



**BATTLEFIELD
TO
MARKETPLACE:**

Responses to Thailand's
Major Foreign Policy Change



SALINEE PHONPRAPAI

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FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE**

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FOREWORD



“Turning Indochina from a battlefield to marketplace” encapsulates Thailand’s major foreign policy change introduced by General Chatichai Choonhavan after he became Prime Minister in August 1988. He radically revised Thailand’s approach to the conflict in Cambodia by unilaterally changing the country’s policy towards the government in Phnom Penh. His policy surprised many people, both domestic and foreign, because it was introduced without prior consultation with other key players. The new policy set a new direction in the process to resolve this long-standing international issue, which was finally settled at the Paris International Conference on Cambodia in 1991.

Dr. Salinee Phonprapai undertook to study this new policy in depth, attempting to find out if a lesser power such as Thailand

could introduce a major foreign policy change independently of its regional partners and the greater powers despite their having important interests in the issue. As she succinctly stated: “The key to understand this is not just to consider its genesis but it is primarily to analyse how the new policy was carried out, how it was received, and how the reactions affected the implementation of the policy.” Therefore, a large part of her work examines this policy in terms of domestic ramification and of the responses of key regional players and the principal international players.

The International Studies Center (ISC) wishes to express its deep appreciation to Dr. Salinee for permitting the ISC to publish, for the first time, her doctoral thesis *Responses to a Major Foreign Policy Change: The Case of Thailand’s Foreign Policy Towards the Conclusion of the Third Indochina Conflict During the Government of Chatichai Choonhavan (1988-1991)*, which was submitted to the University of London in 2003, in the book series on Thailand’s diplomatic history. As with the other volumes in the series, the ISC followed the same practice of making as few editorial changes as necessary in order to keep the context of this book as close to the original thesis as possible.

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ABSTRACT



Thailand's foreign policy towards the third Indochina conflict was radically revised when General Chatichai Choonhavan was elected Prime Minister in August 1988. Chatichai abandoned his predecessors' hard-line policy towards Indochina and instead immediately initiated a new policy which essentially involved befriending Vietnam and the Phnom Penh government in his efforts to turn Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace. Chatichai's policy surprised many people, both domestic and foreign, because it was introduced without prior consultation with other key players.

This thesis attempts to find out if a lesser power such as Thailand could introduce a major foreign policy change independently of its regional partners and the greater powers despite their having important interests in the issue. The key to understand this is not just to consider its genesis but it is

primarily to analyse how the new policy was carried out, how it was received, and how the reactions affected the implementation of the policy. The thesis shows that timing was a crucial factor, and that a lesser power may be able to initiate significant changes in regional and international politics through a sudden alteration of the direction of its foreign policy only by anticipating changes in the international environment. There has to be a congruence between the flow of politics at the domestic, regional, and international levels. Accordingly, the thesis examines Chatichai's new policy in terms of domestic ramification and of the responses of key regional players, namely Cambodia and ASEAN countries, and finally the principal international players, namely China and the US. As a result, it will become clear that a lesser power such as Thailand is better able to initiate a process of implementing a major foreign policy change than to be able to follow it through.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract		8
Acknowledgements		16
Table of Contents		12
List of Tables		13
List of Abbreviations		15
Chapter 1	Introduction	18
Chapter 2	Explaining Chatichai's Policy Towards the Conclusion of the Third Indochina Conflict	36
Chapter 3	Domestic Responses	66
Chapter 4	Responses from Cambodia	98
Chapter 5	Responses from ASEAN countries	126
Chapter 6	Responses from China	164
Chapter 7	Responses from the US	202
Chapter 8	Conclusion	234
Notes		246
Bibliography		284
Appendix		322

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Thailand's trade (export + import) with the Indochinese countries in terms of percentages of Thailand's total trade	55
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CGDK	Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
FUNCINPEC	Front uni national pour un Cambodge indépendent, neutre, pacifique et coopératif
JIM	Jakarta Informal Meeting
KPNLF	Khmer People's National Liberation Front
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGC	National Government of Cambodia (new name of the CGDK from 3 February 1990)
NSC	National Security Council
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
SNC	Supreme National Council
SOC	State of Cambodia
UN	United Nations
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

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CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION



The study in this thesis focuses on a major and sudden foreign policy change introduced by Thailand's Prime Minister General Chatichai Choonhavan towards the third Indochina conflict during his administration between 1988 to 1991. The third Indochina conflict was Thailand's most important foreign policy issue since the late 1970s, and it had not only local but also regional and international dimensions. On becoming Prime Minister, Chatichai radically revised Thailand's approach towards the third Indochina conflict by unilaterally replacing the hard-line policy towards the Cambodian government in Phnom Penh with an olive branch diplomacy. Chatichai's friendly approach towards Cambodia in particular and Indochina in general was captured by his slogan of 'turning Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace' by which he argued that peace in Indochina could be more easily achieved through an expansion of economic ties with Indochina.¹

The central question of this thesis is: could a relatively small power such as Thailand unilaterally introduce and carry forward a major foreign policy change in an issue that involved not only local players but also countries that were greater powers such as China and the US, all of whom had important interests in that issue? The thesis contends that the key to answer this is to look at how the new policy was received by relevant countries during the process of implementation. The question of implementation has not been adequately addressed in the existing literature on Thailand's foreign policy during this period. Studies of Chatichai's foreign policy towards Indochina, notably those by Sunai Phasuk and by David Oldfield², primarily focus on the origins of Chatichai's policy but they do not sufficiently follow through on the crucial issue of implementation. This thesis seeks to fill in this

important gap in scholarship. Moreover, only by looking at how the new policy was implemented and how it was received by key players could one begin to see the extent to which a relatively small power such as Thailand can be proactive in its foreign policy conduct, particularly when the issue in question has international and regional as well as local dimensions. In other words, responses from key countries could determine how much the new policy could do to achieve its intended goals. Responses are feedback of the policy, and could lead to further changes in the policy or how it is subsequently implemented. Foreign policy is more than a question of decision-making as it must also be seen in terms of a flow of the policy and how it interacts with other players.

This introduction will now address five main areas which are imperative to the subsequent discussions in the thesis. These are (1) the meaning of a major foreign policy change; (2) significance of responses to a foreign policy change; (3) relative power of states and their foreign policy; (4) the third Indochina conflict and Thai foreign policy; and (5) contribution and an overview of the thesis. It will become clear that although this thesis focuses on Thailand's foreign policy, it has broader implications. Importantly, it draws attention to the possibility where a major foreign policy change by a relatively small power in the international system could make a difference in the issue which has not only local but also regional and international significance.

DEFINING A MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

Although a major foreign policy change may simply mean an important change in foreign policy, scholars in the field of foreign policy studies offer a variety of definitions, depending on how

the change (which some scholars call restructuring) is looked at. Thomas Volgy and John Schwarz define foreign policy restructuring as a major, comprehensive change in the foreign policy orientation of a nation, over a relatively short period of time, as manifested through behavioural changes in a nation's interactions with other actors in international politics.³ For Kal Holsti, a foreign policy restructuring is the dramatic, wholesale alteration of a nation's pattern of external relations with change being quick, intentional, non-incremental, and incorporating conscious linkage of different sectors.⁴ Holsti makes a distinction between a restructuring and a normal change in foreign policy, describing the latter as being usually slow, incremental, and typified by low linkages between sectors.⁵

A more flexible and broader conceptualisation of foreign policy change is offered by Joe Hagan and Jerel Rosati. They assert that a change or restructuring of foreign policy may not be dramatic or wholesale, and may vary relative to specific issue areas or sectors of the state's foreign relations.⁶ David Oldfield follows along this line while trying to tighten up Hagan and Rosati's broad definition. According to Oldfield, foreign policy restructuring is a change in multiple sectors or issue-areas (i.e., at least two, but not necessarily all) with one or more states over a short period of time and equates to a near reversal of the past foreign policy directed at that state (or those states) in terms of the relevant sectors.⁷

Charles Hermann offers a definition which is more specific about what is changed. His definition of a major foreign policy change incorporates three forms of policy redirection. These are programme changes (changes of means), problem/goal changes (changes of ends), and international orientation changes.⁸ Excluded from Hermann's

definition of major foreign policy changes are what he calls adjustment changes which occur in the level of efforts (greater or lesser) and/or in the scope of recipients (such as refinements in the class of targets) without changing what is done, how it is done, and the purpose for which it is done.⁹

Closely related to the idea of a major, non-incremental foreign policy change is a notion of surprise. Michael Handel distinguishes between different degrees of surprise, ranging from routine diplomacy where there is little or no innovation, to what he calls a major surprise which involves radical changes that have impacts on the balance of power in the international system.¹⁰ He also explains that surprises may be *faits accomplis* if they are unilateral acts committed by one state against the interest of another, but he notes that a *fait accompli* is only a surprise in terms of timing, and not of the object of the policy.¹¹

The notion of surprise is relevant in Chatichai's case and formed part of the major foreign policy change which he launched. In this thesis, a major foreign policy change, as introduced by Chatichai, is defined as a change in a foreign policy of a state (Thailand) towards another state (Cambodia) in at least two aspects (e.g., economic and diplomatic) over a short period of time, with change being a major revision of the previous approach towards that state. The significance of Cambodia was that it was at the vortex of the third Indochina war that was multi-dimensional involving interlinked conflicts at local, regional and international levels. Importantly, Chatichai's new policy was a surprise because it was introduced without prior knowledge of, or consultation with other key players or countries who had important interests in the issue.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESPONSES TO A FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

Responses to a policy change may be defined as actual and observable reactions to the new policy following its introduction. The importance of responses should not be understated, because after the decision is made, it will necessarily have to be presented to those outside of the decision-making body. The significance of what happens during the implementation stage is highlighted by David Lewis and Helen Wallace.¹² They point out that policies sometimes have unclear and uncertain characters when they are made, and because of the unsettled and unfinished nature of the policy, we need to look beyond the decision-taking stage. They argue that the implementation process has a close and creative interaction with the policy, hence the whole process may be regarded as evolutionary.¹³

Similarly, Steve Smith and Michael Clarke argue that the implementation process could be, to some extent, a decision process itself.¹⁴ They suggest that in some cases implementers do not directly do anything wrong, and keep the plan in so far as it exists. The fact that sometimes final outcome is different from what is planned could be a result of difficulties emerging when implementation is undertaken. Factors which may obstruct the smooth going of the policy include (i) a lack of effective coalition of domestic and foreign organisations necessary for the successful implementation of the policy, or the coalition does not hold long enough to see the policy through; for example, if there is bureaucratic stalling;¹⁵ and (ii) factors which are simply not foreseen when the policy is made such as unpredicted outcome of discussion or unsuccessful outcome of military actions.¹⁶

By looking into the implementation stage, we throw light on the actual behaviours of states which will assist our ways of explaining them.¹⁷ At the same time, this will contribute to the attempts to move further from the existing foreign policy literature where the central problem to be explained is usually the decision and where implementation is assumed rather than examined.¹⁸ Indeed, if foreign policy is to be seen as a dynamic process, we cannot exclude an explicit study of what happens during the implementation stage such as responses which are feedback of the policy. Decisions and their implementation form a constantly flowing continuum as the experience of implementation feeds into the thinking behind future decisions and further implementation.¹⁹

An early attempt to highlight the notion of dynamism in foreign policy analysis, including the ideas of responses, feedback, and flow, is a study by Michael Brecher, Blema Steinberg, and Janice Stein.²⁰ They criticise earlier studies of foreign policy behaviour which they describe as being static because little or no attention was given to feedback and ongoing process. Their study mentions the possibility when a policy decision may be affected by the environment in which it is exposed after it has been made, although they do not go into great details about this. Similarly, Graham Allison argues that there was no systematic effort to examine the influence of the implementation phase of the policy-making process on the final output of that process, nor was attention paid to the possible improvement of policy-making that might result from greater attention to this phase, even though it was often the case that success or failure of a policy rested on what was done during this step.²¹

The focus of this thesis on the responses to a major foreign policy change, therefore, reflects the importance of what happens during

the implementation process and the extent to which this could affect how the policy plays out. For instance, if responses are favourable, they could create positive impacts on further implementation of the policy and could increase the chances of it becoming a success. On the other hand, if responses are negative, the new policy may have to be modified or abandoned. An example of the case in point is Nigeria's decision to break off diplomatic relations with France in 1961 following France's nuclear tests in the Sahara in 1960. This major foreign policy change was in response to popular domestic support, and was mainly engineered by Nigeria's Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa. The decision was largely influenced by altruistic and African leadership consideration and it was a manifestation of self-assertion by a new entrant into world affairs. However, responses to the new policy became so negative that it could not be sustained. For instance, Nigeria came under pressure from its African neighbours, who relied on it in their trade and diplomatic activities with France, to reconsider the policy. In the end, Nigeria relented and re-established diplomatic relations with France in 1965.²²

RELATIVE POWER OF STATES AND THEIR FOREIGN POLICY

Among other things, the case of Nigeria shows the constraints that apply to a lesser power in seeking to introduce and to maintain a foreign policy change that challenges the interests of a greater power. Indeed, states have different degrees of influence in relation to one another and to the international system, which could affect their foreign policy in general and their ability to introduce major foreign policy changes in particular. Generally, and especially prior to the second World War,

states in the international system may be divided into great powers and minor powers.²³ Martin Wight explains that although there are different ways of defining the terms, the most satisfactory definition is one which embodies the distinction made at the Paris Conference in 1919 between powers with limited interests (minor powers) and those with general interests (great powers).²⁴ This supports an earlier writing by Annette Baker Fox which distinguishes between great and small powers, arguing that great powers exert their influence over wide areas while small powers are almost by definition local powers whose demands are restricted to their own and immediate adjacent areas.²⁵ Nevertheless, after the second World War, the term 'superpower' was used to describe the US and the Soviet Union to distinguish them from other great powers. The superpowers were recognised as being superior to the traditional European great powers and alone capable of undertaking the central managerial role in international politics the latter had played in the past.²⁶ Meanwhile, minor powers include the vast majority of countries in the international system, ranging from powers on the fringe of the great to very small states lacking any military strength.²⁷ Martin Wight notes that one type of minor powers is regional great powers. These are states whose interests primarily centre on regional level and they have the capacity to act alone on that level; for example, China.²⁸

Given this very general distinction between great/small or great/minor powers as well as a large diversity within the group of minor powers, it seems appropriate to speak of influences of states in relative terms in the context to which they are being referred. For the purpose of this thesis, the US and the Soviet Union are the superpowers as they have global reach. Meanwhile, China will be described as a great power

whose interests and influence are mainly regional. It is able to dominate the region to which it belongs but not the international system as a whole. Also, for the purpose of this thesis, Thailand may be seen as a medium regional power in the context of East and Southeast Asia, although it is a relatively small power on the global scale. Thailand has a capacity to sustain itself, pursue independent foreign policy, and can contribute to shaping the region. The last point distinguishes Thailand from a regional great power like China who can dominate the region, and from weaker countries whose capacity to operate independently is relatively limited e.g., Laos. To avoid possible confusion, in this thesis Thailand will be described as a lesser power when referred to in relation to the greater powers like the US and China. It will be argued that under certain circumstances, countries such as Thailand, or those in a similar position, could be proactive in their foreign policies and could make a difference in the issues which have significance beyond their immediate local or regional scopes.

In a way, this seems to go against many scholars' suggestions that, as lesser powers have relatively limited capacity to act²⁹, they should not act alone but should align with others.³⁰ Nevertheless, there have been examples where lesser states are able to introduce major foreign policy changes which are against the interest of the greater powers. One was the case of Egypt under the leadership of President Anwar Sadat. In 1972, Sadat introduced a major foreign policy change by announcing his decision to expel Soviet technicians from Egypt. This was a unilateral move which successfully pressured the Soviet Union to increase its military support to Egypt. He shocked the Soviet Union into concessions it would not otherwise have made, while deceiving his adversaries and strengthening his position within Egypt.³¹ Also, in

another major foreign policy initiative in 1977, Sadat embarked on an unprecedented journey to Jerusalem despite Arab opposition to Israel. Sadat repeatedly emphasised the need to sustain the momentum in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. Although this move shocked many countries, it successfully led Israel to quickly take a stand on the basic issues between itself and Egypt, and to follow up Sadat's bold move with its own proposals.³² As a result, Sadat successfully signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 through American diplomatic support and mediation.³³

The case of Sadat shows that the ability of Egypt, as a lesser power, to successfully implement a foreign policy change depends on how other key countries reacted to the new policy. The reactions were, in turn, influenced by the context in which the policy was introduced as well as how well timed it was. This is relevant in the case of Thailand's policy towards the conclusion of the third Indochina conflict during the Chatichai administration. In one of his statements, Chatichai acknowledged that Thailand did not have enough influence to determine the shape of the conflict.³⁴ Nevertheless, his decision to unilaterally change the Thai approach towards the Indochina issue seems to contradict this statement, as it would appear imprudent for a country without enough influence to initiate a new policy on its own when the issue in question had regional and international dimensions involving many players including regional and global powers. It will be argued in this thesis that the new Thai policy was introduced because its makers calculated that it would not threaten to undermine the important interests of other key players in the issue. Instead, they believed that the trends of events favoured the policy, and that it would not be rejected by the key players. This leads on to a more

general argument that lesser powers can be proactive and can make significant changes within their region, and possibly beyond, if their foreign policy change accords with broader systemic changes whose advent is just becoming apparent.

THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT AND THAI FOREIGN POLICY

Chatichai's policy seems to go against what has been described as the bamboo diplomacy in the practice of Thai foreign policy where the country reacts to prevailing circumstances rather than initiating new approaches.³⁵ There are many examples in the history of Thai foreign policy where Bangkok adopted a policy of bending with the wind, which involved an ability to adjust and adapt to situations. For instance, in the colonial period, the country avoided colonisation partly because of its ability to manage relations with Britain and France. At the end of the second World War, Thailand was able to benefit from American sympathy in order to balance off severe British demands. These instances show that although Thailand was not a regional great power, it had a capacity to successfully draw attention of the greater powers to the Thai interests and to convince them that these were consistent with, or did not go against, their interests. In the mid 1970s, following the communist victories in Indochina and the Sino-American rapprochement, Bangkok moved to establish cordial relations both with Beijing and with its Indochinese neighbours in an attempt to adapt to new regional situations, although earlier Bangkok had been staunchly against communist forces in the region and had taken part in the American war against Vietnam. One scholar suggests that

Thailand's ability to adjust and adapt to situations indicates that it was a mature and pragmatic actor in international politics.³⁶

However, the third Indochina war affected Thailand in a way that was different from other regional developments in the past. Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia, which marked the start of the third Indochina conflict, put Thailand in a position of a front-line state in the crisis as Thai security was directly threatened by the presence of Vietnamese forces near the Thai-Cambodian border.³⁷ Although Thailand was not a regional great power, its position as a front-line state significantly increased its relative importance in the region where the issue quickly became the most serious problem. Thailand's front-line status changed Bangkok's relations with other ASEAN partners, China, and the US, all of whom were key players in the Cambodian issue.

At this point, perhaps it should be restated that the third Indochina conflict had multiple dimensions, involving not only local but also regional and international aspects.³⁸ On the local level, it was a conflict between regimes in Hanoi and Phnom Penh whose relationship had been plagued with problems such as border clashes and ethnic differences. However, the conflict between two Indochinese neighbours became part of the rivalry between Vietnam and China as Beijing supported the Pol Pot government in Cambodia which was ousted following the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of that country. The conflict also fuelled Sino-Soviet hostility as Chinese leaders believed that the Vietnamese aggression was part of Moscow's plan to encircle China and exert Soviet influence worldwide. The Chinese view was shared by the US, particularly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Because of its multiple dimensions, the third Indochina conflict

was viewed in different lights by key players in the issue, depending on the scope of their interests. For Washington, the third Indochina conflict was viewed in relation to the bigger picture of superpower relations and the role of China. For Beijing, the issue was an immediate national security concern. As a regional great power, China was sensitive to what it perceived to be Vietnamese threats which were seen as linked to the Soviet attempts to encircle China. Meanwhile, ASEAN countries were primarily concerned with the security of their immediate area. Within ASEAN, Thailand's position of a front-line state in the conflict made it stand out from other members of the Association and enabled it to influence how the issue should be dealt with by ASEAN and beyond. In other words, the status of a front-line state gave Thailand greater influence than what a medium regional power like itself may have expected to wield normally. Bangkok's hard-line policy against Vietnam and the Phnom Penh government received support from its ASEAN partners, and from a large number of states in the international community, including the US and China. The success of Thailand's diplomacy, and the international support for its Indochina policy since the late 1970s, explained in part why some groups and countries reacted with disapproval when Chatichai reversed Thailand's policy towards Indochina in August 1988. In contrast to the previous Thai approach, Chatichai offered an olive branch to the government of Phnom Penh in an effort to end the Cambodian conflict and, as he announced, to turn Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace.

It will be argued in this thesis that Chatichai's decision to introduce a new policy was significantly influenced by his judgement of the trends of events based on the changing circumstances

at the time, coupled with his own personality and experience. What makes Chatichai's diplomacy stand out from other foreign policy changes in the past is that it caught most people by surprise and that it appeared to go against the general agreement on how the Cambodian problem should be handled. In other words, the new policy seemed to put Thailand in a position at odds with greater powers such as the US and China, as well as with its ASEAN partners. Nevertheless, this thesis contends that what Chatichai did was in fact consistent with international circumstances that had begun to change since the late 1980s, which was proved by the findings that other key countries did not fundamentally oppose his idea.

CONTRIBUTION AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

By looking at the responses of the key players in the Cambodian conflict to Chatichai's new policy, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the ability of a lesser power to initiate a major foreign policy change in the issue which was of considerable importance to many other countries, including its regional partners, a great power, and the superpowers. The focus of this thesis on the responses to the policy change also draws attention to the crucial issue of implementation. The process of implementation is of considerable importance as it involves interactions with other countries, which is essentially what foreign policy is about. As one scholar points out, the task of foreign policy analysts is to throw light on the manner in which states influence each other.³⁹ Indeed, foreign policy is a dynamic process involving not only the stage leading up to the decision but also how it is implemented, how it is received by other key countries, and the extent to which such

reception could influence further implementation. For scholars whose interests centre on the study of Thai foreign policy, this thesis offers a detailed examination of Chatichai's policy towards the conclusion of the third Indochina conflict. In this respect, it significantly adds to the existing literature on Chatichai's foreign policy which almost always concentrates on the factors that influenced the making of his policy without sufficiently addressing the process during which it was implemented.

The details and information included in this thesis are derived from various sources. Primary information includes not only speeches of relevant people as well as governmental documents and data, but also the author's interviews with some key figures involved in the making and implementation of the policy as well as some experts on the subject.⁴⁰ A number of materials considered as secondary resources have also been consulted. These include books, biographies, and articles published in scholarly journals, newspapers, newsletters, and magazines. Some newspaper articles which were acquired from relevant internet sources and in the form of newspaper cuttings do not have their page numbers identified. Otherwise, all details of the materials are provided in the dissertation.

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, including this introductory part. The following chapter examines the context in which Chatichai's policy emerged. It will also discuss the nature of the policy's goals as well as the character of the policy. Chapter 3 looks at the reactions from Thailand's domestic groups to Chatichai's policy. The discussion in this chapter, particularly about the roles of certain domestic players who were the key figures in the making and implementation of the policy, is imperative for subsequent discussions.

Chapter 4 examines responses from Cambodia which was central to the issue and was the target to which the policy was directed. Chapters 5-7 investigate responses from ASEAN countries, China, and the US, respectively. These countries are carefully selected because of their influence on Thailand's foreign policy in general and their relevance in the third Indochina conflict in particular. Essentially, these countries could determine how much of a difference Chatichai's policy could make to the Cambodian issue. The selection also reflects multiple dimensions of the third Indochina conflict, which had local, regional, and international aspects. Reactions from ASEAN states reflect the view of a regional organisation where collective actions were an integral part. Responses from China reflect the view of a regional great power with wider interests and influence than those of ASEAN countries. Meanwhile, responses from the US reflect how a superpower with global interests perceived the same issue. The concluding chapter will draw together the findings and discussion in the preceding chapters in an attempt to provide a key to understanding how a foreign policy change of this kind works. It will also discuss the extent to which Chatichai was able to achieve his objectives in Indochina.

CHAPTER

2

EXPLAINING CHATICHAI'S POLICY
TOWARDS THE CONCLUSION
OF THE THIRD INDOCHINA
CONFLICT

—

INTRODUCTION

Thailand's policy towards the third Indochina conflict underwent a significant and sudden change which surprised friends and allies alike when Chatichai took office in August 1988. Reversing the country's decade old hard-line policy which was bent on obtaining a Vietnamese troop withdrawal from Cambodia at all costs, Chatichai adopted a more flexible policy that essentially banked on improving relations with Indochina through expanded economic ties. On becoming Prime Minister, Chatichai quickly announced a new policy of 'turning Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace.' The Prime Minister argued that by promoting economic ties, peace and stability would be more easily achieved. His announcement was followed by a series of diplomatic moves which appeared to be in contrast to the previous Thai approach.

This chapter focuses on the origins and substance of Chatichai's foreign policy initiatives. Its task is to examine the orientation of the policy, the context within which it emerged, the nature of its goals, and the actual means by which Chatichai sought to reach his goals. His new policy may be seen to have resulted from his personal commitment and supported by his business ties, but an unexpected reorientation of foreign policy such as this should not be seen as driven by the whim of one man. It is important to understand the environment, conditions, and processes which gave rise to the policy. Thus it will be argued that both the internal and external contexts had undergone developments which favoured a change of direction. It will also be suggested that his personality and style favoured an approach that circumvented bureaucratic obstacles.

POSSIBLE DETERMINING FACTORS AND POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

POLICY-MAKING ENVIRONMENTS

Possible determinants of Chatichai's foreign policy could be found in the environments or conditions within which his policy was made. These may be divided into operational and psychological environments, to use the terms coined by Harold and Margaret Sprout.⁴¹ Operational environment refers to objective conditions which surround the decision-maker, whereas psychological environment is the decision maker's subjective perception of these conditions.

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

1. DOMESTIC FACTORS

1.1 Greater degree of democracy

Chatichai was Thailand's first democratically elected Prime Minister in 12 years, which contributed to his popularity. With the advent of his elected regime, Thailand managed to elevate itself to a greater degree of democracy after its political structure had inherited the unenviable label of a 'half-baked democracy' during the previous governments.⁴² According to Kraissak Choonhavan, Chatichai's son and adviser, being a democratically elected leader contributed to Chatichai's confidence, which in turn led the Prime Minister to try to impress the public by launching new policy initiatives.⁴³

1.2 Economic capability

Chatichai's policy towards Indochina was introduced when the

Thai economy was growing at an impressive rate. By virtue of the strong Yen, conservative management, and what foreign investors considered a user-friendly environment, the Thai economy reached take-off stage in 1988. Even before the official statistics were released, it was the general consensus among the Bangkok economic commentators that, for the first time in 22 years, Thailand achieved economic growth above 10 percent in 1988. Thailand's Board of Investment (BoI) statistics indicated how well the economy was doing: by mid 1988, the number and value of investment projects had virtually matched the total for all of 1987 which was in itself an impressive year.⁴⁴

Chatichai's policy carried a clear economic tone, encapsulated by his slogan of turning Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace. Given the impressive performance of the Thai economy, the new policy seemed well-timed, as some of the wealth generated by Thailand's rapidly growing economy in the late 1980s could be used to invest in other countries. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, this apparently economic-driven policy was primarily intended to facilitate a peace settlement of the conflict in Cambodia.

1.3 Impacts of the Cambodian conflict on Thailand's security

Since Vietnam invaded Cambodia in December 1978, the presence of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia had created security threats for Thailand. The threats were not only from incursion and invasion of Thai territory by Vietnamese troops but were caused also by the general instability and insecurity in the border areas. In addition, there were problems of Cambodian refugees flowing into Thailand, who could not be returned until a peace settlement was reached,⁴⁵ creating social and economic problems. Now that a conceivable end to the Vietnamese

military presence was in sight, Chatichai argued that a dialogue with the Phnom Penh government was needed to seek to promote any prospect for the Cambodian factions to resume talks, because Thai border villagers were suffering from the war in Cambodia.⁴⁶

1.4 Roles of the advisers

A prominent feature of the new government was Chatichai's appointment of a Policy Advisory Council comprising seven academics and experts in such fields as foreign affairs, economics, and international law. These advisers were to be directly responsible to Chatichai. They would study details of the issues ordered by the Prime Minister and advise him on these matters.⁴⁷ Although the appointment of policy advisers was not uncommon, the degree of involvement of Chatichai's advisers in Thailand's foreign policy making and implementation was unprecedented. Some of the advisers had long been prominent critics of Foreign Minister Siddhi's hard-line policy, arguing that Siddhi's foreign policy did not stand up to fast-changing situations in Indochina. The advisers were seen as Chatichai's think-tank and were believed to be behind many new policies, including the idea of turning the Indochinese battlefield to a marketplace. The advisers, however, indicated that the policy emanated from the Prime Minister himself, although, as we shall see, the team shared the same views and was active in implementing them.

1.5 Roles of the military

The military had played an important role in the making and implementation of Thailand's policy towards Indochina long before Chatichai took office, not least because it controlled most

or all cross-border issues. In the late 1980s, however, a prominent role was assumed by General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, the army commander and acting supreme commander, who not only oversaw the military's usual duty of safeguarding the country's security but also became increasingly involved in the diplomatic activities. The fact that he welcomed Chatichai's policy suggests that he shared Chatichai's ideas. More importantly perhaps, Chavalit's statement that the new policy was not a surprise⁴⁸ indicates that he was aware of the policy beforehand. Although Chavalit did not clearly spell out his role in the making of the new policy, one of his close aides said that he was very much involved.⁴⁹ Chavalit's firm control over the military was also important to Chatichai, not only because of the military's involvement in the policy implementation but also because it provided the Prime Minister with security in political sense.

1.6 Roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

Among the formal duties of the MFA is to advise the Prime Minister and the cabinet on formulating foreign policy. This clearly did not happen in the case of Chatichai's Indochina policy. Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila was shocked and surprised when Chatichai announced a new policy direction soon after he took power. Unlike his predecessor who was a novice in foreign affairs, Chatichai's previous experience as Foreign Minister and his reliance upon his advisers for information and assistance enabled him to conduct some of Thailand's foreign policy independently of the MFA. The differences in how the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister approached the Cambodian issue were evident throughout the administration. While the MFA believed that the hard-line policy was producing good results and that

the changing international circumstances in the late 1980s, including improved Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese relations, would further support this course, the Prime Minister had a very different view. To Chatichai, the changing circumstances presented a new opportunity for a new policy which he grasped, but which resulted in a lack of policy consensus and a rift between himself and the Foreign Minister, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

1.7 Roles of the National Security Council (NSC)

The NSC does not make policies although it usually advises the Prime Minister and relevant governmental agencies in matters relating to national security.⁵⁰ The NSC is under the authority of the Office of the Prime Minister, and therefore the Prime Minister served as its chairman and could in effect decide when and on what issues he would refer to the NSC. No evidence has been found to suggest that the NSC influenced the making of Chatichai's policy. In fact, Chatichai did not seem to rely on the NSC so the Council kept a relatively low profile during his administration. It avoided siding either with the MFA or the Prime Minister and his advisers. Its pronounced aims were generally about the ultimate goals, namely to bring about Vietnam's troop withdrawal from Cambodia, to promote self-determination of the Cambodians through a free election, and to help build an independent and peaceful Cambodia that would not threaten the security of Thailand.⁵¹

2. EXTERNAL FACTORS

2.1 Decline of the Cold War

A state's foreign policy is often influenced by the structure and events of international politics. During the Cold War, the international system was characterised by its bipolar structure in which most states aligned with either the United States or the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the ideological struggle over communism began to fade in the late 1980s, especially in response to US-Soviet rapprochement. The world was no longer perceived as divided between communist and non-communist groups, thereby giving policy-makers more options in the conduct of their countries' external relations.

The changing international situation in the late 1980s and early 1990s appeared significant in Chatichai's thinking, as demonstrated in a number of his speeches and statements. For instance, in 1989 the Thai Prime Minister spoke of a 'world of change', saying that the winds of change were blowing from one region to another, and swept away the days when we talked about conflict and confrontation.⁵² On another occasion, he also said that the reduction of tension between major powers in general had provided favourable conditions for small states to take on a greater role in promoting regional peace, progress and stability.⁵³

The decline of the global Cold War was paralleled with the eventual defeat of the communist insurgency in Thailand. By the late 1980s, problems of domestic insurgency in the country had been resolved, paving the way for a possible improvement of Thailand's relations with neighbouring communist countries which had been believed to provide support for the insurgents in the country, particularly members of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT).⁵⁴

In other words, with the decline of communism worldwide and the reduced fears of communism spreading in the region, the Thai leaders had fewer reasons to feel threatened by their communist neighbours and therefore could begin to think about improving relations with them.

2.2 Increasing interdependence

Chatichai's thinking was also influenced by growing interdependence both in the region and in the world at large. The Thai Prime Minister emphasised that the world was becoming increasingly interdependent in terms of peace and prosperity. He underlined the need to enhance constructive relations with Thailand's neighbours and other countries beyond the region, and he explained that Thailand's security must be based as much on economic well-being as on political stability and military readiness.⁵⁵ Chatichai explained that the common goal of building a peaceful and prosperous world required co-operative efforts on the part of all nations, and would require more innovative thinking and approaches to outstanding national and international problems.⁵⁶ More clearly, he expressed his belief that "as the twenty first century approaches, Thailand has an important role to play to help the peoples of this region gather the harvest of peace and prosperity."⁵⁷ He added that Thailand's strength did not lie in its inherent capacity because Thailand was only a small nation, but in its long tradition of diplomacy and firm commitment to principles as the framework for the conduct of relations among nations.⁵⁸

2.3 Improved relations between China, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam

The third Indochina conflict was not limited to hostility

between Indochinese states. It also represented the antagonism between the Soviet Union and China, in which Cambodia was an object of their competition. Beijing's primary objective was to have a friendly government in Phnom Penh and, failing that, to support resistance to Vietnamese hegemony in Indochina.⁵⁹ Moscow, on the other hand, supported Hanoi as a counterweight to Beijing. The Soviet Union supplied military equipment to Vietnam and backed Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in December 1978, which happened after the signing of the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in the previous month.⁶⁰

Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia resulted in a situation in which Thailand forged in effect an alliance with China alongside its existing formal alliance with the US. This emboldened Bangkok to confront Vietnam by helping the Chinese, in particular, to assist the remnant Khmer Rouge and other resistance forces lodged in sanctuaries along the porous Thai border with Cambodia. Vietnam, aided by the Soviet Union, maintained an army of occupation in Cambodia that was able to provide relative security for its puppet government to build a degree of administrative effectiveness.⁶¹

Nevertheless, Soviet policy from the mid 1980s underwent substantial changes and became concerned with security and stability in the region. In July 1986, Gorbachev announced his willingness to restore relations with China in order to ease tension in Asia, thus opening the way for future talks on Cambodia. Moscow's intention to disengage from Indochina appeared to be driven by worsening economic situations in the Soviet Union and the need to demonstrate to the international community its commitment to new political thinking and its desire to improve relations with China and the United States

Alongside the improving Sino-Soviet relations, there was also progress towards better relations between Beijing on the one hand and Hanoi and Phnom Penh on the other hand. Since 1988, China had made a series of concessions to them, including an agreement to resume dialogue with Vietnam in early 1989 and to consider a cut-back of arms supplies to the Khmer Rouge, even in advance of a total Vietnamese withdrawal.⁶²

Better relations between China, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam meant that the external dimension of the Cambodian conflict had improved. This was one of the major reasons for Chatichai's Indochina policy. According to M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, a member of Chatichai's advisory team, the Prime Minister concluded that Thailand should not maintain its previous policy when circumstances had changed.⁶³

While the external situations were improving, the government of Phnom Penh was increasingly consolidating its power in its fight against the resistance factions. The increasing strength of the Cambodian government under Hun Sen was another main reason for Chatichai's move to improve Thailand's relations with Phnom Penh. Kraisaak Choonhavan, Chatichai's son and adviser, explained that the strength of the Phnom Penh government vis-à-vis the resistance factions was a major reason for the new Thai policy. He said that these (new) conditions were ice-breaking events that recognised the failure of Thailand's previous policy of supporting the anti-Phnom Penh factions.⁶⁴

2.4 Positions of Thailand's allies

As a front-line state in the third Indochina conflict, Thailand received unwavering support from its allies, particularly ASEAN

countries, China, and the US. Although some of these countries, notably Indonesia and Malaysia, might have had sympathy with Vietnam, they nevertheless accorded more importance to Thailand's security concerns. These allies not only supported Thailand's diplomatic efforts against Hanoi and Phnom Penh, but some, notably China and the US, also provided material and financial assistance for Thailand as well as for the Cambodian resistance factions.

However, there is no evidence that these allies played a part in the making of Chatichai's new policy towards Indochina, at least in a direct way. They were not consulted beforehand and were surprised by Bangkok's new move. However, some of Thailand's allies may have indirectly played a part in Chatichai's calculation, leading to the introduction of his new policy. For instance, the sympathy of some countries (e.g. Indonesia and Malaysia) towards Vietnam could have provided Chatichai with some confidence that his initiatives were not out of tune with those allies (see chapter 5).

PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

This refers to how decision-makers (in this case, Chatichai) perceive the operational environment. Chatichai's psychological environment was a function of the following factors:

1. HIS BACKGROUND, PROFESSION, AND PERSONALITY

Chatichai had considerable experience of many walks of life. He had served in the army, after graduating from Chulachomkhalao Military Academy. His service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began in the late 1950s, and his assignments included serving as Thailand's ambassador

to Argentina, Switzerland, Turkey, Austria, Yugoslavia, the Holy See and the UN. His most important posts in the Foreign Ministry were as Deputy Foreign Minister (1973-1974), and as Foreign Minister (1974-1976), providing him with significant experience in foreign affairs. Having been the head of the Foreign Ministry, Chatichai had intricate knowledge of how the MFA operated, and this was likely to have played a part in his move to supplant the Foreign Ministry in the policy process (see later). Apart from this, Chatichai was also a prominent businessman. His Choonhavan family had good connections with business interests since 1947. Chatichai himself was involved in many businesses, including construction, chemical industry and textile.⁶⁵

As a personality, Chatichai was known to be an easy-going, flexible, fast moving, and creative person.⁶⁶ It is likely that his Indochina policy was influenced, at least in part, by his character. Chatichai was also boosted with further confidence not only because he had first hand knowledge of many professions, but also crucially because, unlike his predecessor, he was democratically elected and hence the people's choice.⁶⁷

Lloyd Jensen suggests that there are many conditions in which personality could significantly affect the decision being made. These include the degree of interest shown in foreign policy, amount of decisional latitude, and how high one is in the decision-making hierarchy.⁶⁸ Chatichai's case fits well into many of these conditions. He was undoubtedly interested in matters of foreign affairs. And although other actors, particularly the MFA, had different views about how best to approach the Indochina issue, Chatichai's higher position in the political and decision-making hierarchy enabled him to have his way.

2. HIS THINKING ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

It may be argued that there were at least three prominent features that characterised Chatichai ideas about foreign affairs.⁶⁹ Firstly, Chatichai supported foreign policies where Thailand could act independently and did not have to wait for others to start, given that the prevailing conditions were favourable to such actions. An example was when Thailand normalised relations with China in 1975, ahead of the US. Chatichai was Foreign Minister at the time, and he played an important role in this development, which took place amid the new circumstances both in Thailand and in the region, particularly after communist victories had just swept across Indochina. Secondly, Chatichai advocated policies of co-operation rather than pressure and sanctions. Chatichai explained that the most effective way of ending a conflict was through dialogue and negotiation, since this interaction would help to promote better understanding and create trust, which was the first step towards ending hostility.⁷⁰ Thirdly, probably owing to his business background, Chatichai tended to use economic incentives in order to promote co-operation.

POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

How Thailand's foreign policy is made depends on factors such as character of the leaders, the type of regime in power, and the nature of foreign policy issues in question. For instance, under a military regime or when the policy in question is about national security, particularly in the sense of maintaining the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the military assumes a dominant role. Generally, however, the key player in policy-making is the Foreign Ministry.

Before Chatichai took office, the major government spokesman on international relations had been Foreign Minister Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila. Siddhi's position in the making of Thailand's foreign policy was unique, as he had close ties both to the military (being a retired Air Chief Marshal himself), and to the National Security Council (having been its Secretary-General). These allowed him to coordinate between the key organisations which normally offered inputs into the making of the country's foreign policy. Although foreign policy was normally put before the cabinet, the cabinet as a whole tended not to play an instrumental role, and cabinet members frequently listened to the advice of relevant government departments and their bureaucracy due to their specialised knowledge.⁷¹

In the light of this, the making of Chatichai's policy towards Indochina was a break from the previous pattern, because policy now emanated directly from the Prime Minister (heading a civilian government), without prior consultation with the Foreign Ministry, let alone other relevant government departments and agencies. However, this did not break the rules of Thailand's political system where the Prime Minister has the most power and authority in foreign policy-making. As head of government, the Prime Minister is entitled not only to assemble the cabinet and dismiss any ministers, but he also possesses discretionary decision-making power which does not require cabinet approval.⁷² The Prime Minister is the chief executive, chief legislator, and chief diplomat.⁷³ Consequently, he has direct control over executive agencies such as the National Security Council and the National Intelligence Agency; he is fully entitled to initiate policies; and he speaks on the country's behalf.

