

Reappraising Thailand's Counterinsurgency, 1965-1985

by

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In 1965, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) took up arms against Thai security forces. The Thai response to the insurgency was uneven. A 1968 article for Foreign Affairs reflected contemporary concerns: "Northeast Thailand: Tomorrow's Vietnam?" Questions arose whether the Thai government was quelling the uprising or fueling the grievances that supported the insurgency. This case study examines the Royal Thai Government's successful suppression of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), including activities in 1978-1980 and the political policies announced in 1980 that reduced the CPT's strength and diminished its appeal to the populace. This review will examine the security situation and the political landscape of Thailand from 1965 to 1985 to test the thesis that the political astuteness of the "semi-democratic" military regime in power from 1977 until 1988 bears the greatest responsibility for the successful elimination of the Communist Party of Thailand as a viable threat. The key to the success of this counterinsurgency strategy lay in the political formulae the Thai regime employed for a "political offensive."

Reappraising Thailand's Counterinsurgency, 1965-1985

Numerous strategic thinkers have commented on the likely increase in the years ahead of so-called "limited war" or what Colin Gray has dubbed "small wars or other savage violence,"¹ in contrast to wars characterized by the classic massing of troops and technological firepower to gain superiority over a well-defined opposing force. As isolated groups such as tribes, ethnic minorities or others with sub-national identities continue to prosecute "small wars" – sometimes as civil wars, oftentimes across ill-defined and porous national borders – these events will further challenge traditional theories about counterinsurgency (COIN) shared by the international community.² As Professor Colin S. Gray put it, we must "adapt COIN...to new contexts."³ This review of the Thai experience with a communist insurgency over a two-decade period some fifty years ago seeks to re-examine some of the common assumptions behind analyses of that counterinsurgency success. Through a fresh look at the mix of solutions chosen, we may be able to see more clearly the dynamic political adaptations taken by a few Thai leaders.

In the 1960s, as the Vietnam war grew in strategic importance for the United States as a frontline engagement with communist aggression, the status of communist insurgencies in the neighboring states of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand took on increasing importance. Due to Geneva Convention commitments regarding neutrality, among these three countries only Thailand could directly and openly provide bases of operations for the U.S. in the larger Indochina conflict. However, Thailand was also home to a growing insurgency supported by China and with logistics bases located in Laos and Cambodia. By 1965, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) had taken up arms against Thai security forces in the North and Northeast. U.S. advisors had been

advising Thai counterparts on responses to communist subversion at least since 1962,⁴ and United States Ambassador Graham Martin consolidated U.S. bilateral assistance in counterinsurgency efforts in 1964.⁵ It was already apparent that the Thai response to the insurgency was uneven; moreover, the U.S. official who had retired from his position coordinating counterinsurgency publicly stated that “a more concerted effort against the Communist Terrorists” was still not evident as late as 1974.⁶

Thailand scholar John Girling best captured the urgency of the problem when he wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* in 1968 entitled “Northeast Thailand: Tomorrow’s Vietnam?”⁷ Other Indochina scholars concerned about the nature of the growing insurgency and whether the Thai government was quelling the uprising or fueling the grievances that supported the insurgency, urged a more comprehensive assessment of the political situation⁸ and the need for more appropriate economic analyses to correct “existing inequalities” through better targeted development programs.⁹

The case of the successful suppression of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) has been the subject of a number of books and journal articles as well as several theses. Outside of analyses focused solely on the CPT, many studies attempt to unravel the complex internal politics of Bangkok elites in the tumultuous 1970s, a period during which there were three coups d’etat and nine prime ministers; this is the primary narrative, against which the fate of the CPT is either an issue in deciding power politics or a side-show. These studies have generally pointed to political policies the Prime Minister’s office publicly announced in 1980 as an important element in reducing the CPT’s strength and diminishing its appeal to the populace, especially disaffected minorities. However, most commentaries point to other internal and external factors as

having equal or greater weight in the break-up of the CPT. These include the purported reduction in aid to the CPT by China and the CPT's internal crises.

This review will examine the political landscape of Thailand from 1965 to 1985 to test the thesis that the political astuteness of the “semi-democratic” military regime in power from 1977 until 1988, and particularly the internally developed counterinsurgency strategy first fully implemented in 1978, bears the greatest responsibility for the successful elimination of the Communist Party of Thailand as a viable threat to the government. The key to the success of this counterinsurgency strategy lay not in its military elements – though these were clearly present – but in the political formulae for resolution adduced from the acute situation faced by Thai officials, who acted on their own without appreciable outside influence or assistance.

This paper argues that, in the protracted situations of many insurgencies and some small wars, the host government can benefit not only from its own cultural understanding of a conflict situation but also from a careful examination of the political and economic aspects of the conflict. Armed intervention by a government's police (and sometimes military) forces is needed to confront internal armed insurrection; nonetheless, greater care should be taken by a government confronted by an insurgency to include appropriate civilian solutions addressing governmental legitimacy and related distributive political and economic issues. The paper also considers the presence or absence of external military assistance to better understand if the absence of this potential inducement to rapid military action may be significant. While the Thai government that put in place the new counterinsurgency policy was installed by the military, the paper argues that the government's “semi-democratic” credentials based on

a newly passed constitution meant to better regulate the civil-military relationship and its reliance on civilian policy-making and implementation of its political counterinsurgency plan are the more decisive factors. This re-examination of the Thai case attempts to put into greater relief the success of a legitimate government's politically-oriented counterinsurgency strategy.

The royal Thai government's counterinsurgency campaign against the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in 1965-1985 was marked by uneven application of government policies and inappropriate conventional military responses during most of the first fifteen years of the conflict. And yet, by 1985 the CPT proved no longer to be a direct threat to security or stability. Some analysts credit the dissolution of the CPT to a largely indifferent Thai populace or the changing geopolitical stakes with China, which nominally withdrew support¹⁰ for the CPT after Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia and China's temporary alliance with Thailand. But close examination of the Thai government's counterinsurgency approach points to the successful application of political strategies as part of a larger governance plan that gave paramount status to internal economic development and intensified integration with the world economic, financial and commercial systems. Whether the economic plan was adequately inclusive of labor and Thailand's large rural population or whether political changes were truly democratic, the fact is the overall plan was sufficiently oriented toward the needs of the Thai population that the predominantly political plan countered the appeal of a large armed faction ensconced among the populace in a "people's war."

