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# THESIS

THE EXPANDING SINO-THAI MILITARY RELATIONSHIP:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY IN THAILAND

by

Kenneth Stanley Harbin

December 1990

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# The Expanding Sino-Thai Military Relationship: Implications for U.S. Policy in Thailand

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## ABSTRACT

Prior to 1987, the U.S. was the major supplier of ground, air, and naval weapons, and other military equipment to Thailand. Since 1987, Thailand has turned to the PRC for the purchase of weapons and equipment required for many of its armed forces' modernization and force restructuring programs. In addition to the acquisition of large quantities of ground forces equipment for the Royal Thai Army (RTA), Thailand has also investigated the acquisition of PRC fighter aircraft for the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) and is in the process of acquiring six frigates for the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) from the PRC. What are the factors which have caused Thailand to enhance its political-military relations with the PRC and purchase significant amounts of military equipment from the PRC in a relatively short period of time (1987-present)?

The objective of this thesis will be to examine the improved and improving Sino-Thai military relationship and analyze the key variables responsible for changing Thai political and military attitudes towards the PRC. The thesis also examines Thai willingness to actively pursue supplier diversification strategies with respect to major arms acquisition contracts. Finally, the thesis will also consider the impact of the Sino-Thai military relationship on current and short term U.S. policy objectives in Thailand. Appendix A provides a timeline of significant regional events occurring between 1949 and 1990.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

"In international relations, there can be no eternal friends, nor can there be eternal enemies. The only thing eternal is the national interest." Lord Palmerston

In contrast to the decades of the 1950's and 1960's which were characterized by hostile Sino-Thai relations, the 1970's marked the beginning of a period of reconciliation. This later period was highlighted by the extraction of U.S. forces from South Vietnam and Thailand, the establishment of Thai and U.S. diplomatic relations with the Chinese, and the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam.

Since 1979, the Chinese and Thais have expanded military, diplomatic and economic relations through high level state to state contacts and the acquisition of Chinese military arms and equipment. Thai-U.S. political and military relations have remained strong and multilateral security agreements such as the Manila Pact of 1954 and the bilateral Rusk-Thanat Agreement of 1962 have never been repudiated by the U.S. or Thailand. The U.S. continues to provide sophisticated military equipment to the Thais although the percentage of equipment supplied by the U.S. the Chinese has declined within the last 3 to 4 years in favor of increasing acquisition of Chinese equipment by the Thai military. (See Appendix B)

From the first Chinese "gift" of arms to Thailand in 1985, to the most recent orders for significant numbers of main battle

tanks (MBT) armored personnel carriers (APC), and Jianghu-class and Type 25 frigates, Sino-Thai military relations have been mutually beneficial for the Thais, the Chinese, and, to some extent for the U.S. Although there are certain mid-to-long term disadvantages to more direct Chinese involvement in Thailand, the offsetting influence of the PRC vis a vis Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Indochina has created a situation where some current Chinese and U.S. policy goals in this region seem to overlap.

For the Thais, the decline of the internal insurgency threat of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), the occupation of Kampuchea and Laos by Vietnamese military forces and incursions into and shellings of Thai territory by Vietnamese and Laotian forces dictated the necessity for a shift in the orientation of Thailand's military doctrine from counterinsurgency to conventional warfare.

More than anything, two particularly embarrassing and costly military operations were mitigating events supporting arguments by the Thai armed forces for the creation of a more capable, responsive, and better equipped conventional force, post haste. The first was against the Vietnamese at the Chong Bok Pass in February 1987 and the second against Laotian forces at Ban Ramklao from December 1987 through February 1988. (See Appendix C) In both these operations, the Thai military discovered their lack of conventional mobility and modern heavy weapons a distinct disadvantage when dealing with the Vietnamese or Vietnamese-trained forces.

Since 1987, technologically advanced military equipment from the U.S. and other Western nations as well as armor, anti-aircraft weapons, and artillery from the PRC, has contributed to the rapid modernization of the Thai Armed Forces. The planned modernization program is scheduled to eventually include mechanization of five infantry divisions, the creation of light infantry and helicopter-borne cavalry units, an enhancement of naval surface and possibly subsurface warfare capabilities, the expansion of the the Royal Thai Marine Corps (RTMC) from two regiments to a division, and the possible addition of multi-role aircraft squadrons by the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF). [Ref. 1]

The low price and easy payment terms for PRC weapons and equipment, the recognition of the PRC as the strongest regional counterweight to Soviet/Vietnamese influence, the desire to diversify sources of arms acquisitions, and a decreasing trend in U.S. security assistance, have caused Thailand to significantly increase its military purchases from the PRC, rivaling the U.S. quantitatively as a major military supplier of the Thai Armed Forces.

## II. SINO-THAI RELATIONS (1950-1979)

### A. BUILDING SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY (1949-1969)

Although the military and political relationship between Thailand and the PRC today can be classified as "close and growing closer", this was certainly not the case during the period of 1949-1969. In 1949, the establishment of Communist China and the resulting specter of expanding communist power in Southeast Asia swayed Thailand from a postwar neutralism to a pro-Western course in regional affairs.

#### 1. U.S.-Thai Relations Mature

In 1950, relations between the United States and Thailand were substantially improved after the U.S. persuaded the Thai government to recognize the Bao Dai government in Southern Vietnam. In return, the U.S. provided Thailand with grants for military, education, health, and agricultural development assistance. The majority of these grants were provided under U.S.-Thai agreements for economic and technical cooperation and for military assistance.

"Although the American government had, since V-J Day, followed a policy of diplomatic support for Thailand as the only country in Southeast Asia that had escaped colonization, relations between Bangkok and Washington now assumed the character of an entente cordiale." [Ref. 2] Between 1950 and 1957, U.S. assistance to Thailand amounted to \$138 million [Ref. 3].

In 1950 Thailand also supported the U.N war effort in Korea by sending 4,000 troops. In December of 1951, the U.S. and Thailand exchanged notes which essentially provided Thailand with an assurance that it would receive military assistance according to the Mutual Security Act of 1951. [Ref. 4] In further support of Western and U.S. policies in Southeast Asia, Thailand condemned the Viet Minh invasions of Laos and Cambodia.

In April 1953, Thailand participated with the U.S., Burma, and Taiwan in the establishment of a Joint Military Committee to consider ways of evacuating Kuomintang (KMT) forces from Burma to Taiwan. Although Burma withdrew from the committee, Thailand, the U.S., and Taiwan reached an accommodation and evacuation of KMT forces via Thailand began on November 7, 1953. Between this time and when the operation ended in September 1954, almost 7,000 "foreign forces" and dependents had been moved from Burma to Taiwan. [Ref. 5]

The successes of the Viet Minh in Indochina in 1953 and early 1954, the defeat of the French at Dienbienphu in April 1954, and the possibility of Communist-dominated regimes in Cambodia and Laos made the Thai government receptive to the efforts of the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to bolster the region's military security by organizing the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954. In addition, American military and economic aid to Thailand was increased. [Ref. 6]

Throughout the early 1950's, Thailand once again departed from its desired foreign policy objective of "dealing with all parties" in regional affairs by reluctantly moving into the Western camp and towards a reliance on the U.S. for security from the internal and external threat of regional communism. Without the U.S., Thailand feared Eisenhower's "domino theory" arguments would become a reality. For Thailand, improving relations with the U.S. brought it economic aid, an enhanced feeling of national security, and the capability to carry forward modernization of its military forces.

## 2. The Bandung Spirit

The years 1949-1969 were also marked by Thailand's refusal to recognize Communist China, bitter disagreements over the status of ethnic Chinese in Thailand, the deployment of Thai military forces to Korea in 1950, Chinese support to Viet Minh forces in Laos and Vietnam, the formation of an autonomous Thai state in Yunnan (China), propaganda radio broadcasts, and public signs of support for Thai exiles in Beijing. The formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in 1954 exacerbated diplomatic conflict and precluded the establishment of Thai-PRC relations.

The April 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia was attended by twenty-nine countries including those of Communist, uncommitted, and pro-Western orientation. The conference provided the opportunity for a Sino-Thai dialog between Thai Prince Wan and the PRC's Chou En Lai. In cordial

discussions, Chou assured Prince Wan that the PRC would not perpetrate aggressive action against Thailand, would respect Thai sovereignty, and that the autonomous Thai state which had been established in Yunnan Province was not done so with the objective of fostering subversion of Thai dissident elements in the northeast region of Thailand.

Subsequently, there was some easing of tensions between 1955 and 1959 as trade between the two countries increased and restrictions on Chinese nationals in Thailand were relaxed. The honeymoon was short-lived. Recognition of Communist China by Cambodia in July 1958 and the October Sarit Coup in Thailand "marked a phasing out of the Bandung spirit of accommodation which had marked Chinese-Thai relations. [Ref. 7] Sino-Thai relations would now be polarized by two major issues: Chinese ideological and materiel support to the communist insurgency in Thailand and Thai relations with the United States.

### 3. The PRC and the CPT

The first and foremost irritant to Sino-Thai relations was China's support for the communist insurgency in Thailand. After having achieved control of the government in 1949, the Chinese communists embarked on a foreign policy of confrontation with regional states which included support to regional insurgency movements, an invasion of Tibet, and a threatened invasion of Taiwan. This confrontational stance continued into the mid-1950's in its support for North Korea against U.N. forces and for the Viet Minh against the French in Indochina. PRC

support to regional insurgencies also included assistance to those in Burma, Malaysia, and Thailand.

While active in these regional communist activities, the PRC was domestically experiencing political and social turmoil. In the shadow of Khrushchev's attack on Stalin and the Hungarian Revolt of 1956, Mao decided to experiment with free expression and instituted the "Hundred Flowers Movement" in May 1957. Lasting only one month, it was quickly suppressed in the face of stinging criticism of almost every aspect of the Communist government.

In 1958, another socio-economic experiment was begun which sought to place the entire Chinese rural population into communes. By the end of 1958, virtually all of the PRC's 700,000 collective farms had been merged into 26,000 huge communes and a radically new form of organization harshly imposed on the PRC's rural population. [Ref. 8]

China's "Great Leap Forward" (GLF) was also instituted in 1958 to push forward economic progress through agricultural and industrial development. Although some success was experienced in the early months of the GLF, it faltered in 1959 and collapsed altogether in 1960-1961. Much of the blame for failure of this economic experiment belonged to poor planning and implementation on the part of the Chinese. Mao blamed the Soviets for its failure because they had withdrawn their advisers and technicians in August of 1960. The resulting ill-will between the Soviet Union and the PRC led to the Sino-Soviet split of 1960.



"The fiasco of the GLF collapse, resultant famine, and stymied economic development over the next several years ended any remaining possibility that Mao could bid for leadership of the socialist bloc. Although he lost much of his domestic power, he continued to dictate PRC foreign policy." [Ref. 9]

Domestic economic and political problems hampered but did not prevent the PRC from continuing to support regional communist insurgencies. In response to improving U.S.-Thai relations and the increasing presence of U.S. military forces in Thailand, the PRC increased its support to the Communist Party of Thailand.

Prior to the actual outbreak of widespread armed insurgent activity, the Thais had been aware of the extra-legal activities of the PRC. Thailand's Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman characterized the PRC's insurgent support activities as:

...ant-like, mostly clandestine, and ...surreptitious. Instead of seeking publicity and spectacular result, they laboriously and patiently aim at gradually undermining and gnawing at the existing strength and structure. They seem to think that time is on their side and in due course the fruit may be ripe for picking [Ref. 10].

After the outbreak of armed conflict in 1965, insurgent operations were greatly assisted by the provision of Chinese ideological support through Thai language propaganda broadcasts from the Voice of the People of Thailand, Radio Peking, and Radio Hanoi, and material support from the PRC and North Vietnam in the form of arms, ammunition, and training. The primary reason cited by the communists for the transition to armed struggle was the U.S. military build-up in Thailand which commenced in 1964 to support U.S. military operations in the Republic of Vietnam.

Considered the number one threat to Thai internal security through 1979, the communist insurgency spread in scope from the northeast to the northern, central and southern (Malay border) areas of the country. From 1965-1969, units from all branches of the Thai armed forces, police and other paramilitary units as well as various civic organizations were employed in an attempt to curtail the rapid spread of the communist insurgency.

Although the PRC was willing to provide material and ideological support to this and various other regional insurgent movements, there was never any guarantee and little evidence that this support was successful. Neither the training of cadres, technical and tactical advice, nor logistical support was able to provide the majority of these movements with the military nor organizational capability to garner sufficient popular support necessary to defeat the national government forces. Of course, any PRC interest in the insurgents widened the gap between the PRC and the government of Thailand.

#### 4. The Buildup of U.S. Forces in Thailand

The second major obstacle to Sino-Thai relations was the consolidation of U.S.-Thai diplomatic relations and the build-up of U.S. forces in Thailand. The basis for U.S. support to Thailand was contained in the provisions of the 1954 Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Pact) which called for the U.S. to respond to external aggression against treaty members, including Thailand, not in a reflexive manner characteristic of

the NATO agreements but, by acting, "...to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." (See Appendix D)

After signing of the Manila Pact, U.S. military assistance to Thailand expanded significantly between 1954 and 1967. Prior to 1960, U.S. military aid to Thailand was principally in the form of improved communications and transport facilities. [Ref. 11]. After conclusion of the 1960 Military Assistance Agreement and the Laos Crisis of 1962, substantial contributions of American military hardware to Thailand began [Ref. 12].

The objective of providing U.S. military assistance was to strengthen Thailand's military capability through buildup and modernization of its equipment, improvement of its operational tactics, and increased training for its personnel against both external and internal threats [Ref. 13].

The 1962 Rusk-Thanat Communique clarified U.S. intentions with respect to the Manila Pact and assured Thailand that the U.S. would react unilaterally, but not in a reflexiv manner, in response to an external threat to Thailand [Ref. 14]. (See Appendix E) The 1962 agreement was supplemented by a "military contingency plan" drawn up in 1965. "This plan called for a lightning attack across Savannakhet, Laos, into Vietnam's Khe Sanh Valley and along Highway 9, which runs east through Quang Tri Province until it intersects Vietnam's major north-south artery, Highway 1 near the coast. Such an offensive, if successful, would have cut Vietnam in two just south of the

former demilitarized zone, which straddled the Ben Hai River.  
[Ref. 15]

It has been suggested that this plan was in exchange for American use of Thai military bases which in 1965 included Don Muang, Korat, Nakhom Phanom, Takhli, Ubon, and Udorn. U Tapao was added in 1967. [Ref. 16]

The signing of a series of bilateral and multilateral security treaties by the U.S. with the developing nations of the region served to contain Chinese communist expansion by encircling the PRC's southeastern and southern rim with independent and stable "democratic" nations whose internal dynamics it was hoped would provide a hostile and infertile social, economic, and political atmosphere for successful communist subversion.

