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## Thailand's Response to the Cambodian Genocide

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### Introduction

In January 1999, Cambodian Prime Minister Hen Sen proposed that the Khmer Rouge's foreign backers be brought to justice. His proposal was an act of retaliation against the international community who condemned his warm welcome of two defected Khmer Rouge leaders, Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea. His remark prompted the Thai leaders to distance the country from its past involvement with the murderous regime. The then Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai asserted that Thailand was not involved and had even objected and disagreed with the genocide. He reiterated that a trial was a matter for Cambodia alone. But the Cambodian problem was rarely regarded by its neighbors as an internal affair. The rise of the communist regime in Cambodia, together with those in Laos and Vietnam in 1975, was perceived as a threat for Thailand. But ironically, soon after its fall, the Khmer Rouge became Thailand's military ally in fighting against the Vietnamese and the new Cambodian regime. Later on, a new dimension was added to the relationship between Thailand and the Khmer Rouge. Though a policy of turning Indochina from a battlefield into a market place of the Chatichai Choonhavan government was initially aimed at breaking a decade-long impasse of the Cambodian conflict, the Thais nevertheless enjoyed having the Khmer Rouge as their business partner. This chapter examines the development of Thailand's policy towards the genocidal regime between 1975 and the mid 1990s. And as the friendly relationship with the regime was widely supported by the Thais, this chapter also sheds light on the perspectives of various Thai political groups on the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge.

### The Khmer Rouge as a Threat

Khmer Rouge rule began as Thailand was going through a transitional period. The civilian governments after the 14 October 1973 revolution had to cope with expansive communist power. The intense struggle between the left and the right subsequently led to a massacre of students and the military coup

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of 6 October 1976. Between 1973 and 1976, there were rapid shifts of Thailand's foreign policy toward its neighbors from anti-communism to co-existence and then back to anti-communism again.

Since Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat took power in 1958, Thailand had served as a launching ground for the United States to conduct covert operations against the communist movements in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. The U.S. failure in the Vietnam War as well as Washington's shift of focus to the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America forced Washington to abandon its full involvement in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the Thai military was facing serious political storms from both domestic and regional political changes. After the October 14 uprising, the new civilian governments were forced to adopt two interrelated policies: the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Thailand and the establishment of normal relations with the communist countries.<sup>1</sup> The withdrawal of the U.S. bases in Thailand became one of the top campaign issues for the leading student organization, the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT), after 1973.<sup>2</sup> Soon after the royally appointed Prime Minister Sanya Dhammasakti (October 1973 - February 1975) had taken office, his government announced that the U.S. was no longer allowed to use the air bases in Thailand to support its war in Indochina. The successive governments of M.R. Seni Pramoj (February - March 1975 and April - October 1976), and his younger brother M.R. Kukrit Promoj (March 1975 - April 1976) also adopted the same policy. The Sanya administration also tried to establish relations with Vietnam. Later, Kukrit announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with China, visiting Beijing on July 1, 1975.

In fact, the governments of Seni and Kukrit, which comprised conservative and right wing politicians, were initially reluctant to force the U.S. troops from Thailand, particularly at the time of the rapid expansion of both domestic and regional communism. They believed Thailand would be the next domino to fall if the Khmer Rouge-Sihanouk group came to power in Cambodia. At the beginning of his tenure of office in February 1975, Seni primarily stressed the necessity of maintaining U.S. troops in Thailand, reasoning that it was Thailand who had invited the U.S. troops and that Thailand should, therefore, give them time for withdrawal.<sup>3</sup> As the situation in Phnom Penh entered the terminal period, the Thai Army Commander General Kris Sivara expressed strong opposition to the calls for immediate withdrawal of the U.S. troops.<sup>4</sup>

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The short-lived Seni government, which failed to obtain parliamentary approval, was succeeded by that of his brother Kukrit in mid-March 1975. Though the Kukrit administration saw a necessity to revise the country's foreign policy toward its communist neighbors, it was apparently reluctant to implement this option, and that resulted in its contradictory policy toward the Khmer Rouge.

In March 1975, as the anti-U.S. campaign was continuing and calls for revising Thailand's policy toward its neighbors were getting louder, the Thai public learned that the U.S. was freely using the U-Tapao airbase in southeastern Thailand to airlift arms and ammunition to the falling Lon Nol government. The U.S. also employed trucks from the Thai state enterprise, Express Transport Organization (ETO), to transport arms across the border at Aranyaprathet to the Lon Nol forces in Battambang. After this U.S. operation was exposed to the public, Kukrit immediately told the press that he had ordered the suspension of the use of the base for shipping arms to Cambodia and that America had no right to do this. However, one week later the Thai media revealed that the operation across the Aranyaprathet-Poipet was still underway. Kukrit claimed that he had no knowledge of the arms shipment.<sup>5</sup> Obviously, the arms shipments went on with cooperation from the Thai military as the customs official told the press that the ETO trucks to Cambodia had the supreme military command office's immunity, and they were not subjected to any searches. Besides, the customs office did not receive an order either from the military or the government to stop the arms transport.<sup>6</sup>

Another move to save the Lon Nol regime came from Kukrit's Foreign Minister Major General Chatichai Choonhavan. On the eve of the Khmer Rouge's seizure of Phnom Penh, Chatichai announced that the Thai government was willing to offer Thailand as a site for peace negotiations between the Lon Nol government and the Khmer Rouge.<sup>7</sup> Despite a warning from Prince Norodom Sihanouk, nominal president of the National United Front of Cambodia (NUFC), that Thailand should stop playing the U.S. henchman and interfering in Cambodian affairs, Chatichai did not want to give up this effort. He announced that he had already arranged a meeting between Lon Nol's Prime Minister Long Boret and a Khmer Rouge representative in Bangkok. Chatichai's claim was soon dismissed by both Boret and the Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan. Sihanouk lashed out at the Thai foreign minister's initiative as "a figment of the too-fertile imagination of the Thai authorities."<sup>8</sup>

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It is intriguing that Kukrit pretended that he had no knowledge of what his cabinet members were doing. Some scholars have suggested that a contradictory policy toward Cambodia was the result of the political right wing and military groups while the civilian governments tended to favor a rapprochement policy and the withdrawal of U.S. troops.<sup>9</sup> Apart from his background as a royalist and a long-term anti-communist leader, some evidence suggests that Kukrit himself shared the idea of the leaders of military factions in his government. While Kukrit always stressed that his government did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of neighboring countries, he urged Washington on the eve of the Khmer Rouge victory that South Vietnam and Cambodia would not be able to survive if they did not receive enough aid. If these two states fell, the political situation in the region would change, including Thailand's foreign policy.<sup>10</sup> His conservative daily newspaper, Siam Rath, was one of a few presses in 1975 opposing the calls for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Thailand. The paper argued that the deteriorating situation in Cambodia had made conditions along the Thai-Cambodian border more dangerous.<sup>11</sup>

When it became clear that there would be no U.S. military intervention in Indochina, the Thai leaders realized that they had to try to live with communist neighbors. The Kukrit government soon moved toward rapprochement by offering the Khmer Rouge regime recognition on 18 April.<sup>12</sup>

However, it was necessary for Thailand to maintain the rebel armed forces along the borders to destabilize the communist regimes. Some may argue that the Thai civilian governments had limited power over security and border issues. But secret support for guerilla forces had never created real conflict between the civilian faction in the governments and the armed forces, in contrast to other domestic issues. Whether the civilian governments had chosen to turn a blind eye, or secretly approved such clandestine operations, does not make much difference. This two-faced diplomacy toward neighboring countries has been common practice for Thai governments.

The rapprochement with Democratic Kampuchea by the Kukrit administration was soon affirmed by the so-called Mayaguez incident. On 12 May 1975, Khmer Rouge seized and charged an American cargo ship named the SS Mayaguez with trespassing in its waters. The Ford administration demanded the unconditional release of the ship and its crew of 39. Washington immediately ordered its Seventh Fleet to sail for the Gulf of Siam the next day. The Kukrit government had informed the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Bangkok that the Thai government would not permit the Americans to use the air bases in

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Thailand in the Mayaguez dispute. But the next day, Thailand saw 1,100 U.S. marines from Okinawa landing at the U-Tapao air base. The U.S. forces launched heavy attacks on the Cambodian port at Kampong Som and on Tang Island. Finally, the Mayaguez was released at the end of 14 May. The Thai government sent a protest note to the U.S. Embassy, charging the Americans with violating Thailand's sovereignty. The Thai ambassador to Washington was recalled.<sup>13</sup> It is unlikely that the U.S. use of U-Tapao air base took place without the cooperation from the Thai military. Defense Minister Major General Pramarn Adireksarn even asserted that the U.S. operation did not violate Thailand's sovereignty, but was only a breach of promise between the two countries.<sup>14</sup>

Soon after Thailand offered the Khmer Rouge regime recognition, contacts between the two sides began. Full diplomatic ties between the two countries were established following Cambodian Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Ieng Sary's five-day visit to Thailand in late October 1975. The Cambodian delegates also expressed their need to begin official trade with Thailand as Cambodia was facing a shortage of food.<sup>15</sup> However, diplomatic relations between Thailand and Democratic Kampuchea were built up in parallel with tension along the Thai-Cambodian border. In April, the Khmer Rouge troops stationed opposite Pong Nam Ron District of Chanthaburi Province threatened to attack Thailand, after Thai authorities refused to hand over six armored personnel carriers brought to Thailand by fleeing Lon Nol military officers.<sup>16</sup> Another 60 Khmer Rouge troops contacted Thai authorities on the border at Trat Province for permission to cross into Thailand to suppress the Lon Nol troops. But the request was turned down. A Thai navy patrol boat was sent to reinforce the coastal border of Trat.<sup>17</sup> The first territorial dispute began on 12 May 1975, when the Khmer Rouge forces opposite Trat Province claimed that Cambodia had lost a large amount of land to Thailand during the Lon Nol period. They gave Thailand seven days to withdraw to a demarcation line one kilometer from the existing line. Otherwise they threatened to do it by force. The Khmer Rouge also held four Thai fishermen, charged with violating Cambodia's maritime border.<sup>18</sup> At the end of May, another Thai fishing boat on the Trat coast was attacked and set ablaze by Khmer Rouge soldiers.<sup>19</sup> Two weeks later, Thai marine police engaged in an hour-long fight with Cambodian forces off the Trat coastal district of Ko Kut. At least seven Thai officers were wounded. At the same time, another clash between the Thai and Cambodian forces took place on the Aranyaprathet-Poipet border.<sup>20</sup> Thai border security