Significant powers and resources are available to the Prime

Minister for foreign policy-making, but whether or not he uses them depends in part on the character and nature of the particular individual holding the office. Previous Thai prime ministers such as Sarit Thanarat (1959-1963), Thanom Kittikachorn (1963-1973), and Kriangsak Chomanand (1977-1980) took advantage of the powers allotted to them to dominate the foreign policy-making process. However, Prem Tinsulanonda, Chatichai's predecessor, delegated his foreign policy authority to his Foreign Minister and maintained a relatively 'hands off' approach to foreign affairs. It may also be noted that the individual characters of leaders were probably a stronger determinant of foreign policy than the type of regime exercising power.⁷⁴ Although Sarit, Thanom, Kriangsak, and Prem were all prime ministers under military-dominated governments, Prem's relatively aloof style of foreign policy-making distinguished him from the others.

Chatichai chose to use, to a large extent, power and authority granted to his position as the Prime Minister. Chatichai's advisers maintained that the new Indochina policy originated directly from the Prime Minister rather than from them, as some outside observers had suggested, although the advisers did share Chatichai's views.⁷⁵ However, the fact that the advisers were very active in foreign policy matters led to a friction between them and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over who should handle foreign policy, despite the fact that the Prime Minister often said 'no problem.' As Chapter 3 will discuss, the advisers had an advantage of being close to the power centre, i.e. the Prime Minister, and therefore they were more involved in the implementation of the policy.

Although Thailand has a history of flexible foreign policy, Chatichai's case stands out. While Chatichai was quick to respond to

changing international circumstances, he acted without waiting for a bigger power to lead, whereas traditional explanation of the flexibility of Thai foreign policy would refer to a readiness to align or realign with other countries.⁷⁶ Chatichai did not seem to be constrained by the fact that his policy shift might provoke negative reactions from other concerned countries in general and great powers in particular, because the new policy seemed to defy the previous approach which most countries supported. Kraisak Choonhavan, Chatichai's son and adviser, explained that in the past, Thailand always followed the dictates of a superpower on foreign policy, but under Chatichai administration, "...we are making our own decisions without the influence of others."⁷⁷ Sukhumbhand, who also advised Chatichai, argued that Thailand was a front-line state and therefore it was entitled to redirect its policy in the way it deemed appropriate.⁷⁸ Borwornsak Uwanno, another adviser, said that the Prime Minister wanted to take an initiative which would lead the rest. Borwornsak explained that a policy which followed the path of the superpowers would be 'a foreign policy of slaves.'⁷⁹ Chatichai himself said in 1989 that Thailand would avoid following the policies of the superpowers by pursuing a broader view and approach to foreign policy.⁸⁰

Chatichai's decision to introduce a new policy without consulting others could be seen as a product of his fast-moving and confident personality combined with his perception of the relevant circumstances at the time. In other words, although Chatichai believed that interstate conflicts should be solved by means of dialogue rather than pressure and sanctions, he could not have carried it out until the time was appropriate.⁸¹ The 'appropriate' time came when, domestically, there was a change of government and Chatichai became a new Prime

Minister. Internationally, conditions such as improved relations between the great powers and other countries involved in the third Indochina conflict, and Vietnam's announcement of its plan to complete troops withdrawal, helped to pave the way for Chatichai's foreign policy change. Arguably, these conditions were particularly important for an unexpected and sudden reorientation of foreign policy such as this, as there is no evidence that Chatichai had consulted any of Thailand's friends and allies. One former Thai diplomat suggested that Chatichai did not consult anyone because he did not want his ideas to be diluted.⁸² Therefore, to introduce the policy as a surprise was a way to avoid a possibly lengthy process of discussing the policy proposal with those who might have different views.⁸³

Chatichai's foreign policy may be seen as a gamble, as it involved some possible risks, notably those which could arise from unilaterally deviating from the previous Thai approach. Not only could Chatichai alienate some domestic actors who favoured the previous policy, but he could also upset Thailand's foreign allies, some of whom had sacrificed their own interests so that Bangkok's hard-line policy could be maintained. In this light, Chatichai's policy might be seen as a rush to make economic profits while appearing to have little concern about what other allies might think. Nevertheless, his advisers argued that the risk they took was a calculated one, because the circumstances surrounding the third Indochina conflict in the late 1980s pointed to the direction which would allow their plans to be carried out successfully.⁸⁴ Pansak Vinyaratn, chairman of Chatichai's advisory team, said that the Prime Minister and the advisers expected the war in Cambodia to end soon after Chatichai took office, and that what they did was to try to limit the negative aspects of the transition to the end of the war.⁸⁵

GOALS OF CHATICHAÏ'S POLICY TOWARDS INDOCHINA

When he announced his new Indochina policy in August 1988, Chatichai pointed out that his policy aimed to bring peace to Indochina through increased trade and investment ties. However, as the policy was a significant change from previous practice, it soon became controversial and in particular a charge was made that Chatichai's agenda was to serve the purpose of business interests, particularly as the Prime Minister himself also had a prominent business background.

Chatichai's advisers dismissed the suggestions that the new policy was designed to facilitate business interests.⁸⁶ They claimed that neither they nor the Prime Minister had any business ties with Indochina at the time of the policy shift, and that the policy was not influenced by businessmen. Sukhumbhand explained further that the only significance of the business community for the Prime Minister's Indochina policy initiative was that it gave him a constituency to support his policy. Sukhumbhand and Borwornsak emphasised that Chatichai had always believed that the Indochina issue should be tackled by means of co-operation rather than pressure.

Indeed, there is evidence to support the advisers' argument. Data on trade between Thailand and each of the three Indochinese countries during the Chatichai government shows that proportion of Thailand's trade with those countries was small. The proportion of trade with the Indochinese countries never even reached half a percent of Thailand's total trade (see Table 1). And in the case of Cambodia, the figures are very small. It may be argued that if Chatichai's intention was mainly to exploit business opportunities in Indochina, there should have been a significant increase in Thailand's trade with Indochina. Although some

economic activities such as smuggling went on unrecorded, the Thai authorities said that these were not likely to reach an enormous scale.⁸⁷

Table 1: *Thailand's trade (export + import) with the Indochinese countries in terms of percentages of Thailand's total trade*⁸⁸

Year	1988	1989	1990	1991
Cambodia	0.0016	0.007	0.022	0.024
Laos	0.203	0.248	0.196	0.187
Vietnam	0.038	0.135	0.199	0.210

It is also pointed out that there was no sufficient study or research which seriously looked into the possibilities of creating an Indochina market, although the idea was frequently mentioned by Chatichai and his team. According to General Charan Kullavanijaya, the political-military co-ordinator during the Chatichai administration, the idea of creating an Indochina market had not been properly studied by the time it was announced, and that the government did not do enough to facilitate the establishment of trade and investment ties between Thai and Indochinese, particularly Cambodian, companies.⁸⁹ For instance, there was a lack of legislation which could have helped to facilitate greater economic activities. One scholar on Cambodia said that a weak point of Chatichai's policy in this respect was that it encouraged businessmen to trade with Cambodia, but it did not provide sufficient support to allow them to carry this out successfully.⁹⁰

A former MFA official who is now an executive of Thailand's giant conglomerate Charoen Pokphand (CP) echoed this view, saying that the government offered little more than rhetoric, and the company had to take initiatives by itself.⁹¹ Therefore, it seems that Chatichai's policy of persuading Thai businessmen to trade with Indochina was more verbal persuasion than practical support and assistance.

Indeed, it was argued that the new policy, though encapsulated in a slogan of turning a battlefield to a marketplace, was not so much for economic purposes, but it was intended to help 'sell' Chatichai's Indochina policy package aimed to end the Cambodian conflict. According to Charan, the Prime Minister wanted to make the objective of 'peace in Cambodia' less abstract and more attention-capturing by using his slogan to point out the benefits that could be gained by trading with peaceful Indochina.⁹² Similar explanations were given by some of the highest-ranking government officials and Chatichai's close allies. General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, the military chief, said that the slogan was for 'marketing purposes' while Arsa Sarasin, a former Thai Foreign Minister and a close aide of Chatichai, called it a 'catch word.'⁹³ Arsa also described the Prime Minister as a man with flair who would make statements to attract attention.⁹⁴ Indeed, during the late 1980s when the Thai economy was doing well and many Thai entrepreneurs were looking to expand their businesses, slogan such as this seemed to be well timed.

Also, there is evidence that what the Prime Minister had in mind as a primary reason when he launched his new policy was to bring peace to Cambodia. One of the clearest statements which revealed Chatichai's intention in Indochina was his speech during his visit to Laos in November 1988, a few months after he became Prime

Minister. Chatichai did not specifically speak of increasing trade and investment. Instead, he referred to the needs to promote co-operation in Indochina. Chatichai said:

The reason I have declared my wish to turn Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace is that I hoped to create a new atmosphere of co-operation and mutual assistance, which will facilitate the efforts to solve various problems and restore permanent peace in our Southeast Asian region.⁹⁵

On another occasion, Chatichai emphasised that no other country was affected by fighting in Cambodia as much as Thailand, and said that there had to be peace. He pointed out that Thai villagers near the border with Cambodia had long had to suffer from gunfire and fighting between the Cambodian factions along the border.⁹⁶ The Prime Minister emphasised that Thailand could not stand idly by while fighting raged in a neighbouring country and that his intention was to bring peace to Cambodia.⁹⁷ Chatichai's son and adviser, Kraisaak, also clarified that the Prime Minister's policy was not a business-oriented diplomacy, but was rather a moral commitment to help end the conflict and bloodshed in Cambodia.⁹⁸

There are suggestions that Chatichai introduced a new policy in order to score political points and win admiration from the public. It turns out that this is not irrelevant. Kraisaak recalled his conversation with the Prime Minister in which Chatichai said that he needed a foreign policy success because to achieve domestic success would be difficult, owing to various domestic problems.⁹⁹ However, this is not unusual in political calculations elsewhere. Moreover, he could only gain public support if the new policy were to be seen as successful.

Putting this argument about the desires to achieve political popularity aside, it may be argued that Chatichai's primary purpose was to create an atmosphere of co-operation which he believed could bring the conflict in Cambodia to an end. Most likely because of his strong business background, Chatichai chose to create such an atmosphere of co-operation by promoting trade and investment in Indochina. In other words, increasing trade and investment was not an overriding goal of Chatichai's policy. Instead, it was a step towards the major purpose which was to bring the Cambodian conflict to an end.

SUBSTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CHATICHAÏ'S INITIATIVES TOWARDS INDOCHINA

If attaining peace in Indochina was the ultimate goal, there were other more immediate steps that had to be made in order to reach that goal. These were seen in the attempts to implement the policy. This section examines the contents of Chatichai's policy and how they were implemented.

1. CHATICHAÏ'S PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS POLICY TOWARDS INDOCHINA

Verbal presentation of the policy perhaps should not be understated because it was the first time the public, both domestic and foreign, was informed of the new policy. Examples include Chatichai's speech on the day he was officially made Thailand's Prime Minister when he said that "[T]here will be an adjustment in our policies towards our neighbouring countries. We want Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as our trade markets, and not a battlefield. I must reiterate this."¹⁰⁰

Chatichai argued that peace and stability in the region would be more easily achieved by promoting economic ties.¹⁰¹ To many at home and abroad, to hear the Prime Minister openly encourage trade with Indochina was a surprise as Bangkok had always maintained a hard-line approach since the start of the third Indochina conflict. Chatichai's speech at a meeting with foreign media where he implicitly invited Hun Sen to Thailand by saying that Hun Sen would be welcomed in Bangkok was another significant diplomatic move and was also a surprise to many, including his advisers. Chatichai's advisers said that the Prime Minister's implicit invitation to Hun Sen was an astute move, which the advisory team had not known beforehand although the team moved quickly to carry out the policy.¹⁰² Borwornsak, one of Chatichai's advisers, said that the purpose of the speeches was to test the initial response from both domestic and international audiences.¹⁰³ Arguably, making a public announcement was the very first stage of implementation.

2. OPENING INDOCHINESE MARKETS AND IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES

Chatichai's policy emphasised possible economic benefits which could be gained by trading with Indochina. As for Thailand's trade with Cambodia, the Chatichai administration built on the existing border trade by turning the additional Thai towns of Aranyaprathet and Trat into permanent border-crossing points to facilitate transportation of goods. The government also designated another three Thai border towns as temporary border-crossing points.¹⁰⁴ Generally, the Prime Minister encouraged Thai businessmen to explore trade

and investment opportunities with Cambodia. This added to the momentum of economic flows between the two countries although they were still confined mainly to border trade. Political instability and lack of infrastructure in Cambodia were among the main reasons for lower level of Thai-Cambodian trade, compared with the other two Indochinese countries.

Meanwhile, Laos and Vietnam enjoyed relatively larger trade with Thailand. The Thai government introduced measures such as a relaxation of some trade restrictions (e.g., in the case of trade with Laos, a reduction of the number of items banned from export). In fact, it seems that Chatichai's policy was introduced at the right time, because both Vietnam and Laos were adopting economic reform programmes. These helped to boost confidence of Thai businessmen, who were better prepared to trade with Vietnam and Laos than with Cambodia. Not only were Vietnam and Laos more stable politically but the levels of infrastructure were also relatively better than that in Cambodia. Laos also had an additional advantage because of its cultural and lingual similarity with Thailand.

In addition to increased trade and investment ties, there were attempts to improve other kinds of relations between Thailand and its Indochinese neighbours; for instance, in technical, social and cultural fields. Examples included exchanges of high-level visits by top-ranking officials from Thailand and Indochinese countries. In the case of Cambodia, attempts to promote closer people-to-people relations included a concert at Cambodia's Angkor Wat where a Thai band entertained Cambodian audience. Chatichai's son and adviser, Kraisak, known for his musical talents, also participated in the show.¹⁰⁵

3. ADOPTING A FRIENDLY APPROACH TOWARDS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT

For a start, Chatichai welcomed Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Vietnamese backed Phnom Penh regime, three times to Bangkok during 1989. Chatichai said that one of the keys to solve the Cambodian crisis was to treat the Cambodian factions more equally. He asserted that Thailand's previous policy was biased in favour of the resistance factions which operated along the Thai-Cambodian border.¹⁰⁶ However, Chatichai's move did not find favour with many in Thailand as well as with some other countries who were concerned that the invitation implied Thailand's recognition of the Phnom Penh regime. Indeed, the invitation raised the status of the Hun Sen government, although Bangkok explained that no formal recognition was granted. Chatichai's explanation was that Thailand historically knew the Indochinese best, and that it should spearhead efforts to reach an accommodation between communist and non-communist Southeast Asia. Chatichai argued that contacts with Phnom Penh would facilitate better understanding between Thailand and the ruling regime in Cambodia and that it would increase the chance of success of the second Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM II) in early 1989, after the failure of JIM I in July 1988.

4. PROPOSING AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS A PEACE SETTLEMENT IN CAMBODIA

One of the major obstacles to making progress towards a peace settlement in Cambodia stemmed largely from the refusal of the warring parties to compromise over a power-sharing arrangement, and this had been responsible for inconclusive endings of various peace

talks. Another was the diplomatic international consensus that only an all embracing comprehensive settlement was possible. In an effort to break the stalemate, Chatichai proposed a step-by-step or incremental approach to tackle the Cambodian problem. Essentially, this approach advocated breaking down the different aspects of the Cambodian issue and dealing with them one at a time. Chatichai and his advisers argued that Cambodia was not a single problem, and hence it could not be dealt with in a comprehensive manner.¹⁰⁷ Asserting that the Vietnamese withdrawal was not possible without a ceasefire, Chatichai supported having a ceasefire first; then an International Control Mechanism should be set up to monitor the withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia; after that there must be a census taking before an election could take place, with an interim coalition administering the country in between.¹⁰⁸ This step-by-step or incremental approach differ from an internationally supported idea of a comprehensive settlement which would include in one package the agreements from all the parties concerned on the issues relating to the Cambodian problem. Chatichai promoted his idea of a step-by-step settlement after the failure of the 1989 Paris Conference on Cambodia, which, according to Chatichai, failed to produce any conclusive agreements because it was too big and involved too many participants.¹⁰⁹ Advocating a step-by-step approach, he said that “when one route leads to a dead end, we have to find another way to reach the objective.”¹¹⁰ Chatichai emphasised that Thailand’s task was to get all the Cambodian sides to attend another meeting so that they would have a chance to talk to each other. Addressing the concerns of some sceptics, Chatichai explained that the only difference between his approach and that of the comprehensive solution was confined to how best to begin the process, and that the two approaches would reach the same objective.¹¹¹

5. PLAYING THE ROLE OF A MEDIATOR IN THE PEACE PROCESS

Apart from meeting with Hun Sen in Thailand Bangkok in 1989, Chatichai also held many meetings with the other Cambodian faction leaders. For instance, Chatichai held meetings with leaders of the Cambodian resistance factions in Bangkok in late January 1989 and in September 1989 where he attempted to persuade the resistance factions to agree to the idea of a step-by-step solution. Moreover, Chatichai played host to both Prince Sihanouk (who headed the resistance coalition) and Hun Sen in a meeting at his residence in Bangkok in February 1990 prior to the third Jakarta Informal Meeting. The two Cambodian sides agreed on the role that the UN should play in helping to solve the conflict and on the formation of a Supreme National Council in Cambodia. In addition, Chatichai took an active part in helping to arrange a conference on Cambodia in Tokyo in early June 1990. Earlier in April that year, Chatichai had a meeting with Sihanouk in Bangkok and successfully persuaded him to attend the Tokyo Conference, where the prince and Hun Sen would have bilateral talks.

At the Tokyo Conference (4-6 July 1990), Thailand was represented not by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but by Chatichai's advisers. The Conference produced a joint statement which was signed by Hun Sen and Sihanouk but was rejected by the Khmer Rouge.¹¹² Despite this, Chatichai believed that this meeting had fulfilled its aim of securing a ceasefire agreement between the representatives of the resistance coalition (led by Sihanouk) and the Phnom Penh regime.¹¹³ Chatichai also hosted the first meeting of the Supreme National Council (SNC) for Cambodia in Bangkok in September 1990,

thanks to active co-ordination by his advisers. The idea of a Supreme National Council, which would represent Cambodia in international forums, had been agreed upon by the Cambodian factions in an earlier meeting in Jakarta.

CONCLUSION

The context in which Thailand's new policy emerged indicated that the policy was a product of the Prime Minister's thinking combined with domestic and external circumstances at the time. Although Chatichai had advocated co-operative rather than harsh means as a way to solve interstate problems, he had been unable to carry this out until conditions were right and timing was appropriate. Domestically, he became Prime Minister in August 1988, which entitled him to make foreign policy decisions. Meanwhile, international conditions affecting the third Indochina conflict were also improving, which Chatichai saw as an opportunity to present a new policy. Arguably, by being the first to shift openly to a new stand, he made Thailand a front-line state once again, but this time in his anticipation of a post-conflict situation in which Hun Sen was perceived to be central to a power-sharing arrangement in Cambodia due to the increasing strength of his faction and in which trade was thought to be a key issue, particularly as the Thai economy was booming.

Chatichai surprised many people both in Thailand and elsewhere because, although he was committed to the same goal (i.e. achieving a peace settlement in Cambodia), he was prepared to choose a different path towards that goal. This chapter has argued that Chatichai was

able to introduce a new approach because of favourable domestic and international circumstances. These conditions correspond to other instances of unexpected reorientations of foreign policy in states that are not great powers. They are initiated by a confident leader in response to both a recognition that changed circumstances caused the previous policy to have outlived its usefulness while both internal and external developments favoured a new approach. Also, if the new policy were to be launched successfully, it required stealth and speed, or it could be diluted or modified by interests who benefited from the previous policy. The surprise necessarily involved risks and it depended ultimately on the capacity of the leader to assess the extent to which the other key players would react positively once they had got over the surprise. In other words, how well (or badly) the policy would play out depended significantly on how it was received by key players in the issue, not only initially but also during the course of the policy. This is the subject of the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER

3

DOMESTIC RESPONSES



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to find out how the reactions of domestic groups to Chatichai's new foreign policy could affect the way the policy was implemented as well as to examine how the policy played in domestic politics. Responses of domestic groups are important not only because they could affect the implementation, and ultimately the extent of success, of Chatichai's new foreign policy, but they might also exercise some influence on how the policy was perceived by other countries. Although there were many domestic actors in Thailand, in this chapter, attention will be focused on the institutions and groups that were most relevant in Chatichai's case. These were the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Chatichai's advisers, and the military. It will be demonstrated that the way in which the new policy was implemented placed significant emphasis on certain domestic actors at the expense of others. This, in a way, weakened the unity of the implementation efforts.

PARTICIPATION OF DOMESTIC ACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHATICHAÏ'S FOREIGN POLICY

1. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA)

Although the MFA has formally been the most engaged actor in the making and implementation of Thailand's foreign policies, the degree of the MFA's involvement has varied according to the regimes in power. For instance, before General Prem Tinsulanonda became Thailand's Prime Minister in 1980, the MFA had been relatively less active in foreign affairs. The military, on the other hand, assumed a prominent role. One of the main reasons that the military had extensive

interests in foreign policy was that many military leaders became prime ministers and still enjoyed support from their friends and colleagues in the military. However, not all civilian governments allowed the MFA to function to its full capacity. The Thanin government (October 1976-October 1977) was a case in point. Thanin became Prime Minister after the 6 October 1976 coup. He was a right-wing leader and revived the policies of confrontation towards Indochina and other communist countries. This went against the policy of moderation and caution which the MFA had successfully pursued over the preceding period, causing the morale within the MFA to drop.¹¹⁴

The real change for the MFA came with the first government headed by General Prem, and the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila as Foreign Minister. Recently retired from a military career in international relations intelligence, and as Secretary General of the National Security Council (NSC), Siddhi combined a strong understanding of foreign affairs with excellent military links and a desire to enhance the role of the MFA and assure a degree of autonomy to his ministry.¹¹⁵

The upsurge in the MFA's control over foreign policy making and implementation until 1988 (when Chatichai came to power) derived from at least two main factors. Firstly, Siddhi was a former classmate and a close and trusted friend of Prime Minister Prem. This, coupled with Siddhi's experience, led Prem to give him a relatively free hand in the making and implementation of Thailand's foreign policy. Secondly, Siddhi had close connections with the military and the National Security Council, and, therefore, he was able to co-ordinate their activities and reduce competition.¹¹⁶ Although the second factor remained true when Chatichai became Prime Minister in August

1988, the first factor did not. This perhaps made it difficult to rule out possibilities of personality clashes between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister. The two were leading and popular politicians and had what it took to become prime minister. After it emerged that Prem would decline another invitation to head the government, Chatichai was quickly able to form a coalition. Siddhi said that he agreed to continue to serve as Foreign Minister mainly because he wanted to see Thailand's foreign policy, particularly towards the Cambodian conflict, through to its completion.¹¹⁷

Neither Chatichai nor Siddhi admitted that their differences in how Thailand's policy towards Cambodia should be conducted had significantly put them at odds, presumably in order to preserve the unity of the government. To be sure, the Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister shared the ultimate objective of bringing peace and security to Indochina by making sure that Vietnam withdrew its forces from Cambodia and the Cambodian people were given their right of self-determination. Both also advocated expanding Thailand's economic ties not only with Indochina but also with other countries. What put them at odds were how and when these should be done. The Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister perceived changing international circumstances in different ways. While Siddhi thought that these would allow the hard-line policy to work more effectively, Chatichai saw them as an opportunity to introduce a new policy. Chatichai reversed Siddhi's decade old hard-line policy towards Vietnam and the Phnom Penh regime by extending a friendly hand to them in his efforts to end the Cambodian conflict and turn Indochina into a marketplace. In contrast, the Foreign Minister believed that this would harden Phnom Penh's position and delayed the achievement

of a peace settlement. Also, Siddhi thought that trade should not be encouraged until all Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia. Indeed, Siddhi was one of the main architects of the hard-line policy towards Hanoi and Phnom Penh and he believed that his policy was bearing fruit.

Within the MFA, there were some who agreed with Chatichai's approach¹¹⁸, but there is no clear evidence showing the number of staff who fell into this group. However, this group of officials did not have a direct role in the implementation of Chatichai's initiatives, since the Prime Minister did not primarily rely on the MFA staff to carry out his policy. There was no organisational change in the MFA which resulted from the introduction of Chatichai's new foreign policy. However, there were some changes of personnel in the Ministry's Department of Information, following talks between Chatichai and Siddhi, whereby staff who were allegedly hard-liners in Indochina affairs were replaced.¹¹⁹

2. CHATICHAİ'S ADVISERS

The Prime Minister tended to rely on his personal advisers in the implementation of his initiatives. One advantage of the advisers compared to the MFA was that they were closer to the power centre, i.e. the Prime Minister. The advisers actively took part in the implementation of the new policy; for instance, during Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok in 1989, they were assigned by Chatichai to handle the negotiations.

Technically, the advisers should not have implemented the policy change because they lacked the legal authority to do so, and they lacked the needed resources to carry out the policy restructuring on a daily basis.¹²⁰ Despite this, Chatichai preferred to rely on the advisers'

informal approach of conducting foreign policy. The Prime Minister saw this as appropriate because of the previous suspicions between the governments of Thailand and Indochina. The Indochinese states regarded Thailand's MFA as entrenched in its hard-line policy and unwilling to bend on issues affecting their mutual relations. The advisers, on the other hand, were known to be strong critics of the MFA and therefore capable of effectively demonstrating Chatichai's intentions. In fact, the advisers publicly took a strong position in defence of the new initiatives, dismissing their critics as failing to adapt to changing international and regional situations, sometimes even calling the critics dinosaurs.¹²¹ On the other hand, the MFA was bureaucratic and could be slow in bringing about changes. Chatichai had considerable experience in foreign affairs and therefore was confident that he and his team could bring about this change mainly on their own. It was also suggested that Chatichai and his advisers feared that their bold ideas might be diluted or rejected if they consulted anyone.¹²²

3. THE MILITARY

The Thai military has been involved in the implementation of the country's foreign policy, particularly that relating to traditional security such as maintaining territorial integrity and in suppressing externally supported domestic insurgency. This was even more apparent when the country was perceived to be in immediate danger, such as when the communist threats rose. For example, at some points during the Vietnam War, the military upstaged the Foreign Ministry by bypassing it and negotiating directly with the American embassy. During these times, the military monopolised policies regarding border disputes, the

purchase of weapon systems, defence budget, and American military aid to Thailand.¹²³

The third Indochina conflict and the threat it posed to Thailand's security undoubtedly called for the military's active involvement in the country's Indochina policy. The military possessed not only disciplined troops but also necessary logistics and equipment, which ostensibly enabled it to carry out its assigned tasks systematically. In other words, the military had the power to control the so-called 'hardware' aspect of the conflict, not only in terms of defending Thailand but also in terms of controlling supplies of foreign military aid to the Cambodian resistance factions which were passed through Thailand. On the other hand, other countries that were concerned with the conflict were dealing with its 'software' aspect e.g., Vietnamese troop withdrawal, Vietnamese settlers, and displaced Cambodians along the Thai border.¹²⁴ In fact, even the software aspect was not beyond the influence of the military. This was due largely to the military's involvement in all cross border issues. Military officers responsible for security along the country's borders might even formulate and implement policies without the knowledge of the MFA.¹²⁵

One issue with which the military had to deal was the smuggling of goods and people across the border. Although the military sought to prevent the smuggling of strategic items such as pharmaceuticals and batteries, there were reports that this had become relaxed by late 1987. *The Far Eastern Economic Review* quoted an unnamed senior Thai government official who said that the Thais were not trying to suppress the goods smuggling because the volume was unlikely to reach an enormous scale and, in fact, this was seen as an indirect form of humanitarian assistance.¹²⁶

By the time Chatichai took office, the military had expanded its role in national development along side the traditional duty of defending the country from real and potential threats. General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, Thailand's army commander and acting supreme commander, called the period of 1982-87 a 'consolidation phase' which followed the defeat of the communist movements in Thailand and which led the military to concentrate more on economic and national development.¹²⁷ Chavalit explained that attention given to these development tasks did not mean that the military's role was being redefined, because promoting national development has always been one of the military's responsibilities.¹²⁸ Chavalit believed that the military's *defence diplomacy*, as he called it, involved the tasks of promoting a strong economy, development, and better relations with neighbouring countries. Not only were Chavalit's views similar to those of Chatichai, but the military chief himself also took part in the making and implementation of Chatichai's new policy towards Indochina. With the military behind him, and also his extensive personal contacts with leaders in the Indochinese countries, Chavalit's contribution to the implementation of Chatichai's policy seemed indispensable. This was even more so as the MFA did not subscribe to the new policy.

4. NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC)

The NSC may take part in the implementation of foreign policy if that falls within the realm of its responsibility, such as co-ordinating between governmental agencies.¹²⁹ During the government of Prem Tinsulanonda, Chatichai predecessor, the NSC worked closely with the Foreign Ministry in the pursuit of Thailand's policy towards the

Cambodian problem. One example was its efforts to help push for the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in 1982, which was the anti-Phnom Penh coalition.

Nevertheless, during the Chatichai government, the roles of the NSC were overshadowed by the Prime Minister's advisory team. The NSC had no prior knowledge of Chatichai's surprising announcement of his Indochina initiatives. According to General Charan Kullavanijaya, former Secretary General of the NSC, the Council was initially shocked by the policy change which Chatichai announced but soon came to understand that the new policy could benefit the country.¹³⁰ Some top NSC officials such as Kachadpai Burusapatana were, in fact, in favour of the new initiatives. He saw Chatichai's invitation to Hun Sen as a good and practical diplomatic move, which he thought was handled well.¹³¹

The NSC adopted a relatively low profile during the Chatichai administration, largely because its chairman (the Prime Minister) did not call for the Council's active involvement. However, it did carry out some tasks which may be seen as supporting the implementation of Chatichai's policy. These included its efforts in helping to forge a compromise between the Prime Minister and his advisers on the one hand, and the Foreign Ministry on the other hand.¹³² Moreover, by the end of 1989, the NSC had conducted some low-key exchanges between its officials and those of the Hun Sen regime, but this was not publicly revealed at the time. According to Kachadpai, the NSC thought that contacts with that regime, and with Hanoi, would eventually be inevitable.¹³³

5. BUSINESS INTEREST GROUPS

Businessmen responded well to the announcement of Chatichai's initiatives. The new policy prompted many businesses to carry out market surveys to look into the possibilities of trading with the Indochinese countries. During Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok in January 1989, the Cambodian Prime Minister also met with many Thai businessmen to discuss about possibilities of trading with them.

Businessmen's enthusiasm, at least during the initial period of the introduction of Chatichai's initiatives, contributed to the momentum of the policy. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, it turned out that the policy offered little reassurance about long term economic ties between Thai and Indochinese (particularly Cambodian) businesses.

6. OTHER DOMESTIC GROUPS

Reactions of other domestic groups such as the general public, the media, and academics, were mixed. These reflected different views of the components of Thai society, and their expression was mainly in the form of public debates and comments. It seems that the mixed public reactions (hence, the absence of an overwhelming opposition to the new policy) allowed the Prime Minister to implement his policy relatively uninterruptedly.

RESPONSES TO CHATICHAÏ'S POLICY TOWARDS INDOCHINA

1. OPENING INDOCHINESE MARKETS

Chatichai's announced idea of turning Indochina from a

battlefield to a marketplace was met with mixed reactions from domestic actors in Thailand. Most disapproving was the MFA. Foreign Minister Siddhi did not find it necessary to actively emphasise the economic dimensions of Thailand's foreign policy towards Indochina because the MFA had already been promoting trade in a quiet and tacit way.¹³⁴ In fact, one of the central themes of Siddhi's foreign policy was to strengthen Thailand's economy through diplomacy.¹³⁵ According to a high-ranking MFA official and diplomat, to change the course of the policy in order to promote trade openly, as the Prime Minister did, was not a good idea because it would cause confusion and undermine the country's credibility.¹³⁶

Speculation of a rift between Chatichai and Siddhi began a few days after Chatichai's announcement of his initiatives, when Siddhi said in response that the Cambodian problem must be resolved before Thailand engaged in open and free trade with Indochina. The Foreign Minister explained that he was not challenging the Prime Minister's initiatives but insisted that Vietnamese troops be withdrawn from Cambodia, peace restored, and a superpowers' agreement on the reconstruction of Cambodia be reached prior to developing trade ties.¹³⁷ Later, Chatichai, Siddhi, and their aides conducted behind-the-scene talks on how to handle the country's foreign policy towards Indochina, after which both sides seemed to show some flexibility towards the other. The MFA agreed to change some of its personnel in the Department of Information who had been criticised for allegedly assuming a hard-line posture on Indochina affairs. Meanwhile, Chatichai spelt out that Thailand would not normalise trade ties with Vietnam unless all its troops from Cambodia were withdrawn.¹³⁸ Some government officials saw this reconciliation between the Prime Minister

and the Foreign Minister as an encouraging sign although this did not put an end to the differences of opinion between Chatichai and Siddhi. Arguably, it played down the differences rather than eliminate them.

On the other hand, Chatichai's views about opening markets in Indochina seemed to be well received by the military. Similar to what Chatichai proposed, the military adopted a notion of *Suvarnabhumi* or golden land. This was first mentioned by Chavalit in January 1989 when he said that the Thai armed forces should aim to create a peaceful Southeast Asian region, with Thailand as its hub, in order to make it possible for the development of economic co-operation, solidarity, and prosperity.¹³⁹ The *Suvarnabhumi* idea, however, was soon criticised as being an indication of Thailand's imperial design to dominate the region. Chatichai later had to explain that this was not the case, and the talking about *Suvarnabhumi* was soon dropped in order to avoid further confusion. The military also denied having such an imperialist plan as it was accused. One high-ranking military official who was involved in the formulation of this idea explained that the notion was aimed not only to elaborate a goal of achieving regional peace and prosperity, but also to counter the notion of Indochina Federation on which Vietnam seemed to set its mind.¹⁴⁰ In other words, Chavalit intended to send a signal to Hanoi that Thailand did not accept its notion of Indochina Federation.

In addition, the military's active interests in rural development, particularly in the Northeast but also in the south of the country, coincided with Chatichai's plan to build an industrial and communication complex similar to the Eastern Seaboard Project. One scholar notes that the military had been very co-operative in adjusting to pro-business government policies like the policy to change Indochina

from a battlefield to a marketplace,¹⁴¹ although he does not suggest that some military officials might have their own business interests.

Chatichai's idea was also well received by business interest groups. Anand Panyarachun, who in 1989 was Vice-President of the Thai Industrial Federation, praised Chatichai's foreign policy. Anand said in early 1989 that the new policy was consistent with rapid changes which led to a new economic and political structure on the international level.¹⁴² Anand later became Thailand's Prime Minister after Chatichai was ousted by a coup in February 1991 (see later).

However, as far as trade and investment with Cambodia is concerned, at least two groups of Thai traders should be distinguished. One was the border traders and small local businesses, and the other was the big companies. Although trade along the Thai borders had been present before Chatichai came to power, Chatichai's open encouragement gave it an extra impetus and was welcomed by local traders. Large volumes of trade went through Cambodia's Koh Kong, a province bordering Thailand's Trat province. In late 1989, one estimate had trade going through Koh Kong running at around US\$11.56 million a month, half of it was with Thai traders.¹⁴³ The trade quickly made border areas, particularly Trat, booming provinces. Thanit Traivut, an MP for Trat, explained that his province had full employment, and in fact a labour shortage, as many new ice factories sprang up over just a few months in mid 1989 to handle the seafood imported from Cambodia.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, some local businessmen also planned to invest in the tourist business in anticipation that tourists would eventually pour into Cambodia to see the wonders of the ancient kingdom.¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the situation was different beyond the border

areas where not many Thai businessmen wanted to establish long term trading relations with their Cambodian counterparts. Although many companies moved quickly following Chatichai's encouragement, the economic interaction turned out to be only short term. Many Thai businessmen found that many of their Cambodian, and more generally Indochinese, counterparts were not ready to embrace capitalist mode of trading. In addition, continuing problems such as Cambodia's political instability and its poor infrastructure put off many Thai businessmen. Moreover, it appeared that the Chatichai government did not provide adequate support to Thai businesses to expand their activities into Cambodia. For instance, there was a lack of legislation which could facilitate trade and investment. It may be argued that what Bangkok had done to practically promote economic activities was relatively little and those who benefited from them were mainly local businesses.

2. APPROACH TOWARDS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT

While the initial announcement of Chatichai's intention to turn Indochina to a marketplace surprised and displeased some quarters in Thailand, his friendly approach towards Hun Sen, particularly when he said he would welcome Hun Sen to Bangkok, caused even more shocks and surprises. The Foreign Ministry, in particular, was shocked because this move went against the hard-line stance and the policy of non-recognition of the Phnom Penh government. Chatichai's explanation that his invitation to Hun Sen was personal did not dissolve the controversy. To arrange for Hun Sen's visit, Chatichai relied on his advisers and Chavalit, the military leader. Although Foreign Minister Siddhi attended the Chatichai-Hun Sen informal meeting, the fact

that he left early probably showed his disapproval of the arrangement. Only a few days after Hun Sen left Bangkok, the MFA arranged for a meeting between Chatichai and the leaders of the three Cambodian resistance factions, as it emerged that these leaders were upset by Hun Sen's visit to Thailand.¹⁴⁶

Many MFA officials were faced with confusion as to how best to make their moves in the wake of Chatichai's initiatives, while having to explain Thailand's new policy to their counterparts in other countries. One high-ranking MFA official recalled that the task of explaining this policy to other countries was not easy, and he had to face satirical comments from some ASEAN officials.¹⁴⁷ He also added that meeting with Hun Sen was not a good idea, but to choose Thailand as a venue was even worse.¹⁴⁸ Siddhi was also faced with the same problem of having to explain to his foreign counterparts. He said he tried to explain to them that Thailand's basic policy had not changed although 'the style might have undergone some alteration.'¹⁴⁹ According to Siddhi, the difficulties were eased because many of his counterparts, particularly among ASEAN leaders with whom he had closely co-operated, understood the position he was in.¹⁵⁰

To be sure, Siddhi himself had made a positive move towards Hanoi earlier in January 1989 when he announced that he would visit Vietnam during that same month. The announcement caught many by surprise because Siddhi was considered a hard-liner on Vietnam. Prior to Siddhi's announcement, Chatichai said that he intended to visit Vietnam in 1989 as part of his policy to befriend Indochina. Sukhumbhand Paribatra described Siddhi's planned trip as representing the emergence of a new consensus in Thailand's foreign policy.¹⁵¹ However, some observers saw this in a less optimistic light

and said that the Foreign Minister wanted to stay one step ahead of the Prime Minister.¹⁵² Nonetheless, Siddhi denied this accusation, saying that he had long been invited by the Vietnamese.¹⁵³

While Chatichai's invitation to Hun Sen to visit Bangkok in January 1989 may have surprised and shocked many, the military leadership was not among those. In fact, Chavalit played an instrumental role in the arrangement of the visit by meeting Hun Sen earlier in the Lao capital of Vientiane in October 1988.¹⁵⁴ During Hun Sen's visit, Chavalit and his aides worked closely with Chatichai in trying to pave the way for an internal reconciliation between the four Cambodian factions through their direct dialogue with the Phnom Penh government. Chavalit, like Chatichai, regarded the Phnom Penh regime as the administrative foundation for any coalition that would be negotiated among four factions.