In support of U.S. policies and actions to contain the spread of Chinese communism in Indochina, Thailand agreed to the basing of U.S. forces in Thailand in 1964 and committed ground, air, and naval forces to Vietnam from 1964 through 1969. "By 1969, there were over 50,000 U.S. military personnel in Thailand, with nearly 600 aircraft. [Ref. 17] During the Vietnam Conflict, Utapao as a particularly critical airbase, capable of handling all U.S. military aircraft including the B-52's, the U-2 intelligence aircraft, and larger transport aircraft.

Thailand also served as a base of CIA operations involved in gathering intelligence on communist forces in Indochina as well as on the insurgent elements in Thailand. U.S. Special Forces

troops trained Thai police and soldiers in low intensity conflict methods as well as training Cambodian soldiers for special missions, and training Lao elite troops and Thai 'volunteers' to fight in Laos. [Ref. 18]

By 1969, more than 12,000 Thai troops were committed to Vietnam representing close to 14% of the Royal Thai Army's strength [Ref. 19]. Thailand was also conducting U.S.-coordinated military operations in Laos and Cambodia, including reconnaissance and air support operations, which were perceived by the PRC as directly supportive of U.S. operations in Vietnam.

#### 5. Summary

Between 1950 and 1969, Sino-Thai relations were affected by both internal and regional influences. While Bandung talks between the Thais and Chinese in 1955 were hopeful, increasing Chinese support for communist activities in Thailand was seen by the Thais as contradictory to Mao's "Five Principles of Coexistence" adopted by conference members, particularly the two principles of nonaggression and noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations.

As the internal communist insurgency gained strength and communist movements in Laos and Cambodia threatened Thailand's north and eastern borders, Thailand found it to be in its national interest to support U.S. military efforts in Indochina. The increasing military cooperation between the U.S. and Thailand with respect to operations in Vietnam, Thailand's diplomatic support for Taiwan and its refusal to recognize the PRC or

support its admission to the UN, and the formation of two western-aligned International Governmental Organizations (IGO); the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), exacerbated Sino/Thai relations. For the most part, "it can be argued that the hostility the PRC displayed towards Southeast Asia between 1954 and the late sixties reflected its indignation at, and opposition to, the intrusion of a hostile outside power, namely the United States, into what it considered to be essentially its sphere of influence, rather than any deep-rooted enmity the PRC harbored towards Southeast Asia itself." [Ref. 20]

#### B. AN EVOLVING PERSPECTIVE OF THREAT (1969-1979)

##### 1. Tet and the U.S. Role Redefined

In 1968 Malaysia's Finance Minister Tan Siew Sin, musing over British plans to withdraw its military forces from Southeast Asia and concede to the geopolitical and military reality of the diminution of its influence "East of the Suez", remarked that "The British won't die for Southeast Asia, but the Americans will." It was not a particularly appropriate statement for two reasons. First, many British soldiers had "died for Southeast Asia" during British operations in the region during the Second World War and during the 1948-1960 Malayan insurgency. Secondly, American soldiers and airmen had been dying in the jungles, in the hills, and in the villages of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia since 1965. It also ignored growing American disenchantment with the conflict following the Tet Offensive.

On January 31, 1968, just eight days after the seizure of the USS Pueblo by the North Koreans, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong launched the Tet Offensive. In spite of initial enemy successes, by late summer of 1968, the overall outcome of the action was clearly a victory for the U.S. and South Vietnamese military forces. But to many Americans, this major victory on the battlefield did little to bolster their sense of looming defeat in the overall sense of the Vietnam effort. As Frances Fitzgerald observed in her book, A Fire in the Lake,

The Tet offensive had an electric effect on popular opinion in the United States. The banner headlines and the television reports of fighting in the cities brought the shock of reality to what was still for many Americans a distant and incomprehensible war. The picture of corpses in the garden of the American Embassy cut through the haze of argument and counterargument, giving flat contradiction to the official optimism about the slow but steady progress of the war. Those who had long held doubts and reservations now felt their doubts confirmed. For the first time the major news magazines, Time, Life, and Newsweek, began to criticize the war policy overtly; television commentators such as Walter Cronkite, who had always backed the administration, now questioned whether or not the war could be won. [Ref. 21]

By 1969, a weary and angry domestic constituency, as well as many in Government office, were ready to concede that the toll in lives, the ravaging of Indochina, and devastation to the moral fabric of this country had more than exceeded social and politically acceptable limits. Opinion polls concerning the President's handling of the war plummeted and many Congressmen, formerly supportive of U.S. involvement, registered their disillusionment with administration actions. "After years of frantic bailing and pumping and damming and blasting, Washington

was at last preparing to give the subcontinent a chance to find its own level." [Ref. 22]

## 2. The Nixon Doctrine

In 1969, the announcement of a fundamental change in U.S. policy towards Asia required Thailand to re-evaluate its relations with the PRC. In a press conference in the Officers Club on Guam on 25 July 1969, U.S. President Richard Nixon, informally announced his policy of Vietnamization and informally outlined his thoughts on the necessity for a shift in U.S. policy toward Southeast Asia. (See Appendix E) His comments were formalized into what became known as the Nixon Doctrine during his television and radio address entitled "The Pursuit of Peace in Vietnam" on 3 November 1969. (See Appendix G)

To Asian and Pacific allies, the U.S. specifically intended the Nixon Doctrine to imply that the U.S. would proceed with announced Vietnamization in South Vietnam; that the U.S. would continue to offer allies the protection of the "nuclear umbrella"; that the U.S. would honor existing defense and other commitments; and, that there would follow a significant withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Pacific area, with the U.S. seeking a new role as partner in the region. Perhaps the most crucial element of the Doctrine was that U.S. military aid and assistance would be available to our allies in the event of external conventional or subversive threats provided it was specifically requested, that the requesting nation was aggressively involved in exerting a defensive effort on its own



behalf, and that it was in the national interest of the U.S. to respond.

Thailand was specifically informed by the United States that it's new Indochina policies included a withdrawal of forces from the region "without the undertaking of any new obligations" and the intention of the U.S. to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC [Ref. 23]. In addition to Vietnam, U.S. force withdrawals were projected for Korea, Thailand, Japan, and the Philippines. Reversion of Okinawa to Japan was also anticipated.

It was made clear that Thailand and other Southeast Asian allies would have to assume an increased responsibility for their own defense. "In September of 1969, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution which, in effect, superseded the 1962 Rusk-Thanat understandings and insisted that no American ground forces would be employed in the event of war in Thailand." [Ref. 24] The U.S. did reassure Thailand that its economic and security assistance agreements would remain in force. In response to these actions, Thailand announced plans to pull its forces out of Vietnam and talks were initiated to remove all U.S. forces from Thailand.

Globally, the Nixon Doctrine sought to achieve the following objectives before the 1972 elections:

- (1) Make progress on the Berlin-Four Power tangle as the necessary precondition to the Bonn-Moscow treaty detente;
- (2) Arrive at some diminuation in defense expenditures through strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviets;
- (3) Maintain the truce, if no more, in the Middle East so as to open the Suez Canal;

(4) Negotiate, if possible, with the North Vietnamese while nonetheless withdrawing American power from South Vietnam, leaving the latter to determine its own future, but supported by some residual American military aid;

(5) Cut back on military support in Korea, Japan, the Philippines and Thailand; and,

(6) Limit, in an as yet unclear way, our defense of an old ally, Taipei, in order to promote "peace" with a longstanding enemy, Peking [Ref. 25].

### 3. Thailand Evaluates the New U.S. Role

For Thailand, the events of 1968-69, particularly the promulgation of the Nixon Doctrine, had the effect of raising serious doubts concerning the validity of existing treaty commitments with the United States. Although the Thai's did not feel that the United States was ready to abrogate existing security agreements, there was some question as to whether these security commitments (the Manila Pact and the Rusk-Thanat Communique) and other political-security interests in the region would retain their value to the U.S. in light of changing U.S. foreign policy priorities and national interests. To Southeast Asian allies the Nixon Doctrine was flawed in its failure to provide a tangible criteria for intervention, its key points being vague and allowing the U.S. too much leeway regarding a response to a regional crisis.

The provisions of Article IV of the Manila Pact required applicable parties to "...meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." There was no requirement for a reflexive response of any kind on the part of any signator. As the U.S. reformulated its Asian policies, the Thais became more

aware that the "constitutional processes" clause of the treaty provided the U.S. a convenient escape device in case the discharge of the treaty obligation did not appear to serve U.S. national interests. Regarding this, [former] Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman remarked:

The question which arises then is: Will the help (to the threatened nation) come? To ask the question does not imply an intention to reflect on the moral integrity of one's allies and partners; it is rather an expression of realism and prudence. History, particularly of recent times, is strewn with examples of lesser nations being sacrificed by their allies on the pretext of preserving peace of the world but actually because the national prestige and vital interests of those allies were not directly affected. [Ref. 26]

The dependability of the U.S. to respond to future regional security needs was also perceived by the Thai's as weakened by the increasing assertiveness of the U.S. Congress reflected in the War Powers Act of 1973, and the willingness of U.S. domestic opinion to permit an atrophy of U.S. regional interests. Thanat Khoman observed:

...Perhaps some day the U.S. Congress will realize that its efforts to score a domestic and political victory over the Administration with respect to the Vietnamese War did not enhance America's international stature or credibility. If anything, the April capitulation of Phnom Penh and Saigon, by dealing a heavy blow to the U.S. position in the whole of Asia, raised doubts about how effectively it will play its future role as a responsible regional power. [Ref. 27]

The Nixon Doctrine had a positive effect in accelerating the commencement of more cordial relations between Thailand and the PRC. In 1969, Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman recommended that Thailand move away from its binding ties with the U.S. and seek to improve its own relations with the PRC and

North Vietnam. In 1971, Thailand announced its support for Chinese admission to the U.N.; having voted against such a move in 1966, 1968, and 1969. [Ref. 28]

#### 4. Bangkok Seeks a New Foreign Policy

Although Thanat Khoman was ousted in a coup in 1971, the move toward Sino-Thai reconciliation remained on track. After the re-election of Nixon and the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, Thailand opened normal trade with the PRC in 1974. In March of 1975, Thai Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj outlined his government's foreign policy which included equidistant relations with the superpowers, normalization of relations with the PRC, withdrawal of foreign troops from Thailand, constructive contacts with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and continued cooperation with ASEAN. [Ref. 29] Following this statement, diplomatic relations were established with the PRC on 1 July 1975 and the U.S. completed withdrawal of its forces from Thailand in March 1976. Although beneficial for Thai internal interests, the removal of U.S. forces from Thailand was done without obtaining any quid pro quo from regional communist adversaries presaging the requirement for the development of a military relationship with the PRC as a hedge against Vietnamese expansionism. Once again, Thailand was forced to "lean away" from its stated goal of achieving a unique omnidirectional foreign policy.

The failure of the U.S. effort in Indochina was the most significant factor responsible for the reorientation of Thai foreign policies that had previously supported non-recognition

and containment of the PRC. Key events that caused Thailand to question the reliability and dependability of the U.S. to honor existing arrangements under the Manila Pact and the Rusk-Thanat Communique and to seek a more autonomous foreign policy free of U.S. influence included: promulgation of the Nixon Doctrine; U.S. normalization of relations with the PRC in 1972; the Paris Peace Talks; the pullout of U.S. forces from South Vietnam in 1973; the fall of Saigon in 1975; and, the pullout of U.S. forces from Thailand and Taiwan in 1976.

Up to 1975, the Asian policies of the U.S. had relied on its ability to influence events on the Asian mainland through a U.S. military presence in the region. The significant reduction of this presence after Vietnam brought into question in Bangkok and other Asian capitals the future regional role or position for the United States.

After 1976, other events continued to reinforce Thai perceptions of a U.S. retrenchment of interests. Several of these included: President Carter's announcement of a phased withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea in 1977; the possible adoption of a "swing strategy" by the U.S. Navy to reapportion forces from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean to meet challenges in the Persian Gulf; U.S. failure to prevent the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979; the build-up of Soviet troop concentrations in the Northern Territories (of Japan); and, Soviet acquisition of naval and air facilities in Vietnam and Cambodia coupled with the steady enhancement of Soviet naval power in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.

The reduction of American regional presence and Asian perceptions of diminished dependability and reliability were determining factors in Bangkok's desire for more comprehensive security arrangements. For Thailand, the drive for more comprehensive security would include more active and independent political, economic, and diplomatic strategies, the strengthening of national defense forces, and closer political cooperation with other emerging powers in the region to include the Soviet Union and the PRC.

Between 1975 and 1978, the historical buffer between the Thais and the Vietnamese remained precariously in tact by the absence of Vietnamese troops in Laos and through the tragic and genocidal reign of the PRC-supported Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. In 1978, the Soviets and the Vietnamese formalized their alliance by the conclusion of a twenty-five year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. With Soviet-supported Vietnam now poised to realize their goal of political and military influence over Indochina, Thai threat perceptions were transformed from an internal to an external orientation eastward. Thailand was now faced with the prospect of dealing with an ancient enemy larger and more powerful than at any recent time.

The reality of the growing external threat from the east complicated the calculus of the Thai internal security equation in that there had been no reduction in its problem with a domestic insurgency which continued to blossom in intensity and geographic scope. Insurgent ranks had multiplied to a total of

about 12-14,000 armed guerrillas by 1979. With this force, the insurgents were able to directly control over 400 villages and exert some degree of influence over 6,000 more with a combined population of nearly 4 million, and to conduct combat operations in well over half of Thailand's 71 provinces. [Ref. 30]

##### 5. Wither the CPT

The break in Sino-Viet relations in 1974-5 had an ultimately crippling effect on the CPT insurgency in Thailand. In 1979, the PRC made renewed efforts to separate party-party from government-government relations in Southeast Asia. This meant a departure from its former policies of open material and ideological support for regional communist insurgency movements and a move toward more anti-Soviet policies. In Thailand, PRC material support to the CPT ceased in 1979 as did broadcasts from the Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT) which went off the air on July 11, 1979. Because of its former anti-Vietnamese orientation, the CPT subsequently lost its access to sanctuary in Laos and Cambodia. Under increasing pressure from Thai counterinsurgency programs and without a foreign sponsor, the CPT rapidly withered.

