai

Government was

that all the democratic classes, strata, public organizations and individuals should unite, form a patriotic democratic united front, drive the U.S. imperialists out of the country and overthrow the traitorous, fascist and dictatorial government. The Communist Party of Thailand is willing to co-operate with any groups or individuals that are against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, and is ready to work hard for this kind of co-operation and for the formation of the patriotic democratic united front. [102]

It was probably no coincidence, then, when, a month after the CPT message to the CCP, a new Thai organization announced its formation. A December 8 VPT broadcast announced that on November 1, the Thailand Independence Movement (TIM) had been founded. The apparent leader of TIM was a relatively unknown radical from Southern Thailand known as Mon Koh Nanakon,¹⁰³ although in the Chinese media he was referred to as the liaison representative of TIM in China.¹⁰⁴ Along with the announcement of the existence of TIM came the publication of their manifesto. Like the CPT, TIM called for the formation of a patriotic, democratic, united front for all "irrespective of their class or social standing, sex, age, history, occupation, or past record."¹⁰⁵ TIM also expressed the same basic objectives as the CPT, namely to "drive out the U.S. imperialist aggressors from Thailand [and] overthrow the traitorous, despotic Thanom government and set up another composed of patriotic and democratic parties and individuals and to be committed to a policy of neutrality and peace."¹⁰⁶

The formation of TIM in November, 1964, was followed

by the formation of the Thai Patriotic Front (TPF) on 1 January 1965. The probable leader of the TPF was Phayom Chulanont - although, again, the Chinese media simply described him as a representative of the TPF.¹⁰⁷ Phayom Chulanont was a former member of the Thai National Assembly and a former lieutenant-colonel in the Thai army. He was also a former classmate of Thailand's Deputy-Prime Minister Praphat Charusathian. Phayom had fled Thailand after Sarit's 1957 coup.¹⁰⁸ Like TIM, the TPF was dedicated to the overthrow of the Thai Government and the expulsion of the United States from Thailand.¹⁰⁹

The united front was rounded out in May, 1965, with the formation of the Federation of Patriotic Workers of Thailand.¹¹⁰ It is not known who led this organization - if indeed it actually existed - nor was much attention given to it after the occasion of its founding. Finally, in October, 1965, Pridi Phanomyong resurfaced in Beijing where he was received by Mao himself on the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary of the founding of the PRC.¹¹¹

While the messages of these front organizations were usually accompanied by little or no editorial comment when reprinted in the Chinese media, the organizations did occasionally receive unofficial and semi-official expressions of support from China, although the form this support would take was always left unspecified. For example, the Federation of Patriotic Workers of Thailand was told that "the Chinese workers have always followed with deep

interest the development of the struggle of the workers and other people in Thailand, and have always firmly supported their patriotic, anti-U.S. struggle."¹¹²

Similarly, TIM's representative in China, Mon Kon Nanakon, was feted by Liao Cheng-chih, Chairman of China's Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, and wished success in his struggle.¹¹³ At a banquet in Beijing for the TPF, attended by Liao Cheng-Chih as well as by Kuo Mo-jo, Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and Chairman of the China Peace Committee and Liu Ning-i, also a Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and the China Peace Committee, Liao Cheng-chih noted "that support for the Thai people's struggle...[was] an inescapable responsibility of the Chinese people. They always regarded it as a glorious international duty to support the people of all countries in their struggle against imperialism and to win and safeguard national independence."¹¹⁴

More concrete forms of support were forthcoming for these front organizations. At a minimum level, the PRC provided a haven for these organizations to organize and propagandize in safety.¹¹⁵ At the international level, Beijing sought to gain a measure of international recognition for the TPF and TIM. Delegations from both front organizations were invited to participate in the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference in Accra (May, 1965), the Second Conference of the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of Vietnam in Hanoi.

(June, 1965), and the Tri-continental Afro-Asian Conference in Havana (January, 1966).¹¹⁶

The next major development in the united front came in late 1966 when TIM announced, exactly one year after its formation, that it would affiliate with the TPF and accept TPF leadership of the struggle in Thailand. According to TIM, this affiliation was necessitated by increasing U.S.-Thai collaboration. The "Central Committee of the Thailand Independence Movement saw that the situation had posed a new task before all patriotic forces calling on them to unite as one and carry out a heroic struggle. Only in this way could the present cruel enemy be overwhelmed."¹¹⁷ The hasty unification of the TPF and TIM suggests that the two never really led separate lives and were probably created simply to create the impression of widening opposition to the Thai Government.

At the same time that TIM decided to accept TPF leadership, a new round of united front-founding began with the formation of the Thai Patriotic Youth Organization, the Federation of Patriotic Workers, the Thai Monks' Group, the Patriotic Teachers' Group, the Self-liberated Farmers and Planters' Association, the Southern Rubber Plantation Workers' Group, the Lawyers' Group, and the Patriotic Combatants' Group.¹¹⁸ Whether or not any of these groups actually existed other than on paper is unknown; however, it is clear that the intention behind this spate of united front-forming, like that of the TPF and TIM, was to create

the impression of an ever-widening struggle against the Thai Government and her American ally.

On the ground in Thailand, however, there was little sign of an enormous swell of anti-government activity nor was there much evidence indicating massive Chinese assistance to the fledgling Thai insurgency. In early 1964, clandestine CPT leaflets began appearing in Bangkok,¹¹⁹ but instances of violence were still rare. In 1963, most of the violent confrontations between police and guerrillas resulted from the police searching out the still weak insurgents.¹²⁰ While the level of violence increased slightly in 1964 with the assassination of village leaders and robberies along the highway from Bangkok to the provincial capital of Nankhai,¹²¹ it is unclear if these incidents were related to guerrilla activity or whether they were simple acts of banditry.

Indeed, according to the CPT, the first armed unit was not established until November, 1965, in the province of Ubon Ratchanthani in Northeast Thailand, and the Thai Patriotic Front claimed that the armed struggle did not begin until 7 August 1965.¹²² Whatever the true starting point, 1965 did mark the beginnings of serious communist insurgency in Thailand. The size and extent of the insurgency in these years is difficult to determine because of unreliable reporting by the Thai Government.¹²³ Estimates of the number of guerrillas operating in the Northeast ranged from 200 to 800¹²⁴ while the figure for those in the South has been put at 700.¹²⁵ The headquarters of the

CPT insurgency were reputed to be in Sakon Nakhon and Nakhom Phanom provinces in the Northeast, although regional headquarters of some independence also existed in the North and South.¹²⁶

The actual level of guerrilla violence in Thailand remained low, although violence did increase in 1965 and 1966. In the first half of 1965 there were only six assassinations in the Northeast, but that figure rose to 24 by the end of the year. Although confrontations between guerrillas and Thai police also increased, this was due to police efforts to search out guerrillas and not because of expanding guerrilla activities.¹²⁷ The insurgency in the South appeared to be expanding as "government forces began to encounter large, well-fortified training camps and roving guerrilla bands some three hundred miles north of the Thai-Malaysian border."¹²⁸

The escalation of guerrilla activity continued into 1966 until assassinations of government officials and sympathizers averaged ten per month by the end of the year in the Northeast alone.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, guerrilla activity remained at a low level as the guerrillas avoided clashes with the police whenever possible and refrained from attacking any police stations.¹³⁰

The extent and nature of Chinese aid to the Thai insurgency in these years remains unclear. Much of the aid to the insurgents came from North Vietnam and Laos. Between 1964 and 1965, there were numerous reports of Thais

receiving training in camps in Laos and North Vietnam.¹³¹ While some of the instructors at these camps were Chinese,¹³² most observers have noted that China and North Vietnam shared a division of labour when it came to training prospective Thai insurgents.¹³³ In general, it appears that North Vietnam and Laos provided Thais with training in the use of weapons and guerrilla fighting while the PRC provided higher ranking CPT members with political indoctrination.

Although it is likely that more concrete forms of aid were forthcoming from China, details on the nature of the assistance China gave to the Thai insurgents remains sketchy. According to some reports, the Bank of China in Hong Kong purchased large quantities of Thai currency in January, 1965, estimated at a total value of 21 million baht (\$4 million U.S.).¹³⁴ The veracity of this claim remains in doubt, though. That Thai insurgents were being trained in China was strongly suggested when, in October, 1964, the Peking School of Foreign Languages began offering three year courses in Thai.¹³⁵ Also suggestive of Chinese efforts to aid the Thai insurgency were the road-building activities of Chinese engineering and military battalions in Laos and Southern China. Although American analysts doubted that these roads would be used to assist the Thai insurgency, the Thais saw them as yet another example of Chinese attempts to subvert their kingdom.¹³⁶ Finally, the quality of weapons used by the Thai insurgents

suggested to some observers that China, and Vietnam, had not been very generous with their aid to the insurgents. "This is reflected in the fact that neither China nor North Vietnam, though able to smuggle arms across a 500-mile stretch of the Mekong River from Laos into Thailand, has yet supplied the Thai guerrillas with weapons more deadly than vintage 'burp' guns, rifles and carbines."¹³⁷

Even though concrete expressions of Chinese support for the Thai insurgency had not been much in evidence in 1964-1966, the enthusiasm in China for the insurgency dramatically escalated in the following years. This escalation in China's public enthusiasm for the Thai insurgency did not result from increasing Thai involvement with American policy in Southeast Asia as it had in the past nor did it result from an increasingly successful struggle in Thailand; rather, it was a result of the onset of the Cultural Revolution in China and the extreme leftism of that period. While the Chinese media continued to condemn Thai collaboration with the United States in Southeast Asia,¹³⁸ the content of Chinese coverage of the Thai insurgency increasingly focussed on the loyalty of the Thai insurgents to China and to the thought of Mao Zedong.

The Maoification of the Thai Insurgency

The first hint of the impending Maoification of the Thai insurgency came in January, 1966, when the Patriotic Front called for the expansion of the insurgency into a

people's war, a decision warmly lauded in the Chinese media.¹³⁹ It appears that the decision by the Chinese media to grant the insurgency in Thailand the status of a people's war reflected the growing radicalization within China rather than any dramatic spread in the armed struggle within Thailand. At the same time as the Thai struggle was accorded the status of a people's war in the Chinese media, articles praising the invincibility and universality of people's war began appearing in the Chinese media.¹⁴⁰ Thus, according to the Thai insurgency the status of a people's war was part of a more general trend of glorifying one aspect of Mao's thought.

The rise of leftism in China also affected the content of CPT statements, as reprinted in the Chinese media. Beginning in the summer of 1966 and continuing throughout 1967 and 1968, the messages of the CPT became less and less concerned with the struggle within Thailand and American policy in Southeast Asia and more and more concerned with the brilliance of Mao's thought and the glory of Mao's path to power. While CPT statements did not wholly ignore the issue of American involvement in Indochina and Thailand and political oppression within Thailand,¹⁴¹ the most prominent themes in CPT messages in the Chinese media dealt with the role Mao's thought played in the Thai struggle: "The Communist Party of Thailand, guided by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung thought has dauntlessly led the Thai people in taking up arms and fighting against the U.S. aggressors

and their flunkies."¹⁴²

Indeed, by 1968, the praise of Mao in CPT statements had become positively sycophantic. According to the CPT, "Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era. He has inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism with genius, creatively and comprehensively"¹⁴³ and "Mao Tse-tung's thought is the acme of Marxism-Leninism of the present era."¹⁴⁴ In fact, CPT statements went so far as to attribute their success not to their own efforts and sacrifices, but to the brilliance of Mao's thought and his strategy of people's war.

The fact that the Thai people's forces have been able to persist and grow is mainly because, from the very first day of their existence, they have taken the brilliant thought of Mao Tse-tung as their guide, relied on the peasants, established rural base areas to surround the cities from the countryside and prepare for the final seizure of political power throughout the country. [145]

Indeed, the CPT even went so far as to claim that their success in the future was dependent upon their knowledge of Mao's thought.

The most important guarantee for our party to march towards victory is that all members of the Party should master the invincible thought of Mao Tse-tung and arm themselves with this powerful ideological weapon. Only in this way is it possible to accomplish the above-mentioned glorious task. Many of our cadres have working experience; but experience alone cannot be a substitute for Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought. [146]

Obviously, such rhetoric was designed more for Chinese consumption than for Thai consumption. Indeed, the main purpose of CPT, and occasional TPF, statements during this period appears to have been to validate Mao's rule in China

and the leftist policies pursued during the Cultural Revolution. The domestic function of these statements became even more apparent in late 1968 when CPT messages not only continued to praise Mao and Lin Biao, but also began to refer to Liu Shaoqi as a renegade, traitor, and scab.¹⁴⁷

Another theme that became increasingly prominent in both Thai and Chinese statements dealt with the need to combat Soviet revisionism. These statements accused the Soviets of attempting to stifle revolutionary movements in the Third World and denounced the CPSU for its "cunning, deceitful and wicked means."¹⁴⁸ For the CRT - and, one might add, the Chinese - ideological purity was of the utmost importance and compromise with revisionism could never be tolerated.

From the very beginning, our Party has entirely disagreed with and opposed the viewpoint of revisionism. We maintain that true Marxist-Leninists must draw a line of demarcation with revisionism and that it is absolutely impermissible to take 'united action' with the revisionists. It is absolutely impermissible to adopt a policy of neutrality or compromise between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. To adopt a line of neutrality or compromise towards revisionism can only bring irreparable, serious losses to the revolutionary cause of the world's people. [149]

This concern with Soviet revisionism demonstrates not only CPT subservience to China, but also, again, the domestic use of support for the CPT. CPT messages supporting the position of the PRC and the CCP in world affairs could be used not only to validate CCP rule in China but also to improve the standing of the CCP among other communist

parties throughout the world. Thus, during the Cultural Revolution, support for the insurgency in Thailand fulfilled an important ideological need for the PRC.

This more radical approach to the war in Thailand was also reflected in the new prominence given to the CPT by the Chinese media. Although the CPT had claimed as early as 6 November 1966, in a message to the Albanian Communist Party, that they were leading the revolutionary struggle in Thailand,¹⁵⁰ the Chinese media, as late as August, 1967, continued to accord the TPF the leading role in the struggle.¹⁵¹ However, once the CPT had been identified as the leader of the armed struggle in Thailand, the Chinese wasted little time in expressing stronger support than ever before for the struggle: "The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people firmly support the armed struggle led by the Communist Party of Thailand."¹⁵³ Thus, for the first time, the armed struggle in Thailand and the CPT received the official blessing of the Chinese Communist Party.

The next significant development in the struggle in Thailand came in January, 1969, with the announcement of the formation of the Thai People's Liberation Army on January 10¹⁵⁴ and the establishment of a supreme command for the TPLA on January 17.¹⁵⁵ The formation of the TPLA brought further expressions of support from China. Kuo Mo-jo promised that China would "provide more powerful backing to the revolutionary people of Thailand in winning

complete victory in their revolution."¹⁵⁶

It is important to note here that the formation of these various Thai resistance groups and their role in the Thai struggle also performed an important function for China. The development of the Thai insurgency followed the pattern set out in Lin Biao's "Long Live the Victory of the People's War." The CPT called for a united front and this was followed by a flurry of announcements of the establishment of various front groups. Then the CPT assumed the leading role in the struggle, as prescribed by Lin Biao, and the Maoist model was finally capped off with the formation of a people's army. And, as has been demonstrated, the CPT repeatedly proclaimed their allegiance to the strategy of people's war. Again, then, the insurgency in Thailand was used to validate an element of Maoist ideology.

While the increasingly strident and frequent number of articles appearing in the Chinese media in support of the Thai insurgency would seem to suggest an increasing level of Chinese aid to the Thai guerrillas, there is little evidence to suggest a dramatic escalation in aid to the insurgents during these years, nor were the Thai guerrillas as successful as one might imagine they were by reading the Chinese media.

Indeed, between 1967 and 1968, the Thai insurgency met with mixed results. The insurgency in the Northeast, while not halted, was suppressed somewhat by combined

military activities and rural development programmes financed largely by the United States.¹⁵⁷ Another setback for the CPT occurred on 31 August 1967 when 33 alleged members of the CPT, including five Central Committee members were arrested.¹⁵⁸

Despite these difficulties, the insurgency in Thailand did encounter some success. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the North where communists had been recruiting Meo tribesmen since the early 1960's.¹⁵⁹ In 1967, the VPT "began broadcasting in tribal languages, directing its primary emphasis toward the Meo."¹⁶⁰ This effort to recruit the hill tribes was also made apparent by the inclusion of a promise of autonomy for the various nationalities in Thailand in the program of the CPT.¹⁶¹

The CPT strategy began to bear fruit in 1968 as Meo tribesmen began attacking resettlement villages and, by January, 1969, government convoys.¹⁶² Even more disquieting were reports of Meo operations in the tri-province area (Phitsunulok, Loei, and Phetchabun) in late 1967 and early 1968.¹⁶³ Activity in this area raised the disconcerting possibility that the insurgencies in the Northeast and North might become linked up and lead to more closely co-ordinated operations.

The response of the Thai Government to the hill tribe threat was to launch military strikes against regions inhabited by the Meo. Napalm, artillery, and aerial bombing were used indiscriminately against Meo villages with the

unintended result of simply driving more Meo into the arms of the CPT.¹⁶⁴ As the number of Meo refugees swelled, so too did the number of Meo joining the ranks of the CPT. Thus, by their own heavy-handed tactics, the government aided CPT recruitment in Northern Thailand.

The Thai Government also had much to be wary of in its Southern provinces. In July, 1968, the CPT and the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) expressed support for one another and announced that the "Thai and Malaysian peoples must be more closely united, supporting and coordinating with one another to more strongly and violently attack our enemy."¹⁶⁵ By late 1969, the CPT was active in border regions once formerly the preserve of the MCP and it is also likely that the more experienced MCP was training CPT guerrillas.¹⁶⁶ In November, 1969, the CPT made their first major attack on government forces in the border area, killing 18 policemen.¹⁶⁷ Thus, by the end of 1969, the Thai Government, while not faced with a situation as serious as that in South Vietnam, was confronted with the uncomfortable reality of expanding guerrilla activities in both the Northern and Southern regions of her country.