Chavalit significantly resorted to personal diplomacy, which he described as the most sophisticated form of all.¹⁵⁵ Chavalit's diplomatic skills had been clearly seen in 1987-88 following Ban Rom Klao battle where Thai and Lao troops fought a bloody border conflict over a remote stretch of disputed territory. Thailand emerged from the conflict with a bruised image as being unable to score a decisive victory over Lao armed forces which were perceived to be inferior. However, after stirring up a nationalistic campaign which saw nationwide anti-Lao demonstration, the Thai military leadership abruptly switched track and opted for a ceasefire with Laos. Chavalit stole the diplomatic limelight by concluding the ceasefire and engaging his Lao counterpart in negotiation, while the Thai Foreign Ministry adopted a wait-and-see gesture towards Laos. Foreign affairs analysts saw Chavalit's high profile as playing into the hands of the Lao, who had long disliked the Thai Foreign Minister.¹⁵⁶

Chavalit's practice of personal diplomacy continued during the Chatichai administration. Chavalit and his aides believed that official diplomatic channels were too formal. Instead, they could talk to their counterparts in Vietnam and Cambodia more easily through their personal ties and common understanding based on their common military careers. Their point was: military staff, even in different countries, spoke the same 'language.'¹⁵⁷ A game of golf and a few drinks with military leaders from the other countries could indeed play a crucial role in paving a way for a diplomatic breakthrough.¹⁵⁸ The MFA's adherence to traditional protocol, on the other hand, did not allow its officials to do the same. Chavalit described his role as relating more to underground or covert diplomacy which complemented the work of the MFA. He also added that both tracks always followed parallel lines in all the different forms of diplomacy.¹⁵⁹

The Prime Minister's new approach towards Hun Sen also resulted in considerable public debate, particularly among columnists and academics. Reactions to this aspect of the new policy were mixed. A notable supporter of Chatichai's policy was Kavi Chongkittavorn, a leading journalist. He believed that by initiating contacts with the Hun Sen regime, Thailand was doing itself a big favour by acting as its own interlocutor because previously this was monopolised by Hanoi, Sihanouk, and Jakarta.¹⁶⁰ On the other hand, there were many who disagreed, seeing Chatichai's diplomatic move as unnecessary because the problem was already being solved by external events and Thailand's previous efforts.¹⁶¹ Many academics, notably Professor Khien Theeravit of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, were vehemently against the new policy. In one of his comments prior to the Hun Sen visit, Khien said that he did not think the government would be so

stupid enough to invite Hun Sen to Bangkok because such a move would only harden Phnom Penh's position.¹⁶² Khien suggested that Chatichai should stop taking any new initiatives which were contrary to the Foreign Ministry's policy.¹⁶³ However, Khien did not speak for all academics, as many others were in favour of Chatichai's idea, saying that his initiatives were realistic.¹⁶⁴ One academic commented that Chatichai's initiatives seemed to create a shock wave more among Thai academic dinosaurs than in China.¹⁶⁵ Also, it must be noted that many of Chatichai's advisers were academics.

3. OTHER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACE SETTLEMENT

A series of diplomatic moves were introduced by the Prime Minister and his team in order to promote the idea of a step-by-step settlement of the Cambodian conflict which Chatichai put forward after the failure of the Paris Conference in August 1989. However, Foreign Minister Siddhi did not agree with this step-by-step or incremental approach. Chatichai's attempts to promote his idea to foreign leaders by almost bypassing the MFA did nothing to narrow the differences between himself and the Foreign Minister. In one instance, the Ministry was not aware that Chatichai planned to meet US President George Bush at the Japanese emperor's funeral in Tokyo in late February 1989, and to present Bush with an aide memoire about how he thought the Indochina issue should be approached. Instead, Siddhi was merely informed by a telephone call from the Prime Minister who invited the Foreign Minister to join him, but he declined,¹⁶⁶ which implied his disapproval of Chatichai's diplomatic conduct.

Chatichai and the advisers were also behind the idea of the Tokyo and Bangkok meetings between all the Cambodian factions (June 1990

and September 1990, respectively). The advisers were most involved in the preparation of these meetings while the Foreign Ministry was mostly bypassed. Indeed, the Foreign Ministry had been upset by a series of moves made by Chatichai's advisers, some of whom sought to become observers in the second Jakarta Informal Meeting directly through the good offices of the Thai embassy in Indonesia instead of making a request through the MFA in accordance with the correct procedure.¹⁶⁷

As there was no significant attempt to address these differences between the advisers and the Foreign Ministry, each went on to do what was thought to be appropriate. Chatichai relied on his advisers to carry out his initiatives in unofficial ways, whereas the MFA used its official channels as normal. As both groups often advocated different strategies, there was inconsistency in the presentation and pursuit of the country's policy, causing confusion, and more importantly affecting the efficiency of Chatichai's policy implementation. One example was the case of Deputy Foreign Ministry spokesman Prachyadavi Tavedikul. Prachyadavi released the information on the alleged capture of five Vietnamese soldiers by the Khmer Rouge after Vietnam's official troop withdrawal from Cambodia. Some newspapers also showed pictures of the captured soldiers being held in Thai territory. This upset the Prime Minister who saw it as an episode that could jeopardise Thailand's neutrality and appeared to favour the Khmer Rouge. Prachyadavi, and the press which showed those pictures, came under criticism from the Prime Minister.¹⁶⁸

In contrast to the Foreign Ministry, the military leadership was highly involved in the Prime Minister's efforts to promote a peace settlement for Cambodia. Chavalit actively took part in the arrangement of various meetings between the Cambodian faction

leaders. For instance, in May 1990 Chavalit held separate meetings with each of the faction leaders in order to secure their preliminary agreements before the Tokyo Conference in June that year. Leaders of the Cambodian factions agreed to what was called the ‘Chavalit Plan’ which proposed that ceasefire should be a self-restraint exercise and that a Supreme National Council for Cambodia should have twelve members: six from the Phnom Penh government and six from the resistance coalition.¹⁶⁹ Chavalit not only attended the Tokyo Conference, but he also went to China immediately after the end of the meeting in order to inform the Chinese of the developments of the peace process. The fact that Chatichai assigned him with this task indicated the general’s vital role. Chavalit had, from the start, been an ardent supporter of Chatichai’s initiatives and was trusted by the Prime Minister. As one of Chatichai’s advisers said, support from the military was important to Chatichai, because of the Foreign Ministry’s initial reluctance to implement the new policy.¹⁷⁰ Within the military, it seemed that Chavalit was not challenged by any elements. In other words, the military was helpful in propelling Chatichai’s initiatives. One high-ranking Defence Ministry official explained that the military actually contributed to Chatichai’s efforts more than it admitted, and that the military was content to play behind-the-scene roles such as helping to arrange and facilitate meetings between Chatichai and various Cambodian leaders.¹⁷¹

DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF CHATICHAÏ’S FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

Responses of domestic groups to the new policy point to at least two important consequences of the new policy on the domestic level.

These were (1) the deteriorating relationship between the MFA on the one hand and the Prime Minister and his advisers on the other hand; and (2) the underlying importance of the military.

RIFT BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MFA

The prominent role played by Chatichai and his advisers undermined the MFA's influence over foreign policy making and implementation. The fact that Chatichai did not take significant steps to reconcile these differences but instead chose to do things his own way greatly contributed to the divergence of the Prime Minister and his advisers on the one hand, and the Foreign Ministry on the other hand. What the Prime Minister did, according to Siddhi, was to establish in effect another Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁷²

One of Chatichai's tactics to ease the problem of conflicting opinions was to say on various occasions that there was 'no problem.' Also, the Prime Minister praised the MFA's efforts in the Jakarta Informal Meetings which he said were constructive and had helped to narrow the differences between the Cambodian parties. Chatichai compared his approach and that of the MFA as different musical instruments with different tones but which were playing the same song.¹⁷³ In late 1988 and early 1989, Chatichai and Siddhi held talks to clear up differences between them, which resulted in the two sides appearing to be more flexible to one another. For instance, Chatichai announced in March 1989, following some talks with his Foreign Minister, that he would not visit Vietnam until it withdrew all forces from Cambodia.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, sequences of events did not all seem to match this

apparent optimism. In fact, it seemed that the problem of conflicting views was hardly solved, but was exacerbated by the prominent roles of Chatichai's advisers. Recalling the separation between the MFA on the one hand and the Prime Minister and his advisers on the other hand, Siddhi said that his working relationship with the Prime Minister and the advisers was 'correct so far as each side kept the other informed.'¹⁷⁵ This highlighted the operation of the two-track foreign policy where there was little or no consultation between them.

This was not the first time Foreign Minister Siddhi had to deal with different opinions from leading government politicians. In 1983, two coalition government party leaders publicly suggested an alternative way of approaching the Indochina issue. Kriangsak Chomanan, who was a former Prime Minister, and Pichai Rattakul, a former Foreign Minister, expressed their views that, contrary to Siddhi's hard-line policy towards Vietnam, Bangkok should adopt a policy of accommodation. Pichai spoke of a trade-before-politics policy towards Hanoi as a path leading to a political settlement in Cambodia.¹⁷⁶ However, Siddhi did not change his foreign policy, and this did not lead to any serious domestic political consequences. The case shows that the policy was under firm control of the Foreign Minister who received full support from Prime Minister Prem.

The case of Chatichai's policy, although involving similar ideas of how best to approach Indochina, was clearly different from that in 1983. This time, Siddhi found himself in a difficult position because the alternative view came from the Prime Minister himself. While disagreeing with the Prime Minister's ideas, Siddhi was under pressure from his Social Action Party (SAP) to maintain unity of the coalition government. In fact, the aforementioned meeting between Chatichai

and Siddhi in March 1989 was called for by SAP members who were concerned that the rift between the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister could affect the SAP's position in the government.¹⁷⁷ When the differences worsened, Sukhumbhand Paribatra, one of Chatichai's advisers, suggested that Siddhi should resign if his views were significantly different from those of the Prime Minister. Sukhumbhand's comment caused anger among SAP members who in turn criticised the adviser as acting without authority. Chatichai had to intervene to silence his advisory team in order to regain the unity of his coalition government.

Indeed, the fact that Siddhi did not resign in the wake of the heated conflict of opinions between himself and the Prime Minister was largely because of his need to heed the demands of his party. Recalling the situation when he was faced with political difficulties resulting from his working relationship with the Prime Minister, Siddhi said that "If I were merely a Member of Parliament, I would have resigned a long time ago. However, as the then leader of the SAP, I must put my party's interests above my own feelings."¹⁷⁸ This revealed not only that Siddhi had bitter feelings about the political situation he was in but also that the Foreign Minister was under pressure from his party to remain in the government to retain the party's bargaining position for other political purposes.¹⁷⁹

Instead of resigning, Siddhi announced in late November 1989 that the Cambodian conflict would no longer be a top priority issue for the Foreign Ministry. Siddhi indicated that he was giving the Prime Minister a free hand in handling the country's approach in resolving the Cambodian conflict, while the MFA would turn to concentrate more on bread-and-butter issue.¹⁸⁰ Some MFA officials added that the

Ministry would not adopt an active role in lobbying for support for a comprehensive settlement.¹⁸¹ The Foreign Minister said that he was not washing his hands of the Cambodian issue but “we will do what we can do.”¹⁸² Siddhi explained that the MFA had done enough over the past 11 years. And with Thailand secure now, the MFA’s interest in Cambodia diminished. He would therefore let the events unfold on their own towards a solution.¹⁸³ Some observers suggested that Siddhi’s move was an attempt to score political points at a time when Chatichai had just been criticised for dwelling too much on foreign affairs and not enough on the well-being of the people.¹⁸⁴ In an interview with the author, Siddhi explained that his decision to reduce the MFA’s role in the Cambodian issue was because of the improved situation in Indochina, but he did mention, without elaborating, that politics were also a factor.¹⁸⁵

Chatichai’s reshuffle of his cabinet in August 1990 saw the departure of Siddhi from his Foreign Minister post.¹⁸⁶ To be sure, this was not unexpected, and Siddhi tendered his resignation one day before the reshuffle was announced. Siddhi said upon his resignation from Parliament and from the Social Action Party that among the achievements he was most proud of was his role in mobilising support from the US, China, ASEAN, and other countries for the political and economic isolation of Vietnam. The pressure, he said, finally prompted Vietnam to pull out its troops from Cambodia.¹⁸⁷

Siddhi was replaced by Dr. Subin Pinkayan, who was the Commerce Minister in the previous cabinet and whose views were more in line with those of Chatichai. The new Foreign Minister spoke of his hope of seeing the transition of Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace complete.¹⁸⁸ Referring to co-operation between the

Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's advisers, Subin said that "we can cooperate on any matter because there is one policy under one leader."¹⁸⁹ Indeed, Siddhi's replacement with Subin allowed the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to speak with one voice. There were also some changes at the Foreign Ministry under its new chief, whereby working groups which handled the Cambodian problem would be removed, and the role of a special committee on Cambodia formed in 1979 would be reviewed in the light of improved prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian conflict.¹⁹⁰ However, it must be noted that the Prime Minister continued to work through his advisory team and used informal channels to contact with the Cambodian leaders in his efforts to arrange peace talks in late 1990. Despite Subin's appointment, the MFA's non-recognition policy towards the government of Phnom Penh continued to preclude Thailand's official contacts with that regime. Nonetheless, his appointment served to eliminate friction on the ministerial level and presented a picture of a more united government.

In any case, it must be noted that by the time Subin took office at the MFA, the Cambodian problem had become less pressing. Although some obstacles to a peace settlement still remained to be overcome, circumstances surrounding the issue had developed in such a way that a peace settlement was becoming more rather than less likely (see chapter 4). By the beginning of 1991, Chatichai had become more concerned with the problems of domestic nature which seemed to have shaken the stability of his government.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MILITARY

The case of Chatichai's new policy towards Indochina confirmed

the importance of the military in the conduct of Thai foreign policy. In the Indochina issue, the military and the MFA had worked together relatively effectively. This was partly due to Foreign Minister Siddhi's attempts to promote co-operation by appointing General Charan Kullavanijaya in 1983 as a military-political co-ordinator. Charan was assigned with the task of ensuring that policies of the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs were congruent. However, it seems that rivalry between the two establishments began to set in from the late 1980s as Chavalit increasingly took diplomatic roles, although Charan insisted that the coherence of the policy was not undermined and that all sides understood each other.¹⁹¹ To be sure, there was no row, but the different degrees of involvement of the MFA and the military in Chatichai's policy (i.e. Chavalit's important role and Siddhi's exclusion from it) spoke louder than words. Although the military's role in Thai politics was usually more rather than less prominent compared with other domestic groups, this case was an example where its role in the conduct of foreign policy during a civilian government was very prominent, and centred mainly on the military chief.

In fact, the importance of the military in general and of Chavalit in particular in the making and implementation of Thailand's policy towards the Cambodian issue was given extra attention by Chatichai when he took office in August 1988. An effort to build closer ties with the army was clearly demonstrated in one of the early acts of the Chatichai administration when the Prime Minister appointed Lt. General Panya Singsakda, one of Chavalit's close friends, to be his secretary-general. Moreover, the Prime Minister gave Chavalit, who was the army commander and acting supreme commander, a free hand in the 1988 annual military reshuffle. This was in contrast to the

previous administrations where military promotions were selectively vetted by Prime Minister Prem.¹⁹²

Chavalit's involvement in the making and implementation of Chatichai's new policy towards the Cambodian issue was also clearly demonstrated by the general's repeated statement that the new policy was not at all a surprise.¹⁹³ This implies that he had been aware of Chatichai's intention before it was publicly announced. In fact, one of Chatichai's advisers said that Chavalit was behind the process of successfully implementing it.¹⁹⁴ This seems to suggest that Chatichai would probably not have been able to embark on a new policy if he had not received support from the military.

The importance given to the military may also be seen from its rising budgetary allocations. Notwithstanding the high growth rates of the economy, the defence budget received its high percentage of overall spending despite the reduced level of conflict and the Prime Minister's apparent emphasis on trade with Indochina. During 1988-1991, which was the period of Chatichai's government, an average of 18.1% of the Thailand's total budget was allocated for defence. The actual defence spending during the same period was even higher. An average of 18.9% of the country's total expenditure was on defence, compared with an average of 16.3% on what was categorised as 'economic services.'¹⁹⁵ In addition, arms transfers from other countries to Thailand, particularly from China, did not decline during the Chatichai government either (see chapter 6). The large proportion of defence spending and continuing arms transfer seemed to underline the importance of the military in the efforts to achieve Chatichai's primary objective which was to bring the Cambodian conflict to an end, although his policy was presented with an economic tone. Not only did the military

control all cross-border issues, but the crucial role of Chavalit as a main implementer of Chatichai's policy arguably made the military even more important. This research did not find evidence of dissenting elements within the military, and it appeared that Chavalit had the support of the military as a whole. However, it must be noted that the military (at least formally) was a disciplined establishment which may have shaped the way in which military officials expressed their views and opinions.

One occasion when the military displayed its support for Chavalit was after Sukhumbhand Paribatra, one of Chatichai's advisers, responded to Chavalit's speech about the need to combat corruption in the government. The adviser's suggestion that 'anyone who said the government was corrupt should clean up their own house first' prompted a military protest demanding the sacking of Sukhumbhand. That Sukhumbhand was removed from the advisory team confirmed the influence of the military in a civilian government in general and the significance of Chavalit to Chatichai in particular. Until much later in the Chatichai government, the relationship between the Prime Minister and Chavalit had been good, and the military chief pledged soon after Chatichai took office that the military would give the Prime Minister its unwavering support.¹⁹⁶ Also, in August 1989, Chavalit offered Chatichai a further reassurance by announcing that there would be no coup as long as he (Chavalit) was in power.¹⁹⁷

Chavalit's active role in the conduct of Thailand's policy towards the third Indochina conflict had led many observers to speculate that the general had political ambitions. For his part, Chavalit never denied the suggestion that he might want to enter politics. Indeed, Chavalit joined the cabinet in early 1990 as deputy prime minister and defence

minister, and was its only non-elected member. However, Chavalit's career in the Chatichai cabinet was short-lived. The general resigned from his ministerial posts in early June 1990 after he suffered some political back-stabbing from a fellow cabinet member.¹⁹⁸ There were concerns that his resignation might hamper or slow down the Thai efforts in the Cambodian peace process, but Chavalit confirmed that he would continue what he had been doing as far as the Cambodian problem was concerned.¹⁹⁹ Chavalit's importance in the Cambodian peace process was again demonstrated when Son Sann, leader of one of the resistance factions, visited Chavalit in Bangkok in late June 1990 and asked the general to help arrange another meeting between the four Cambodian factions.²⁰⁰ The general remained involved in the efforts to solve the Cambodian problem, particularly through his personal connections, although his role was less high-profile compared to when he was the army chief and when he was in the cabinet.

Although Chavalit's resignation from the cabinet might not have significantly affected the efforts to achieve a peace settlement for Cambodia, it did not bode well for the good relationship between the Prime Minister and the military. It is argued that Chavalit's exit from the government constituted a significant setback in the government-military relations as the military felt that the government did not accord the respect due to Chavalit and that the treatment of him showed disregard for the interests and sensitivities of the military.²⁰¹ Chatichai's relationship with the new military chief, General Suchinda Kraprayoon, did not match earlier periods under Chavalit. This culminated in a military-staged coup against Chatichai in February 1991. One of the reasons cited by the coup leaders was what they described as 'the harassment by politicians of honest civil servants.'²⁰²

Conflicting relationship such as that between the MFA and Chatichai's advisers also happened between politicians and bureaucrats in other government departments. This was mainly due to a feeling by the latter that their bureaucratic turf was being trod on by the politicians, many of whom, from the bureaucrats' point of view, lack qualifications and credibility.²⁰³ In other words, it may be argued that Chatichai's way of handling the Cambodian issue, particularly his reliance on the advisers to implement the policy, contributed to his downfall.

CONCLUSION

As the first democratically elected Prime Minister in 12 years, Chatichai enjoyed popular support when he took office in August 1988. However, his surprising announcement of his intention to turn Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace generated mixed domestic reactions. While it boosted business confidence (at least in the short term), it upset the Foreign Ministry whose approach towards the third Indochina conflict was opposite to Chatichai's.

Chatichai's reliance on his advisers and the military chief's personal diplomacy widened the rift between himself and the Foreign Ministry, and represented a shift of emphasis from the bureaucrats to politicians and their associates. At the same time, it also showed that the Prime Minister and the military prevailed over the politically weak MFA. Although this was not uncommon in Thai politics, this case was illuminating because of the civilian character of the government and because of the unique role played by the military chief in the making and implementation of Chatichai's policy towards Indochina. This was clearly seen in the way by which Chatichai's policy emerged. The

fact that it was a surprise to most domestic actors except the military leadership meant that these actors, particularly the MFA who was directly concerned with the country's foreign policy, were not well prepared for the policy change.

Consequently, in the short term (particularly during the lifetime of Chatichai's government), the new Indochina policy created a rift between Chatichai and the MFA, which was caused not only by differences in opinion but also because of the unprecedented prominence of Chatichai's advisers over the MFA. However, this did not seem to be a significant concern for the Prime Minister. In practical terms, it would have been difficult for the MFA to fulfil Chatichai's Indochina plans in part because the Ministry did not officially recognise the government in Phnom Penh. Therefore, the Thai Prime Minister relied mainly on his advisory team to carry out his initiatives. He was also supported by Chavalit whose personal diplomacy provided an indispensable contribution. By working with those who shared his ideas and by using informal channels, the Prime Minister could undertake diplomatic manoeuvres of his choice, although these had to be done with limited instruments and resources.²⁰⁴ In other words, although the MFA had skilful personnel and diplomatic instruments at its disposal, these were not fully utilised by the Prime Minister who opted for an informal/personal way of dealing with the Cambodian issue.

In the longer term (beyond the duration of the Chatichai administration), it appeared that the policy increasingly became more acceptable. Chatichai's successor, Anand Panyarachun, who was a businessman as well as a diplomat, had earlier expressed agreements with Chatichai's policy, and continued the basic direction of Chatichai's policy of encouraging trade and investment with Indochina, albeit with

a lower profile.²⁰⁵ By the time Anand took office, the developments of the Cambodian peace process had been encouraging as the conflicting parties edged towards an agreement. Anand's Foreign Minister, Arsa Sarasin, also subscribed to Chatichai's ideas about how best to approach Indochina.²⁰⁶ Sukhumbhand, one of Chatichai's advisers, said that when people looked at the policy in retrospect, they recognised Chatichai's wisdom, despite the fact that many had criticised the policy when it was being implemented.²⁰⁷ Sukhumbhand, who later became Thailand's Deputy Foreign Minister during 1997-2001, also recalled that during his time at the Ministry, some MFA officials told him that they had shared Chatichai's views when he was Prime Minister.²⁰⁸

However, within the lifetime of Chatichai's government, the prominent role taken by the Prime Minister (and other government politicians) over the state bureaucrats, not only in the case of Indochina policy but also in other policy areas, appeared to be costly as it formed part of the announced reasons for which his government was ousted in February 1991. Also, for the Indochina policy in particular, it seems that Chatichai's reliance on personal and informal connections had an inherent limitation. While it offered flexibility to Chatichai in the implementation of his new policy, he and his team only had limited resources. The fallout with Chavalit also weakened the capacity of informal diplomacy on which Chatichai's plan was based.

CHAPTER

4

RESPONSES FROM CAMBODIA

INTRODUCTION

By the late 1980s, the external aspect of the conflict, including the involvement of the Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam, had become more conducive to peace. Therefore, the remaining obstacles to a peace settlement were largely internal to Cambodia. Chatichai's policy attempted to tackle the internal aspect of the third Indochina conflict by means of according greater importance to the Phnom Penh regime. At the same time, Chatichai presented economic incentives to the Indochinese governments, pointing out the benefits which could be gained if there was peace in Indochina.

Central questions of this chapter are: In what way did Chatichai's policy affect the Cambodian factions, and how did they respond to it? This chapter primarily examines the reactions of the two competing Cambodian governments, namely the government in Phnom Penh led by Prime Minister Hun Sen, and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) which was a resistance coalition led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. This chapter looks at the position of Vietnam where relevant, as Hanoi was closely linked with the Phnom Penh government, and because Vietnam started the third Indochina conflict by invading Cambodia in December 1978. On the other hand, Laos, which is also another Indochinese country, will not be considered separately or thoroughly because it was not central to the Cambodian conflict with which this thesis is concerned.

THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM

The Thais and the Cambodians might not have been staunch antagonists, but each country's attitude towards the other was not primarily positive. Histories of the two countries record many wars and clashes between them before and during the time when Cambodia became a French colony. Bilateral security problems in Thai-Cambodian relations included the problem of their poorly demarcated border. These were eased in the mid 1970s as Thailand sought to adopt a policy of accommodation following the communist victory in Indochina in 1975. With the exception of the anticommunist government of Thanin Kraivichian during October 1976 – October 1977, Thailand's relations towards Cambodia were reasonably well maintained. Up to the start of the third Indochina conflict, Cambodia served as a buffer between Thailand and Vietnam.²⁰⁹

Thailand and Vietnam were historical rivals in their competition for influence in the sub-Mekong region.²¹⁰ Ho Chi Minh's successful liberation of Vietnam from French rule added to Thailand's concern about the threats from North Vietnam. Successive Thai governments maintained that communism, and especially the communist struggles within Thailand that received support from other communist countries, was a threat to Thailand's security. This was one of the major reasons for Bangkok's support to the American efforts in the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese victory at the end of the War caused concern to Thailand, as the country found itself living next to communist neighbours in Indochina. Thailand adapted to the new situation by developing a working relationship with Vietnam, in spite of the

inherent difficulty of internal subversion posed by a communist movement drawing close support from Hanoi.²¹¹

However, such a working relationship was abruptly ended with the start of the third Indochina conflict in December 1978. The invasion and occupation of Cambodia by Vietnamese troops immediately strained Bangkok's relations with Hanoi, and later with the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh. The conflict added to the concerns of the Thai leaders about internal source of security threats to the country. It may be argued that before the Vietnamese invasion, the core threat perception of Thai leadership was the internal polarisation, particularly through the influence of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). The threats stemming from the withdrawal of American forces and from the fall of Indochina to communism in 1975 were not primarily domestic in nature but they were a cause of concern because of their domestic impact, such as increased support for the CPT as well as economic and social dislocations stemming from the refugees flowing into Thailand.²¹²

Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia not only intensified these problems but also presented a new one which involved physical clashes between Thai and Vietnamese troops, and putting Thailand under the threat of possible incursions and attacks by the Vietnamese. Indeed, the presence of Vietnamese troops near and along the Thai-Cambodian border destabilised the area, causing border fighting between rival forces, and general instability on the Thai side of the border. The conflict also produced a large number of Cambodian refugees who fled from their homes, crossing into Thailand. Towards the end of 1979, there were more than 310,000 Indochinese refugees in Thailand.²¹³ The refugees not only created social, economic, and political

problems for Thailand, but were also a main cause of strained relations between Thailand and the Indochinese governments, particularly as some of the refugee camps were controlled by the Khmer Rouge and other groups opposed to the Hun Sen regime. The governments in Phnom Penh and Hanoi were unwilling to accept Thailand's attempts to repatriate these refugees, seeing them as a plan to send the refugees back as soldiers to fight against the Hun Sen government.

Thailand reacted to the third Indochina conflict in at least three ways: (1) strengthening the Thai military by increasing arms procurement and military co-operation with other countries; (2) taking measures against Phnom Penh and Hanoi; (3) contributing to the efforts of finding a political solution to the conflict e.g. by helping to arrange peace talks between the Cambodian factions. The following discussion looks at these in greater detail.

1. INCREASING ITS MILITARY STRENGTH

Thailand's attempts to strengthen its military capability may be seen by an increase in defence budgets and greater number of military exercises. Defence spending as a percentage of central government expenditure rose from 19.3 % in 1977 to 21.4% and 23.6% in 1978 and 1979 respectively.²¹⁴ This was spent on both buying arms and on military training exercises.

The Thai military strengthened its capacity significantly with Chinese weapons. These weapons were not only simple to use, but they were also cheaper than other sources, particularly as they were sold to Thailand at 'friendship prices.' The transfer of Chinese arms to Thailand was one of the aspects of Sino-Thai tacit alliance formed in response to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. However, American

military assistance to Thailand also went up since the Cambodian conflict started. The US and Thailand conducted joint military exercises which served both as a symbol of continuing co-operation between the two countries as well as to help strengthen the capacity of the Thai military. The arms that Thailand procured might not all be used in combat, but it was necessary to have them for at least two reasons: (1) the act of acquiring arms could help to shape Vietnamese perceptions of the depth of international support for Thailand and of Thai capabilities and willingness to fight, and (2) these weapons could help to bolster Thai resolve and weakened elements of the leadership who advocated compromising views on the demands for total Vietnamese withdrawal.²¹⁵

2. TAKING MEASURES AGAINST PHNOM PENH AND HANOI

Apart from strengthening the country militarily, the Thai government also undertook other actions against Vietnam and the Phnom Penh government. Diplomatically, Thailand and other ASEAN partners protested against armed intervention in Cambodia, demanding an immediate and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia, and requesting UN assistance in restoring peace, security, and stability in the region. Bangkok refused to recognise the Vietnamese-backed regime in Phnom Penh while proposing that a new neutral government should be chosen by Cambodian people.²¹⁶ Thailand maintained its recognition of the Khmer Rouge government at the UN until the Khmer Rouge seat was taken over by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in 1982 of which the Khmer Rouge was still a component.²¹⁷ In fact, Bangkok played an active role in the process leading to the formation of the CGDK.

In addition, Thailand joined forces with other countries in implementing economic sanctions against Hanoi and Phnom Penh. The idea was to apply pressure on those regimes so as to compel Vietnam to withdraw troops from Cambodia. Meanwhile, support was given to the Cambodian resistance factions. Thailand acted as a channel through which weapons and assistance from other countries, mainly China and the US, were passed to the anti-Phnom Penh forces. One of the key actions which Bangkok took following the start of the Cambodian crisis was to closely cooperate with China, making a tacit alliance with Beijing so as to facilitate Chinese efforts to strengthen the Khmer Rouge against Hun Sen's faction and its Vietnamese supporters. It was also reported that Thailand gave sanctuary to a number of guerrillas, although there was no formal evidence to verify the claim.²¹⁸

3. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFORTS OF FINDING A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT

In this regard, Thailand acted with its ASEAN partners in their common efforts to help arrange peace talks and meetings between the relevant parties to the Cambodian conflict. One of the main strategies taken by Bangkok was to highlight the international dimension and significance of the Cambodian conflict. For instance, Thailand's Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila called attention to the similarity between Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, describing the Vietnamese aggression as being part of global Soviet design for the Asia-Pacific region.²¹⁹ This strategy seemed to be effective in keeping the issue on the international agenda, although there was some criticism that it overlooked local contents of the crisis.²²⁰

THE CAMBODIAN FACTIONS AND CHATICHAÏ'S POLICY

By the time Chatichai took office in Bangkok in August 1988, there had been important developments relating to the Cambodian issue, such as improving relations between China and the Soviet Union, and Vietnam's announcement of its plan to complete the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia by October 1989. These developments signalled the beginning of the end of the third Indochina conflict which, as discussed in Chapter 2, significantly influenced Chatichai's decision to introduce his policy

Chatichai's policy reflected international changes by shifting the attention from the efforts to force Vietnam out of the Cambodia to the attempts which were aimed to encourage the Cambodian factions to agree to a political settlement. In other words, his policy represented a shift of emphasis from external to internal aspects of the Cambodian conflict, or from international to local levels. However, the new Thai policy was not an overhaul of the goals of the previous Thai approach, but it was rather a change in the means by which to achieve a peace settlement.

Chatichai's initiatives not only indicated his attempts to create atmosphere for peace in Indochina in general, but they also showed his views about the political future of Cambodia in particular. In this regard, Chatichai's friendly approach towards Hun Sen was a significant diplomatic move which, by diverging from the previous Thai approach, gave Hun Sen some international legitimacy of which the Hun Sen government had been deprived. However, there is no evidence that the Phnom Penh government, or any other Cambodian faction, was aware of Chatichai's policy before it was

publicly announced. The following discussion addresses how the Cambodian factions reacted to three interrelated elements of Chatichai's policy.

1. OPENING INDOCHINESE MARKETS

Chatichai's attempts to boost trade and investment with Indochina were received favourably by the regime in Phnom Penh. When the Thai government established three new border crossing points along the Thai-Cambodian frontier in early 1989, the Phnom Penh government agreed that these trading areas should be protected by unarmed troops.²²¹ During Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok in late January 1989, the Cambodian Prime Minister met some delegations from Thai business community to discuss opportunities of trade and investment in Cambodia. Both Thai and Cambodian delegations agreed to establish working groups to look into these. They considered particular areas such as fishing, logging, tourism, and mining.²²² In March 1989, Hun Sen introduced a new legislation to protect the rights of foreign investors.²²³ Indeed, in late 1989, some Thai businessmen made some progress in their efforts to establish trade links with Cambodia. For instance, a Thai car company sold 300 cars directly to Cambodia for the first time.²²⁴ Recorded bilateral trade between Thailand and Cambodia increased from 15 million baht in 1988, to 91 million baht in 1989, and 318 million baht in 1990.²²⁵ However, the volume of trade, and its proportion out of Thailand's total trade, was relatively small. Cambodia's lack of necessary infrastructure and personnel were among the major reasons for its slow going economy. The resistance coalition CGDK did not seem to have objections to the economic aspect of Chatichai's policy, arguably because the plan was

mainly of form rather than substance and because it did not threaten to directly weaken the political stance of the resistance coalition. Additionally, some members of the coalition benefited financially.

Chatichai's economic initiatives were received favourably in Vietnam and Laos, because they came at a time when economic reform programmes were under way in these two countries. Thailand's trade with Vietnam increased from 351 million baht in 1988 to 1,596 million baht in 1989.²²⁶ Meanwhile, Thailand's trade with Laos went up from 1,869 million baht in 1988 to 2,929 million baht in 1989.²²⁷ It is clear that Vietnam and Laos were relatively more attractive trading partners than Cambodia. However, Indochina in general remained a relatively less important market, and the proportions of Thailand's trade with the Indochinese countries were small (see Table 1 in Chapter 2).

2. APPROACH TOWARDS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT

Whereas Chatichai's announced intention to turn Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace was more or less a general idea designed to ultimately bring peace to the sub-region, his diplomacy towards Hun Sen was more specific and more significant. This took its most visible form in January 1989 when Hun Sen arrived in Bangkok following Chatichai's personal invitation. The Thai Prime Minister explained that it was time that Hun Sen's faction was listened to, after a decade during which only the factions of the CGDK had their say.

Hun Sen's visit, although controversial, boosted the position of the Phnom Penh government. By receiving Hun Sen as his guest, Chatichai in effect gave him some degree of international legitimacy, which the Hun Sen government had seldom possessed. Although Bangkok explained that contacts with Hun Sen were informal and

did not amount to an official diplomatic recognition of the Phnom Penh government, Cambodia's media seemed to conveniently ignore this, as it reported that the Phnom Penh regime portrayed Hun Sen's visit as official.²²⁸

The Phnom Penh government described Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok as a success, calling it a breakthrough which broke the stalemate in the Cambodian problem and paved the way for the improvement of relations between Cambodia and Thailand.²²⁹ Later in April 1989, the Cambodian Prime Minister also said that the Phnom Penh - Bangkok dialogue had softened tensions along the Thai - Cambodian border, and he said that Thailand was the key to peace in Cambodia.²³⁰ However, Hun Sen's positive reception of Chatichai's initiatives caused some concern among some members of the Cambodian People's Revolutionary Council who were wary about Thailand's new policy, pointing out that Thailand had earlier been staunchly against Phnom Penh for a decade. Hun Sen reportedly spent almost a day explaining to the Council that Thailand now adopted a new line of policy, and telling the Council about his positive impression when he visited Bangkok in January 1989. He was reportedly able to convince many members of the Council who had previously been doubtful about Chatichai's policy.²³¹

While Hun Sen welcomed the new Thai policy, the resistance factions were displeased. The CGDK's reactions were mainly presented by Prince Sihanouk as the leader of the coalition. The Cambodian prince charged Thailand with favouring *de facto* recognition of the Phnom Penh regime devoted to communism and Vietnamese colonialism. He criticised Chatichai's diplomacy as part of an attempt to turn Cambodia into a Thai-Vietnamese condominium with China as

a care-taker.²³² Sihanouk called for other countries to resist such plan, saying that he would not allow it to happen. Also, as a sign of protest, Sihanouk announced on 26 January 1989 that he would not attend the second Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM II), although he had earlier told Indonesia's Foreign Minister Ali Alatas that he would participate. In a move to ease the tension caused by Chatichai's diplomacy, Thailand's Foreign Ministry arranged for the three resistance forces to meet Chatichai in Bangkok only a few days after the end of Hun Sen's trip to Thailand in late January 1989. Later, the resistance factions confirmed their earlier agreement to attend JIM I on 19–21 February 1989.

However, Sihanouk's sceptical expression towards Chatichai's policy seemed to vanish when the prince arrived in Bangkok to meet Chatichai in late April 1989.²³³ In his meeting with Chatichai, Sihanouk asked Thailand to host a meeting between the four rival Cambodian factions to resolve the conflict. Sihanouk said that Chatichai was the right man, and Thailand was the right state to help the Cambodians solve their problem, adding that all Cambodian factions had trust and confidence in the Thai Prime Minister.²³⁴ Sihanouk's statement was a shift from his critical comments about Chatichai's initiatives which he made only two months earlier. This inconsistency, as will be addressed later, was the result of having to satisfy conflicting views in the factional coalition.

3. OTHER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACE SETTLEMENT

Apart from highlighting the importance of Hun Sen, Chatichai also proposed a step-by-step approach to a peace settlement in Cambodia by which he suggested that there should be a ceasefire first and other agreements would subsequently follow. The idea of a

step-by-step or incremental approach, as against a comprehensive approach, was put forward by the Thai Prime Minister as a possible alternative way out of the Cambodian quagmire following the inconclusive ending of the Paris Conference in August 1989. By this time, not only had Sino-Soviet relations been normalised (thus providing a favourable background for efforts towards a peace settlement in Cambodia), but there had also been signs from Hun Sen that his government might declare a unilateral ceasefire after all the Vietnamese troops had left Cambodia, although he spelt out that his forces would remain alert and ready to retaliate if they were attacked.²³⁵ In general, Chatichai's idea in this regard seemed to be favourably received by the Phnom Penh government, not least because it had gained control over many areas of the country and would thus be able to retain these areas if there was a ceasefire.

On the other hand, responses from the resistance coalition were not favourable. In September 1989, Chatichai and his staff hosted a meeting in Bangkok between the factions of the CGDK where the Thai Prime Minister sought to convince them to agree to the idea of having a ceasefire first. The CGDK, however, was not persuaded. Arguably, reactions from the resistance coalition to this aspect of Chatichai's policy were significantly influenced by the Khmer Rouge which was the faction with the most effective fighting capacity and therefore wanted to achieve a military victory rather than agree to a ceasefire. More broadly, the Khmer Rouge had most to lose from a political settlement given the deep animosity it faced from all sides.

Because of the difficulties of convincing all factions of the CGDK, particularly the Khmer Rouge, Chatichai's attempts were concentrated on getting an agreement between Sihanouk (who headed the CGDK)

and Hun Sen. This explained Chatichai's efforts to arrange bilateral meetings between the two Cambodian faction leaders. The Tokyo Conference in June 1990, which ended with a bilateral agreement between Sihanouk and Hun Sen, was a highlight of such attempts.

EXPLAINING RESPONSES OF THE CAMBODIAN FACTIONS

Responses of the Cambodian factions reflected how their respective positions were affected by the new Thai policy. Accordingly, Hun Sen welcomed Chatichai's diplomacy because it offered him many benefits, including the opportunity to mitigate Cambodia's economic troubles and increase his international legitimacy. In this regard, Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok in January 1989 following Chatichai's invitation was a significant episode. The visit not only showed Chatichai's de facto acceptance of the Phnom Penh regime but it also indicated the importance Chatichai placed on that regime not only as a key to a peace settlement in Cambodia but also a political force to be reckoned with in future Cambodia. Meanwhile, Chatichai's economic incentives to the Indochinese governments in effect gave them a stake so that they could see the possible benefits on offer and therefore felt more need to achieve a peace settlement. Chatichai's economic incentives strengthened the positions of the reformers in the Indochinese countries, helping them to emphasise the increasing necessity of economic reforms. Various measures introduced by the Hun Sen government following the launch of Chatichai's policy showed that Phnom Penh was concerned about the future of its economy. Perhaps Chatichai's policy was timely in this sense, because it was introduced

during the time Vietnam, which faced economic troubles at home in the wake of declining Soviet support, was withdrawing forces and reducing assistance to Phnom Penh. Consequently, the Indochinese countries were likely to welcome economic opportunities which could help to cure their ailing economies.

However, the more Chatichai's policy appeared to favour the Phnom Penh government, the more it undercut the resistance factions and hence was not favourably received by the CGDK whose reactions were mainly expressed by Sihanouk who was the head of the coalition. Nevertheless, Sihanouk's responses were not consistent, due to the differences of opinions within the factional coalition as well as the need to maximise his own political leverage. The factions which made up the CGDK arguably were held together not so much by common political values but rather out of necessity. Sihanouk's party, although respected by many Cambodians and well recognised by other countries, was relatively weak, particularly in military terms. The opposite was true in the case of the communist Khmer Rouge who, although strong militarily, was unacceptable on moral and political grounds. Another faction led by Son Sann was a weak and relatively quiet nationalist force which kept a low profile. As Sihanouk's and Son Sann's parties had little military power and relied on the Khmer Rouge to fight against the Phnom Penh regime, it was necessary that the two factions paid attention to the Khmer Rouge's interests, which were fiercely against Phnom Penh and Hanoi. However, confusion sometimes occurred when Sihanouk commented on the Cambodian issue in different capacities. For instance, in May 1989 the prince said he personally shared Chatichai's view that an incremental approach to a peace settlement, starting with a ceasefire first, could be effective.