In the face of concerted Thai political, military and civic action efforts, the strength of the insurgents is estimated to have declined from a total of 12-14,000 armed men and women in 1979 to less than 2500 today. On 2 December 1989, the Communist Party of Malaysia, an insurgent group operating in the southern provinces of the Isthmus of Kra along the Malaysian border signed

peace agreements with the governments of Thailand and Malaysia. Estimates of remaining insurgent forces at the date of signing was put at 1188. These insurgents were to remain in former areas of operations for six months to dismantle or demolish booby traps. Aside from these forces, strength of remaining active insurgent groups are reportedly as follows: [Ref. 31]

Communist Party of Thailand	600
Thai Peoples Revolutionary Movement	1500
Patani United Liberation Organization (Muslim)	
Barisan Revolusi Nasional (Muslim)	400

With respect to the CPT, the loss of PRC support is not likely to be replaced by support from Vietnam. In the coming years, Hanoi will continue to lobby the West, particularly the United States, for improved relations. In doing so, it will be increasingly important for Hanoi to be successful portraying the PRC as the greatest regional threat. Any surge in Vietnamese or client state support for smoldering regional insurgencies would be a politically crippling evolution and would perpetuate the image of a Soviet-supported Vietnam as the most aggressive regional threat.

To acknowledge the closing of the VOPT, (former) Thai Prime Minister Prem ordered the closure of a Chinese-language radio station that had been set up in 1956 to counter communist propaganda. Although Prem's actions were reportedly taken for financial reasons, it was more likely done to prevent the station from being used for political or subversive purposes that would impede improving Sino-Thai relations.



The PRC hoped that reduction of military aid to regional communist insurgency forces would improve its image with Western powers and ASEAN in order to acquire access to Western military assistance. In the case of the U.S., this was ultimately successful as military relations between the U.S. and the PRC were established in January 1980.

#### 6. The Soviet-Vietnamese Alliance

In 1978-79, the political and military situation in Southeast Asia was transformed by the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviets and the Vietnamese, the ouster of PRC personnel and influence from Vietnam, and the subsequent invasion of Cambodia by the Vietnamese. This latter act most seriously threatened to shift the strategic balance in the region. Beginning on Christmas day in 1978 the Vietnamese, backed by massive Soviet arms aid and Moscow's diplomatic support, launched a full scale offensive against Cambodia along multiple axes of advance with 14 divisions totaling 120,000 combat troops. By 7 January 1979, the Vietnamese had taken Phnom Penh and on 10 January, installed a puppet government headed by Heng Samrin. By mid-January 1979, the remnants of the Khmer Rouge forces had been driven into the Dangrek Mountains in the north and the Cardamom and Elephant Mountains in the southwest, as well as into Thai/PRC supervised insurgent bases and refugee camps in Thailand.

#### 7. A Buffer Rebuffed

For Thailand, the neutrality of Laos and Cambodia was important for the maintenance of a buffer between itself and its

historical enemy, the Vietnamese. Prior to December 1978, the absence of strong Vietnamese influence in Laos and the presence of an anti-Vietnamese government in Cambodia (the Khmer Rouge) represented for Thailand a suitable "cushion" between itself and the Vietnamese.

After securing its control over South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese, using border incursions by the aggressive Khmer Rouge as a pretense, successfully invaded Cambodia and acquired control over the strategic buffer territory of Cambodia and, through occupation by over 50,000+ of its ground forces, Laos. In doing so, Vietnam thereby preempted the influence or control over this territory by Thailand or any Western power and gained for itself the political-strategic advantage of occupation, as costly as it would eventually prove to be. The movement of Vietnamese forces into Cambodia and Laos was not really surprising and was probably not driven solely by the border incursions of the Khmer Rouge or even the presence of a PRC-supported government in Phnom Penh.

Throughout the 1950 and 1960's, the Vietnamese had supported the communist movements of the Pathet Lao in Laos and trained Thai-Lao cadres in North Vietnam in support of the insurgency in northeastern Thailand. In North Vietnam, training for CPT insurgents was conducted at the Hoa Binh training school on the outskirts of Hanoi. First reported opened in 1962, early graduates were reinfilitrated back into northern Thailand for the conduct of low-key propaganda activities. Later, weapons as well

as propaganda training was conducted. Between 1962 and 1965, over 500 insurgents were reported to have been trained at Hoa Binh. [Ref. 32] This number rose to 1500 between 1967-1969 [Ref. 33]. Other training sites were located in Pathet-Lao controlled areas of Laos and in Yunnan Province of the PRC.

With large Vietnamese populations in northeast Thailand (approximately 40,000), and eastern Cambodia, and with veteran insurgent organizations in Laos, North Vietnam was in a position to potentially rebuild the foundations for an Indochinese Federation [Ref. 34]. However, military problems in subduing the communist and non-communist resistance forces, a rapidly deteriorating national economy, and Moscow's increasing impatience with the inability of its ally to resolve the Cambodian imbroglio required Vietnam to eventually agree to a withdrawal of its forces (reportedly achieved by September 1989) from Cambodia and proceed with efforts to increase its political and economic ties with regional nations.

Although much was made of the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces in 1987-1989, evidence today indicates that not all Vietnamese forces have been withdrawn and some Vietnamese forces have been re-introduced into Cambodia in response to Khmer Rouge military successes in the western battle areas. The prolongation of Vietnamese involvement in Cambodia will continue to concern Thailand, require the continued involvement of the PRC in the conflict, and exacerbate differences of opinion within ASEAN over just which country represents the greatest regional threat: the

PRC or Vietnam. ASEAN will also remain divided over which country should represent the true Indochinese "strategic buffer": Cambodia to contain the Vietnamese threat or Thailand to contain the PRC.

For Thailand, "fulcrum" status in Southeast Asia, implying a key economic and political position for it in any future regional perspective, is an acceptable and much sought after position. It's consideration as a "buffer" state between Malaysia and Indonesia and the perceived military ambitions of the PRC is an absolutely unacceptable position.

Besides the obvious threat from the 180,000 Vietnamese troops, Thailand was forced to deal with a tremendous flood of refugees that had begun in April of 1975 brought about by the genocidal "Year Zero" policies of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. Cambodian refugees in Thailand today number over 300,000. With Vietnamese influence firmly entrenched in Laos and Cambodia, Thailand's desire for a security buffer between it and Vietnam was now out of the question.

Thailand also recognized the increasing presence and possible influence of the Soviet Union in the region. The reduced level of U.S. defense commitments to mainland Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese alliance with the Soviet Union, and the increased military presence of the Soviets in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, removed the geographical impediments which had hitherto made the Soviet threat a remote one and underlined the Soviet potential in the region. [Ref. 35]

#### 8. Sino-Thai Relations Improve

Border incursions by Vietnamese and Laotian forces plus periodic occupation of Thai territory in the eastern and northern border states made the mutual relationship between the PRC and Thailand more crucial. For Thailand, a relationship with the PRC and the U.S. represented a significant counterbalance to Soviet and Soviet client state hegemonism in Indochina. If Vietnamese forces could be contained and eventually forced to withdraw from Laos and Cambodia by a combination of diplomatic means and demonstrated resolve on the part of the PRC, the U.S., and ASEAN, the buffer would once again be established and Thailand's borders to the north and east secured from immediate external threat.

"For Thailand, the PRC would become an important security guarantor against Vietnam by demonstrating its willingness to put pressures on Hanoi's northern border whenever the Vietnamese attacked the Cambodian resistance on the Thai frontier."

[Ref. 36]

#### 9. A Lesson for Vietnam?

Fearing successful Vietnamese hegemonism over its client state Cambodia, and loss of influence in Southeast Asia, the PRC launched a military offensive against Vietnam on 17 February 1979 to "teach Vietnam a lesson." Attacking through six Vietnamese provinces with a force of 20 divisions, the conflict lasted for 17 days, after which the PRC withdrew its forces. Although extensive damage was done in the battle area and casualties were high on both sides, its arguable who gave and who received the

"the lesson". Although the threat of future PRC invasions would force the Vietnamese to keep close to 600,000 forces on the border for defense, the PRC insursion did not change the status of Vietnamese forces in Cambodia.

The PRC was alarmed over what it perceived as Vietnamese, and ultimately Soviet, intentions to expand their influence throughout the whole of Southeast Asia, initially through Kampuchea and then to Thailand [Ref. 37]. The PRC's traditional policy of maintaining a weak and divided Southeast Asia was at risk if the Vietnamese could obtain lasting political and military influence over the communist Indochinese states. The PRC's perception that the Vietnamese were being used as proxies for Soviet encirclement of the PRC, and the PRC's desire to maintain its support to its Cambodian ally, the Khmer Rouge, brought about a hard-line stance against the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia.

#### 10. Poker Chips and New Alliances

Thailand's strong opposition to the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia permitted Thailand and the PRC to develop a political and military relationship that would be partly responsible for the denial of Vietnamese hegemony over Cambodia and would contribute to the maintenance of international sanctions against the Vietnamese. The fact that Thailand would contemplate establishing a military relationship with the PRC is not surprising considering Thailand's diplomatic history of accommodating whomever it considered the most politically and militarily

influential power in the region at the time. Putting this into perspective, Professor Claude Buss related during a seminar at the Naval Postgraduate School that Sukhumbhand Paribatra of Chulalongkorn University once remarked: "When at a poker game and you want to find the Thai, just look behind the player who is holding the biggest pile of chips."

"The parameters of the evolving Sino-Thai military relationship were shaped foremost by the significance Chinese policy makers attached to the Southeast Asian situation, and the role of Thailand in the Kampuchean question [Ref. 38]. The PRC's strategic goals in the region, which closely paralleled those of Thailand, consisted of five main points:

1. Removal of Soviet support for Vietnam
2. Dismantling of Soviet-Viet Alliance and removal of the bases
3. Adversity to the formation of an Indochinese Confederation with Vietnam as its leadership
4. A checkage of the expansion of the Soviet Pacific Fleet
5. A neutralization of the Soviet military encirclement in the region [Ref. 39].

#### C. SUMMARY

A decreased willingness on the part of the U.S. to become involved militarily in conflicts abroad stemming from its Vietnam experience caused Thailand to look elsewhere to assure its security against the very real and growing threat to the east. Although formal U.S./Thai security treaties remained intact, Thailand felt its future security could not be solely rooted in a dependence on its traditional ally, the U.S., for two reasons.

First, the age of the Manila Pact and the Rusk-Thanat Communique as well as Washington's willingness to allow the demise of SEATO in 1977 with only a cryptic statement by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, made the Thai's suspect that while the U.S. "...does stand by its old commitments..." the Carter Administration "...would make its own judgments [in a crisis] depending on the specific circumstances [Ref. 40]. In other words, the Thais feared that U.S. military action would be guided more by true national interests rather than by vague and aging security agreements.

Secondly, there was little U.S. physical presence in Thailand that would have served as a "tripwire", like that in South Korea, requiring for an automatic U.S. military response if Thailand were attacked. Psychological and political factors made it highly unlikely that the American people would see a need to defend Thailand should an attack occur, especially considering the country's remote geographic location. More pragmatically, Thailand felt that enhanced regional security against growing Soviet-inspired and supported Vietnamese hegemonism could only be enhanced by closer economic, political, and military contacts with the Chinese.



### III. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP (1979-1990)

#### A. THE CONDITIONS AT BIRTH

##### 1. First Offers of Military Assistance

Vietnam's incursions into Laos and Kampuchea raised fears in the PRC that Vietnam, with support and direction from the Soviet Union, was attempting to consolidate a dominant position for itself in Indochina and rekindle the specter of an Indochinese Federation with Vietnam at the helm. In June 1979, the PRC pledged support, including military assistance, to Thailand if it was invaded by Vietnam. This was followed in December by a visit from a People's Liberation Army military delegation which was sent to Thailand to emphasize the PRC's support should Vietnam open an offensive against Thailand. To accommodate Thai concerns regarding Chinese support for the Khmer Rouge, the PRC agreed to provide military assistance to the non-communist resistance groups as well. Between 1980-1983, high level exchange visits between various branches of the Thai military and the PRC continued. Although these delegations exchanged mutual concerns regarding the Indochinese situation, there is no evidence that arms sales or transfer agreements were made. Joint U.S.-Thai logistics planning efforts were also stepped up in May 1981 in response to "lessons learned" from the Vietnamese incursions into Thai territory at Norn Mark Moon during June 1980.

The first indication of the new direction of Sino-Thai military relations occurred between 1984 and 1986 when the groundwork was laid for the acquisition and incorporation of Chinese military equipment into the Thai Armed Forces. In 1984, Thailand reportedly conducted negotiations with the Chinese to acquire a reconnaissance version of the Chinese F-7 aircraft. The terms of these negotiations were unclear and none of these aircraft were delivered to Thailand.

## 2. The Political Game In Bangkok

As Thailand sought to enter into this new relationship, domestic Thai politics were tense as trouble brewed between Prime Minister Prem and the Thai Army Commander-in-Chief Arthit over various issues including Thai currency devaluation and the political role of military officers. The military was factionalized by those desiring a wider role in politics and those who felt the military should decrease its involvement in politics, particularly coup plotting as a means of replacing elected governments.

In late 1984, an imminent confrontation between the opposing factions of Prem and Arthit was averted through the tempering influence of the King and his stated desire for the continued progression of the democratic process in Thai politics. In September 1985, a weak and disorganized coup attempt failed. Observers cited two reasons for its failure. The first was factiousness in the military. The other was the perceived obsolescence of a coup, a view shared by a widening circle of

military officers, senior civil servants, businessmen, financiers, industrialists, white-collar executives, intellectuals and significantly, by the King as well. [Ref. 41]

The easing of domestic political tensions and an evaluation of Thailand's vulnerable military position after the 1984-1985 Vietnamese dry season offensive, the largest since its invasion of Cambodia, hastened Thailand's decision to enter into a military relationship with the PRC.

## B. THE PROGRESS OF SINO-THAI MILITARY RELATIONS

### 1. 1985-The First Chinese Arms Arrive

In March 1985, it was announced that, as part of a military grant from the PRC, Thailand would receive 24 x Model 59 Main Battle Tanks (MBT), 18 X 130mm towed artillery pieces and 12 X 37mm anti-aircraft (AAA) guns. It was the first major military grant aid from the PRC for the Thai armed forces and came at a time just prior to the commencement of Vietnamese dry season offensive activity in Cambodia. Although the PRC's expressed purpose for providing the equipment was for defense against Vietnamese intrusions along the border, it probably was also to acquaint the Thai's with the quality, simplicity, and availability of PRC military equipment.

At this time, both the U.S. and Germany were working to secure a contract to provide main battle tanks to the Thai military. The Germans were offering the Leopard-1 and the U.S. was attempting to sell the Thais the Commando Sting Ray. Bids had

also been made by Britain and Sweden. The Chinese tanks were to be kept at the Lop Buri-based Calvary center while the artillery pieces were to be initially located at the Lop Buri-based Artillery center for testing. [Ref. 42]

## 2. 1987-The U.S. Stockpile and PRC Arms for Modernization

There were few reported military contacts between the PRC and Thailand in 1986, however, two key events in 1987 significantly enhanced Thailand's military position. First, on 9 January 1987, Washington and Bangkok signed an agreement to establish a \$100 million War Reserve Stockpile in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand (See Appendix H) for use by both countries in case of a military emergency.