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forces in Surin Province also faced a series of border attacks by the Khmer Rouge forces.<sup>21</sup> A Thai security officer summed up: from the day the Thai-Cambodian border was closed on 18 April to the end of June, Khmer Rouge troops had purposely intruded across the Thai border in Surin Province more than 30 times. The intruders, the Thai officers added, had planted mines along the border inside Thai territory, abducted villagers and stolen their food.<sup>22</sup> In November 1975, fighting between Thai and Khmer Rouge forces on the Aranyaprathet-Poipet border area intensified.<sup>23</sup>

Part of the border conflict was due to the overlapping claims over territory by Thailand and Cambodia.<sup>24</sup> It was also believed to be the work of the guerilla operations of the Cambodian right-wing forces, which received secret support from the Thai armed forces and were allowed to use the Thai border areas as their sanctuaries. These forces, generally known as the Khmer Serei, comprised various ex-Lon Nol government groups. One of them belonged to the former Cambodian Prime Minister In Tam, whose base was on the border of Prachinburi and Battambang Provinces. In late November, Prime Minister Kukrit and his Foreign Minister Chatichai publicly blamed In Tam's force as the cause of the border conflict.<sup>25</sup> Kukrit finally ordered In Tam to leave Thailand within seven days in order to show the Cambodian government his own government's good intention.<sup>26</sup> However, the Prime Minister's order was contradicted by his Deputy Interior Minister, Colonel Prakop Prayoonphokharat, who told reporters that In Tam would need more than a week to seek asylum in a third country. Prokop also pointed out that, in fact, Thailand did not give In Tam a one-week deadline.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Thai hard-line National Security Council simply declined to follow the premier's order by announcing that In Tam need not meet the deadline.<sup>28</sup> But the Cambodian rebel leader was finally forced to leave for France at the end of December after the Thai government pointed the finger at his troops as being responsible for several serious clashes between Thai and Khmer Rouge forces in December.

Interestingly, In Tam denied the accusation made by Kukrit and Chatichai that he had instigated the border clashes. Instead, he revealed that the cause was the escalation of a conflict between two Khmer Rouge groups. One group of 24 defecting Khmer Rouge soldiers was pursued across the border by 70 others who were then confronted by Thai Border Patrol policemen. In Tam also refuted Chatichai's earlier statement that he had asked the former Prime Minister Seni Promoj to allow him to stay in his border sanctuary in Aranyaprathet. Instead, he himself had always wanted to come to Bangkok, but

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Chatichai told him to stay in the border area.<sup>29</sup> Besides, he pointed out that the border skirmishes were also the work of the Thai military, which supported a Cambodian gang. This gang often robbed Cambodian villagers of their cattle and smuggled Cambodians out of the country for money.<sup>30</sup>

Another active Cambodian right-wing force on the Thai-Cambodian border was known to belong to the former governor of Battambang Province, General Sek Sam Iet. This group reportedly gathered intelligence for the Thai Supreme Command office. They often penetrated into Cambodia to harass the Phnom Penh government. Sek Sam Iet's group operated near Aranyaprathet and sometimes extended their activities into the Phnom Malai range in Cambodia. Moreover, this group ran a clandestine business with Thai army officers in smuggling Cambodian logs into Thailand. The group also behaved like bandits as they robbed wealthy Cambodian refugees.<sup>31</sup> This was later confirmed by the police department, which reportedly wanted to force Sek Sam Iet to leave Thailand.<sup>32</sup> However, the idea was not implemented, as it later appeared that the Cambodian rebel leader was allowed to continue his sabotage activities on the Thai-Cambodian border. Border conflicts, therefore, did not end with In Tam's flight.<sup>33</sup>

Again, the relationship between Thailand and Cambodia was challenged by a strange incident on 25 February, when the Cambodian town of Siem Reap was bombed by unidentified jet fighters flying from the direction of Thailand. Thai officials denied any involvement in the incident.<sup>34</sup> The new government of Seni Promoj, which resumed office after Kukrit's dissolution of parliament and the April election, continued the effort to strengthen the unstable relationship with the Cambodian government. In August 1976, the Thai government prepared for a reopening of the Cambodian embassy in Bangkok. Private trading at the Aranyaprathet-Poipet border point was finally allowed to resume.<sup>35</sup> Later on, the Cambodian government requested the Thais hand over Sek Sam Iet and three other former Lon Nol officers.<sup>36</sup>

However, for the Thai military and rightists, the three years of an open political system in Thailand following the October 14 incident had exposed Thai society to communist infiltration. By early 1976, the Thai public repeatedly heard the Thai military and rightists' warning of the outside communist threat to Thailand, stressing Indochina's military support for the expanding Thai communist movement. The Khmer Rouge also helped the Thai communists establish an organization called "Angkar Siem," which provided terrorist

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training for Thai youths from three provinces on the Thai-Cambodian border: Si Sa Ket, Buriram and Surin.<sup>37</sup>

The fear that Thailand would follow the fates of the Thieu and Lon Nol regimes appeared to lead some conservatives to reverse their opinions on U.S. military relations with Thailand. The Bangkok Post, which in early 1975 had blamed the Thai government for the war in Cambodia by allowing the Americans to use air bases to prosecute war in neighboring countries, later urged the U.S. Congress to continue American military assistance to Thailand.<sup>38</sup> Following violence against long-term Vietnamese refugees in the northeastern Thai province of Sakon Nakhon, a Thai-language newspaper, Prachathipatai, strongly criticized the Seni government for being pro-Vietnamese. It was dissatisfied with Foreign Minister Phichai who told Vietnamese officials that anti-Vietnamese activity was instigated by Thai criminal gangs who held personal grudges against the refugees. Instead, the newspaper believed the Vietnamese refugees must be responsible for the troubles since some of them were collaborating with the communists.<sup>39</sup>

The intensification of anti-communist propaganda finally led to a massacre of students at Thammasat University on the morning of 6 October 1976, followed by the announcement of a coup led by Admiral Sa-ngat Chaloyu that evening. The coup group, who called themselves the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC), installed the ultra-conservative Supreme Court judge, Thanin Kraivixien, as the country's new leader.<sup>40</sup> Reversion of Thailand's foreign policy back to that of the anti-communist era soon began. The ultra-rightist government of Thanin soon announced a "strong intention to revitalize" Thailand's relationship with the U.S. in both economic and military aspects.<sup>41</sup> Thanin later disclosed his wish for the return of U.S. troops to Thailand.<sup>42</sup> In January 1977, the government imposed a ban on all official visits to communist countries.<sup>43</sup> His cabinet member, the well-known ultra-rightist Interior Minister Samak Sundaravej, even tried to stir up fear of the Vietnamese threat. In mid-December, Samak told newsmen that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam had set upon 15 February 1977 as a "D-Day" to invade Thailand. Worse, he warned the Thai people of a possible danger from Vietnamese refugees by making a false statement that most of the 76,000 post-1975 refugees in Thailand were Vietnamese.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Vietnamese made up the smallest group among Indochinese refugees in Thailand. As of November 1976, Thailand housed 79,689 refugees from Laos, 23,028 from Cambodia, and 8,036 from Vietnam.<sup>45</sup>

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Throughout the one-year rule of the ultra-rightists there was a tendency to use all-out offensive operations against the Khmer Rouge forces by the Thai armed forces. Border clashes between the Thai and Cambodian forces resumed quickly in early November 1976 and subsequently got much worse than in the pre-1976 coup period. Thanin claimed that between January and August 1977 Cambodian forces invaded Thailand more than four hundred times.<sup>46</sup> The worst two incidents took place in late January 1977 and early August 1977. According to the White Paper issued by the Thai Foreign Ministry, during the night of 28 January 1977, around 300 Khmer Rouge soldiers launched a three-pronged attack on three villages in Aranyaprathet. The Cambodian troopers killed 21 Thai villagers, including children, babies and a pregnant woman. Some women were raped. All houses in Ban Nong Do village were set on fire.<sup>47</sup> The Thai government sent a protest note to Cambodia, demanding the latter take responsibility and pay compensation to the victims. The Khmer Rouge, however, replied that the three attacked villages were inside Cambodian territory, implying that they could do whatever they pleased there.<sup>48</sup>

The August massacre of Thai villagers took place in Ban Sanlo Cha-ngan, Ban Sa-ngae and Ban Kasang in Taphraya District of Prachinburi. The Khmer Rouge forces killed 29 Thais. According to one eyewitness, the Khmer Rouge soldiers ransacked houses and killed every living thing, including women, children and even cattle.<sup>49</sup> In order to put pressure on Phnom Penh, in February the Thanin government decided to cut off the pipeline of essential goods to Cambodia. An embargo was imposed on the border trade.<sup>50</sup>

The shortage of food in Cambodia eventually turned the Khmer Rouge soldiers into bandit forces. Their raids were increasingly associated with looting Thai villages, taking crops, cattle and other property back with them to Cambodia.<sup>51</sup> According to a former member of the Khmer Rouge-backed Angkor Siem organization, Kasien Tejapira, whose base was inside Cambodia opposite the south of Surin Province, the Thai communists decided to adopt the CPK tactic of "sweeping up the masses." The CPT wished to gain converts by forcing Thai villagers across the border into Cambodia for political training. However, the cross-border incursions by the Khmer Rouge soldiers soon "degenerated into raiding parties. Civilian casualties were high; the political aims were forgotten by the Cambodians, who became overexcited by combat and loot."<sup>52</sup> Such raiding parties appear to conform with Michael Vickery's analysis of the Khmer Rouge cadres in northwestern Cambodia, namely that

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they were not disciplined revolutionaries, but “rather guerillas right out of the woods.”<sup>53</sup>

The Thai foreign ministry made several attempts to hold high-level talks with Cambodia. However, the contacts were unable to reach beyond Poipet. The lack of dialogue between the two sides thus intensified the use of force to solve the border conflicts. Thai villagers in the border areas received weapons and military training from the armed forces to protect themselves.<sup>54</sup> The border security officers were authorized to retaliate against Khmer Rouge intrusions, while more patrols and armed reinforcement units were established.<sup>55</sup>

By the time the high-level negotiations between the two sides were held, the Thanin administration was about to be gone. Obviously with the Chinese influence, Pol Pot for the first time publicly referred to the border conflict with Thailand. He told the New China News agency while in Beijing that the border disputes with Thailand would soon be “problems of the past.” On 12 October 1977, Uppadit finally met DK Foreign Minister Ieng Sary at United Nations headquarters in New York. The two agreed to end confrontations.<sup>56</sup>

### **Alliance with the Khmer Rouge**

Dialogue between Thailand and Democratic Kampuchea moved forward soon after the Thanin government was overthrown. The new Thai administration of General Kriangsak Chomanan took a new direction in foreign policy. The Thais offered a gesture of friendship to communist Indochina in order to seek a balance of power with Vietnam, whose domination in Laos and Cambodia, Bangkok believed, was growing. However, border clashes with Cambodia continued until the Pol Pot regime was overthrown by Vietnamese forces in early January 1979. The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia had effectively changed relations between Thailand and the Khmer Rouge, transforming the latter from an enemy into an ally. Despite its repetitive claim of neutrality, Bangkok had been involved in the Cambodian conflict from the beginning. Its role was essential to the diplomatic and military position of the guerilla forces of Pol Pot, as well as to the other two Cambodian opposition forces led by Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann. Although the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge were widely known, the Thai government’s policy of backing them received strong support from various political groups in Thailand.