Nonetheless, he went on to say that he also had to listen to other resistance factions in the CGDK, and that the CGDK's collective position was that no ceasefire was acceptable before a comprehensive political solution was first agreed upon.²³⁶ Apart from this, Sihanouk also sought to increase his own political leverage, and resort to tactics such as attendance/non-attendance of meetings on the Cambodian problem, and resignation/reinstatements as head of the resistance coalition. One scholar explains that these were merely Sihanouk's tactical devices aimed at achieving his ultimate reinstatement as Cambodia's head of state since he genuinely believed that what was best for the Cambodian people was himself.²³⁷

Whereas Sihanouk's desire to maximise his political leverage and popularity was consistently maintained, his alliance with the Khmer Rouge seemed to be weakened in the late 1980s, particularly after Vietnam withdrew its forces from Cambodia. The departure of the last Vietnamese troops contributed to a refocusing of international attention as concerns began to increase over a possible return of the Khmer Rouge to power in Phnom Penh. This adversely affected the position and moral legitimacy of the CGDK of which the Khmer Rouge was a component. In the light of this, Sihanouk began to consider the possibilities of discussing the power sharing issue with Hun Sen. As one scholar suggests, Sihanouk saw in Hun Sen the possibilities of a fresh merger that might afford him some of the power he had been used to, and which would avoid a complicated and potentially divisive power-sharing arrangement between the Phnom Penh government and the CGDK.²³⁸ One clear manifestation was when Sihanouk met with Hun Sen in December 1987 in their first bilateral meeting. The two signed a joint communiqué in which they agreed that the

conflict in Cambodia must be resolved politically. David Roberts argues that Sihanouk's move towards Hun Sen reflected his realisation that Hun Sen's relative position was getting stronger and that Hun Sen's resistance would delay a political settlement and Sihanouk's return to Cambodia.²³⁹ In other words, amid the changes of international circumstances in the late 1980s, it was in Sihanouk's interests to consider joining hands with Hun Sen and politically distancing himself from the Khmer Rouge.

Therefore, the respective interests of Sihanouk and Chatichai converged in acknowledging that Hun Sen would have to play an important role in any power sharing arrangement in Cambodia. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, one of Chatichai's advisers, argued that Chatichai's approach towards Hun Sen reflected the already existing trend of events so it was not at all a peculiar move.²⁴⁰ This implies that Chatichai and his staff anticipated that there would not be significant resistance from Sihanouk. Sihanouk's early dissatisfaction with Chatichai's friendly approach towards Hun Sen was likely to stem from his shock and surprise to see Hun Sen being openly accorded some degree of *de facto* recognition by Thailand who had previously been strong in its opposition to the Vietnamese action in Cambodia and to the Phnom Penh government. However, as events unfolded, it became clear that Sihanouk's disapproval would not be maintained consistently. The prince himself continued to have dialogues with Hun Sen. For instance, the two met in bilateral talks in Jakarta in May 1989, and in Bangkok in February 1990. The latter took place at Chatichai's residence, and the Thai premier said he was asked by Sihanouk to arrange this meeting in Thailand prior to the third JIM in Indonesia.²⁴¹ This indicated that Sihanouk not only shared Chatichai's ideas but he

was also willing to let Chatichai play a role of mediator between himself and Hun Sen. The Cambodian Prime Minister described his meeting with Sihanouk in Bangkok as a success, saying that it gave more hope to the Cambodian peace process.²⁴² He and Sihanouk signed a joint communiqué in which they endorsed as essential principles both a UN presence in Cambodia and a kind of supreme national body to symbolise Cambodia's national sovereignty, although the issue of whether to dismantle Hun Sen's government remained unresolved.

That Chatichai and his advisers handled the peace process in a bilateral format seemed to suggest that they accorded more significance to the factions of Hun Sen and Sihanouk than to the other factions. As Son Sann's KPNLF faction had always kept a relatively low profile, what was clear from the new Thai policy was how it treated the Khmer Rouge in the wake of changing circumstances surrounding the third Indochina conflict. Recalling the Tokyo Conference of June 1990 which ended with a bilateral agreement between Hun Sen and Sihanouk, Kraisak Choonhavan, Chatichai's son and adviser, said that it produced satisfactory results even though Sihanouk later withdrew from the agreement due to the opposition of the Khmer Rouge. Kraisak said this could be seen as a success because the whole episode showed that the Khmer Rouge was an obstacle to peace.²⁴³ Kraisak's explanation underlines a view taken by the Thai Prime Minister and his advisers that while Hun Sen's party was a political force to be reckoned with in future Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge's fate went the opposite way. However, Chatichai handled his diplomacy with care and he did not appear to single out the Khmer Rouge. Following the Khmer Rouge's boycott of the Tokyo Conference, for example, Chatichai said that he would attempt to persuade the Khmer Rouge to join in.²⁴⁴

In any case, the Khmer Rouge was not likely to express openly strong opposition or take steps against Chatichai's initiatives even if it disapproved of some of them. The Khmer Rouge, and more generally the CGDK, significantly depended on Thailand as a channel through which foreign assistance was passed to it, although the Chatichai administration argued that the Thai government itself did not supply aid to the CGDK.²⁴⁵ In fact, it may be suggested that the CGDK could not have survived effectively as a political force to rival the Phnom Penh government if there had not been necessary support from Thailand which acted in concert with ASEAN and China, among others. The Khmer Rouge, in particular, was not in a strong position to protest Chatichai's policy because the basis on which it justified itself (i.e. Vietnam's unlawful invasion and occupation of Cambodia) lost its importance after Vietnam had withdrawn its forces. Instead, fears that the Khmer Rouge might return to power in Phnom Penh began to surge, coupled with the revived memory of the Khmer Rouge's genocidal policy in the 1970s. These increasing fears of the Khmer Rouge were consistent with how the Hun Sen government had always justified itself. And as the third Indochina conflict was approaching its final stages, it seemed that Hun Sen was increasingly gaining an upper hand. Chatichai's policy, which was introduced in accordance with circumstances relating to the Cambodian conflict, in a way signalled his view that a new, and perhaps final, phase of the Cambodian conflict had truly begun. Importantly, this was echoed by the changes in American foreign policy in 1990. In July of that year, US Secretary of States James Baker announced that Washington would no longer support the seating of the CGDK at the UN if it included the Khmer Rouge, while implying that the Hun Sen government was no longer

a Vietnamese puppet since it had shown its ability to remain and function after Vietnamese forces had been withdrawn (see chapter 7).

EFFECTS OF CHATICHAÏ'S POLICY ON THE CAMBODIAN PROBLEM

By reflecting new circumstances surrounding the Cambodian conflict, Chatichai's policy in a way represented a refocusing of the Cambodian issue. After Hanoi had made clear its plan to complete its troop withdrawal from Cambodia, and later when the Vietnamese forces were withdrawn, the key aspect of the Cambodian conflict was no longer the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia but rather how to achieve a political settlement between the Cambodian factions. By approaching the government of Phnom Penh, Chatichai implicitly indicated his view that the Phnom Penh government was not only independent in its own right (as opposed to being a puppet of Vietnam) but it was also a key to a peace settlement.

The acceptance and de facto legitimacy which Chatichai accorded to the Phnom Penh government boosted the confidence of that regime. This, in turn, led to at least two interrelated consequences: on the one hand, the Hun Sen government sought to build on the legitimacy given to it by offering some compromises and being cooperative in some aspects; but on the other hand, such confidence led Phnom Penh to demand increasingly more favourable terms for a settlement which involved undercutting the power of its rival factions, particularly the Khmer Rouge. Undoubtedly, critics of Chatichai's policy usually focused on the latter consequence, arguing that Chatichai's olive branch to Hun Sen made the Phnom Penh government harden its stance,

and thus protracted the conflict rather than solving it. American Congressman Stephen Solarz, for example, suggested that the Hun Sen government might play the Chatichai card and avoid making compromises.²⁴⁶ Critics of Chatichai's policy argued that the new Thai approach was responsible, at least in part, for inconclusive endings of some peace talks. Among the examples where Hun Sen was accused of being stubborn were his unwillingness to agree on the UN role in Cambodia, his insistence on the inclusion in various peace documents of the term 'genocide' as a description of Pol Pot's policy, and his view on the composition of the Supreme National Council (SNC) for Cambodia. The last example was often used to elaborate Hun Sen's so-called stubbornness, so this will be examined in a little more detail.

By September 1990, the Cambodian factions had agreed to the idea of establishing the SNC which would represent Cambodia in international fora and it was accepted that Sihanouk should be its chairman. The problem, however, was whether there should be a vice-chairman and who would be the most appropriate person. A meeting in Bangkok in September 1990, dedicated to the SNC issue, failed to solve the problem. The Phnom Penh government wanted Hun Sen to be vice-chairman but the resistance coalition disagreed, saying that Hun Sen was already the Prime Minister of the Phnom Penh government, and to make him a vice-chairman of the SNC would be to allow him to take advantage of the situation which in turn could deprive the SNC of any real power. However, the Hun Sen government did not want to concede to the resistance on this issue because the SNC would represent Cambodia in the international arena. When the Bangkok meeting failed to resolve this problem, Chatichai and his advisers were accused of favouring Hun Sen at the expense of the resistance factions,

thereby allowing Hun Sen to be stubborn.²⁴⁷ The accusation centred on the apparently better treatment Chatichai's advisers accorded to Hun Sen in comparison to other resistance leaders. For example, Hun Sen was given a prominent seat at the conference table and Hun Sen's hotel room was located on the same floor as the advisers' rooms.

Hun Sen's stance in the vice-chairmanship issue reflected his attempt to achieve international legitimacy while minimising the influence of his political rivals, particularly the Khmer Rouge. Arguably, this was also Hun Sen's main reason for turning down Sihanouk's suggestion that both the CGDK and the government in Phnom Penh be dismantled before elections were organised in Cambodia. Hun Sen's insistence on keeping his government in power during the election reflected his attempt to ensure that his party would be in a favourable position to return to power as well as to prevent the Khmer Rouge's return.

On the other hand, there were instances where the Phnom Penh government appeared to be co-operative, which could be seen as part of its efforts to increase its international acceptance, following Chatichai's friendly approach towards Hun Sen. One example was when the Phnom Penh government and the other two Indochinese states issued a joint declaration in April 1989 which not only confirmed Vietnam's willingness to complete the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia, but also suggested that there should be an international control and supervision commission to monitor the withdrawal and the cessation of external military assistance, as well as to guarantee peace during the elections in Cambodia.²⁴⁸ The declaration was seen as a constructive move from Hanoi and Phnom Penh, and the Thai government's spokesman described it as a positive sign which would

support Chatichai's idea of turning the Indochinese battlefield to a marketplace.²⁴⁹

Also, in late April 1989, Hun Sen said he was willing to allow UN forces of 100 troops to enter Cambodia to verify the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces.²⁵⁰ Again, this was a positive development, particularly in the light of Hun Sen's earlier statement that peace-keeping was a responsibility of the Cambodians and that outside forces from the UN or other countries were not necessary.²⁵¹ In August 1990, Hun Sen also said he was willing to have the UN supervise the administration of key military, foreign, and domestic affairs, after the Supreme National Council set up committees in charge of these areas of government.²⁵²

In addition, the Hun Sen government introduced many changes such as the law to facilitate foreign investment, a new name for the country (State of Cambodia or SOC), a new national flag and national anthem. The Cambodian Prime Minister explained that these changes aimed to increase international acceptance of Cambodia, while observers added that they also reflected greater importance of nationalism and patriotism which were more in accord with the position of Sihanouk's party.²⁵³ Indeed, these may not have been the most significant moves by Phnom Penh, but they did show the willingness of the Hun Sen government to change, as well as greater understanding of the need for reconciliation. Thus, it could not be said that Hun Sen's responses were exclusively of a stubborn character.

In late 1990, many positive developments relating to the Cambodian issue took place on the international stage. Unanimity was achieved in steps among the external parties: the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Perm Five) agreed on a joint framework

in August 1990, which was subsequently endorsed unanimously by the Security Council and General Assembly. This plan formed a basis of the 'Proposed Structure for the Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict' which the Perm Five presented in November 1990. It included provisions for the creation of a United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) which would supervise a ceasefire between the Cambodian parties and verify the withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia.

By 1991, these positive actions by the great powers had been reinforced by a transformation of local developments in Cambodia, which made prospects of a peace settlement more encouraging. Politically, the conflict increasingly lost its importance as the interests of external powers in supporting the Cambodian factions had declined. Militarily, no single Cambodian faction could claim a complete and undeniable victory in the battlefield – even the Hun Sen faction which had been able to take control over many areas. Economically, the conflict had created an undesirable burden on all involved. Amid these developments, Chatichai's policy highlighted the significance of bringing the Hun Sen government and the resistance factions together in order to work out a peace settlement. Chatichai's government was abruptly ended by a coup in February 1991 and therefore did not last long enough to witness the formation of the SNC for Cambodia in June 1991. The SOC agreed to drop the demand for the inclusion in the 'Proposed Structure' of references to the 'genocide' carried out by the Khmer Rouge, although the SOC still wanted to obtain guarantees against the return to the practices of a recent past. The Cambodian factions also agreed on the creation of two commissions in search of aid for the economic and social rehabilitation and development in

Cambodia. By the end of August 1991, each of the four Cambodian factions had agreed to cut their armed forces by 70 percent. The remaining troops would hand over their weapons to United Nations supervisors and enter cantonments.

A further agreement between the four factions was reached in the SNC meeting in New York on 19 September 1991. The four Cambodian parties concurred on the mode of conducting the general elections in Cambodia. The agreed formula was a compromise between the previously expressed preferences.²⁵⁴ The efforts to achieve a peace settlement culminated in the signing of the Paris Agreement on 23 October 1991 which formally ended the long drawn out conflict in Indochina.

CONCLUSION

By replacing Thailand's hard-line approach towards Phnom Penh with a conciliatory one, Chatichai's policy was undoubtedly welcomed by the Hun Sen government. The new Thai policy indicated that Chatichai saw Hun Sen as a key political force in Cambodia and also implied his recognition (although in *de facto* terms) of Hun Sen as a legitimate Cambodian government. Responses from the CGDK, however, were less clear cut. In principle, an approach which increased international legitimacy of the Phnom Penh government would not be favourable to the resistance coalition. But in reality, elements within the CGDK, particularly the factions of Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge, were not completely at one in their views towards the Hun Sen government. This contributed to the inconsistency of Sihanouk's responses to Chatichai's policy.

As head of the CGDK, the prince had to accommodate different views among the factions of the coalition, while he concurrently sought to maximise his own political leverage. Arguably, Sihanouk's approving gestures towards Chatichai's policy reflected not only his views that Hun Sen was a key to a peace settlement in Cambodia and the country's political future, but also the prince's calculation that an eventual alliance with Hun Sen would be to his own political advantage. In fact, the lack of significant objection from Sihanouk to Chatichai's policy may be seen as his tacit acceptance. Indeed, it would not be easy for Sihanouk to enthusiastically welcome Chatichai's policy even if he may have shared some of Chatichai's ideas, because the prince was officially aligned with the Khmer Rouge who preferred a military victory rather than a diplomatic settlement.

In any case, Chatichai's policy demonstrated his views that the focus of the Cambodian issue should now be shifted from external to internal aspects, as Vietnam's troop withdrawal was due to complete in September 1989 and as the Cambodian factions themselves had to adjust to international changes which affected their respective positions. Arguably, Chatichai's policy contributed to the momentum which drove the involved parties closer to a peace settlement. Politically, his policy highlighted the importance of the Hun Sen government both as a key to break the stalemate at the time and as a political force to be reckoned with. Chatichai's view in this regard was indicated by his readiness to give Hun Sen some degree of legitimacy, most clearly by inviting him to Bangkok. At the end of the third Indochina conflict, some of the outcomes seemed to be consistent with Chatichai's views. For instance, some of the terms in the 1991 Paris Agreement reflected many of Hun Sen's positions, for example, Hun Sen's faction had the

most representatives in the SNC compared to the other factions, and his SOC government was not dismantled during the transition period in Cambodia.

Economically, Chatichai's announced intention of turning Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace demonstrated to Phnom Penh and Hanoi that they held a stake in a future peaceful Cambodia, thereby giving them an incentive to work towards a peace settlement. Also, the policy strengthened the position of reformers in Indochina, confirming them that the future of their countries could lie significantly in the extent to which open markets for trade and investment were developed. Economic incentives received favourable responses from the Indochinese countries, as seen by various moves on the part of the Indochinese governments to encourage foreign trade and investment. However, the extent to which the Indochinese battlefield was turned into a marketplace was limited, due not only to insufficient help from other countries, but perhaps more importantly, to the limited ability of Indochina in general, and Cambodia in particular, to provide an economically conducive environment which could effectively boost trade and investment.

CHAPTER

5

RESPONSES FROM
ASEAN COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

Successive Thai leaders have emphasised the importance of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a corner stone of Thai foreign policy. This was even more marked during the third Indochina conflict. The diplomatic support of ASEAN was of great significance for Thailand in its opposition to Vietnam's military occupation of Cambodia. ASEAN members deferred to Thailand's position as the front-line state, sometimes even against their own preferences. As Chatichai's policy towards Indochina was a swift and unilateral shift from Thailand's previously long held position and as the change caught other ASEAN members by surprise, it prompted them to react with some disapproval. It may be argued that the new Thai policy seemed to challenge ASEAN both in individual and in collective respects. Not surprisingly, however, the concerns of ASEAN states were usually expressed with reference to the collective unity of the group so as to emphasise how in their view Chatichai had abused the group solidarity that had served his country so well.

This chapter investigates ASEAN's responses to Chatichai's policy and offers an account of these reactions. The chapter addresses the questions of ASEAN's relevance in the third Indochina conflict, as well as where and how the Association was placed in Thailand's diplomatic and strategic calculation. This, in turn, will offer an explanation about the circumstances and conditions in which a small state such as Thailand could break ranks with its regional partners in a matter that was of considerable importance to them. It should perhaps be noted that although member states in the Association shared a common concern about the Cambodian conflict, some members were clearly

more active and more relevant than others. Consequently, this chapter focuses on the responses of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, more than those of the Philippines and Brunei.

ASEAN: A REGIONAL ORGANISATION

ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 at a meeting in Bangkok between the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. The grouping was conceived in practical terms as a means of institutionalising regional reconciliation, marking in particular the ending of Indonesia's Confrontation policy towards Malaysia. Also, the Association was a result of a convergence in political outlook by Southeast Asia's political elite and especially in their antipathy towards communism.²⁵⁵ In the mid 1960s, the founding members of ASEAN were all beset by communist insurgencies or subversion and felt threatened by neighbouring communist states such as China or Vietnam, who in one way or another sponsored the insurgencies. However, although security was uppermost in their minds, it was not openly addressed. Instead, ASEAN's declared primary goals were to promote 'economic growth, social progress and cultural development' through regional co-operation, although in fact these were realised only to a very limited extent.²⁵⁶ It has been argued that ASEAN's objective of furthering socio-economic progress was aimed at eliminating social and economic deprivation in order to undermine the appeal of communist revolution as an alternative to the market economy *status quo*.²⁵⁷

Even so, ASEAN's avowed attempts to bind its members together

in friendship and co-operation took some time to evolve in practical terms and was confined primarily to political co-operation exemplified by the sustained predominant role assumed by ASEAN's foreign ministers. As member states differed in their threat perceptions, political co-operation has not been extended to include defence co-operation of even an informal multilateral kind. Leifer argues that whatever aspirations may have been entertained about the security role of ASEAN, the Association began its working life as a very modest inter-governmental enterprise.²⁵⁸ Its members consciously played down any such role in a region that was then dominated by the second Indochina conflict (the Vietnam War). The central priority was to cultivate a habit of harmony within the extended set of multilateral relationships. In the process of its decision-making, for example, ASEAN has abided by the principle of consensus which means that policy initiatives can arise only on the basis of a common denominator. This practice has been justified with reference to a regional cultural style which has enthroned consensus as the *modus operandi* of the Association.²⁵⁹

THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

When the communist forces swept across Indochina in 1975, Thailand's foreign policy seemed to be tied to that of ASEAN as the event brought the problem of survival and security closer to home, especially as the US had effectively disengaged militarily from the region two years earlier. ASEAN responded with a first meeting of heads of governments that produced a treaty and a declaration setting out its norms for regional conduct that included non-intervention and

peaceful settlement of disputes. By its subsequent violation of these norms in its invasion of Cambodia in December 1978, Vietnam in effect challenged ASEAN as well as threatening Thailand's national security. As a result, ASEAN became an even more important factor in Thailand's Indochina policy, as major Thai initiatives were advanced through the Association which became the primary actor at the United Nations on the Cambodian issue. This gave Thailand many advantages.²⁶⁰ For instance, representation by an organisation with regional credentials like that of ASEAN carried much greater credibility than representation by Thailand alone or in concert with other powers who, unlike regional neighbours, might not share similar strategic concerns. Furthermore, ASEAN's solidarity made collective political action possible and denied Vietnam the opportunity to divide and rule and impose the *fait accompli* in Cambodia on the region. However, because of ASEAN's limited capability to lend any significant degree of military or economic support to Thailand, the Association could assume only a diplomatic role.

ASEAN AND THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT

Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, which prompted the beginning of the third Indochina conflict, altered the regional balance of power on mainland Southeast Asia by destroying Cambodia's position as a buffer state between Thailand and Vietnam. In early January 1979, when Vietnamese troops arrived at the Thai-Cambodian border, Thailand became a front-line state directly threatened by Vietnamese communist military power for the first time. Other ASEAN countries quickly closed ranks in support of Bangkok. This abruptly

ended the earlier period of ASEAN's conciliation with Vietnam symbolised by the open door and olive branch diplomacy as well as by the web of bilateral relationships built up over the previous years as part of the efforts of ASEAN countries to adapt to new circumstances following the end of the Vietnam War.²⁶¹

Whereas a superpower like the US viewed the Cambodian issue mainly in a global perspective in terms of how the issue affected Washington's triangular relations with China and the Soviet Union), this was not the case for ASEAN states. For ASEAN countries, the conflict had more direct repercussions, mainly because it threatened the security of the region in which they must live. The third Indochina conflict affected ASEAN in at least four aspects.

Firstly, Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia undermined a delicate balance of strategic perceptions among the ASEAN states. Regardless of Vietnam's encroachment of Cambodia, there had been nuances in the individual perspectives of the ASEAN members which reflected their different strategic perceptions.²⁶² Indonesia, Malaysia, and to a lesser extent the Philippines saw China as a more serious though long term security threat than Vietnam; and therefore, they tended to be less hostile to, or even to sympathise with, Hanoi whom they saw as a buffer against China. In contrast, Thailand and Singapore tended to incline towards the Chinese view that Vietnam was a danger to regional security. As long as the status quo was maintained, there was a balance in the region, and hence this intra-ASEAN divergence of strategic outlook did not threaten the diplomatic cohesion of the Association. However, as Tim Huxley argues, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia overturned such balance, allowing these differences among ASEAN members to foreshadow a deeper division within the

Association.²⁶³ Similarly, Sukhumbhand Paribatra argued that the Cambodian conflict could lead to increasing strains within ASEAN due to differences in the concept of regional order between Thailand and Indonesia. He argued that Vietnam might be encouraged to exploit the intramural contradictions within ASEAN with renewed vigour, and that ASEAN might be divided.²⁶⁴ In other words, although other ASEAN members united behind Thailand, which described itself as a front-line state in the Cambodian conflict, this did not mean that their deep-rooted strategic perspectives converged. Not only did the differences remain, but there was also a possibility that countries outside the group might exploit them.

Secondly, the conflict weakened ASEAN's efforts to avoid external intervention in the affairs of the region. The Cambodian crisis allowed extra-regional powers to become involved in the conflict by providing support for the warring Cambodian factions. The seemingly local conflict between two Indochinese neighbours was engulfed into a wider strategic competition between the great powers, with the US and China supporting the resistance forces (particularly the Khmer Rouge - in the case of Chinese support) and the Soviet Union supporting Hanoi and Phnom Penh regimes. Such involvement of the external powers reduced the chances that the region could be a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN).²⁶⁵ Although the notion of ZOPFAN was more a symbol rather than a programme for action, its influence on the thinking of some ASEAN members, particularly Indonesia, was perhaps not negligible. For instance, it explained in part the concerns of Indonesia, and to a lesser extent Malaysia, over Thailand's tacit alliance with China (see later).

Thirdly, the conflict created a problem of refugees. An increase

in the flow of refugees from Indochina to ASEAN states reached a significantly high level by the mid 1979. A notable feature of the flow of refugees was the ethnic Chinese identity of most of the boat people.²⁶⁶ As such they were deemed to pose a threat to social and political order by disturbing the communal balance in Singapore and Malaysia and by reviving fears of a subversive menace in Indonesia. Although the ethnic character of the refugees was not a problematic issue in Thailand, the size of the influx did create social, economic, and political problems for Bangkok. By the end of 1979, Thailand had taken more than 310,000 refugees from Indochina.²⁶⁷

Fourthly, the Cambodian problem diverted resources and energy from other fields of endeavour.²⁶⁸ For instance, it took up a high proportion of the agenda of the ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings, perhaps to the exasperation of those who wished to promote regional co-operation in other directions. This was made explicit by Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja who clearly said that too much time had been spent on the Cambodian issue. He proposed in a meeting in Jakarta in July 1984 that the Association's attention should not be focused only on the Cambodian problem but also on the pressing economic issues of common interest.²⁶⁹ In general, there was a growing amount of resources devoted to defence, except in the case of the Philippines. For instance, whereas during 1981–82 the ASEAN countries altogether spent US\$7.44 billion on defence with 768,000 men under arms, in 1983–84 the figures increased to US\$8.29 billion and 801,100 men.²⁷⁰

At the same time, some beneficial side effects of the third Indochina conflict on ASEAN should also be noted.²⁷¹ Firstly, the issue acted as a centripetal force for regional co-operation that might otherwise

have fallen short of expectations. Secondly, it provided an opportunity for promoting dialogues with Western countries, China, and Japan. Thirdly, it was a mechanism for orchestrating international support for the group, its ideals, and its individual members. ASEAN's records in the UN General Assembly since late 1978 provided ample proof of its success in this regard. Indeed, it enabled ASEAN to emerge as a diplomatic community of international significance.

ASEAN'S RESPONSES TO THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT

The Vietnamese ousting of the Khmer Rouge government and the installation of a client government under Heng Samrin shocked ASEAN states. Vietnam maintained that the situation in Cambodia was irreversible and that the Vietnamese-ASEAN relations would have been better had it not been for the 'dark scheme of division by the Peking reactionaries.'²⁷² However, the Vietnamese invasion engendered among ASEAN leaders a pronounced sense of betrayal.²⁷³ This was particularly keenly felt as Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Dong had given public reassurances that his country would respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each Southeast Asian country only weeks prior to Vietnam's armed intervention in Cambodia. The depth of ASEAN consternation and outrage at Vietnam's invasion was probably intensified by the embarrassment of having incorrectly calculated that Hanoi's future influence on Southeast Asia would likely be limited due to Vietnam's expected preoccupation with the formidable challenge posed by its need for post-war economic reconstruction.²⁷⁴

However, ASEAN's immediate response to Vietnam's aggression

in December 1978 was rather restrained. At the conclusion of their special meeting in Bangkok in January 1979, ASEAN's foreign ministers issued a communiqué reminding Vietnam of its pledge to ASEAN member countries scrupulously to respect each other's independence. The communiqué then called for an immediate and total withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia.²⁷⁵ This may be considered as a mild response. The fact that Vietnam was not mentioned by name and its action not condemned more aggressively revealed that ASEAN was still undecided how far to go in opposing Vietnam's use of force. Also, ASEAN's muted diplomatic response might have been due in part to the fact that Indonesia was the chairman of ASEAN's standing committee and was inclined to be less hawkish than Thailand.²⁷⁶ When China took a more direct measure by sending its forces into Vietnam in February 1979 in order to punish Vietnam and teach it a lesson, ASEAN reacted by repeating its call for the withdrawal of unnamed foreign forces from Indochina.²⁷⁷

In their meeting in Bali in June 1979, ASEAN's foreign ministers affirmed their commitment to three goals over Cambodia which were upheld with consistency in public thereafter. First, the solidarity of ASEAN was affirmed with reference to the security of Thailand and to the cardinal rule of the society of sovereign states. Second, they called for the immediate and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodian territory, referring directly to Vietnam by calling on its government to demonstrate its positive attitude towards Thailand and the other ASEAN member states by withdrawing its forces from the Thai-Cambodian border. Finally, support was reiterated for the rights of the Cambodian people to determine their future by themselves, free from interference or influence from outside powers in the exercise of self-determination.²⁷⁸

Moreover, ASEAN gradually developed a broadly based strategy to oppose Vietnam by promoting the application of political and economic pressures on Hanoi. An editorial of Singapore's newspaper *The Straits Times* firmly argued that there was no alternative to putting pressure on Vietnam. The paper said that although ASEAN's call for immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia might not be heeded, the pressure had to be maintained and prices of Hanoi's persistence should be made so high it would be forced to change.²⁷⁹ By the end of 1979, ASEAN had achieved a measure of diplomatic success on the issue of Cambodia as its member governments had displayed a facility for coordinating policies and exercising lobbying skills. However, it must be noted that ASEAN's diplomatic success would have been less likely had there not been support from greater powers. The reliance of ASEAN's diplomacy on the economic isolation of Vietnam by the West and Japan, and the military pressure by China pointed up to the limitation of ASEAN.

At the same time, the Association sought to deny international legitimacy to the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh. ASEAN countries continued to recognise the ousted Cambodian government (i.e. the Khmer Rouge regime under Pol Pot) and they were the main diplomatic force behind the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in 1982 which combined two non-communist Cambodian factions with the communist Khmer Rouge. According to two of the highest ranking officials of the Thai government who were involved in the process leading to the formation of the CGDK, Bangkok's role in this regard was important, particularly in convincing China that the establishment of a resistance coalition was expedient.²⁸⁰ The successful establishment of the CGDK

represented a political advance of a kind for ASEAN. It made it easier to refute charges of engaging in an immoral political relationship with the murderous Khmer Rouge; and therefore, it made it easier to solicit voting support in the UN because of the more acceptable credentials of the non-communist components of the coalition.²⁸¹

In addition, ASEAN sought to find a way to achieve a political settlement for Cambodia. An early effort of ASEAN was the organisation of the *International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK)* which was convened in New York in July 1981 under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This was the first main conference on Cambodia and was attended by 92 nations. The Conference represented a remarkable triumph for ASEAN diplomacy, although in practical terms the success was much less. The ICK was distinguished by the absence of Vietnamese and Laotian as well as Soviet representation. In addition, ASEAN's draft proposal unexpectedly met with resistance both from Beijing, which had adopted an implacable anti-Vietnamese stand that paralleled the Khmer Rouge's position, and by Washington, whose main interest was to manage its adversarial relationship with Moscow. As a consequence, the final ICK declaration was passed only after passages relating to the disarmament of the different Cambodian factions and the organisation of the interim administration had been watered down.²⁸² Michael Leifer describes the outcome of the Conference as nothing less than a diplomatic defeat for ASEAN, whose collective efforts had been frustrated.²⁸³ Indeed, the ICK episode clearly points to the limitation placed on the Association and shows that the success or failure of ASEAN's diplomatic efforts depended on policies and approaches of the great powers.

This was confirmed two years later, as another initiative from

ASEAN states encountered Chinese intervention. In 1983, ASEAN discussed what was called a five-plus-two formula, which would have led to a discussion of the Cambodian issue attended by the five ASEAN countries (Brunei was not a member at the time), plus Vietnam and Laos. The exclusion of all the Cambodian factions from the formula was thought to have the advantage of preventing a confrontation between the participants over the issue of who represented the Cambodian authority.²⁸⁴ However, the idea was in the end turned down by a special meeting of the ASEAN foreign ministers held in Bangkok, primarily due to Chinese pressure.²⁸⁵ China did not want the legitimacy of the CGDK to be questioned and Beijing was not prepared to abandon its control over the negotiation process.²⁸⁶

Also, in 1983, the ASEAN countries put forward a Joint Appeal which called for the complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia, the right to self-determination of the Cambodian people, and compliance by all states to refrain from interference in Cambodia's internal affairs. This was not accepted by Vietnam, who later undertook a dry season offensive of 1984–5 with renewed vigour and a more aggressive strategy, which led to the loss of army bases of all three factions of the CGDK. Vietnam's move reflected the failure of the ongoing diplomacy at the time, and led ASEAN to step up its efforts in other ways – as seen by a special meeting between ASEAN foreign ministers on 11–12 February 1985 which called for international assistance including weapons for the resistance factions.²⁸⁷ ASEAN also indicated willingness to give military aid to the resistance more openly.²⁸⁸

However, although ASEAN members generally adhered to a common position which defied Vietnam's action in Cambodia, some

peace initiatives proposed by some members were not acceptable to others. A clear example was when Malaysia and Indonesia, during their bilateral meeting in the Malaysian town of Kuantan in March 1980, put forward what was called the Kuantan Principle. It called for a Vietnam free from Soviet influence but independent of China. In addition, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur offered concessions on Cambodia including acceptance of a government in Phnom Penh if it was broader-based, termination of ASEAN support of the Khmer Rouge government of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), and a position calling for only a partial Vietnamese troops withdrawal, especially from the Thai borders.²⁸⁹ It was suggested that the timing of this declaration may have been designed, in part, to put pressure on the new Thai leadership under Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda to be more accommodating to Vietnam.²⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the Kuantan proposal proved to be unacceptable to Bangkok because it implied a recognition of a Vietnamese hegemonial role in Indochina.²⁹¹ When Prem undertook a tour of ASEAN capitals after becoming Prime Minister, he went out of his way to indicate hostility to the Kuantan message. The fate of the Kuantan idea was also sealed when Hanoi did not accept this olive branch, rejecting the implication that Vietnam was dependent on external powers.²⁹² As a result, the Indonesian-Malaysian joint statement issued at Kuantan was quietly discarded and omitted from the series of public documents issued by Malaysia's Foreign Ministry. Also, following an incident at Non Mak Moon Village in June 1980, when Vietnamese troops crossed Thai border, and killed Thai soldiers in their attempts to seize the village, Indonesia and Malaysia had no choice but to throw their support behind Thailand.

Although the Kuantan formula was abandoned, this episode nevertheless highlights the differing perceptions between Indonesia and Malaysia on the one hand, and Thailand on the other. In other words, the Kuantan episode was a manifestation of the Indonesian and Malaysian sensitivity towards the China threat (intensified by growing ties between Bangkok and Beijing) and relative sympathy with Vietnam. This marked a turning point in the public expression of internal debate within ASEAN.²⁹³

The intramural differences within ASEAN in this issue resurfaced in the mid 1980s, when Malaysia proposed the idea of *proximity talks*. The plan was to arrange negotiations between representatives from the CGDK and from the government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) led by Hun Sen to take place via a mediator. However, the idea went against the key principle defended by Thailand as it seemed to involve the legitimisation of the Hun Sen government. Under the pressure from Thailand and China, the idea was rehashed, and it was decided instead that negotiations should be held between Hanoi and the CGDK, with the possibility of the PRK forming part of the Vietnamese delegation.²⁹⁴ Although Hanoi itself refused to participate, this episode was nevertheless an example of how Thailand and China could influence the collective position of the Association.

Similar efforts to arrange Cambodian peace talks continued well into the late 1980s. In May 1987, Indonesia put forward the idea of a cocktail party which would allow the four Cambodian factions to hold informal discussions about how to overcome the deadlock. The cocktail party concept called for a two-stage negotiation. The first stage would see all the Cambodian factions talk to each other, while the regional parties including Vietnam would be invited to

participate in the second stage.²⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the initial reaction of Thailand and Singapore was negative. The two were concerned that as the proposed idea did not specify the time frame in which Vietnam would participate in the dialogue process, it might lend credence to Hanoi's claim that the conflict in Cambodia was a domestic power struggle. This concern was soon addressed, and during an ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Bangkok in August 1987, the proposal was modified to specify that a cocktail party could only take place if Vietnam joined the talks immediately after the initial informal talks between the Cambodian factions.²⁹⁶

The idea of a cocktail party, consisting of two-stage meetings, was later applied in successive rounds of the *Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIMs)*. The first JIM, held in July 1988, attempted to forge a comprehensive political settlement which aspired to link the timetable for Vietnamese withdrawal to the elimination of the Khmer Rouge. However, the meeting ended inconclusively. The PRK's proposal to establish a national reconciliation government, which would include all four factions but not Pol Pot and his close associates, was rejected by the Khmer Rouge who in turn demanded that Vietnam had to completely and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Cambodia first. The second JIM in February 1989 also failed to move the peace process ahead because Phnom Penh and Hanoi rejected concessions on two issues: an interim government and the question of the mandate and size of the international force on which the CGDK had by then agreed.²⁹⁷

DIFFERENCES IN THREAT PERCEPTIONS AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES

Proposals such as the Kuantan principle, proximity talks, and a cocktail party highlighted the differences between Indonesia and Malaysia on the one hand and Thailand and Singapore on the other hand. The fundamental issue here was ASEAN countries' differing threat perceptions and security perspectives. These had their roots in such factors as the differences in geographical location, historical experiences, as well as economic and social dimensions of each state's foreign policy.²⁹⁸ Until the start of the Cambodian conflict, these differences among ASEAN countries did not place serious strain on the relationship between them, because any potential for threat was not translated into actual form.²⁹⁹ However, the conflict sharpened the differences in security perspectives among ASEAN countries. On the one hand, Thailand and Singapore saw Vietnam as a menace. On the other hand, Indonesia and, to a slightly lesser extent, Malaysia, thought China was a more serious threat. The Philippines stance was not as strong as other ASEAN partners, partly because it was geographically more remote from the site of the conflict and because it was preoccupied with domestic issues. Generally, Manila's stance was in the middle between the aforementioned two poles and it preferred to follow ASEAN consensus. The same could be said of Brunei (who joined the Association in 1984), although one scholar suggests that Brunei appeared to have been closer to the Indonesian and Malaysian position.³⁰⁰

The Vietnamese threat to Thailand resulted from the two countries' age-old historical rivalry. Not only had they competed for supremacy

in the Mekong area, but the Vietnamese threat came to assume even greater significance because of the perceived intention of Vietnam to dominate Indochina, its ideological commitment to export revolution, and its strategic alliance with the Soviet Union. Thai policy makers believed that Vietnam was a Soviet proxy, and that Soviet influence on Vietnam made it even more difficult to resolve the already complicated problem in Cambodia.³⁰¹ Thailand had long feared the creation of an Indochina federation, because not only would this remove the buffer between Thailand and Vietnam but it would also leave Thailand continually vulnerable to Vietnam.

Singapore shared Thailand's fear of Vietnam. Singapore's anti-communist rhetoric allowed it to demonstrate its independence from China, particularly since a large majority of Singapore's population was Chinese. Moreover, as a small country, Singapore had particular reasons for objecting to the practice by which a stronger power could impose a government by force on its weaker neighbour. Also, the city state sought to restore regional stability on which its prosperity depended. Indeed, apart from Thailand, Singapore was the key shaper of world opinion on the Cambodian conflict. It was a strong and outspoken member of ASEAN on this issue, and it often told the world to 'stay the course.'³⁰²

However, this view of seeing Vietnam as a menace was not fully shared by Indonesia and Malaysia. For Indonesia, it was probably the memory of the Indonesian revolution, and the perceived similarities of Vietnamese struggle for independence, that made Jakarta sympathetic towards the Vietnamese plight. In fact, Indonesia and Vietnam were the only two Southeast Asian countries that had to fight for their independence, whereas for the others independence was achieved

without armed struggle. It is suggested that in this respect, the Indonesians saw the Vietnamese as kindred souls who understood the meaning of struggle against the powerful forces of colonialism.³⁰³ In addition, it is argued that Jakarta was sympathetic to Hanoi partly because the Vietnamese action in Cambodia was similar to the Indonesian domestic consensus in support of Indonesia's takeover of East Timor as morally and legally valid against the UN vote endorsing self-determination and independence of East Timor.³⁰⁴ Jakarta's sympathy with Vietnam was paralleled with its suspicions of China's motives, particularly about seeking to establish regional hegemonism. These were partly due to Beijing's alleged involvement in the abortive *coup d'état* in Indonesia in 1965. Similarly, Malaysia's threat perception was dominated by fears of internal subversion resulting from China's assistance to the Communist Party of Malaya.

More generally, Indonesia and Malaysia wanted to avoid the involvement of external powers in the affairs of Southeast Asia (hence their idea of ZOPFAN), and therefore were concerned about growing Chinese role in the Cambodian conflict. While the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in February 1979 may have provided Thailand with some assurance that China was willing to take action, it added to the fears in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur that China was prepared to use force to realise its political goals. Growing ties between Thailand and China were therefore a matter of important concern for Indonesia and Malaysia. Jakarta warned that the Chinese goal was to use ASEAN only to achieve its political interests in pressuring Vietnam in order to contain Soviet-Vietnamese influence in Indochina.³⁰⁵ These suspicions about the Chinese motives were exacerbated by a large ethnic Chinese minority in Malaysia and Indonesia, which was seen as

a possible channel of China's interference of Malaysian and Indonesian domestic affairs. The ethnic Chinese in these two countries were less well assimilated than their counterparts in Thailand.

Because of their sensitivity towards the China threat, Indonesia and Malaysia felt that Vietnam had also been motivated to invade Cambodia by its antipathy towards China. Consequently, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur thought that the Vietnamese withdrawal could be pursued best by conciliatory policies, such as the Kuantan Principle, which took into account Vietnam's security concerns.