U.S. stockpiling in Thailand was originally proposed in 1985 during a meeting in New York between Defense Secretary Weinberger and PM Prem when the two leaders signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) concerning logistics support. This MOU formalized U.S. guaranteed delivery of U.S. weapons and equipment, specifically from the Special Defense Acquisitions Fund (SDAF); a stockpile of long lead-time items in the U.S. arsenal available only to select allies. This agreement would make it easier for the Thai's to plug directly into the U.S. supply system for critical items. [Ref. 43] Regarding the 1987 agreement, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand William Brown stated that the agreement would provide an "...increased measure of security...and help promote peace and stability to Southeast Asia..." [Ref. 44].

According to the 1987 agreement signed by Thai Defense Minister Phaniong and U.S. Ambassador Brown, the U.S. and Thailand will each contribute \$50 million in weapons and equipment (primarily artillery, tank, and mortar ammunition, and anti-tank missiles) to the stockpile over a 5-year period and will be required to consult with the other before drawing on it. The agreement does allow the U.S. to use the stockpile for military operations beyond Thailand, but it is not likely in view of U.S. bases and logistics assets in the Philippines, South Korea, and Japan. [Ref. 45] No nuclear weapons will be in the stockpile. This stockpile will upgrade Thai logistic capabilities and permit the Thai military to plug into the U.S. supply system more efficiently. The concept is similar to that employed during the Vietnam Conflict when the U.S. established a similar stockpile in Korat, Thailand [Ref. 46].

There was one legislative obstacle that had to be overcome before the stockpile could be activated. "A sticking point was, before the agreement could be implemented, Section 514c of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 would have to be amended and the U.S. Congress would need to give its approval [Ref. 47]. As written, the Act stated such stockpiles could only be kept in NATO countries, the Republic of Korea, or in areas where the U.S. had military bases or was the primary user of a base [Ref. 48]. Congressional approval was granted for establishment of the Thai-U.S. stockpile on 22 December 1987 by House Joint Resolution 395 and Public Law 100-102, 101 statute

1329 under which Thailand was added to Section 514c of the Foreign Assistance Act. The stockpile began operations in October 1988 with the first deliveries of supplies occurring in November 1988.

Secondly, 1987 marked the first major series of arms purchases by Thailand from the PRC. In March 1987, it was announced that the Thais were considering purchasing a large number of PRC 57mm or 37mm Anti-Aircraft artillery (AAA) (P-74) for airbase defense. The AAA weapons would provide airbase defense in the provinces of Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Ratchasima, Ubon Ratchathani, and Udon Thani. Although the PRC also offered to sell the Thai Air Force the F-7 fighter, the offer was declined. [Ref. 49]

Other PRC weapons and equipment considered for acquisition at this time were Type 69II MBT's, YW-531H Armored Personnel Carriers (APC), additional AAA guns, and 130mm artillery ammunition. If purchased, the tanks would be used to form a tank battalion for the 2nd Calvary Division at Saraburi. The tanks were to be sold at a "friendship price" which amounted to 10% of their value with lengthy payment terms. The PRC arms manufacturing company Norinco was to handle the sale. To assist with the purchase, the Thai Cabinet agreed to cut import duty requirements on military arms and equipment from the PRC and permit PRC freighters to transport the military supplies to Thailand. Also included in the deal were some additional T-59 MBT's, delivered at no cost. As of March 1987, Thailand had

received approximately 36 X 130mm artillery pieces and between 20,000-30,000 rounds of ammunition. The PRC had also offered to sell the Thai's 155mm towed howitzers, additional 130mm guns, Model 84 bridge laying tanks, and Type 653 Armor Recovery Vehicles (ARV). [Ref. 50]

After careful consideration of the Chinese offer, Army Commander in Chief General Chawalit Yongchaiyut approved the purchase of 30 X T-69II MBT, 400 X YW-531H APC's, 24 X Type 59 towed artillery, 24-30 X 37mm AAA guns, 25 X 57mm AAA guns, 16 X ARV 653, and 4 X Model 84 bridge laying tanks during a May visit to PRC. Delivery was scheduled for September-October 1987. [Ref. 51]

With respect to Thailand's desire to purchase light tanks, it was announced in May 1987 that it had decided to procure 150 X Stingray light tanks from the Cadillac Gage Company of the U.S. In September 1987, Thailand took delivery of approximately 423 Type 69II MBTs and YW-531H APCs purchased in May 1987.

### 3. 1988-Picking Up The Pace of Chinese Arms Acquisitions

From December 1987 through February 1988, Thai forces became decisively engaged with a Laotian ground force in the vicinity of Ban Romklao in the province of Phitsanulok. (See Appendix C). The intensity of the engagement quickly depleted existing stocks of Thai artillery and other military supplies requiring an emergency airlift of equipment from the U.S. It was reported that the PRC also assisted in supplying ammunition to

Thai forces. In February 1988, the Thais were forced to seek a cease fire from the Laotians after suffering a loss of over 300 personnel killed and expenditure of US\$120 million worth of ammunition. [Ref. 52]

Taking a lesson from this experience as well as the earlier effort by the U.S., the Chinese considered opening talks with the Thais regarding the establishment of a Chinese stockpile of military supplies to support the increasing amount of Chinese military equipment in Thai inventories. This was to be somewhat more awkward for the Chinese than for the U.S. because of the lack of a formal security assistance agreement between Thailand and the PRC. [Ref. 53]

During April-May 1988, Army CINC General Chawalit approved the purchase of 23 X T-69II MBT's, 360 YW-531H APC's, an AAA radar control system, a surface-to-air missile (SAM) HN-5 missile guidance system, 38 X 130mm (Type 59) towed artillery, and 9 minesweepers for the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) from the PRC. The purchase was worth US\$47 million, was to be delivered in 6 months, and paid for over a 6 year period with no interest. [Ref. 54] The tanks were sold for approximately US\$ 400,000 (9.1 million Baht)-a price representing a reduction by half of that which the first lot of MBT's bought for the calvary in Saraburi were acquired for in 1987. Also, these tanks were fitted with 105mm vice 100mm main guns on the earlier purchased vehicles. Chawalit was also offered 4 Jianghu Frigates and three Romeo diesel submarines for "friendship prices". The frigates were



offered for US\$270 million. Chawalit took the offer under consideration. [Ref 55]

Following up on the January 1987 U.S. War Reserve Stockpile Agreement, an Appendix was signed 1 April by General Chawalit and BGen Peter Lash, Commander of the USJUSMAG in Thailand clarifying composition and control of the stockpile's contents. Also during April, it appears that talks for the establishment of a PRC stockpile of ammunition and spare parts were initiated during a visit to the PRC by the Thai Army Deputy Commander-in-Chief General Wanchai Ruangtrakun.

Regarding the stockpile issue, General Chawalit in June 1987 expressed the desire for the establishment of War Reserve Stockpiles with the other countries from whom Thailand was purchasing weapons and equipment. These stockpile plans would include Singapore, West Germany, and Britain. General Chawalit felt that, like the deal with the U.S., stockpiling would assist in streamlining logistics procedures, avoid supply lags during periods of crisis and would support Thailand's policy of arms diversification. [Ref. 56]

Acting on an earlier offer from the PRC, Thailand signed an agreement in September 1988 to buy 4 Chinese Jianghu-class frigates at a total cost of US\$270 million. The first frigate was expected to be delivered in February 1991 with the other delivered every 4-6 months after the first. At this time it was planned that the ships be equipped with anti-ship guided missiles, possibly the PRC C-801 or CSS-N-4, the U.S. Harpoon.

During a November 1988 visit to the PRC, Thai Army CINC General Chawalit signed another major arms agreement with the PRC for 30 X T-69II MBT and 400 X Type 63Mk2 Armored Cars. Thailand also expressed interest in purchasing a squadron of F-M's and three Romeo diesel submarines. [Ref. 57]

The military relationship between Thailand and the PRC continued to grow during this period primarily because of the Thai's satisfaction with the PRC's rapid response to arms requests, especially during periods of crisis such as the Chong Bok Pass and Ban Ramklao border incidents. In explaining why Thailand had continued to seek an expansion of its military relationship with the PRC, General Chawalit said [of the PRC], "We received the weapons soon after we had asked for them while American weapons always came after the fighting ended, and the transportation was costly. Chinese arms are modern and suitable for Thailand considering the country's financial situation." [Ref. 58] In an article in the New York Times, Barbara Crossette defined the relationship as follows:

Thais understand, respect, and appreciate power and what power can achieve, especially in terms of survival and progress. After the end of Pax Americana in Southeast Asia, China's ability and willingness to offer Thailand protection has been one of the bases for the development of close bilateral ties, especially in the security area. [Ref. 59]

#### 4. 1989-The Relationship Takes a Breath

In January 1989, [then] Army CINC General Chawalit approved the purchase of 2 Romeo submarines from the PRC. The submarines were to be used to guard the sea routes along the

coasts, protect oil and gas assets in the Gulf of Thailand, and provide security for the Eastern and Southern Seaboard Industrial Zones. The old Thai fleet of 4 submarines had been decommissioned on 30 November 1955. They were old Japanese submarines made by Mitsubishi and had been originally commissioned in 1938. During this period the RTN also discussed the possibility of purchasing PRC P-74 37mm AAA to replace the aging 40mm AAA currently in use by the Royal Thai Marine Corps (RTMC).

During the first months of 1989, Thai plans to acquire the PRC F-7M fighter aircraft were put on hold for further study and consideration. One of Thailand's fears was that if the RTAF procured the F-7M, the Soviets would equip the Laotian, Cambodian and Vietnamese forces with the Mig-23. It was also reported that the PRC had offered to sell Thailand the A-5M, the PRC's latest aircraft built under a joint development scheme with Europe (PRC airframe, European flying and weapon systems). The Thais declined the offer. [Ref. 60]

Thailand's first steps towards establishing an export-oriented arms industry were taken in February and April of 1989 when Thailand signed agreements with the PRC for the coproduction of spare parts for PRC tanks and APC's as well as rubber road wheels for West German Leopard tanks. The project to manufacture the spare parts was approved by the Thai Defense Ministry in April. The project was to be initially between the Thai Sugo Engineering Company and the PRC North Industry Corporation

(NORINCO). At this time, it was envisioned that the factory would initially manufacture spare parts but would later expand operations to cover assembling the T-69II MBT for the armed forces of both countries as well as interested third parties. The factory was to be sited in Lop Buri Province. (See Appendix H). Aside from the benefits of local production of spare parts, the Thai government felt that the opportunity to enter the arms export business would contribute to the further development of Thai defense technology. [Ref. 61]

Interestingly, this was not the first reported offer by the PRC for a joint Sino-Thai arms production venture. In 1982, the PRC offered to establish a joint arms production venture with the Thais after unofficial Thai inquiries about the possibility of Thai arms purchases from the PRC. At this time, the Thais did not respond to the PRC offer citing that "the issue of a joint Thai-Chinese arms production venture could be a sensitive move and that Thailand should look at the proposal 'from all aspects'". [Ref. 62]

The development of a national arms industry would be beneficial for the Thais for a number of reasons. Several of these include:

- reduction of reliance on foreign suppliers for weapon systems, spare parts, or supplies
- avoidance of political strings attached to arms imports
- capability to supply arms in exchange for political leverage
- political prestige through defense industrialization

- reduction of domestic defense expenditures (import substitution)
- spin-off opportunities for civilian industry
- capability to design weapons to meet geographical requirements of the battlefield
- attract production of foreign weapons for employment opportunities and foreign exchange

In May 1989, conflicting reports stated that the Royal Thai Air Force was still considering the purchase of 24 Chinese F-7M fighter aircraft. However, by late 1989, Thai interest in the F-7M waned and the Thai's did not procure this aircraft. In June, Thailand reportedly ordered an additional 53 X T-69II MBTs, 410 YW-531H APCs, and 360 X Type 63Mk2 armored cars from the PRC. [Ref. 63]

The events of June 1989 in the PRC (Tienamen Square incident) posed temporary problems for the Sino-Thai military relationship. In July 1989, the Thais began seeking a revival of intelligence exchange and a renewal of stronger U.S./Thai military relations, including the possibility of joint ventures to produce U.S. arms in Thailand, due to the growing uncertainty about Sino-Thai military cooperation following events in Tienamen. No doubt tied to these overtures was the resurrection of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits from the U.S. to Thailand which had been suspended in 1986. The events in Tienamen Square also forced Thailand to put on hold several proposed Sino-Thai joint ventures to produce APC's as well as plans to establish a joint Sino-Thai War Reserve Stockpile.

Thai/U.S. military ties had deteriorated steadily over the past several years because of cutbacks in U.S. military assistance (See Appendix I) and U.S. charges that senior Thai military officers had misappropriated U.S. covert funds for non-communist Khmer resistance forces. Exacerbating the flagging relationship were Thai complaints of delays in delivery of U.S. arms and equipment during past times of crisis. However, in these latest overtures to the U.S., the Thais were not seeking more military assistance but were "looking for advanced U.S. weaponry to compliment the Thai Army's defense capabilities through existing military assistance programs." [Ref. 64] A sign of the willingness to renew U.S./Thai military relationships was the Thai Cabinet's approval for the purchase of 25 new U.S. Bell helicopters for establishment of the country's first airborne cavalry regiment in the 3d Army region.

In renewed arms purchasing activity with the PRC, the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) signed a contract with the PRC in October 1989 for the construction of two additional helo-equipped ASW Type 25T frigates for US\$303 million during the September visit of Zou Jiahua, PRC Minister of Machine Building and Electronics Industry [Ref. 65]. According to a reliable source, the two frigates are scheduled to be 2500-3000 tons displacement, be powered by U.S. LM-2500 gas-turbine engines, and be armed with ship-to-ship (Harpoon or PRC C-801) and surface-to-air missiles.

The RTN's vigorous modernization program is aimed at fulfilling its projected role in the defense of the new Eastern and

Southern Seaboard Industrial Zones, as well as patrol responsibilities in the Mekong river, the Andaman Sea, and the Gulf of Thailand. Most notable naval modernization efforts thus far have included:

- contract with the PRC for the construction of 6 frigates
- possible acquisition of 6 X 2-9A (Dauphin) helicopters for use on the Type 25T helo-capable frigates.
- approval for purchase of Chinese C-801 surface-to-surface missile for use on the PRC frigates
- consideration for the purchase of 3 PRC Romeo diesel submarines
- continued receipt of PRC 37mm AAA guns to replace aging stocks of 40mm AAA
- formation of an AAA Division
- plans to upgrade the RTMC from two regiments to a division
- establishment of a RTMC tank battalion and acquisition of addition artillery for enhancement of RTMC fire support capabilities
- and, the planned acquisition of shore based coastal defense missiles and medium sized patrol boats. [Ref. 66]

##### 5. Arms Purchases in Review

To summarize purchases of major items of PRC military equipment between 1985 and 1990 as can best be determined from unclassified data available, it appears that as of January 1990, Thailand had ordered and received 72 X Type 69II MBT's (100mm and 105 mm), 16 X ARV 653, 4 X Model 84 bridge laying tanks, 400 X YW-531H APC, 24 X 57mm and 36 X 37mm AAA, and 36 X Type 59 130mm towed artillery. On order but yet to be delivered was 64 X T69II MBT, 770 X YW-531H APC, 760 X Type 63Mk2 armored cars, 28 X Type 59 130mm towed artillery, 4 X Jianghu-class frigates, 2X Type 25T

frigates, 9 X minesweepers, and 2-3 Romeo-class diesel submarines. (See Appendices J and K).