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Hanoi's appeal to the international community regarding DK atrocities along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border failed to secure much sympathy. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong went to Bangkok in mid-1978 informing Thailand about the Khmer Rouge's continuous aggression against Vietnam. He assured the Thai government that Vietnam was no longer supporting the Thai communist movement. Dong also urged the Thai authorities to be cautious of the Chinese role in supporting the Khmer Rouge. The Thais turned down Vietnam's proposal of Thai-Vietnamese non-aggression pact to deter China, saying the two countries share no common border.<sup>57</sup> Despite the known fact that DK was battling on all its three fronts, the Thai intelligence agency concluded that the conflict between Hanoi and Phnom Penh was caused by Vietnam's goal of establishing an Indochina Federation.<sup>58</sup> Finally, Hanoi, together with DK dissident forces and the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea, launched a massive invasion of Cambodia on 25 December 1978. Within two weeks Phnom Penh fell to the Vietnamese troops. The Kriangsak government soon announced that Thailand still recognized the Pol Pot regime as the sole and legitimate government of Cambodia. Thai authorities assured the Khmer Rouge leaders that they were welcome to pass through Thailand to any destination they wished.<sup>59</sup>

Despite claiming detrimental effects on Thailand, Thai authorities reiterated that Thailand was not a party and was neutral in the conflict between various Cambodian factions and Vietnam. Thailand's neutrality was, however, greatly undermined by its own actions from the beginning of the conflict. Prince Sihanouk revealed that the Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Han Nianlong, had told him about the Thai attitude in early 1979, that "to the outside world the Thais say they are neutral but they are not neutral. In fact, the Thais are with Pol Pot."<sup>60</sup>

The Cambodian conflict was no longer bilateral between Vietnam and Cambodia or Thailand and Vietnam, after it was brought to the attention of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations forums. Thailand sought to internationalize the conflict and to gain international support for its policy to denounce the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and violation of Thailand's territorial sovereignty. ASEAN became a legitimate regional body, through which Thai officials advanced all their major initiatives on the Cambodian conflict, at the United Nations. In the name of

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ASEAN, Thailand's policies received greater attention and credibility than representation by Thailand alone or in concert with its great power patrons, the U.S. and China.<sup>61</sup>

Ties between Thailand and China had developed significantly since the Cambodian conflict started. Cooperation between these two countries on the Cambodian problem was most essential for the existence of the Khmer Rouge and later its allied non-Communist forces led by Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann. China acted as a sponsor while Thailand served as a land bridge for the delivery of Chinese arms and strategic goods to the three resistance forces on the Thai-Cambodian border. Thai officials saw China as a crucial factor in a strategy to contain the influence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia. In return for Thailand becoming a conduit between the Cambodian resistance forces and Chinese arms supply, the Chinese government subsequently shut off the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) broadcasting station in southern China and cut off strategic supplies to the CPT, whose guerilla warfare in rural Thailand was therefore significantly affected.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the Thai army also enjoyed free Chinese weapons as the Chinese agreed to let the Thai army retain a portion of the arms shipments. Later, the Chinese provided the Thai army technology to co-produce weapons, part of which had to be given to the Khmer Rouge.<sup>63</sup>

Washington was Bangkok's most important Western ally in the Cambodian issue. Since the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the Thai armed forces had enjoyed growing military assistance and cooperation from the U.S., which had been severely reduced since the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975.<sup>64</sup> While publicly condemning Khmer Rouge brutalities, Washington still led the Western nations in support of Democratic Kampuchea's attempts to retain its seat in the United Nations. The U.S. saw the Khmer Rouge as indispensable, the only efficient military force fighting the Vietnamese.

It should be noted that while the Thai army played a major role in border security and refugee issues, Thai diplomacy on the Cambodian conflict in the 1980s was virtually left entirely in the hands of the Thai foreign ministry under Foreign Minister Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila. Siddhi served as a foreign minister of Thailand between February 1980 and August 1990 under the three successive governments of Kriangsak (October 1977-March 1980), General Prem Tinsulanon (March 1980-August 1988), and Chatichai Choonhavan (August 1988-February 1991).

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Through their collective efforts, Thailand, ASEAN, China, and the United States succeeded in leading most of the world to throw support behind the guerilla Pol Pot group, whose representative was allowed to occupy Cambodia's seat in the United States up until 1992. The denial of diplomatic recognition to the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin regime aimed to deprive it of internal and external legitimacy, thus obstructing an easy passage for the new regime to reconstruct its war-torn country as well as Vietnamese military consolidation in Cambodia.<sup>65</sup>

Facing moral difficulty in backing the genocidal regime of Pol Pot as well as a risk of withdrawal of support by some countries for the DK seat in the United Nations, Bangkok took a leading role in a campaign to form a "coalition government" of three rival Cambodian resistance groups: the Khmer Rouge, Funcinpec, headed by Sihanouk, and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) led by Son Sann. One of the priority missions of Siddhi Savetsila was to bring these three Cambodian factions into a coalition. With support from Beijing and Washington, Bangkok finally succeeded in pressuring these former rival Cambodian factions to join the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in 1982, if they wished to continue receiving aid.<sup>66</sup> The CGDK became a cover for Thailand in its support for the Pol Pot group as a legitimate recipient of international aid.<sup>67</sup> Academic Khien Theeravit defended the government's policy as "assisting all the Kampuchean people who are fighting for independence and not only the Khmer Rouge."<sup>68</sup>

Thai authorities approached Cambodia's former Prime Minister Son Sann in Paris soon after Vietnamese-Heng Samrin forces seized Phnom Penh. Thai planners wanted an alliance between a non-communist resistance and the Khmer Rouge to oppose Vietnam. The Thai architects proposed that the Son Sann group would be able to recruit troops among the refugees. Though the group saw the Khmer Rouge as the number one enemy and initially refused to join with the murderous group, the formation of the KPNLF under Son Sann began. The KPNLF forces, too, received arms supplies from China.<sup>69</sup>

In early 1985, after Vietnamese and Heng Samrin forces successfully captured all 20 of the Khmer Rouge and allied camps along the Thai-Cambodian border, ASEAN ministers released a joint statement in Bangkok calling for an increased military assistance to the Khmer resistance forces.<sup>70</sup> After the 1985 offensive, Hanoi dropped its demand for an end to the Chinese military threat as a pre-condition for its troop withdrawal from Cambodia, insisting only on prevention of the return of the Khmer Rouge to power. This

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meant the conflict could be resolved by Southeast Asian states, particularly by Thailand, which could cease to be a conduit for Chinese arms suppliers to the Khmer Rouge. At first, ASEAN reportedly tended to agree with the idea. But it was soon dropped in the face of opposition from China and the U.S.<sup>71</sup>

### **Thai Perspectives**

The makers and supporters of Thai foreign policy on the Cambodian issue claimed that the increasing democratic environment in Thailand since 1973 allowed interest groups and intellectuals to participate in policy formulation.<sup>72</sup> But for a country such as Thailand, where national security has been the most important (hidden) agenda in both domestic and foreign affairs, freedom of expression does not necessarily lead to a challenge or change of policy direction. Instead, “the discourse of national security” which has been “undoubtedly a very effective paranoia put into Thai people’s heads by the Thai state” strengthened the government position.<sup>73</sup> In other words, the Thai were not only victims of the discourse of national security, but they were also supporters and reproducers of that ideology.

When Vietnam’s Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach visited Thailand in October 1979 and again in June 1980, he was greeted by student and worker protests.<sup>74</sup> In the banners carried by the Thai Buddhist-Islamic League, the protesters called the Vietnamese official “a dog eater.”<sup>75</sup> In early August 1985, 765 Thai academics from several institutions signed a petition to protest the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. In the letter sent to the Vietnamese embassy, the academics called on Hanoi “to abandon its dream of establishing an Indochinese Federation.” They also sent a telex to the then United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, urging the United Nations to end the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia.<sup>76</sup> No such protests were made against the Khmer Rouge or against Thai support for them. This, as Thongchai Winichakul has pointed out, was the first time in Thai political history that Thai government policy was granted approval and cooperation from such a large number of scholars. Even the Thai communist movement shared Thai government policy. The CPT decided to abandon one of its military bases near the Thai-Cambodian border in order to facilitate military and non-military cooperation between the Thai armed forces and the Khmer Rouge. Information and viewpoints on the conflict, either from the government, the armed forces, the media or academics, provided a similar perspective, while any different view

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of the minority was neglected.<sup>77</sup> Astonishingly, reports of Thailand's clandestine aid to the notorious Pol Pot group were hardly examined. Sometimes the views expressed by the Thai press and public were so much more aggressive than those of security officials that the Thai government had to warn the former to tone down their attacks on Vietnam in order not to further impair relations between the two countries.<sup>78</sup>