Again, the exact level of Chinese support for the Thai insurgency is difficult to determine. Concrete examples of Chinese aid to the insurgents are difficult to find and those that are cited often lack confirmation. It appears, though, that Chinese aid did not increase substantially during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶⁸ Aid was

still forthcoming, but proof of massive aid was not. In October, 1967, Thai forces claimed that they intercepted a 100-horse caravan of the nomadic Haws in Northern Thailand and discovered Chinese soldiers, supplies, and propaganda among them.¹⁶⁹ The Thai Government also accused the Chinese of training Meo tribesmen in Yunnan and infiltrating them into Northern Thailand and the tri-province area.¹⁷⁰ Finally, it is possible that China ran a system in "Hong Kong to channel financial support to the CPT Central Committee in Bangkok."¹⁷¹

Overall, though, China's material aid to the Thai insurgents appears to have been slight. Indeed, an American Senate report placed the total number of Thais trained by the Chinese from 1952-1969 at only 700 persons.¹⁷² In fact, it is quite likely that the major source of CPT material support was North Vietnam. While the lack of firm evidence about Chinese support for the CPT prohibits reaching final conclusions about the extent of this support, it also suggests that Chinese assistance to the CPT during this period was not substantial.

Thus, by the end of the 1960's, the Thai Government was faced with a full-fledged, communist-led insurgency, located primarily in its Northern, Northeastern, and Southern regions. Moreover, this insurgency had the wholehearted political support - if not wholehearted material support - of the largest communist power in the region. Sino-Thai relations appeared implacably hostile as China seemed bent

on overthrowing the Thai Government and placing a communist one in its stead. As was shown, this state of affairs was brought about by Thailand's involvement with American policy in Southeast Asia. The Chinese viewed American policy in the region as being hostile to China, hence, Thai collusion with that policy earned Thailand China's enmity. Moreover, as Thai-U.S. collaboration escalated, so too did China's hostility towards Thailand and her commitment to revolutionary groups within that country. However, as will be shown in the following chapter, the seemingly irreversible hostility between the two countries was not to last. The balance of power in Southeast Asia began shifting in the late 1960's and this shift was to lead to Chinese and Thai reassessments of their policies in the region, as well as towards each other, and, eventually, to dramatically changed Sino-Thai relations.

Footnotes

¹ Although most communist activity during this period was primarily oriented toward countries other than Thailand, there were unconfirmed reports of Western agents being sent to Thailand in the 1920's to organize communist cells. However, these reports remain of dubious veracity. See Benjamin Batson (ed.) Siam's Political Future: Documents from the end of the Absolute Monarchy. (Data Paper No. 96) (Cornell University: Department of Asian Studies, 1974), pp. 60-61.

² See Jay Taylor, China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements. (rev. ed.) (New York: Praeger, 1976), p. 252; and George Tanham, Trial in Thailand. (New York: Crane, Russak, and Co. Inc., 1974), p. 29. In fact, the first public communist demonstration in Thailand occurred in November, 1936, in Khonkaen

province and evidently involved a clash between police and local Vietnamese. See: Virginia Thompson and Richard Aldoff, The Left Wing in Southeast Asia. (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), p. 57.

³See: Batson, Siam's Political Future., p. 61.

⁴Tanham, Trial in Thailand., p. 28.. Tanham also reports that, in 1927, the Thai police arrested one Chinese and accused him of being a communist agent and of attempting to organize a communist party.

⁵Batson, p. 71. Batson also reproduces a Marxist analysis of Thailand written by this same group (pages 66-71). A group known as the Young Communist Party of Siam or Committee of Young Siam also was reported to be operating in the early 1930's distributing leaflets in Bangkok and Northeastern Thailand. It is possible that the Communist Party of Siam and the Young Communist Party of Siam (or Committee of Young Siam) were one and the same. See: Patrice de Beer, "History and Policy of the Communist Party of Thailand," in Andrew Turton, Jonathan Fast, and Malcolm Caldwell (eds.) Thailand: Roots of Conflict. (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978), pp. 55-57.

⁶Daniel Lovelace, China and "People's War" in Thailand, 1964-1969. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1971), p. 15.

⁷Thompson and Aldoff, The Left Wing in Southeast Asia. p. 160.

⁸Others, however, deny the existence of an independent, indigenous communist party during this period. Taylor claims that until 1935, Thailand was "under the jurisdiction of the MCP and its parent organization in Singapore, the South Seas Communist Party" (p. 252). Taylor suggests that the CPT group that allegedly attended the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935 was actually a Thai branch of the Chinese Communist Party or Ho Chi Minh's Indochina Communist Party (p. 252).

⁹Taylor, p.252. See also de Beer, "History and Policy of the Communist Party of Thailand," p. 144.

¹⁰Thompson and Aldoff, p. 59. Lovelace claims that, in the early 1950's, the membership of the CCPT reached a maximum of 4,000 while the CPT probably had fewer than 200 members. See: Lovelace, China and "People's War" in

Thailand, 1964-1965., p. 16.

¹¹ Taylor, pp. 258-259.

¹² The following discussion is derived from the following sources. Thompson and Aldoff, p. 52; Melvin Gurtov, China and Southeast Asia: The Politics of Survival. (Toronto: Heath-Lexington Books, 1971), p. 5; David Wilson, "Thailand and Marxism," in Frank Trager (ed.) Marxism in Southeast Asia: A Study of Four Countries. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), pp. 59-62; and J.L.S. Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 35-37.

¹³ In fact, communism had been outlawed in Thailand as early as April, 1933. See Thompson and Aldoff, p. 55.

¹⁴ According to a former U.S. Foreign Service Officer in Thailand, as late as 1976, the same 55 Sino-Thai cadres who formed the CPT Central Committee in 1952 still formed the backbone of the CPT. See Robert Zimmerman, "Insurgency in Thailand," Problems of Communism. Vol. 25 (May-June, 1976), p. 19. Justus van der Kroef claims that more than half of the membership of the CPT's Central Committee in 1976 were Sino-Thais. See Justus van der Kroef, "Communism and Political Instability in Thailand," Issues and Studies. Vol. 12 No. 9 (September, 1976), p. 96.

¹⁵ Wilson, "Thailand and Marxism," p. 60.

¹⁶ Quoted in Ibid.

¹⁷ Lovelace, p. 17.

¹⁸ Taylor, p. 257.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tanham, Trial in Thailand., p. 34.

²¹ Lovelace, pp. 28-29.

²² See David Wilson, "China, Thailand and the Spirit of Bandung (Part 1)," China-Quarterly. No. 30 (April-June, 1967), pp. 152-155.

23 Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty, Article 4, Section 1. Reprinted in George Modelski (ed.) SEATO: Six Studies. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1964), pp. 289-292.

24 See, for example, the strident speech by John Foster Dulles in March, 1954, in New York Times, (March 30, 1954), p. 1,4. According to the Chinese, SEATO "intended to force the countries in Southeast Asia into a position of permanent antagonism to China." Taylor, p. 263.

25 Taylor, p. 263.

26 These fears were expressed in 1958 by Thailand's Foreign Minister, Prince Wan Waithayakorn. In expressing these fears, Prince Wan stressed that Thailand was in SEATO simply to protect herself against any possible aggression from China. "That is why I tell the people at home that my policy toward Red China is not only non-aggressive but also non-provocative." Quoted in George Modelski, "Thailand and China: From Avoidance to Hostility," in A.M. Halpern (ed.) Policies Toward China: Views from Six Continents. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 352. On the establishment of the Thai autonomous region, see Edwin Stanton, "Spotlight on Thailand," Foreign Affairs. Vol. 33 No. 1 (October, 1954), pp. 78-80.

27 This description of Pridi's career is taken from, Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics, pp. 104-109.

28 Ibid, p. 105.

29 That Pridi was of Chinese descent, probably helped reinforce the lingering suspicions that he was a communist.

30 Taylor, p. 263.

31 For a discussion of the role of the Chinese in Thai society, see Girling, pp. 74-80.

32 In fact, during, as well as after, the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese population in Thailand was divided between those supporting the CCP and those supporting the KMT.

33 Girling, p. 77.

³⁴ For a description of this phase of Chinese diplomacy, see Michael Yahuda, China's Role in World Affairs. (London: Croon Helm, 1978), pp. 75-81.

³⁵ See David Wilson, "China, Thailand and the Spirit of Bandung (Part 2)," China Quarterly. No. 31 (July-September, 1967), p. 112.

³⁶ Wilson, "China, Thailand and the Spirit of Bandung (Part 2)," p. 98.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Taylor, p. 269. This decision was motivated more by political concerns than by economic concerns as Chinese goods had previously entered Thai markets via Hong Kong. Thus, there was no real economic necessity to normalize trade relations. See Wilson, p. 124.

³⁹ Wilson, p. 118.

⁴⁰ Taylor, p. 271.

⁴¹ See Girling, p. 111.

⁴² Taylor, p. 274.

⁴³ Thailand had sought to retain Laos and Cambodia as buffer states against China and North Vietnam. These goals were endangered by improving Sino-Cambodian relations and the increasing power of the Pathet Lao in Laos. On Cambodia, see J. D. Armstrong, Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 187-189. On Laos, see Thomas Marks, "Thai Security during the 'American Era,' 1960-1976," Issues and Studies. Vol. 15 No. 4 (April, 1979), pp. 63-65. It should also be noted that, while Sarit may have actually believed that he was protecting his country from communist subversion by staging the coup, it is also apparent that the coup was part of a power struggle between Sarit, with his base of power in the army, and Phao Sriyanon, the Police Director-General. Phao was closely associated with Prime Minister Phibun and appeared likely to gain much from the fraudulent elections he had helped rig. Sarit capitalized on the disgust Thais felt at the fraudulent elections and overthrew Phao and Phibun. Thus, a healthy dose of self-interest was behind Sarit's decision to stage the coup. For a description of

the rivalry between these individuals, see Thomas Lobe, United States National Security Policy and Aid to the Thailand Police. (Denver: University of Denver, 1977), pp. 27-28, and Girling, pp. 110-111.

⁴⁴ Taylor, p: 275.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Survey of China Mainland Press. (hereafter SCMP) No. 1940 (January 23, 1959), p. 35.

⁴⁶ Peking Review. Vol. 2 No. 10 (March 10, 1959), p. 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ While the Sarit regime did enforce some anti-Chinese measures- for example, restricting the number of Chinese schools- in general, the Sarit regime was no more, and perhaps less, anti-Chinese than preceding regimes. See Donald Nuechterlein, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 136, and Girling, p. 110.

⁴⁹ Peking Review. Vol: 1 No. 38 (November 18, 1958), p. 20.

⁵⁰ Sarit began supporting Lao rightists such as General Phoumi Nosavan and "urged Western intervention on behalf of the rightists," a proposal that the United States rejected, Girling, p. 113.

⁵¹ For a description of Thai diplomacy during this period, see Nuechterlein, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, pp. 12-23. A more detailed discussion of this period can be found in D.G.E. Hall, A History of South-East Asia. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 679-701.

⁵² See the discussion in Girling, pp. 232-233.

⁵³ See Lovelace, p. 77.

⁵⁴ New York Times. (May 18, 1961), p. 4.

⁵⁵ New York Times. (May 17, 1961), p. 1, and New York Times. (May 18, 1961), p. 1.

⁵⁶ Rusk-Thanat Joint Statement. (March 6, 1962),

reprinted in Modelski (ed.) SEATO: Six Studies., p. 293.

57 Ibid.

58 Modelski, "Thailand and China: From Avoidance Hostility," p. 361.

59 SCMP. No. 2026 (May 30, 1959), p. 50. See also, Peking Review. Vol. 3 No. 35 (August 30, 1960), p. 25.

60 SCMP. No. 2026 (May 30, 1959), p. 50.

61 Ibid.

62 That the Chinese should have been so alarmed by American policy in the region is unsurprising when one considers the historical legacy of Sino-American relations. For an interesting discussion of how the past nature of Sino-American relations affected more recent Chinese attitudes towards the United States, see John Gittings, "The Origins of China's Foreign Policy," in David Horowitz (ed.) Containment and Revolution. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 182-217.

63 Peking Review. Vol. 3 No. 24 (June 14, 1960), p. 34.

64 SCMP. No. 2560 (August 17, 1961), pp. 43-44.

65 SCMP. No. 2598 (October 13, 1961), p. 38.

66 Peking Review. Vol. 2 No. 15 (April 14, 1959), p. 3.

67 Peking Review. Vol. 5 No. 21 (May 25, 1962), p. 11.

68 Ibid.

69 Peking Review. Vol. 5 No. 31 (August 3, 1962), p. 16.

70 Peking Review. Vol. 5 No. 21 (May 25, 1962), p. 10. See also SCMP. No. 2717 (April 11, 1962), pp. 28-29, and Peking Review. Vol. 5 No. 31 (August 3, 1962), p. 17.

71 Taylor, p. 288. It should be noted that this

decision was not made public by the CPT until 1967, hence, the notion that the insurgency began with this official decision may be false. It is possible that the CPT claimed this not because it was a true depiction of events, but instead to reinforce the picture of CPT leadership of the armed struggle.

72 See Thomas Marks, "The Meo Hill Tribe Problem in North Thailand," Asian Survey. Vol. 13 No. 10 (October, 1973), p. 929.

73 Jeffrey Race, "The War in Northern Thailand," Modern Asian Studies. Vol. 8 No. 1 (1974), p. 94.

74 Tanham, p. 34.

75 Lovelace (p. 44) argues that the broadcasts probably originated in Laos or North Vietnam; however, as Taylor (p. 289) notes, the VPT's anti-Soviet line suggests that it did not operate in North Vietnam nor, one might add, in Laos. It is likely that the VPT was situated in Yunnan, possibly in the Thai autonomous region.

76 Lovelace, pp. 44-45.

77 Thomas Marks, "Thailand-the Threatened Kingdom," Conflict Studies. No. 115 (January-February, 1980), p. 8.

78 Indeed, in the late 1950's and early 1960's, a former member of the Thai House of Representatives, Krong Chandawong, formed a secessionist movement in the Northeast known as the Samakhi Tham (United in Dharma). Its goal was to unite the Northeast with Laos. See David Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija, Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, and Revolution. (Cambridge: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain, 1981), p. 80.

79 See Race, pp. 87-89.

80 Douglas Blaufarb, The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present. (New York: Free Press, 1977), p. 173.

81 Far Eastern Economic Review. (hereafter FEER) (June 20, 1980), p. 22. It should also be noted that the CPT was not the only guerrilla group active in Southern Thailand. At least three Moslem separatist groups were also active in the region. See Ibid, pp. 18-22.

82 This was the conclusion of a study by Robert McColl. See Robert McColl, "A Political Geography of Revolution: China, Vietnam, and Thailand," Journal of Conflict Resolution. Vol. 11 (1967), pp. 153-167.

83 For example, much of the communist activity in the Northeast in the early 1960's was in response to the execution of Krong Chandawong (see footnote 78 above) by government forces in 1961. After his death, his family reportedly joined the CPT (Krong had not been a CPT member, though) and began recruiting people for the CPT. By 1964, they had gathered sufficient numbers of recruits to launch an armed struggle. See, Alessandro Casella, "Communism and Insurrection in Thailand," World Today, Vol. 26 (1970), p. 202, and Morell and Chai-anan, Political Conflict in Thailand, p. 81. It is also possible that the adoption of armed struggle by the CPT was necessitated by government military pressure on them. A communist document captured by government forces allegedly revealed that the CPT was unprepared for the armed struggle as late as 1965. However, a clash with government troops in August, 1965, forced the CPT to launch the armed struggle. See Morell and Chai-anan, pp. 81-82. (Note that the TPF claimed that this incident marked the beginning of the armed struggle and also implied that it had been initiated by Thai insurgents, p. 57 above). Thus, the insurgency in Thailand did have domestic roots and was not merely a creation of the PRC.

84 This impression is probably reinforced by the fact that most of the CPT statements quoted in this paper are from the Chinese media. Thus, it must be kept in mind that, because this paper is primarily concerned with China's attitude towards the CPT, the view presented here of the CPT is largely that of the Chinese. It is not surprising, then, that the CPT should often appear to be little more than a Thai offshoot of the CCP.

85 Tanham, p. 21.

86 New York Times. (July 1, 1966), p. 3.

87 Maynard Parker, "The Americans in Thailand," The Atlantic. Vol. 218 No. 6 (December, 1966), p. 54. See also Girling, p. 237.

88 Girling, p. 237.

89 Lovelace, p. 50.

- ⁹⁰ New York Times. (July 1, 1966), p. 3.
- ⁹¹ Peking Review. Vol. 9 No. 15 (April 18, 1966);
p. 7. See also, Peking Review. Vol. 9 No. 7 (February 11,
1966), pp. 16-18.
- ⁹² See Peking Review. Vol. 9 No. 7 (February 11, 1966),
p. 17 and SCMP. No. 3642 (February 21, 1966), pp. 24-25.
- ⁹³ Peking Review. Vol. 9 No. 9 (February 25, 1966),
p. 10.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Peking Review. Vol. 9 No. 7 (February 11, 1966),
p. 18.
- ⁹⁶ Peking Review. Vol. 9 No. 20 (May 23, 1966), p. 5.
- ⁹⁷ See Peking Review. Vol. 8 No. 19 (May 7, 1965),
p. 27.
- ⁹⁸ See Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 5 (January 27, 1967),
p. 29.
- ⁹⁹ Peking Review. Vol. 8 No. 42 (October 15, 1965),
p. 10.
- ¹⁰⁰ Current Background. No. 744 (October 16, 1964),
p. 34.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 34-35.
- ¹⁰³ For a brief description of Mon Kon Nanakon's
background, see Lovelace, p. 48.
- ¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 8 No. 45
(November 5, 1965); p. 31.
- ¹⁰⁵ Peking Review. Vol. 7 No. 51 (December 18, 1964),
p. 13.