Despite intramural differences of threat perceptions, however, ASEAN was generally unified in offering unwavering support for Thailand. The Association was drawn primarily into the service of Thai interests, and Bangkok was in a position to determine the direction of collective policy by conveying an implicit threat that undue resistance by its regional partners could provoke an even closer relations with China.³⁰⁶ By successfully imposing on other ASEAN partners its tacit alliance with China, Thailand integrated a power-balancing dimension into ASEAN's diplomatic campaign against Vietnam's action in Cambodia.³⁰⁷ Consequently, Chinese influence, both directly and indirectly through its ties with Thailand, was able to shape the policy of ASEAN on many occasions: for instance, when the initial ICK proposal had to be modified under Beijing's pressure; and when the proximity talks proposal was turned down by Thailand and China. As Leifer argues, although the Association was regarded as a significant diplomatic instrument, it would only receive, during the Cambodian conflict, a secondary position in Thailand's strategic planning.³⁰⁸ Thailand could not rely on its ASEAN partners to militarily oppose Vietnam's action in Cambodia or to deter incursions on the Thai-

Cambodian border or in an event of an open Vietnamese offensive against Thailand. Instead, Bangkok sought assistance from extra regional powers particularly China but also the US.

Generally, Thailand's ASEAN partners seemed to understand and accept the limit of the Association's capacity. Consequently, concerns over possible Chinese attempts to expand its influence in the region were compromised by the understanding that in the absence of ASEAN's credible military strength to reassure Thailand, support from the bigger powers was necessary. In this regard, China was an important back-up for ASEAN's diplomatic efforts. China's diplomatic support and its military capability allowed the Association to successfully carry out its collective diplomatic efforts in isolating Vietnam and prevented the Hun Sen government from gaining international recognition. ASEAN's diplomatic achievement, in turn, helped to strengthen the group's confidence and also its unity. Meanwhile, Hanoi's policies also contributed to ASEAN's solidarity. Vietnam's aggressions against Thailand on many occasions, such as the incident at Non Mak Moon Village in May 1980 and during the dry season offensives in 1984–85, effectively brought the ASEAN members more closely together in their support for Thailand. Similarly, Vietnam's rejection of the olive branch such as Kuantan and proximity talks proposals also helped, indirectly, to keep the group united. It has been suggested that the degree of ASEAN solidarity manifested during the third Indochina conflict should be viewed as surprising in light of the co-operative fragility that had defined the Association since its creation.³⁰⁹

ASEAN AND CHATICHAÏ'S INITIATIVES

When Chatichai came to power in late 1988, he spoke of high importance that his government attached to the promotion of ASEAN co-operation. Referring to ASEAN's efforts in the Cambodian issue, Chatichai said in his opening address at a meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers in Thailand in October 1988 that "our common efforts and unified stand on the Kampuchean problem throughout these years have brought home to the Vietnamese the futility of their course in Kampuchea."³¹⁰ However, it seems that his own decision to surprise other ASEAN partners by unilaterally introducing a new policy could undermine the 'unified stand' which he referred to. There is no evidence that Chatichai had consulted or informed other ASEAN countries in advance about his Indochina initiatives.

There is evidence, however, that Chatichai and his team of advisers believed that the new policy would not run into ASEAN's opposition. According to Chatichai's advisers, it was recognised that the new policy carried some risks of upsetting Thailand's allies and friends because it was different from the previous common position, but the risks were thought to be low. They expected that the irritation which the policy might cause would be outweighed by the understanding of other ASEAN countries because the new policy was an appropriate move consistent with international and regional circumstances in which other ASEAN partners also operated.³¹¹ General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, Thailand's army commander and acting supreme commander who took part in the making and implementation of Chatichai's policy, added that ASEAN countries understood that the new policy was a continuation of the efforts to bring peace to the region and therefore

it was consistent with ASEAN's interest. Chavalit argued that because the new policy was merely a change in tactics and not in strategy, it did not undermine the interests of the Association and hence was not a significant concern to ASEAN members.³¹² In other words, the makers of the new Thai policy did not carelessly ignore ASEAN in their calculation but they expected that the Association would not object to the policy. The decision to introduce the policy as a surprise was perhaps a consequence of bypassing the Thai Foreign Ministry in the process of making and implementing it, as the Ministry was the main channel for ASEAN consultation.

Nevertheless, the initial responses of ASEAN countries to the new Thai policy were not favourable. Chatichai faced some criticism about his divergence from the common ASEAN stand. For instance, Singapore's former Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam warned that the Thai initiatives could seriously damage ASEAN's credibility as one of the few successful examples of regional political co-operation in the Third World.³¹³ Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, who played an important role in ASEAN's containment policy against Vietnam in the early 1980s, was also very critical of Chatichai's policy which he claimed had seriously undermined ASEAN's credibility.³¹⁴ Concerns were raised that the new Thai policy might ease the pressure on Hanoi to make concessions at the negotiating table over Cambodia's political future. The failure of the second Jakarta Informal Meeting hosted by Indonesia in 1989 to produce an agreement on power sharing among the Cambodian factions was blamed by these critics on Vietnamese intransigence which was seen to have resulted in part from the Thai government's premature offering of an olive branch to Hanoi.

Arguably, Chatichai's new policy seemed to challenge other ASEAN countries in at least two aspects: first, it was seen to undermine the unity of the Association as a whole; and second, it went against individual interests of some ASEAN states. However, the first aspect was usually referred to as the main reason. Not only was it easier to speak of collective interests rather than of individual interests, but it must also be noted that by acting as a unified group, ASEAN had gained significant diplomatic recognition, which was a positive contribution to its records. Consequently, it was not surprising that comments about Chatichai's policy were mainly projected from a position where the assumption of ASEAN unity was central. The following section discusses responses of ASEAN countries to three main aspects of the new Thai policy. It will be demonstrated that their responses were based not so much on their disagreement with the substance of Chatichai's policy as on their dissatisfaction with the way the policy emerged.

1. OPENING INDOCHINESE MARKETS

Chatichai's statement about turning Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace, coupled with the Thai military's concept of *Suvarnabhumi*, was not welcomed by some ASEAN countries, particularly Singapore. Singapore's former Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam argued that by indulging in this policy shift, Thailand had failed to understand that Vietnam was using ASEAN members merely as bait to lure foreign investments from Western countries.³¹⁵ Bangkok was also accused of seeking unilateral economic advantage by promoting rapid trade and investment links with Indochina, which could become Thailand's market and a supplier of natural resources.

Although Singapore's Rajaratnam did not seem to welcome Chatichai's ideas, Malaysia showed some understanding of the new Thai policy. Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammed said that changing international circumstances looked conducive to peace; and that Malaysia supported Bangkok's policy of ending the isolation of Indochina so that the Indochinese countries could help to contribute to the development of ASEAN economies.³¹⁶ Mahathir's comment shows that his view was consistent with the anticipation of Chatichai and his team. Chatichai's advisers also believed that Singapore's view in fact did not differ significantly from that of Chatichai, not least because Singapore already had trade ties with Indochina. They suggested that Singapore's critical comment perhaps was more of a political gesture to indicate its dissatisfaction following the surprising introduction of Chatichai's policy.³¹⁷ In any case, Chatichai's early attempts to address the concern about his policy were seen during his visits to ASEAN capitals in late 1988 – early 1989. The Thai Prime Minister assured his hosts that Thailand would not establish formal trade links with Hanoi as long as Vietnam maintained its troops in Cambodia.³¹⁸

2. APPROACH TOWARDS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT

Although Chatichai's announcement of his intention to turn Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace was not well received by some of Thailand's ASEAN friends, it was perhaps his personal invitation to the Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to visit Bangkok that generated much more criticism, especially from Indonesia. This was despite Bangkok's attempts to make clear that Chatichai's invitation to Hun Sen was informal and did not mean that Thailand recognised the Phnom Penh government.³¹⁹ Chatichai's invitation to Hun Sen was a

significant diplomatic move which was contrary to the previous Thai and ASEAN positions. Chatichai claimed that Hun Sen's views should be listened to, and this would contribute to the efforts to promote reconciliation between the four Cambodian factions. The importance that Chatichai gave to Hun Sen's faction marked a difference between his policy and the previous Thai approach which ASEAN supported.

Reactions from ASEAN countries were mixed. The Philippines, for example, seemed to react favourably. The Philippines' Foreign Minister Raul Maglapus said in April 1989 that Hun Sen's visit to Thailand might well contribute to the peace process in Cambodia by putting some pressure on Sihanouk to be more assertive and abandon his earlier moves of repeated resignation and resumption of power as the leader of the CGDK.³²⁰ On the other hand, some ASEAN partners appeared to be critical. This was particularly the case for Indonesia where Chatichai's new move towards Hun Sen seemed to create tensions as both Bangkok and Jakarta competed for control of the peace negotiation process and hence for leadership of ASEAN. When the JIM II failed in February 1989, particularly because the Cambodian factions could not agree on the question of an interim government in Cambodia, Chatichai's new diplomacy was blamed for contributing to the impasse by allowing Phnom Penh and Hanoi to harden their positions and object to the peace plan. Consequently, an editorial in an Indonesian newspaper *Jakarta Post* noted that 'the failure of some ASEAN members to render their unqualified and full support to the maximum results of the second JIM, which was supposed to be an indigenous effort at regional diplomacy, was quite disappointing.'³²¹ It was quite apparent that the article was referring to Chatichai's policy.

3. OTHER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACE SETTLEMENT

Another aspect of Chatichai's Indochina policy was his idea of a step-by-step approach to peace in Cambodia, as opposed to the idea of a comprehensive approach advocated by ASEAN. As part of his attempts to promote an early ceasefire in Cambodia, Chatichai actively took part in the arrangement of the Tokyo Conference in June 1990. This, however, intensified the differences between him and other ASEAN partners. The Tokyo Conference was in effect a bilateral discussion between the Phnom Penh government and the CGDK (represented by Sihanouk).³²² As the idea of a bilateral format was not shared by ASEAN, the Tokyo Conference was arranged without the participation of the Association. That Chatichai and his team decided to organise the meeting without the co-operation of other ASEAN partners may be explained by the preparation process leading up to it, which provided them with confidence. Prior to the Tokyo meeting, the Thai Prime Minister, his advisers, and Chavalit (the Thai military leader), held separate meetings with the leaders of the Phnom Penh government and the CGDK as part of their attempts to find a way to facilitate an understanding between them. Chavalit, in particular, played an important role in securing a preliminary agreement between the two competing Cambodian governments concerning, among other things, a provision for a voluntary ceasefire and an establishment of a supreme national body for Cambodia. This provided confidence for Chatichai and his team that progress would be made at the Tokyo Conference, and contributed to their decision to arrange the Conference even without the participation of ASEAN and China.

The Tokyo meeting did produce an agreement between Sihanouk and the Phnom Penh government, although Sihanouk later withdrew

from it because one component of the CGDK (i.e. the Khmer Rouge) was opposed to the final declaration. Despite this, Chatichai and his advisers appeared satisfied with their effort, not least because it provided another opportunity for the Cambodian factions to discuss the problem.³²³ Nevertheless, Thailand's ASEAN partners still did not openly endorse Chatichai's idea of a step-by-step or incremental approach to a peace agreement, although Indonesia was reported to be inclined to it. According to a *Far Eastern Economic Review* intelligence report in December 1989, Indonesian Foreign Ministry had held a closed-door meeting to discuss ways of matching Chatichai's policy line of a step-by-step approach to peace in Cambodia without appearing to reproduce it; and Foreign Minister Ali Alatas was under considerable pressure to soften his insistence on a comprehensive solution to the Cambodian conflict.³²⁴ Nonetheless, towards the Paris Conference of 1991, the step-by-step idea was decreasingly referred to as a comprehensive settlement began to take shape following the actions on part of the superpowers and the great powers which importantly paved the way for it (see later).

EXPLAINING THE RESPONSES OF ASEAN COUNTRIES

The reactions of ASEAN countries may be looked at in two related aspects depending on the kind of interests that seemed to be challenged by Chatichai's policy. These are (a) collective interests centred on the unity of ASEAN, and (b) individual or private interests of the ASEAN countries.

EFFECTS ON ASEAN'S UNITY

It was clear that Chatichai's Indochina initiatives caused much controversy among ASEAN countries because they disliked the fact that the new Thai policy was announced without prior consultation with them. In other words, the Association was displeased with the Thai Prime Minister because he was seen to break with ASEAN's practice of consensus. Thailand's policy shift was described by Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar as a 'rude blow' to ASEAN cohesion and political solidarity.³²⁵ For Indonesia and Malaysia, the irritation was also caused in part because the two countries had in the past subordinated some of their political and security interests to Thai advantage so as to maintain the unity of ASEAN. To them, it seemed that, having taken advantage of the sacrifice of the interests of others on the Indochina issue up to this point, the Thais were now seeking to advance their private interests at the expense of those who had been their benefactors. Meanwhile, Chatichai was criticised by Singapore's Foreign Minister for his 'failure to recognise that his policy change might embarrass and render ASEAN meaningless in the eyes of Western dialogue partners.'³²⁶

However, there did not seem to be any serious consequences or impact on the group as a whole. This could be because, as Evelyn Colbert suggests, the Association had a capacity to absorb an originally aberrant position into a new ASEAN consensus.³²⁷ On his part, Chatichai sought to minimise the irritation of his ASEAN partners by, for example, reassuring them that Vietnam would not be allowed to enter the Indochina market while still carrying guns and by emphasising that ASEAN had a central place in Thailand's

foreign policy. In any case, Chatichai's advisers believed that the new Thai policy did not undermine the unity of ASEAN, because other ASEAN countries later followed Chatichai's example, e.g. trading with Indochina.³²⁸ In addition, it should be noted that there was no formal criticism from the Association or its members against Chatichai's initiatives. The ASEAN members observed one of the Association's rules of the game – not criticising each other publicly. Public discussion of policy difference, if occurred at all, was conducted in a low-key and non-confrontational manner.³²⁹ Chatichai argued that there was no official negative reaction from the ASEAN countries. The Thai government's deputy spokesman clarified in February 1989 that the apparent criticism from ASEAN countries was in fact personal views of some ASEAN officials and by no means represented the formal position of the ASEAN states.³³⁰

EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS

Chatichai's policy may be seen to adversely affect individual interests of other ASEAN countries, which prompted them to react negatively. For instance, the new Thai policy, introduced unilaterally, did not please Indonesia who nurtured a sense of being a regional leader. Indonesia had for long resented the lack of recognition for its deferral to Bangkok on the issue of Cambodia and had increasingly disliked the 'shift in the political centre of gravity of the Association from Jakarta to Bangkok.'³³¹ Chatichai's policy was viewed as Thailand's implicit claim to leadership of the Association even once its security was no longer threatened. Therefore, the new Thai policy was not warmly welcomed by the Indonesians although Jakarta was said to be 'privately

elated to see that Thailand, which had opposed any contact with the Phnom Penh government, had come to recognise it as a key actor in Cambodia.³³² The effects of Chatichai's foreign policy on Indonesia's sense of regional leadership was said to be a reason for Suharto's visit to Bangkok in July 1990. The Indonesian president reportedly tried to persuade the Thais to yield the position of ASEAN forerunner in dealing with Cambodia back to Indonesia (who was a co-chair of the Paris Conference on the Cambodian issue).³³³

Malaysia shared some of Indonesia's dissatisfaction about the new Thai policy, not least because earlier Malaysia had to restrain its initiatives for the benefit of Thai security interests. However, unlike Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur did not nurture a sense of regional leadership and hence was not annoyed by Thailand's implicit claim to ASEAN leadership. On the contrary, the Malaysian Prime Minister on some occasions appeared to openly approve Chatichai's move, as outlined earlier in this chapter. In addition, Malaysia's less critical responses (than those of Indonesia) could be explained by the relatively close relations between Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. The two countries' bilateral attempts to control communist insurgencies along their common borders contributed to the necessity of close co-operation and mutual understanding.³³⁴

Singapore's reactions may also be seen as resulting partly from its interests of maintaining a prominent position on the international stage with regard to the Cambodian issue. The city-state adopted a role of a spokesman for ASEAN on the Cambodian issue, as Singapore's Ambassador Tommy Koh skilfully argued the case for ASEAN at the UN. This, arguably, was undermined by the new Thai initiatives of which Singapore had no prior knowledge. Consequently, the city-state's

reaction to Chatichai's policy was unfavourable. However, as argued earlier in this chapter, Chatichai's advisers believed that this reaction was to some extent for political effect, because Singapore itself had maintained contacts (particularly economic) with the Indochinese countries before Chatichai announced his policy.

Meanwhile, the new Thai approach did not seem to undermine the Philippines' interests. Since the late 1970s, Manila was not particularly active on the Cambodian question. While condemning the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, Philippine President Marcos did not consider this to be a danger to the Philippines.³³⁵ This continued in the second half of the 1980s, as President Aquino was beset with the country's social, economic and political problems which reduced the salience of the Cambodian issue. The Philippines' geographical location away from the scene of the conflict further explained the relatively lesser interest it had in the issue. Similar explanation could perhaps be said of Brunei.

The differences in causes and degrees of irritation among ASEAN countries reflected the extent to which Chatichai's policy was perceived to affect their individual interests. For instance, Singapore's expressed concern about Chatichai's encouragement of trade with Indochina could have stemmed in part from its interests in maintaining its share of less than open trade with Indochina. Similarly, Indonesia's unfavourable reaction to Chatichai's initiative towards Hun Sen, which was a significant diplomatic move in the efforts to solve the Cambodian problem, could be explained by the dissatisfaction of being upstaged. Jakarta's sense of regional leadership was not replicated in the other ASEAN countries, which perhaps explains relatively less critical reactions from those countries following Hun Sen's visit to Thailand.

Chatichai's way of handling responses of other ASEAN countries was reactive. When concerns were raised about the effectiveness of his policy, Chatichai would seek to explain that his policy was a viable alternative to a peace settlement in Cambodia. Meanwhile, the Thai Prime Minister attempted to emphasise the importance of other ASEAN states. For instance, in what could be seen as an attempt to address Indonesia's concern, Chatichai emphasised in an interview in mid 1989 that he personally respected Indonesia's President Suharto.³³⁶ One of Chatichai's advisers pointed out that the Thai Prime Minister skilfully employed personal diplomacy towards his ASEAN counterparts.³³⁷ Arguably, this helped to moderate disapproving responses from other ASEAN leaders who were displeased by the surprising introduction of the new Thai approach.

TWO TRACK DIPLOMACY IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

Generally, responses from Thailand's ASEAN partners were not significantly critical. An important reason was that Chatichai's policy was not out of tune with the approaches of other ASEAN countries towards the Cambodian issue. This is because despite their collective stance in opposing the Phnom Penh government and Vietnam's action in Cambodia, some ASEAN countries had sympathy with Vietnam and some had informal contacts with Phnom Penh.

Two track diplomacy such as this was not uncommon among ASEAN countries. In Indonesia, the differences between the Foreign Ministry (headed by Mochtar, and later by Alatas) and the Military (led by General Benny Murdani) were marked by the former's pro-ASEAN views and the latter's pro-Vietnam views. During his visit to Hanoi in

February 1984,³³⁸ General Murdani clearly said that the Indonesian army and people did not believe that Vietnam was a danger to Southeast Asia.³³⁹ Although this was later toned down by Murdani's public backing of the ASEAN diplomatic stand and by an explanation that his assessment was made strictly in military terms,³⁴⁰ the episode nevertheless indicated that the Indonesians were taking two different approaches towards the Cambodian issue. One channel was through ASEAN, and the man responsible for it was Foreign Minister Mochtar. The other, strictly bilateral, channel, was handled by General Murdani. It was asserted that there was no conflict between the two channels, and Indonesian President Suharto, who oversaw both, would refuse to sacrifice one for the other.³⁴¹

In Malaysia, there were no apparent differences among regime members on the country's foreign policy towards Vietnam and on the Cambodian conflict; and foreign policy was not a contentious subject.³⁴² Instead, Kuala Lumpur's policy behaviour depended on who made the foreign policy at each particular period, which, in turn, was influenced by waves of domestic politics. By the mid 1980s, Malaysia had adopted a more co-operative bilateral approach towards Vietnam and Cambodia while still supporting the Association's collective hard-line stance, similar to Indonesia's two track diplomacy.³⁴³

In the case of Singapore, two track policy could be seen by the country's paralleled approaches towards Indochina, which involved officially adopting an anti-Vietnamese stance and privately having trade ties with Indochina. Similar to what Chatichai's advisers said, some analysts suggest that Singapore disliked Chatichai's economic initiatives towards Indochina because these might reduce economic benefits which many private businessmen from Singapore had

been enjoying from trading with Indochina.³⁴⁴ Indeed, Singapore's economic link with Indochina in general and with Vietnam in particular may be seen by the fact that soon after the 1991 Paris Agreement was signed, which marked the end of the Cambodian conflict, Singapore's senior statesman Lee Kuan Yew was asked by the Vietnamese Foreign Minister Vo Van Kiat to become an economic adviser to Vietnam. Lee accepted, deciding to "put the past behind us and help them as best we could to adjust to the market economy and become compatible partners in ASEAN."³⁴⁵

According to Evelyn Colbert, by the beginning of the new decade, the ASEAN states were in full pursuit of the two track policy, significantly expanding bilateral contacts with the Indochinese states while continuing to speak with one voice in the formal negotiation arena.³⁴⁶ This implicit flexibility within the ASEAN states could in part explain their temperate reaction to Chatichai's policy. The practice of two track diplomacy in ASEAN countries showed that they had shared Chatichai's ideas, although Chatichai was prepared to be more open about them. Arguably, Chatichai's policy not only confirmed the already existing practice but also paved the way for it to become more open, particularly when the Cambodian conflict was at its final stages where the need to recognise the importance of Hun Sen's faction was greater.

TOWARDS THE 1991 PARIS CONFERENCE

As the situation in Cambodia improved following the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops in late 1989 and as tensions between the superpowers relaxed, Chatichai's policy increasingly seemed timely. The fighting within Cambodia in the late 1989, after Vietnam had

withdrawn its troops, demonstrated that at this stage the Cambodian conflict was a civil war between the CGDK and the Phnom Penh regime. In July 1990, ASEAN's long-standing official position, as sustained by international diplomatic support, suffered a blow when the US Secretary of States James Baker declared that Washington could no longer support the CGDK in the UN. In addition, Washington signalled its willingness to have dialogue with Phnom Penh and Hanoi. The Bush Administration justified the decision by arguing that it sought to prevent the Khmer Rouge from returning to power (see chapter 7). The modification of American position in this regard was a break from US policy for the past 11 years, and therefore did not please many ASEAN countries. Although Chatichai and his staff welcomed the new American stance, the Thai Prime Minister stood by the ASEAN position and did not follow Washington in ceasing recognition of the CGDK. Arguably, Washington's move was already significant in itself and more than enough to show other ASEAN countries that Chatichai had been right in his approach towards Phnom Penh.

By early 1991, the ASEAN countries had been much more accommodating to Chatichai's diplomacy. On 4 February 1991, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and French Deputy Foreign Minister Edwige Avice asked Chatichai to talk to the four warring Cambodian factions about taking part in another round of peace talk in Jakarta, saying that the Thais were best placed to approach the Cambodian factions' leaders.³⁴⁷ Chatichai later met Prince Norodom Ranariddh, representing his father Prince Sihanouk, on 11 February 1991 as part of the efforts to persuade the Cambodian factions to meet in Jakarta under the banner of the SNC of Cambodia. Chatichai would most probably have continued these efforts had he not been ousted by

a coup in Bangkok on 23 February 1991. Indeed, the Indochina policy of Chatichai's successor was not dissimilar to his. However, it should perhaps be re-emphasised that by the time the new Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun came to power in Thailand, the circumstances of the Cambodian problem had significantly improved. Chatichai's initiatives were thus superseded by the rapidly unfolding tide which he had to a certain extent anticipated and perhaps even helped to promote.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that although Chatichai seemed to break ranks with other ASEAN partners when he introduced his Indochina policy unilaterally, responses of ASEAN states were not significantly critical. Their reactions to the new Thai policy, which caught them by surprise, were influenced by both their individual interests and the collective interests of maintaining the Association's consensus and unity. Chatichai's handling of the disapproving responses from ASEAN was reactive, involving the use of personal diplomacy, and it was mainly to emphasise the importance of ASEAN in Thailand's foreign policy.

That Chatichai was able to introduce his policy without facing opposition from ASEAN was essentially due to favourable conditions, as were perceived by him and his staff. Although Chatichai's policy caught ASEAN by surprise, the favourable conditions both internationally (e.g. improved relations between the great powers involved in the conflict) and regionally (e.g. Vietnam's withdrawal of troops from Cambodia, and the operation of two track diplomacy by ASEAN states) significantly minimised the dissatisfaction which the new policy might have caused. Arguably, the dissatisfaction of other

ASEAN countries stemmed not so much from their disagreement with the substance of Chatichai's new policy, but rather from their displeasure of being caught by surprise rather than being properly consulted. This was partly a result of his bypassing the Thai Foreign Ministry which was the main institutional channel for ASEAN consultation.

In any case, the absence of ASEAN's opposition to Chatichai's new policy is significant and may be taken as a tacit acceptance. The Cambodian issue was of considerable importance to ASEAN and it is likely that other members of the Association would have attempted to intervene or modify Chatichai's policy if it was seen to undermine their interests. This chapter has shown that Chatichai was able to launch his new policy unilaterally not only because it did not threaten major interests of other ASEAN countries, but also because it was consistent with them. Arguably, Chatichai's diplomacy towards Hun Sen facilitated an open acceptance of the Phnom Penh regime by other ASEAN countries by sending a message that Hun Sen was no longer a Vietnamese puppet but was a political force to be reckoned with in future Cambodia. This was to become a backdrop of the post-Cambodian conflict era where the ASEAN countries all sought to develop their relations with the Indochinese states.

CHAPTER

6

RESPONSES FROM CHINA

INTRODUCTION

Although China had long been an important factor in Thai foreign policy, it may be argued that the third Indochina conflict intensified this to a degree much greater than any other event in the contemporary history of Sino-Thai relations. The convergence of Thai and Chinese strategic interests after Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in December 1978 further cemented Sino-Thai relations which had been normalised in July 1975. The anti-Vietnamese stance brought China and Thailand together, and this tacit alliance was one of the most important aspects of the efforts to deal with the Cambodian crisis.

The change of Thai approach towards the Cambodian conflict as introduced by Chatichai in August 1988 seemingly threatened to undermine the country's tacit alliance with China. There is no evidence that Chatichai had consulted Beijing beforehand, and the Chinese appeared to have been caught by surprise when the new Thai policy was launched. This raises a crucial question of what it was that enabled Chatichai as the leader of the lesser power to introduce his policy unilaterally. As chapter 2 has established, Chatichai's policy was a product of his personality and thinking on foreign affairs combined with what was perceived to be a favourable condition for the new policy. Therefore, it could be argued that the Thai Prime Minister was not impulsive or ignored relevant factors including China. The fact that Chatichai chose not to consult China could therefore suggest that he was anticipating at least Beijing's acquiescence.

Indeed, responses from China to Chatichai's policy were important. Support from China, or at least the absence of opposition from Beijing, was required if Chatichai's policy was to have real meaning and effects.

This is because not only did China have significant interests in the third Indochina conflict, but Beijing was also a regional great power who had a capacity to block initiatives that were perceived to undermine its interests. This chapter examines China's reactions to the new Thai policy in an attempt to explain how the interests of Thailand and China converged even as the Cambodian conflict began to wind down in the late 1980s, thereby enabling Chatichai to carry out his initiatives.

CHINA'S INTERESTS IN INDOCHINA

Since the start of the third Indochina conflict in December 1978, Beijing consistently pursued three interrelated objectives in Indochina.³⁴⁸ First, China sought a significant reduction of the Soviet presence and influence in the region. Second, it sought the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, and thereby diminish Vietnamese power on China's southern periphery, and reduce the opportunity for an outside power to use Vietnam to undermine Chinese interests. Third, it insisted on the dissolution of the Vietnamese-influenced government in Phnom Penh.

These Chinese objectives show that Beijing viewed its involvement in the third Indochina conflict on at least two levels: (1) a conflict between China and the Soviet Union, since Moscow had been Hanoi's principal foreign supporter, and (2) a conflict between China and Vietnam. These two levels were not unrelated, but each also had its unique history and characteristics. At issue was how Beijing viewed the strategic balance in Indochina, as the following section will discuss.

SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

The close relationship between Chinese leaders and their Soviet counterparts that characterised the period around the time the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949 had given way to an increasingly antagonistic relationship by the late 1950s. The hostility between China and the Soviet Union had its origins in many factors including the differences in their interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, personality clash between Chinese and Soviet leaders, and their differing national interests. The Sino-Soviet split manifested itself in different forms including their exchange of critical polemics and the withdrawal of Soviet experts and advisers from China.³⁴⁹ By the mid 1970s, Beijing's foreign policy had been predicated on resisting what it termed as 'Soviet hegemonism', and in particular its expansion into Asia on terms that would contribute to the encirclement of China. The Soviet conventional and nuclear weapons build-up near the Sino-Soviet border during the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet treaties with India, and the development of the Soviet Pacific fleet all presented China with increased military pressure. The extension of Soviet influence into Indochina, and the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship signed in 1978, were perceived as a component of a Soviet encirclement strategy. In the Chinese view, Moscow bankrolled and defended Hanoi's occupation of Cambodia in exchange for a continuing dominant political and military presence in the region, which was part of the Soviet ambitions to dominate the whole world.³⁵⁰ Beijing believed that Moscow's incitement and support had prompted Vietnam to oppose China and expel Chinese residents, make claims to Chinese territories, provoke armed border conflict, and through a Soviet-Vietnamese

friendship treaty, allow Vietnam to invade and occupy Cambodia.³⁵¹ The withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia formed part of what the Chinese called the 'three obstacles' which had to be overcome if Sino-Soviet relations were to improve.³⁵²

SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

Closely related to China's objective of denying Indochina to the Soviet Union was its animosity towards Vietnam. Hanoi was seen as having regional hegemonic ambitions that dovetailed with Soviet broader hegemonic aims. Fractured Sino-Vietnamese relations carried a heavy historical legacy while ideological considerations hardly played a part.

Vietnam broke away from China around one thousand years ago and had been subject to periodic invasions and attempts at control from the north. However, the previous one thousand years of Chinese rule gave Vietnam Chinese-style political institutions and a veneer of Chinese culture, which became the foundation of a psychologically complex relationship. The common struggle of communist regimes in China and Vietnam against French and American forces and the Vietnamese dependence on Chinese Communist experience in the early years of independence recreated a Sino-Vietnamese relationship that was close and, in some sense, hierarchical.³⁵³

Beijing's role during Vietnam's struggle against France in the first Indochina war was another cause of Vietnam's distrust of China. Vietnam saw that Chinese support for Ho Chi Minh in the war against France was short-lived and was limited by China's great power interests as shown at the 1954 Geneva conference on the Indochina issue where

the Vietnamese had to accept what they saw as an unfair compromise. When the second Indochina war in South Vietnam began to escalate in the mid 1960s, China refused to join hands with the Soviet Union in a 'united action' to help Vietnam. Moreover, Hanoi was upset when Beijing played host to Kissinger and Nixon in the early 1970s, seeing that China collaborated with the imperialists to pursue its own interests while the war in Vietnam entered its decisive phase. Vietnam was also hard hit when China decided to cut aid to Vietnam in the late 1970s. In mid 1978, Vietnam described Chinese policy over this issue as erroneous, calling it a wrong path.³⁵⁴

The Chinese, on the other hand, were not happy with Vietnam's behaviour either. China believed that its support for North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, first against France and second against the US, was something for which Hanoi should be grateful, and therefore Vietnam should avoid hostile behaviour. However, the Vietnamese withdrew their earlier recognition of Chinese claims to the Spratly and Paracel islands in the South China Sea, claimed two-thirds of the Gulf of Tonkin in 1974, and occupied a key island in the Spratly islands in 1975. In addition, after 1975, Hanoi refused to consult with Beijing on the question of the ethnic Chinese in South Vietnam, despite the 1956 agreement between them. Moreover, in 1977, China was upset by Hanoi's policy of forcing Chinese people living along the Sino-Vietnamese border area who rejected Vietnamese citizenship either to move to the interior or to move to China. Beijing was outraged at what it saw as a 'betrayal' of Sino-Vietnamese friendship. China believed this was due in large part to the Soviet Union's ability to offer Vietnam more post-war economic assistance. China's invocation of Vietnamese ingratitude and 'repaying kindness with enmity' suggests

the importance of frustrated Chinese expectations in subsequent Chinese policy decisions on Vietnam.³⁵⁵ Nevertheless, these seemed to have an adverse effect of pushing Vietnam even closer to the Soviet bloc as evidenced by Vietnam's joining the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in June 1978 and signing a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in November 1978.

THE CAMBODIAN CONNECTION

In the wake of the animosity between China and Vietnam, Cambodia had become an arena for an indirect Sino-Vietnamese confrontation to decide their respective positions. It was to this end that China and Vietnam became patrons of the contending Cambodian clients who enjoyed a mixed autonomy.

When the second Indochina war ended in 1975, Vietnam established dominance over Laos but faced opposition from the communist victors in Cambodia. As the Pol Pot government in Cambodia opposed Vietnam's idea of building and fostering 'military solidarity of fraternal friendship between the three Indochinese nations'³⁵⁶, a conflict between Hanoi and Phnom Penh ensued. To be sure, the Vietnamese-Cambodian hostility was a result of many factors including territorial disputes, ethnic hatred, as well as differences in policies. In any case, the split between the new governments in Cambodia and Vietnam presented China with an opportunity to thwart Vietnam's influence from spreading throughout Indochina, although the relevance of China in the outbreak of Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict is less clear than one might have thought. While Michael Leifer argues that the China factor was the

precipitating one in Vietnam's initiatives to bring down the Pol Pot government,³⁵⁷ Nguyen Manh Hung asserts that there was no evidence to show that China initiated the conflict though it could be argued that China was not unhappy with it either.³⁵⁸ In fact, these opinions are not necessarily incompatible. China might not have directly initiated the conflict, but the accumulation of unfriendly Chinese policies towards Vietnam, and Hanoi's strategic fear of encirclement from a China-backed Cambodia in the south and China itself in the north, might well have contributed to Vietnam's decision to invade Cambodia.

In any case, the Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict saw a deepening of Soviet and Chinese involvement. When Vietnamese-Cambodian border skirmishes intensified and came to a breaking point, the Soviet Union immediately took the Vietnamese side in the disputes. China then decided to commit itself openly to Cambodia and let it be known that it was sending military supplies and advisers to Cambodia. Beijing began to describe the Vietnamese as the 'Cubans in Southeast Asia' implementing a Russian scheme of encircling China. Each side intensified political propaganda against the other as well as started to militarise their borders by mid 1978. China was rankled even more by the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship signed in November 1978. Deng Xiaoping called it a military pact of supreme importance to Asia and the Pacific because it threatened the security in the region. He said China had and see how much aggression Vietnam made against Cambodia, before deciding what measures Beijing would take.³⁵⁹

CHINA'S POLICIES TOWARDS THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT

When the Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia in December 1978 and captured the capital Phnom Penh in January 1979, China's credibility as a regional power of strategic significance was also challenged. China attacked Vietnam in February 1979 after Deng had repeatedly threatened some sort of limited action against Vietnam during his tour of the US and Japan (with whom a treaty of friendship had been signed in 1978) to sound out their reactions and that of the Russians. Beijing explained its brief attack on the border with Vietnam as a defensive, limited and short operation. From a military point of view, the Chinese incursion was badly executed and it failed to draw Vietnamese forces from Cambodia. However, it destroyed a great deal in the provinces adjoining China, and above all, it demonstrated to Vietnam that China was willing, and had the capacity, to use force. It also reminded Hanoi that China was a permanent factor in the region who would not go away, thanks to its geographical position. China's invasion of Vietnam was the first time since 1949 that China used force in response to developments that did not directly threaten either Chinese mainland or challenge its territorial claims. This, as Robert Ross argues, clearly shows that China was acting like a regional great power with regional interests of countering Soviet encirclement of China through the use of Vietnam.³⁶⁰ After its brief war against Vietnam in February 1979, China maintained pressure on Hanoi by threatening to teach Vietnam another lesson, holding troop movements near the border, shelling areas on or across the border and feigning military forays into Vietnam. Beijing also kept tensions high in

Hanoi by pushing territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea.

At the same time, China sought to keep Vietnam isolated through its diplomacy at the United Nations and its bilateral ties with nations with whom it had diplomatic relations. China's brief attack against Vietnam, with the tacit support of the US, ended Japanese attempts to cultivate Vietnam in the hope of detaching it from the Soviet Union. Instead, Japan followed the US lead by ending economic relations in the expectation that Vietnam should be left exposed to its dependence on Moscow. This approach was welcomed by China. Beijing believed that as Vietnam continued to require consistently high levels of Soviet aid, strains in the Soviet-Vietnamese relationship would develop, and these would finally reduce Vietnamese power. A commentary in the Chinese Communist Party newspaper *Renmin Ribao* suggested that the most effective way was to 'hold out against and pin down the Soviet Union and its lackey Vietnam in Kampuchea, turning this into a heavy burden on the back of the Soviet Union, wearing down its strength and causing changes within the Soviet Union and its backyard.'³⁶¹

In addition, China objected to the government in Phnom Penh and saw it as a Vietnamese puppet. To counter the Phnom Penh regime, Beijing supported the Cambodian resistance forces, which in 1982 were formed into the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). The establishment of the CGDK and the recognition it received at the UN not only represented a diplomatic breakthrough for ASEAN from which the idea emanated, but also for China who was the main supporter of the communist Khmer Rouge. Although Beijing supplied material and financial support to all three Cambodian factions of the CGDK, most of the Chinese support went to the Khmer Rouge which was the most effective fighting force in

Cambodia that was most able to contain the Phnom Penh regime. China was less concerned about the Khmer Rouge's appalling human rights records than about the strategic benefits which the Cambodian communist faction could offer. Thailand's position in this operation was important. Support for the Khmer Rouge was possible because of its location near the Thai border to which it could retreat, denying the Vietnamese the capacity to destroy it.

China was also involved in other efforts to bring a peace settlement to Cambodia. In fact, Chinese involvement was decisive. An early example was seen in the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) in 1981 where Beijing's interests prevailed over those of ASEAN. The Association's draft proposal had to be watered down because China objected to the idea of compromising with the Phnom Penh government, and Beijing maintained that the Khmer Rouge should be restored to power. To ASEAN's dismay, the Chinese position prevailed because it was backed by the US who sought China's reciprocal goodwill in the wake of its adversarial relationship with the Soviet Union.

It was not until after the mid 1980s when China began to loosen its uncompromising stance towards Vietnam and the Phnom Penh government. Until this time China had disagreed with proposals from Indonesia and Malaysia, such as the five-plus-two formula and the proximity talks. Beijing rejected the five-plus-two proposal because while it included Vietnam and Laos in the talks, it left out all the Cambodian factions. The proximity talks plan was also opposed by the Chinese because it would allow only a discussion between the CGDK and the Hun Sen government without the participation of Vietnam. China maintained that the Cambodian problem was caused by Vietnamese aggression in Cambodia, and therefore Vietnam should be

included in the talk. Under Chinese pressure, the initial proposal was modified so that it would in effect bring about discussions between the CGDK and Vietnam.

China's opposition to some diplomatic efforts of Malaysia and Indonesia created tension between Beijing and the two Southeast Asian countries, and consequently presented a potential rift between Thailand and its ASEAN partners, as the Thai-Chinese tacit alliance was fully at work. However, this tacit alliance helped to assure that China would be able to influence efforts by ASEAN countries to resolve the Cambodian conflict at every stage. In the late 1980s, as Chinese fears of the Soviet Union receded, China's stance became closer to Malaysia and Indonesia. Beijing indicated its approval of the Indonesia-sponsored cocktail party concept in 1987 which later led to the Jakarta Informal Meetings that saw the four Cambodian factions talk to each other before the participation of relevant countries. Furthermore, China appeared ready to drop its earlier demand that the restoration to power of the Khmer Rouge regime remained an integral part of any Cambodian settlement.³⁶²

SINO-THAI RELATIONS DURING THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT

DEVELOPMENT OF SINO-THAI COMMON SECURITY INTERESTS

Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia led to a convergence of Thai and Chinese strategic interests. For Bangkok, the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia was a clear and present danger at a time when Thailand was no longer assured of direct military assistance

from the US. China shared Thailand's hostility towards Vietnam, even though Bangkok and Beijing might have differed in their longer term objectives. Beijing's purpose was to curb Vietnam's influence, which China saw as linked to Soviet attempts to encircle China. While China sought Vietnam's humiliation and wanted to deny a military presence in the region by a hostile superpower, Thailand wanted to see a regional balance of power so as to avoid a situation where any power dominated Southeast Asia.³⁶³

Thailand's concerns about a possible Chinese threat to Thai security derived from the link between Beijing and the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) which had received active Chinese support since its inception in 1942. The Thai leadership's perception that China was behind communist activities in Thailand was well expressed by a high-ranking Thai official in 1968 who not only spoke of China's intention to overthrow legitimate authorities of neighbouring countries and to impose its hegemony on them, but also clearly said that "Chinese communist leadership has in effect declared a guerrilla war on Thailand."³⁶⁴ Nevertheless, this hostile attitude declined in the 1970s, as Southeast Asia underwent many changes including the reduction of American involvement in the region while China began to reduce its support for revolutionary movements in the region as part of its new diplomacy in the early 1970s. Many ASEAN countries responded by establishing their diplomatic relations with China. Thailand did so in July 1975.