In May 1990, the Thai Cabinet approved a request from the RTN to buy C-801 surface-to-surface missiles from the PRC. The missiles will be installed on the six Chinese frigates purchased earlier. The deal was worth over US\$40 million and is scheduled to be paid for in five installments between 1990 and 1994.

[Ref. 67]

#### 6. Summary

Thailand's progress toward conventionally upgrading its military forces is proceeding rapidly with respect to the acquisition of modern military equipment. On 7 May 1990, former Defense Minister Chawalit stated that "...a stronger military force should go hand-in-hand with economic and investment development. Investment and other assets must be granted security and protection. This means that the Thai Armed Forces must have the strength to protect the economy and industry."

[Ref. 68] Recent reports indicate US\$3.7 billion has been earmarked for weapons modernization over the next decade [Ref. 69]. Accordingly, many changes are in the wind for the Thai Armed Forces in the coming years as they continue their transition to a modern conventional military force.

For the RTA, this will mean the mechanization of its five infantry divisions, the addition of a third Cavalry division, the establishment of an airborne Cavalry regiment, and a substantial strengthening of its Armored division. When added to existing



inventories and other armor and mechanized equipment on order or delivered from other suppliers, the 136 tanks and 1900+ APCs from the PRC will contribute substantially to the achievement of these goals.

The RTN hopes to modify existing shipping to accommodate the Vertical/Short Take-off and Landing (V/STOL) Harrier-2, upgrade the naval dockyard at Pom Prachun into a more operational ship repair facility, and is negotiating with Bremer Vulcan and Blohm and Voss of West Germany to acquire 2-4 helicopter carriers to protect the east coast and Southern Seaboard Industrial Projects and the Thai petrochemical industry. This is a very ambitious venture for the RTN and will face tough budget battles in the Thai Senate. The RTAF hopes to replace its aging fleet of A-37's with a squadron of Italian AMX and is looking at the purchase of Tornado or Mirage 2000 aircraft as compliments to its fleet of F-5 and F-16s. It has determined that the U.S. A-10 and A-7 are too expensive. The RTAF is also looking to upgrade several airfields including Surat Thani, Songkhla and Hat Yai to contribute to air defense of the proposed Southern Seaboard Industrial Project. Unless the U.S. can offer the Thais more economically attractive arms deals, the PRC's overall contribution as an arms supplier will continue to be a key factor both from a military and, perhaps more importantly, an economic standpoint for the military modernization goals of the Thai government.

### C. CHINESE MOTIVES FOR PROVIDING AID TO THAILAND

In Mao's day, arms dealers were characterized as "merchants of death". Today, "The PRC has dropped this linguistic attack and instead initiated a highly visible arms export drive. [Ref. 70] The PRC is now amongst the top ten of the world's largest arms exporters and is the premier arms exporter to the Third World. The PRC has been engaged in vigorous arms exports to the Middle East (Jordan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia), Africa (Egypt, Zaire, Sudan, Tanzania, Algeria), South Asia (Pakistan), North Korea, guerrilla movements in Afghanistan and Cambodia, and is the highest volume dealer of major end items of ground forces equipment to Thailand.

This shift in policy can be attributed to Chinese political, economic, and military concerns. First and foremost, the foreign exchange acquired from the sale of arms in Thailand is sorely needed to finance aggressive Chinese modernization programs. This has become especially important to the PRC since the end of the Iran-Iraq War has reduced to a trickle a previously heavy demand for Chinese arms in this region.

Between 1980-1987, the PRC's Third World arms transfer agreements totaled nearly US\$11.1 billion dollars of which 74% consisted of arms transfer agreements with Iran and Iraq collectively. Of the PRC's US\$8.7 billion total in arms deliveries to the Third World during this same period, 69% or US\$6 billion consisted of arms deliveries to Iran and Iraq collectively. [Ref. 71]

Second is the PRC's desire for a stable economic and political environment in the region conducive to its continuing modernization efforts. Newly established diplomatic relations with the developing nations of Southeast Asia, particularly those newly and rapidly industrializing nations, is expected to bring new and much needed technological benefits. This includes all ASEAN nations except Singapore.

Third, is to prevent encirclement by, and seek encirclement of Soviet/Soviet client states in Indochina. This entails both a land and sea aspect. With Soviet influence firmly entrenched in Vietnam and India, and the Vietnamese retaining an influence on the Hun Sen government in Cambodia, a government amicable to the PRC in Thailand checkmates southerly encirclement across the Indochina coastal rim. Because of the strong importance both countries attach to the searoutes in the region, enhanced Sino-Thai naval cooperation will provide a significant measure of increased seaward security for Thai economic and military, as well as Chinese South Sea Fleet, interests. [Ref. 72] This will be especially beneficial to the PRC for enforcing its claims in the Spratly Islands.

"Chinese analysts believe their greatest security-diplomatic success within ASEAN to be the bonds the PRC has forged with Thailand. They believe that Thailand will retain this special relationship as a guarantee against Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, should the Cambodian outcome turn sour." [Ref. 73] For the long term, this relationship will continue to offer Thailand a

measure of assurance against Vietnamese expansion outside the borders of Cambodia.

Fourth, Soviet internal and external problems have given the PRC the opportunity to focus its attention away from its western border with the Soviet Union and on countering Vietnamese hegemonism in Indochina, as well as seeking more amiable ties with ASEAN. In spite of the deployment of over 45 Soviet divisions along the Sino-Soviet border, the Chinese perceive a diminishing threat from this area because of Soviet attention to its problems in Eastern Europe, increasingly expensive ties to client states, economic and political difficulties at home and a resurgence of the U.S.-backed allies in Western Europe and Japan committed to maintaining military power sufficient to keep Soviet expansion in check.

Fifth, stronger ties with Thailand will enable continued support for Chinese-backed Kampuchean resistance forces, principally the Khmer Rouge. Although Thailand, as well as ASEAN and the U.S., does not approve of nor desire the maintenance of a strong Khmer Rouge, Thailand's support for resistance activities in Kampuchea provide tacit support for the PRC's "geostrategic motivations" in Indochina. [Ref. 74] This could become a critical issue in the future if negotiations fail between the Cambodian factions and the Hun Sen government.

And lastly, is the possibility for access to western technology that is not available to the PRC through regular security assistance programs. "Chinese officials now believe

that assured retaliation requires technology for rapid assessment of an attack and for quick launch of Chinese weapons." [Ref. 75]

Although the PRC and the U.S. currently have security assistance agreements in place (but on hold due to events in Tienamen Square), there have been significant limits placed by the U.S. Congress on the types and quantity of weapons sold to the PRC. While there is currently no evidence that the PRC is using or even could use the agreements with Thailand to acquire access to restricted U.S. technology, there are indications that the Chinese have been successful with this tactic in the past. As one observer noted in the case of Pakistan, "...it is believed that the PRC obtained French MIRAGE jet fighters, EXOCET ship-to-ship missiles and MAGIC air-to-air missiles, U.S. SIDEWINDER air-to-air missiles and TOW anti-tank missiles, and U.S. artillery technologies. U.S. F-16 jets in Pakistan were reportedly also examined by Chinese personnel" [Ref. 76] Thailand is one of the world's most recent recipients of the U.S. F-16.

#### D. THAI MOTIVES FOR ACCEPTING CHINESE MILITARY AID (See Appendix L)

After its experience in Vietnam and promulgation of the Nixon Doctrine, the non-communist nations of Southeast Asia, including Thailand, felt that the U.S. had distanced itself from Southeast Asia, leaving conflicts to be handled or settled by the nations of the region. "Since that time, many of these same nations have obtained remarkable success in their economies. This has facilitated the opinion in some Thai circles that while the

relationship between the U.S. and Thailand will remain healthy, it should no longer be special as it once was, but become more business like on a more equal footing." [Ref. 77]

Although the U.S. has renewed its interest in Southeast Asia because of the region's geostrategic position and economic accomplishment, Thailand now seeks to follow its own political, military, and economic policies free from U.S. influence. This is partially because it and fellow Southeast Asian nations have witnessed a fluctuating U.S. strategy which in a 30 year period has transitioned through the various stages of regional defense, containment, offensive action, flexible response, detente, and now to the prospect of a withdrawal of U.S. military forces from bases in the region.

For this and other reasons, "Washington's political will is still suspect, particularly to the extent that ASEAN leaders perceive that the U.S. must rely on the PRC to deal more effectively with the Soviet Union." [Ref. 78] As such, Thailand has sought to diversify its sources of arms and equipment, accepting "gifts" and acquiring both western and, since 1985, Chinese arms.

The Thai's also appreciate that there appears to be no political strings attached to the PRC weapon sales. There has been no known requests for the positioning of Chinese advisors or technicians in Thailand. On the contrary, the PRC has been content with offering maintenance and operational training to Thai forces in the PRC.

As far as Thai political perceptions go, the PRC is neither east nor west. The improvement of political and military relations with the PRC, the USSR, and Indochina states fits in well with Thailand's shift toward a more diversified and independent foreign policy.

The increasing technological sophistication and expense of western arms has also caused the Thais to seek an alternative source of arms. Chinese arms sold to Thailand are of simple design facilitating operation and repair by Thai forces. The fact that many "high-tech" weapons have not performed as reliably in wartime as in peacetime conditions and their requirement for elaborate maintenance not possible in the chaos of war may be one determinant of why the Thai's are seeking simpler and more easily maintainable weapon systems. [Ref. 79]

Besides the military hardware that has been given to the Thai's at no cost, major items of Chinese equipment have been offered at attractive prices, with longer and more favorable terms of payment than similar western, particularly U.S., equipment. For example, the U.S. M48A5 MBT sells for approximately US\$1 million while the Chinese Type-69II MBT is being offered for US\$300,000. To complement bargain prices, after-sales service costs are also significantly lower than for comparable western items of equipment. The Chinese equipment currently being sold to Thailand also comes as a complete package. This is in sharp contrast to certain Western arms deals which have often included the basic system with training,

logistics, and maintenance as separate packages subject to further negotiation. [Ref. 80]

Service rivalry aside, Thai arms acquisitions must be viewed by lawmakers through an economically honed prism. PRC "friendship" prices have proved too inviting for the Thai military to pass up in light of continued calls for tightened military budgets. "The longer-term meaning of the arms supply relationship with the PRC indicates a Thai decision to keep a cap on its defense budget so as not to inhibit economic growth, while simultaneously developing a significant regional capability to control its air and maritime zones as well as its land borders. [Ref. 81]

The operational performance and adaptability of the Chinese equipment to the Thai battlefield is another plus. The U.S. M48A5 has been classified as too heavy for operation in the soft terrain of much of the Thai/Kampuchean border areas. [Ref. 82] Weighing in at 48,987kg, the M48A5 is 12,487kg heavier and exerts from .6-.5 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> more of ground pressure than the Chinese Type 69II [Ref. 83]. (See Appendix M). Senior Thai military sources have also stated that the Chinese artillery guns (Type 59 130mm) have longer ranges and are more suitable and capable of reaching their targets with greater accuracy than U.S. made 155mm artillery currently in Thai inventories [Ref. 84]. In an 18-day artillery battle in September-October 1986, the RTA's 130mm Chinese guns, in concert with U.S. Firefinder anti-artillery radars, were able to successfully hit four Vietnamese batteries and caused all eleven in the area to cease firing [Ref. 85].



Directly related to the above has been the Thai's desire to rapidly acquire the weapon systems necessary for the transformation of the armed forces from its traditional counterinsurgency role to a modern, mobile conventional force capable of defending the country against communist incursions from the east or from the west, if the events in Burma get messy. The shift in military doctrine from a focus on counterinsurgency to a conventional orientation is not unique to Thailand. "The ASEAN shift from a predominant concern with internal insurgencies to the establishment of conventional forces with limited power projection has occurred for several reasons: the atrophy of communist insurgent groups in the late 1970's; concern about the capabilities of the Soviet-supported Vietnamese; and the realization that to defend and exploit 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) requires air and maritime surveillance. [Ref. 86]

#### E. PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED SINO-THAI MILITARY RELATIONS

With respect to future participation in Southeast Asia, it is the PRC that may be in the best strategic position to play a lasting role. This is due to its geographic proximity, its traditional consideration of Southeast Asia as a historical sphere of influence, the quantity and quality of its population, its special assets in the region such as the overseas Chinese communities and the national communist parties, and its past power remembered and future power anticipated. While the Soviets and Vietnamese have been labeled by many as the most immediate

regional threats, it is a united, modernized, and powerful PRC that to many still constitutes the long-term political and economic challenge to Southeast Asia. [Ref. 87]

Although Vietnam will more than likely retain the largest armed force in Southeast Asia over the next 3-5 years, its withdrawal from Cambodia and improving relations with the PRC, the U.S. and other Southeast Asian nations will allow it to enact reductions in current military force levels. Economic conditions will force Vietnam to reduce its military spending and seek ways to alter its aggressive image in order to attract Western investment and other economic assistance. If Vietnamese economic conditions do not improve and are exacerbated by a withdrawal of Soviet support, it will face necessary reductions in the quality and quantity of its armed forces.

Many of the PRC's "strengths" are indeed sources of weakness mitigating against its return as the region's principal "suzerian". The overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia still have an affinity for the homeland of their ancestors but this rarely translates into a political or ideological attraction that could be used to the advantage of the communist government in Beijing. In addition, PRC links to regional communist parties "generates the suspicion that there may have been only a temporary lull, not a permanent decline, in PRC-inspired and PRC-supported insurgency activities in the region. The precept of Chou En-lai that 'When China speaks, she speaks for Asia' is no longer seriously

considered valid by the emerging Asian economic and political powers." [Ref. 88]

Rather than a regional political and economic role model, the PRC is viewed as an important but not overwhelmingly powerful regional actor in the increasingly multipolar character of regional dynamics. It is certainly not the premier strategic military power in the region and lags even further to the rear when considering its current economic status and the potential for internal political upheaval.