106 Ibid.

107 See, for example, SCMP. No. 3443 (April 23, 1965), p. 34.

108 For a brief description of Phayom's background see, Lovelace, pp. 48-49.

109 The TPF programme is reprinted in Peking Review. Vol. 8 No. 7 (February 12, 1965), p. 25.

110 SCMP No. 3488 (June 30, 1965), p. 33.

111 Peking Review. Vol. 8 No. 42 (October 15, 1965), p. 3.

112 SCMP. No. 3488 (June 30, 1965), p. 33.

113 Peking Review. Vol. 8 No. 45 (November 5, 1965), p. 31.

114 SCMP. No. 3443 (April 23, 1965), p. 35.

115 For example, the TPF used a Beijing return address on its literature (P.O. Box 310, Beijing). See FEER. (July 21, 1966), p. 361.

116 Lovelace, p. 49 and Thomas Marks, "Sino-Thai Relations," Asian Affairs. (London) Vol. 5 (1974), p. 303.

117 SCMP. No. 3600 (December 17, 1965), p. 26.

118 Lovelace, p. 49.

119 Taylor, p. 290.

120 Lovelace, p. 46.

121 Ibid., p. 47.

122 Taylor, p. 292. See also footnote 83 above.

123 For example, according to Casella, the Thai Government claimed that it killed 6,274 insurgents in the

last three years of the 1960's, but during the same period never admitted that there were ever more than 2,000 guerrillas operating in Thailand. See Casella, "Communism and Insurrection in Thailand," p. 207.

¹²⁴ For the various estimates on the number of guerrillas in Northeast Thailand, see: Casella, p. 203; Tanham, p. 51. FEER. (May 1966), p. 326; and Lovelace, p. 49.

¹²⁵ Lovelace, p. 49.

¹²⁶ See Justus van der Kroef, "Guerrilla Communism and Counterinsurgency in Thailand," Orbis. Vol. 18 No. 1 (Spring, 1974), p. 115.

¹²⁷ Lovelace, p. 49.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp. 51-52.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 52.

¹³¹ See: Zimmerman, pp. 27-28; Race, pp. 94-95; FEER. (December 21, 1967), p. 541; and Taylor, p. 292.

¹³² See Race, p. 95.

¹³³ See: Lovelace, p. 66; Taylor, p. 289; and Gurtov, p. 16. According to Marks, a regional division of labour also existed, with the PRC focussing its aid on Northern Thailand and North Vietnam concentrating on the Northeast. See Marks, "Thailand-the Threatened Kingdom," p. 9.

¹³⁴ van der Kroef, "Guerrilla Communism and Counterinsurgency in Thailand," p. 113.

¹³⁵ Taylor, p. 290.

¹³⁶ See Lovelace, pp. 63-64.

¹³⁷ FEER. (December 21, 1967), p. 539.

¹³⁸ See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 13 (March 24, 1967), p. 29.

139 See SCMP. No. 3620 (January 19, 1966), p. 32.

140 See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 29 (July 14, 1967), pp. 8-10 and Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 43 (October 20, 1967), p. 28.

141 See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 7 (February 10, 1967), pp. 26-28, and Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 43 (October 20, 1967), pp. 34-35.

142 Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 43 (October 20, 1967), p. 34.

143 Peking Review. Vol. 11 No. 1 (January 3, 1968), pp. 31-32.

144 Ibid, p. 32.

145 Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 50 (December 8, 1967), p. 25.

146 Peking Review. Vol. 11 No. 1 (January 3, 1968), p. 32.

147 See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 11 No. 49 (December 6, 1968), p. 15. Indeed, even the December, 1968, programme of the CPT contained derogatory references to Liu Shaoqi. See "Statement of the Communist Party of Thailand on Present Policy," in Studies in Comparative Communism. Vol. 3 Nos. 3 & 4 (July-October, 1970), p. 51.

148 Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 7 (February 10, 1967), p. 27.

149 Ibid, p. 27.

150 Taylor, p. 293.

151 Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 33 (August 11, 1967), p. 13.

152 Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 43 (October 20, 1967), pp. 34-35.

153 Peking Review. Vol. 10 No. 50 (December 8, 1967), p. 8. During this period the Chinese also sought to gain firmer control of Thai exiles in Beijing by purging those who refused to accept CPT leadership. Several liberal Thai exiles were expelled from China and the ~~PF~~ PF, which appears to have been composed of pro-Vietnamese and pro-Laotian Thais, was mentioned far less frequently in the Chinese media. See Taylor, p. 297.

154 Peking Review. Vol. 12 No. 2 (January 10, 1969), p. 25.

155 Peking Review. Vol. 12 No. 3 (January 17, 1969), p. 21.

156 Peking Review. Vol. 12 No. 2 (January 10, 1969), pp. 25-26.

157 Marks, "Thailand-the Threatened Kingdom," p. 9..

158 Gurtov, p. 40.

159 See Race, pp. 94-95.

160 Marks, "The Meo Hill Tribe Problem in North Thailand," p. 940. For an example of CPT propaganda directed towards the Meo, see Casella, p. 204.

161 See, for example, "Statement of the Communist Party of Thailand on Present Policy," Studies in Comparative Communism, p. 50.

162 Taylor, p. 294.

163 de Beer, p. 146.

164 See Race, pp. 108-109. In fact, many of the Meo who joined the communist insurgents were not communists themselves. Instead, they joined the guerrillas to fight back against government attacks on them.

165 Taylor, p. 295.

166 Like the CPT, the MCP was aligned with the PRC and received some support from China. For example, China

provided the MCP with a clandestine radio station, known as "The Voice of the Malayan Revolution. China may also have played a role in arranging the co-ordination of efforts by the CPT and the MCP. See Taylor, pp. 314-317.

167 Taylor, p. 317.

168 Gurtov, p. 36.

169 van der Kroef, "Guerrilla Communism and Counter-insurgency in Thailand," p. 117. This claim should be treated with great scepticism given the known reluctance of the Chinese to commit their own soldiers to other people's battles. It is doubtful that the Chinese considered Thailand as being important enough to justify sending their own troops there.

170 Taylor, p. 294. Zimmerman claims that China ran a system out of Yunnan province to support the hill-tribe insurgency in Northern Thailand. p. 27.

171 Zimmerman, p. 27.

172 Gurtov, p. 17.

Chapter Three

China and Thailand: The Road to Accomodation

As was noted in the previous chapter, the 1960's marked the growth of U.S. influence in Southeast Asia. As the United States became more heavily involved in Indochina, her presence in nearby countries, such as Thailand and the Philippines also grew. Indeed, it was this expansion of American power in Southeast Asia and the involvement of Thailand in American policy in the region that ultimately poisoned Sino-Thai relations and led China to support insurgent groups within Thailand.

In the late 1960's, though, the United States began to reassess its policy in the region and its relationship with Thailand and move towards a diminished level of involvement in Thailand and Southeast Asia. This change in the security environment in Southeast Asia, resulting from the partial U.S. withdrawal from the region, was to have a dramatic effect on Sino-Thai relations. For just as a growing American presence in Southeast Asia and Thailand had contributed to worsening Sino-Thai relations in the 1960's, a diminishing U.S. presence in the region and a distancing of U.S.-Thai relations contributed to improving Sino-Thai relations in the 1970's. Moreover, this trend towards improving Sino-Thai relations was accelerated by further developments in the region, especially the deterioration of Sino-Vietnamese relations. Thus, to understand the dramatic improvement in Sino-Thai relations in the 1970's, this chapter will

examine these relations within the context of a changing balance of power in Southeast Asia.

A Change in American Policy in Southeast Asia

By the late 1960's it had become apparent to much of the world that American involvement in Indochina had peaked and was bound to decline in coming years. Reflective of this was the effect of the 1968 Tet offensive on American policy. "From the political point of view it [Tet] marked a crucial turning point in the war. By now, the war had become above all a test of wills between Hanoi and Washington. The Johnson administration, caught on the buzz saw of mounting expenditures and rising public discontent with the war, was unwilling to make the commitment necessary to achieve a decisive military victory."¹ Thus, in March, 1968, President Johnson turned down General Westmoreland's request for an additional 200,000 U.S. troops for Vietnam and announced his decision to halt the bombing of North Vietnam. Although the American presence in Vietnam was to continue for several more years, these events marked the turning point in American military involvement in Southeast Asia.

Further indications that America would be adopting a less active role in Asian affairs soon followed. In June, 1969, President Nixon announced his intention to withdraw 25,000 U.S. troops from Vietnam² and one month later he outlined his Guam doctrine to reporters in which he described the future role of the United States in Southeast Asia. According to Nixon, the United States would

reduce military assistance to and especially its military personnel in Southeast Asia and "except when Asian nations are threatened by a nuclear power such as Communist China, the United States would insist that both internal subversion and external aggression be dealt with increasingly by the Asians themselves."³

In place of their direct involvement in Southeast Asia, the United States "adopted a fallback strategy: it relies on air and naval mobility along the 'Pacific Rim' extending from Japan to Okinawa, to Guam, the Philippines (subject to negotiation) and Australia."⁴ According to a 1977 Presidential Review Memorandum, this offshore posture provided "the United States [with the] flexibility to determine at the time whether it should or should not get involved in a local war."⁵ Thus, the United States made it clear that they would no longer automatically assume responsibility for the defence of their allies in the Third World. Instead, such countries would have to cope with their own defence largely on their own and could expect direct American assistance only in exceptional circumstances.

The Effect on Thailand

The import of these changes in American policy was not lost on Southeast Asian leaders, especially those in Thailand. "The election of Richard Nixon as president, with an obvious mandate to end the war, created an uneasy feeling in Bangkok that Thailand might suddenly find itself standing alone against the vengeful masses of Southeast

Asian communism."⁶ These fears of abandonment were increased in December, 1969, when the American Senate approved an amendment to a defense appropriations bill forbidding the use of American combat troops in Laos and Thailand.⁷ Less than a year later, the United States informed Thailand that they could expect no American support for a future Thai role in Cambodia, thus further reinforcing Thai fears of abandonment.⁸

Over the next few years, U.S.-Thai relations became gradually more distant. A clear sign of lessening American involvement in Thailand - and Southeast Asia - was the steady withdrawal of American troops from Thai bases. On 30 September 1969, the United States announced its intention to withdraw 6,000 of its 49,000 troops in Thailand over the next ten months.⁹ This announcement was followed in August, 1970, by the news that a further 9,800 American troops would be withdrawn by 1 July 1971.¹⁰ American troop strength in Thailand climbed slightly in 1972¹¹ as the United States attempted to counter a large North Vietnamese offensive in South Vietnam; however, the overall trend remained one of disengagement. During 1973, Thai and U.S. officials continued negotiations over the phase-out of U.S. troops in Thailand.

Agreement... was reached quickly: some 3,500 men and 100 planes left Thailand shortly afterwards, mainly from Nom Phoung air base in the northeast. The U.S. said it planned to cut down its troops to about 20,000 at the end of the year and reduce the number of B-52's stationed in the country by 10%. [12]

These 1973 withdrawals were matched by even more substantial U.S. withdrawals in 1974 as U.S. involvement in Indochina drew to a close. "By the end of 1974 there were only to be 25 B-52's; the CIA charter airline, Air America had ceased operations; the number of A-7, F-4, and F-111 squadrons had been reduced; and Takhli and Ubon airbases closed."¹³ In March, 1974, the U.S. announced more troop withdrawals, dropping their strength in Thailand to 27,500 men and 350 aircraft.¹⁴

It would be a mistake, however, to view these withdrawals as occurring entirely against Thai wishes. In fact, relations between Bangkok and Washington had been deteriorating throughout the late 1960's and early 1970's and many Thais were pleased to see the United States reduce its presence in Thailand. American public and congressional criticism of Thai Governments' human rights records had annoyed Thai leaders and, when an American Senator, Jacob Javits, publicly questioned the legitimacy of the Thai Government, the Thai elite was further enraged.¹⁵ Further damage was done in December, 1969, when it was disclosed that the United States had paid Thailand \$1 billion to obtain deployment of a Thai division in South Vietnam.¹⁶ The payment smacked of bribery and provoked further American criticism of the Thai Government which, in turn, created further resentment among Thai leaders of what they perceived to be American interference in their own internal affairs. In addition, the Thai public was becoming increasingly

concerned about the overwhelming cultural and social effects the American presence was having on Thailand and was increasingly supportive of a reduced American presence in their country.¹⁷

An even more pressing concern for Thai leaders was how to preserve Thai security as their previous protector, the United States, opted for a less active role in the region. Thai leaders came to the bitter realization that their "involvement in the 'American war' in Vietnam [had] brought down Hanoi's wrath on Thai heads without providing compensating guarantees."¹⁸ Indeed, in 1973, Thailand's Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn admitted "that the U.S. military presence in Thailand posed 'serious disadvantages' for his country"¹⁹ and in January, 1974, the Thai Foreign Minister, Charunphan Isarangkun, said that past relations with the United States had overemphasized military cooperation and that this needed "to be adjusted in order to achieve a more truly balanced relationship."²⁰

This 'more balanced relationship' was finally achieved in 1976 with the final withdrawal of a significant American military presence from Thailand. A year earlier, Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj, in his inaugural speech, had vowed "that he would see all American forces withdrawn within a year."²¹ Thai determination to reduce the American presence in their country was reinforced in May, 1975, when the United States used the U-Tapao facilities in Thailand as its main staging base for the Mayaguez rescue without

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first receiving Thai authorization.²² This violation of Thai sovereignty enraged many Thais and led to a government demand that 1,100 marines be immediately withdrawn from U-Tapao so as not to involve Thailand further in the Mayaguez incident.²³

The final denouement came on 29 March 1976 when the Thai Government ordered all but 270 American military personnel to leave Thailand. This ultimatum came after lengthy bargaining between the two countries, during which the United States sought to retain important air bases, radar, communications, and espionage facilities as well as 3,000 American personnel in Thailand.²⁴ When the United States failed to satisfy Thai conditions on these demands²⁵ the Thai Government ordered the final withdrawal.

The fact that Thai leaders were willing to take the initiative and seek a greater American withdrawal from their country reflected Thai perceptions that external threats to their security were being defused. In particular, the Chinese threat to Thailand no longer seemed as serious as it had been in the 1950's and 1960's. That the Chinese were seen as being less threatening resulted from a lengthy period of diplomatic and political contacts between China and Thailand. From the Thai point of view these contacts were necessitated by the declining American role in the region. Thailand had looked to the United States to guarantee her security against external threats, hence, when the United States gave indications that it would be

playing a less active role in the defence of Southeast Asian countries, Thai leaders had to use political and diplomatic contacts to defuse these external threats.

This meant improving Thailand's relations with the PRC.

The need to reach some sort of arrangement with hostile powers in the region was publicly recognized as early as February, 1969, by Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman.

Expressing his belief that the United States would

eventually withdraw most, if not all, of its troops from

Thailand at the end of the Vietnam War, Thanat went on to

express his belief that Thailand should improve its relations with all the powers acting in Southeast Asia.

Although we countries of Southeast Asia will have to take care of ourselves, this does not mean that we do not want to cooperate with other powers. On the contrary, we hope it will be possible for Southeast Asian nations to collaborate not only with China, North Vietnam and North Korea, but also with European nations, the United States and the Soviet Union. But this must be done on the basis of equality. [26]

In fact, Thanat went so far as to admit that no settlement of Southeast Asia's problems was possible without Chinese participation.

In a speech before Parliament, in March of the same year, "Thanat spoke of 'carrying the offensive for peace and stability to Peking'"²⁷ and a month later he recommended the negotiation of a trade pact with China.²⁸ A year later, "Thanat suggested that his remarks on China constituted a 'public offer' by the Thai Government to 'sit down and meet with Peking representatives.' Communist China, Thanat

was quoted as saying, 'will become pivotal to peace, security and freedom in Asia as it turns from internal preoccupation to outside interests and as the United States tries to sneak out of the Asian scene.'"²⁹

Thanat's overtures to China were a clear indication of the changing security environment in Southeast Asia and the need for Thailand's adaption to this changing environment. Moreover, they also came at a time when China was reassessing her policy in Southeast Asia and her relations with the two superpowers. Emerging from the turmoil and introspection of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese found that their past conception of how best to protect their security interests in Southeast Asia no longer suited unfolding events there.

China and the Changing Security Environment

Throughout the 1960's, the Chinese had been primarily concerned with the expansion of American political and military influence throughout Southeast Asia. In fact, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the expansion of American influence in Thailand played a major part in fostering the hostile relations between China and Thailand. Yet the implications of the Tet offensive, Johnson's halt of the bombing of North Vietnam as well as the election of Richard Nixon and his subsequent statements at Guam were clear to the Chinese. Indeed, the Chinese were quick to perceive America's failure of will in Vietnam. "U.S. imperialism has never been so hard pressed on the battle-

field as it is today, and the prospects of victory of the three Indochinese peoples have never been so bright."³⁰

A U.S. defeat in Indochina was now seen as being utterly inevitable: "The U.S. aggressors can never avert their destiny of complete defeat in Indochina."³¹

By itself, the Chinese perception of America's declining influence in Southeast Asia was not enough to alter Chinese policy in Southeast Asia. Indeed, it might have only served to make China more vigorously promote revolution in Thailand and Southeast Asia as the main enemy of China's "revolutionary" policy in the region faced defeat. However, added to the perception of a declining American threat came a concomitant perception of a greatly magnified Soviet threat to Chinese security.

In a content survey of the Peking Review for the period January, 1968, to December, 1969, a group of political scientists discovered that beginning around September, 1968, the Chinese began increasingly to perceive the Soviet Union, and not the United States, as the principal threat to their security.³²

Beginning in September 1968, a dramatic shift in patterns of Chinese perceptions of the two superpowers as enemies took place. During [September 1968 to April 1969], the number of hostile symbols directed against the U.S. fell by nearly a third, while the number directed against the Soviet Union tripled. During the final period, May 1969 through December 1969, the total of hostile symbols aimed at the U.S. remained relatively stable, while the Soviet Union experienced a rather marked decline from the [previous] peak...period. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union remained the main target of Chinese hostility with approximately five hundred more hostile symbols aimed at it...Thus our overall conclusion is that a major shift

in Chinese perceptions of the U.S. and Soviet Union as principal enemies did in fact occur during this two year period, with the Soviets replacing the U.S. in the primary role. [33]

Moreover, as the authors noted, the timing of this shift in the media's perception of threats to Chinese security coincided with rumours that, at the 12th Plenum of the CCP's Central Committee in October, 1968, Mao Zedong had ranked the United States below the U.S.S.R. as a threat to China.³⁴

One need not look far to understand why China's perception of its principal enemy changed during this period. The August, 1968, invasion of Czechoslovakia certainly played a part, as did the Brezhnev doctrine legitimizing that invasion.³⁵ Just as alarming were the border clashes between Chinese and Soviet troops along the Manchurian border in early 1969. Indeed, some Chinese statements linked the border clashes with Soviet intentions of repeating their Czechoslovakian invasion in Asia.