The third Indochina conflict pushed Beijing and Bangkok even closer to each other, albeit on a quid-pro-quo basis. After Vietnam invaded Cambodia, Thailand's Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan secured a deal with Beijing whereby the Chinese government agreed

to reduce material aid to the CPT and to close down the CPT's clandestine radio station in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan in return for Thailand's co-operation in assisting the Khmer Rouge.³⁶⁵

Having a close relationship with Thailand served China's strategic and political objectives. Through Thailand, China could militarily support the Cambodian resistance forces, principally the Khmer Rouge, in their struggle against the Phnom Penh regime. Politically, links with Thailand allowed China to develop closer ties with ASEAN countries, thereby enhancing China's influential presence in the region. In return, Beijing demonstrated to Bangkok that it was willing to take action, including the use of force, against Vietnam. Michael Leifer argues that if China had not made clear its unrelenting opposition to Vietnam's policy in Cambodia, Thailand would have almost certainly been obliged to accommodate itself to the political *fait accompli*.³⁶⁶ China's invasion of Vietnam in 1979 provided a kind of reassurance to Thailand when its ASEAN partners could offer only diplomatic support. Although no formal treaty was signed between China and Thailand, Beijing gave assurances to Bangkok shortly after the Chinese invasion of Vietnam that it would intervene in the case of a Vietnamese aggression against Thailand.³⁶⁷ In 1985, Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila confirmed the importance of China by saying that China was one of the stabilising factors in Southeast Asia and that there was remarkable evidence that China regarded peace and stability in Southeast Asia to be vital to its interests.³⁶⁸

CHINESE ARMS SUPPLIES TO THAILAND

Sino-Thai relations had entered a new era by the mid 1980s as Thai

military circles strengthened their ties considerably with their Chinese counterparts, even though this fell short of allowing the use of Thai military airspace and ports by the Chinese. By 1982, China had given military equipment in the form of free gifts to Thailand, although these were limited mainly to light weapons, such as AK-47 and RPG guns and bullets.³⁶⁹ Later on, China responded to Thai request by giving heavy artillery. By the late 1980s, Thailand had purchased military equipment from China at 'friendship prices.' Chinese weapons might not have been the most modern but nevertheless they were seen to be sufficiently effective and their prices fell within Thailand's limited budget.³⁷⁰ In 1987, Thai Army Deputy Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant General Suchinda Khraprayun declared Bangkok's intention to conclude a large arms deal with China.³⁷¹ Chinese-Thai arms transfers complemented their growing relationship marked by broad consensus on the Cambodian issue, concern for Thai security, and frequent high-level official exchanges from mid to late 1980s. In addition, there was a decision to establish a Chinese reserve stockpile along the lines of an American stockpile agreed to in 1985. The Chinese stockpile would carry ammunition and spare parts and would be under Thai control, unlike the American one which would be a storehouse for heavy weapons governed by a treaty.³⁷² This was an unprecedented move for both Thailand and China. The creation of the stockpile promised to institutionalise the special relationship between Beijing and Bangkok and assure its continuation even after the resolution of the Cambodian conflict.³⁷³ The idea of a Chinese reserve stockpile was promoted by acting supreme commander General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh after the Thai army's clash with the Laotians at Ban Rom Klao in January–February 1988 during which the Thais faced ammunition shortages and fared badly

To China, these activities proceeded logically both from its increased desire to arm Thailand against Vietnamese expansion and its interest in expanding Chinese influence in Thailand and Southeast Asia.³⁷⁴ They represented an emerging pattern in Chinese arms transfer policy since the early 1980s, and were indicative of a shift towards regional priorities in Chinese foreign policy overall. This shift appeared to be for the purposes of (1) countering a hostile arc of encirclement around China, perceived in Beijing to be the work of Moscow; (2) countering potential threats from smaller, regional powers (Vietnam, India); and (3) asserting, through arms exports, China's influence regionally where the superpowers once held sway. The fact that some Chinese weapons were given as free gifts, and many were sold at low prices, seemed to suggest that for the Chinese, economic gain took a back seat to more important considerations of potential political leverage and strategic manoeuvring.

SINO-THAI ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Arms trade between Thailand and China was an example of economic as well as strategic co-operation between the two countries. However, there were also other commercial activities between them that grew during the third Indochina conflict, contributing to the economic relations between Thailand and China which began earlier. For instance, there was a major commercial deal which was a result of political considerations in 1974 when China agreed to the Thai request for the sale of diesel oil following an oil shortage. Since then, in order to cultivate good relations with Thailand, China on several occasions bought up surplus Thai agricultural products to relieve

Thailand's trade difficulties. Total trade exchanges between Thailand and China increased 103% between 1978–1979, and a further 70% between 1979–80.³⁷⁵ The security-stimulated nature of this trade expansion was indicated by the fact that China had agreed to purchase a number of commodities which it did not need but for which Thailand could not find markets elsewhere. Examples were US\$43 million worth of rice and maize and 30,000 tons of Thai glutinous rice which China bought in 1986.³⁷⁶ Two-way investment was also developed and increased at an impressive rate since 1980. The Chareon Pokphand (CP) group, the largest Thai investor in China, had several projects in that country. These included a motor-cycle manufacturing plant in Shanghai and a beer brewery project. At the same time, China had invested in many projects in Thailand in a wide range of businesses, such as construction, travel agencies, and transportation.

CHINA AND CHATICHAI'S INDOCHINA INITIATIVES

Chatichai seemed to realise that China held a key position in the conduct of Thai foreign policy. In an interview before his election, Chatichai said that 'China was like the main part of your body; Southeast Asia was its hands and feet.'³⁷⁷ Such comparison of China as the main part of the body seemed to acknowledge the central and significant role which China occupied in the conduct of Thai diplomacy.

However, the introduction of his new Indochina policy appeared to neglect this importance of China. As noted earlier, there is no evidence that Chatichai consulted or informed Beijing in advance of his announcement of the new policy. According to Chatichai's associates who took part in the making and implementation of his policy, prior

consultation with other countries in this matter was not necessary and that the policy was timely, introduced in accordance with domestic and international circumstances.³⁷⁸ This implies at least two points. First, consultation with China or other allies entailed the prospect that the appropriate time would have been missed. Consultation would have taken more time and, if done through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, would have involved many complications. As discussed earlier in the thesis, Chatichai had a team of advisers who were prepared to act expeditiously on their own. Second, Chatichai and his team anticipated that, by introducing the new policy at what they believed to be the right time, the Chinese would not oppose it. As it turned out, Chatichai's calculation seemed to be correct in the sense that China did not appear to oppose the contents of the policy although Beijing was not pleased with the 'surprise' element of it. Even so, Beijing seemed to find some aspects of Chatichai's policy less surprising than others, as the following section will discuss.

1. OPENING INDOCHINESE MARKETS

Beijing did not seem to disapprove of the shift of Thai emphasis towards promoting commercial relations with Indochina. In fact, it was no secret that border trade and illegal smuggling between Thailand and its Indochinese neighbours had been taking place for some time. Moreover, just before the parliamentary elections which brought Chatichai to power, Prime Minister Prem stressed that one of the tasks for the next government was to grasp the opportunities in the world economy.³⁷⁹ The trend then was towards a reassessment of the policy in response to Thailand's rapid economic growth and changing profile of the Thai economy where agriculture as a percentage of GDP

was decreasing while manufacturing's share was increasing and, with it, the demand for more trade and markets. Therefore, Chatichai's encouragement of trade did not come without pre-indications. Beijing may have been surprised by Chatichai's willingness to openly encourage trade with Indochina, but the degree of surprise here did not seem to be either significant or a cause of Chinese concern.

An important reason was Chatichai's attempt to address Beijing's concerns about limiting Vietnamese gains, as China wanted to ensure that Vietnam would not benefit from its aggression in Cambodia. During Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Liu Shuqing's visit to Bangkok in September 1988, Chatichai said that although he hoped that the Cambodian problem would be settled soon and the battlefield turned into a marketplace, but that "on no account should the Vietnamese be allowed to come to this market with guns."³⁸⁰ Beijing appeared to be satisfied that Bangkok would not sacrifice strategic interests on the altar of commerce, and it might even have seen the new Thai policy as highlighting the costs to Vietnam of its international economic isolation.³⁸¹

2. APPROACH TOWARDS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT

While the economic side of Chatichai's policy did not seem to surprise China, his invitation to Hun Sen to visit Bangkok did, and this resulted in what might be interpreted as disapproving responses from Beijing. Arguably, this was because such a move involved a political question of the legitimacy of the Phnom Penh government that was also linked to the influence of Hanoi and Moscow, which was an important concern for China,

Nevertheless, China's responses in this regard were mainly to

signal its doubts and dissatisfaction about the new Thai policy rather than to react furiously. A Chinese news agency Xinhua passed no direct judgement on Hun Sen's visit, but it did cite diplomatic analysts as saying that they would wait and see if major diplomatic initiatives conducted by the Thai government would make a big breakthrough for the political settlement of the Cambodian conflict.³⁸² However, a disapproving tone was subtly conveyed, as the same news agency also reported at length the views of a former high-ranking Thai government official who said that the visit was ill-timed and that Indochina would benefit from it.³⁸³

Apart from this, Beijing's response to Chatichai's diplomacy towards the Phnom Penh regime was conveyed to Bangkok on at least two separate occasions.³⁸⁴ Firstly, when Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi visited Beijing in February 1989, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen stressed the need for friendly Thai-Chinese relations and continued co-operation on Cambodia in easing the situation in the region. This was repeated by Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng during Chatichai's visit to Beijing in March 1989. Li expressed the hope that the Sino-Thai co-operation would continue, pushing for an early solution to the Cambodian problem, and he also emphasised that Vietnam should be condemned for its aggression in Cambodia.³⁸⁵ It is clear from these Chinese responses that China did not strongly disapprove of Chatichai's policy, and Beijing's reactions did not convey a sense of anger. Instead, the emphasis on the importance of Sino-Thai co-operation and the absence of Chinese criticism on the details of Chatichai's policy seem to suggest that Beijing's concerns about Chatichai's initiatives were centred on the 'surprise' element of the policy because it was introduced without prior Sino-Thai discussion.

The absence of Chinese opposition to Chatichai's olive branch towards Hun Sen is significant, particularly when China had been strongly against the idea of compromising with the Phnom Penh government. As will be explained later on, by this time, Beijing's position had been softened by favourable international developments.

Although China's reactions to Chatichai's approach towards Hun Sen were not critical, the Thai Prime Minister nevertheless offered a reassurance to Beijing in March 1989 that its strategic interests were taken into account. During his visit to Beijing, Chatichai reaffirmed Thailand's support for the CGDK and he made clear that Bangkok did not recognise the Hun Sen regime as claimed by Vietnam.³⁸⁶ This could be seen as an attempt to address China's concern that the governments of Hanoi and Phnom Penh should not benefit from the Vietnamese aggression against Cambodia. Moreover, Chatichai stated during a news briefing in the Chinese capital that Thailand would await the outcome of the Sino-Soviet Summit before initiating new moves.³⁸⁷ This meant that he would wait to ensure that Beijing's major strategic concerns about the Soviet Union would be addressed first before his local initiatives were presented further, if at all. In fact, Chatichai's statement could be interpreted as conveying at least two points: first, it showed that Chatichai acknowledged the importance of China and Chinese interests; and second, it demonstrated Chatichai's recognition that the relationship between Beijing and Moscow held a key to solve the Cambodian problem. Chatichai's statements in March 1989 could also be seen as an attempt to minimise possible Chinese frustration as Beijing had been surprised by his new policy.

3. OTHER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACE SETTLEMENT

Chatichai's idea of a step-by-step solution to the Cambodian problem differed from the comprehensive approach that China supported. Chatichai's attempt to promote this idea was yet again a surprise to China. There is no evidence that Beijing had been either aware of Chatichai's move or had considered adopting this approach itself. An incremental approach as Chatichai suggested would require a ceasefire in Cambodia as a first step, but this would not be to the liking of the Khmer Rouge who received support from China.

However, the timing of Chatichai's proposal of a step-by-step or incremental solution was significant. The Thai Prime Minister promoted this idea in August 1989 after the Paris Conference on the Cambodian issue ended inconclusively. Chatichai grasped this opportunity to put forward what he described as an alternative route to the same destination which should be taken now that the efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement failed. Moreover, by this time, Beijing's concerns about the Soviet dimension that most threatened China's security had already been addressed in the Sino-Soviet Summit in May 1989 which officially ended years of hostility between the two communist powers. This could explain why China did not seem to object to Chatichai's idea in this regard. In other words, China was more concerned about the broader picture of its relations with the Soviet Union and Vietnam rather than the details of how a Cambodian settlement was reached. When Chatichai visited Beijing in October 1989 to seek support for his idea, the Chinese not only refrained from questioning his plan, but the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping also told the Thai Prime Minister that Thailand could try the step-by-step approach in parallel with the approach for a comprehensive political

settlement.³⁸⁸ This green light from Beijing allowed Chatichai to announce after returning from China that Deng endorsed his step-by-step approach to Cambodia.³⁸⁹

Nevertheless, by early 1991, much less reference about the step-by-step approach had been made, and no effective ceasefire had been either achieved or internationally supervised. The world's powerful countries continued to support a comprehensive settlement, and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, which included China, issued a statement on a framework for a comprehensive political settlement in late 1990.

EXPLAINING CHINA'S RESPONSES

The absence of opposition from Beijing to Chatichai's foreign policy is significant. It suggests that the new Thai policy did not challenge important Chinese interests in Indochina. If Beijing had thought that Chatichai's policy could undermine its interests, it would most certainly have made this clear. After all, China was a regional great power who had important interests in Indochina and had the capacity to effectively block initiatives which threatened to undermine its interests. Arguably, signs of Chinese disapproval of Chatichai's policy were a result of Beijing's dissatisfaction as it had neither been informed nor consulted beforehand. As a great power who had significant interests in the developments of the third Indochina conflict and as a close ally of Thailand during this time, China would have expected to be part of a new policy initiative rather than being caught by surprise. However, such dissatisfaction was not followed by active diplomacy and, overall, Beijing seemed to tacitly acquiesce to Chatichai's policy. This may be due to at least four reasons.

1. CHINA'S MAJOR SECURITY CONCERNS WITH REGARD TO THE SOVIET AND VIETNAMESE THREATS HAD BEEN LARGELY ADDRESSED BY THE TIME CHATICHAI'S POLICY WAS ANNOUNCED.

Since 1983 Beijing and Moscow had begun normalisation talks, but relations between them improved only slowly. It was in his speeches in Vladivostok in July 1986 and in Krasnayorsk in September 1988 that Gorbachev clearly staked out a Soviet claim to be an Asian and Pacific power of a different kind. The Soviet leader admitted the failure of past Soviet policies and opted to make an all-out effort to improve Soviet ties with non-communist Southeast Asia and, more importantly, with Beijing. By this time, it had become clear that the central thrust of Soviet Asia-Pacific policy was normalisation of relations with China. One episode which demonstrated Soviet attempts to avoid upsetting China was when Moscow withheld support for Vietnam when the latter clashed with the Chinese navy in the Spratly archipelago in March 1988. Meanwhile, Moscow had indicated that it could no longer afford to underwrite the commitment of its allies in distant regions. Moscow's intention to disengage from Indochina and other third world areas appeared to be driven by worsening economic situations in the Soviet Union and the need to demonstrate to the international community its commitment to a new political thinking as well as desire to improve relations with Beijing and Washington. When China maintained that Sino-Soviet normalisation could not occur until the Soviet Union overcame the three obstacles, of which the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia was one, Moscow had little choice but to act on them. However, the extent to which Vietnam's withdrawal from

Cambodia was brought about by Soviet policy is subject to different interpretations. While some scholars underline the importance of the Soviet decision to cut down its support to Vietnam as a crucial factor behind the momentum of Vietnam's troop withdrawal from Cambodia,³⁹⁰ others argue that Moscow's role was overstated, and that a more accurate picture of Soviet-Vietnamese relations in regard to the issue of the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces was one of merging interests rather than mainly a result of Soviet policy.³⁹¹

In any case, it is not an objective of this thesis to seek to establish the extent of Moscow's influence on the Vietnamese decision to withdraw its forces from Cambodia. Instead, the purpose here is to underline that Moscow's contribution and its efforts to improve Sino-Soviet relations which, by putting at rest the Chinese anxiety about a Soviet encirclement strategy, played an important part in meeting Chinese security interests not only in Indochina but also internationally. The three decades of hostility between China and the Soviet Union were formally ended by their summit held in Beijing in May 1989. Deng Xiaoping summed up the meeting in eight words – "End the past and open up the future."³⁹² In their joint communiqué of 18 May 1989 which signified the normalisation of their relations, the two countries took note of the decision of Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia by the end of September 1989 under effective international supervision. They also reaffirmed their continued efforts to promote an early political settlement of the Cambodian question in a fair and reasonable way.³⁹³

In the wake of declining Chinese hostility towards the Soviet Union, the competition between China and Vietnam for influence in Indochina was also eased. The weakening Soviet-Vietnamese link had

served to fulfil China's strategic interests of ending a Soviet encirclement strategy and ensuring that Vietnam would not be allowed to profit from its aggression. Consequently, Beijing lessened its opposition both to Hanoi and to the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh. Thus, in response to Vietnam's plan to complete its troop withdrawal from Cambodia by the end of September 1989, China eased its anti-Vietnamese rhetoric, reduced its military pressure along the Sino-Vietnamese border, and opened negotiations with Hanoi over Indochina. Also, it must be noted that after the Tiananmen massacre in June 1989, China was keen to cultivate good relations with Asian neighbours so as to break the isolation imposed by the West. At the same time, Vietnam also had to adapt to the new circumstances where Soviet support was diminishing. Hanoi was forced to recognise a significant Chinese influence in the region and to defer to China's right to broker a deal among the indigenous Cambodian factions. Vietnamese Foreign Ministry officials paid three visits to Beijing in 1989 and 1990 before China reciprocated, underscoring Hanoi's recognition that Vietnamese security now depended on Chinese goodwill.

2. CHINA BECAME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH THE POSITION OF THE KHMER ROUGE VIS-À-VIS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT.

China's support for the CGDK, particularly to the Khmer Rouge, was a direct response in countering Vietnamese influence in Cambodia. As the Khmer Rouge was the most effective fighting force among the resistance factions, Beijing's support was based more on a power-balancing calculation rather than on shared values. When

Vietnam demonstrated that it was indeed withdrawing troops from Cambodia, China could, in turn, afford to be more flexible in its approach towards Phnom Penh which involved not only some friendly gestures towards that regime but also the lessening of material and financial support to the Khmer Rouge. This was clear from a statement of Chinese Premier Li Peng in November 1988 that Beijing would be willing to end aid to the Khmer Rouge along with the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. He said that if Vietnam withdrew its troops, all sides might gradually reduce military support in step with the tempo of the troop withdrawal.³⁹⁴ This announcement was significant because it was a move away from China's earlier demand that Vietnam must unconditionally complete the withdrawal of its troops first.

The reduction of Chinese support for the Khmer Rouge also reflected China's view about the future of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said in France in January 1989 that China approved of neither the policies of the Khmer Rouge nor their return to a monopoly of power in Phnom Penh.³⁹⁵ This was confirmed in the Sino-Soviet statement on the Cambodian problem issued during the Soviet Foreign Minister's visit to Beijing in February 1989 where it was made clear that China and the Soviet Union stood for non-return to the policies and practices of a recent past in Cambodia.³⁹⁶ A high-ranking Thai government official said that China conveyed to Thailand on many occasions that it wanted eventually to cease support for the Khmer Rouge. The official suggested that the Chinese intention was not just in words, but China had practically reduced support for the Cambodian communist faction, whose leader Khieu Samphan told Thai representatives at the UN that his party was suffering from diminished support from Beijing.³⁹⁷ At the same time, there were, in

China, positive views about the Phnom Penh government. A Chinese newspaper said that, under the Hun Sen government, Phnom Penh was 'coming back to life after death', and that, with encouraging trends of economic development, it would enjoy even greater prosperity in the future.³⁹⁸ Beijing's move towards the Phnom Penh government soon began to gain momentum; for instance, some Chinese technical and trade delegations visited Cambodia in early 1990, while others were invited on a getting-to-know-you basis.³⁹⁹

Therefore, it seems that the Chinese leadership and Chatichai shared similar ideas about the increasing importance of the Hun Sen faction and how the power-sharing in Cambodia should look like. Although Beijing and Bangkok wanted all Cambodian factions, including the Khmer Rouge, to participate in the elections, neither had an interest in seeing the Khmer Rouge return to power in Phnom Penh. In fact, Chatichai's friendly approach towards Phnom Penh such as when he invited Hun Sen to Bangkok, could be a move that China quietly approved of, as China itself began increasingly to recognise that the Hun Sen government would likely play a central role in future power-sharing in Cambodia.

China's more compromising stance was clearly seen in late 1990, particularly after the US modified its policy towards the Cambodian issue in July 1990. Under the new American policy, Washington would no longer recognise the legitimacy of the CGDK if it included the Khmer Rouge. Also, the US indicated its willingness to improve its relations with the Hun Sen government. China's initial reaction to the new American policy was to indicate its disagreement, saying that it would continue to support and arm the Khmer Rouge guerrillas.⁴⁰⁰ However, there is no evidence that Beijing attempted to either dissuade

Washington or to pursue an active diplomacy to reverse this. In fact, by the end of 1990, Beijing's policy towards Hanoi and Phnom Penh had not been dissimilar to that of the US. To China, improved relations with the Soviet Union and Vietnam had lessened the importance of their competition through the factions in Cambodia, thereby weakening the reason for Chinese support for the Khmer Rouge. In August 1990, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, including China, agreed on a Framework Document which included provisions for the establishment of a Supreme National Council (SNC) in Cambodia that would include all four Cambodian factions. To arrive at this compromise, China made two major concessions. Firstly, China dropped its insistence that the Hun Sen government be dismantled. Secondly, China no longer insisted on the formation of a quadripartite government prior to the holding of elections in Cambodia.

China also played a key role in the agreement between the Cambodian factions in 1991 which led to the formation of the SNC. After China saw that Sihanouk had secured sufficient compromises from Phnom Penh during the preliminary talks in Jakarta, China compelled the Khmer Rouge to fall into line during the meetings in Thailand in June 1991.⁴⁰¹ Later, China welcomed all members of the SNC, including Hun Sen, to Beijing to convene an informal meeting. This indicated that China recognised Hun Sen as a Cambodian representative and not a Vietnamese puppet.

It was clear that China appeared to be more conciliatory towards the Hun Sen government following the introduction of Chatichai's initiatives. It may be suggested that the new Thai policy helped to facilitate the transition of Chinese approach from a hard-line stance towards Hanoi and Phnom Penh to a more conciliatory one. As one

scholar suggests, moving closer to the Phnom Penh regime would not be readily easy for China, and therefore, China wanted to place the responsibility elsewhere; for example, with Thailand.⁴⁰² Thus, by inviting Hun Sen to Bangkok, Chatichai demonstrated to Beijing that he was ready to openly accept Hun Sen as an independent Cambodian leader in his own right and as a key to resolve the Cambodian conflict. Arguably, this paved the way for China to openly follow a similar approach, which Beijing also saw as appropriate in the wake of changing circumstances. Therefore, it could be suggested that Beijing did not object to Chatichai's policy because of the convergence of that policy and China's own calculation.

3. NEW PATTERNS OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY SINCE THE EARLY 1980S INCREASINGLY GAINED MOMENTUM.

From the early 1980s, China began to adopt a foreign policy which was more independent of the two superpowers. Although this was not strictly independent in practical terms as China continued to share Washington's idea about the issues of Cambodia and Afghanistan, it served three purposes: first, it provided a basis for gradually improving relations with the Soviet Union; second, it reflected major ideological changes that had taken place in China, which defined economic development as the highest priority and repudiated Mao's emphasis on class struggle; and third, it more explicitly served Deng Xiaoping's new approach which called for economic reform at home, and openness to the international economy abroad on the basis of adherence to communist party rule.⁴⁰³

Therefore, towards the end of the 1980s, the underlining characteristic of Chinese foreign policy in general was a shift away from

concerns about threats to Chinese security to those about promoting the country's economic development. In fact, Deng had specifically said in the mid 1980s that peace and development were the 'two really important issues confronting the world today.'⁴⁰⁴ As for Indochina, initially the Chinese wanted to bleed Vietnam white, but later it was a question of getting the Vietnamese to withdraw, cut ties with the Cambodian government, and acknowledge China's patrimonial position. Beijing's interest was to establish a new order in the sub-region which would contribute to a wider goal of peace and development. To the Chinese, a new order in Indochina in general would be one where Soviet and Vietnamese influences were kept down, and for Cambodia in particular it would mean that all the Cambodian factions, including the Khmer Rouge, could participate in the elections and subsequent power-sharing arrangement. In other words, the Chinese idea was more of a broad view about the kind of a new order Beijing wanted to see in Indochina whereas more specific details about how this should be achieved seemed to be open to influences from others, of which Chatichai's initiatives could be seen as an example.

By the late 1980s, China had sought increasingly to establish and expand friendly ties with countries of the Asia-Pacific in accordance with its interests to promote economic development. Generally speaking, Beijing's achievement in strengthening its ties with other countries following the start of the third Indochina conflict was largely successful. Common concern about Soviet and Vietnamese motives since the late 1970s served as a catalyst for Sino-US normalisation in 1979, although the views in Washington had earlier been split on whether to improve relations with Vietnam or China. The normalisation set the ground work for a Sino American co-operative

strategic relationship throughout the 1980s that included the transfer of sophisticated US weapons systems and technology to China. The US valued China as a strategic partner, and remained content to defer to China's policy on Indochina.⁴⁰⁵ As for its relations with ASEAN countries, some of whom were more fearful of China than they were of Vietnam, Beijing also managed to get closer to them through its tacit alliance with Thailand. According to some Chinese analysts, China's greatest success within ASEAN was the bonds between China and Thailand.⁴⁰⁶

In short, China's increasing interests in economic development and in bringing peace to Indochina paralleled with Chatichai's ideas. Beijing's accumulative gains since the start of the third Indochina conflict could also explain its greater flexibility in the late 1980s, including its willingness to improve relations with the Phnom Penh government. China's interest to cultivate relations with its Asian neighbours to offset the adverse international reaction to the Tiananmen massacre of June 1989 intensified this trend.

4. CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND CHINA

Apart from not posing as a threat to China's interests, Chatichai's policy was introduced against the background of relatively cordial relations between Thailand and China. The Thai Prime Minister not only benefited from his experience in dealing with the Chinese but he also sought to build on this existing Sino-Thai friendship. It may be argued that in order for a major foreign policy change in the Cambodian issue, such as in Chatichai's case, to be launched, a good working relationship with China was required. In this regard, there are several factors which served to bind Thailand and China in positive ways.

Their significance is that they contributed to the moderation of China's reactions to the new Thai policy which otherwise might have angered China because it caught Beijing by surprise.

Firstly, Chatichai and his associates mastered the use of personal diplomacy towards the Chinese. Chatichai's reputation as an 'old friend' in Chinese diplomatic circles was a positive contribution to his attempts to secure Chinese acquiescence to his new Indochina policy. The Thai Prime Minister was well recognised by many in China because of his important role in the early-mid 1970s which led to a normalisation of Sino-Thai relations in July 1975. In December 1973, Chatichai (then Deputy Foreign Minister) led Thailand's first official delegation to Beijing since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. This paved the way for greater contacts between the two countries, including sports exchanges and contacts in third countries. When he became Prime Minister, Chatichai used his experience and contacts to the advantage of implementing his Indochina policy. Speaking about his planned official visit to China in October 1989, Chatichai said that the main purpose of his trip was to visit his old friends, suggesting that this was more important than discussions about economic issues and the Cambodian problem.⁴⁰⁷ During this trip, Chatichai was warmly received in Beijing, and he was described by the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping as an old friend.⁴⁰⁸

Chatichai's careful handling of Sino-Thai relations following the Tiananmen incident of June 1989 added another positive factor in China's perception of Bangkok. While the military crackdown in Tiananmen Square and the following repression received no applause from Thailand, Bangkok did not openly criticise China, nor did it take any action to show its disapproval. Four months after the incident,

Chatichai was among the first senior foreign leaders to visit Beijing. The Thai Prime Minister told the Chinese leaders that Thailand's policy towards China remained unchanged regardless of how other countries treated China.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, as one of Chatichai's advisers recalled, the Thai Prime Minister stated, in the presence of the French President Mitterrand during this visit to France after the Tiananmen incident, that 'to open the Chinese door was difficult, therefore we should not close this door by isolating China.'⁴¹⁰ This was doubtlessly the kind of comment Chinese leaders were pleased to hear, particularly when China faced international condemnation and felt beleaguered following the Tiananmen killings, as well as having its confidence shaken in the wake of the political changes in Eastern Europe. Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng expressed his appreciation for Chatichai's understanding of China's suppression of the rebellion.⁴¹¹ Arguably, Chatichai's diplomacy towards China in this regard contributed greatly to the Chinese goodwill towards Bangkok, and made Beijing more ready to work with Chatichai and to react more favourably to his Indochina policy.

In addition, Chatichai used unofficial diplomacy as a means to cultivate good relations with Beijing. The Thai Premier was an active president of the Thai-Chinese Friendship Association, which indicated his interests in utilising diplomatic channels other than that of the government. In the Association's meeting in China in 1989, Chatichai emphasised that the Thais and the Chinese were brothers.⁴¹² One of Chatichai's advisers said that the Thai Prime Minister gained respect from many Chinese because he was humble, which was a quality that the Chinese praised.⁴¹³ Indeed, the significance of the personal factor and feelings should not be undervalued. One may be reminded that

China's antagonism towards Vietnam came partly from what China saw as a Vietnamese betrayal and ingratitude, in the light of earlier Chinese assistance. In Chatichai's case, it seems that the Chinese regarded him as a friend. His close link with the Chinese was a result of years of friendship and close contacts, which none of his advisers could match. Therefore, the personality factor seems to be more relevant in the case of Chatichai than that of his advisers.

However, the significance of personal diplomacy was evident in the case of Chavalit, the head of the Thai military, although perhaps to a slightly lesser degree than that of the Prime Minister. Chavalit played an active part in helping to implement Chatichai's policy, and on many occasions travelled to China to discuss the Cambodian issue with the Chinese. For instance, after the Tokyo Conference in 1990, Chavalit went straight to China to inform Beijing of the result of the meeting. The general said that China appreciated the Thai attempts, and that the Chinese were not upset with the new Thai initiatives.⁴¹⁴ Chavalit's intellect and diplomatic skills were said to win the hearts of many Chinese.⁴¹⁵ This could be explained, at least in part, by his experience of co-operating with the Chinese since the start of the Cambodian conflict. According to one of his close aides, Chavalit even played a part in the Chinese decision to launch a brief war against Vietnam in February 1979.⁴¹⁶

Apart from the use of personal diplomacy, economic and social links between Thailand and China also served as a binding factor which helped to minimise China's dissatisfaction created by the surprising launch of Chatichai's policy. Since Chatichai came to power in August 1988, Sino-Thai economic relations expanded. This resulted not only from Chatichai's encouragement of trade and investment

between Thailand and other regional countries, but also from China's policy. Through increasing emphasis on economic co-operation with its neighbours, China sought both to reap major benefits for its own development and to identify itself with peaceful and mutually advantageous opportunities that would ease the fears of potential Chinese hegemonism. An active economic diplomacy with Thailand was therefore seen to serve this purpose. The volume of bilateral trade between Thailand and China during the Chatichai government constantly increased from 29.2 billion baht in 1988 to 33 billion baht in 1989, and 35 billion baht in 1990.⁴¹⁷ Although Thailand's trade deficit with China generated concern in Bangkok⁴¹⁸, there was appreciation for the significance of Sino-Thai economic links as contributory to the moderation of China's responses to Chatichai's foreign policy shift.

In addition to the expansion of Sino-Thai economic activities, the two countries continued their strategic co-operation. Despite Chatichai's declared goal of turning Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace, the Thais did not close their border with Cambodia to interrupt the arms flows to the Cambodian resistance forces, and the volume of arms transfer from China to Thailand continued to expand.⁴¹⁹ Also, there were exchanges of visits by senior military officials of the two countries. For instance, in January 1990, Deng Xiaoping's son-in-law He Ping, who had been a key official in charge of export of Chinese arms as well as technology acquisitions, made a quiet visit to Bangkok. Apart from ensuring that the Thais did not change their Chinese arms purchase plans, his mission was thought to have included discussions about possible future arms shipments to the Cambodian resistance's Khmer Rouge faction.⁴²⁰ In addition, strategic relations between Thailand and China were enhanced by the fact that

Thailand had no claim over the Spratly Islands, which are disputed between China and many ASEAN states.

CONCLUSION

The tone in which Chatichai spoke of Beijing, such as when he compared China to the main part of the body (whereas Southeast Asia was the hands and feet), seems to suggest that he accorded significant importance to China. This, coupled with Chatichai's treatment of Beijing during the course of his policy, overruled the possibility that Chatichai carelessly dropped China out of his calculation when he introduced a new policy. The fact that China was not consulted in advance seemed to suggest that Chatichai anticipated that the Chinese would not oppose. In other words, Chatichai and his team believed that the new Thai policy was in accordance with Chinese interests. Chatichai's confidence derived not only from his personality and experience but also importantly from the timing of the policy which was introduced when international circumstances were favourable.

Chatichai's way of dealing with Chinese responses seemed to be one of flexibility and being reactive. The Thai Prime Minister appeared ready to adjust the pace of his initiative in order to accommodate the needs and concerns of China. Examples include his reassurances to Beijing that Thailand did not recognise the Phnom Penh regime as claimed by Vietnam, and that he would withhold from introducing further initiatives until after the Sino-Soviet Summit. Importantly, Chatichai was able to introduce his foreign policy change because it did not threaten major Chinese interests, especially in limiting Soviet and Vietnamese influence. As a regional great power, China had a capacity

to obstruct an initiative by a lesser power like Thailand if the initiative was perceived to undermine its interests, and it is likely that Beijing would do so if this was the case, particularly because the Indochina issue was of considerable importance to Beijing. In this respect, the absence of Chinese opposition to Chatichai's policy is significant.

This chapter has argued that China's thinking about the Cambodian issue in the late 1980s was similar to Chatichai's ideas, although Beijing was not happy to be caught by surprise rather than properly consulted about the new Thai policy, hence Beijing's emphasis on close Sino-Thai co-operation. China's acceptance of peace initiatives, such as an Indonesian proposal of Jakarta Informal Meetings, which accorded greater importance to Hun Sen than previously, suggests that by this time Beijing had become more conciliatory towards Phnom Penh. This was an important change from the hard-line stance which Beijing had adopted earlier. Arguably, Chatichai's readiness to openly accept Hun Sen as an independent Cambodian leader paved the way for China to follow suit. By the late 1980s, China's major security concerns had largely been addressed, which enabled Beijing to show greater flexibility in its approach towards the Phnom Penh regime and to put more emphasis on issues of economic development. Because these were also the main aspects of Chatichai's policy, the Thai Prime Minister was able to carry out his initiatives without opposition from China, even though Beijing had not been consulted about the plan. In other words, the lesser power was able to take the initiative in staking out a new path because it did not challenge the main interests of the greater power.

CHAPTER

7

RESPONSES FROM THE US



INTRODUCTION

While ASEAN and China took a diplomatically active role in the third Indochina conflict, the US adopted a relatively quiet and behind-the-scene role. Washington's relatively low profile in the Cambodian issue was a result of many factors, including its experience of failure in the Vietnam War and the antipathy of the American public to the Khmer Rouge government in Cambodia. However, Washington's supporting diplomacy and influence provided an important basis on which other efforts (particularly those of ASEAN and China) could build. The US was instrumental both in the implementation of economic sanctions against Vietnam and in the efforts to support the Cambodian resistance coalition. For Thailand in particular, the US was the ultimate guarantor of Thai security under the 1954 Manila Pact.

As Chatichai's policy was a reversal of the previous Thai approach which had the support of Washington, it seemed to go against American interests. This raises a crucial question of how to interpret Chatichai's move, which was a unilateral move by a lesser power that seemed to contrast the interests of a superpower. How the new policy was received in Washington was of considerable importance not only because the US was one of the key players in the issue but also because, as a superpower, it could significantly influence how the new Thai policy would play out.

US POLICY IN INDOCHINA

American interests in Indochina in the post Second World War era centred mainly on the concerns to prevent the spread of communism.

The communist victory in China in 1949 and close Sino-Soviet ties in the early 1950s added to these concerns as the communist giants, particularly China, became supporters of insurgent movements in Southeast Asian countries. For Indochina in particular, the US supported the French efforts to fight against communist forces. The conclusion of the first Indochina war and the partition of Vietnam may have put an end to a particular phase of history which was characterised by the Vietnamese armed struggle against the French colonial power, but it also opened up a new one. American concerns about the communist North Vietnam led Washington to take steps to increase security of Southeast Asia in order to prevent further communist gains. The US signed the Manila Treaty of 1954 which led to the establishment of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), that was part of Washington's policy of containment. Despite its obvious weaknesses in having failed to elicit Asian support beyond Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan, and in obligating its members to a less than binding military commitment to each other's defence, SEATO provided a mechanism for extending a commitment to Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam without assuming treaty obligations themselves.⁴²¹ In other words, it served the American purpose of enhancing its deterrent position in Southeast Asia without committing it to increasing its military deployments. Southeast Asia continued to be regarded as a region of lesser strategic priority.⁴²²

The efforts of communist North Vietnam to extend its control to the South and reunite the country increasingly led to greater American involvement in the region. By this time, Washington had been significantly motivated by the need to prevent the effects of a domino theory whereby a fall of one country to communism would lead

others to fall. Washington had little appreciation for nationalism as a force behind the struggle of the Vietnamese against American power. Instead, the US was mainly concerned with containing and defeating communism, as supported by the Soviet Union and China, which led to an escalation of its war against Vietnam in 1965.

Nevertheless, towards the end of the 1960s, the worsening Sino-Soviet dispute, and Washington's growing frustration with the course of the Vietnam War, brought about a significant modification in the US approach to Southeast Asia. In response to the increasing unpopularity of the Vietnam War in the US, American troops began to withdraw from Vietnam in June 1969: In July, President Nixon's Guam Doctrine warned America's Asian allies and friends that their future defence against non-nuclear threats would rest largely in their own hands. This marked a watershed in Southeast Asian diplomacy and opened the door for an active Chinese role which was also brought into focus by Kissinger's and Nixon's visits to Beijing, signifying the start of the Sino-American rapprochement.

The desire of the Americans to remove themselves from the concerns of a region that had witnessed their greatest defeat in foreign policy merged with ASEAN reactions and efforts to promote greater regional independence to determine the priorities of the Carter administration. Washington's central concern continued to be about the management of triangular relations between itself, China, and the Soviet Union. However, this was made complicated as the Carter administration did not speak with one voice about how best to deal with the two communist giants. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance placed a higher priority on reaching an accommodation with the Soviet Union than with confronting it through an alignment with China,

whereas National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski advocated the opposite view. In the end, Brzezinski's view prevailed as Moscow signed a friendship treaty with Hanoi, and supported the Vietnamese action against Cambodia. In late 1978, the US then chose recognition of China over Vietnam, and tacitly accepted the Chinese view of a new conflict in Indochina where Vietnam was seen as a Soviet proxy carrying out a Soviet plan of encircling China. The view of the Soviet Union as an aggressive power was confirmed when Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in late 1979. The administration's long term aim in Indochina was to eradicate the Soviet presence in the sub-region and to eliminate the threat that the Soviet navy represented to what Washington saw as vital sea lanes of communication, such as the Malacca Straits that linked the American Pacific Fleet to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, and through which Japan's energy supply was shipped from the Middle East. One manifestation of the American view was Washington's role in encouraging the signing of Sino-Japanese friendship treaty which contained an anti-hegemony clause directed against Moscow even though this was not spelt out openly. This shows that US interests were engaged in Asia as a consequence of Soviet encroachment and that American policy was mainly dictated by global strategic considerations.