While reports on the Cambodian issue in the Thai press were basically not different from Thai official press releases, any allegation of the Thai armed forces' involvement in the Cambodian conflict often drew strong retaliation by the Thai press. In 1981, when India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made a statement alleging that the Thai army was helping the Cambodian resistance to fight in Cambodia, she was accused by the Thai press of serving the Soviet Union, a main supporter of Vietnam.<sup>79</sup> Even the liberal newspaper *Nation Review*, which in 1982 had disagreed with Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanon's idea of giving military aid to the newly-formed CGDK, now supported ASEAN's call for military aid and other assistance to the Cambodian resistance forces which lost several of their strongholds to the Vietnamese-PRK heavy offensive in 1985. Its editorial urged the United States in particular to provide arms to the CGDK. The reason given was: "And now, the sheer ferocity of the Vietnamese dry season offensive and her frequent incursions in strength into Thailand appear to have convinced ASEAN that some sort of military retaliation against Vietnam should coexist with the various political and diplomatic moves."<sup>80</sup>

Public support of the Thai government policy needs to be understood in light of the general perspective of the Thais on the Cambodian conflict. This perspective not only represented the importance of the matter from the point of view of the Thais, but it was accepted and reproduced again and again by Thai officials, academics and media and became the dominant theme of Thailand's position on the Cambodian issue. It therefore played a significant role in justifying the country's support of the Khmer Rouge forces.<sup>81</sup>

Vietnam's long perceived intentions to dominate Cambodia and Laos and to create a Hanoi-led Indochina federation, which led to the invasion of Cambodia, were viewed by the Thais as the root of conflict. The Cambodian problem, as they saw it, started only when Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia in late December 1978, certainly not when the Pol Pot-led DK forces launched heavy incursions into Vietnamese border villages in 1977-78. The presence of 180,000 Vietnamese forces and the establishment of the Heng

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Samrin regime in Cambodia posed the greatest threat to Thailand's national security. The trans-Mekong region, Cambodia and Laos, which had been considered a buffer area between Thailand and Vietnam, had been taken away by the Vietnamese, according to this viewpoint. The Thais also believed that Vietnam had a commitment to the socialist revolution in other countries in the region, including to the Thai communist movement. After the U.S. left the region, Thailand believed it had the ability to rival the power of Vietnam in Indochina. But Soviet support for Vietnam moved the balance of power towards Hanoi. Vietnam would not be able to expand its domination and sustain the occupation of Cambodia without Soviet support. Besides, since the Soviet Union was the rival of the United States and China (Thailand's major allies), the Thais accused the Soviet-Vietnam alliance of having forced Thailand into the center of a superpower conflict. Obviously, this official view has been accepted without question by many Thai scholars.

Though the Thai asserted that the Cambodian problem was a problem between Vietnam and Cambodia only, Thailand, as a peace loving country, could not abandon a righteous cause. As a prominent scholar Khien Theeravit described the Thai role in the conflict:

The question for us as a neighbor to the "Big" Vietnam is whether we would allow the big fish (Vietnam) to swallow the small fish (Cambodia), which is now stuck in the big fish's throat; whether we should stay idle and let a few leaders in Hanoi brutalize innocent Cambodians and Vietnamese; whether we should tolerate threats and shoulder the displaced people who escaped the killing by the ruthless people. I think we should not stay idle.

We cannot accept it, not because we hate Vietnam, but because Cambodia's independence is our problem too. Man is not a wild animal, which tends to resort to violent means and ignore what is right or wrong.<sup>82</sup>

Vietnam was viewed as even worse than the Khmer Rouge. Khien believed that "the dead bodies, as a consequence of the Vietnamese invasion were not less and perhaps more than those Kampuchians killed by American bombers or by the suppression of the Pol Pot clique."<sup>83</sup> Khien, however, failed to offer details of the death toll in Cambodia he believed had been caused by Vietnamese forces.

To justify Thailand's backing of a murderous regime, the Thais went further to defend the Pol Pot regime as being patriotic, defending their country's independence by not bowing to Hanoi. In this view, hostility between DK and Vietnam was rooted in Cambodia's suspicion that Vietnam harbored

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ambitions of integrating Cambodia. Unlike the Lao PDR, Pol Pot's regime tried to be independent from Vietnamese domination, and that subsequently led Hanoi to decide to arbitrarily replace the Cambodian leader. The clashes on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border were interpreted as merely an excuse for Vietnam to implement its alleged plan to control all of Indochina. The death toll caused by the Khmer Rouge's escalating attacks on Vietnam's border villages in 1977-1978 was, therefore, not significant enough to be noted by Thai officials and their supporters. On the other hand, the atrocities during the DK period reported by Western journalists since 1975 were dismissed as propaganda of the Vietnamese and Heng Samrin authorities.<sup>84</sup>

Western scholars who did not share this opinion with the Thais were discarded as people who "only see things superficially;" "it can't be helped if someone [Thai academics] prefer to listen to those foreigners rather than to the Thai opinion."<sup>85</sup> Some even accused foreign Cambodia experts who had any sympathy for Vietnam as still "having an imperialist mind."<sup>86</sup> The overwhelming support of worldwide peace-loving countries for the DK seat in the United Nations proved to them that Thailand's actions were correct.

Vietnam's settlement proposal demanding the exclusion of the two Khmer Rouge leaders, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, in exchange for Vietnamese recognition of the Sihanouk and Son Sann factions was dismissed as Vietnam's attempt to conceal the real problem. For the Thais, the elimination of the Khmer Rouge leaders was not "a matter of principle."<sup>87</sup> However, the Thais accepted that Beijing would have been displeased if Thailand agreed with any proposal to eliminate the Pol Pot group.<sup>88</sup> As the Thai foreign ministry's permanent secretary in 1988, M.R. Kasemsamoson Kasemsri, explicitly explained, any agreeable resolution must take into account not only the interests of Vietnam and Thailand, but also those of China. "If Vietnam cannot concede to the interests of China and ASEAN, it is not in tune with reality. It is one thing to stand on principles on certain issues, but the question is how far can principles go in a world of reality."<sup>89</sup>

The claim that Thailand resorted only to just and peaceful means to solve the Cambodian conflict was probably convincing as long as the Thai transit route for China's arms supply to the forces of Pol Pot and the other two resistance factions was ignored. The allegation made by the Heng Samrin government that Thailand, in cooperation with Cambodian resistance forces, had often made incursions into Cambodia was dismissed by Thai officials who

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spoke only of defending their territorial integrity from the aggressive Vietnamese-Heng Samrin forces.<sup>90</sup> It was also unclear what the Thai perception of Cambodia's neutrality and non-alignment was because Thailand had served as Washington's anti-communist base in Indochina since the 1960s.

The Thais claimed that they had no intention of prolonging the conflict in order to bleed Vietnam white. But as Nayan Chanda cited one Thai military thinker as saying, "having lost Cambodia as buffer, the best that Thailand could do was to sustain the fighting that in itself constituted a buffer."<sup>91</sup> Thai authorities also accepted that prolonged conflict would work to the advantage of Thailand. Vietnam's weak economy, waning Soviet economic and military support and growing Cambodian resistance forces would eventually force Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia. Besides, while the war penalized Vietnam, it seemed to cost Thailand little, as the Thais believed clashes between Thai and Vietnamese troops were confined to small-scale fighting in the border area. Though the Thais complained that some innocent Thai villagers were killed by Vietnam's shelling, the existence of refugee camps, which drew aid workers and thus spending power, greatly benefited business in the Thai border provinces.<sup>92</sup> Besides, Bangkok could not ignore the fact that it was willing to serve China's known strategy of bleeding Vietnam to death. As Deng Xiaoping had stated in December 1979: "It is wise for China to force the Vietnamese to stay in Cambodia, because that way they will suffer more and more."<sup>93</sup>

## **Behind Humanitarianism**

The Thais always claimed that their policy on the refugees was based on humanitarian principles. Despite security and socio-economic risks, Thailand could not ignore the plight of a million Cambodian refugees who sought asylum there. Thailand thus believed it should be praised for undertaking such a humanitarian mission. As the Thai foreign ministry official claimed: "It would not be consistent with our established tradition to push them back and let them be killed or become victims of Vietnamese suppression."<sup>94</sup> Thus, the Thais were playing a role of dharma while the aggressive Vietnamese and Heng Samrin regime were the evils. The Thais, including the academics and media, argued that their country's policy on the Cambodian refugees had nothing to do with politics and military strategy in the Cambodian arena at all. The supporters of the Thai government's policy ignored the government's aim of exploiting

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refugees for the military and political benefit of the Cambodian resistance forces. Extensive research and reports by foreign newsmen on the Cambodian refugees showed a contrasting picture of Thai motives.

When the aid agencies wanted the refugee encampments to be moved further into Thai territory so that the refugees would have been safe from the fighting between the Khmer opposition and Vietnamese forces, the Thai authorities refused. Some Thai academics argued that the aid agencies mainly emphasized humanitarian objectives, but they ignored the fact that the Thai government had to take into account the country's security interests as well. On the other hand, they claimed that it was difficult for the Thai authorities to maintain full security in the refugee camps because of struggles among various Cambodian armed factions.<sup>95</sup> When problems arose in the refugee camps, Khien believed they had been unfairly criticized because of problems created by outsiders; "that is, enemies are doing the dirty work and the Thais get all the blame."<sup>96</sup>

A study by Linda Mason and Roger Brown showed that the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were granted permission by the Vietnamese and the PRK governments to deliver aid to famine-stricken Cambodia starting in August 1979. The aid to Phnom Penh led to protests by the Khmer Rouge leaders that this aid was a sign of international recognition of its enemy regime. The Khmer Rouge, on the other hand, claimed that the DK, as the legal and legitimate regime, was entitled to such aid. In late August, Kriangsak facilitated a meeting between representatives of the Khmer Rouge, ICRC and UNICEF in Bangkok, concerning aid to the Khmer Rouge.<sup>97</sup> Kriangsak announced an open door policy for Khmer refugees at the end of October 1979. With the support of the United States, Bangkok agreed to give temporary asylum to the Cambodian refugees but insisted that the international aid go to all camps, including the Khmer Rouge.<sup>98</sup>

The border camps became effective political, economic, and military tools for Thailand, together with China and the United States, to hinder the efforts of the Vietnamese and PRK governments from rebuilding Cambodia. The new policy eventually drew a growing number of refugees to the Thai border. It became international propaganda that the Khmers were fleeing Vietnamese oppression and its client regime failed to take control of the country's administration. Refugee camps became a magnet, many of them came because

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of free food provided by aid agencies and the prospect of resettlement in “third countries.”<sup>99</sup>