In the near term, Sino-Thai military relations can be expected to expand as Thailand continues the modernization of its ground, air, and naval forces. While the majority of the military equipment received to date has been for Thai ground forces, the RTM and RTAF will undoubtedly seek to purchase Chinese equipment if offered at the same "friendship" prices, under equitable payment terms, and with the same short lag time between order and delivery. The acquisition of increasing amounts of foreign exchange will enable the Chinese to increase its acquisition of western arms production technology thereby improving its product lines with little associated economic costs involved with innovation or research and development. [Ref. 89]

#### F. SUMMARY

In January 1990, it was reported that Thailand's Cabinet had finally approved the long-planned project to build a 180 kilometer "land bridge" across the Isthmus of Kra from Krabi on

the Andaman Sea to Khanom on the Gulf of Thailand. When completed, the land bridge will shorten shipping routes through the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok Straits. As part of the Southern Seaboard Industrial Project, this effort will also include the construction of deep sea port facilities, industrial districts, a transportation network, and undersea gas lines. This project will be about ten times larger than the Eastern Seaboard Industrial Project in Rayong Province. [Ref. 90]

The future success of this and other ambitious Thai economic projects will be partly dependent on the Thai military's capability to provide a safe climate for foreign investment. These projects will pose new and unique security requirements for the Thai military that it has not had to deal with in the past. This fact seems to indicate two likely outcomes: that the modernization programs of the Thai armed forces continue and that the military relationship between the PRC and Thailand will continue.

#### IV. EXPANDING SINO-THAI MILITARY RELATIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

##### A. OVERLAP OF SINO-U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Since the occupation of Cambodia by Vietnamese forces, stated Chinese and U.S. military assistance objectives in Thailand have overlapped. Points of overlap have included the desire to reduce Soviet influence in the region, the removal of Vietnamese forces and influence from Laos and Cambodia, support to resistance forces battling Vietnamese and Cambodian-government forces in Cambodia, achievement of a negotiated settlement to the Cambodian problem, and the provision of military assistance to the Thai Armed Forces to assist modernization efforts. (See Appendix N).

In the broad sense, the U.S. has been an active supporter of closer ties between Thailand and the PRC. The influence and presence of the PRC provides a counterbalance against Vietnamese hegemonism in Cambodia and Laos. It also provides a counterbalance to Soviet naval and air power in East and Southeast Asia. Although there is considerable anxiety among some ASEAN states concerning the PRC's true motives in strengthening ties with Thailand, "The PRC's size and existing capabilities act as a buffer to Soviet expansion, while its internal problems and military deficiencies prevent the PRC from projecting military power throughout the region and adopting an expansionist policy of its own." [Ref. 91]

Chinese involvement with Thailand might also enhance the security of Thailand as U.S. forces and deployment schedules are realigned due to increasing budget constraints or to meet challenges in the Persian Gulf and Latin America, as well as planned escalation in drug enforcement and interdiction operations. As discussed in some detail above, Chinese arms exports to Thailand have also contributed significantly to the rapid modernization of the Thai armed forces to meet its goals of a transformation from a counterinsurgency orientation to a modern and capable conventional force.

#### B. DIFFERENCES OF OPINION.

As with any situation, there are also possible disadvantages to closer Sino-Thai relations. One of the primary objectives of U.S. military assistance policies has been to improve Thai logistic capabilities. This was evident not only by the logistics MOU worked out in 1987 but also by the proposal and establishment of the Thai-U.S. War Reserve Stockpile. With the likelihood of some increase in the acquisition and use of Chinese-made weapons in the future, significant logistical problems could occur if Thai combat units employ a mixture of U.S. and Chinese-made weapons. This could be avoided if certain units were to use exclusively U.S. weapons while others were issued Chinese weapons. [Ref. 92]

A second objective of U.S. military assistance, increased interoperability of Thai and U.S. systems, could also be degraded by mixing incompatible Chinese or other third party systems in a

network operating with predominantly U.S. equipment. If the U.S. and the PRC should at some point seek to decrease diplomatic contacts or worse, permanently break relations, it is not clear as to the direction that Thai-PRC or Thai-U.S. relations would proceed. This will be especially true if U.S. troop withdrawals occur from the Philippines, Korea and Japan.

### C. SUMMARY

Thailand, in recent years, has increasingly sought greater independence in the formulation of its foreign policies to include relationships with communist countries including Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. "The PRC, the U.S., and some ASEAN countries are concerned that Thailand's economic and political openings to Indochina will make it easier for Hanoi to retain control in Cambodia; a policy which could significantly weaken close relations with the U.S., the PRC, and ASEAN." [Ref. 93] However this statement is not necessarily true.

Relations between Vietnam and Cambodia have never been very amicable. In their early southward expansion, the Vietnamese displaced the Khmers from much of their former territory; perhaps only the French colonial administration kept the Khmers from being completely overrun by the expansive Vietnamese. The result of this continuing conflict has been a tradition of animosity grounded mainly on Cambodian fear and distrust of all Vietnamese and any allies who join the Vietnamese in threatening Cambodia. On the other hand, the Cambodians have not historically trusted

the Thai but have been closer to the PRC. Prince Sihanouk remarked in 1961:

Westerners are always astonished that we Cambodians are not disturbed by our future in which China will play such a powerful role. But one should try to put himself in our place: in this jungle, which is the real world, should we, simple deer, interest ourselves in a dinosaur like China when we are more directly menaced, and have been for centuries, by the wolf and the tiger, who are Thailand and Vietnam. [Ref. 94]



## V. CONCLUSION

In an address before the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council and the Pacific Forum in Honolulu on 21 July 1988, George Shultz stated:

Thailand has been an ally for over 30 years and today remains the front-line state resisting Vietnamese aggression in Cambodia. In turn, America has supported Thailand diplomatically, militarily, and politically against security threats. The presence, even as I speak, of U.S. ground, naval, and air units on bilateral exercises in Thailand demonstrates that our commitment to Thailand's security remains firm. [Ref. 95]

Close political and military relationships have continued since that time and continue today, evidenced by U.S. force deployments to Thailand for exercises COBRA GOLD and THALAY THAI during July-September 1989 [Ref. 96.]. Although there have been and continue to be strains between the U.S. and Thailand regarding decreased levels of economic aid and security assistance, Thai policies toward Vietnamese refugees, Thai contacts with Indochinese communist states, and numerous trade issues, there is little reason to believe that closer Sino-Thai military relations alone will prove detrimental to historically close U.S.-Thai military relationships. However in the broad context of U.S.-Southeast Asian policies and resulting strategic political and military relations with the PRC, with Thailand, and with the member nations of ASEAN, the expanding Sino-Thai military relationship and its possible long term impact on regional stability should continue to be closely monitored.

In the future, it can be anticipated that Bangkok will be searching for some clearer indication of U.S. interests and intentions in the region. Of particular interest to the Thai's will be the status of the U.S. commitment embodied in the Manila Pact and the Rusk-Thanat Communique, the future of U.S. security presence in the region, and the prospect for continued U.S. economic aid and security assistance. What is increasingly clear to Bangkok and many other regional capitals is the realization that any alliance existing or made in the rapid course of change occurring in the world today will remain valid only so long as the national interests of the concerned parties remain unchanged politically, militarily, and economically.

An increasingly prominent topic evident in conference papers of noted Thai academics and former government officials, articles and editorials of Thai newspapers found in FBIS materials, and statements of Thai government officials, is that a U.S. military response to a regional threat to Thailand can more than likely be expected only if it is compatible with current U.S. interests, not those that existed when the security agreements were signed. In spite of Thai concerns, this would be the most responsible course of action for the U.S..

Thailand's "omnidirectional" trend in foreign policy relations with the two communist superpowers as well as regional communist governments may be a partial reflection and grudging admission of its belief that, in spite of statements made by every U.S. President to the contrary, its closest western ally

may not be prepared to go beyond diplomacy if the external or internal security of Thailand were threatened. Future Thai security will and should be dependent on more independent and autonomous policy decisions for itself with respect to regional as well as international actors. Working toward and participating in an atmosphere of regional, mutually beneficial interdependence through improved state-state, government-government, and people-people relationships may well be the best way for Thailand to further its own national interests and guarantee a place for itself as the true political and economic Suwanaphumbe (Golden Peninsula) throughout the next decade. I am sure Lord Palmerston would agree.

# APPENDIX A

## TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS-1949-1990

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>THAI</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>THAI-PRC</u>	<u>THAI-US</u>	<u>REGION(SEA)</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1949	Phibun(PM)	PRC formed				NATO
1950						Korean War
1951	November Coup			Melby-Erskine Joint State- Defense MDAP Survey Mission U.S.-Thai Economic & Technical Assistance Agreement U.S.-Thai Military Assistance Agreement	US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty	US-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty
1953					Cambodia declares independence from France	Korean Armistice US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty
1954		5 Principles of Coexistence			SEATO formed Manila Pact	Geneva Conference
1955	Prachathipatai (democracy) policy initiated by Phibun				Bandung Conference	Baghdad Pact US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty
1956		Hundred Flowers				Suez Crisis
1957	Phot(PM) Sarit Coup	PRC-Soviet Split			Communist insurgent activity commences in South Vietnam	

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>THAI</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>THAI-PRC</u>	<u>THAI-US</u>	<u>REGION(SEA)</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1958	Thanon(PM) Sarit(PM)	Great Leap Forward (58-61) Off-Shore Islands Incident		Mil/Econ aid to Thailand increased		
1959			Thailand severs relations with PRC			
1960				Military Assistance Agreement signed		OPEC formed U-2 Incident
1961					ASA formed	Bay of Pigs Berlin Wall
1962		War with India	VOPT begins broadcasts	US Troops to Thailand Rusk-Thanat Communique	Pathet Lao to Power in Laos MACV formed in South Vietnam Geneva Conference on Laos	Cuban Missile Crisis
1963	Thanom(PM)				Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation	
1964		Atom bomb tested	PRC declares support to CPT Thai Independence Movement formed in PRC (communist)	Joint covert ops conducted in Laos	Tonkin Gulf Incident	
1965	Armed conflict with CPT commences	Cultural Revolution (65-68) Border conflict with India	Thai Patrotic Front formed in PRC (communist)	Secret agreement signed to base US aircraft US commences bombing of NVN		
1966	Thai Navy personnel to Vietnam			32,000 US forces in Thailand		
1967	2000+ Thai combat troops to Vietnam				ASEAN formed	British "East of Suez" policy

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>THAI</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>THAI-PRC</u>	<u>THAI-US</u>	<u>REGION(SEA)</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1968					Tet Offensive	Pueblo seized by North Korea Soviets invade Czechoslovakia
1969	12,000 Thai combat troops to Vietnam	Ussuri River clashes with USSR			US bombing Cambodia begins US troop pullout from Vietnam commences	Nixon Doctrine Brezhnev Doctrine
1970	Govt decides to pull troops from Vietnam				Sihanouk ousted by Lon Nol	
1971	Supports PRC entry into UN November Coup	Admission to UN Kissinger visit			ASEAN Kuala Lumpur Declaration (ZOPFAN)	Pentagon Papers
1972		Nixon visit			NVN launches offensives across DMZ US commences bombing Hanoi, Haiphong	Watergate
1973	Sanya (PM) October student demonstrations/riots				US troops depart SVN	Paris Peace Accords signed
1974		Paracel Islands seized	Dip. relations estab.		Coalition govt. in Laos Conflict recommences in Vietnam US ends aid to Cambodia	
1975	Seni (PM) Kukrit (PM) Recognition of Khmer Rouge government in Phnom Penh	Dip. relations estab. with US, Philippines Aid pledged to Cambodia			Fall of Saigon Phnom Penh to Khmer Rouge (Year Zero) Pathet Lao in Vientiane support to Vietnam	Mayaguez

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>THAI</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>THAI-PRC</u>	<u>THAI-US</u>	<u>REGION(SEA)</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1976	Seni(PM) Thanin(PM) Diplomatic relations estab. with Cambodia Normalizations of relations with VN October Coup	Secret military aid agreement with Cambodia signed Death of Chou En Lai and Mao		U.S. military forces asked to leave Thailand	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation/Declaration of Concord (ASEAN) Socialist Republic of Vietnam established Sihanouk out-Democratic Kampuchea formed	
1977	Kriangsak(PM)	Four Modernizations			SEATO dissolved 25 year Treaty of Friendship signed (Laos-VN) VN-Cambodia sever relations	SRV joins UN Panama Canal Treaty VN invades Cambodia
1978		Normalization of relations with U.S. PRC-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship			Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (VN-USSR) VN into COMECON VN invades Cambodia	
1979	Kriangsak to Moscow	Invasion of VN Terminates 1950 Mutual Security Agreement w/USSR	VOPT ceases broadcasts PRC ceases support to CPT PRC-Thai secretly meet to discuss support to Cambodia resistance		VN supported govt installed in Phnom Penh Soviet Naval forces in Danang, Cam Ranh Bay	Soviets invade Afghanistan US-Taiwan Relations Act UN Resolution on Cambodia Shah of Iran ousted
1980	Norn Mark Moon incursions by VN Prem(PM)	Trial of Gang of Four	High level cultural exchanges between Thailand-PRC	U.S. airlift of emergency military supplies to Thailand		US abrogates US-Tawain Security Treaty
1981	April Fools Day Coup(Young Turks)	Announces end of aid to SE Asian insurgent movements				1st UN International Conference on Cambodia

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>THAI</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>THAI-PRC</u>	<u>THAI-US</u>	<u>REGION(SEA)</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1982					DK delegation recognized as legal rep. to UN	Falkland Is. War
1983	Soviet support to Pak Mai arm of CPT revealed				New US-Philippines Base Agreement	KAL incident US invades Grenada
1984			Thai-PRC military talks scheduled	US provides covert aid to Cambodian resistance	Brunei joins ASEAN Singapore-PRC providing arms to Cambodian resistance VN begins dry season offensive in Cambodia-crosses into Thailand	
1985	Thai-VN troops clash on Thai-Cambodian border 2nd Young Turks Coup		Thailand receives first PRC arms and military equipment		DMZ established along Thai-Cambodian border Yellow Rain Controversy	
1986					KPNLF-ANS form military alliance Marcos ousted in Philippines	Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech US-Libya raid
1987			Thailand purchases PRC military equipment	War Reserve Stockpile Agreement signed		Sino-Soviet talks Toshiba-Kongsberg incident
1988	Prem visit to Moscow Chatichai(PM)	Clash with VN in Spratleys			VN withdraws 50,000 troops from Cambodia	Soviets out of Afghanistan Gorbachev's Krasnoyarsk speech Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM) Seoul Olympics



<u>YEAR</u>	<u>THAI</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>THAI-PRC</u>	<u>THAI-US</u>	<u>REGION(SEA)</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1989		Tienamen Square PRC-Soviet Summit				
1990						Splintering of Eastern Europe Gorbachev- Reagan Summit