They [the Soviets] have ruthlessly plundered and brutally oppressed the people of East European countries at will and have even sent several hundred thousand troops to occupy Czechoslovakia and marked large expanses of land in East Europe as their sphere of influence in an attempt to set up a colonial empire of the Tsarist type. At the same time, they are pushing the same line in Asia. They have not only turned the Mongolian People's Republic into their colony but also vainly attempted to go further and occupy China's territory. [36]

In phrases reminiscent of Chinese statements on American activities in Southeast Asia in the 1960's, the Chinese accused the Soviets of trying "to form a so-called ring of encirclement against China" and of carrying on

"anti-China activities."³⁷

Soviet policies in Southeast Asia were also roundly condemned by the Chinese. On 8 June 1969, Leonid Brezhnev, speaking at the World Conference of Communist Parties, mentioned a proposal for a conference on European security and added that the Soviets also believed that, "the course of events is also placing on the agenda the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia."³⁸ Although Brezhnev did not elaborate on the form this system would take, the Chinese were quick to condemn it. According to the Chinese, the Soviet notion of an Asian collective security alliance had been "picked up from the garbage heap of the notorious warmonger Dulles"³⁹ and was nothing more than an anti-China tactic.

The so-called 'system of collective security in Asia' is nothing more than an anti-China military alliance. It is another frenzied step taken by Soviet revisionism in its collusion with U.S. imperialism in recent years to rig up a ring of encirclement around China and to make war clamours and threats of aggression against China. [40]

Indeed, the Chinese suggested that the Soviet Union, aware of declining American influence in Southeast Asia, was seeking to fill the vacuum left there by the American military withdrawal and that the Soviets' intentions in Southeast Asia were as dishonourable as those of her predecessors. "Following U.S. imperialism's footsteps, Soviet revisionism dishes up the sinister ware of 'system of collective security in Asia' in an attempt to control and plunder the Asian countries, especially some countries

in Southeast Asia, and to suppress the people's revolution in these countries."⁴¹

The ferocity of China's response to Soviet proposals for a collective security system in Asia betrayed a certain anxiety that the Soviets might actually be able to fill the vacuum left by the declining American role in the region. By this time, it was clear that Vietnam's ties with the Soviet Union were closer than her ties with China, thereby providing the Soviets with a close relationship with a major actor in Southeast Asia. Moreover, although the Soviet collective security proposal was destined to be rejected by Southeast Asian leaders, statements by some leaders suggested that the Soviet proposals were falling on receptive ears.

In the course of a trip to the United States in early 1970, Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman said that Brezhnev's proposal for Asian collective security... 'seems to envisage the departure from the scene of the Western powers and the eventual occurrence of a power vacuum which may be filled by a large nation presently inimical to Russian interests.' If this were to be the case, Thanat Khoman suggested, it would be in the interests of Asian nations to have the Soviets playing a role in the area. [42]

The awareness of a decreasing American presence in Southeast Asia, combined with fears of an increasing Soviet presence there, led to a major reassessment of China's Southeast Asian policy. Now that China's principal enemy had changed, policy had to be readjusted to suit these changing circumstances. To continue promoting revolution in Southeast Asia would only serve to alienate nations in the region from China and open up more opportunities for

Soviet influence there. Instead, in the early 1970's, China began to assign greater priority to state-to-state relations in the region and to de-emphasize party-to-party relations.

The Path to Sino-Thai Normalization

The most overt signs of China's changing policy in Southeast Asia took the form of table tennis diplomacy. In 1972, table tennis teams from many Southeast Asian countries were invited to China, ostensibly to play in table tennis tournaments. These events received much sympathetic coverage in the Chinese media, with the supposed friendship between China and these countries being effusively lauded.⁴³

The contacts made at these tournaments, though, were not merely sporting contacts. These tournaments were especially important because of the opportunities they presented to pursue political contacts between China and these countries. For example, the "advisor" to the Thai table tennis team was Prasit Kanchanawat, who also happened to be the deputy-head of the Directorate of Finance, Economy and Industry of the National Executive Council of Thailand. While in Beijing, Prasit met with the Chinese Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade, Li Chiang, as well as Zhou Enlai.⁴⁴ The Thai table tennis team was also invited to remain in Beijing after the tournament and "[t]his was interpreted as a 'gesture of friendship'"⁴⁵ by the Thais. Moreover, it also gave Prasit an opportunity to engage in

lengthier discussions with the Chinese on issues dividing the two countries. Clearly, then, table tennis diplomacy had mainly a political function.

While table tennis diplomacy was the most obvious sign of China's changing foreign policy towards Thailand, it was, in fact, only the most public indication of changing Sino-Thai relations. As early as October, 1969, the Thai Government had established a "China-watch" task force and it was commonly assumed in Thailand that contacts had been made with the PRC via members of Thailand's Chinese population.⁴⁶ Rumours also circulated that, in 1970, Pridi Phanomyong was serving as a go-between for China and Thailand⁴⁷ while, in May, 1971, "Thanat announced that Peking had used a third country to contact Thailand."⁴⁸

Despite these initial indications of improving relations, the Thai Government remained divided over how far and how quickly improved Sino-Thai relations ought to be pursued. Thanat Khoman appeared most eager to improve Sino-Thai relations⁴⁹ while the Thai Prime Minister, Thanom Kittikachorn, as late as July, 1971, stated his reluctance to establish commercial or political relations with China until China had ended its support for the CPT.⁵⁰

Despite these misgivings, the movement towards Sino-Thai normalization continued. In September, 1971, Thailand changed its position of opposing the seating of China at the UN. The National Security Council - an interagency security organization within the Office of the Prime Minister -

announced that Thailand would vote yes to China's representation at the UN while also seeking the retention of Taiwan's seat. Thailand was a co-sponsor of the American motion to provide seats at the UN for both China and Taiwan; however, when that motion was defeated, Thailand, for the first time, abstained on, rather than opposed, the Albanian resolution to seat China.⁵¹ In justifying this position, Thanat said that "the admission of China was advantageous to Thailand because it would present an opportunity to establish a dialogue with Peking - without the necessity of establishing formal diplomatic relations."⁵² However, "before leaving the UN General Assembly, Thanat, on September 15, told newsmen that Thailand would recognize China after its UN entry."⁵³

While the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries would have to wait several more years, on other fronts, relations steadily improved. This was especially true in the field of commercial relations between the two countries. Thailand had banned trade with China in early 1959, although Chinese goods continued to be brought into the country by smugglers. The debate over whether or not to restore trade ties with China preoccupied the Thai elite throughout the early 1970's.⁵⁴ Those in favour argued that a restoration of trade relations with the PRC would provide Thailand with access to more inexpensive goods, increase tax revenues as smuggling decreased, and pave the way for improved political relations between the

two countries. Moreover, trade with China might help counterbalance Thailand's growing economic dependence on Japan. Those opposed felt that trade with China might lead to further opportunities for Chinese subversion of Thailand and that Thailand would probably suffer a trade deficit with China.⁵⁵

The Thai Government remained reluctant to establish trade relations with China as late as May, 1971. At that time, Prime Minister Thanom ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to slow down its policy of establishing contacts with the PRC until China ended its support for the CPT.⁵⁶ However, events within the region, especially the February, 1972, trip of Richard Nixon to China, as well as internal pressure from business groups, persuaded the Thai Government that their future security depended on better relations with China.⁵⁷ Thus, despite a November, 1971, reaffirmation of the prohibition on trade between the two countries, by August, 1972, Thanom was exploring the possibility of restoring trade relations with China.

The presence of Prasit Kanchanawat in China with the Thai table tennis team was a clear indication of Thailand's increasing openness to trade with China and the Chinese were quick to take advantage of these changes in Thai attitudes. "To show China's keen interest, its Deputy Minister Li Chiang...indicated to the Thai delegation that, his country wanted to buy Thai products (such as rice, rubber, sugar, jute, gunny sacks, corn and sorghum)⁵⁸ and

in his talks with Zhou Enlai, Prasit found that the Chinese adopted a conciliatory line towards Thailand. Zhou apparently took the U.S. presence in Thailand for granted and did not raise the issue of Thai involvement in Laos, although he also refused to deny unequivocally Chinese support for the CPT.⁵⁹ The Chinese also invited Thai businessmen to the Canton Trade Fair and the Thai Government on 10 October 1972 responded by granting Thai businessmen permission to attend.

By this time the momentum of improving Sino-Thai relations seemed impossible to stop. In early June, 1973, the Thai Government discontinued a KMT intelligence operation operating along the Thai-Laotian border and began scaling down official visits to Taiwan. At the same time, Thailand announced that it would support China's entry into the Asian Games scheduled for 1974 in Iran.⁶⁰ In July, 1973, Thailand sent a message to China via its badminton team - accompanied by two high-level officials from the Foreign Ministry - "urging China to help restore permanent peace in the region" and, one month later, telephone and cable links were established between the two countries.⁶¹

The result of this was that, on 14 August 1973, "the Thai cabinet agreed in principle, though reluctantly, to amend Decree No. 53 so as to make way for trading directly with the PRC. No free trading, however, was allowed since the government wished trade with the PRC to be on a state-to-state basis only."⁶² To entice the Thais further, on

17 November 1973, China offered to sell Thailand oil at a friendship price well below the prevailing world price. The timing of this offer was propitious as world oil prices had begun rising rapidly and it resulted in the first official visit by a high-ranking Thai Government representative to China in December, 1973.⁶³

That China was willing to sell oil to Thailand at cheaper prices than she could have asked for was an indication of how eager she was to cultivate ties with Thailand.⁶⁴ As a consequence, Sino-Thai relations improved significantly in 1974. In January, the entry of Chinese goods into Thailand was formally legalized and, in February, the list of Chinese goods allowed into Thailand was significantly increased. Finally, on 6 December 1974, the trade ban was fully abrogated. Immediately afterwards, Deputy Commerce Minister Prasong Sukhum was sent to Beijing, ostensibly to inform the Chinese that Sino-Thai trade could resume, but, in reality, to discuss political rapprochement between the two countries.⁶⁵

To achieve this end, China had sought to assuage Thai fears and had avoided pressuring Thailand into an early establishment of diplomatic relations. For example, in November, 1972; Chinese Vice-Premier Li Hsien-nien had told a visiting Thai economic delegation that "Thailand should not feel compelled to hurriedly establish diplomatic relations with China."⁶⁶ In an effort to assuage Thai security concerns, the Chinese even displayed a willingness

to overlook Thailand's close ties with the United States. Indeed, in an astonishing reversal of previous Chinese policy - but one that makes sense given the change in Chinese perceptions of the balance of power in Southeast Asia - Zhou Enlai told Prasit Kanchanawat "that the Thais should think carefully on the U.S. bases question, which taken with other things the Chinese Premier...said, prompts the conclusion that he prefers an American presence, rather than a vacuum towards which the Russians might thrust."⁶⁷ Similarly, "Deputy Foreign Minister Chatichai was told by Zhou Enlai during his second visit to Beijing from January 4-10, 1975, that U.S. forces in Thailand could serve to check a possible Soviet presence"⁶⁸ in the region. While the Chinese undoubtedly perceived a security interest in maintaining an American military presence in Thailand, it is also likely that they adopted a conciliatory position on this issue in order to further the cause of Sino-Thai normalization.

Perhaps the most contentious issue dividing the two countries, though, remained that of Chinese support for the CPT and the Thai insurgency. In 1974, the Thai Defence Minister Dawee Chullasapya went to China as head of the Thai Olympic Committee where he questioned Zhou Enlai on Chinese support for the CPT. According to one report, "Chou En-lai...told him that China had stopped supporting Communist insurgents in Thailand, Laos, and other Southeast Asian countries."⁶⁹ Zhou also sought to justify past

support for the CPT, claiming that "the unfriendly attitude of Thai military governments dating from 1958 had forced China to support rebel activities inside Thailand."⁷⁰

If Zhou did make this remark,⁷¹ it is probable that its implications were not lost on the Thais. Rather than simply recounting past events, Zhou was telling Thailand's leaders that friendly ties with China meant increased Thai security while unfriendly relations brought with them the threat of Chinese-supported insurgency. In other words, if Thailand continued to pursue its policy of normalizing relations with the PRC it could expect to see decreasing Chinese support for the CPT and their insurgency.

Evidently, the Thai Government of Kukrit Pramoj received sufficient assurances from China that their support for the subversion of Thailand would cease or drop to insignificant levels,⁷² for on 1 July 1975, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries.⁷³ The joint diplomatic communique issued by China and Thailand revealed Thai anxieties about Chinese support for the CPT as well as Chinese fears of Soviet influence in the region. Clause four stated that China and Thailand agreed "that all foreign aggression and subversion and all attempts by any country to control any other country or to interfere in its internal affairs are impermissible and are to be condemned"⁷⁴ while clause five stated that the two Governments "are also opposed to any attempt by any country or group of countries to establish hegemony or create spheres of

influence in any part of the world."⁷⁵

The banquet in Beijing commemorating the signing of the joint communique provided the Thai and Chinese leaders with an opportunity to patch up their differences. Deng Xiaoping used the occasion to play down past differences while emphasizing the generally good relations China had with Thailand.

After the founding of New China, the contacts between our two countries were unfortunately interrupted for a time, owing to imperialist obstruction and sabotage. But that was a brief interlude in the long history of friendship between our two peoples. We are happy to note that in recent years the traditional friendship of our two peoples has resumed and developed at a rapid pace. [108]

Kukrit Pramoj sought to reassure the Chinese about past Thai intentions, stressing that SEATO had always been a defensive organization. He also made it clear to Chinese leaders that Thailand continued to fear Chinese subversion. "[T]he countries of Southeast Asia continue to have to oppose all manners of subversion from outside in order to preserve their right to choose their own political, economic and social systems without external interference."⁷⁷ Thus, while Thai leaders were willing to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, their distrust of China's intentions towards their country remained.

The CPT and Sino-Thai Normalization

That the Thai Government continued to harbour suspicions about China's relations with the CPT during this period of Sino-Thai normalization reflected the fact that Chinese leaders, in public, had been unwilling to disclaim

completely support for the CPT as well as the fact that the insurgency in Thailand continued to grow steadily. Indeed, during this period of warming Sino-Thai relations, the Thai insurgency continued to grow both in terms of the number of men it had under arms as well as in the scope of its operations.

The total number of armed insurgents in Thailand increased from approximately 5,000 in 1970⁷⁸ to about 8-10,000 by 1975, with another 6-7,000 civilians working in the CPT infrastructure.⁷⁰ Moreover, as the CPT grew in numbers so too did the number of areas in which the CPT was active. By 1971, thirty-seven of Thailand's seventy-one provinces were declared sensitive areas in which some level of insurgent activities were carried out.⁸⁰ The military capabilities of the CPT also increased during this period. "During 1973...the weaponry of the revolutionary forces was upgraded to include 60 mm. mortars, M-79 grenade launchers, B-40 rocket launchers, and AK-47 automatic rifles, and targets shifted from Village Defence Corps posts to units of regular army forces."⁸¹

These increases in CPT activities were not spread equally over all areas afflicted by the insurgency. Growth in the Thai insurgency was most marked in the North, where, by late 1968, government forces had to concede control of the hills to the guerrillas and content themselves with securing the lowlands. Government incursions into the hills only took the form of large-scale infantry sweeps and even

these were often repelled with heavy army casualties.⁸² Tribal armed strength in the North increased from 1,900 to 2,400, in addition to several hundred armed village defence units,⁸³ and the insurgents were found to be using more sophisticated weaponry. It also appears that liberated areas were established in the North, thereby partially freeing the guerrillas from the troublesome and risky necessity of having to move to and from Laos for training and refuge.⁸⁴ Indeed, by 1972, seven Northern districts "were declared 'special insurgency zones,' writing them off from permanent government presence."⁸⁵

The insurgency in Northeastern Thailand continued to present problems for Thai forces. Insurgent strength climbed from about 1,500 in 1970⁸⁶ to 2,123 in 1973.⁸⁷ While the military situation there did deteriorate, the most notable activity of the CPT occurred in the political field. By 1971, the insurgents controlled at least 150 villages, consisting of a total population of perhaps 100,000. During the early 1970's, the CPT spent much of their time consolidating their hold over this region, organizing the villages to provide them with recruits, supplies, and information. Their efforts were so successful that one observer claimed that the CPT's "ability to organize Northeastern villages far exceeds that of the government."⁸⁸ This ability was seemingly confirmed in 1973 when reports circulated that the CPT had established a shadow government in the Northeast.⁸⁹ Thus, as in the North, government control of the Northeast-

ern region was gradually slipping away.

This remained true in the tri-province area where government forces faced between 100-150 armed men.⁹⁰ The government strategy in this area had been to keep the guerrillas confined to the hills; however, by 1971, the insurgents had spread southwards to southwestern Phetchabun where the northern mountains meet the central plain of Thailand.⁹¹ Thus, the Thai insurgency was no longer confined only to Thailand's peripheral regions. The guerrillas had descended from the hills and were now menacing Thailand's heartland.

Insurgent activities in the South also increased during the early 1970's. Armed insurgent strength there reportedly increased from 400 in 1971-72 to 1,282 in 1973.⁹² With this increase in men under arms came an increase in military activity. Attacks on police detachments and government outposts increased as did the number of villages under insurgent control.⁹³ Complicating government efforts there were reports that the Communist Terrorist Organization (CTO), a remnant of the 1950's Malayan emergency had been revived. Consisting of about 2,000 armed men, its activities were mainly directed towards Malaysia, though it often clashed with Thai forces as well.⁹⁴ Thus, in the South, as well as in the North and Northeast, Thai forces found themselves faced with steadily growing and increasingly effective guerrilla forces.