Journalist Rod Nordland revealed in 1980 that Thai military men in the Khao I Dang refugee camp were not just guarding the camp but were commanding Cambodian guerilla forces fighting the Vietnamese. Refugees were brutally treated. The entire camp population was forced to find land mines in the surrounding minefields without any efficient tools. Many were killed by mines.<sup>100</sup> While widespread famine was raging inside Cambodia, by the early 1980s, Khmer Rouge fighters and people under their control now appeared to be better off than before. Khmer Rouge fighters were given priority for the internationally provided rice in the refugee camps in Thailand. More than 2,000 tons of food a month were reportedly supplied to Khmer Rouge villages by international relief agencies on the Thai border.<sup>101</sup>

The so-called voluntary repatriation program of Khmer refugees initiated by Thai authorities in June 1980 was believed to help strengthen the Pol Pot army. Many refugees from the Sa Keo holding center were forced to join the Khmer Rouge forces.<sup>102</sup> According to the Washington-based human rights group, Asia Watch Committee, by 1988, the forced recruitment of Cambodian refugees by the Khmer Rouge still went on. Faced with intensive shelling from the PRK forces, some of them were driven back to the refugee camps. Some died in the shelling. The fate of many is not known.<sup>103</sup> By 1988, access to the Khmer Rouge was causing tension between Thai authorities and the international relief agencies.<sup>104</sup>

Refugee lives were in danger not only from the spill-over of battles between the resistance and the Vietnamese/PRK forces, but also the fighting among rival Khmer Serei factions. Their Chinese-supplied weapons were often used to threaten the camp residents. But the Thai authorities refused to move refugees into the holding centers or to camps further inside Thai territory. The reason for this was the fact that Thailand, China and the U.S. were more concerned with support for the Khmer Serei resistance movements. “Had refugee populations been moved into holding centers, the humanitarian pretense for feeding these resistance movements would have vanished.”<sup>105</sup> Moreover, when refugees were killed by border fighting, the Thais could blame the Vietnamese/PRK forces for ruthlessly killing innocent civilians. But when Vietnam repetitively requested that Thailand move refugee camps deeper inside Thailand, Thai authorities blasted Vietnam as having no right to make such a call.<sup>106</sup>

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While the Thais often stressed that refugees were an economic burden to Thailand, they did not mention the benefit the Thai economy gained from the presence of refugees. Just seven months after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the border district of Aranyaprathet experienced a thriving black market trade and a property boom. Many local farmers abandoned their rice-fields to take part in the illegal cross-border trading with Cambodians. The influx of foreign aid workers to the town meant a rapid increase in housing demands and local employment.<sup>107</sup> Thailand's economy in general also benefited from the huge amount of money the international aid agencies spent for the relief efforts. Between 1979 and 1982, the refugee relief efforts spent US\$350 million in Thailand. Since then, the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) spent 90 percent of US\$36 million each year in Thailand. The UN also granted assistance to 80,000 Thai border villagers who were affected by the refugee situation.<sup>108</sup>

### **Alliance in Transition**

By the end of the 1980s, the Thai foreign ministry's hard-line policy began to face real challenge as it was perceived to be inefficient in resolving the prolonged conflict in Cambodia, no longer suitable for the fast growing economy of Thailand. The attempt to break the foreign ministry's monopoly on decision-making came with a newly elected government led by General Chatichai Choonhavan, an experienced diplomat from the Kukrit Promoj government. Trade was introduced as a new diplomatic tactic to improve trust and relations between Thailand and the Indochinese states. Although this new economic approach was primarily perceived elsewhere as Thailand ceding advantages to the PRK government, the three Cambodian resistance factions, the Khmer Rouge in particular, eventually were allowed to share in the huge business profits from this trade with the Thais. The new economic approach eventually opened a new aspect of relations between Thailand and the Khmer Rouge.

By 1985, a few Thai academics began to voice their dissatisfaction with Thai government policy, which was seen as causing a protracted war and a diplomatic stalemate. They urged the Prem government to stop backing the Khmer Rouge. Kraisak Choonhavan, Chatichai's son, rejected the view that Vietnam was a threat to Thailand as Vietnam was much more underdeveloped than Thailand. He called for a cessation of the Chinese arms trade to the Khmer

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Rouge group and Thailand's more flexible policy towards the Cambodian problem.<sup>109</sup> In his July 1988 article, M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra strongly criticized the Thai government for the Cambodian impasse, which was "partly due to conceptual naivety, partly to fear of antagonizing Thailand's Chinese patron, partly to continuing distrust of Vietnam and partly to the existence of bureaucratic vested interests in the Khmer Rouge connection."<sup>110</sup>

However, these critics were only a small group of academics and their criticism did not receive much attention from the Thai press. Thus, they did not have much effect on the confidence of Thai foreign policymakers until Chatichai took office in August 1988. The shift of policy received both criticism and support from the public. It was obvious from the beginning that Chatichai wished to play a major role in Thai foreign policy instead of giving a free hand to the foreign ministry and the army. He launched new initiatives and shuttled between Bangkok and regional capitals to meet regional leaders as well as the four Cambodian factions' leaders, discussing the Cambodian peace settlement. The prime minister also appointed a group of young liberal academics and businessmen as advisers. Among them were Phansak Vinyarat, M.R. Sukhumbhand Baripatra, and Kraisaak Choonhavan. They had been known for their disagreement with the Thai foreign ministry's Indochina policy and as critics of the Khmer Rouge.

Immediately after Chatichai assumed the premier's office, he announced a new initiative to turn Indochina from a battlefield into a market place. The prime minister clarified his idea toward Indochina: "In the future, the neighboring countries such as Laos and Vietnam must be a market place, not a battlefield anymore. The same will go to the Cambodian problem as well. We want to see peace in Cambodia in order to develop the border trade."<sup>111</sup> Chatichai and his advisers explained the reason behind the new policy: Thailand's booming economy required both new markets as well as a new source of raw materials to supply Thailand's fast growing export-oriented industries. Economic cooperation with other Southeast Asian states, as well as peace in the region, were essential for Thailand to deal with the emergence of trading blocks among developed countries and their growing protectionism. Therefore, Thailand, whose security, political and economic interests had been threatened by the Cambodian problem had to try to bring a comprehensive peace settlement to the protracted conflict or at least minimize the level of conflict to that of a local one. The appropriate foreign policy was therefore to develop a positive attitude and mutual trust with all Indochinese countries by

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way of talks at the leadership level. Moreover, peace and economic relations between ASEAN and Indochinese states would reinforce a trend toward reform in Indochina.<sup>112</sup>

A rift between Chatichai's faction and the foreign ministry emerged from the very beginning of the new administration. While Chatichai expressed his desire to develop business relations with Indochina, Siddhi reiterated his conservative stand that Thai policy on Indochina would remain basically unchanged. He asserted that before Thailand could have an open and free trade with Indochinese countries, the Cambodian problem had to be resolved. Siddhi insisted that Vietnam had to pull all its troops out of Cambodia and an agreement among superpowers on the reconstruction of Cambodia reached before Thailand would be able to do business with Vietnam and Cambodia.<sup>113</sup>

Perhaps fearing a positive attitude toward Vietnam and the PRK regime would eventually lead to Chatichai's abandonment of Thailand's support for the three Cambodian resistance forces, Siddhi contradicted his previous view on the Vietnamese troop withdrawal from Cambodia. In June 1988, he had said that he believed Vietnam was serious in its announced plan to withdraw 50,000 troops from Cambodia by the end of 1988, as Vietnam had already honored its promise by withdrawing part of its troops in 1987.<sup>114</sup> But in May 1989, a month after Vietnam had announced a plan to withdraw all its remaining troops from Cambodia by September 1989, Siddhi told the press that Vietnam had a "concealed condition" for pulling its troops out of Cambodia, and could send them back at Phnom Penh's request if the Khmer Rouge returned to power. He cited alleged reports of the Thai army and China that some 30,000-40,000 Vietnamese soldiers were now disguised as PRK soldiers and civilians. He therefore urged continued support for the Cambodian resistance forces, saying an end to aid would play into the hands of Hanoi and Phnom Penh. Siddhi reasoned that a quadripartite government, which included the Khmer Rouge, was the best solution because "leaving anyone in the jungle is dangerous. It is better to have them in the government than out."<sup>115</sup> He also asserted that the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in a peace formula would give an "equal opportunity for every Cambodian who seeks to stand before the judgment of the people. To deny any Cambodian such a right would make a mockery of the call for self-determination and show contempt for the people of Cambodia." Siddhi remained firm on the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in any peace settlement until he resigned as foreign minister in September 1990.<sup>116</sup>

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Regardless of the foreign ministry's opinion, Chatichai and his team carried on their initiatives. In January 1989, Chatichai extended de facto recognition to the PRK government by inviting Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to Bangkok, saying that in the past ten years Thailand had had contact with only three Cambodian resistance groups, which had not brought much progress to the peace process. Therefore, Thailand should try to integrate the PRK government into peace talks.<sup>117</sup> Chatichai's maverick diplomacy, which obviously attempted to change Thailand's decade-old anti-Vietnam and anti-PRK policy thus incited heated debate on the pros and cons of Thailand's new foreign policy.

Prasop Butsarakhom, chairman of the House committee on foreign affairs and member of the Social Action Party headed by Siddhi, said that the invitation had provided the Heng Samrin regime with a public relations forum and implied Thailand's recognition of "invaders."<sup>118</sup> The leading critic from Thai academic circles was Khien Theeravit, a staunch supporter of Siddhi's policy. He accused Chatichai of making a diplomatic coup that neglected the already agreed-upon principles among the concerned parties. These were the eventual complete withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and the formation of a four-party coalition government, including the Khmer Rouge. Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok, Khien claimed, had caused a split in Thailand's national unity, a slide in national credibility, and disintegration of Thailand's friendly ties with the international community. He even blamed Chatichai's diplomacy for having been partly "tinted by emotional humanitarian concern."<sup>119</sup> Slating the Chatichai team as inexperienced, Khien appeared to support the monopoly role of the foreign ministry, and asserted that the matter should be handled only by those who possessed diplomatic skills and expertise!<sup>120</sup>

Despite the criticism, the Chatichai team hosted a meeting between the three Cambodian resistance factions and Hun Sen in September 1989 in Bangkok. According to press reports, not a single foreign ministry official was present at the meeting.<sup>121</sup> Chatichai apparently did not pay much attention to the foreign ministry's growing bitterness. Part of the reason for his confidence in pursuing an Indochina initiative was the growing support they had gained from the Thai press, which saw little progress achieved under a decade of Siddhi's leading role.<sup>122</sup> Also, Chatichai's proposed business relations with neighboring countries was very attractive to the Thai business sector and press. They were eager to see Thailand become an economic power in the region, the

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economic gateway to Indochina, the Thai baht a major currency in the Indochinese economy, and Thailand a financial center of the region.<sup>123</sup>

In the political arena, the rapprochement between Thailand and Vietnam was credited for the Vietnamese troop withdrawal from Cambodia in September 1989 and Hun Sen's agreement to Thailand's cease-fire proposal. The Chatichai government also proposed the establishment of neutral camps to protect Cambodian refugees from the abuses by the Khmer Rouge and their allies. It was successful in bringing the four Cambodian factions to the negotiating table. Chatichai's diplomacy was thus an important basis for the Cambodian peace process that eventually led to the United Nations-sponsored election in 1993.