The Analytical Context

Many before have noted that insurgents exhibit their violent behavior because of certain "fighting points" or provocations to arms: they lack a voice in running their own

affairs (either through direct participation in governance or, alternatively, as autonomous bodies); they cannot advance themselves (economic development); there is no semblance of arbitration or accountability (justice); and basic safety needs are unmet (security). In addition, many modern conflicts have their genesis in issues of cultural identity, what Kaufman has called the “symbolic politics trap,” so named because the highly violent ethnic or religious identity chauvinism unleashed to start a conflict may not be subject to mitigation later to inculcate more moderate views, thus leading to predictable outcomes: perpetual conflict or military victory often followed by genocide.¹¹ These “cultural narratives” (Ross calls them the “collective memories of contesting parties”¹²) are often an essential part of a conflict

When trying to mitigate the elements that lead to conflict, it is not necessarily the case that all of these elements need to be addressed in some definitive fashion to cool the flames of violent discord. The ability to understand a conflict as if it were like white light dispersed through a prism spectrum, with many gradations across some of the key desiderata – voice, justice, economic and physical security – is central to finding means to restrain, contain or resolve the conflict. There is no single answer to COIN effectiveness, which always must be tailored to the facts on the ground.¹³ For example, Raphael Cohen argues that winning “hearts and minds” may not be as significant an element of counterinsurgency as previously thought.¹⁴ While gaining a foothold among the local population and recruiting local forces may still be key elements to any successful counterinsurgency,¹⁵ it remains an open question that one must have greatest control of the population or make a counterinsurgency a “population-centric”¹⁶ endeavor. In short, COIN solutions can be numerous, provided that the host

government is prepared to weigh the costs and benefits of the courses of action available to them, and keeping in mind certain red lines in international norms.

A political understanding of the conflict situation and deep local knowledge among the host government's police, civil administration and military are central to effective COIN.¹⁷ These should be considered prerequisites as the host government begins to grapple with an insurgency.

An empirical example of a positive host nation approach to internal conflict is the royal Thai government's (RTG) response to the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT).¹⁸ The RTG military performed abysmally on its far northern frontier with Laos and Burma in the late 1960s, sowing the seeds of ethnic conflict for a generation. But over the next decade, RTG security officials chose to "treat the insurgency as a civil-police matter, rather than a military problem" in a "total effort" that was "Thai-inspired, supported and administered." In a multi-pronged security/development/administration program the Thai were able to eliminate the CPT as a threat by the early 1980s.¹⁹

This case study demonstrates that host nations can develop unique answers to their specific problems, given the internal political will and acknowledgement from outside partners that a nuanced understanding of an insurgency and a carefully orchestrated COIN response – on both the policy and operational sides – will be the most productive one.

The Example from Thailand: Counterinsurgency, 1965-1985

The experience of the Royal Thai Government in bringing an end to armed insurrection by the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) demonstrates a government's ability to take stock of an insurgency and develop an understanding that adapts the universal template of "insurgency" as conceived by theorists over the last half century.

Initially, the Royal Thai Army leadership applied military force in an attempt to quash CPT insurgents, but then learned from its mistakes and sought new approaches. Thailand's about-face, away from a strategy relying on a main-force military effort and toward a more flexible counter-insurgency strategy, was deeply rooted in an analysis of the political, social and economic dimensions of that insurgency and the Thai leadership's (military and monarchy) perceptions of legitimate rule.

Although characterized by limited urgent and focused development efforts such as the Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) program to build infrastructure,²⁰ the Thai government's main counterinsurgency effort began in 1965 as a rigid strategy of "search and destroy." This was a full frontal military assault by means of artillery and air raids on small armed CPT bands. At the time, the RTG faced a force with no more than 300-500 armed communist fighters; Thai military leaders assessed that it would take just six months to defeat the insurgency.²¹ However, a number of missteps, both in military operations and through actions by corrupt members of the civilian bureaucracy, exacerbated the political situation. With the consequent growth in numbers of insurgents and their popular support, it became clear to some key Thai counter-insurgency officials as early as 1967 that the government response was "unsatisfactory."²² A number of U.S. officials also viewed the Thai response as weak and ineffectual,²³ and one argued for greater emphasis on police efforts, more cross-fertilization of ideas and U.S. personnel from "Vietnam pacification policy and programs," and reduced Thai expenditures on "economic and social projects."²⁴ By 1968 a separate official U.S. report concluded the massive traditional military campaigns in the North and Northeast were "counterproductive."²⁵

Thai military leaders would not begin transformation to a more comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign in earnest until 1973-1974, and then only in parts of the country where regional military commanders were willing to take risks to increase the social and political emphases of their operations (in opposition to the largest group of Thai military leaders who were committed to eradicating the CPT by search-and-destroy methods learned during their service in Vietnam²⁶). A fully politicized counterinsurgency campaign did not become public policy until 1980. This account reviews the evolution of the strategy to the more successful approach that eventually brought thousands of CPT fighters off of the battlefield to mark the end of the insurgency.