Thai efforts to counter this growing insurgent threat

often proved ineffective. For example, in January 1972, Thai forces launched their largest assault ever on guerrilla bases in the mountains south of the Thai-Laotian border. The guerrillas knew of the planned assault weeks in advance and retreated into Laos leaving only small units behind to harass government troops. As a result, the government forces lost at least 60 men and another 200 were wounded while no guerrillas were captured, dead or alive.⁹⁵ Other counterinsurgency efforts often produced unintended, but predictable results. For example, in January 1974, Thai forces looted and burnt a Northeastern village, killing many of its inhabitants in retaliation for allegations that the villagers supported the CPT.⁹⁶ Such actions, of course, served only to increase the flow of recruits to the CPT.

Counterinsurgency efforts also tended to be poorly planned and co-ordinated. The problem of governmental instability inhibited the establishment of central co-ordination and, in the case of the 1973 coup, brought counterinsurgency efforts in Northern Thailand to a virtual standstill.⁹⁷ Moreover, corruption was rife among those empowered to carry out the civic action side of the counterinsurgency program. Money for rural development, education, and medical care was often pocketed by corrupt officials.⁹⁸

Despite these difficulties, the Thai Government encountered some success. Thai forces claimed that between 1968 and 1972 they captured 1,000 insurgents⁹⁹ and, in July,

1970, nine alleged members of the CPT, including a high-ranking Central Committee member, were arrested.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, evidence suggests that the Thai Government had learned that there was more to successful counterinsurgency than military operations. In 1974, the government reassessed its counterinsurgency efforts and brought forth a new plan that placed greater stress on civic action programmes in rural areas.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, during the early 1970's, government counterinsurgency efforts proved incapable of halting the growth of armed insurgency in Thailand.

As had been the case in the 1960's, the Chinese media continued to report on guerrilla activities within Thailand. Articles describing the insurgents' struggle against U.S. imperialism and the Thai reactionaries continued to be published¹⁰² as were VPT messages praising Mao and the Chinese Revolution.¹⁰³ Indeed, a superficial examination of the Chinese media's coverage of the Thai struggle during this period would indicate that China intended to support the CPT until its final victory over the Thai Government.

However, more careful examination of the Chinese media's coverage of events in Thailand reveals the effect of improving Sino-Thai relations on China's commitment to the CPT. To begin with, the actual quantity of Chinese media coverage of the Thai struggle was dramatically reduced in the 1970's. During the Cultural Revolution, coverage of the Thai struggle had rivalled that of the Vietnam War, yet, by 1972, this coverage had been greatly reduced. Not

only were there fewer articles dealing with the Thai insurgency, but those articles that did discuss the war in Thailand were much shorter than those published in the mid and late 1960's.

However, the changes in media coverage of the Thai insurgency were not merely quantitative in nature; several qualitative changes can also be observed. Articles in the Peking Review virtually ceased expressing any opinions on the development of the armed struggle in Thailand. Instead, articles usually consisted of verbatim transcripts of VPT broadcasts unaccompanied by any expressions of Chinese support.¹⁰⁴ While the fact that the Chinese media continued to print these articles indicates some measure of sympathy for their content, the lack of sympathetic editorial comment accompanying these messages indicates a reduced level of Chinese commitment to the CPT and their struggle.

This observation is reinforced by a more objective criterion, namely the increasing infrequency with which the Chinese media carried messages of greetings from the CPT to the CCP on occasions such as CPT anniversaries and China's National Day celebrations. CPT messages of greetings on such occasions had been regularly published since the mid-1960's, hence, their increasing infrequency since 1971 reflected a distancing of the PRC from the CPT. This trend was confirmed when, "[o]n the TCP anniversary on December 1, 1971, Radio Peking's Thai-language broadcast for the first time in 6 years failed to comment on the occasion."¹⁰⁵

While it is apparent that, in deference to improved relations with Thailand, China was willing to lessen her public support for the CPT, it is less clear if China also reduced her material support for the insurgency. According to one report, Chinese support for the CPT "was dramatically reduced early in the decade,"¹⁰⁶ however, this report lacks independent substantiation.

The fact that the CPT continued to advance militarily during the period of Sino-Thai normalization does not mean that the Chinese continued to give significant material support to the CPT. To assume this ignores the fact that the CPT had begun using weapons captured from Thai forces and that the PRC was not the CPT's sole sponsor; Vietnam and Laos were also important sources of support for the CPT. Indeed, in a 1975 interview, Kukrit Pramoj stated that he thought that "Hanoi is more prominent in supporting insurgency in this country than China - in arms, training of personnel, training of fighters and cadres."¹⁰⁷ Indeed, a detailed description of the CPT foreign supply network based on Thai and American intelligence, published in the Far Eastern Economic Review, revealed the guerrillas' supply routes from China, Laos, and Vietnam into Thailand, but virtually all of the discussion and evidence outlined in the article pointed to greater Vietnamese material support to the CPT than that provided by the PRC.¹⁰⁸ While weapons from China had been sent to the CPT over the years, as was noted in the previous chapter,

China's support for the CPT had mainly taken the form of training and political indoctrination while Vietnam acted as chief armourer of the CPT. Thus, the continuing military expansion of the CPT does not indicate continuing and significant Chinese support. Indeed, it is likely that China reduced her material support for the CPT in the early 1970's as a necessary sacrifice to improved relations with Thailand. However, events within Thailand were to provide ample compensation to the CPT for any losses they may have suffered due to a reduction in Chinese support.

The CPT and the October 1976 Coup

Thai society during the 1970's was characterized by growing social unrest, especially among student and labour organizations. The public apathy that Thai rulers had once counted on to perpetuate their rule no longer existed. Indeed, students were instrumental in the overthrow of the incompetent and corrupt Thanom-Prapath regime in October, 1973. In the years following the downfall of Thanom and Prapath, labour unrest, student activism, and violence between leftist and rightist groups continued. Things finally came to a head in October, 1976, with a military coup and a brutal attack on Thammasat University by police and the military.

A government headed by Thanin Kraivichien was appointed by the coup leaders and immediately thereafter martial law was instituted, political parties outlawed, and rule by decree established.¹⁰⁹ Although Thanin was only to last

a year in power, the result of his actions and the brutality of the attack on Thammasat University was not surprising. Students, teachers, labour activists as well as leaders and members of leftist parties fled to the countryside to escape government repression.

The coup proved to be a blessing for the CPT. The October coup and the resulting government repression seemed to confirm CPT claims that only armed struggle could lead to change in Thai society. As a result, "it is estimated that about 1,500 students and some young intellectuals...fled and joined the CPT during the first six months after 6 October 1976."¹¹⁰ Even more important than the sheer number of new recruits was the fact that these new recruits were of a higher calibre than those previously recruited into CPT ranks. The new recruits were well-educated and many were already accustomed to holding leadership positions. "This [was] a major political victory for the CPT because during thirty-four years of its existence ...the CPT had never won over such a large number of better educated citizens (who undoubtedly would provide better quality leadership in the CPT) in such a short period of time."¹¹¹

The CPT was quick to capitalize on the increased political repression in Thailand and on the forced flight to the countryside of so many Thais. Just days after the October coup, the VPT was heralding the struggle of those opposed to the regime and calling on them to intensify their struggle.¹¹² In an obvious effort to secure wider support

for their struggle, the CPT praised the efforts of "school-children, students, workers, employees, farmers, and others engaged in agriculture, traders, vendors, writers, journalists, educators, Buddhist monks and novices, as well as low-ranking police, soldiers and civil servants who love the country, democracy and justice."¹¹³ VPT broadcasts boasted of students flocking to join the CPT and vowed to carry the rural struggle into the urban centres.¹¹⁴

The VPT also began broadcasting statements from prominent Thai activists and politicians to demonstrate the gathering support for CPT policy. For example, in January, 1977, a message from former members of the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT) was broadcast over the VPT. The message of the students was that "[f]rom now on the curtain is closed on our peaceful struggle."¹¹⁵ Two months later, the VPT broadcast an interview with Khaisaeng Suksai, Deputy-Chairman of the Socialist Party of Thailand, in which he expressed his belief that armed struggle was now the only possible way to effect political change in Thailand. To allay the fears of those who were not sure that life in a jungle camp was very pleasant, Khaisaeng fulsomely praised life in jungle camps and the food they ate there as well as noting that, contrary to government propaganda, the guerrillas themselves were very friendly people.¹¹⁶ Similarly, in April, 1977, interview with Thirayudh Boonmee (or Bunmi), former Secretary-General of the NSCT, quoted Thirayudh as saying that people throughout the country

were turning their backs on the government and "turning increasingly towards the Communist Party of Thailand."¹¹⁷

In order to accomodate these new members, as well as to recruit further members, the CPT, as in the 1960's, began to issue appeals for the formation of a united front.¹¹⁸ Thus, in late September, 1977, the Committee for the Coordination of Patriotic and Democracy-Loving Forces (CCPDF) was founded. According to a VPT broadcast, the CCPDF was founded by "representatives of the Communist Party of Thailand, the Socialist Party of Thailand, the Socialist United Front Party, political groups, mass organizations, and a number of patriotic and democracy-loving people."¹¹⁹ Significantly, the CCPDF was led by Udom Srisuwan, variously described as the senior CPT official in Northeastern Thailand¹²⁰ or as leader of the Thai insurgency.¹²¹

With this broadening base of support, the CPT was able to expand its operations in Thailand. Between October, 1977, and July, 1978, the CPT managed to infiltrate several previously untouched provinces bringing the total number of provinces infected with insurgent activity to forty-six.¹²² The CPT also expanded into urban areas, making contact with student and labour leaders and infiltrating factories. In all, the CPT was estimated to have about 2,000 cadres in Bangkok,¹²³ while the TPLAF increased in strength to between 12-14,000 armed men.¹²⁴

Clashes with government troops rose steadily throughout this period, peaking in February, 1979.¹²⁵ The CPT

seemed to be focussing their attention on shifting from sanctuaries in Northern Cambodia to new bases in the Banthat mountains and this may partially account for the rising level of violence in Thailand.¹²⁶

Despite these gains, difficulties were soon apparent that would eventually spell the seeping disintegration of the CPT and the Thai insurgency. Rapid expansion of the number of CPT recruits diluted the command structure of the CPT as hastily trained leaders were hurriedly pressed into service.¹²⁷ The CPT also succeeded in alienating many potential recruits by kidnapping residents of Northeastern Thailand and spiriting them into Cambodia for forced political indoctrination and training.¹²⁸ Government counterinsurgency efforts in Buriram province prevented the CPT from establishing a liberated zone there and forced the CPT to continue operating from bases in Cambodia.¹²⁹ And, in a portent of things to come, in 1978-79, the Kriangsak Government granted "an amnesty to students, intellectuals and others involved in the October 6, 1976, events who had gone to the hills."¹³⁰ About 400 students responded to this amnesty and deserted the CPT.¹³¹

Most damaging of all to the CPT, however, were the ripple effects of the deterioration in Sino-Vietnamese and Thai-Vietnamese relations. In early January, 1979, after a lengthy period of deteriorating relations,¹³² Vietnam invaded Kampuchea ousting the pro-Beijing regime of Pol Pot and installing the pro-Vietnamese government of Heng

Samrin. In retaliation, China initiated a border war with Vietnam beginning February 17 and lasting 17 days. These events proved to be crucial to the further strengthening of Sino-Thai relations and marked a pivotal point in the history of the CPT, its relations with China, and the success of its insurgency in Thailand.

The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and Sino-Thai Relations

As the Vietnam War had come to a close in the mid-1970's, Thailand had sought to improve its relations with its former enemies in the region. This included not only China, but also Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Thailand's motives for improving her relations with the three Indochinese states were similar to those underlying her search for better relations with China. With the withdrawal of the United States from Southeast Asia, it was in Thailand's security interest to secure good relations with these hostile and potentially threatening states, particularly since Thailand shared a common border with two of them. If Thailand was able to foster good relations with the Indochinese states, she might be able to dissuade them from supporting the CPT or trying to wreak revenge on Thailand for the Thai role in the Vietnam War.

Thailand sought to improve relations with Vietnam by reducing her involvement with American policy in Southeast Asia. In February, 1972, the last Thai forces left Vietnam. The gradual withdrawal of American forces from Thailand was also seen as contributing to improved Thai-Vietnamese

relations. The Thais were also willing to put aside the question of Vietnamese support for the CPT in an effort to hasten normalization of Thai-Vietnamese relations. In fact, in the same interview in which he stated that Vietnam was the chief supporter of the CPT, Thai Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj denied that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Vietnam was out of the question as long as Vietnam continued to support the Thai insurgency. "That is not the reason at all: Insurgencies don't supply any obstacle to our attempts to restore normal diplomatic relations with Hanoi."¹³³ Evidently, Vietnamese support for the Thai insurgency was no obstacle to normalized Thai-Vietnamese relations for diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1976.

Thailand also tried to establish better relations with Kampuchea and Laos; although with the latter country success remained limited because of Thailand's past extensive military involvement there.¹³⁴ Thai relations with Kampuchea were marred by frequent border clashes and Thai fears of Khmer Rouge support for the CPT. However, it seems likely that Thailand enlisted China's aid in improving relations with Kampuchea. In 1975, it was rumoured that Thailand had asked the Chinese to persuade Kampuchea to reduce its armed attacks on Thai territory.¹³⁵ Although Thailand, in 1976, became the first non-communist country to establish diplomatic relations with Kampuchea, border clashes continued throughout 1976 and 1977.¹³⁶ Once again, it

appears that China sought to reduce tension between the two countries when Kukrit Pramoj and Pol Pot coincidentally both appeared in Beijing in October, 1977.¹³⁷

While China undoubtedly welcomed improved Thai relations with her Kampuchean ally, she looked askance on improving Thai-Vietnamese relations. China viewed Vietnam not only as an historic rival for power in Southeast Asia, but also as a vehicle for Soviet expansion in the region. Because of its geographic position, Thailand was useful to the Chinese as a state that could serve in the frontline against Vietnamese expansionism, and, by extension, Soviet expansion in the region. Thus, China sought to prevent the development of close Thai-Vietnamese relations while Vietnam, in turn, sought to thwart China's containment policy by improving her relations with Thailand.

Sino-Vietnamese rivalry for Thailand's affections was vividly demonstrated in 1978 when Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong visited Thailand and pledged that Vietnam would not support the subversion of Thailand. An anti-subversion clause was put in the joint communique signed by Van Dong and Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak Chammanand, pledging that both countries would refrain "from carrying out subversion, direct, or indirect, against each other and from using force or threatening to use force against each other."¹³⁸

In a visit later that same year, Deng Xiaoping warned the Thais not to trust Van Dong's statement, claiming that since communists never call wars of national liberation

"subversion," {Van Dong's promise not to carry out subversion in Thailand was not applicable to the CPT's war of national liberation.¹³⁹ Deng himself, though, was unwilling to disclaim Chinese support for the CPT. Deng said that China's position was "that, on a governmental basis 'communist insurgency' or a 'war of national liberation' will not be supported but what the relations are between the communist parties of Thailand and China is not the concern of the Chinese Government"¹⁴⁰ and claimed "that the relationship between parties should be separated from that between states so that it does not hinder the development of our friendly relations with other countries."¹⁴¹

Thailand's response to the two countries' statements about their relations with the CPT betrayed a decided pro-Beijing slant. Thailand was unimpressed by Pham Van Dong's assurances since Vietnam could easily use its ally, Laos, to supply the CPT.¹⁴² On the other hand, Thai statements about China's refusal to disown the CPT revealed a considerable, and astonishing, amount of sympathy for China's position. One high-level source was quoted as saying that the Thais "understand the political compulsion behind Teng's statement...Anyway actions speak louder than words. We see no evidence of increased Chinese support for insurgency. So in this case the actions are different from the words."¹⁴³ It seems, then, that Thailand had reason to disbelieve Vietnamese promises to cease attempts to destabilize Thailand and to trust China to reduce its commitment to

the CPT without publicly disowning the party. In fact, it is possible that Thailand wanted China to continue providing support - albeit, insignificant support - to the CPT in order to prevent it from coming under Vietnamese influence and receiving potentially more support. Thus, the Thai rationale may have been that it was better to face a relatively harmless, pro-Beijing CPT than a more dangerous, pro-Hanoi CPT.¹⁴⁴

China could not have been more pleased with the indications that Thailand was shifting to her side in the Sino-Vietnamese competition. While the Chinese media continued to print occasional messages from the VPT,¹⁴⁵ Chinese press coverage of Thailand increasingly focussed on state-to-state relations and the prospects for broader and closer Sino-Thai relations.¹⁴⁶ This trend was accelerated in 1979 with the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, the subsequent installation of the Vietnamese-backed government there, and the Sino-Vietnamese war.

The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea brought seeming confirmation of China's claims that the Soviet Union and her regional hegemonist, Vietnam, were intent on establishing their hegemony in Southeast Asia.

[T]he Soviet Union's counterrevolutionary strategy in Asia today is to cordon the continent from the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, right up to Haishenwei (Vladivostok) and using Vietnam, 'the Cuba of Asia,' in its central thrust to seize the whole of Indochina and then dominate Southeast Asia and South Asia and edge the United States out of Asia. [147]

Chinese statements acknowledged that this strategy

was intended to encircle China;¹⁴⁸ however, the overwhelming stress in Chinese statements was on the danger Vietnam and the Soviet Union posed to Southeast Asia, and especially to Thailand. One article warned that "Thailand is Viet Nam's next target. Viet Nam had once indicated that it would liberate the rural areas of northern Thailand bordering on Kampuchea"¹⁴⁹ and quoted approvingly from a speech by Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak condemning the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea.