Chatichai's peace initiatives also faced objections from the U.S. and China. Due to a fear that Bangkok would abandon the three Cambodian resistance groups for the sake of doing business with the Phnom Penh government, Washington even threatened to withdraw U.S. trade privileges from Thailand.<sup>124</sup> Despite the U.S. opposition, Bangkok continued to strengthen business relations with Hanoi, Phnom Penh, and Vientiane. Bangkok became a venue for business discussions between Thais and their Indochinese counterparts. In March 1989, the first shipment of a timber deal worth three million baht with the Hun Sen government arrived at the Thai coastal town of Trat Province.<sup>125</sup> Cross-border trade between Thailand and Cambodia soon flourished.

### **Doing Business with the Khmer Rouge**

The business ties between Thailand and Cambodia fostered by the Chatichai administration were initially believed to benefit Cambodia's pro-Vietnam/PRK government politically and economically. However, the three Cambodian resistance factions, the Khmer Rouge in particular, did not want to miss such an opportunity. They were as competent as the PRK government at exploiting Cambodia's natural resources for their own uses. The Thai governments, including the Chatichai and the successive administrations of Anand Panyarachun and Chuan Leekpai, voiced no objection to such lucrative businesses the Thais had with any Cambodian factions.

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In fact, business contacts between Thais and the KR began as early as 1981. According to the governor of Trat Province, around 2,000 Thais were already digging for rubies in the Khmer Rouge-controlled area opposite Trat. They regularly crossed into Cambodia despite a warning of possible danger. Many were killed and injured when Vietnamese troops attacked the area.<sup>126</sup>

Prince Sihanouk's faction, Funcinpec, also wanted to be a partner in the lucrative trade with the Thais. In late 1982, Funcinpec had concluded an agreement with a Thai logging company for supply of 2,000 million baht (US\$100 million) worth of timber.<sup>127</sup> It included 650,000 cubic meters of soft wood and 350,000 of hard wood, which could feed local sawmills for up to six years. The deal was signed at a hotel in Bangkok by a representative of Amphaiphan Kankaset company and Buor Horl, the CGDK's co-minister of economic affairs and a close aide of Sihanouk.<sup>128</sup> However, they faced a problem when the Thai government refused to open a border check-point for transporting Cambodia's timber into Thailand, for security reasons. Sihanouk also denied that he had endorsed the timber contract, stressing that the contract should have been approved by the Khmer Rouge and the KPNLF factions. But Buor Horl insisted that the Prince had, in fact, agreed with the contract and had only suggested he obtain approval for the project from other Funcinpec leaders.<sup>129</sup>

But with Chatichai's policy of turning Indochina into a trading ground, Thai officials became more helpful in facilitating the lucrative business transaction, and sometimes even allowed a breach of regulations. For example, the Chatichai cabinet acceded to logging companies' demands to be allowed to import Cambodia's timber from the areas under the control of the Khmer Rouge and KPNLF without certificates of origin.<sup>130</sup> The certificates were essential proof that the timber was not cut on Thai soil.

It should be noted that the logging trade with Cambodia was crucial for the livelihood of Thailand's timber business, particularly after the Chatichai cabinet imposed a nationwide logging ban following a natural catastrophe in southern Thailand in 1989. Gems in the Pailin area, south of Battambang, were also in high demand by Thailand's gem export business, as Thailand's biggest gem areas in Chanthaburi and Trat had been nearly exhausted, which led to a shut down of many gem businesses since 1984.<sup>131</sup> Besides, Cambodia's precious stones, mainly rubies and sapphires, were considered to be of higher quality than Thai products.

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Soon after Thailand had moved to revitalize trade with the Phnom Penh regime, Thai and Cambodian merchants flocked to the newly set up black market in the border towns of Aranyaprathet and Poipet. According to the Thai traders, the profits were shared between the PRK soldiers and the Khmer Rouge guerillas. The two rival forces were also trying to draw more traders to the areas they controlled. The Phnom Penh troops mined a similar Khmer Rouge-controlled cattle market some 40 kilometers from Khlong Pramhot, killing and wounding many Khmer traders.<sup>132</sup>

In 1990, several business deals between Thai private companies and the Khmer Rouge were reached. Six Thai timber companies, one partly owned by a Chatichai cabinet minister, were trying to win contracts from the Khmer Rouge to carry out massive logging in Pailin.<sup>133</sup> In August 1990, the Khmer Rouge granted a group of about 500 Thai gem traders a concession to dig for precious stones in their newly-captured stronghold of Pailin. In return for the concession, the group agreed to build a 12-kilometer road from Pailin to the Noen Phi border checkpoint in Chanthaburi Province, in order to facilitate their clandestine cross-border trade. About 100 Thai workers with five bulldozers, sent to Cambodia for gem mining, also had a duty to construct the road, which had cost the group over 22 million baht. In addition, the group agreed to pay the Khmer Rouge an undisclosed percentage of the sales from the gems. Besides, the guerilla forces had earlier allowed a large number of Thais to dig for gems in Bo Lang and Khao Peth areas opposite Trat Province. Nearly 100 thousand Thai and Karen workers were reportedly mining there.<sup>134</sup>

By 1992, border trade between Thais and all Cambodian factions had expanded considerably. Twenty-seven temporary checkpoints in seven border provinces (Ubon Ratchathani, Sisaket, Surin, Buriram, Prachinburi, Chanthaburi and Trat) facilitated the thriving border business. Of these, 13 checkpoints were mainly used to transport logs and timber to Thailand. Between January and October 1992 alone, over 898,000 cubic meters of timber were transported from Cambodia to Thailand. Of these, 520,000 cubic meters were reportedly from deals made with the Phnom Penh government, 200,000 cubic meters were from the Khmer Rouge area, 128,000 were from the Fucinpec area, and 50,000 were from the KPRLF area.<sup>135</sup> Forty-eight Thai logging companies claimed that in 1992 they had invested almost 15 billion baht (US\$600 million) in return for three- to five-year concessions, which involved over 30,000 Thai workers.<sup>136</sup> Interestingly, the state enterprise Forestry Industry Organization of Thailand was among the Thai logging companies doing

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business with the Khmer Rouge.<sup>137</sup> The logging area under Khmer Rouge control covered the area opposite Thailand all the way from Prachinburi to Trat Provinces.

The Pol Pot group now also controlled most of the gem rich area in Pailin and its surrounding area. It was estimated that there were around 40,000-50,000 Thai fortune hunters working in the area. They can be categorized into three groups. The first group was individuals who needed only a spade to dig for precious stones. They paid the guerilla group 250 baht in fees per week, in return for mining permission. They could work anywhere except the areas already granted in concessions to the second and third groups. The Khmer Rouge reportedly earned millions of baht daily from this group. The second group comprised minor operators who owned concessions for a small area. The Khmer Rouge received five thousand baht from each of them in return for a concession for one square wah (approximately four square meters) of land. And the last group comprised major operators, who paid the Khmer Rouge 10 to 20 million baht for a six-month concession for a large area, which was then divided and sub-contracted to smaller companies. The concession was renewable every three months by paying 800,000 baht each time. Around 80 companies, including their sub-contractors, were in this category. Individual hunters would sell gems in Chanthaburi and Trat, home of Thailand's biggest gem-cutting factories. The big operators usually had their own factories and export business. The price for an unburnished gem sold at the spots ranged from 25 to two million baht.<sup>138</sup>

According to a banking official, during the boom period the volume of money in circulation in Chanthaburi's gem business alone was as high as 200-300 million baht (US\$8-12 million) a week.<sup>139</sup> Some claimed that the Cambodian gem trade had generated 3 billion baht (US\$120 million) a year in revenue since 1989, when the Khmer Rouge had captured Pailin. The Thais and the Khmer Rouge usually split the profits 50-50, after paying 10 percent of their income to the Thai military, which controlled the border.<sup>140</sup>

## **Sanctions**

Thailand's thriving logging and gem business with the Khmer Rouge was threatened when the latter refused to respect the Paris peace agreement they had signed in 1991, neither disarming their fighters nor allowing people in their area to register for the country's election in May 1993. The UN Security Council

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passed a resolution dated 30 November 1992 to support the decision of the Supreme National Council (SNC) headed by Prince Sihanouk to impose economic sanctions against the Khmer Rouge. The SNC set a moratorium on logging exports from Cambodia from 31 December 1992. It also called on Cambodia's neighboring states to prevent the supply of petroleum products to the areas occupied by the Khmer Rouge. The SNC later announced a ban on gem exports from 28 February 1993. The decision thus obliged the Thai government to close down all border trade with Cambodia, and led Thai traders to cry foul over the United Nations sanctions. Several attempts were made to prevent a huge loss of Thai business interests.