The Communist Threat

Our understanding of the Communist Party of Thailand comes from the writings of a small sampling of its members, of whom only a minority remained stalwart party supporters. In addition to the problems of gaining an accurate historical record from disillusioned defectors, there is the challenge of overcoming layers of secrecy the CPT employed to protect its people and operations. (For most of its history the party has been banned, first by a 1933 Anti-Communist Law and then by subsequent anti-communism suppression measures.) Former CPT member Gawin Chutima makes clear that he didn't want to incriminate members in a paper published in 1990.²⁷ CPT member Wirat Anghathawon penned the most cited CPT ideological history in 1978, published 15 years later as "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand."²⁸

By all accounts, the CPT (originally called the Thai Communist Party from its foundation in 1942 until the 1952 Second Congress) and predecessor communist organizations were heavily influenced from abroad. Original communist groups in the 1920s appeared to center around Chinese and Vietnamese migrant communities,

primarily in Bangkok.²⁹ Ho Chi Minh reportedly worked to bolster the Communist Youth of Siam in 1929-1931.³⁰ In addition to the Communist Party of Siam (CPS) – which folded in the mid-1930s – there was the Chinese Communist Party of Thailand (CCPT). The latter was estimated to have a membership 20 times the 200 members of the CPT, but with the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, many CCPT leaders returned to mainland China and the single CPT party emerged.³¹ Nonetheless, the Chinese and Vietnamese influences remained even among Thai citizens who were predominantly of Chinese or Vietnamese ethnic extraction³² and by the late 1950s, the CPT was firmly aligned with the Chinese Communist Party. CPT leadership made journeys to Beijing and studied at the Marxism-Leninism Institute in China.³³ “We were influenced from the east, by the revolutions in China and Vietnam,” wrote Wirat Anghathawon.³⁴

The Marxist ideology of the CPT would lead it first to work among laborers, students and others in the cities after the end of the Japanese occupation, founding the Bangkok Labor Federation, publishing a newspaper (*Mahachon* or *The Masses*), and openly working in politics. This was during a brief period when accession to the United Nations required repeal of anti-communism measures. At the Second Party Congress in 1952, the party would enunciate a policy of “armed struggle” but would not act seriously on this policy until the Phibun military regime once again banned communism and the Sarit regime dissolved parliament and detained suspected leftist politicians.³⁵ It was during this stage that the party lost a faction led by Prasoet Supsunthorn (expelled as a “revisionist traitor”), who believed in a more open “united front line” dedicated to peaceful democratic development, without resort to arms. (Prasoet would later join the Thai government’s counterinsurgency efforts as a leading political analyst who

understood the CPT's weaknesses and advised on exploiting them by political means.) Even in the face of the openings offered by the 1973 democracy movement in Thailand, the CPT could not adapt. As Gawin Chutima put it bluntly, "The October 14 uprising took the CPT by surprise."³⁶

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the CPT moved back into the countryside, focused on recruiting among Thailand's large rural population of peasant farmers, and developed a Maoist guerilla strategy. During this phase the increases to party rank and file boosted the overall ethnic Thai membership. In a discussion of CPT military strategy and tactics, Wirat Anghathawon quotes directly from Mao's treatise *On Guerilla Warfare*, citing chapter and verse – "the enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack..." – and advocating a "people's war of a long-term nature."³⁷ The CPT developed "guerilla zones" and "base areas" in five areas: the northeast, north, central plains, middle south and deep south.³⁸ Of these, the northeast was the most heavily manned and most strongly armed. Additional support bases were located in Laos and Cambodia. In the south, a small band of Malay communists who had escaped from Malaya were believed to be in the area and providing limited support.

In August 1965, the first armed exchange between CPT fighters and government forces began a decade-long war in which over 4,500 purported communists and close to 10,000 RTG personnel were killed in over 9,500 violent incidents.³⁹

Response to the Communist Threat

With the establishment of the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) in early 1966, Deputy Prime Minister and Army Commander-in-Chief General Praphas Charusathira authorized a Civil-Police-Military (CPM) program that recognized

the need for coordinated action among multiple Thai government agencies to combat the CPT.⁴⁰ The Thai leadership recognized the importance of addressing governance, economic development and effective administrative and police services as central to counterinsurgency.⁴¹ However, CSOC operations were not well received by area commanders out in the field⁴²; these were “older soldiers” who “did not understand” the new concepts, according to the first Director of CSOC Operations and counterinsurgency policy architect, General Saiyud Kerdphol.⁴³ In an official re-evaluation of policy, the Army took over command of counterinsurgency operations from CSOC in October 1967⁴⁴ and directed them through regional army commanders at the Communist Suppression Operations Region (CSOR).⁴⁵ As interviews with several key Thai military officers revealed, for the next several years “the dominant approach to solving the communist problem was through military means.”⁴⁶ When civilians took over leadership of the Thai government in 1973, the government responded to complaints of the “harsh” CSOC⁴⁷, by renaming it the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) in 1974.⁴⁸ However, the military focus of the Thai operations did not change at that time; a Thai government ISOC center remains to this day.

The U.S. government offered direct assistance to Thailand to counter subversion from 1961 to 1970, after which the U.S. mission reverted to an emphasis on broader, less coordinated policies under the heading of “Development and Security.”⁴⁹ The U.S. military presence at seven air bases and some other outposts established to prosecute the war in Vietnam (with 40,000-50,000 personnel in country at the peak)^{50, 51} was one among a number of complicating factors for the U.S.-Thai bilateral relationship which tended to dampen the voice of the U.S. in interactions on the counterinsurgency

campaign.⁵² In addition budget constraints introduced by a war-weary Congress limited direct aid programs. As the conflicts in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia came to a culmination in 1975, the U.S. was already in the process of moving bases elsewhere and would complete the move in July 1976 with the withdrawal from Thailand of the last of 27,000 troops and the simultaneous reduction in military assistance.⁵³ While the evidence suggests many Thai wanted the U.S. to remain in some capacity as a guarantor of security,⁵⁴ the civilian-led Thai government during this period was actively hedging its bets, recognizing the People's Republic of China in 1975, and quickly establishing formal diplomatic relations.⁵⁵ In the end, however, in the mid-1970s Thailand was not well endowed with powerful allies, nor inclined to participate in big-power realignments. This was the period (1975-1976) when the Association of Southeast Nations agreed on a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, to include non-interference and internal and external security provisions. The international arena offered more challenges than opportunities to Thai leaders, especially as the Second Indochina War came to an end. The United States would have little security assistance to offer Thailand, at least until Vietnamese troops arrived at Thailand's border in 1979.⁵⁶

The Thai domestic political landscape during the period 1965-1985 saw unprecedented changes, just as the social and economic spheres underwent significant upheaval. Simultaneous changes in the military culture would converge during these tumultuous times to stimulate a radical departure from the previously adopted search-and-destroy counterinsurgency doctrine.