Although Thailand was understandably concerned about the presence of Vietnamese troops in neighbouring Kampuchea, she tried to avoid the appearance of being allied too closely with the PRC on the issue for fear that alignment with China might provoke a Vietnamese attack on the Thai border or intensified Vietnamese support for the CPT. However, the Chinese did their utmost to woo Thailand to their side. As the frontline state in Southeast Asia that could halt Vietnamese expansionism, Thailand had to be drawn towards China's position in the dispute. Thus, coverage of the Thai insurgency and the CPT ceased entirely in the Chinese media and no less a figure than Deng Xiaoping publicly expressed support for the Thai Government: "China will stand on the side of the ASEAN countries if Viet Nam attacks them. It will stand on the side of Thailand if Viet Nam attacks it."¹⁵⁰ This pledge was publicly reiterated by Chinese spokesmen several times over the next few years. For example, after Vietnamese troops invaded Thailand in

pursuit of Khmer Rouge guerrillas, the Chinese Foreign Ministry warned the Vietnamese that the Chinese Government was closely watching events and that "it would be a miscalculation on the part of the Vietnamese authorities if they should think that they could get by military means what they couldn't obtain through their 'peace offensive' and smiling diplomacy."¹⁵¹ Exactly what type of support China would give Thailand in the event of a Vietnamese attack was not made clear in these statements, but when Thailand's Air Chief Marshal Sitthi Sawetsila went to China in August, 1980, rumours circulated that he was "assured by Chinese leaders that any Vietnamese attack on Thailand would immediately prompt a Chinese assault on Vietnam's Northern border."¹⁵²

Although Thai leaders were initially somewhat perturbed by Chinese efforts to involve them so deeply in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict, Thailand has been drawn ineluctably into the conflict on China's side. Thai leaders had hoped in the 1970's, as in the 1960's, that Kampuchea could serve as a buffer between Thailand and Vietnam. The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and the subsequent Vietnamese rejection of Thai proposals that Kampuchea serve as a buffer state between the two countries¹⁵³ destroyed that hope. The presence of hostile Vietnamese troops on her border - and sometimes within her borders - has meant that Thailand has had to shed the fig leaf of neutrality and align herself more closely with China as

a necessary counterbalance to Vietnam:

Thailand's shift from apparent neutrality to close alignment with China against Vietnam was helped along the way by repeated Chinese statements of support for Thailand in the event of a Thai-Vietnamese conflict and by China's refusal to deny that Thailand was serving as a conduit for arms to anti-Vietnamese rebel forces in Kampuchea. Similarly, matters were not helped in 1979, when Prince Sihanouk disclosed "that the Chinese had informed him they planned to supply and pay Khmer Rouge troops in Thailand to fight the Heng Samrin Government"¹⁵⁴ and scoffed at claims that Thailand was playing a neutral role in the conflict. "[T]o the outside world the Thais say they are neutral but they are not neutral in fact. The Thais are with Pol Pot."¹⁵⁵

Sihanouk's indiscretions undoubtedly confirmed Vietnam's suspicions that Thailand and China were aiding remnants of the Khmer Rouge and other anti-government forces in Kampuchea. The Vietnamese had long suspected that Thailand's policy of repatriating Kampuchean refugees was simply a cover for infiltrating Kampuchean guerrillas into the country and these suspicions were reinforced when, on one occasion, a caravan of Khmer Rouge soldiers and refugees, reported to number between 50-80,000, was allowed to enter Thailand in flight from Vietnamese forces, march thirty miles south through Thai territory, and re-enter safer territory in Kampuchea.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, in April, 1981, "Chinese arms were delivered to the guerrilla group led by the former premier

Son Sann at the Thai border in a glare of publicity."¹⁵⁷

By now, Thailand has abandoned hope of maintaining a neutral posture in the Sino-Vietnamese dispute. The presence of Vietnam on her borders and the repeated incursions of Vietnamese troops into Thai territory have

forced Thailand to move closer to the PRC. This was made apparent when Thailand and the PRC worked to organize a united front of three Kampuchean resistance groups in 1981.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the overall effect of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict has been to strengthen Sino-Thai relations to the point where the once hostile Chinese Government now publicly supports the Thai Government and evinces a willingness to act militarily in support of Thailand.¹⁵⁹

China, the CPT, and the Sino-Vietnamese Conflict

The effect of these dramatically improved Sino-Thai state relations on Sino-Thai party relations has been somewhat predictable. As was noted, after the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, Chinese media coverage of the Thai insurgency ceased. Shortly afterwards, on 11 July 1979, the VPT went off the air. No explanation was provided for the VPT's closure, but it is possible that the station was closed by the Chinese in the interests of further consolidating their good relations with the Thai Government.¹⁶⁰ It also appears that China's material aid to the CPT ceased during this period. In 1978, intelligence sources claimed that the "CPT [received] little more than occasional moral support from China."¹⁶¹ A 1981 report

stated that China was giving some financial and training support to the CPT but only enough to prevent it from aligning with Vietnam and the Soviet Union.¹⁶² Another report said that material support from the PRC ended in 1980¹⁶³ and a 1980 interview with Thirayudh Boonmee supported this claim. Thirayudh said that the CPT did "not get direct arms support [from China]...we receive support on political points...there's some financial support, but it is not much."¹⁶⁴ If true, then this corresponds to statements made in 1981 by Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang "that China's relations with the communist parties of the ASEAN countries are 'only political and moral.'"¹⁶⁵

However, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict was to have more serious repercussions on the fortunes of the CPT than merely the loss of Chinese support. As the Sino-Vietnamese conflict deepened, the CPT found itself increasingly being forced to choose sides in the matter. This was especially disastrous for the CPT, not simply because of the ideological rifts it created in the party, but also because of its effect on the CPT's ability to carry on its insurgency.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, it became apparent that Vietnam and Laos were escalating an historic competition with China for the loyalty of the CPT.¹⁶⁶ The 1975 Pathet Lao victory enabled the Pathet Lao to return CPT members previously serving with Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces to Thailand. This had the effect of increasing

Laotian and Vietnamese influence over the CPT to such an extent that China sent special advisors to the training camps of these returned CPT members to ensure their continued loyalty to China.¹⁶⁷ In December, 1976, the CPT was invited to send delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Vietnam Workers' Party (since renamed the Vietnamese Communist Party)¹⁶⁸ and, in 1977-78, Vietnam reportedly offered weapons to a regional committee of the CPT in Northeastern Thailand consisting largely of Vietnamese-trained cadres in an effort to persuade them to adopt a more pro-Vietnamese and pro-Soviet stance.¹⁶⁹

Rumours of divisions within the CPT and the formation of pro-Soviet and pro-Vietnamese factions soon began circulating. In 1977, Thai intelligence sources reported that a pro-Soviet offshoot of the CPT, the Thai Northeastern National Liberation Party, had been formed in Laos and was headquartered in Vientiane.¹⁷⁰ In 1979, two members of the CCPDF executive, Bunyen Wothong (vice-chairman) and Therdphum Chaides, accompanied by fifty to sixty followers, defected from the CCPDF and reportedly travelled to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi,¹⁷¹ a move that contributed to the collapse of the CCPDF.¹⁷² Thus, the CPT found its internal unity seriously shaken by the growing rift between China and Vietnam.

However, divisions within the CPT were not merely a reflection of the conflict between China and Vietnam. Disputes over party policy and military tactics also began

to surface in the late 1970's. For example, the predominance of Sino-Thais in the CPT was increasingly challenged by younger, newer members of the party. The 1976 coup had increased the number of Thais in the party and these newer members resented the Sino-Thai monopoly of important CPT positions, as well as the party's slavish adherence to the Chinese line and the inordinate amount of attention paid to issues mainly of Chinese, not Thai, concern.¹⁷³ The long-standing CPT policy of relying on the rural struggle was also disputed, with newer members favouring a greater emphasis on urban operations.¹⁷⁴ These disagreements appear to have severely undermined the unity of the CPT. According to one CPT defector, violent ideological disagreements wracked the CPT in Northern Thailand in late 1978.¹⁷⁵ The postponement of the CPT's Fourth Congress in 1979 also suggested that the party was unable to patch up internal differences.¹⁷⁶

Perhaps more serious than these divisions, though, have been the effects of worsening Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Laotian relations on the CPT's military capabilities. Because of the CPT's strong allegiance to the PRC, Vietnam and Laos became increasingly unwilling to support the party as their relations with China deteriorated. In 1977, Vietnam refused to give or sell its surplus weaponry to the CPT¹⁷⁷ and, in 1980, Vietnam reportedly severed all aid to the party.¹⁷⁸ A year earlier, both Laos and Kampuchea evicted the CPT from their training

camps along the Thai-Laotian and Thai-Kampuchean borders.¹⁷⁹ The effect of the evictions was especially disastrous for the CPT. Although the CPT had established some bases within Thailand, it was still heavily reliant on these foreign bases, hence, the evictions created serious military problems for ~~the CPT~~. The termination of weapon supplies from Vietnam also seriously hindered the military capabilities of the CPT, especially given the important role Vietnam had historically played in arming the CPT.

Combined with these difficulties was an increasingly effective government counterinsurgency programme to contend with. In 1980 and 1982, the Thai Government reaffirmed its offer of amnesty to those fighting in the hills and promised to "treat communist defectors or those who are arrested with sympathy as fellow countrymen...[and] thoroughly explain the government policy and help them start a decent new life in mainstream society."¹⁸⁰ It appears that this offer proved to be too much to resist for many insurgents tired of life in jungle camps and disillusioned by flagging CPT fortunes and bitter ideological disputes. By 1981, the number of insurgents had dropped from 13,000 in 1979 to about 6,000, with surrenders and defections occurring especially in the Northeast.¹⁸¹ Defections continued throughout these years, reaching such levels that, on one occasion, in December, 1982, 250 insurgents and 750 of their dependents surrendered en masse to Thai authorities.¹⁸² According to one estimate, 7,500

armed cadres and a much larger number of sympathizers and dependents surrendered to Thai authorities in the period 1979-1982.¹⁸³ Moreover, these defections were not limited to the CPT rank and file. In September, 1982, Udom Srisuwan defected, followed in December by Mongkol na Nakhon, another high-ranking CPT and CCPDF member.¹⁸⁴

The effect of these mass defections, as well as the declining external support for the CPT, has been predictable. In 1981, government forces captured key CPT strongholds in the North and Northeast, including the CPT's traditional stronghold in the Phuphan mountains, and army sources also claimed some success in overrunning bases in the Southern province of Surat Thani, though their efforts there generally met with less success. The TPLAF itself was fragmented - both by defections and military clashes - into small units capable only of limited and sporadic strikes against government forces.¹⁸⁵ As a result, in 1981, insurgent operations in Northeastern Thailand were down by 70%¹⁸⁶ while guerrilla incidents in the area adjacent to Northern Kampuchea - which had once accounted for 57% of all nationwide guerrilla-initiated incidents - had dropped to nearly zero.¹⁸⁷ It was evident, then, that by the early 1980's, the CPT had ceased to be an effective challenge to government forces in the countryside.

The future of the CPT at this time remains uncertain. While the collapse of the CPT in the rural areas and the mass defections the party has suffered would seem to signal

the demise of the CPT, the CPT cannot yet be written off as a spent force. Indeed, many Thais suspect that the decline in the CPT's rural activity and the massive defections from the party reflect not the imminent demise of the CPT, but, instead, a shift in CPT tactics.

As was noted earlier, many newer members of the CPT felt that the party placed too great an emphasis on the rural struggle, often to the detriment of urban operations. In 1981, these members forced the CPT to adopt a new policy that would place as much emphasis on urban activities as was placed on rural activities.¹⁸⁸ Considered in this light, the massive defections from the CPT and the decline in its rural operations take on a more sinister appearance. Some Thais feel that the government's amnesty scheme "may in fact turn out to be the unwitting instrument of the CPT in their move to infiltrate the cities."¹⁸⁹ Indeed, according to one report, many of those who fled Bangkok after the 1976 coup have returned to Bangkok and are actively working for the CPT.¹⁹⁰ Thus, while the CPT's military operations have declined considerably in recent years, it is still too early to determine what the long-term future of the CPT will be. On the surface, the CPT appears to have been dealt a decisive defeat by the government and by events within Southeast Asia; however, if those sceptical of CPT defections are correct, Thailand may yet be faced with renewed communist activity.

In conclusion, Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand

during this period moved increasingly from the party level to the state level. China's previous affirmation of support for the CPT eventually gave way to statements of support for the Thai Government. As was demonstrated, this shift in Chinese foreign policy resulted primarily from the changing balance of power in the region and from a changed Chinese perception of which country was her principal enemy. As the United States withdrew from Southeast Asia, and as Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese relations worsened, China began to look to Thailand as a regional ally that might help halt the spread of Vietnamese and Soviet - influence in Southeast Asia and make Vietnam pay for her transgressions in Kampuchea. To ensure that Thailand would be willing to perform this role and, moreover, that she would be strong enough to be an effective ally against Vietnam, China abandoned the CPT and expressed outright support for the Thai Government. As will be discussed in the following chapter, this period in Sino-Thai relations, as well as the period that preceded it, illustrate vividly some of the motivations behind Chinese foreign policy and the role of revolution in that policy.

Footnotes

¹ William Duiker, The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam. (Boulder: Westview, 1981), p. 270.

² Far Eastern Economic Review Asia Yearbook. (here-

after FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1970), p. 290.

³ New York Times. (July 26, 1969), p. 9.

⁴ J.L.S. Girling, "Southeast Asia and the Great Powers," Pacific Community. Vol. 9 No. 2 (January, 1978), p. 201.

⁵ Quoted in Girling, "Southeast Asia and the Great Powers," p. 201n.

⁶ Thomas Marks, "Thai Security during the American Era, 1960-1976," Issues and Studies. Vol. 15 No. 4 (April, 1979), p. 69.

⁷ Marks, "Thai Security during the American Era, 1960-1976," p. 72.

⁸ Ibid, p. 76.

⁹ New York Times. (October 1, 1969), p. 1.

¹⁰ Clark Neher, "Thailand: Toward Fundamental Change," Asian Survey. Vol. 11 No. 2 (February, 1971), p. 137. The overwhelming number of American military personnel in Thailand during this period were connected with the American air war in Indochina. See Marks, "Thai Security," p. 72.

¹¹ See David Morell, "Thailand," Asian Survey. Vol. 13 No. 2 (February, 1973), pp. 172-173.

¹² FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1973), p. 314.

¹³ FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1975), p. 50.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 308.

¹⁵ Marks, "Thai Security," p. 71.

¹⁶ New York Times. (December 1, 1969), p. 1.

¹⁷ For a discussion of Thai resentment of the social and cultural effects of the American presence in their country, see New York Times. (November 24, 1971), p. 2; and Far Eastern Economic Review. (hereafter FEER) (May 28, 1973), p. 18.

18 Roger Kershaw, "Thailand after Vietnam: After Vietnam Thailand?" Asian Affairs. (London) Vol. 63 (February, 1976), p. 28. The bitterness of Thai leaders towards the United States was given public expression in 1975 in Thai Foreign Minister Chatchai Choonhavan's response to comments by American Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger's remark that the U.S. had an "obligation of a moral nature" to defend Thailand: "Moral? The United States does not have any morals at this point. They have already pulled out from Cambodia and South Vietnam, so we are going to depend on ourselves." Quoted in Robert Zimmerman, "Thailand 1975: Transition to Constitutional Democracy Continues," Asian Survey. Vol. 16 No. 2 (February, 1976), p. 168.

19 Quoted in Marks, "Thai Security," p. 77.

20 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1975), p. 307.

21 Kershaw, "Thailand after Vietnam: After Vietnam Thailand?", p. 23.

22 See FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1976), p. 305.

23 New York Times. (May 15, 1975), p. 1,18.

24 For a description of these negotiations, see FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1976), p. 318.

25 For a list of these Thai conditions, see Ibid.

26 FEER. (February 20, 1969), p. 314.

27 Quoted in Jay Taylor, China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements. (rev. ed.) (New York: Praeger, 1976), pp. 349-350.

28 Taylor, China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements, p. 350. Taylor also quotes the chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce as saying that there was an "urgent need" for trade with China. p. 350.

29 Quoted in Ibid.

30 Peking Review. Vol. 14 No. 34 (August 21, 1970),

p. 30.

31 Peking Review. Vol. 15 No. 3 (January 21, 1972), p. 13.

32 Linda Dillon, Bruce Burton, and Walter Soderlund, "Who was the Principal Enemy? Shifts in Official Chinese Perceptions of the Two Superpowers, 1968-1969," Asian Survey. Vol. 17 No. 5 (May, 1977), pp. 456-473.

33 Dillon, Burton, and Soderlund, "Who was the Principal Enemy?" p. 459.

34 Ibid; p. 467. See also FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1970), p. 100.

35 See Dillon et. al., p. 457. See Alvin Rubinstein, Soviet Foreign Policy since World War II: Imperial and Global. (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), p. 83, for a description of the Brezhnev doctrine.

36 Hsinhua. No. 10 (March 10, 1969), p. 5. See also Hsinhua No. 35 (August 26, 1968), pp. 6-7.

37 Hsinhua. No. 10 (March 10, 1969), p. 5.

38 Quoted in Arnold Horelick, "The Soviet Union's Asian Collective Security Proposal: A Club in Search of Members," Pacific Affairs. Vol. 47 (1974-1975), p. 269.

39 Peking Review. Vol. 12 No. 27 (July 4, 1969), p. 22.

40 Ibid.

41 Hsinhua. No. 36 (September 8, 1969), p. 18. Despite this abuse, Brezhnev, in 1973, had the temerity to propose again a collective security system in Asia. See Leonid Brezhnev, "For a Just, Democratic Peace, for the Security of Nations and International Cooperation," New Times. No. 44 (November, 1973), pp. 4-11. For the Chinese response, see Peking Review. Vol. 16 No. 52 (December 28, 1973), pp. 7-8.