Before the UN Security Council passed its resolution to support the SNC decision, Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, foreign minister of the Chuan Leekpai government, said that Thailand would continue to allow business transactions with the Khmer Rouge as long as there was no formal ban from the SNC.<sup>141</sup> He also defended the Khmer Rouge, by saying the Maoist group had no intention of rejecting the peace plan.<sup>142</sup> Nor was the Thai foreign minister happy with the UN Security Council's call for a ban of oil supplies to the Khmer Rouge-controlled area. He told the chief of UN Transitional Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC), Yasushi Akashi, that it was "not a military measure and should not be taken as an economic measure." Prasong asserted that the ban would hurt the people and result in the Khmer Rouge taking a tougher stance in retaliation. Besides, he added, the difficulties would force people to rise up to help the Khmer Rouge.<sup>143</sup>

Ironically, as soon as the story that the UN was considering endorsing the economic sanctions against the Khmer Rouge first came out, some Thai officials and businessmen continued to foster a plan to expand border trade with Cambodia. Chanthaburi's governor announced that he would soon open a new temporary check-point at Pong Namron district, and called for more investment to expand the Pong Namron market in order to serve the new trading channel. The Chanthaburi Business Association called upon the governor to implement the plan as soon as possible. They believed that if the UN eventually acted, they could thus have more bargaining power with the United Nations.<sup>144</sup>

Deputy Secretary-General of the foreign ministry Saroj Chavanvirat said that Thailand and some Asian countries believed the United Nations should not impose severe punishments, such as sanctions or military measures, on the Khmer Rouge.<sup>145</sup> The opposition parties, several members of which had been

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involved in the border trade with Cambodia, particularly in the logging business, moved to put pressure on the Chuan Leekpai government not to abide to the UN decision. They set an urgent agenda for the parliamentary meeting in order to lobby the government that the closure of Thai-Cambodian checkpoints would cause serious damages to Thai traders and workers.<sup>146</sup> Thai border traders urged Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri to play a bigger role in persuading the Khmer Rouge to join the peace process. They even pledged to assist the foreign minister in talks with the Khmer Rouge because, they said, “we have traded with the Khmer Rouge for a long time and can understand them.”<sup>147</sup> A group of 48 logging companies and major gem mining companies asked the Chuan government to allow them to continue their business at the Cambodian border until their concessions ended in three to five years. They argued that they had not yet received any profit from the almost 15 billion baht (US\$600 million) investment they had made.<sup>148</sup>

The owner of a Sahawannapruk sawmill in Surin Province accused the UN and UNTAC, which pushed for the Thai-Cambodian border closure, of trying to paint the Khmer Rouge as evil. He argued that the guerrillas refused to disarm because their demands had been rejected by the international organization. “It was unfortunate that the Khmer Rouge leaders did not try to defend themselves against the accusation,” said the Thai businessman. He blamed the blockade on a lack of humanitarian concern since it would seriously hurt the Khmer Rouge’s children, who relied on supplies of food and medicine from Thailand. He even urged the UN to establish measures to supply necessities to the Khmer Rouge forces.<sup>149</sup> Many Thais argued that the sanctions would have very little effect on the Khmer Rouge, because the guerillas had already received huge payments in advance from Thai businessmen. They would thus cause damage only to the Thai economy.<sup>150</sup> They defended their business in Cambodia as having nothing to do with politics, because they traded with every faction!<sup>151</sup> Some Thai timber merchants praised the Khmer Rouge as “good warriors” and “businessmen who keep promises.”<sup>152</sup>

In addition, Thai traders slated the UN resolution as a conspiracy by some Asian countries, particularly Japan and Taiwan, which had sawmills in Cambodia itself at Kampong Som, to get rid of the Khmer Rouge so that they could monopolize the exploitation of Cambodian resources even in the Khmer Rouge-controlled area.<sup>153</sup>

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After the deadline for border closure came into effect, these Thais blamed the foreign ministry and Thai border officials for overreacting in enforcing the government order to seal off all border passes with Cambodia after 31 December. They argued that the UN resolution banned only the import of logs from Cambodia, but said that the Thai officials had imposed a ban on all kinds of goods from Cambodia, including sawn timber, gems and agricultural products. Furthermore, though the United Nations had yet to set a date for an oil embargo against the Khmer Rouge, Thai officials had implemented it already. They said this strict action taken by the Thai side would only benefit Japanese and Taiwanese logging companies, which would transport the huge surplus of uncut logs on the Cambodian border to their own sawmills in Pursat, Kampong Som and Phnom Penh.<sup>154</sup> Claiming such loopholes in the UN resolution, some Thai companies decided to set up sawmills in Khmer Rouge-controlled areas to process felled logs for export.<sup>155</sup>

However, the strict enforcement by Thai border officials appeared to be temporary. The French news agency Agence France-Presse reported a few days after the embargo had come into effect that 140 trucks loaded with huge logs passed the mountain checkpoint in Surin Province.<sup>156</sup> Thai soldiers and police reportedly assisted the transportation of petroleum products into the Khmer Rouge-held areas opposite Chanthaburi, Trat and Sisaket Provinces.<sup>157</sup> An assurance from the Khmer Rouge provided the Thais some sort of security. As one Trat-based gem businessman put it: "The Khmer Rouge have assured us that we can continue our business as long as Pailin is still under their control."

It was difficult for UNTAC to monitor illegal activities along the Thai-Khmer Rouge-controlled border, because the guerillas did not allow UNTAC to monitor the eight border posts they controlled and the Thai government also refused the UN peace-keeping forces permission to patrol the border on the Thai side. But the border violations were likely very high, considering the frequent violations that took place at the border checkpoints controlled by the Hun Sen government. An UNTAC official disclosed that during the first five months of 1993, there were 103 violations, of which 98 cases involved goods carried through the border passes controlled by the Phnom Penh government. Of the total, Thai companies were involved in 51 cases, making the Thais the biggest violator of Cambodia's log ban.<sup>158</sup>

The same occurred with the gem mining business. But smuggling gems out of Cambodia was much easier than logs, particularly for individual miners who could easily sneak across the long, mountainous, jungle-covered Thai-Cambodian border. They needed only a spade, and could hide gems in their

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pockets. Some Thai authorities also did not want to comply with the United Nations. The governor of Trat Province asserted: “The SNC resolution is for Cambodians to abide by inside their country, but so far there is no order from [the Thai] interior ministry, so the miners can continue their business.”<sup>159</sup>

The outcry in the Thai business sector also gained strong support and sympathy from local media and officials who both warned the Chuan government to seriously consider the impact on Thai interests before following the UN decision. A Bangkok Post editorial, for example, questioned the practicality and effectiveness of the sanctions, saying the strength of the Maoist guerrillas was not drawn from the income earned from illegal business with the Thais, but from their well-disciplined troops and political idealism. It went further:

Instead of hurting the Khmer Rouge, tens of thousands of Thai people in Chanthaburi and Trat provinces...are likely to be the principal victims and most hurt if the sanctions are strictly enforced. ... An international backlash may be possible if Thailand refuses to cooperate with the UN. But if Thailand cooperates fully as a responsible member, even at the risk of putting tens of thousands of its people out of work and forcing the closure of several businesses, will the international community just look on and simply leave it to the Thai Government to come up with remedial measures? What if the sanctions fail, as they are likely to? What, then, would the next punitive measures be?<sup>160</sup>

Facing such pressure from business groups, the Thai foreign ministry and army officials tried many ways to minimize the losses of Thai traders. The foreign ministry attempted to seek a grace period from the SNC and UNTAC, to allow Thai timber merchants to haul logs from Cambodia.<sup>161</sup> But these negotiations were unsuccessful. Later, the Thai National Security Council’s Secretary-General, General Charan Kunlavanich, accused UNTAC of being unfair to Thai loggers by allowing the Japanese to ship Cambodia’s logs via Cambodian ports.<sup>162</sup> Later, in April 1993, General Chaovalit Yongchaiyuth, then the Interior Minister, wished to mobilize his popularity in the Northeast region. He tried to press the Chuan cabinet to reopen the temporary checkpoints to import logs from Cambodia. But this move was later rejected by the cabinet.<sup>163</sup>

After the peacekeeping forces left Cambodia following the UN-sponsored 1993 election, logging and gem business between the Thais and the Khmer Rouge boomed again. In September 1993, Reuters reported that gem mining in Pailin was thriving despite the threat of the new Cambodian government’s

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military offensive against the Khmer Rouge stronghold. More than 150 new fields had sprung up in this border region since the Khmer Rouge had relaxed profit-sharing regulations in July 1993, demanding less than half the profits from the mining.<sup>164</sup> The London-based environmentalist group Global Witness said in its 1995 report: "Both the Khmer Rouge and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, apart from waging a war, are actively involved in the timber industry."<sup>165</sup> In fighting with the Khmer Rouge in late 1997 in Samlaut district of Battambang, Phnom Penh troops reportedly seized from the rebels 750 million baht (US\$30 million) in cash, collected from logging concessions, from the rebels. The area was under the command of General Khe Mut and his father-in-law, the notorious butcher 'Ta Mok.<sup>166</sup>

Pailin had been such a precious asset for the Khmer Rouge leaders that they did not want to abandon it, even those who had decided to defect from the Pol Pot-led guerilla forces. In 1997, Ieng Sary's faction, which defected to the Cambodian government in 1996, was reportedly still making millions of dollars selling gems to Thai traders. At least 29 mining companies operated in the Pailin area. Each company was required to pay the dissident group 220,000 baht a month in return for a concession.<sup>167</sup>

## **Conclusion**

During the two decades of the 1970s and 1980s, the relationship between Thailand and the Khmer Rouge had shifted dramatically from hated enemies to trading counterparts. Even though the Thais were well aware of the massive atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge against the Cambodian people, perceptions of Thai national security and lucrative trade led them to support the regime. After their overthrow in early 1979, the Khmer Rouge soldiers came to the Thai border in severe condition. They were in a state of famine. Many had been wounded and soon died. But they soon found a new lifeline for a revival and strengthening of their forces on an old enemy's soil. The new alliance with Thailand, approved by the U.S. and China, offered the Maoist forces three main sources of income: Chinese arms supplies, aid relief supplies, and illegal business with the Thais.

These two allies efficiently exploited the Thai-Cambodian border area for military, political and economic purposes. The Khmer Rouge forces and refugee camps became a human buffer between Thailand and the Hanoi-Phnom Penh forces. This buffer zone later became a lucrative area for the Thais. Though

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Chatichai assumed office with a clear intention to establish a rapprochement with Hanoi and Phnom Penh in the light of expanding Thai trade and investment in Indochina, this new lucrative market soon incorporated the Khmer Rouge themselves. Ironically, Chatichai's policies actually ended up strengthening the genocidal regime. The profit guided policy was pursued unreluctantly by the successive Thai governments. The consistent support for the Khmer Rouge on the part of the Thai government was a justification for Thai businessmen to trade with them as Thailand's long-time allies. They believed they were simply conducting business with a regime that was Thailand's friend.

"Realpolitik" considerations therefore proved far more important than the ideological conflict between Thai "capitalism" and Khmer Rouge "Communism." Without the support of the outside world led by the U.S., China, and Thailand, the genocidal regime of Pol Pot would thus have been finished by the Vietnamese-PRK forces soon after their overthrow. Regardless of what they have said about human rights for public consumption, the outside world indeed nurtured the genocide perpetrators while the post-genocide Cambodia was left with famine and starvation.