In addition to showing exceptional GDP growth averaging some 7.6 percent over a 36-year period (1961-1996),⁵⁷ Thailand's student populations grew dramatically⁵⁸ and

urban centers were drawing greater migration from rural agricultural areas as manufacturing increased.⁵⁹ Of note, in the period 1954-1969 agricultural development in the Northeast had markedly expanded but most of the benefits fell to middle-men in the “metropolis” not to the farmers in the “producing area.”⁶⁰

Up through 1985, with the exception of a brief post-World War II period and 1973-1976, the military in Thailand was a “preeminent political force”⁶¹ dominating the political process from the time it established the constitutional monarchy via a coup d’etat in 1932. Together with bureaucratic elites from the well-entrenched Thai civil service, the military directed national policy and programs during the two decades, 1965-1985. However, starting in 1980, the consensus-driven leadership of a coup-replaced Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda allowed “semi-democratic patterns of rule”⁶² to emerge and grow to a point where increased civilian control of the government could gain a precarious foothold.

In addition to military and bureaucratic elites, the Thai monarchy (King Bhumibol Adulyadej) gave the central government a moral legitimacy and the hierarchy of Buddhist monks (the *sangha*) continued to influence social mores and cultural norms of group cohesion and consensus.⁶³ Just as influential on the Thai polity were traditions of a generally free press and independent judiciary, which helped to stabilize the systems of governance.⁶⁴ Thai society was undergoing substantial social change in the 1965-1985 period⁶⁵ and all organizations – including the military and the CPT – experienced difficulties adapting to the rapidly changing needs of urban and rural populations.⁶⁶

Against this backdrop, the Thai military itself underwent a major transformation, through the rise of a group of internal change agents dubbed the “Young Turks” and

also through the quiet advocacy of a smaller group of “Democratic Soldiers.”⁶⁷ The Young Turks – formally called the Young Military Officers Group – were intent on reforming the military leadership by insisting on greater probity and more accountability among coup leaders then in power. This group of some 18 battalion commanders in 1977⁶⁸ grew to more than 50 military professionals in 1981.⁶⁹ Their white papers and other activities to emphasize key issues such as equity for the small-hold farmer and improved national development policies translated into a wider governmental policy for a more equitable society. One significant contribution of the Young Turks would be their rallying of the troops to back the removal of General Thanin Kraivichien – infamous for his heavy-handed anti-communist suppression tactics⁷⁰ – and his replacement with General Kriangsak Chomanan in October 1977.⁷¹ In February 1980, the Young Military Officers Group would withdraw support from General Kriangsak in favor of General Prem, who became the new Prime Minister.⁷² The Young Turks considered Prem to be the best man to “respect the needs of the people,” as a later informal manifesto would state.⁷³

But a decade earlier, the kingdom was reeling in turmoil and the military had been taking a conservative, hard-line anti-communist stance. By 1969 the government had declared 34 of 71 provinces as “communist-infested” areas. In the preceding period, 1965-1969, some 2000 armed clashes occurred between CPT fighters and government forces. Whereas there were a reported 6500 armed fighters in the communist Thai People’s Liberation Army in 1973,⁷⁴ by 1979 estimates put the number of communist insurgents at anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000.^{75, 76} One of the contributing factors to the substantial increase in CPT fighters was the military coup and

simultaneous violent crack-down on Bangkok student activists on October 6, 1976. As one knowledgeable military observer put it in 1978, “the infusion of several thousand students and activists following the military coup of 1976 has gone far to fulfill a longstanding need [of the CPT] to fill key organizational posts. The immediate effect of this strengthening of communist infrastructure has been the beginning of political infiltration and subversion in several new [geographic] areas.”⁷⁷

General Prem had worked with ISOC to bring a more balanced counter-insurgency strategy to Thailand’s Northeast when Prem commanded Army Region 2 from headquarters in Nakhon Ratchasima in 1974-1977. He would be the champion for an entirely new counterinsurgency strategy most strongly advocated by the officers known as the Democratic Soldiers group. According to reports, the decisive moment for change occurred in September, 1978, when Thai military leaders met in secret to review the current counterinsurgency strategy. As one account put it, the leadership concluded “a military campaign only aggravated the basic problems that fueled the insurgency.”⁷⁸

Over the next few years, reform came to military counterinsurgency operations in the form of a “political offensive” strategy that relied on infrastructure projects and economic development for the largely rural communities under CPT sway, along with more representative governance systems and anti-corruption efforts. One such effort was called the Development and Self-Defense Volunteer Program (known as “Aw Paw Paw” – or APP – by its Thai acronym). The aim of the APP Program was to help rural villagers “better themselves socially, politically and economically” and also to provide them “the training and the capability to defend their own communities.”⁷⁹ According to General Saiyud Kerdphol, the main proponent of Aw Paw Paw, the program went far to

bring the villagers back into the government fold, particularly when it was recognized that there was a “need to arm the villagers who have shown they are prepared to defend themselves against the communists.”⁸⁰ During the period 1975-1985 a total of 6,960 villages benefited from APP or similar programs.⁸¹

A number of scholars and participants have outlined the Thai response to the CPT in the 1978-1985 period when General Prem was first Commander-in-Chief and then Prime Minister. As the last U.S. counterinsurgency advisor to the RTG had put it, “the Thai doctrine...tried to avoid some of the mistakes and pitfalls of earlier counterinsurgency efforts, emphasizing the point that the support of the people is the true target for both sides...”⁸² General Prem would advance the Thai doctrine as no others had before him.