Meanwhile, the third Indochina conflict contributed to the strengthening of Sino-US relations. Although the US did not endorse the Chinese attack on Vietnam in February 1979, Washington did not blame it either. One scholar argues that apart from teaching Hanoi a lesson, the Chinese action against Vietnam may have also been a test of the new Sino-American relationship as well as an implicit Chinese assertion of the right to take the lead in shaping policy towards

Indochina.⁴²³ The US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote that American handling of Sino-US relations during the Chinese invasion of Vietnam led to a blossoming relationship. According to Brzezinski, the Chinese learned during that time that the US was a reliable friend.⁴²⁴

US POLICY DURING THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT

American policy since the start of the third Indochina conflict had at least four aspects. Firstly, the US continued to recognise the ousted Khmer Rouge government in an attempt to deny legitimacy to the new regime in Phnom Penh. This act was significant, given the difficulties the American leaders faced when they had to justify to domestic and international audiences the decision to support the murderous government of Pol Pot. It was suggested that at one point, the American policy makers felt uneasy and considered abstaining on the vote to retain the Pol Pot government in the UN in 1980, but in the end decided to vote in favour of it to maintain the credibility of American support for Thailand and ASEAN.⁴²⁵ The moral dilemma of voting in favour of the Khmer Rouge government was partly eased when the UN seat of the Khmer Rouge government was taken over by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) formed in 1982 and included two non-communist factions as well as the communist Khmer Rouge.

In addition to the diplomatic support, Washington gave material and financial assistance to the CGDK. Secret funds were administered by a Working Group set up in 1981, presumably to service non-communist resistance factions.⁴²⁶ In early-mid 1980s, American assistance to the

non-communist Cambodian factions was in the form of non-lethal aid amounting to US\$5 million annually which Washington said was important in order to make sure that the non-communist resistance would not be swallowed up by the communist faction.⁴²⁷ In around mid 1989, Washington even went further to give covert lethal assistance to the non-communist factions from secret CIA funds.⁴²⁸ However, the conduit of material and financial assistance, usually channelled through third countries such as Thailand and Singapore, made it difficult to trace how the money was spent and where supplies were directed. Although the US State Department vehemently denied that any money and supplies were transferred to the Khmer Rouge, it was believed that, through whatever route, US weapons destined for the non-communist resistance ended up in the hands of the Khmer Rouge.⁴²⁹

Secondly, the US imposed economic sanctions on Hanoi and Phnom Penh in response to the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia. The American embargo on trade and investment was in place since the early days of the war. The denial of American maritime oil technology to Vietnam through third countries and the prevention of major development loans from international financial institutions were critical.⁴³⁰ These were an important element in the wider efforts, particularly those led by ASEAN, to isolate Hanoi and Phnom Penh. In this respect, the US influence was clear, as Japan, the European Community, and other potential donors or investors were reluctant to break ranks as long as the US held fast.

Thirdly, Washington increased military assistance to Thailand and demonstrated its concern for the security of East Asia as a whole by suspending its decision to withdraw American forces from their base in Korea. When Vietnam launched its military incursions at Thailand's

Non Mak Moon village along the Thai-Cambodian border on 23–24 June 1980, President Carter ordered an immediate airlift of arms to Thailand, which took place on 5–8 July 1980, and pushed forward deliveries of weapons already ordered. General David Jones, Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff emphasised his understanding that, among the countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand felt most threatened by the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia and Laos, and he confirmed that the US was pledged to support the Thais against external aggression.⁴³¹

American military assistance to Thailand since the start of the Cambodian conflict increased significantly during 1984–5. Whereas in 1979, total American military assistance to Thailand was US\$31.8 million, it went up to US\$132.8 million in 1984 and US\$131.40 million in 1985.⁴³² This followed Vietnamese victories over the resistance during the dry season offensives of 1984–5. One of the most visible signs of US support for Thailand was Cobra Gold'85, the fourth and largest of a series of annual joint military exercises which took place in July 1985. Earlier in April that year, Washington also allowed the Thais to purchase F-16A fighter aircraft.⁴³³ In addition, there were frequent exchanges of visits by high-ranking officials and the constant presence of the US Seventh Fleet in Thailand's vicinity, which led many in Thailand to believe that the country was more assured of the US support than at any time since the Vietnam War and that this trend was likely to persist as the US became more assertive in the international arena.⁴³⁴

Fourthly, the US supported and participated in the efforts to bring about a peace settlement in Cambodia. Like China, ASEAN, and most other countries, the US supported a comprehensive political settlement which would incorporate all the essential aspects of peace in Cambodia from a ceasefire to a holding of elections. Despite this,

the US generally kept a relatively low profile in the Cambodian issue and instead let China and ASEAN take a diplomatic lead.

SITTING IN THE BACK SEAT

Although the conflict took place in Indochina – the area which had been of significant importance to the US in the 1960s – the Cambodian issue did not seem to receive similar treatment from Washington. There are many factors which could explain American reluctance to adopt a policy of active diplomacy.

One important reason was the impacts of the loss in the Vietnam War on American politics and on its foreign policy, particularly from the psychological point of view. The War destroyed the consensus that had existed since the late 1940s, leaving the Americans confused and divided on the goals to be pursued and the methods to be used. Concern over US domestic reaction and the fear of a public perception of another possible American failure inevitably led to a sense of caution among US policy makers in their decision concerning the Cambodian conflict.

Moreover, Washington's support for Khmer Rouge's UN seat, and from 1982 for the CGDK of which the Khmer Rouge was still a component, put the American government in an uncomfortable position. This was even more so during the Carter administration which named human rights issues as one of its main concerns. Letting other countries assume a leading role in supporting the CGDK was, therefore, a preferable choice. To this end, ASEAN and China served a useful purpose of the American policy.

Meanwhile, the performance of ASEAN countries provided some

satisfaction for the American leaders. By the mid 1980s, ASEAN states had achieved remarkably high economic growth that provided degrees of social and political stability that were unthinkable in the 1960s. At the same time, ASEAN states showed their determination and resolve to tackle the Cambodian problem. In 1983, US Secretary of States Shultz said, with regard to ASEAN's role in the Cambodian issue, that "We follow your lead."⁴³⁵ Richard Childress, former chief of Asian Affairs for the US National Security Council, also emphasised the significance of ASEAN's central role in the Cambodian issue, implying that because of this, there was less need for the American involvement.⁴³⁶ At the same time, China's role in the Cambodian issue fitted well in Washington's broad strategy. While acting as a countervailing force against Vietnam and the Soviet Union, China also provided military muscle to backup ASEAN's diplomacy. China's attack on Vietnam, although brief, undistinguished, and limited, was nevertheless an evidence that Beijing was willing and able to take action.

However, there were different opinions as to how much the US could and should do in Indochina, with some suggesting that the US was inactive. For instance, Singapore's senior statesman Lee Kuan Yew recalls that he found both the Carter and Reagan administrations reluctant to play a major role, and that he and his Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam had to work hard to ensure that the US remained interested in the region.⁴³⁷ Another scholar asserts that the US government was unimaginative and slow to respond to circumstances in the region.⁴³⁸ On the other hand, it is argued that this was in fact part of Washington's plan. Michael Hass suggests that Washington pretended not to take a leadership role regarding Cambodia because to acknowledge that American aid did go to the Khmer Rouge was

embarrassing.⁴³⁹ According to Hass, US Secretary of State Alexander Haig said that he was merely backing non-communist countries of Southeast Asia who were linked through ASEAN, and therefore all queries should go to ASEAN. Hass suggests that Washington created a myth that the US government opposed the Khmer Rouge while consistently voting in favour of the Khmer Rouge at the UN.⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, to defer the issue to others seemed to be the best option. Also, in the light of continuing American efforts to maintain good relations with China, letting Beijing have a leading role in the Cambodian issue and develop a tacit alliance with Thailand seemed an expedient thing to do, as it gave the Chinese an opportunity to exercise their influence in the region.

THAI-US RELATIONS DURING THE THIRD INDOCHINA CONFLICT

Washington's reluctance to act fully and openly as Thailand's ally from the start of the third Indochina conflict stood in sharp contrast to the earlier post Second World War periods. In the late 1940s for instance, the US not only saved Thailand, which had leaned towards Japan during the Pacific War, from retribution from Britain and France, but Washington also supported Thailand's admission to the United Nations. This served to bind Thailand and the US in what may be called a period of engagement.⁴⁴¹ From 1950, government-to-government relations were intensified and their scope widened. Co-operation was evident in many areas such as economic, educational, and in anti-communist activities. The last was prominent during the Vietnam War when the two countries co-operated closely, although their perceptions

of the communist threats were not exactly the same. The US viewed Southeast Asia from the perspective of a superpower seeking to avoid a situation where regional countries fell into communist hands like falling dominoes. Thai policy makers, on the other hand, saw communist North Vietnam as an immediate threat to national security. Thai leaders believed that communism was incompatible with their own country and were determined to prevent it from spreading into Thailand.⁴⁴² In any case, a common objective of the US and Thailand in maintaining South Vietnam as a non-communist state enabled the two countries to closely co-operate during the American war against Vietnam in the 1960s and resulted in an expansion of American military presence in Thailand. In fact, Thailand provided not only military bases but also ground combat forces at the end of 1967. Thai policy makers felt that it was necessary to meet the American request for ground troops in order to accommodate the US, which was providing Thailand with a security guarantee and material support.

Nevertheless, this was to change by the end of the 1960s. As the American involvement in Vietnam declined, so did the closeness of Thai-US security co-operation. The communist victory in Indochina in 1975 marked the lowest point of American efforts in Southeast Asia. By this time, Thai-US relations had also suffered as a result of Thailand's domestic political transformation whereby the military government, closely associated with American anti-communist ideology, was replaced by civilian leaderships. Thailand rapidly readjusted its pattern of external relations by lessening its link with Washington while extending its relations to China, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union in a bid to adopt a multidirectional and independent foreign policy.

The outbreak of the third Indochina conflict following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia strengthened Thai-US security relations. However, like earlier periods, Washington's concerns in Indochina reflected its wider perspective of a balance between itself and the communist powers, namely the Soviet Union and China. Recognising this, Thailand sought to highlight the significance of the events in Indochina beyond their local and regional scopes. A former high-ranking official of the Thai Foreign Ministry explained that Thai officials played an important role in drawing attention to the similarities between Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He said that Thai officials pointed out to the Americans that there was a 'common denominator' between these two cases because they involved an invasion of a sovereign state by another power and in both cases Moscow was perceived to be behind the aggression. He said this became a theme commonly referred to throughout the 1980s, and it successfully brought the US and many other countries to support the Thai cause.⁴⁴³

During this time, as discussed above, a key pattern of US policy towards the Cambodian conflict was to keep a relatively low profile and let other countries take a lead. Washington recognised Thailand as a front-line state, provided some support for Thailand, and acquiesced in a tacit alliance between Thailand and China. At this point, Washington's perception of the Chinese role perhaps should be noted. Even though the US said it would follow the lead of both China and ASEAN, it was apparent that China was accorded a more important position. This was perhaps not surprising, as China had greater influence than ASEAN in confronting Vietnam and the Soviet Union. Therefore, at the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) in

1981, the US tolerated China's objection to ASEAN's draft proposal which, in the end, had to be watered down as a result of Chinese insistence. It may be argued that the episode showed not only Washington's attempt to avoid displeasing Beijing in the interest of managing its adversarial relationship with Moscow, but it might have also underlined Washington's view that, in dealing with the Cambodian issue in particular, China, rather than ASEAN, could steer the course of the Cambodian conflict towards a favourable direction.

In any case, keeping a relatively low profile on the Cambodian issue allowed the US to conduct its Indochina policy at relatively low costs, particularly in political terms. Indeed, this was a comfortable policy for the US who, as one scholar puts it, wanted 'minimum involvement but maximum influence' in the Cambodian issue, which was a relatively peripheral concern.⁴⁴⁴ Therefore, if the US intentionally played down its involvement in the Cambodian issue, it may be inaccurate to conclude, as Frederick Brown does, that Washington was passive and slow to respond.⁴⁴⁵ Perhaps Washington's behind-the-scene roles should not be overlooked, including its position towards the Khmer Rouge. Not only did the US vote in favour of the Khmer Rouge at the UN, but Washington also acquiesced in China's open support for the Cambodian communist faction. Moreover, it is asserted that the US National Security Adviser Brzezinski talked Bangkok into volunteering as a US proxy against Vietnam by serving as a conduit for Chinese aid to keep Pol Pot's forces going so that Hanoi would be denied a victory.⁴⁴⁶

Meanwhile, American influence in the global arena in general meant that most other countries felt it in their interests to go along with Washington. For instance, other countries might fear a cut-off of US economic aid, and therefore had little choice but to support

Sino-American-Thai policy which, directly or indirectly, strengthened the Khmer Rouge. As already noted, US not only imposed an economic embargo against Hanoi and Phnom Penh, but it also made sure that Europe and Japan were also on board. These US policies provided an important and necessary support for ASEAN's diplomatic manoeuvres while the Association took the lead in the public diplomacy with regard to the Cambodian issue. For Thailand in particular, the US remained the ultimate guarantor of Thai security.

THAI-US RELATIONS DURING THE CHATICHAJ GOVERNMENT

However, by the time Chatichai took office in August 1988, Thai-US relations had not been particularly close. American security assistance to Thailand, e.g. in the forms of funds and arms transfers, declined from US\$73.10 million in 1987 to US\$50.05 million in 1988, and was under US\$30 million in 1989.⁴⁴⁷ Washington's reaction may have reflected its perception that Thailand was no longer threatened by Vietnam because many developments seemed to point in this direction; for instance, the announcement of Vietnam's plan to complete its military withdrawal from Cambodia, political stability and democratisation of the Thai polity, as well as a conversion of the Thai economy to a manufacturing base.⁴⁴⁸ While these were positive developments, they weakened Thailand's claim to be a front-line state whose security was being seriously threatened by the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia. Clark Neher argues that from the American perspective during this time, neither China nor Vietnam constituted a serious security threat to Thailand, at least in the short run, and

therefore Thailand was more meaningfully viewed as an economic partner and competitor than as a client state.⁴⁴⁹

Meanwhile, problems in Thai-US bilateral trade were a major cause of concern. Thailand's Foreign Minister Siddhi said in November 1988 in a frank speech with reference to Thai-US economic relations that there were cracks in the reservoir of goodwill that had been built over century and a half of friendship.⁴⁵⁰ The first crack came with the Farm Act which allowed American rice farmers to be subsidised, to the detriment of Thai farmers. In fact, rising deficits caused the US government to take protectionist measures not only on rice, but also sugar and textiles, all of which negatively affected Thai exports. While the Thais complained about US protectionist measures, the Americans voiced their concern about the lack of protection in Thailand for US intellectual property rights, which they said affected sales of such items as pharmaceuticals and electronic goods. In January 1989, in retaliation, the US cut Thailand's benefits under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). The loss of such benefits to Thailand amounted to US\$165 million out of at least US\$600 million of exports to the US under the GSP.⁴⁵¹ Indeed, soon after he became Prime Minister, Chatichai warned of what he saw as Thailand's impending economic conflict with the US.⁴⁵²

Concerns about American protectionist measures heightened patriotic sentiments in Thailand which were reflected in various press commentaries in early 1989. A typical Thai view was that since the US seemed unprepared to consider Thailand's request for flexibility in trading practices, the country should not make such a request.⁴⁵³ One newspaper article suggested that Thailand should forget about the US and turn its attention to the neighbouring countries.⁴⁵⁴ The

feeling of patriotism was widespread, and Chatichai seemed to react favourably. In response to the US calls for protection of computer software copyrights, the Prime Minister dismissed such requests, saying that Thailand was a developing country which needed computer software in the process of development and therefore could not yield to the US demands.⁴⁵⁵ Extreme though this might sound, it won Chatichai approval by many politicians and student groups in Thailand who lauded him for his 'right and bold' decision to reject US demands for computer software protection.⁴⁵⁶ The public perception was that the Chatichai government was much tougher and more nationalistic than the previous Prem administration.⁴⁵⁷

Troubled Thai-US economic relations and declining US security assistance to Thailand were two prominent issues in the relations between the two countries in the late 1980s. However, each of these factors seemed to influence Chatichai's Indochina decision in different ways. The reduction of American security assistance to Thailand was seen by the Thai Prime Minister as a response to the improved security situations in Indochina.⁴⁵⁸ This thesis has argued earlier that these changing international circumstances were an important factor which explained Chatichai's decision to introduce a new initiative (see Chapter 2). The American policy in this regard, therefore, formed part of a wider picture of international changes which the Thai Prime Minister had recognised, and therefore it could explain in part Chatichai's decision to introduce his new policy.

The influence of troublesome Thai-US economic relations on Chatichai's thinking on Indochina, however, was less clear. There is no evidence that Thailand's trade friction with the US directly led Chatichai to launch his Indochina policy in a way that caught the US

by surprise. As far as his policy surprise was concerned, there is no evidence that Chatichai consulted any countries at all, so the fact that Washington was unaware of the policy until it was publicly announced was also true in the case of other countries. Nevertheless, the way Chatichai handled Thai-US relations, such as his nationalistic tone on the issue of computer software copyrights, seemed to provide him with some political benefits. It increased his popularity among some Thai domestic groups which saw Chatichai's idea of improving economic relations with neighbouring countries as an appropriate action to take in the wake of what they saw as American protectionism.

RESPONSES OF THE US

Chatichai's decision not to consult Washington before he announced his Indochina policy seems to lie in his calculation that international conditions were favourable and that the time was right for Thailand to put forward new initiatives. In one of his speeches, the Prime Minister said that the "reduction in major power tension in general has provided a favourable condition for smaller states to take on a greater role in promoting peace, progress and stability."⁴⁵⁹ Chatichai's advisers fully shared the view that there was no need to follow the lead of the superpowers when circumstances allowed Bangkok to take an initiative.⁴⁶⁰ Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, Thailand's acting supreme commander who actively took part in the making and implementation of Chatichai's policy, explained that both the US and Thailand knew that each would not undermine the other's interests because, after all, the two countries were treaty allies.⁴⁶¹ The implication was that there was no reason for Washington to worry about

Chatichai's policy. As it turned out, the US did not seem to have any significant objection to Chatichai's policy, as will be discussed below.

1. OPENING INDOCHINESE MARKETS

Like many other countries, the US was surprised when Chatichai first made his initiatives public in August 1988 by announcing his intention to turn the battlefield in Indochina into a marketplace. Although there was no secret that trade between Thailand and Indochinese countries (particularly border trade) still went on despite the Cambodian crisis, Chatichai's policy seemed to go in the opposite direction from the on-going US policy of strangling Vietnam with economic sanctions. However, there is no evidence that the US objected to Chatichai's announced plan, which may have reflected Washington's views that Thailand's attempt to create an atmosphere of co-operation with Indochina was an appropriate action at the time, and that increasing trade with Indochina was not Chatichai's primary objective. As discussed in Chapter 2, little was done by the Thai government to actually boost trade with Indochina. Despite the nationalistic mood against what many Thais saw as unfair protectionist measures by the Americans, which formed part of public support for Chatichai's idea of trading more with Thailand's neighbours, the US market remained the largest and most important outlets for Thai exports.

Economic issues featured prominently in Chatichai's aide memoire to US President George Bush in February 1989, which the Thai Prime Minister presented to the American leader during their meeting at the funeral of Japanese emperor Hirohito in Tokyo. In this aide memoire, Chatichai not only spoke of the need to resolve the differences between Thailand and the US, particularly in the issues of intellectual

property rights and trade, but he also put forward ways and means of promoting co-operation between the two countries in new areas as well as existing ones. One of the new areas Chatichai spoke of was in Indochina where he pointed out that a “combination of Thailand’s geographical advantages and the US technological know-how would be an irresistible one in taking advantage of the evolving situations in these countries and, more importantly, in strengthening the fabric of peace and prosperity in this region.”⁴⁶²

Chatichai’s aide memoir to President Bush may be seen as a follow-up of his initiatives introduced when he became Prime Minister. It could be seen as an attempt to seek support from Washington for his new policy, which at the time of its introduction caught the Americans by surprise. One of Chatichai’s advisers who was present at the Chatichai-Bush meeting in Tokyo said the US President enthusiastically responded to Chatichai’s suggestion that the US paid more attention to economic potentials in Asia-Pacific countries, including the Indochinese states.⁴⁶³ The fact that Chatichai’s memoir mainly referred to economic-related issues reflected the priorities of Thai-US agenda at the time. Consequently, Indochina was referred to as having economic potential which could be utilised by Thai-US co-operation. Arguably, the focus on economic-related matters allowed Chatichai to put forward political and diplomatic initiatives, such as inviting Hun Sen to Bangkok and proposing a step-by-step approach to peace in Cambodia, without provoking American criticism or objection.

2. APPROACH TOWARDS THE HUN SEN GOVERNMENT

Washington’s responses to Chatichai’s friendly move towards the

Phnom Penh government, such when he invited Hun Sen to Bangkok in January 1989, were not critical. Although there is no evidence that the US was aware of Chatichai's plan to invite Hun Sen to Thailand, there did not seem to be shocks, outrage, or criticism in Washington, except perhaps from some American politicians who were considered hard-liners in the Cambodian issue. For instance, Congressman Stephen Solarz wrote in 1990 against Chatichai's idea, saying that as long as the Phnom Penh government believed that the Chatichai card might be played, and the Khmer Rouge rendered impotent as a result, its incentive for compromise would tend to remain low.⁴⁶⁴ However, there did not seem to be similarly critical comments from the American government, although the US ambassador to Thailand (Daniel O'Donohue) said, in the light of Chatichai's divergence from the policy of the Thai Foreign Ministry, that Thailand's policy towards Indochina was unclear and caused confusion.⁴⁶⁵ It is important to note that in the Chatichai-Bush meeting in Tokyo in February 1989, a month after Hun Sen's visit to Bangkok, there were no signs of American disapproval. While reiterating his support for Sihanouk as the leader of the resistance coalition, Chatichai told President Bush that Thailand wanted to speed up the peace process in Cambodia and that it had done so by persuading all the four warring factions to discuss the issue in an upcoming meeting in Jakarta. The US leader reportedly agreed with this.⁴⁶⁶ However, in the aide memoire which Chatichai presented to President Bush during this meeting, the Thai Prime Minister did not refer to any specific political and diplomatic efforts to solve the Cambodian conflict. The memoire only referred to a rapprochement between China and the Soviet Union as being one of many changes in the international political environment which altered some main

assumptions of non-communist countries' foreign policies.⁴⁶⁷

3. OTHER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACE SETTLEMENT

Chatichai's proposal of a step-by-step approach to a political settlement in Cambodia was different from a comprehensive approach with which American policy was identified. After Chatichai put forward the step-by-step idea following the inconclusive ending of the Paris Conference in August 1989, Washington voiced some concern that Chatichai's strategy might legitimise the Hun Sen government without resolving the central issue of power-sharing and without the establishment of an impartial authority which could oversee elections.⁴⁶⁸ However, responses from the US government were little more than verbal comments as they were not followed up with active diplomacy.

By May 1990, the American stance had begun to accord more with Chatichai's idea, particularly in his efforts to arrange a meeting between the Cambodian faction leaders in Tokyo to promote an early ceasefire. When the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Richard Solomon, visited Bangkok in May 1990 and held a meeting with Chatichai, he appeared to extend his support to Chatichai's plan of arranging a Tokyo Conference between the Cambodian leaders, describing this as part of the process to bring about a comprehensive solution.⁴⁶⁹ American support for the Tokyo meeting indicates a shift in American foreign policy towards the issue. This is because the Tokyo Conference was arranged in a bilateral format between the Phnom Penh government and the resistance coalition (CGDK) represented by Sihanouk, as against a quadripartite format where each of the four factions was equally represented, which was a position Washington normally supported. Washington's involvement

in the Tokyo Conference was applauded by Chatichai and his advisers. Kraissak, Chatichai's son and adviser, described the US as one of the three countries which were central to the efforts to bring peace to Cambodia.⁴⁷⁰ Washington's stance towards the Tokyo meeting was different from those of China and ASEAN who did not openly support the Conference. Later, it seemed that the US support for the Tokyo Conference was a tip of the iceberg. A dramatic change of American foreign policy towards the Cambodian conflict occurred in July 1990 – only a month after the Tokyo meeting.

US POLICY SHIFT

In a move that surprised many, US Secretary of States James Baker announced on 18 July 1990 that the US was to shift its policy towards the Cambodian issue. A key point of the Baker formula was that the US would no longer support the seating of the Cambodian resistance coalition at the United Nations if it included the Khmer Rouge, but Washington would continue to support the two non-communist factions of Sihanouk and Son Sann. At the same time, Baker signalled a changed US assessment of the nature of the Phnom Penh regime by implying that the Hun Sen government was no longer a Vietnamese puppet since Vietnam had pulled out its troops in September 1989. And because the troops withdrawal had been completed, Washington was now prepared to discuss the Cambodian issue with Vietnam in a direct dialogue. Believing that Hanoi could pressure Phnom Penh into a settlement, Baker sent his Deputy Assistant Secretary of States, Kenneth Quinn, to start discussions on Cambodia with the head of Vietnam's UN mission in New York soon after he announced his policy

shift.⁴⁷¹ One scholar suggests that the new American move indicated that Washington was prepared to ask the non-communist Cambodian resistance to co-operate fully with the Hun Sen regime after UN-organised elections.⁴⁷²

The Baker shift bore significant similarities to Chatichai's initiatives, particularly on how best to deal with Phnom Penh and Hanoi as the Cambodian conflict was entering its final stages. Reports about the Khmer Rouge gaining military victory in many areas in Cambodia increased concerns about a possible comeback of the Khmer Rouge to power in Phnom Penh.⁴⁷³ It is argued that the Thai Prime Minister chose to concentrate on highlighting the important role of Hun Sen in future power-sharing in Cambodia rather than to point out the relative unacceptability of the Khmer Rouge.⁴⁷⁴ The Baker shift, however, went further by highlighting both. In fact, American concern about the Khmer Rouge issue had become increasingly open by mid 1989 when, in contrast to Baker's earlier comment that the Khmer Rouge was 'a fact of life', Washington made clear to the non-communist factions that its ability to support them would depend on the extent to which they were seen as distancing themselves from the Khmer Rouge.⁴⁷⁵ President Bush himself admitted that he was troubled by the perception that US policy towards Cambodia was aiding the Khmer Rouge.⁴⁷⁶

By mid 1990, changing circumstances surrounding the Cambodian conflict had led to a breakdown of the bipartisan consensus in the US government, and there was a danger of Congress cutting off support to the non-communist resistance in Cambodia, which Baker sought to avoid by revising the US policy towards Cambodia. Following Baker's announcement of a new US policy, the anti-Khmer Rouge tone became

even clearer, and the new policy was articulated as being concerned 'to do everything we can to prevent a return of the Khmer Rouge to power.'⁴⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Washington's relations with Phnom Penh improved. Within two months of the policy shift announcement, Baker told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that 'the next logical step' was to begin a dialogue with Hun Sen's representatives.⁴⁷⁸ This happened in September 1990 when, after the meeting in Jakarta to form a Supreme National Council for Cambodia, John Manjo, the US ambassador to Indonesia, talked for 45 minutes to Hun Sen, while the US chargé d'affaires in the Lao capital of Vientiane also met his SOC counterpart.⁴⁷⁹

The US policy shift was a boost to Chatichai's policy as it was consistent with what the Thai Prime Minister advocated. Chatichai saw this as an American acceptance of his step-by-step approach where recognition of Hun Sen's important role was a central part, and the Thai Prime Minister said that this was exactly what he had thought would happen.⁴⁸⁰ Chatichai also added that this move would help to speed up the peace process.⁴⁸¹ In other words, the impact of the changing international circumstances on Washington's foreign policy towards the Cambodian issue had been anticipated when Chatichai introduced his new policy. Kraisak Choonhavan, Chatichai's son and adviser, suggested that this change in the American foreign policy was partly a result of his father's initiatives.⁴⁸² Kraisak also said that the Thai Prime Minister was the first and only leader of ASEAN governments to welcome the Baker formula.⁴⁸³ However, the US policy shift did not seem to change the mind of some critics of Chatichai's policy. One high-ranking official of the Thai Foreign Ministry argued that the Baker shift was introduced when the situation was ripe,

implying that Chatichai's policy was not well-timed.⁴⁸⁴ Arguably, the differences in Thai assessments in this regard were a continuation of troubled relationship between Chatichai and his advisers on the one hand and the Foreign Ministry on the other hand, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Washington's policy shift was not welcomed by some ASEAN countries and China, at least initially. Some ASEAN states such as Indonesia were concerned that the new US stance could allow the Vietnamese to dig in their heels and wait for more concessions, thereby weakening the peace efforts.⁴⁸⁵ Disapproving responses were nevertheless moderated by American reassurances that Washington would continue to give financial and material support to the non-communist factions of the CGDK. Meanwhile, Washington minimised the opportunity for criticism by subtly adjusting its language i.e. avoiding calling the Baker shift a policy 'change.' When asked whether this was a new policy, Richard Solomon, Assistant Secretary of States for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said that it was "an adjustment or...a revision in our policy."⁴⁸⁶ When explaining to an ASEAN foreign ministers meeting, Baker referred to the new American position as 'merely a shift in tactics.'⁴⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the Association did not follow the US. ASEAN maintained its view that the CGDK headed by Sihanouk should continue to occupy the Cambodian seat at the UN. Chatichai closed ranks with his ASEAN counterparts on this issue. The Thai Prime Minister said that Thailand should follow the Association's decision, and Bangkok's opinion should not differ from that of ASEAN. That Chatichai did not follow Baker's policy was probably because the American move was already significant in itself and that the US change was more than enough to demonstrate to

ASEAN and other countries that Chatichai had been right about how best to deal with the Cambodian issue. As for China, although Beijing said, following the Baker shift, that it would continue to support and arm the Khmer Rouge,⁴⁸⁸ there is no evidence that China attempted to dissuade or oppose Washington. In fact, subsequent Chinese moves were similar to those of the US. Thus, Chinese leaders met their Vietnamese counterparts in August 1990 and they met with the Cambodian faction leaders including Hun Sen in July 1991.

EXPLAINING THE US RESPONSES

The absence of American opposition to Chatichai's policy, which had caught Washington by surprise, seems to suggest that Chatichai was right when he said on many occasions that the new era had set in, and that this necessitated adaptation and new approaches as well as opened the way for new initiatives by lesser states.⁴⁸⁹ That Chatichai was able to attain an implicit American acquiescence was due to at least two related reasons which affected American position and which Chatichai seemed to recognise and acted accordingly.

Firstly, Chatichai realised that the American policy was influenced by changing power relations and the decline of the global Cold War. As a superpower, one of Washington's main concerns was to maintain a favourable global balance between itself and other powers. Changes on the great power scale, particularly in the triangular relationship between Washington-Moscow-Beijing were significant in this regard. By the end of the 1980s, relationship between the US and the Soviet Union moved away from the antagonism that characterised their relationship in earlier periods. Both superpowers increasingly

co-operated in resolving regional conflicts such as in Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Moreover, Soviet military withdrawal from its Cam Ranh Bay air and naval base in Vietnam indicated to the US a loosening of a strategic link between Moscow and Hanoi, which Washington had seen as Moscow's client. Meanwhile, Sino-Soviet relations, which had begun to improve when Gorbachev came to power, were transformed by the Soviet leader's visit to Beijing in May 1989. This indicated that China's relations with Vietnam would soon change.

Improved relations between the great powers, in turn, led to important developments in the Cambodian issue, particularly the completion of Vietnam's troop withdrawal and the increase of Hun Sen's *de facto* authority. These contributed to the momentum which led Washington to reconsider its stance in the Cambodian issue. As a result, the US became more flexible towards Hun Sen – an approach similar to that of Chatichai.

Secondly, as Vietnam withdrew its forces from Cambodia, Washington's concerns became increasingly focused on the position of the Khmer Rouge, which had benefited from covert and indirect US support. From the beginning, the US had been uncomfortable about its approach towards the Cambodian communist faction, and Washington had sought to minimise this political difficulty by deferring the Cambodian issue to China and ASEAN. Arguably, this could go on as long as there was a stalemate in Cambodia. However, as Vietnam began to withdraw its forces from Cambodia and as Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese relations improved, Washington had fewer reasons to justify its unannounced support for the Khmer Rouge and its tacit support for the Chinese policy of arming that Cambodian faction. While fears that the Khmer Rouge might return to power in

Phnom Penh increased, the Americans also saw that Hun Sen was gaining greater *de facto* authority and recognition. The image of Hun Sen's subordination to Hanoi receded following the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and as his ability to maintain control over many areas of Cambodia became clear.

By mid 1990, the issue of American support to the resistance coalition, of which the Khmer Rouge was a component and probably the main receiver of American assistance, had come increasingly under domestic focus, particularly from the US Congress. American policy during this time, therefore, showed greater flexibility towards the Phnom Penh government. Consequently, the US supported Chatichai's efforts to arrange a conference in Tokyo in June 1990 which in effect saw Hun Sen meet with Sihanouk. In the following month, Washington went further when Secretary of State Baker announced a change in American policy towards the Cambodian issue. Chatichai's policy may not have been a decisive factor that led to a change in American policy, but it may be argued that the new Thai approach contributed to the momentum which led to the change. Arguably, Chatichai's willingness to openly accept Hun Sen as an independent Cambodian leader, and not as a Vietnamese puppet, drew Washington's attention to the increasing *de facto* legitimacy of the Hun Sen government. In short, Washington did not object to the new Thai policy because it was consistent with American interests.

Last but not least, it must be noted that problems of trade and intellectual property rights protection, accompanied by some anti-American expression in Thailand, did not seem to lead the US to respond negatively to Chatichai's new policy towards Indochina either in its economic or political aspects. Arguably, it is not unusual for

smaller and weaker allies to manifest ambiguous expression towards bigger and stronger allies. Therefore, the US may experience some anti-American expressions or actions in weaker countries, which, depending on factors such as the type of threat those actions pose, may not necessarily lead Washington to take action.⁴⁹⁰ According to one scholar, Chatichai had to manage the gap between public mood and reality, which was called 'image constraints.'⁴⁹¹ Although many Thais were driven by nationalist sentiments and angry at what they saw as America's unfair trading practices, it could not be denied that the US remained the largest and most important market for Thai exports. During the period of the Chatichai government, the volume of Thai-US bilateral trade went up from 916 billion baht in 1988 to 1682 billion baht in 1991.⁴⁹² In addition, the two countries had long term and historical connections and the US provided a deterrence against possible threats to Thai security. A dilemma facing the Thai government was that while it could not ignore the significance of Thai-US relations, it did not want to appear to be soft in the public eye either. In the midst of this difficulty, Chatichai explained that he advocated a policy that was tough but not aggressive, gentle but not weak, saying that any arrangement that would have a long term adverse impact on the future development of the Thai economy would be unacceptable.⁴⁹³

By late 1990, Thai and US positions in the Cambodian issue and in trade matters had become closer. On the economic front, an agreement was reached in August 1990 which established a Joint Commercial Commission aimed at promoting bilateral trade and investments and encouraging greater commercial co-operation between the two countries. In the Cambodian issue, Washington's position became increasingly similar to that of Chatichai, hence the US support for the Tokyo Conference and the Baker formula.

CONCLUSION

Although Chatichai's initiatives caught the US by surprise, Washington did not seem to be upset by this. However, some elements of American irritation were evident; for instance, when the US ambassador commented that Thailand's new approach caused confusion (because it was different from what the Thai Foreign Ministry had adhered to), or when the US Vice-President Dan Quayle told Chatichai in their meeting in Bangkok in May 1989 that it was "important that we stand together in pursuit of our common objectives."⁴⁹⁴

Nevertheless, the absence of American opposition to the new Thai approach was significant. That Washington did not openly approve Chatichai's policy was likely to result from the fact that it was not consulted beforehand rather than from its disagreement with the idea behind Chatichai's policy. The similarities between Chatichai's policy and subsequent American approaches, such as the US support for the Tokyo Conference and the Baker shift, confirmed this. The absence of Washington's objection could be viewed as a tacit acceptance to Chatichai's policy. As a superpower with important interests in Indochina, the US could have effectively intervened or blocked new initiatives by a lesser power like Thailand if these were perceived to threaten its interests. This chapter has demonstrated that Chatichai was able to introduce his new policy not only because the policy posed no threat to American interests, but importantly because it was consistent with them. This consistency was not a mere coincidence, but the Thai Prime Minister had predicted that in what he called a 'new era', policies of other countries towards the Cambodian issue would change. That the first state to do so, particularly in terms of switching recognition

from the resistance coalition to the Phnom Penh government, was the world's superpower was in itself significant.

CHAPTER

8

CONCLUSION



This thesis addresses the issue of responses to a major foreign policy change by a lesser power such as Thailand. The main question is: under what circumstances could a lesser power introduce a major foreign policy change in a way that surprises its regional partners and greater powers in a matter that was of considerable importance to them all? The thesis focuses on the process of implementing the policy and, essentially, how it was received by the key players in the Cambodian issue, namely ASEAN countries, China, the US, and the Cambodians themselves. Reactions of these players were important primarily because they could determine how much of a difference the new Thai policy could make to the Cambodian issue.

The decision to reverse the previous Thai approach towards the Cambodian conflict was made by Chatichai, with the help from his advisers and the military chief. The policy was then presented to others as a surprise. Arguably, by not consulting other key players, Chatichai spared considerable time and efforts which would have been required if the policy was made in a conventional way. On the other hand, the implementation of a diplomatic surprise such as this had some limitations to it. For instance, by introducing his policy unilaterally, Chatichai had deprived himself of a thorough discussion with those whose views and efforts might have been useful for a successful implementation of the new policy. Instead, the Prime Minister had to rely on a small team, with limited resources, to do most of the work. In the process, he also risked upsetting Thailand's friends and allies who identified with the previous Thai approach.

Despite this, Chatichai and his advisers believed that the risks were low and worth taking. They believed that circumstances favoured the new policy and consequently there would not be significant opposition

to it. Such anticipation owes significantly to the context in which Chatichai's policy emerged. Domestically, the change of government in Bangkok enabled Chatichai to make and implement foreign policy even at the expense of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), because as Prime Minister, he had the most political power. The fact that he was the first elected Prime Minister in 12 years added to the basis of his legitimacy. More importantly perhaps, Chatichai had the support of powerful interests, particularly the military. Also, Chatichai's confident personality and experience, as well as the assistance from like-minded advisers, enabled him to take quick decisions.

Concurrently, international circumstances were such that the prospects of the end of the Cambodian conflict were promising. Favourable international circumstances were a major contributing factor to Chatichai's decision to introduce a new policy. In many of his speeches and statements, Chatichai referred to a 'new era' and the 'winds of change' by which he meant the developments on both international and regional levels which offered opportunities for lesser states to take on greater role and not having to follow the great powers. Favourable circumstances boosted the confidence of Chatichai and his staff, and enabled them to believe that the new Thai policy would quickly become a success as the Cambodian conflict was nearing its end.

RESPONSES TO CHATICHAİ'S POLICY

Responses from Thailand's domestic groups and from other key countries to Chatichai's policy reflected how the new Thai policy affected their respective positions. Consequently, those who stood to benefit from the new policy, most clearly the Phnom Penh

government, welcomed it. On the other hand, those who found their positions undercut by the new policy did not react favourably. Thus, Thailand's MFA did not agree with the new approach because the Ministry had identified itself with the previous approach for almost a decade which it believed was the most appropriate stance. ASEAN countries, China, and the US were also displeased to be surprised by the new Thai approach that seemed to differ from the previous policy which they supported.

But even though the new Thai policy encountered some negative responses (which was mainly criticism about bypassing other allies), there did not seem to be opposition to it. The absence of opposition to the new policy was consistent with the anticipation of Chatichai and his staff. According to Borwornsak Uwanno, one of Chatichai's advisers, this assured the Prime Minister and his team that by introducing a new policy, they had done the right thing.⁴⁹⁵ Chatichai himself said in May 1989 that his policy towards the Cambodian issue was met with favourable responses from every country.⁴⁹⁶ Strictly speaking, not all responses appeared to be favourable, but Chatichai's statement most probably reflected his view that the reactions to his policy were on the whole satisfactory.

Importantly, Chatichai was able to introduce a new policy and avoid significant disapproval from other key countries because the new policy did not threaten to undermine their important interests in the Cambodian issue. The issue was of considerable importance to ASEAN, China, and the US, and it is likely that these countries would have taken action if they believed that their interests would be undermined by Thailand's new approach. This thesis has demonstrated that the dissatisfaction of other countries following the introduction of

Chatichai's policy was caused mainly by the way the policy emerged rather than by the disagreement with its substance. The ASEAN countries were concerned that they had not been informed, let alone consulted, on a matter that significantly changed their Association's diplomatic position. Indonesia was particularly unhappy to see its prerogative position as the leading country of ASEAN pushed aside in this way. Yet Indonesia, and other ASEAN members, had pursued a two track diplomacy which indicated that they had some sympathy with the Phnom Penh government and saw the benefits of having contacts with that regime. The absence of substantial Chinese and American disapproval to the new Thai policy also implied that Beijing and Washington did not object to Chatichai's idea. This thesis has demonstrated that by the time Chatichai's policy was announced, security concerns of China and the US had in part been addressed, enabling them to be more flexible in their approach towards Phnom Penh. Indeed, the acquiescence of the greater powers was important, particularly because they had the capacity to block new initiatives or to demonstrate their disapproval in a profound way. China's attack on Vietnam, following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, shows how far a great power like China could go in expressing its disapproval. As for the Cambodians themselves, the resistance factions were too politically weak and too dependent on Thailand to oppose Chatichai's new policy, and in fact the leader of the factional coalition (i.e. Sihanouk) even shared Chatichai's view because it was consistent with his own political calculation.