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- <sup>52</sup> Kasien pointed out that the sweeping masses tactic begun in 1978, but according to the Thai villagers' accounts, the looting by the Khmer Rouge cadres had already taken place in 1977. See his interview in Chandler, *op.cit.*, p. 281, note 77.

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<sup>71</sup> For detail of China's and the United States' role in blocking any possible compromise between ASEAN and Vietnam in Ben Kiernan, "The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian Peace Process: Causes and Consequences", in Kiernan (ed.), *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia: The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*, New Haven, Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 1993, pp. 195-196.

<sup>72</sup> See "Introduction" by Khien Theeravit in Institute of Asian Studies, *The Kampuchean Problem in Thai Perspective*, p. III.

<sup>73</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994, p. 167.

<sup>74</sup> FBIS-AP, 19 October 1979; 27 June 1980, p. J5-6.

<sup>75</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 27 June 1980.

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<sup>77</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, "Kampucha: mayaphap kap manutsayatham" (Cambodia: myth and humanitarianism), *Warasan Thammasat*, 14, 2 (June 1985), p. 55. The only group which openly criticized the Thai government's policy toward Vietnam in the early 1980s was the so-called "Democratic Soldiers," led by former member of the Communist Party of Thailand, Prasert Sapsunthon. However, because Prasert's communist background and his doctrine were similar to that of the Soviet Union, the group's opinion did not receive much attention from either the government or the public. See Chai-anan Samudavanija, "Implications of A Prolonged Conflict on Internal Thai Politics," in William S. Turley (ed.), *Confrontation or Coexistence: The Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations*, Bangkok, Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985, pp. 83-87.

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<sup>79</sup> See Matichon, 2 October 1981; Nation Review, 1 October 1981; Bangkok Post, 2 October 1981.

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Khien in Institute of Asian Studies, *The Kampuchean Problem in Thai Perspective*, p. 82.

<sup>84</sup> Khien, "Kampucha kap panha kantosu..." *op.cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>85</sup> Interview of Khien Theeravit in Matichon, 8 April 1985 quoted in Thongchai, "Kampucha..." *op.cit.*, p. 55.

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<sup>93</sup> Kiernan, "The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge," *op.cit.*, p. 200, citing Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 December 1979.

<sup>94</sup> Institute of Asian Studies, *The Kampuchean Problem in Thai Perspectives*, p. 17.

<sup>95</sup> Supang Chantavanich "Introduction," in Supang Chantavanich and Bruce Reynolds (eds.), *Indochinese Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement*, Bangkok, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1988, p. 9; Phuwadol Songprasert, "The Thai Government's Policies Towards the Indochinese Refugees," in *Thailand: A First Asylum Country for Indochinese Refugees*, Bangkok, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1988, pp. 8-27.

<sup>96</sup> Khien Theeravit, "Conclusion," in Supang and Reynolds (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 398-399.

<sup>97</sup> Linda Mason and Roger Brown, *Rice, Rivalry, and Politics*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1983, pp. 12-15.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 4.

<sup>99</sup> Vickery, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>100</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 May 1980.

<sup>101</sup> *The London Times*, 8 May 1980; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 November 1979, pp. 13-15; *The Guardian*, 24 November 1979.

<sup>102</sup> Mason and Brown, *op.cit.*, chapter 4.

<sup>103</sup> The Asia Watch Committee, *Khmer Rouge Abuses Along the Thai-Cambodian Border*, An Asia Watch Report, 1989.

<sup>104</sup> *The Nation*, 28 March 1988.

<sup>105</sup> Mason and Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 45

<sup>106</sup> FBIS-AP, 29 January 1986, p. J2

<sup>107</sup> *The Southeast Asia Record*, 30 November-6 December 1979.

<sup>108</sup> Mysliwicz, *op.cit.*, pp. 108, 110.

<sup>109</sup> *Asiaweek*, 21 June 1985, p. 90.

<sup>110</sup> *The Nation*, 21, 22 July 1988.

<sup>111</sup> *Sayam Rath*, 5 August 1988.

<sup>112</sup> See Kham thalaeng nayobai tangprathet khong ratthaban phol ek chatichai choonhavan (Foreign Policy of the Government of General Chatichai Choonhavan), 25 August 1988; Chatichai Choonhavan, Prathetai nai banyakat rawang prathet thi kamlang plienplaeng (Thailand in the Changing International Situation), speech delivered at the Association of Political Science Faculty, Thammasat University, on 10 June 1989; "Interview with M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra," in *Khao phiset*, 14-20 December 1988, pp. 27-28; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, "Scholar Speaking" in *Naeo Na*, 15 January 1989, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 10 August 1988. The unnamed foreign ministry official urged the government to go slow on trading with Indochina until Vietnam withdraws troops from Cambodia. The official also said that Siddhi had sought Chatichai support on the issue, in *The Nation*, 26 September 1988.

<sup>114</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 28 May 1988.

<sup>115</sup> United States, Foreign Broadcast Information Service-East Asia (hereafter FBIS-EAS), 11 May 1989, pp. 52-53.

<sup>116</sup> "Inside Thailand's Foreign Policy: An Interview with Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand," *Asian Review*, vol. 5, 1991, p.37.

<sup>117</sup> *The Nation*, 7 February 1989.

<sup>118</sup> *The Nation*, 28 January 1989.

<sup>119</sup> *The Nation*, 31 January 1989. Also, "Interview with Dr. Khien Theeravit," *Sayamrath Weekly* 5-11 February 1989, pp. 22-24; Surin Pitsuwan, "Reflections," *Bangkok Post*, 8 February 1989, p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> *The Nation*, 28 January 1989.

<sup>121</sup> *The Nation*, 16 September 1989.

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<sup>122</sup> See example, supporting comment by Phiraphan Phalusuk, an opposition MP in *The Nation*, 28 January 1989; editorials of *Naeo Na*, 1 February 1989; *Siam Rath*, 3 February 1989; *The Nation*, 11 September 1989.

<sup>123</sup> For example, see *Phuchatkan Weekly*, 29 June-5 July 1992, 16; *Phuchatkan Daily*, 24 September 1992.

<sup>124</sup> See Kiernan, "The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge," pp. 194-205. Citing *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 March 1989.

<sup>125</sup> *The Nation*, 26 March 1989.

<sup>126</sup> *Matichon*, 23 October 1981.

<sup>127</sup> In 1982, US\$1 was equivalent to 20 baht. In 1984, the Prem government devalued the baht to 25 baht to US\$1.

<sup>128</sup> *The Nation Review*, 1 November 1982.

<sup>129</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 27 November 1982; *FBIS-AP*, 10 December 1982, p. H1.

<sup>130</sup> *The Nation*, 29 October 1990.

<sup>131</sup> *Phuchatkan Weekly*, 30 November-6 December 1992, pp. 1, 2, 19.

<sup>132</sup> *FBIS-EAS*, 29 June 1989, p. 64.

<sup>133</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 30 June 1990.

<sup>134</sup> *The Nation*, 12 September 1990.

<sup>135</sup> *Phuchatkarn Weekly*, 30 November-6 December 1992, pp. 1, 2, 19.

<sup>136</sup> *Thansetthakij*, 21-24 February 1993, pp. 1-2.

<sup>137</sup> *Thansetthakit*, 10-12 December 1992, p. 18.

<sup>138</sup> *Phuchatkan Weekly*, 30 November-6 December 1992, pp. 1, 2, 19; *Bangkok Post*, 19 November 1992.

<sup>139</sup> *Prachachat Turakij*, 6-9 December 1992, p. 42.

<sup>140</sup> *The Nation*, 2 March 1993.

<sup>141</sup> *The Nation*, 11 November 1992.

<sup>142</sup> The Nation, 16 November 1992.

<sup>143</sup> FBIS-EAS, 30 November 1992.

<sup>144</sup> Phuchatkan Daily, 12 November 1992.

<sup>145</sup> Phuchatkan Daily, 13 November 1992.

<sup>146</sup> Phuchatkan Daily, 13 November 1992.

<sup>147</sup> Bangkok Post, 17 November 1992.

<sup>148</sup> The figure seems very high. It is possible that these companies exaggerated their claim so that their appeals would receive more public sympathy and the government's help. See Prachachat Turakij, 22-25 November 1992, p. 43; Thansetthakit, 21-24 February 1993, pp.1-2.

<sup>149</sup> Matichon, 23 November 1992.

<sup>150</sup> Bangkok Post, 20 March 1993.

<sup>151</sup> Thansetthakij, 24-26 December 1992, p. 21.

<sup>152</sup> Phuchatkan Daily, 29 June 1993.

<sup>153</sup> Matichon, 23 November 1992; Phuchatkan Weekly, 30 November-6 December 1992, pp. 1, 2, 19.

<sup>154</sup> Bangkok Post, 3 January 1993.

<sup>155</sup> Phuchatkan Daily, 18 November 1992; 26 February 1993; The Nation, 14 March 1993.

<sup>156</sup> The Nation, 4 January 1993.

<sup>157</sup> Bangkok Post, 9 January 1993; The Nation, 26 January 1993.

<sup>158</sup> Bangkok Post, 24 August 1993.

<sup>159</sup> The Nation, 2 March 1993. See also, Bangkok Post, 20 March 1993.

<sup>160</sup> Bangkok Post, 20 November 1992. Also see, for example, Phuchatkan Weekly, 5-11 October 1992, pp. 60, 59; Prachachat Turakij, 6-9 December 1992, p. 42; Thansetthakij, 6-9 December 1992, pp. 1, 15; 10-12 December 1992, p. 18; Nao Na, 30 December 1992; Siam Post, 3 January 1993; Manager Daily, 29 June 1993;

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<sup>161</sup> Matichon, 23 November 1992; Bangkok Post, 1 January 1993; Phuchatkan Daily, 7 January 1993.

<sup>162</sup> Phuchatkan Daily, 19 February 1993.

<sup>163</sup> Bangkok Post, 28 April 1993.

<sup>164</sup> Bangkok Post, 9 September 1993.

<sup>165</sup> Quoted from Bangkok Post, Perspective section, 19 January 1997.

<sup>166</sup> Bangkok Post, 11 December 1997.

<sup>167</sup> Bangkok Post, 21 January 1997.