In addition to refocusing energies on making deeper administrative and programmatic connections to the Thai people in CPT areas, the Thai government in the late 1970s was fortunate to have a respected king who understood that he could reach his people through his own set of values and traditions. As biographer Paul Handley observed, King Bhumibol had become “a sovereign of unmatched virtue and sagacity” who was “alone able to resolve the most intractable problems and disputes.”⁸³ The king in the mid-1960s focused a great deal of his energy on the developmental needs of his subjects, especially in rural areas. King Bhumibol increased official appearances and audiences by himself and Queen Sirikit from 341 in 1965 to 553 in 1969.⁸⁴ He traveled to rural areas and demonstrated a keen interest in the best, most productive farming techniques;⁸⁵ more importantly he was seen to be constantly among his people and concerned about their challenges with irrigation or animal husbandry, just as he

expressed concern for his subjects' political rights and access to justice.⁸⁶ CPT attempts to use propaganda against the king – trying to link him with the October 6, 1976, student massacre at elite Thammasat University or as an ally of extreme rightists – proved to be counterproductive.⁸⁷ As one Thai scholar has observed, King Bhumibol brought to life “the traditional concept of Thai kingship” and adjusted that concept to “the requirements of his time.”⁸⁸ Yet, Bhumibol’s “power derive[d] from his subjects’ appreciation of his personal vast reservoir of merit” as an exceptionally good king.⁸⁹ A cursory review of the Thai monarch’s actions during the period of the communist threat brings one to the conclusion that, however “feudal” the monarchy may have been in its origins, an insurgency would have great difficulty countering his popular appeal or the monarchy’s symbolic value as a supporter of Thai national identity that had remained free of other nations’ imperial ambitions.

Finally, a significant feature of the successful Thai approach to counterinsurgency was the offer of amnesty to any member of the CPT who would defect. One assessment based on direct interviews with military leaders was that an offer of amnesty had assumed many who had joined the CPT were “not ideologically committed but were forced to do so by circumstances such as economic hardship or unfair treatment by government officials.”⁹⁰ In the end, upon the public grant of amnesty to jailed students known as the “Bangkok 18” in September 1978, CPT members came out of the jungles in increasing numbers to a “forgiving reception.”⁹¹ From 572 defectors surrendering to authorities in 1978, the number grew to 1479 the next year, and to 1565 in 1980. CPT regular forces declined even more rapidly during the same period, presumably because many dropped out of the CPT but did not report to authorities as

defectors: from a total of over 10,000 in 1979, CPT regular forces declined to 7900 in 1981, to 4000 in 1982,⁹² and to “only 400-500” by mid-1987.⁹³ The implementation of amnesty was not without its challenges. Among the more committed CPT members, Thai writer Seksarn Prasertkul was typical of those who did not abandon their jungle hideouts immediately. Seksarn had joined the movement as a student who fled Bangkok after the October 6, 1976, incident. It would take him two years after the first major amnesty announcement to decide to come in from his base in the Northeast.⁹⁴ This is evidence that the new Thai counterinsurgency policy had to demonstrate sincerity and commitment in order to prevail and win over CPT members.

In 1984, the Thai military declared that the war with the Communist Party of Thailand was over.⁹⁵ Many veteran military counterinsurgency leaders warned of a potential relocation by the CPT to urban areas and their potential revival as a serious armed threat.⁹⁶ This potential threat never materialized.

Only after the counterinsurgency had succeeded in seriously eroding the CPT did the Government Issue a direct edict announcing its stance, called the “Policy of Struggle to Defeat Communism.” In April 1980 Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda issued Prime Minister Order 66/2523, a wide-ranging document that stated “social justice must be eliminated at every level and malfeasance in the bureaucracy must be decisively prevented and suppressed.”⁹⁷ In short, the document argued that “political means must prevail” to defeat the CPT.⁹⁸ In addition, the prime minister’s order stated that it was a Royal Thai government policy to be “carried out by all government agencies.” For the first time in two decades the counterinsurgency role had been shifted away from the military as the primary COIN implementer. The concept of a “political offensive” was

alien to the older Thai military generation; it was left to the new rising leaders to promulgate this political concept.

The Meaning of the Thai Case: A Reappraisal

The counterinsurgency against the Communist Party of Thailand draws out three main points:

1. Thai counterinsurgency planners paid attention to the local population and in that sense they had adapted population-centric approaches of counterinsurgency theory. At the same time, the government did not give excessive emphasis to “winning hearts and minds,”⁹⁹ as opposed to transforming the mode of government, reforming institutions, spurring economic growth and establishing a new social contract with the populace.

2. As General Saiyud summed up, “there was...a growing emphasis on the principle of putting political measures before military operations in tackling internal security problems;”¹⁰⁰ and,

3. To promote “understanding amongst the Thai people” and to correct the “deficiencies in [Thai] society,” officials reminded themselves, as they put it, these were tasks “[we] must shoulder ourselves” through combined political and social activism. During much of the 1980s, the military would in fact turn toward an official internal development role (infrastructure construction and agricultural projects, for example) as part of this larger strategy.¹⁰¹

The Thai case is significant because a host government had first worked with international community advisors to prosecute what was then considered a traditional armed counterinsurgency campaign but met with failure. When that traditional approach did not work (and in fact proved to be counter-productive), a new rising Thai leadership

was agile enough to chart an alternative course, even as outside donors such as the United States withdrew substantial military aid. What is unique about the Thai arrangement is that it followed Thai culture and precepts in the “Thai way.”