## APPENDIX B

### MAJOR MILITARY SUPPLIERS TO THAILAND, 1964-1988 (Million current US\$ and %)

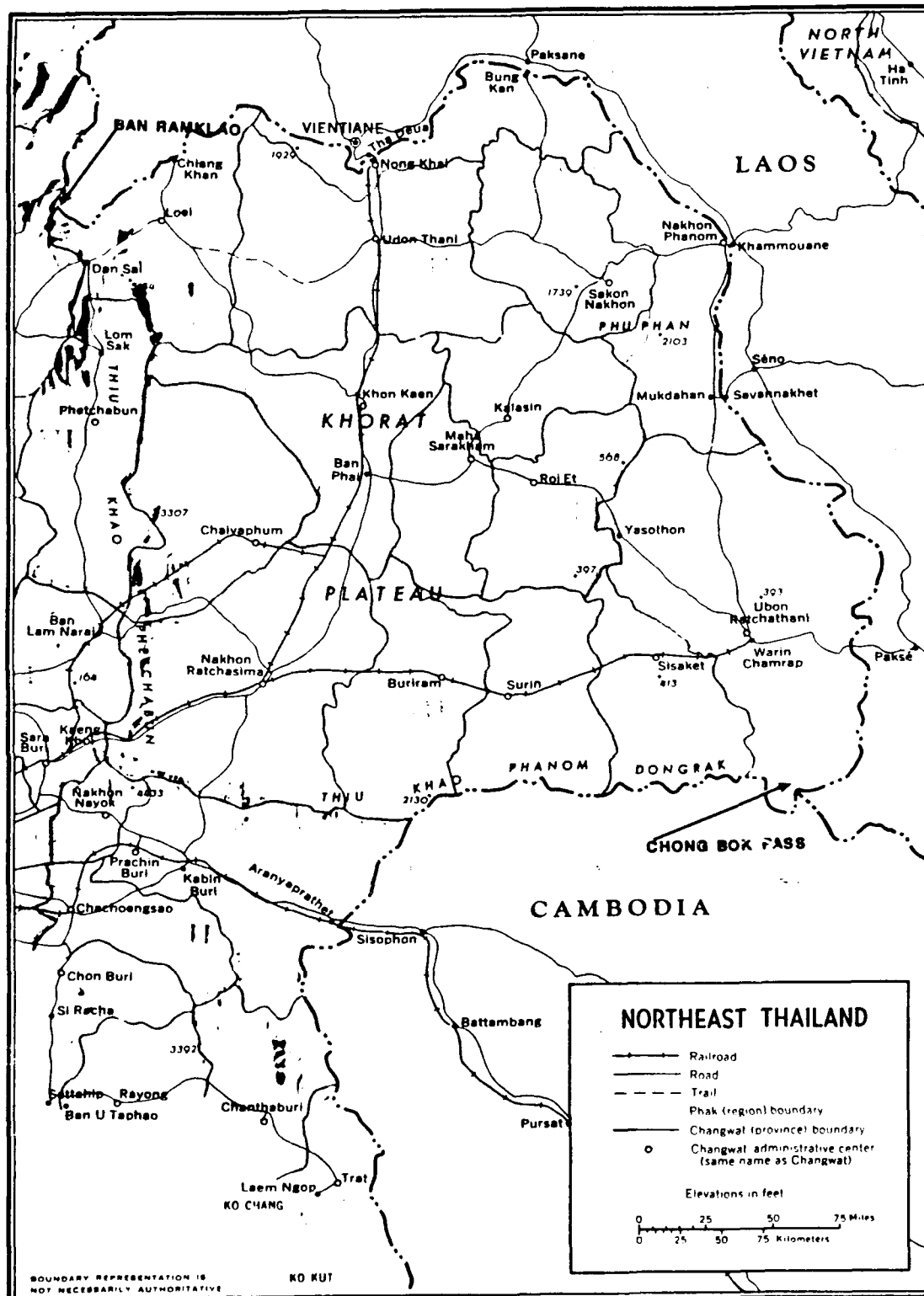
SUPPLIER	TOTALS	PERCENTAGE
Fiscal Years 1964-1973		
US	437	95.8
UK	13	2.9
FRG	6	1.3
Fiscal Years 1974-1978		
US	260	78.8
FRG	5	1.5
Canada	5	1.5
Other	60	18.2
Fiscal Years 1979-1983		
US	850	64.4
Italy	230	17.4
UK	70	5.3
France	10	0.8
Other	160	12.1
Fiscal Years 1983-1987		
US	800	68.1
PRC(1)	90	7.7
Italy	110	9.4
FRG	40	3.4
UK	10	0.8
France	5	0.4
Other(2)	120	10.2

**Notes:**

1. Percentage of PRC arms sales to Thailand had risen substantially in light of Thai purchases in 1987-89.
2. Other military suppliers to Thailand include Australia, Belgium, Israel, the ROK, and Singapore

**Sources:** "Military Dependency: Thailand and the Philippines," Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1988), p. 436; World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1988, p. 112.

# APPENDIX C LOCATION OF BAN RAMKLAO AND CHONG BOK PASS



57622 12 67

## APPENDIX D

### EXCERPTS FROM THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TREATY (MANILA PACT), 8 SEPTEMBER 1954

The Parties to this Treaty (Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom, the United States),

Recognizing the sovereign equality of all the Parties,

Reiterating their faith in the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments,

Reaffirming that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, they uphold the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and declaring that they will earnestly strive by every peaceful means to promote self-government and to secure the independence of all countries whose peoples desire it and are able to undertake its responsibilities,

Desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace and freedom and to uphold the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, and to promote the economic well-being and development of all peoples in the treaty area,

Intending to declare publicly and formally their sense of unity, so that any potential aggressor will appreciate that the Parties stand together in the area, and

Desiring further to coordinate their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security,

Therefore agree as follows:

Article IV. 1. Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the Parties or against any State or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. Measures taken under this paragraph shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations.

2. If, in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the

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

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

Article VIII. As used in this Treaty, the "treaty area" is the general area of Southeast Asia, including also the entire territories of the Asian Parties, and the general areas of the Southwest Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north latitude. The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, amend this Article to include within the treaty area the territory of any State acceding to this Treaty in accordance with Article VII or otherwise to change the treaty area.

Article X. This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely, but any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, which shall inform the governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.

#### Understanding of the United States of America

The United States of America in executing the present Treaty does so with the understanding that its recognition of the effect of aggression and armed attack and its agreement with reference thereto in Article IV, paragraph 1, apply only to communist aggression but affirms that in the event of other aggression or armed attack it will consult under the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 2.

In witness whereof, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed this Treaty.

Done at Manila, this eighth day of September, 1954.

Source: Maki, John M. Conflict and Tension in the Far East: Key Documents, 1894-1960, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961), pp. 228-231.

## APPENDIX E

TEXT OF RUSK-THANAT COMMUNIQUE, 6 MARCH 1962  
U.S. Department of State Press Release 145 dated March 6, 1962

The Foreign Minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman, and the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, met on several occasions during the past few days for discussions on the current situation in Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and the Security of 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 interest 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.

The Foreign Minister and Secretary of State reviewed the close association of Thailand and the United States in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and agreed that such association is an effective deterrent to direct Communist aggression against Thailand. They agreed that the Treaty provides the basis for the signatories collectively to assist Thailand in case of Communist armed attack against that country. The Secretary of State assured the Foreign Minister that in the event of such aggression, the United States intends to give full effect to its obligations under the Treaty to act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. The Secretary of State reaffirmed that this obligation of the United States does not depend upon the prior agreement of all other parties to the Treaty, since this Treaty obligation is individual as well as collective.

In reviewing measures to meet indirect aggression, the Secretary of State stated that the United States regards its commitments to Thailand under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and under its bilateral economic and military assistance agreements with Thailand as providing an important basis for United States actions to help Thailand meet indirect aggression. In this connection the Secretary reviewed with the Foreign Minister the actions being taken by the United States to assist the Republic of Vietnam to meet the threat of indirect aggression.

The Foreign Minister assured the Secretary of State of the determination of the Government of Thailand to meet the threat of indirect aggression by pursuing vigorously measures for the economic and social welfare and the safety of its people.

The situation in Laos was reviewed in detail and full agreement was reached on the necessity for the stability of Southeast Asia, of achieving a free, independent and truly neutral Laos.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State reviewed the mutual efforts of their governments to increase the capabilities and readiness of the Thai armed forces to defend the Kingdom. They noted also that the United States is making a significant contribution to this effort and that the United States intends to accelerate future deliveries to the greatest extent possible. The Secretary and the Foreign Minister also took note of the work of the Joint Thai-United States Committee which has been established in Bangkok to assure effective cooperation in social, economic, and military measures to increase Thailand's national capabilities. They agreed that this Joint Committee and its subcommittees should continue to work toward the most effective utilization of Thailand's resources and those provided by the United States to promote Thailand's development and security.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary were in full agreement that continued economic and social progress is essential to the stability of Thailand. They reviewed Thailand's impressive economic and social progress and the Thai Government's plans to accelerate development, particularly Thailand's continuing determination fully to utilize its own resources in moving toward its development goals.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State also discussed the desirability of an early conclusion of a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation between the two countries which would bring into accord with current conditions the existing treaty of 1937.

Source: Department of State Bulletin, "The Realities of Foreign Policy," remarks by Secretary Rusk, Vol. XLVI, No. 1187 (March 26, 1962), pp. 498-499.

## APPENDIX F

### EXCERPTS FROM UNOFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S MEETING WITH REPORTERS, GUAM OFFICERS CLUB, 25 JULY 1969

The United States is going to be facing, [Nixon] hoped before too long--no one can say how long, but before too long--a major decision. What will be its role in Asia and in the Pacific after the end of the war in Vietnam? We will be facing that decision, but also the Asian nations will be wondering about what that decision is, Mr. Nixon said.

When [Nixon] talked to Prime Minister John G. Gorton, for example, he indicated that in the conversations that he had with a number of Asian leaders, they all wondered whether the United States, because of its frustration over the war in Vietnam, because of its earlier frustration over the war in Korea, whether the United States would continue to play a significant role in Asia or whether the United States, like the French before, and then the British, and, of course, the Dutch--whether it would withdraw from the Pacific and play a minor role.

Mr. Nixon said he thinks that one of the weaknesses in American foreign policy is that too often we react rather precipitously to events as they occur. We fail to have the perspective and the long range view that is essential for a policy that will be viable.

As we look at Asia today, the President observed, we see that the major world power that adopts a very aggressive attitude and a belligerent attitude in its foreign policy, Communist China, of course, is in Asia, and we find that the two minor world powers--minor, although they do have significant strength as we have learned--that most greatly threaten the peace of the world, that adopt the most belligerent foreign policy, are in Asia--North Korea and, of course, North Vietnam.

When we consider those factors, we realize that if we are thinking down the road--not just four or five years, but 10, 15 or 20--that if we are going to have peace in the world, that potentially the greatest threat to that peace will be in the Pacific, the President said.

The President was asked, on the question of United States military relationships in Asia, a hypothetical question: If a leader of one of the countries with which we have had close military relationships, either through SEATO or in Vietnam, should say, "Well, you are pulling out of Vietnam with your troops. We can read the newspapers. How can we know you will remain to play a significant role as you say you wish to do in the security arrangements in Europe?" What kind of approach would [Nixon] take to that question?



The President replied that he had indicated that the answer to that question was not an easy one--not easy because we would be greatly tempted when that question is put to us to indicate that if any nation desires the assistance of the United States militarily in order to meet an internal or external threat we will provide it.

However, he said he believed that the time had come when the United States, in its relations with all of its Asian friends, should be quite emphatic on two points: one, that we would keep our treaty commitments; our treaty commitments, for example, with Thailand under SEATO. And two, that as far as the problems of international security are concerned, as far as the problems of military defense, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons, that the United States was going to encourage and had a right to expect that this problem would be increasingly handled by, and the responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves.

The President was asked whether he anticipates in that connection during his talks with the Asian leaders he is going to have to spend any significant amount of time perhaps convincing them that his plan for withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam will pose no threat to their security.

The President replied that one of the reasons for this trip is to leave no doubt in the minds of the leaders of non-Communist Asia that the United States is committed to a policy in the Pacific--a policy not of intervention but one that certainly rules out withdrawal, and regardless of what happens in Vietnam that we intend to continue to play a role in Asia to the extent that Asian nations, bilaterally and collectively, desire us to play a role.

The President said he could put it this way: he recalled in 1964 some advice that he got from Mohammed Ayub Khan, who was then the President of Pakistan. This was before the United States had any significant troop commitment in Vietnam. Mr. Nixon asked him what his view was as to what our role should be. He said: "Well, the role of the United States in Vietnam or the Philippines, or Thailand, or any of these countries which have internal subversion is to help them fight the war but not fight the war for them." That, of course, is a good general principle, one which we would hope would be our policy generally throughout the world, the President said.

We of course have the SEATO Treaty. We will keep our commitments under that treaty. We had the Rusk-Thanat communique, which simply spelled out the treaty. We will, of course, keep our commitments set forth there as well, Mr. Nixon said.

## APPENDIX G

### EXCERPT FROM PRESIDENT NIXON'S "THE PURSUIT OF PEACE IN VIETNAM", TELEVISION AND RADIO ADDRESS, NOVEMBER 3, 1969

#### New Directions in U.S. Foreign Policy

Now let me turn, however, to a more encouraging report on another front.

At the time we launched our search for peace, I recognized we might not succeed in bringing an end to the war through negotiations.

I therefore put into effect another plan to bring peace—a plan which will bring the war to an end regardless of what happens on the negotiating front. It is in line with a major shift in U.S. foreign policy which I described in my press conference at Guam on July 25.

Let me briefly explain what has been described as the Nixon doctrine—a policy which not only will help end the war in Viet-Nam but which is an essential element of our program to prevent future Viet-Nams.

We Americans are a do-it-yourself people. We are an impatient people. Instead of teaching someone else to do a job, we like to do it ourselves. And this trait has been carried over into our foreign policy.

In Korea and again in Viet-Nam, the United States furnished most of the money, most of the arms, and most of the men to help the people of those countries defend their freedom against Communist aggression.

Before any American troops were committed to Viet-Nam, a leader of another Asian country expressed this opinion to me when I was traveling in Asia as a private citizen. He said: "When you are trying to assist another nation defend its freedom, U.S. policy should be to help them fight the war, but not to fight the war for them."

Well, in accordance with this wise counsel, I laid down in Guam three principles as guidelines for future American policy toward Asia:

—First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.