42 Taylor, p. 334. Whether or not Thanat was sincerely welcoming a greater Soviet role in the region is open to question. He may have been playing on Chinese fears of growing Soviet influence in Southeast Asia in order to pressure Beijing into improving its relations with Thailand. It is also possible that Thanat was playing on American

fears of Soviet influence in the region in order to slow the American withdrawal from his country. Whatever the true motive was for Thanat's statements, Thai-Soviet bloc relations did improve in the early 1970's. In 1972, Thailand established diplomatic relations with Poland and sent a 15-man trade mission to the U.S.S.R. In 1974, diplomatic relations were established with Outer Mongolia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and East Germany, and, in November of that year, Thai Foreign Minister Chatichai made the first official Thai Government visit to Poland, Romania, Hungary, and East Germany. See FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1974), p. 314; and FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1975), p. 309.

⁴³ See, for example, Survey of China Mainland Press. (hereafter SCMP.) No. 5218 (September 19, 1972), pp. 81-83.

⁴⁴ SCMP. No. 5217 (September 18, 1972), p. 37. Prasit claimed that, in their talks, Chou was very understanding of the obstacles to Sino-Thai normalization, saying "that if there were obstacles on the Thai side to immediate diplomatic relations, China could wait. But in the meantime, Chou suggested, China and Thailand should begin to promote relations in other fields such as sports and trade." Taylor, pp. 354-355.

⁴⁵ Yuan-li Wu, The Strategic Land Ridge: Peking's Relations with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), p. 35.

⁴⁶ See New York Times. (February 16, 1971), p. 6.

⁴⁷ Taylor, p. 350.

⁴⁸ Yuan-li Wu, The Strategic Land Ridge, p. 22.

⁴⁹ That Thanat was so eager to improve Sino-Thai relations is a sign of how profoundly Thai perceptions of the security environment in Southeast Asia had changed. Thanat had been one of the principal architects of close Thai-U.S. relations in the early 1960's.

⁵⁰ FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1972), p. 321.

⁵¹ See Ibid, p. 322; and Taylor, pp. 351-352.

⁵² FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1972), p. 322.

53 Ibid.

54 In 1970, seventy Thai MP's signed a petition to repeal the ban on trade with China. See Truman Phillips, "Some Recent Political Development in Thailand" in Kok-Chiang Tan (ed.) Southeast Asia after the Restoration of Peace in Indochina. (Guelph: Canadian Society for Asian Studies, 1975), p. 111.

55 For a summary of the debate on this issue, see Shee Poon Kim, "The Politics of Thailand's Trade Relations with the People's Republic of China," Asian Survey. Vol. 21 No. 3 (March, 1981), pp. 313-314.

56 Shee Poon Kim, "The Politics of Thailand's Trade Relations with the People's Republic of China," pp. 314-315.

57 For a discussion of some of the internal pressure for establishing trade ties with China, See Ibid, pp. 315-317.

58 Ibid, p. 316.

59 Taylor, p. 354.

60 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1974), p. 314.

61 Ibid.

62 Shee Poon Kim, p. 318.

63 For details on the oil deal, see Ibid, p. 319n.

64 China's desire to develop friendly relations with Thailand was also illustrated by her 1975 decision to buy 200,000 tons of rice from Thailand. This purchase was intended to minimize the trade imbalance that existed in China's favour. As a rice exporter, China had no real need to import rice from Thailand. See Ibid, p. 322n.

65 Ibid, p. 320.

66 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1974), p. 314.

67 FEER. (July 23, 1973), p. 25.

68 Leszek Buszynski, "Thailand: The Erosion of a Balanced Foreign Policy," Asian Survey. (November, 1982), pp. 1040-1041.

69 New York Times. (February 17, 1974), p. 9.

70 Ibid.

71 There is some uncertainty as to whether or not Zhou actually did say unequivocally that China had ceased its support for the CPT. According to one source, Zhou did not disclaim Chinese support for the CPT, although Dawee Chullasapya mistakenly thought he had. See Dick Wilson, The Neutralization of Southeast Asia. (New York: Praeger, 1975), p. 72.

72 It is probable that Thailand and China reached some backroom deal on this issue. According to Kukrit himself, in private talks with Mao, Mao "dismissed the Thai Communist Party as 'very small.'" FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1976), p. 151.

73 For the immediate chain of events leading up to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, see Phillips, "Some Recent Political Development in Thailand," p. 121.

74 Peking Review. Vol. 18 No. 27 (July 4, 1975), p. 8.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

77 Ibid., p. 12. The right of each country to preserve its own political, economic, and social system was also inserted in the joint communique as clause nine. See Ibid., p. 9.

78 Neher, "Thailand: Toward Fundamental Change," p. 135.

79 FEER. (May 9, 1975), p. 27.

80 David Morell, "Thailand: Military Checkmate," Asian Survey. Vol. 12 No. 2 (February, 1972), p. 158.

81 Jeffrey Race, "Thailand 1973: 'We certainly have been ravaged by something...'" Asian Survey. Vol. 14 No.

2 (February, 1974), p. 200. See also Jeffrey Race, "Thailand in 1974: A new constitution," Asian Survey. Vol. 15 No. 2 (February, 1975), p.164.

⁸² Morell, "Thailand: Military Checkmate," pp. 159-160.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 160.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Whether or not these liberated zones were established or, if they were, how large they were remains in doubt. Events discussed later in the chapter (pp.129-130) suggest that these liberated zones were not adequate for CPT needs.

⁸⁵ David Morell, "Thailand," Asian Survey. Vol. 13 No. 2 (February, 1973), p. 170.

⁸⁶ Morell, "Thailand: Military Checkmate," p. 159.

⁸⁷ Race, "Thailand 1973," p. 200.

⁸⁸ Morell, "Thailand: Military Checkmate," p. 159.

⁸⁹ FEER. (July 23, 1973), pp. 26, 28.

⁹⁰ FEER. (September 18, 1971), p. 22.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 21.

⁹² Race, "Thailand 1973," p. 200.

⁹³ See Morell, "Thailand: Military Checkmate," p. 160; and Morell, "Thailand," p. 171.

⁹⁴ Morell, "Thailand: Military Checkmate," p. 160.

⁹⁵ New York Times. (March 26, 1972), p. 1. See also Morell, "Thailand," pp. 170-171.

⁹⁶ FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1975), p. 305.

⁹⁷ FEER. (May 9, 1975), p. 27.

⁹⁸ See William Heaton and Richard MacLeod, "People's

War in Thailand," in Donald Alberts, William Heaton, and Bard O'Neill, (ed.) Insurgency in the Modern World. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), p. 102-103.

⁹⁹ Thomas Marks, "Thailand-the Threatened Kingdom," Conflict Studies. No. 115 (January-February, 1980), p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Neher, "Thailand: Toward Fundamental Change," p. 136.

¹⁰¹ See Jeffrey Race, "Thailand in 1974: A new constitution," p. 165. Race attributes this change in emphasis to Thai strategists but, given the United States pronounced involvement in training and advising the Thais in counterinsurgency techniques, it is possible that the United States had a hand in changing the nature of Thai counterinsurgency efforts. On the American role in Thailand's counterinsurgency programme, see Douglas Blaufarb, The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance - 1950 to the Present. (New York: Free Press, 1977), pp. 187-190, 197-203; and Heaton and Macleod, "People's War in Thailand," pp. 103-104.

¹⁰² See, for example, Peking Review, Vol. 13 No. 33 (August 14, 1970), p. 23.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 13 No. 23 (June 5, 1970), pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 15 No. 12 (March 24, 1972), p. 21; and Peking Review. Vol. 15 No. 32 (August 11, 1972), pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor, p. 350. A glaring exception to this general rule was a message of greetings in 1977 from the CCP to the CPT. The message used language reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution and is at odds with the overwhelming trend away from close CCP-CPT ties. While the publication of this message remains somewhat mysterious, it may be a reflection of the ideological conflict occurring in China during these years and perhaps represents the 'last gasp' of the Cultural Revolution leftists. See Peking Review. Vol. 20 No. 50 (December 9, 1977), p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ FEER. (July 28, 1978), p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ FEER. (December 12, 1975), p. 21.

- 108 See FEER. (August 22, 1975), pp.110-111.
- 109 See J.L.S. Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 116-117.
110. Somchai Rakwijit, "Problems of Thai Internal Security," Southeast Asian Affairs 1978. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1978), p. 291.
111. Somchai Rakwijit, "Problems of Thai Internal Security," p.291.
- 112 Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: Asia and the Pacific. (hereafter DR:AP), (October 21, 1976), pp. J8-J11.
- 113 DR:AP. (October 21, 1976), p. J9.
- 114 DR:AP. (November 11, 1976), pp. J6-J8.
- 115 DR:AP. (January 6, 1977), p. J9.
- 116 DR:AP. (March 16, 1977), pp. J5-J12.
- 117 DR:AP. (April 4, 1977), p. J2.
- 118 For a detailed discussion of CPT efforts to form a second united front, see Thomas Marks, "The Communist Party and the Strategy of the United Front in Thailand Since October 1976," Asia Quarterly, No. 1 (1980), pp. 3-18; and Thomas Marks, "The United Front in Thailand since October 1976," Courrier de l'extreme-orient, No. 71 (1979). The appendix of the latter article lists VPT statements calling for a united front, beginning on 7 October 1976.
- 119 DR:AP. (October 6, 1977), p. J7.
- 120 FEER. (May 13, 1972), p. 18.
- 121 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1975), p. 49. A list of the CCPDF leaders can be found in DR:AP. (October 6, 1977), p. J8 and a brief description of their backgrounds can be found in David Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija, Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution. (Cambridge: Oelgeschlager, Gunn, and Hain, 1981), p. 297.

- 122 FEER. (July 28, 1978), p. 13.
- 123 Ibid., p. 14.
- 124 FEER. (July 27, 1979), p. 31.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 See FEER. (July 14, 1978), p. 17; and FEER. (July 28, 1978), p. 12.
- 127 See FEER. (July 28, 1978), p. 13.
- 128 Marks, "Thailand-the Threatened Kingdom," p. 13.
- 129 Ansil Ramsay, "Thailand 1978: Kriangsak- the Thai who binds," Asian Survey. Vol. 19 No. 2 (February, 1979), p. 113.
- 130 Morell and Chai-anan Samudavinija, Political Conflict in Thailand., p. 303. The events referred to in this law probably refer to the battle at Thammasat University but may also refer to an incident on 5 October 1976 that enraged many Thais. Students at the University staged a mock hanging to protest the deaths of two students at the hands of Thai police. A right-wing newspaper, Dao Siam, published photographs in which one of the "hanged" actors allegedly was made up to resemble Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn. There is some speculation that the newspaper itself retouched the photographs, however, an enraged Thai public accepted the photographs as authentic and their outrage contributed to the ferocity of the attack on the university. See Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija, pp. 274-275.
- 131 Ibid., p. 304.
- 132 A brief description of the roots of the Vietnamese-Kampuchean conflict can be found in J.L.S. Girling, "Indochina," in Mohammed Ayoob.(ed.) Conflict and Intervention in the Third World. (London: Croon Helm, 1980), pp.16-17.
- 133 FEER. (December 12, 1975), p. 20.
- 134 For a description of Thailand's military involvement in Laos, see Marks, "Thai Security," pp. 73-74; FEER. (June 18, 1973), pp. 31-33; and FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1976), pp. 304-305.

- 135 Frank Darling, "Thailand in 1977: The Search for Stability and Progress," Asian Survey. Vol. 18 No. 2 (February, 1978), pp. 161-162.
- 136 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1978), pp. 324-325.
- 137 Ibid.
- 138 FEER. (September 22, 1978), p. 28. At the same time that Pham Van Dong was disclaiming support for the CPT, Vietnamese propaganda was warning Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries that China intended to use pro-Beijing communist parties "to swallow Southeast Asia." Pro-Chinese parties, the Vietnamese charged, would "conduct armed attacks and terroristic and divisive operations, wantonly massacring civilians and ransacking the people's property." FEER. (June 8, 1979), p. 19. Vietnamese propaganda efforts were aided by Soviet propaganda that warned Thailand that China would use Thailand's Chinese community to undermine Thai security. See New York Times. (June 24, 1975), p. 5.
- 139 DR:AP. (October 16, 1978), p. J1.
- 140 Ibid.
- 141 F.B.I.S. Daily Report: People's Republic of China. (hereafter DR:PRC.) (November 9, 1978), p. A14. Deng claimed that China and Thailand had reached a satisfactory agreement on the question of China's relations with the CPT. See FEER. (November 17, 1978), p. 11.
- 142 See FEER. (November 10, 1978), p. 22.
- 143 Ibid. See also the sympathetic article in the Bangkok Post by its influential editor, The Chongkhadikit in DR:AP. (October 6, 1977), pp. J3-J7.
- 144 See FEER. (November 10, 1978), p. 22.
- 145 See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 20 No. 34 (August 19, 1977), pp. 46-47.
- 146 See, for example, Peking Review. Vol. 21 No. 14 (April 7, 1978), p. 4.
- 147 Beijing Review. Vol. 22 No. 3 (January 19, 1979).

p. 14.

148 Ibid.

149 Beijing Review. Vol. 22 No. 6 (February 9, 1979),
p. 28. See also Beijing Review. Vol. 22 No. 21 (May 25,
1979), p. 27.

150 Beijing Review. Vol. 22 No. 44 (November 2, 1979),
p. 3. See also Beijing Review. Vol. 23 No. 28 (July 14,
1980), pp. 7-8; and Beijing Review. Vol. 23 No. 7 (February
18, 1980), p. 7, for other Chinese statements of support
for Thailand.

151 Beijing Review. Vol. 23 No. 27 (July 7, 1980),
p. 7.

152 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1981), p. 257.

153 See Michael Leifer, "Kampuchea in 1980: The
Politics of Attrition," Asian Survey. Vol. 21 No. 1
(January, 1981), p. 96.

154 Ansil Ramsay, "Thailand 1979: A Government in
Trouble," Asian Survey. Vol. 20 No. 2 (February, 1980),
p. 120.

155 FEER. (April 27, 1979), p. 10.

156 For a description of this incident, see FEER.
(May 4, 1979), p. 10.

157 FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1982), p. 128. See also FEER.
(May 8, 1981), p. 13.

158 For a discussion of Thai and Chinese efforts to
unite the three main Kampuchean opposition groups, see
Larry Niksch, "Thailand in 1981: The Prem Government feels
the heat," Asian Survey. Vol. 22 No. 2 (February, 1982),
pp. 197-198; FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1982), pp. 254-255, p. 129;
and Surachai Sirikrai, "General Prem survives on a
conservative line," Asian Survey. Vol. 22 No. 11 (November,
1982), p. 1102.

159 According to some reports the most recent Chinese
attacks into Vietnam were in retaliation for recent Viet-
namese incursions into Thailand. See Ottawa Citizen.

(April 4, 1984), p. 6. Military cooperation between China and Thailand is also strongly suggested by the number of visits between high-ranking Thai and Chinese military officials in recent years. For example, in late July, 1982, General Chao Sawadisongkhram, the First Deputy Supreme Commander of the Thai Armed Forces, visited China where he met with Keng Piao, the Chinese Minister of National Defence. See "Chronicle of Major Events on the Chinese Mainland," Issues and Studies. Vol. 18 No. 9 (September, 1982), pp. 118-119. The "Chronicle of Major Events," placed at the end of each issue of Issues and Studies, lists the numerous visits of Thai military leaders to China and Chinese military leaders to Thailand in recent years.

160 The actual announcement of the closure of the VPT gave no hint as to why the station was going off the air. The announcement indicating the termination of VPT broadcasts was as follows: "Dear listeners, the Voice of the People of Thailand will temporarily suspend its broadcasts beginning 11 July onwards." DR:AP. (July 10, 1979), p. J1. Although it is generally believed that China forced the VPT off the air as a concession to Thailand, others have offered alternative explanations to account for the VPT's closure: (1) The VPT went off the air because the CPT was unable to resolve ideological differences about the content of VPT broadcasts. In particular, the CPT was divided over the wisdom of using the VPT to attack Vietnam, one of its traditional supporters. See FEER. (July 27, 1979), p. 30; and (2) The VPT was located in a sensitive border area of China and had to be moved because of Sino-Vietnamese hostilities. DR:AP. (July 18, 1979), p. J4.

161 FEER. (November 17, 1978), p. 10.

162 FEER. (November 6, 1981), p. 43.

163 FEER. (February 17, 1983), p. 18.

164 FEER. (September 19, 1980), p. 47.

165 DR:PRC (August 12, 1981), p. E3.

166 For an historical survey of Sino-Vietnamese competition for the friendship of the CPT, see Martin Stuart-Fox, "Tensions within the Thai Insurgency," Australian Outlook. (August, 1979), pp. 182-197. On the relations between the CPT and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), see Martin Stuart-Fox, "Factors Influencing Relations between the Communist Parties of Thailand and Laos," Asian Survey. Vol. 19 No. 4 (April, 1979), pp. 333-

352.

167 See Stuart-Fox, "Tensions within the Thai Insurgency," pp. 184, 191.

168 See FEER. (January 14, 1977), pp. 16-17.

169 FEER. (September 19, 1980), p. 44. According to Stuart-Fox, the Soviet Union has also been actively trying to increase its influence in the CPT. In 1977, it was reported that the Soviets gave Laos \$10 million to cover the costs of sending Thai students to the Soviet Union. See Stuart-Fox, "Tensions within the Thai Insurgency," p. 189.

170 DR:AP. (August 1, 1979), p. J3; and DR:AP. (October 16, 1979), p. J2. These claims were confirmed in 1980 by a CPT member who claimed that a new party had been founded in Laos and that people from Laos were infiltrating Thailand and trying to persuade CPT members to leave the old party and join the newly formed one in Laos. See FEER. (September 19, 1980), p. 48. Marks speaks of a new party in the Northeast known as the Thai Isan Liberation Army (TILA); however, it is possible that this party is the same one as the Thai Northeastern Liberation Army. See Marks, "Thailand- the Threatened Kingdom," p. 11.

171 FEER. (July 27, 1979), p. 30.

172 On the collapse of the CCPDF, see FEER. (August 22, 1980), p. 30.

173 According to one source with CPT contacts, many CPT members wanted the party "to spend more time propagating itself instead of getting involved in the wider propaganda war. They are fed up with international squabbles." FEER. (August 22, 1980), p. 30. More recent CPT political indoctrination sessions reportedly now stress the "Thainess" of the party and play down Maoism. See FEER. (July 27, 1979), p. 31.