A number of commentators have stated the reasons for the Thai government’s success against the CPT were the communist party’s own internal fractiousness or external factors, such as the shift in Thai-Chinese relations, which at the very least reduced the visible footprint of Chinese materiel supplies. However, it appears the Chinese continued with some support to the CPT¹⁰² and, furthermore, one reliable U.S. assessment states that “Chinese material and organization support was never large”¹⁰³ from the outset. Thai scholar Gawin Chutima, a former member of the CPT with extensive inside knowledge, noted many CPT members in the jungle viewed with favor the new policies of Prime Minister Prem’s government in 1980. While taking note of the internal party ideological differences and a changing international context, Gawin Chutima stated a major factor for CPT implosion was “the shift in the [Thai] government’s counter-insurgency policy, from an emphasis on military means to one on political means. The imposition of the Prime Minister’s order number 66/23 [sic], which gave an amnesty to communists who gave themselves up, opened an alternative for the intellectuals, peasants and others...enabling them to leave the jungle.”¹⁰⁴

The Communist Party of Thailand may indeed have lingered on to a certain extent, but the Thai government’s new approach was decisive in ending the insurgent movement. Because the government changed its strategy, Gawin Chutima assessed that there could be no “social revolution” (though stated explicitly that the party would remain in an unarmed status and try to become attractive to Thai society at some future

date as a revolutionary movement).¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Gawin Chutima makes clear how significant was the new government policy: “Many intellectuals admitted that if there had been no amnesty, they would not have left; feeling uncomfortable with the CPT was better than being arrested by another form of dictatorship.”¹⁰⁶

It is easy in hindsight to say that the CPT’s own internal contradictions or the onset of a new transactional relationship between Thailand and China somehow led to the demise of the CPT insurgency in Thailand. But even scholars at the time were uncertain about what would happen next, with one prominent Thai political scientist and long-time observer of the CPT in 1984 questioning whether the “set-backs” encountered really “mark the beginning of the end of the CPT’s revolutionary strategy.”¹⁰⁷ For Thai scholar Kanok Wongtrangan, the CPT could just as well have been “in a process of adapting its revolutionary strategy [for]...the progression of its national-democratic revolution in Thailand.”¹⁰⁸

Spurred on by the reformist activism of the Young Turks and the Democratic Soldiers, elements of the Thai military during 1978-1980 and the government of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda in April 1980 made a major policy overhaul to the counterinsurgency strategy based on careful analyses of the prevailing political situation. Aside from finally implementing policies in accordance with the long-held view that continued armed reaction to the insurgency was “counterproductive,” the government set in motion a political activist campaign of unusual proportions (for example, the initial Prime Ministerial order of April 1980 was followed by the Order of the Prime Minister’s Office No. 65/2525 “Plan for Political Offensive” in May 1982).¹⁰⁹ By these policies, the Thai military assumed the role of “guardian of national security and

promoter of democracy and development” working closely with other government civilian agencies. While assuming a broader mission, the Thai army faced a new enemy: “a multi-dimensional challenge encompassing not only communism but also dictatorship, poverty and underdevelopment.”¹¹⁰

In the mid-1970s, the Thai communist insurgency was a growing phenomenon with the potential to harm Mainland Southeast Asian regional security and stability, and was still a matter for concern among Thai authorities until after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In hindsight, the insurgency’s boiling pot quickly settled down when the government applied the right measures. However, it was by no means evident at the time that the solution would indeed keep the pot from boiling over. We would do well not to dismiss the threat as Thai authorities saw it then, nor to underestimate the complexity of the domestic political situation in which the counterinsurgency was fought (e.g., the strength of those who wanted to continue military suppression operations). Finally, the absence of a steady stream of external military assistance may have helped settle on the right political solution. (That is not to say that most insurgencies won’t involve armed conflict; the Thai government consistently supported the readiness of its forces to combat armed CPT insurgents.)

The Thai government’s adaptive methods in 1978-1988 may provide insights to countering insurgencies elsewhere or even to the current situation in southern Thailand, which involves a number of different additional challenges such as separatist sentiments and religious overtones.¹¹¹ David Ucko and Robert Egnell note that as new insurgencies require “finer strategic thinking” it is imperative that policymakers have “an in-depth understanding of local context – its politics, structures, hopes, and

aspirations...” Ucko and Egnell add that this will in turn require “greater understanding and a more sincere interest – across the relevant arms of government – for the lands, people and context” in which counterinsurgencies might be waged.¹¹² As the Thai case shows, these new levels of understanding, combined with the political will of the host nation, indeed can lead to a more productive approach to counterinsurgency.

Endnotes

¹ Colin S. Gray, “Small Wars and Other Savage Violence,” in *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 273-296.

² For the purpose of this paper, these conflicts will be treated as forms of “insurgency.”

³ Colin S. Gray, *Schools for Strategy: Teaching Strategy for 21st Century Conflict* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2009), 47, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=947> (accessed March 30, 2015).

⁴ George K. Tanham, *Trial in Thailand* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, 1974), 115.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁷ John L.S. Girling, “Northeast Thailand: Tomorrow’s Vietnam,” *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 2 (1968): 388-397

⁸ Jeffrey Race, “The War in Northern Thailand,” *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 1 (January 1974): 85-112.

⁹ Peter F. Bell, “Thailand’s Northeast: Regional Underdevelopment, ‘Insurgency,’ and Official Response,” *Pacific Affairs* 42, no. 1 (Spring 1969), 48, 54.

¹⁰ Gawin Chutima reported that by 1982, the People’s Republic of China still “secretly helped the CPT,” but provided no further details. Gawin Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand 1973-1987* (Canterbury: Centre of South-East Asian Studies, 1990), 88n.

¹¹ Stuart J. Kaufman, “Escaping the Symbolic Politics Trap: Reconciliation Initiatives and Conflict Resolution in Ethnic Wars,” *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 2 (March, 2006): 202-203.

¹² Marc Howard Ross, *Cultural Contestation in Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹³ Austin Long, *On 'Other War': Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), 57.

¹⁴ Raphael S. Cohen, "Just How Important are 'Hearts and Minds' Anyway? Counterinsurgency Goes to the Polls," *The Journal of Strategic Studies Online*, May 2014, 609-636, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2014.881286> (accessed March 30, 2015).

¹⁵ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006, 1964 repr.), 52-63.

¹⁶ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 10.

¹⁷ Graeme Sligo, "Counterinsurgency Lessons from the North-West Frontier," *Australian Defence Force Journal Online*, no. 190 (2013): 44-52, http://www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au/UserFiles/issues/190%202013%20Mar_Apr.pdf (accessed March 30, 2015).

¹⁸ Thomas A. Marks, "Chapter 1: Maoist Miscue I: The Demise of the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965-1983," in *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 19-82.