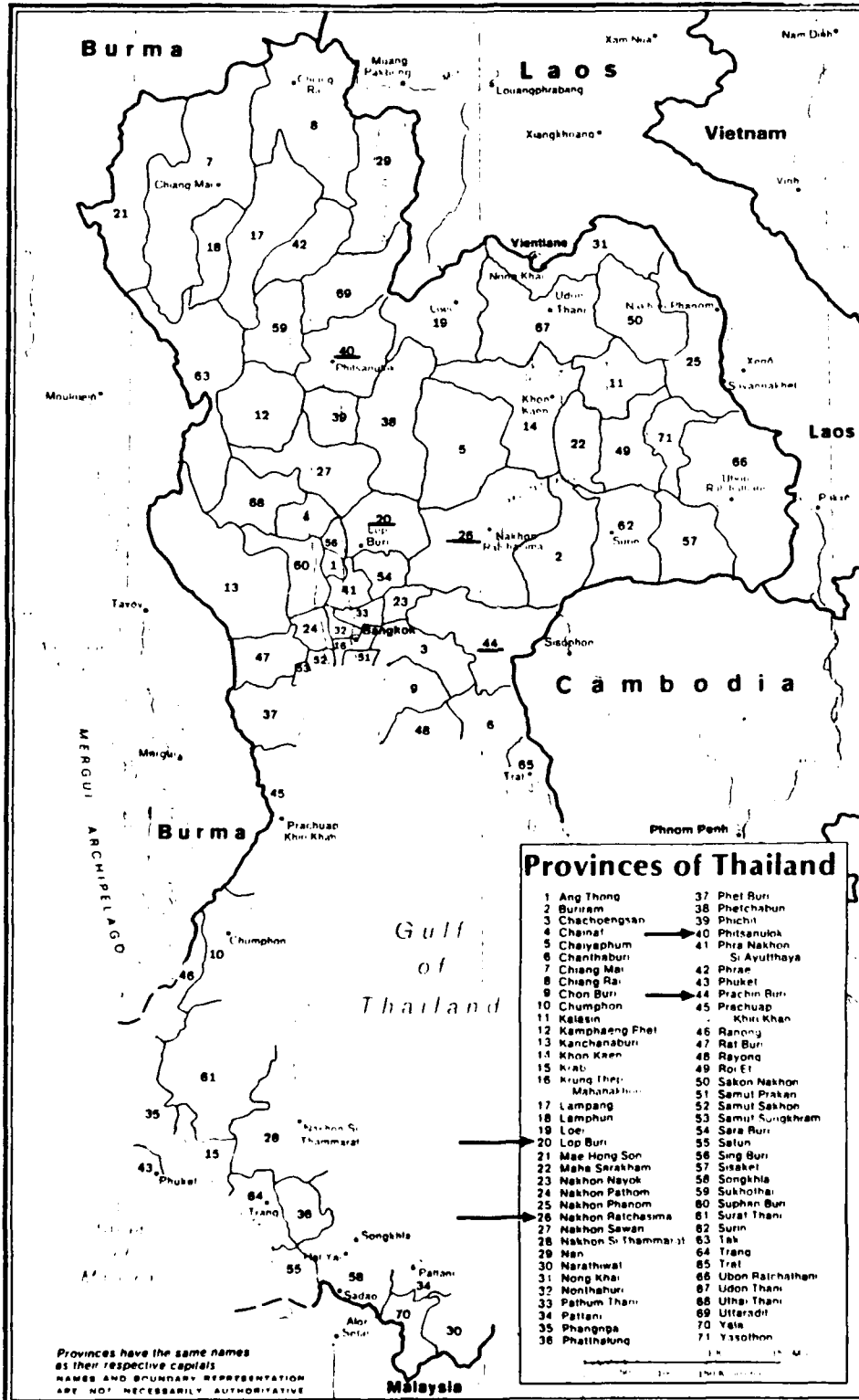
-Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

-Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defenses.

After I announced this policy, I found that the leaders of the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, and other nations which might be threatened by Communist aggression welcomed this new direction in American foreign policy.

# APPENDIX H

## THAILAND'S ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



# APPENDIX I

## U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO THAILAND, FY 1980-89 (Dollars in Thousands)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
FMS Agreements(1)	216324	133175	172066	189734	102380	623085	110213	195945	173327	77051
FMS Deliveries	201479	251739	140286	160129	161731	117948	116560	95394	313688	213952
FMS Financing Program	36000	53400	74700	76000	94000	95000	80000	0	23500	0
Commercial Exports Licenced Under Arms Export Control Act	13796	13526	10000	5860	18180	23244	12962	197893	44271	31825
MAP Merger Funds(2)	0	0	4500	14000	5000	5000	4785	50000	20000	22000
MAP	11578	313	133	884	5	0	0	0	0	0
MAP Deliveries/Expenditures	31866	2874	3388	2285	917	234	162	62	103	0
IMET(3)	786	779	1420	1700	2205	2325	2203	2350	2157	2191
Total	511829	455806	406493	450592	384418	866836	326885	541644	577046	347019

### Notes:

1. FMS-Foreign Military Sales
2. MAP-Military Assistance Program (includes Military Assistance funded and Section 506/excludes training)
3. IMET-International Military Education and Training (includes Military Assistance Service funded and Section 506)

# APPENDIX J

## MAJOR THAI ARMS ARRANGEMENTS WITH U.S.-PRC (1985-1989)

### KEY

#### Weapon/Weapon System

#### Status

AAA	Anti-Aircraft Artillery	CA	Contract Announced
APC	Armored Personnel Carrier	CR	Contract Reported
Arty	Artillery	CS	Contract Signed
Helo	Helicopter	DE	Delivered, Delivery Begun
LT	Light Tank	OD	Ordered (On Order or before Congress(US))
		RD	Reported Delivery
		RN	Reported Negotiations

SOURCE	WEAPON/WEAPON SYSTEM	QUANTITY	STATUS
PRC	F-7 Aircraft (Recce)		RN (84)
U.S.	SANDERS Low Altitude Detection System		OD (Feb 85)
U.S.	Unspecified APC/Arty		DE (Mar 85)
PRC	Model 59 MBT	24	RD (Mar 85)
PRC	37 MM AAA	12	RD (Mar 85)
PRC	Type 59 130mm Artillery	18	RD (Mar 85)
U.S.	F-16 Aircraft	12	OD (Apr 85)
U.S.	S-2 Aircraft	18-20	CR (May 85)
U.S.	AN/TPQ 37 Radar	2	OD (Jun 85)
U.S.	AN/TPS 70	1	RN (Jun 85)
U.S.	HUD for F-5E/F Aircraft	39	OD (Apr 86)
U.S.	AH-1 TOW Helicopters	4	OD (Jul 86)
U.S.	M998 Vehicles	150	CR (Oct 86)
U.S.	F-16 AN/APG 66 Radar		CA (Feb 87)
U.S.	Missile Corvette	1	DE (Feb 87)
PRC	Type 69II MBT	30	CR (Mar 87)
U.S.	M48A5 MBT		OD (May 87)
PRC	YW-531H APC	400	CS (May 87)
PRC	37mm AAA	30	CA (May 87)
PRC	57mm AAA	25	OD (May 87)
PRC	ARV 653	16	OD (May 87)
PRC	Model 84 Bridgelayers	4	OD (May 87)
U.S.	F-16 Aircraft	6	OD (Jul 87)
U.S.	Learjet 34A	3	CR (Aug 87)
U.S.	Commando Stingray LT	106	CR (Oct 87)
U.S.	M44A2 2 1/2 ton Trucks	188	CR (Dec 87)
	1/2 ton Trucks	161	

PRC	130 MM Ammunition		CA (Apr 88)
PRC	Minesweepers	9	CA (Apr 88)
PRC	SAM HN-5 Missile		CA (Apr 88)
	Guidance System		
PRC	Radar Guidance System		CA (Apr 88)
PRC	YW-531H APC	360	OD (Apr 88)
PRC	Type 59 130mm Arty	38	OD (Apr 88)
PRC	Type 69II MBT	23	OD (May 88)
U.S.	414-100 Chinook Helo,	3	OD (Aug 88)
	Spare Parts		
PRC	Frigates	4	CR (Sep 88)
PRC	P74 AAA	4	OD (Sep 88)
U.S.	F-5E Aircraft	10	OD (Oct 88)
PRC	Type 63Mk2 APC	400	OD (Nov 88)
PRC	Type 69II MBT	30	OD (Nov 88)
PRC	37mm AAA	24	DE (Nov 88)
PRC	Tracked APC	300	DE (Nov 88)
PRC	Type 69 MBT	30	DE (Nov 88)
U.S.	TH-300C Helo,	12	DE (Feb 89)
	Spare Parts, Support		
U.S.	CGT Stingray LT	106	DE (Jun 89)
U.S.	M48A5	40	OD (Jun 89)
PRC	Type 69II MBT	53	OD (Jun 89)
PRC	YW-531 APC	410	OD (Jun 89)
PRC	T63Mk2 APC	360	OD (Jun 89)
PRC	Frigates	2	OD (Oct 89)
PRC	Ammunition 57mm, 100mm		CS (Jul 90)
	13mm		
U.S.	M48A5/M60A1 MBT	350/160	RN (Jul 90)
U.S.	LH-1N	10	CS (Jul 90)
U.S.	AH-1F	4	OD (Jul 90)

(Note: Compiled from multiple editions of Defense and Foreign Affairs dating from May 1985 through June 1989.)

# APPENDIX K

## MAJOR ITEMS OF PRC MILITARY EQUIPMENT ORDERED, DELIVERED, AND ON ORDER(1) May 1990

<u>Equipment Ordered</u>				
Tanks	APC	AAA	Artillery	Naval Ships
30 T-69II (100mm)	810 YW-531H	25 57mm	38 Type 59 130mm	4 Jianghu-class Frigates
106 T-69II (105mm)	760 Type63Mk2	24 37mm		2 Type 25T Frigates
16 ARV 653				9 Minesweepers
4 Model 84 Bridgelayers				

### Equipment Delivered

72 T-69II	400 YW-531H	24 57mm	18 Type 59 130mm
16 ARV 653		36 37mm	
4 Model 84 Bridgelayers			

### Equipment On Order

64 T-69II	770 YW-531H		20 Type 59 130mm
	760 Type63Mk2		

### Notes:

1. Excludes equipment provided by the PRC to Thailand at no cost

Source: Condensed from multiple sources referenced in Part IV of the Text.



# APPENDIX L

## THAI MOTIVES FOR ACCEPTING CHINESE MILITARY AID

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS RELATING TO THAI CHOICE OF SUPPLIER:	TIME PERIOD			
	1970-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990
1. OFFERS MOST FAVORABLE COST AND PAYMENT TERMS FOR ARMS AND EQUIPMENT	US	US	US	PRC
2. SECURITY GUARANTOR AGAINST REGIONAL COMMUNIST AGGRESSION	US	US	US	PRC
3. RELATIONSHIP OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER DIVERSIFY SOURCE OF ARMS AND EQUIPMENT	US	US	US	US/PRC
4. CONFIDENCE THAT SUPPLIER WILL RESPOND MILITARILY TO REGIONAL EXTERNAL THREAT	US	US		PRC
5. SUITABILITY OF SOURCE EQUIPMENT TO THAI MILITARY REQUIREMENTS	US	US	US/PRC	US/PRC
6. ABILITY TO DELIVER ARMS AND EQUIPMENT EXPEDITIOUSLY AFTER ORDER	US	US	PRC	PRC
7. AFTER-SALE SUPPORT, SPARE PARTS, ETC.	US	US		PRC
8. WILLINGNESS TO MEET GROWING DEFENSE NEEDS (MODERNIZATION OF FORCES)	US	US	US/PRC	US/PRC
9. WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR JOINT VENTURES IN WPNS PRODUCTION				PRC
10. ABILITY TO INFLUENCE DOMINANT BRANCH OF THAI ARMED FORCES TO PURCHASE WEAPONS	US	US	US	PRC

EFFECTS OF THAI/PRC MILITARY RELATIONSHIP  
ON THAI RELATIONS WITH:

	1970-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995
U.S.			NEG.	+	+
PRC			+	+	+
USSR			-	-	-
ASEAN					
MALAYSIA			-	-	-
INDONESIA			-	-	-
SINGAPORE			+	+	+
PHILIPPINES			NEG.	NEG.	NEG.
BRUNEI			NEG.	NEG.	NEG.

KEY

U.S	+	POSITIVE EFFECT
PRC	-	NEGATIVE EFFECT
	NEG	NEGLIGIBLE EFFECT

## APPENDIX M

### COMPARISON OF MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES OF MAIN BATTLE TANKS (MBT)- US M48A5 VS. PRC TYPE 69II

CHARACTERISTICS	M48A5	TYPE 69II	ADVANTAGE
Fire Power:			
Main Gun(mm)	105	100/105	US/Parity
Stored Load	54	40	US
Loading Process	Manual	Manual	Parity
Fire Control	Range Finder Digital Computer	Tank Simplified Fire Control System(TSFCS)	Parity
Gunner Sighting Device:			
Day	Direct View	Direct View	Parity
Night	Active Infra Red	Active Infra Red	Parity
Survivability:			
Armor Protection	Homogenous Steel	Homogenous Steel	Parity
Front Turret(mm)	110	203	PRC
Hull Front(mm)	120	97	US
NBC Protection	Individual	Individual	Parity
Mobility:			
Engine(hp)	Diesel, 750	Diesel, 580	US
Transmission	Auto, 2F, 1R		
Weight(kg)	48,987	37,000	PRC
Power to Weight Ratio(hp/tonne)	15.89	15.89	Parity
Max Range(km)	500	420-440	US
Road Speed(kph)	48	50	PRC

Sources: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Years 1986-87 (Part 5), 99th Congress, 1st Session, 1986, p. 441; "Chinese Type 69 II MBT-Details Revealed," Janes Defense Weekly, Vol. 5, No. 5 (8 Feb. 1986), pp. 205-7.

## APPENDIX N

### COMPARISON OF STATED U.S./PRC SECURITY ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES

#### U.S. Security Assistance Objectives:

1. Support (military) acquisitions to enhance capabilities for defense against major Vietnamese infantry, artillery, and armor incursions and other aggression
2. Encourage enhanced tactical mobility for ground forces and sustainability in combat for all forces
3. Encourage expansion of Naval capabilities beyond coastal
4. Create an air defense system composed of radar integrated with C3 that is interoperable with U.S. systems
5. Help sustain the ability of the Thai government to carry out policies toward Indochinese refugees.(58)

#### The PRC's "Three Principles of Arms Sales":

1. Strengthening of legitimate self-defense capabilities of the countries concerned
2. The safeguarding and promotion of peace, security, and stability in the region
3. The avoidance of the use of military sales as a means of interference in the internal affairs of other nations.(59)

Sources: U.S. Congress, Senate, Congressional Presentation for Security Assistance Programs FY-89, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988), p. 346; Eden Y. Woon, "Chinese Arms Sales and U.S.-China Military Relations," Asia Survey, Vol. 29, No. 6 (June 1989), p. 610.

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