174 See FEER. (August 22, 1980), p. 30; and FEER. (November 6, 1981), pp. 42-43.

175 FEER. (June 8, 1979), p. 19.

176 See FEER. (August 22, 1980), p. 30; and FEER: Asia Yearbook. (1980), p. 292.

177 See New York Times. (May 1, 1977), p. 21.
According to one source, though, the Vietnamese, while refusing to give the CPT surplus weapons as they had in the past, demanded payment for the weapons from the CPT. See DR:AP (March 29, 1977), p. J10.

178 FEER. (August 22, 1980), p. 30.

179 Ibid.

180 FEER. (February 17, 1983), p. 18.

181 Niksch, "Thailand in 1981," p. 194.

182 FEER. (June 23, 1983), p. 25.

183 FEER. (February 17, 1983), p. 18.

184 FEER. (May 12, 1983), p. 23; and FEER. (February 17, 1983), p. 18. Despite the slight difference in the spelling of his name Mongkol na Nakhon was the former leader of TIM. See p. 53 above. The CPT also lost three other high ranking officials in the early 1980's. In April, 1981, Damri Ruengsuthum, a CPT Politburo member since 1953, was captured by Thai forces. See FEER. (August 14, 1981), pp. 27-28. In 1982, two other high-ranking CPT officials, Sawat Mahisaya and Prachuab Ruangrat, were reported ready to surrender to Thai authorities. See Suchitra Punyaratabandhu-Bhakdi, "Thailand in 1982: General Arthit takes Centre Stage," Asian Survey. Vol. 23 No. 2 (February, 1983), p. 174.

185 See FEER. (November 6, 1981), p. 42.

186 Niksch, "Thailand in 1981," p. 194.

187 FEER. (August 28, 1981), p. 32.

188 See FEER. (November 6, 1981), pp. 42-43.

189 Suchitra Punyaratabandhu-Bhakdi, "Thailand in 1983," Asian Survey. Vol. 24 No. 2 (February, 1984), p. 191. The fact that the amnesty scheme is thought to have been the inspiration of Prasert Sabsunthorn, a former high-ranking CPT official, has only served to increase suspicion about the number of CPT defections. See Ibid, p. 191n and Chapter Two above, p. 26, 28. Morell and Chai-anan identify Prasert

as the CPT's former Secretary-General. See Morell and Chai-anan, Political Conflict in Thailand, p. 80, 320.

¹⁹⁰ See FEER. (November 6, 1981), pp. 42-43.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Viewing the entire course of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand for the period examined in this study, it is apparent that relations between these two countries have changed markedly. The friendly, if distrustful, ties in the mid-1950's gave way to mutually hostile relations throughout the 1960's, with China repeatedly voicing its sympathy and support for communist insurgents and calling for the overthrow of what it termed the reactionary Thai Government. Yet, by the end of the 1970's, one finds Chinese leaders expressing support - including, perhaps, military support - for Thailand's stability and security while virtually completely ignoring the fate of the CPT and the Thai insurgency.

Despite the significance of these changes in China's Thailand policy, one should not view them as reflecting a complete reordering of Chinese objectives towards Thailand. Indeed, it will be argued here that the evidence presented in the preceding chapters clearly demonstrates that, throughout the period 1958-1984, Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand reflected the same basic objective, namely the protection of China's national security interests. Those changes that did occur in Chinese policy towards Thailand reflected the need to adapt that policy to a changing security environment in Southeast Asia and not

a reordering of Chinese objectives in her relations with that country. Thus, the decision to promote revolution in Thailand was motivated by the same concerns as the decision to express support for the Thai Government in the 1970's. In other words, Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand has been overwhelmingly concerned with the practical and essential task of guaranteeing Chinese security and not with liberating the oppressed Thai people and bringing socialism to that country.

This is evident when one reviews Chinese foreign policy in the 1950's and 1960's. China's initial interest in Thailand was not sparked by any concern for the state of the Thai masses or by the ideological complexion of Thai regimes. China's interest in Thailand came about because of Thailand's role in SEATO and indications that Thailand was going to perform a major support role in American efforts in Indochina. SEATO and the growing influence of the United States in Indochina were viewed as security threats by the Chinese, thus, Thai involvement in them naturally brought Thailand to the attention of Chinese policy-makers.

The initial Chinese reaction to Thailand's flirtations with the United States displayed a cautiousness that belied the portrayal by Rusk and others of a nation bent on the promotion of revolution throughout the world. Although Thailand was moving closer to China's principal enemy, the Chinese did not initially respond with hostility and calls for the overthrow of the Thai Government as one might

expect from a revolutionary regime. Instead, China sought to reassure Thai leaders that it had no hostile intentions towards Thailand and sought to demonstrate its good intentions through a number of people-to-people visits and through offers of profitable trade links. The objective of this policy was to lure Thailand away from China's sworn enemy; however, the means of doing this can hardly be considered revolutionary. Indeed, China behaved as virtually any other more traditionally minded state would behave.

This cautious approach remained characteristic of Chinese policy even after the establishment of a very anti-Chinese government in Bangkok and in the face of clear signs of increasing Thai collusion in American policy in Southeast Asia. The Chinese were disturbed by the growing influence of the United States in Southeast Asia and it is reasonable to believe that they genuinely saw it as a threat to their security. Yet China's response to these developments did not suit the image of a revolutionary regime. Instead of reacting with unrelenting hostility towards the Thai regime, the Chinese Government appealed to Thai self-interest. Thus, the promise of profitable commercial relations was again held out as a benefit of improved Sino-Thai relations. In addition, China sought to provide a "way out" for Thailand by blaming deteriorating Sino-Thai relations on American "machinations." It is apparent, then, that China initially sought friendly

relations with Thailand and worked to achieve this objective even in the face of rebuffs and overt hostility from the Thai Government.

When China eventually did begin expressing support for the subversion of the Thai Government, it was largely the result of the failure of peaceful diplomatic means to draw Thailand away from the United States. By 1964, it was apparent that the trend of increasing military cooperation between Thailand and the United States was not going to be reversed by appeals for friendship from China. The carrot had failed and China now resorted to the stick in order to change Thai policy, or, failing that, to punish Thailand for her involvement in American policy in Southeast Asia.

It is significant that China did not rush headlong into support for the insurgency in Thailand or for the CPT. Chinese statements lauding CPT activities were preceded by a lengthy period of warnings to Thailand about the possible consequences of close cooperation with the United States. The Chinese media repeatedly printed warnings that the Thai Government would have to pay for their transgressions and that their actions were stirring up resentment and resistance among the Thai people. The implications of such statements are obvious. The Chinese were warning the Thai Government that if they continued to cooperate with American policy in the region, they would face the consequences of internal, Chinese-supported subversion. If the Thai

Government distanced itself from the United States its security would be more assured.

Thus, China used the threat of revolution in Thailand both as a lever and as a club. The hope was that the threat of a Chinese-instigated insurgency would deter Thai leaders from cooperating with the United States in Indochina. If Thailand ignored the threat and persisted in its support of American policy, then the insurgency could be used to punish Thailand and raise the cost of her relationship with the United States. In short, China's support for revolution in Thailand sprang from considerations of power politics and not from any ideological desire to spread the benefits of socialism to Thailand.

That this was so becomes even more apparent when one considers the nature of Chinese media coverage of the struggle in Thailand. Aside from the fact that Chinese media coverage of Thailand only increased with America's increasing involvement in that country, the content of the media coverage of the struggle overwhelmingly focussed on the American presence in Thailand and Thailand's role in the American war effort in Indochina. While such attention was not inconsistent with a desire to promote socialism in Thailand, had this been the true goal of Chinese foreign policy, one would also have expected to see detailed discussions of the social and economic conditions within Thailand and the role played by various classes within that country. Yet, the Chinese media focussed continually on the

relationship between Thailand and the United States and seldom devoted much attention to the social and economic conditions within Thailand. Moreover, when attention was paid to social and economic oppression in Thailand, it was invariably linked with the exploitive relationship the United States had imposed on Thailand. Thus, the key concern of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand in the 1960's was the role of Thailand in American strategy in Southeast Asia and not the need to promote socialism in a country governed by reactionary regimes.

That Chinese support for the CPT and the subversion of Thailand was a function of power politics and not ideology becomes even more apparent when one considers the changing nature of Sino-Thai relations in the 1970's and 1980's. As was noted in chapter three, China's perception of the security environment in Asia began changing in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The United States was seen as a receding, and defeated power in the region, no longer posing any serious threat to Chinese security. However, the Soviets were seen as attempting to fill the vacuum left by the American withdrawal from Southeast Asia by drawing up proposals for a collective security system in Asia, a proposal the Chinese saw as being directed at China.

The implications of these changes in the security environment in Southeast Asia were not lost on the Chinese. To continue supporting insurgency in Southeast Asia would have further alienated China from countries in the region.

thereby depriving her of any influence over these countries while opening the door for greater Soviet influence there. To forestall that possibility, China sought to improve her relations with Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand.

Thus, China fostered sports and cultural ties with Southeast Asian countries and, in the case of Thailand, worked to develop strong commercial ties. At the same time, China worked to remove existing obstacles to improved Sino-Thai relations. China reversed her stand on the question of the American presence in Thailand, even hinting that it might be wise for Thailand to retain an American presence in her country. Media coverage of the CPT was reduced considerably and the coverage that was accorded the CPT was devoid of the supportive statements that had been characteristic of media coverage in the 1960's. Moreover, evidence strongly suggests that Chinese material support for the CPT was dramatically reduced in the 1970's when a weak Thailand no longer suited China's security interests.¹

This shift in Chinese foreign policy from the party-to-party level to the state-to-state level vividly illustrates the practical considerations at work in China's foreign policy.² Had China really been intent on overthrowing the Thai Government, this period presented far better opportunities than those in the 1960's. Thailand's protector, the United States, had opted for a less active role in Southeast Asian affairs and was unlikely to become engaged in a guerrilla war in Thailand if the insurgency

there escalated dramatically. Moreover, Thai society was becoming increasingly restless under undemocratic, unresponsive, and corrupt regimes, thus opening up more opportunities for Chinese subversion. In addition, the October 1976 coup had dramatically increased the capabilities of the CPT. Never before had the CPT seemed as capable of overthrowing the Thai Government as in this period. Yet, China chose instead to improve its relations with the Thai Government and gradually abandon the CPT. That China took this course vividly illustrates that, in foreign policy, security concerns inevitably take precedence over ideological concerns, even for so revolutionary a state as China.

This view is reinforced by events since the Sino-Vietnamese conflict. As historic rivals in the region, China has sought to contain Vietnam's influence in the region. This task has been made more urgent by Vietnam's close relationship with China's enemy, the Soviet Union. Vietnam is now seen by the Chinese as "the dog barking at the end of the master's leash," or, in other words, a vehicle for Soviet expansion in the region. The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea made the containment of Vietnam a more pressing concern for the Chinese and consequently had an important impact on China's foreign policy toward Thailand. Because of Thailand's geographical position, she has become a frontline state in the struggle against Vietnamese - and Soviet - expansion and, as such,

a valuable ally of China.

Thus, China now repeatedly issues statements of support for the safety and security of the country she once sought to subvert. Indeed, the nature of these statements suggest that China is now willing to engage in military action along the Sino-Vietnamese border in order to deter Vietnam from invading Thailand. Moreover, at the same time that Sino-Thai relations at the state level have improved, China's relations with the CPT have virtually ceased. The fact that this abandonment of the CPT occurred at a time when the CPT's eventual success appeared more likely than ever before amply demonstrates the security-minded nature of China's policy toward Thailand. Support for the CPT ceased to contribute to greater Chinese security, hence, China has sacrificed support for the CPT to larger security interests.

This is not to say, however, that ideological concerns were entirely absent from China's foreign policy toward Thailand during these years. Although in general Chinese foreign policy reflected China's preoccupation with her security, it is possible to detect the presence of ideological concerns in this policy. For example, the form that Chinese support of the insurgency took betrayed the influence of Maoist ideology. Chinese coverage of the insurgency portrayed a Maoist party using Maoist tactics to win a people's war. Thus, coverage of the insurgency began with a call by the Communist Party of Thailand for

all patriotic and democratic people to form a united front to oppose the reactionary Thai-U.S. clique. This appeal was followed by the formation of several allegedly independent front groups, two of whom, the TPF and TIM, eventually joined forces. The requirements of the Maoist model were eventually fulfilled in the late 1960's when the CPT announced its leadership of the armed struggle and established a people's liberation army.

In addition, throughout the struggle, the CPT stressed its adherence to the Maoist strategy of using the countryside to encircle the cities. Thus, the struggle in Thailand was used to validate China's claims about the invincibility and universality of the people's war strategy. These statements of support for the strategy of people's war were also likely a reflection of the ideological competition between China and the Soviet Union over which country offered the best revolutionary strategy for oppressed peoples.³

The anti-Soviet element of China's support for the CPT was also apparent in the prominence given in the Chinese media to CPT denunciations of revisionism. Although many of the CPT's denunciations of the Soviet Union dealt with Soviet threats to Chinese security, many others were of a more ideological nature. For example, CPT statements accused the Soviet Union of abandoning the struggles of the world's oppressed peoples and of acting in collusion with the United States to suppress wars of liberation in the Third World. Further, they charged that Soviet

leaders had abandoned the ideals of socialism and had restored capitalism at home. These statements - most frequent in the late 1960's - coincided with similar Chinese accusations and served to bolster China's claim to be the most reliable friend of the socialist world.

Finally, the nature of CPT statements during the Cultural Revolution - as reprinted in the Chinese media - demonstrated the domestic ideological uses of support for the CPT. During this period, the vast majority of CPT statements printed in China had little to do with events within Thailand and everything to do with legitimizing the course of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Hence, numerous CPT statements praising Mao and the correct policies of the Cultural Revolution and denigrating Liu Shaoqi and other "capitalist-roaders" were reproduced in Chinese journals. Thus, during the Cultural Revolution, the CPT was used to validate Mao's rule and policies while simultaneously denigrating the beliefs and policies of his rivals.

In general, though, Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand was overwhelmingly concerned with protecting China's national security. Indeed, this study strongly suggests that the militantly revolutionary policy that so often figured in the rhetoric of Chinese leaders and in the nightmares of some Western leaders and Sinologists cannot be taken at face value. Like Van Ness' book, this paper portrays a foreign policy concerned first and foremost with

the defence of the nation-state. In fact, as was demonstrated here, both Chinese support for the CPT in the 1960's and Chinese support for the Thai Government in the 1970's and 1980's can be traced to similar motivations. In both periods of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand, China was preeminently concerned with protecting her national security.

Thus, the key factor in accounting for the difference between these two periods of Chinese foreign policy was the change in the security environment in Southeast Asia and not a dramatic reordering of China's foreign policy objectives. In the 1960's, support for the CPT made sense given the security situation in Southeast Asia at that time. However, in the 1970's - and especially in the late 1970's - support for the CPT no longer contributed to Chinese security - indeed it detracted from it - hence, China virtually completely abandoned the CPT and threw its support behind the Thai Government.⁴ Thus, the history of Sino-Thai relations for this period demonstrates that, despite a few self-serving ideological concerns, both the revolutionary and cooperative periods of Chinese foreign policy towards Thailand were motivated by the same fundamental concern, namely the protection of China's security interests.

Footnotes

¹ It also appears that the PRC attempted to pressure the CPT into accepting this new emphasis on state-to-state relations between Thailand and China. Taylor reports that the VPT, undoubtedly under pressure from the Chinese Government, called for the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand in September, 1971. See Taylor, p. 352. According to another source, China pressured the CPT into proposing a truce with the Thai Government in order to form an alliance to fight the Vietnamese. See FEER, (August 14, 1981), p. 27.

² It should be noted that Thailand's reciprocal efforts to improve her relations with the PRC also reflect the need for a changing foreign policy to adapt to a changing environment.

³ As was noted in Chapter One, this competition was a common and early feature of Chinese pronouncements on revolution. See Chapter One, pp. 4-5.

⁴ The fact that China still seems to maintain some links with the CPT may indicate that she has not completely lost her feelings of solidarity with a fellow communist party. However, it may also reflect a pragmatic desire not to throw away any asset that might prove valuable in the future. It might also reflect China's desire not to allow the CPT to slip into Vietnamese hands where it could be used to weaken the Thai Government.

Code to Map 1.

1. Samut Songkhram	37. Nakhon Phanom
2. Samut Sakhon	38. Nong Khai
3. Krung Thep Mahanakhon	39. Kalasin
4. Rat Buri	40. Phitsanulok
5. Samut Prakon	41. Phichit
6. Nonthanburi	42. Nakhon Sawan
7. Ang Thong	43. Uthai Thani
8. Sing Buri	44. Kamphaeng Phet
9. Pathum Thani	45. Loei
10. Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya	46. Tak
11. Nakhon Pathom	47. Uttaradit
12. Nakhon Nayok	48. Phrae
13. Sara Buri	49. Nan
14. Chachoengsao	50. Phayao
15. Suphan Buri	51. Chiang Rai
16. Chainat	52. Chiang Mai
17. Chon Buri	53. Mae Hong Son
18. Kanchanaburi	54. Lamphun
19. Rayong	55. Lampong
20. Chanthaburi	56. Sukhothai
21. Trat	57. Phet Buri
22. Prachin Buri	58. Prachuap Khiri Khan
23. Nakhon Ratchasima	59. Ranong
24. Buriram	60. Chumphon
25. Lop Buri	61. Surat Thani
26. Phetchabun	62. Phangnga
27. Chaiyaphum	63. Phuket
28. Surin	64. Krabi
29. Sisaket	65. Nakhon Si Thammarat
30. Ubon Ratchathani	66. Trang
31. Yasothorn	67. Phattalung
32. Roi Et	68. Satun
33. Maha Sarakham	69. Songkhla
34. Khon Kaen	70. Pattani
35. Udon Thani	71. Yala
36. Sakon Nakhon	72. Narathiwat

..... Areas of Significant
Insurgency- circa 1978

from: U.S. Government, Area
Handbook Series, Thailand.
p. 223.

MAP TWO

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