¹⁹ Richard Lee Hough, "Development and Security in Thailand: Lessons from Other Asian Countries," *Asian Survey* 9, no. 3 (March, 1969): 178-87; Race, "The War in Northern Thailand," 85-112. In his book *Resisting Rebellion*, Anthony Joes wrote that when the Thai Black Panther Division returned to Thailand from Vietnam, it came "with its own ideas about what to do and not to do in effective" COIN. Anthony J. Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 214.

²⁰ Thac Chaloeontiarana, *Thailand: The Politics of Despotism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Programs Publications, 2007), 172-175.

²¹ GEN (ret.) Saiyud Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-insurgency 1965-1985* (Bangkok, Thailand: S. Research Center Co., Ltd., 1986), 13.

²² Saiyud Kerdphol, then a Lieutenant General in the Royal Thai Army and Chief of Operations for the RTG Counter Subversion Command concluded that in "direct" operations government troops "suffered disproportionate losses" and did not win the "involvement and participation of the people." Saiyud Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, unpublished typed and bound manuscript, U.S. Army War College Library 1968, 28.

²³ In a report to the National Security Council in November 1972, counterinsurgency analyst Dennis Sachs, predicting the "expected failure of yet another multi-battalion army operation" against the CPT, noted that the Royal Thai Army was "unprepared for the unconventional kind of warfare that must be waged to combat the insurgents." Dennis Sachs, "Memorandum for Phil Odeen," National Security Council Trip Report, Washington, DC, NSC, November 29, 1972, 2-3.

²⁴ Chester L. Cooper, "Thai Security Situation," Number 310. Report From Chester L. Cooper of the National Security Council Staff to the Special Group (Counter Insurgency), February 28, 1966. In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Vol. XXVII, Mainland Southeast Asia; Regional Affairs* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 664-668.

²⁵ In an official report in 1968, U.S. analysts assessed that Royal Thai Army "suppression operations have been ineffective, counterproductive and costly in manpower and money." WSEG, ODDRE, "Counterinsurgency in Thailand," Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 15, 1968, 95.

²⁶ David Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981), 85.

²⁷ Gawin Chutima, preface to *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand 1973-1987*, v.

²⁸ Tho Phianwitthaya [nom de guerre for Wirat Anghathawon], "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand," trans. Chris Baker, *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, no. 4 (2003): 510-541.

²⁹ Justus M. Van der Kroef, *Communism in South-East Asia* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981), 7, 17.

³⁰ Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 8; Morell and Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand*, 79.

³¹ Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 11.

³² Morell and Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand*, 79.

³³ Tho Phianwitthaya [nom de guerre for Wirat Anghathawon], "An Internal History," 511.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 518.

³⁵ Morell and Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand*, 79-80.

³⁶ Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 18. Chutima also writes that "there is no solid evidence as to how far the CPT had penetrated and taken control of the student movement between 1973-1976" (25).

³⁷ Tho Phianwitthaya [nom de guerre for Wirat Anghathawon], "An Internal History," 538.

³⁸ The implications of the anti-CPT strategy for the ongoing conflict in Southern Thailand is beyond the scope of this paper. That conflict involves, ethno-religious and separatist elements that were not part of the mainstream communist insurgency during 1965-1985. As Keokam Kraisoraphong reported in 2013, in addition to the policies of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda outlined in this paper, Thai authorities also implemented a joint, whole-of-government Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC). According to Keokam Kraisoraphong, "The security and governance arrangements coordinated by the SBPAC effectively contained the violence in Thailand's south for two decades (from the late 1980s)." Prime Minister Thaksin

abolished SBPAC in 2002. Keokam Kraisoraphong, *Conflict in Southern Thailand: Seed for Security Sector Reform?* Asia Security Initiative Policy Series no. 22 (Singapore: Rajaratnam School for International Studies Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, 2013), 8.

³⁹ Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 186.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴¹ Tanham, *Trial in Thailand*, 88-93.

⁴² Some field commanders were reported to approve indiscriminate arrests and tolerate torture and summary executions. Kasuma Snitwongse, "From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive: Attitudinal Transformation of Thai Military Officers Since 1976," *Conflict* 10, no. 2 (1989): 95.

⁴³ Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 16.

⁴⁴ Tanham, *Trial in Thailand*, 135.

⁴⁵ Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Kusuma Snitwongse, and Suchit Bunbongkarn, *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive: Attitudinal Transformation of Thai Military Officers Since 1976* (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, 1990), 61, 87 (n. 15).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁴⁷ See Zipple's account of General Sant Chitpatima in the Fifth Military Region who oversaw what were called the "red drum murders" of large numbers of suspected communists, mainly in the 1969-1972 period. General Sant would later lead a failed coup against General Prem in 1981. Matthew Zipple, "Thailand's Red Drum Murders through an Analysis of Declassified Documents," *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 36 (2014): 91-111.

⁴⁸ Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 15.

⁴⁹ Tanham, *Trial in Thailand*, 150.

⁵⁰ Morell and Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand*, 164.

⁵¹ John L.S. Girling, *Thailand: Society and Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 236.

⁵² In a May 1973 letter transmitting an inter-agency study on "U.S. Counterinsurgency Support for Thailand," Acting Secretary of State Kenneth Rush highlighted for National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger that in the portion of the study "relating to the U.S. role in promoting a more effective Thai counter-insurgency effort, the study concludes that we possess an 'uncertain ability to leverage even marginal changes in Thai' direction and performance." In "U.S. Counterinsurgency Support for Thailand; Attachment Not Included," Letter, May 18, 1973, 2pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, PR01131. (Accessed on March 4, 2015 from the National Security Archive, The George Washington University.)

⁵³ Barbara Leitch LePoer, ed., Library of Congress Federal Research Division, *Thailand: a Country Study*, 6th ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), 252-253.

⁵⁴ The April 1976 election was considered a referendum on the Kukrit government's policy of removing U.S. bases. When Kukrit's party lost, the incoming Seni government attempted to keep some U.S. bases, but to no effect. Clark D. Neher, *Modern Thai Politics: Village to Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1979), 411.

⁵⁵ Chulacheeb Chinwanno, "Rising China and Thailand's Policy of Strategic Engagement," in *The Rise of China: Responses from Southeast Asia and Japan*, ed. Jun Tsunekawa (Tokyo: The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2009), 87.

⁵⁶ LePoer, ed., *Thailand: a Country Study*, 253.

⁵⁷ See discussion of the Thai economic success in Clemens Breisinger and Xinshen Diao, *Economic Transformation in Theory and Practice: What are the Messages for Africa?* IFPRI Discussion Paper 00797 (Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, September 2008), 13.

⁵⁸ Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 19-20.

⁵⁹ Breisinger and Diao, *Economic Transformation in Theory and Practice*, 19.

⁶⁰ Bell, "Thailand's Northeast: Regional Underdevelopment, 'Insurgency,' and Official Response," 48.

⁶¹ Morell, Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand*, 55.

⁶² Chai-Anan Samudavanija, *Thailand: State-Building, Democracy and Globalization* (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies – IPPS, 2002), 122.

⁶³ Tanham, *Trial in Thailand*, 36.

⁶⁴ Samudavanija, *Thailand: State-Building*, 125-126.

⁶⁵ Kanok Wongtrangan, *Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand*, PhD dissertation (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University, 1981), 297-298, <http://search.proquest.com/dissertations/docview/303239548/fulltextPDF/3748DCD863964E6A/PQ/1?accountid=4444> (accessed March 30, 2015)

⁶⁶ Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 1-5, 12.

⁶⁷ The "Democratic Soldiers" were reportedly based among policy making units and general staffs in Bangkok, including the ISOC. This group drafted, and masterminded the publication and implementation of Prime Ministerial order (66/2523) in April 1980 that formalized a new democracy activism across the whole of the Thai government. These officers did not generally come from command backgrounds. Suchit Bunbongkarn, *The Military in Thai Politics 1981-1986* (Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987), 27-28; Samudavanija, Snitwongse, and Bunbongkarn, *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive*, 118-121.

⁶⁸ Chai-Anan Samudavanija, *The Thai Young Turks* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), 27.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁷¹ Ibid., 34.

⁷² Ibid., 36-37.

⁷³ Ibid., 31n, 37. The informal manifesto was a white paper presented by “Young Turk” member COL Manoon Rupekajon to the group on June 27, 1980, laying out some of the principles by which they had been operating.

⁷⁴ Morell and Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand*, 90.

⁷⁵ Samudavanija, Snitwongse, and Bunbongkarn, *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive*, 143.

⁷⁶ Blaufarb and Tanham put the peak number of communist fighters at 12,000, while Kanok Wongtrangan put it at 14,190. Douglas Blaufarb and George Tanham, *Fourteen Points: A Framework for Analysis of Counterinsurgency* (McLean, VA: BDM Corporation BDM/W-84-0175-TR, July 1984), Appendix G, G-5, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA368093> (accessed March 30, 2015); Wongtrangan, *Communist Revolutionary Process*, 291.

⁷⁷ Saiyud Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 132.

⁷⁸ Kasuma Snitwongse, “From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive: Attitudinal Transformation of Thai Military Officers Since 1976,” 95.

⁷⁹ Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 85.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 121.

⁸¹ Ibid., 86-87 nn.

⁸² Tanham, *Trial in Thailand*, 92.

⁸³ Paul M. Handley, *The King Never Smiles: A Biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 187.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 198.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 199.

⁸⁷ R. Sean Randolph and W. Scott Thompson, *Thai Insurgency: Contemporary Developments* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1981), 57-59.

⁸⁸ Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, “The Monarchy and Constitutional Change Since 1972,” in *Reforming Thai Politics*, ed. Duncan McCargo (Copenhagen, Denmark: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2002), 68.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁰ Samudavanija, Snitwongse, and Bunbongkarn, *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive*, 11-12.

⁹¹ Handley, *The King Never Smiles*, 268.

⁹² Charles F. Keyes, *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 111.

⁹³ Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 73.

⁹⁴ Seksarn Prasertkul, *The Chronicle of Seksarn Prasertkul* (Bangkok, Thailand: Praphansarn Publishing, 2009), 14.

⁹⁵ Samudavanija, Snitwongse, and Bunbongkarn, *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive*, 12.

⁹⁶ Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 168.

⁹⁷ Samudavanija, Snitwongse, and Bunbongkarn, *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive*, 155-156.

⁹⁸ Snitwongse, "From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive: Attitudinal Transformation of Thai Military Officers Since 1976," 105.

⁹⁹ That is to say, the object for leaders such as General Prem and King Bhumibol was to be conscious of the Thai social contract, which looked to all sides of the equation. As King Bhumibol told a business audience in 1969, "If justice is not dispensed throughout the land, disorder will prevail. Many are driven into becoming insurgents by force of circumstances...Troops we can fight for we are a nation of warriors; but insurgency which is of our own making is much more difficult to defeat." In an interview with BBC television in 1980, King Bhumibol answered a question about the CPT menace by replying, "We are not fighting against people, we are fighting against hunger. If we make this [food] and they have a better life, the people you call the communists insurgents will have a better life also." Handley, *The King Never Smiles*, 199, 284.

¹⁰⁰ Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand*, 165.

¹⁰¹ Suchit Bunbongkarn, *The Military in Thai Politics 1981-1986* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987).

¹⁰² See note 10. Chutima, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, 88n1.

¹⁰³ Randolph and Thompson, *Thai Insurgency: Contemporary Developments*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Chutima, preface to *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand*, x.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 43, 86-87.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰⁷ Kanok Wongtrangan, "The Revolutionary Strategy of the Communist Party of Thailand: Change and Persistence," in *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*, ed. Lim Joo-Jock and Vani S. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 162.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Samudavanija, Snitwongse, and Bunbongkarn, Appendix II to *From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive*, 204.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 181.

¹¹¹ See Endnote 38 on the ongoing conflict in southern Thailand.

¹¹² David Ucko and Robert Egnell, *Counterinsurgency in Crisis: Britain and the Challenges of Modern Warfare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 163.