Chatichai's attempts to deal with disapproving reactions from the key countries such as ASEAN states, China, and the US, seemed to be on the basis of flexibility and adaptation. In other words,

Chatichai waited to see how others would react, and subsequently calculate his next move. His main principle was to ensure that important concerns of the other countries were accommodated. Consequently, his handling of the negative responses from Indonesia involved reassuring the Indonesian leaders of their important role in regional affairs, while his handling of the Chinese reactions involved addressing Beijing's concerns about its relations with Moscow. This shows that good working relationships between Thailand and its regional partners as well as the greater powers were an important factor if Bangkok were to secure their acquiescence.

THE EXTENT OF THE POLICY'S ACHIEVEMENT

Despite the absence of opposition from the key countries involved in the Cambodian issue, the extent to which Chatichai's initiatives could achieve their goals were relatively limited. The Indochinese marketplace hardly seemed to take shape. Cambodia, in particular, was a war torn country which was fraught with various problems and difficulties. Its poor infrastructure, lack of skilled labour, and political instability provided little incentives for trade and investment. Meanwhile, relatively little was practically done during the Chatichai government in order to seriously boost trade and investment. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, one of Chatichai's advisers, admitted that the marketplace as envisaged by Chatichai's policy was not achieved, although he believed that the policy did contribute to greater economic interactions between Thailand and the Indochinese countries and provided a good start for subsequent interactions.⁴⁹⁷ However, it is important to recall that the creation of a marketplace was not the

primary aim of Chatichai's policy. As argued in chapter 2, although Chatichai used an economic tone to describe his policy, this was designed mainly to seek support for the new policy whose main aim was to bring an end to the Cambodian conflict. That Chatichai chose to emphasise economic benefits of having peace was perhaps not surprising, as he had a business background and as the Thai economy was booming when he became Prime Minister.

The extent to which Chatichai's policy could make a difference to the Cambodian question was largely influenced by how the policy was received by other relevant countries. For instance, if the policy was received favourably and enthusiastically by the key players, it could spin off and effectively led to positive developments on regional and international levels, including an achievement of a peace settlement. However, this did not happen. Chatichai's failure to consult and inform Thailand's allies in advance about the new policy upset many of them, resulting in less than welcoming responses, even though they may have shared some of Chatichai's ideas. Chatichai's bypassing of the MFA added to the reluctance of those countries to react favourably to the new Thai approach. Consequently, Thailand's allies did not find it conveniently easy to do more than giving their tacit acceptance by not obstructing the new policy. For instance, although Chinese leaders told Chatichai that he could try his step-by-step approach to a peace settlement, Beijing did not give its active support to him, for example, by pursuing that approach. As a result, Chatichai's proposal in this regard remained largely an idea which was not taken seriously as an alternative to a comprehensive settlement.

The lack of active support from key allies in the Cambodian issue, therefore, contributed to the limited achievement of Chatichai's policy.

Without active involvement by regional partners, and more importantly by the greater powers, it may be argued that the best a lesser power could do was to call attention to the issue in question, as its ability to bring about international changes largely on its own is limited. The Prime Minister himself seemed to be well aware of this limitation, as he clearly said that “as a small country and not a superpower, Thailand does not have enough influence.”⁴⁹⁸ In the Cambodian issue, actions on the international levels were necessary because the third Indochina conflict was not only a local issue but also an international question and, therefore, it would need an international solution. In the end, the achievement of the ‘Proposed Structure’, which formed a basis of the agreement that marked the end of the Cambodian conflict, was possible because the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and subsequently the UN General Assembly, actively supported it. The great powers played a crucial role not only because their actions provided a positive backdrop which allowed the Cambodians to come together to address their problem, but also as a driving force pushing the Cambodians towards an agreement.

Despite this, Chatichai believed that his policy had contributed importantly to that process. In a statement in January 1990, the Prime Minister said:

“In the past 18 months (which began around the time he became Prime Minister), assisted by the changes that have taken place in great power relations and in the councils of state of the Indochinese countries, Thailand has played a major role in decreasing tension and conflict in mainland Southeast Asia. Without wishing to seem immodest, I believe that Thailand’s improved relations with Vietnam and the Phnom Penh regime have been one of the main factors leading to Hanoi’s early military withdrawal from Kampuchea.”⁴⁹⁹

Apart from this, it may be argued that Chatichai's policy contributed to the achievement of the peace agreement by adding momentum to the peace process to keep the ball rolling. Importantly, his policy drew attention to one of the major aspects of the Cambodian issue – how to come to terms with the government in Phnom Penh. By being the first to recognise openly the important role of Hun Sen, Chatichai ensured that it was not all left to the international community or Indonesia (as co-chair of the Paris Conference on the Cambodian issue) to lead the way. In other words, Chatichai facilitated the acceptance by other countries that Hun Sen was an independent leader of the Phnom Penh government and was not a puppet of Vietnam. It may be argued that Chatichai's approach paved the way for other countries to reconsider and modify their policies towards Indochina so as to be more consistent with circumstances. China's increasingly conciliatory stance towards Phnom Penh could be seen as an example.

Also, by adopting a friendly approach towards the Indochinese governments, Chatichai in effect paved the way for better relations between Thailand and its Indochinese neighbours which was indeed one of Bangkok's priorities following the end of the third Indochina conflict. In this regard, Thailand's Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila, who did not think that Chatichai's unilateral approach was appropriate, agreed that Chatichai contributed positively to better long term relations between Thailand and Indochina.⁵⁰⁰ More generally, Chatichai's rhetoric about creating an Indochina market identified what would be a long term issue if peace was finally brought to Cambodia. His idea about encouraging co-operation through increasing economic links has become one of the main goals to which successive governments

not only in Thailand but also in other countries in the region aspire. In other words, although Chatichai's policy did not achieve its ultimate objective within the lifetime of his government, his vision about what would be a desirable scenario endures. Indochinese countries, particularly Vietnam, have gained greater economic strength and have played greater role in regional affairs. Arguably, by being the first to be openly friendly to Phnom Penh and Hanoi in a way which seemed to defy the previous approach, Chatichai put Thailand in the front line again, but this time in an anticipated post-Cambodian conflict era.

WHAT LESSONS COULD BE LEARNED?

This thesis has contributed to the study of foreign policy making and implementation of a lesser power. The case of Chatichai's new approach towards the Cambodian conflict demonstrates that a lesser power could be proactive in its foreign policy under certain circumstances. Major foreign policy changes such as that of Chatichai are likely to emerge from leaders who not only possess confident personality and relevant experience, but also have a basis of legitimacy and support from powerful interests in the society. Concurrently, the leaders must be sensitive to the developing trends of events and are prepared to take unilateral actions if they judge that circumstances would favour the new approach, particularly when other key players get over the surprise. In other words, a lesser power may be able to introduce a major foreign policy change in a way that surprises other key players who have important interests in the issue if it is timed right so as to fit in with their interests. This is important because some key

players, particularly those who are great powers and superpowers, have the capacity effectively to neutralise or block new initiatives which are perceived to be against their interests. In Chatichai's case, although there was criticism against the 'surprise' element of his diplomacy, the absence of opposition to it must be highlighted. This could be seen as a tacit acceptance from the key countries involved in the issue.

Nevertheless, a lesser power is better able to initiate a major foreign policy change than to follow it through successfully, especially when the issue in question has regional and international as well as local dimensions. The focus of this thesis on the responses to a major foreign policy change points to the significance of the implementation process involving feedback. It has been demonstrated that what happens during the implementation process, particularly how the policy is received by key players in the issue, could influence the extent to which the policy achieves its goals. In Chatichai's case, acquiescence of other key players enabled him to implement his policy, but the lack of their active support placed a limit on how much his policy could do to achieve its ultimate objective. In other words, because of its relatively limited capacity to act, a lesser power depends on others (particularly the greater powers) to respond favourably if its foreign policy is to succeed.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. Indochina is made up of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos.
2. Sunai Phasuk, *Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards the Cambodian Problem Under the Government of Chatichai Choonhavan* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1997) (in Thai); David D. Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos, 1988–91*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1998.
3. Thomas Volgy, and John Schwarz, "Foreign Policy Restructuring and the Myriad Webs of Restraints," in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan, and Martin W. Sampson III (eds.), *Foreign Policy Restructuring: How Governments Respond to Global Changes* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), p.25.
4. K. J. Holsti, *Why Nations Realign: Foreign Policy Restructuring in the Postwar World* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), p.2.
5. Holsti, *Why Nations Realign*, p.2.
6. Joe Hagan and Jerel Rosati, "Emerging Issues in Research on Foreign Policy Restructuring," in Rosati, Hagan, and Sampson III (eds.), *Foreign Policy Restructuring*, p.267.
7. Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos, 1988–1991*, p.5.
8. Charles Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 34, 1990, p.6.
9. Hermann "Changing Course...", p.5.
10. Michael I. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise: Hitler, Nixon, and Sadat* (Cambridge, M.A.: Centre for International Affairs. Harvard University, 1981), pp.2–3.
11. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise*, pp.3–4.
12. David Lewis and Helen Wallace (eds.), *Policies Into Practice: National and International Case Studies in Implementation* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984).
13. Lewis and Wallace, *Policies Into Practice*, p.15.

14. Steve Smith and Michael Clarke. *Foreign Policy Implementation* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985).
15. Smith and Clarke, *Foreign Policy Implementation*, pp.173, 178.
16. Smith and Clarke, *Foreign Policy Implementation*, p.168.
17. Smith and Clarke, *Foreign Policy Implementation*, p.3.
18. Smith and Clarke, *Foreign Policy Implementation*, p.2.
19. Michael Clarke, "Foreign Policy Analysis: A Theoretical Guide," in S. Stavridis and C. Hill (eds.), *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: West European Reactions to the Falklands Conflict* (Oxford; Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1996), p.33.
20. Michael Brecher, Blema Steinberg, and Janice Stein, "A Framework for Research on Foreign Policy Behaviour." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.XII, No.1, 1969, pp.75–102.
21. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p.276.
22. For a detailed study of Nigeria's decision to break off, and later to re-establish, diplomatic relations with France, see Bola A. Akinterinwa, "The Termination and Re-establishment of Diplomatic Relations with France: a Study in Nigeria's Foreign Policy Decision-Making," in Gabriel O. Olusanya and R. A. Akindele (eds.), *The Structure and Processes of Foreign Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria, 1960–1990* (Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 1990), pp.275–293.
23. Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (Leicester: Leicester University Press for Royal Institute of International Affairs. 1978), p.61.
24. See Wight, *Power Politics*, p.50.
25. Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy the Second World War* (Chicago University Press; Cambridge University Press, 1959), p.3.
26. See Wight, *Power Politics*, p.45; and Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.196.
27. Wight, *Power Politics*, p.61.
28. See Wight. *Power Politics*, p.63; and Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p.198.

29. The state's capacity to act is defined by Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann as the amount of resources it has and its ability to utilise them. [Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspective for Comparative Foreign Policy Studies* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978), p.124.]
30. Philip Everts and Guido Walraven (eds.), *The Politics of Persuasion: Implementation of Foreign Policy by the Netherlands* (Aldershot: Averbury, 1989), p.84; Colin Clarke and Tony Payne (eds.), *Politics, Security, and Development in Small States* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p.216.
31. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise*, p.279.
32. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise*, p.332.
33. For a detailed study of Sadat's foreign policy towards Israel during 1970–81, see; for example, Handel. *The Diplomacy of Surprise*, chapters 5–6; Mohamed Ali Hussein. *The War and Peace of President Sadat: a Study in Egypt's Foreign Policy Towards Israel, 1970–1981*, Ph.D. Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1987.
34. *The Nation*, 18 March 1989.
35. See Sarasin Viraphol, *Directions in Thai Foreign Policy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1976).
36. Corrine Phuangkasem, *Thailand's Foreign Relations, 1964–80* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1984), p.44.
37. As Cambodia was central to this issue, the third Indochina conflict is also referred to as the Cambodian conflict or the Cambodian crisis.
38. For discussion about the origins of the third Indochina conflict, see; for example, Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon* (London: Verson Editions, 1984); Bernard K. Gordon, "The Third Indochina Conflict," *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1986, pp.66–85; Robert S. Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975–1979* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
39. George Modelski, *A Theory of Foreign Policy* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), p.100.
40. Details of the interviews are provided in the appendix.

CHAPTER TWO

41. See Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective in Human Affairs: with Special Reference to International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
42. *Asia 1989 Yearbook* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1989), p.238.
43. Kraisak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001.
44. *Asia 1989 Yearbook*, p.244.
45. *The Nation*, 25 November 1989, p.8.
46. *The Nation*, 25 November 1989, pp.1–2.
47. Prime Minister Order of 84/2531 (issued on 16 August 1988), cited in *Siamrath Subdavijarn*, 36(10), 20 August 1989, p.12.
48. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002
49. Dhanadech Pringthongfoo, personal interview, 9–10 January 2002.
50. Information from the NSC website, <http://www.nsc.go.th>
51. Interview with Suwit Suttanukul, the Secretary-General of the NSC during the Chatichai administration, *Siamrath Subdavijarn*, 17–23 December 1989, pp.30–34.
52. Chatichai Choonhavan, “Challenges and Opportunities in a World of Change,” Inaugural Address delivered on 27 March 1989 at the 45th Session of the United Nations Economics and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. Excerpt is produced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, published by the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 1989, p.15.
53. Chatichai Choonhavan, Opening Address at the International Strategic Seminar organised by the Supreme Command, Thailand, on 23 April 1989. Excerpt is produced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, April 1989, p.13.
54. For details on the communist movements in Thailand and the CPT, see; for example, Kanok Wongtrangan, “The Revolutionary Strategy

- of the Communist Party of Thailand: Change and Persistence” in Lim Joo-Jock and Vani S.(eds.), *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia* (Aldershot: Gower, 1984), pp.131–186.
55. Chatichai Choonhavan, Opening Address at the International Strategic Seminar, in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, April 1989, p.13.
 56. Chatichai Choonhavan, “Challenges and Opportunities in a World of Change,” in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, March 1989, p.15.
 57. Chatichai Choonhavan, “Thailand and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s,” Opening Address at the Willamsburg XVII Conference, organised by the Asia Society, New York, and the Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, in ChiangMai, Thailand, on 11–14 January 1990. Transcription is reproduced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, January 1990, p.9.
 58. *Ibid.*, p.16.
 59. For detailed accounts of Sino-Vietnamese relations, see; for example, Nayan Chanda, *Brother Enemy: the War after the War* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986); and Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon* (London: Verson Editions, 1984).
 60. For Soviet-Vietnamese relations, see; for example, Leszek Buszynski, “Soviet Policy Towards Indochina: Priorities and Conflicts” in L.T. Soon and B.Singh (eds.), *The Soviet Union in the Asia Pacific* (Singapore: Heinemann Asia for the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, 1989), pp.109–131.
 61. See Michael Yahuda, *International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945–95* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), p.91.
 62. See Simon Long, “China and Kampuchea: Political Football on the Killing Fields,” *The Pacific Review*, 2(2), 1989, p.151. Simon Long argues that the shift of Chinese policy came about not because China was concerned with the fate of Cambodia but because that country had lost strategic importance to China.
 63. Sukhumbhand Paribatra. personal interview, 8 January 2002.
 64. *Siamrath*, 30 January 1989, p.16.

65. *Siamrath Subdavijarn*, 35(8), 7–13 August 1988, p.20.
66. Saowapak Techasai, *Thailand's Foreign Policy towards Indochina under the Government of General Chatichai Choonhavan* (August 1988–August 1990), MA Dissertation, Faculty of Social Sciences, Thammasat University, Bangkok, 1990, p.74.
67. Kraisak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001.
68. Lloyd Jensen. *Explaining Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), pp.14–17.
69. Details in this paragraph are based on the author's interviews with three of Chatichai's advisers, Kraisak Choonhavan, Sukhumbhand Paribatra, and Borwornsak Uwanno, during December 2001 January 2002.
70. Chatichai Choonhavan, "Thailand and the World in the 1990s," the Prime Minister's speech addressed to Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand at the Oriental Hotel, 2 December 1988. (Transcription is reproduced in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service EAS-88-247*, 23 December 1988, pp.54–57.); Chatichai Choonhavan, Speech to the Business for Development Club, 30 January 1989. (Excerpt is produced in *Siamrath Subdavijarn*, 12–18 February 1989, pp.23–24.)
71. See John Funston, "The Roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thailand: Some Preliminary Observations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.9, No.3, December 1987, p.235; Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Political Institutions and Processes," in Somsakdi Xuto (ed.), *Government and Politics of Thailand* (Singapore; Oxford: University Press, 1987), p.60.
72. See Funston, "The Roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thailand: Some Preliminary Observations," p.236.
73. Bunbongkarn, "Political Institutions and Processes," p.61.
74. David D. Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos, 1988–91*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1998, p.129.
75. Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.

76. See Clarke D. Neher, "The Foreign Policy of Thailand," in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton (eds.), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp.177–203.
77. *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 30 March 1989, p.33.
78. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
79. Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
80. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, May 1989, p.3.
81. Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
82. Sarasin Viraphol, personal interview, 11 January 2002.
83. This idea was shared by Sukhumbhand Paribatra (personal interview, 8 January 2002).
84. Kraisaak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
85. Pansak Vinyaratn, in a personal interview with David Oldfield, in Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos*, p.258.
86. Details in this paragraph are based on the author's interviews with three of Chatichai's advisers (Kraisaak, Sukhumbhand, and Borwornsak) during December 2001–January 2002; and David Oldfield's interviews with Chatichai's advisers (Kraisaak, Sukhumbhand, Bowornsak, and Pansak). [See Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos*, chapter 4.]
87. *FEER*, 20 August 1987, p.23.
88. The figures are calculated from *Bank of Thailand Quarterly Bulletin*, multiple years.
89. Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
90. Sunai Phasuk, personal interview, 20 December 2001.
91. Sarasin Viraphol, personal interview, 11 January 2002.
92. Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002.

93. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002; Arsa Sarasin, personal interview, 24 December 2001.
94. Arsa Sarasin, in a personal interview with David Oldfield on 12 June 1996, in Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos*, p.285.
95. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB)* FE/0319 A3/4, 26 November 1988.
96. *Matichon*, 21 October 1989.
97. *Bangkok Post*, 25 November 1989.
98. Kraisaak Choonhavan, in a personal interview with David Oldfield, in Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos*, p.250.
99. Kraisaak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001.
100. *SWB*, FE/0223i, 6 August 1988.
101. "Debate: the Prime Minister VS Academics," *Siamrath Subdavijarn*, 12–18 February 1989, p.23–25.
102. Bowornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
103. Borwonisak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002,
104. Department of International Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Thailand, *Cambodia's Trade and Economy*, 1992 (in Thai).
105. *Daily News*, 7 November 2002, p.3.
106. *Matichon*, 21 October 1989.
107. *The Nation*, 24 November 1989, p.8.
108. Interview with Chatichai, *FEER*, 8 June 1989, pp.24–25.
109. *Matichon*, 21 October 1989.
110. *Bangkok Post*, 25 November 1989.
111. *Bangkok Post*, 25 November 1989.
112. In the Joint Communiqué between HRH Somdech Norodom Sihanouk

and H.E.Mr. Hun Sen on Solution to the Cambodian Problem in Tokyo on 4–5 June 1990, it was agreed, among other things, that (1) There must be a ceasefire, to be followed by a formation of a Supreme National Council; (2) The UN would use an international mechanism to oversee the withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia, the end of external assistance to Cambodian factions, and the adherence to the ceasefire agreement; (3) Angkor Wat was to be announced a neutral zone where firing was prohibited; and (4) There would be a conference in Paris on the Cambodian issue. See Bangkok Post, 7 June 1990, p.4. Because the Khmer Rouge was opposed to this agreement, Sihanouk withdrew from the agreement one month after he signed it. [Phasuk, *Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards the Cambodian Problem*, p.63.]

113. Bangkok Post, 7 June 1990, p.10.

CHAPTER THREE

114. John Funston, "The Roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thailand: Some Preliminary Observations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.9, No.3, December 1987, p.237.
115. Funston, "The Roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Some Preliminary Observations," p.238; Clark D. Neher, "The Foreign Policy of Thailand," in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton (eds.), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p.183.
116. Funston, "The Roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Some Preliminary Observations," p.238.
117. Siddhi Savetsila. personal interview, 21 January 2002.
118. Sarasin Viraphol, personal interview, 11 January 2002.
119. *The Straits Times*, 6 September 1988, p.8.
120. David D. Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos, 1988–91*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1998, p.134.
121. *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 23 February 1989, pp.11–12.

122. Sarasin Viraphol, personal interview, 11 January 2002; Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
123. Neher, "The Foreign Policy of Thailand," p.182.
124. *The Nation*, 24 February 1990, p.8.
125. Kusuma Snitwongse, personal interview, 21 December 2001.
126. *FEER*. 20 August 1987, p.23.
127. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.
128. This contrasts some earlier literature, such as that by Chantornvong and Chenvidyakarn (1991), which suggests that there was a reconceptualisation of national security by the Thai military in the late 1980s and early 1990s, indicating that Chavalit sought to broaden the concept of national security to include economic, social, and cultural aspects.
129. Information from the NSC website, <http://www.nsc.go.th>
130. Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002. Charan was the Secretary General of the NSC between 1991–96.
131. Kachadpai Burusapatana, personal interview, 14 January 2002. Kachadpai was Deputy Secretary General of the NSC during the Chatichai administration. At the time of the interview, he is the Secretary General.
132. Suwit Suttanukul, in a personal interview with David Oldfield, in Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos*, p.145. Suwit was the Secretary General of the NSC from 1986–91.
133. Kachadpai Burusapatana, personal interview, 14 January 2002.
134. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
135. Siddhi Savetsila, "The Future of Thailand's Foreign Policy," Address to the Press on 17 January 1985, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saranrom Palace, Bangkok. Transcription is reproduced in *Collection of Speeches by ACM Siddhi Savetsila, Minister of Foreign Affairs, January–December B.E.2528* (Bangkok: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1986), pp.2–7.
136. Charivat Santaputra, personal interview, 25 December 2001.

137. *Bangkok Post*, 10 August 1988, p.2.
138. *The Straits Times*, 6 September 1988, p.8.
139. *FEER*, 23 February 1989, pp.11–12.
140. Dhanadetch Pringthongfoo, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
141. Suchit Bunbongkarn, “The role of major political forces in the Thai political process,” in Clark D. Neher and Wiwat Mungkandi (eds.), *US-Thailand Relations in a New International Era* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1990), pp.268–269.
142. *The Nation*, 29 April 1989, p.13.
143. *FEER*, 12 October 1989, p.36.
144. *FEER*, 12 October 1989, p.36.
145. *FEER*. 1 March 1990, pp.50–51.
146. Many accounts only say that Chatichai later met the leaders of the resistance factions, without acknowledging that the MFA was behind this. However, the MFA’s role in this regard was clearly spelt out in Siddhi’s unpublished memoir. [Siddhi Savetsila, *My Experience as Foreign Minister (11 February 1980 – 27 August 1990)*, unpublished memoir, 1992 (in Thai).]
147. Charivat Santaputra, personal interview, 25 December 2001.
148. Charivat Santaputra, personal interview, 25 December 2001.
149. *The Nation*, 13 March 1989, p.1.
150. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
151. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, “The road to peace in Cambodia,” *FEER*, 2 February 1989.
152. *FEER*, 12 January 1989, p.21.
153. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
154. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.
155. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.

156. *Asia 1989 Yearbook* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1989), p.244. Siddhi also admitted that there was a personality clash between himself and the Lao Foreign Minister (Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002).
157. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002; Dhanadetch Pringthongfoo, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
158. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.
159. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview. 9 January 2002.
160. *The Nation*, 25 January 1989, and 27 January 1989.
161. *Siamrath*, 9 November 1989, and 10 November 1989; *Matichon*, 4 June 1990.
162. *Matichon*, 19 January 1989.
163. *Bangkok Post*, 13 September 1989; *Matichon*, 13 September 1989, and 8 November 1989.
164. *Matichon*, 5 February 1989; Suchit Bunbongkarn, personal interview, 19 December 2001.
165. *The Nation*, 7 February 1989. This argument was made by Dhawon Sukhakanya who taught political science at Thammasat University in Bangkok.
166. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
167. *The Nation*, 13 March 1989, p.1.
168. *Bangkok Post*, 14 October 1989; *Matichon*, 7 October 1989.
169. *Bangkok Post*, 26 May 1990, p.26.
170. Borwornsak Uwanno, in a personal interview with David Oldfield, in Oldfield, *The Restructuring of Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards Laos*, p.142.
171. Source from the Thai Ministry of Defence.
172. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
173. *The Nation*, 1 March 1989, p.4; and 8 March 1989, p.1.

174. *The Nation*, 4 March 1989, p.1.
175. "Inside Thailand's Foreign Policy: an Interview with Siddhi," *Asian Review*, Vol.5, 1991, p.35.
176. *FEER*. 29 September 1989, p.23.
177. *The Nation*, 4 March 1989, p.1.
178. "Inside Thailand's Foreign Policy: an Interview with Siddhi," p.37.
179. Surachai Sirikrai, "Roles of the Leader in the Making of Foreign Policy: the Implementation of Foreign Policy of the Chatchai Choonhavan Government towards the Cambodian Problem (9 August 1988–December 1989), in Saitip Sukatipan (ed.), *Problems of Leaders and the National Policy-Making Process*, (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1991) (in Thai), p.22.
180. *Bangkok Post*, 17 November 1989.
181. *Bangkok Post*, 17 November 1989.
182. *Bangkok Post*, 24 November 1989.
183. *Bangkok Post*, 17 November 1989.
184. *Bangkok Post*, 18 November 1989.
185. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
186. The reshuffle was a response to widespread allegation of corruption among some members of the previous cabinet.
187. *Kaopiset*, 3–9 September 1990; *The Nation*, 28 August 1990.
188. Statement by His Excellency Dr. Subin Pinkayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, on "Asia and the Pacific in the 1990s: Implications for Thai-US Relations" at the Asia Society, 27 September 1990, New York. Transcription is reproduced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, published by the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 1990, pp.5–9.
189. *The Straits Times*, 4 September 1990, p.14.
190. *The Straits Times*, 4 September 1990, p.14.

191. Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
192. *Asia 1989 Yearbook* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1989), p.242.
193. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.
194. Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
195. The figures are calculated from *Statistical Handbook of Thailand* (Bangkok: National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister, multiple years).
196. *The Nation*, 30 December 1988.
197. *Bangkok Post Weekly Review*, 6 August 1989.
198. *Phuchadkarn*, 18 June 1990, p.58. This article provides a detailed account on the developments which led to Chavalit's resignation.
199. *Phuchadkarn*, 18 June 1990, p.1.
200. *Matichon*, 29 June 1990.
201. Ananya Bhuchongkul, "Thailand 1991: The Return of the Military," *Southeast Asian Affairs 1992*, (Aldershot: Gower, 1992), p.316.
202. *Thailand, Burma: Country Report*, No.1, 1991 (Business International Limited, 1991), p.12.
203. Surin Maisrikrod, "The Making of Thai Democracy: A Study of Political Alliances Among the State, the Capitalists, and the Middle Class," in Anek Laothamatas (ed.), *Democratisation in Southeast Asia and East Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1997), pp.161–162; Suchit Bunbongkarn, "The role of major political forces in the Thai political process," in Clark D. Neher and Wiwat Mungkandi (eds.), *US-Thailand Relations in a New International Era* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1990), p.262.
204. This point was highlighted by Sukhumbhand Paribatra (personal interview, 8 January 2002).
205. Bhuchongkul, "Thailand 1991: The Return of the Military," p.330.
206. Arsa Sarasin, personal interview, 24 December 2001.

207. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
208. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.

CHAPTER FOUR

209. For details of Thai-Cambodian relations, see, for example, Corrine Phuangkasem, *Thailand's Foreign Relations, 1964–80* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), chapter V.
210. For details of Thai-Vietnamese relations since early nineteenth century until 1985, see, for example, William S. Turley (ed.), *Confrontation or Coexistence: the Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations* (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985), chapters 1–4; Phuangkasem, *Thailand's Foreign Relations, 1964–80*, chapter V.
211. Sarasin Viraphol, “Thailand’s Perspectives on Its Rivalry with Vietnam,” in Turley, *Confrontation or Coexistence*, p.20.
212. Jeremy E. Plotnick, *A Case Study: the Translation of Threat Perception into Arms Procurement Policy: Thailand’s Reaction to the Vietnamese Invasion of Cambodia*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1994, p.144.
213. Phuangkasem, *Thailand's Foreign Relations, 1964–80*, p.30; Frank Frost, “Vietnam, ASEAN and the Indochinese Refugee Crisis,” *Southeast Asian Affairs 1980* (Singapore: Heinemann Asia for Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1980). pp.347–367.
214. World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (multiple years); in Plotnick, *A Case Study*, p.220.
215. Plotnick, *A Case Study*, p.194.
216. See L. Nicksch, “Thailand in 1980: Confrontation with Vietnam and the Fall of Kriangsak,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXI, No.2, February 1981, pp.223–231.
217. The CGDK was made up of a communist faction (the Khmer Rouge), and two non-communist factions: the National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, an Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and the Khmer People’s National Liberation Front (KPNLF) led by Son Sann.

218. *The Nation*, 16 August 1989.
219. Siddhi Savetsila, "ASEAN's Contribution to Asian Security," Address to the Third Annual World Balance of Power Conference organised by the Foreign Affairs Institute, Kent, Leeds Castle, 21 July 1983. Transcription is reproduced in *ISIS Bulletin* 2, No. 4, October 1983, pp.28–31.
220. Muthiah Alagappa, *The National Security of Developing States: Lessons from Thailand* (Dover, Massachusetts: Auburn House Publishing Company, 1987), p.88.
221. *Dao Siam*, 24 July 1990.
222. *The Nation*, 27 January 1989, p.3.
223. *Bangkok Bank Newsletter*, 1989, p.65.
224. *Krungthep Thurakit Sudsubda*, 30 September–6 October 1989, pp.7–10.
225. Data from the Bank of Thailand, in *Bank of Thailand Bulletin* (multiple years).
226. Data from the Bank of Thailand, in *Bank of Thailand Bulletin* (multiple years).
227. Data from the Bank of Thailand, in *Bank of Thailand Bulletin* (multiple years).
228. *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 2 February 1989, p.13.
229. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB)*, FE/0375 A3/3, 3 February 1989.
230. *The Nation*, 19 April 1989.
231. *Phuchadkarn*, 6 March 1989, p.67.
232. *Matichon*, 3 February 1989.
233. The visit was postponed from earlier arrangement apparently to indicate Sihanouk's dissatisfaction about Hun Sen's trip to Bangkok in January that year.
234. *The Nation*, 30 April 1989.

235. *Bangkok Post*, 7 May 1989.
236. *Bangkok Post*, 9 May 1989.
237. Christopher Brady, *United States Foreign Policy towards Cambodia, 1977–92: A Question of Realities* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.170.
238. David Roberts, *Political Transition in Cambodia 1991–99: Power, Elitism, and Democracy* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001), p.21.
239. Roberts, *Political Transition in Cambodia*, p.21.
240. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
241. *Matichon*, 18 February 1990, p.22.
242. *Matichon*, 23 February 1990, p.24.
243. Kraisaak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001.
244. *Bangkok Post*, 7 June 1990, p.10.
245. *Matichon*, 20 April 1989; *Matichon*, 23 September 1989.
246. Stephen J. Solarz, “Cambodia and the International Community,” *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1990, p.107.
247. Sunai Phasuk, *Thailand’s Foreign Policy Towards the Cambodian Problem Under the Government of Chatichai Choonhavan* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1997) (in Thai), p.67.
248. Joint Declaration by the Government of the People’s Republic of Kampuchea, the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the Total Withdrawal of Vietnamese Volunteer Forces from Kampuchea, 5 April 1989. Cited in Phasuk, *Thailand’s Foreign Policy Towards the Cambodian Problem*, p.43.
249. *The Nation*, 6 April 1989, pp.1–2.
250. *The Nation*, 25 April 1989, p.2; and 2 May 1989, pp.1–2.
251. *Bangkok Post*, 28 January 1989, p.1.
252. MacAlister Brown and Joseph J. Zasloff, *Cambodia Confounds the Peacemakers, 1979–1998* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p.71.

253. *The Nation*, 25 April 1989, p.2; and 2 May 1989, pp.1–2.
254. The representation would be proportional within each of the provinces of Cambodia but not at the national level. Previously, the SOC had insisted on a system in which the candidate receiving the majority of votes in each constituency would get the seat at the National Assembly, whereas the CGDK wanted proportional representation.

CHAPTER FIVE

255. R Irvine, “The Formative Years of ASEAN: 1967–75,” in Alison Broinowski (ed.), *Understanding ASEAN* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp.8–10.
256. For example, by 1987, trade among the six member states, whose combined populations comprised some 300 million, had amounted to no more than 17 percent of their total trade. See Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), p.vii.
257. Tim Huxley, “ASEAN Security Co-operation – Past, Present and Future,” in Alison Broinowski (ed.), *ASEAN into the 1990s* (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp.84–85.
258. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p.30.
259. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p.27.
260. See Muthiah Alagappa, *The National Security of Developing States: Lessons from Thailand* (Dover, Massachusetts: Auburn House Publishing Company, 1987), p.100; William S. Turley (ed.), *Confrontation or Coexistence: the Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations* (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985), p.4.
261. For instance, Malaysia normalised relations with Vietnam in 1976. Thailand and Indonesia did so in 1977. In late 1977–early 1978, Vietnam’s Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh embarked on a historic visit stopping in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand. (Singapore was omitted due to an untimely hijacking of an Air Vietnam plane to the island republic.) These friendly gestures were cultivated despite

- Hanoi's suspicion that ASEAN was a tool, however indirect, of US imperialism. See Carlyle A. Thayer "ASEAN and Indochina: The Dialogue," in Broinowski, *ASEAN into the 1990s*, p.144.
262. For an extended discussion of how ASEAN countries perceived Vietnam and China, see Robert O. Tilman, *Southeast Asia and the Enemy Beyond: ASEAN Perception of External Threats* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987).
263. Huxley, "ASEAN Security Co-operation – Past, Present and Future," p.89.
264. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, "Irreversible History? ASEAN, Vietnam, and The Polarisation of Southeast Asia," in Karl D. Jackson, Sukhumbhand Paribatra, and J. Soedjati Djwandono (eds.), *ASEAN in Regional and Global Context* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), pp.230–231.
265. For discussion on ZOPFAN see, for example, Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South East Asia* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989); Evelyn Colbert, "Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Towards a Regional Order," in W.Howard Wriggins, F.Gregory Gause III, Terrence P.Lyons, and Evelyn Colbert, *Dynamics of Regional Politics: Four Systems on the Indian Ocean Rim* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp.211–273.
266. See Bruce Grant, *The Boat People: an 'Age' investigation with Bruce Grant* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979); Barry Wain, *The Refused: the Agony of the Indochina Refugees* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981); Michael Richardson, "ASEAN and Indo-Chinese Refugees," in Broinowski, *Understanding ASEAN*, pp.92–114.
267. Corrine Phuangkasem, *Thailand's Foreign Relations, 1964–80* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), p.30; Frank Frost, "Vietnam, ASEAN and the Indochinese Refugee Crisis," *Southeast Asian Affairs 1980* (Singapore: Heinemann Asia for Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1980), pp.347–367.
268. This paragraph draws from Paribatra, "Irreversible History?..." pp.229–231.
269. *Bangkok Post*, 13 July 1984, p.1.
270. These figures were calculated by Paribatra from: International

Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1982–83* (London: IISS Publications Department, 1982); and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1984–85* (London: IISS Publications Department, 1984).

271. See Paribatra, “Irreversible History?...” p.227.
272. *Strait Times*, 18 August 1979. Cited in Serm Vongchant, *The Impact of the Kampuchean Crisis on ASEAN’s Unity: The Role of Thailand’s Security Interest (1978–1985)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1986, p.114.
273. Jürgen Haacke, *Understanding the ‘ASEAN Way’: Origins and Development of a Diplomatic and Security Culture*, Ph.D. Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2000, p.147.
274. Karl D. Jackson, “US Policy, ASEAN, and the Kampuchean Crisis,” in Robert Scalapino and Jusuf Wanandi (eds.), *Economic, Political and Security Issues in Southeast Asia in the 1980s* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1982). pp.127–128.
275. Statement by Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee on the Escalation of the Armed Conflict Between Vietnam and Kampuchea, Jakarta, 9 January 1979. Transcription is reproduced in *ASEAN Documents Series, 1967–1988* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1988), p.587.
276. Thayer, “ASEAN and Indo China: The Dialogue,” p.146.
277. Joint Statement of the Special Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the Current Political Development in the South-East Asian Region, Bangkok, 12 January 1979. Transcription is reproduced in *ASEAN Documents Series, 1967–1985* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1985), p.328.
278. Joint Communiqué of the Twelfth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Bali, Indonesia, 28–31 June 1979. Transcription is reproduced in *ASEAN Documents Series, 1967–1985*, pp.54–59.
279. *The Straits Times*, 18 August 1979, p.18.
280. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002; M.R. Kasem S. Kasemsri, personal interview, 8 January 2002. According to

them, there was a talk at Chavalit's residence between Thai and Chinese officials on this issue. China was initially reluctant because it feared that the change of Cambodia's UN seat occupant from the Khmer Rouge government to the CGDK would be questioned and could affect the existence of the new coalition itself.

281. Both Son Sann and Sihanouk had admitted that the resistance forces would probably never develop the strength or momentum to defeat the Vietnamese militarily in Cambodia. Instead, the main purpose of the resistance was to deprive the Vietnamese of any legitimacy for their stay in Cambodia, to act as a focus of Cambodian nationalism, and to increase the costs to Vietnam for its occupation [Kishore Mahbubani, "The Kampuchea Problem: a Southeast Asian Perception," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.62, No.2, Winter 1983/4, p.414].
282. ASEAN's draft had called for the disarming of all Cambodian factions, the dispatching of UN peacekeeping forces and the establishment of a temporary UN administration in Cambodia pending free election that were to be held under UN supervision. However, under the pressure from China, who had the support of the US, the final ICK declaration did not call for disarming of the Cambodian factions, but called for a ceasefire and 'appropriate measures to ensure that armed Cambodian factions would not be able to prevent or disrupt the holding of UN-supervised elections.
283. Leifer, ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia, p.117.
284. Amitav Acharya, Pierre Lizée, and Sorpong Peou, "The Road to the Paris Conference: The Cambodian Peace Process in Historical Perspective," in Amitav Acharya, Pierre Lizée, and Sorpong Peou (eds.), *Cambodia – The 1989 Paris Peace Conference: Background Analysis and Documents* (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus International Publications, 1991), p.xxxiv.
285. R. J.D.Emmers, *The Role of the Balance of Power Factor Within Regimes for Co-operative Security: a Study of ASEAN and ASEAN Regional Forum*, Ph.D. Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2001, p.182.
286. Acharya, Lizée, and Peou, "The Road to the Paris Conference..." p. xxxiv.
287. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, *Suchomnamai? (Towards a new look?)*:

ASEAN-Vietnam and the Cambodian Problem (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985) (in Thai), p.9.

288. *Bangkok Post*, 12 February 1985, p.1.
289. Jusuf Wanandi, "An Indonesian View," *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 28 March 1980, p.16; K.Das, "The Kuantan Principle." *FEER*, 4 April 1980, pp.12–13.
290. Thayer, "ASEAN and Indochina: The Dialogue," p.148.
291. Sheldon Simon, *The ASEAN States and Regional Security* (Stanford: Hoover Institutional Press, 1982), p.69.
292. Justus M. Van der Kroef, "ASEAN, Hanoi, and the Kampuchean Conflict: Between 'Kuantan' and a 'Third Alternative,'" *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXI, No.5, May 1981, p.517.
293. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p.106.
294. Joint Statement by ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the Kampuchean Problem, Kuala Lumpur, 8 July 1985. Transcription is reproduced in *The Eighteenth ASEAN Ministerial and Post-Ministerial Conferences with the Dialogue Countries, Kuala Lumpur, 7–13 July 1985* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1985), p.55.
295. This idea had been put forward earlier by Sihanouk in 1985 but had not been pursued until Indonesia's Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja discussed it with his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Co Thach in 1987, after which a joint statement was issued, calling for such a meeting.
296. Acharya, Lizée, and Peou. "The Road to the Paris Conference..." p.xxxvii.
297. Haccke, *Understanding the 'ASEAN Way,'* p.167.
298. For a good detailed discussion on these points, see Tilman, *Southeast Asia and the Enemy Beyond*, Chapters 4, 5, 8.
299. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p.73.
300. Haacke, *Understanding the 'ASEAN Way,'* p.156.

301. This was quoted by Sukhumbhand Paribatra as the view of Thailand's senior policy-makers who he interviewed in 1984. [Paribatra, *Suchomnamai?*, p.17.]
302. Tilman, *Southeast Asia and the Enemy Beyond*, p.72.
303. Tilman, *Southeast Asia and the Enemy Beyond*, pp.73–74.
304. Vongchant, *The Impact of the Kampuchean Crisis on ASEAN's Unity*, p.122.
305. Hans H. Indorf and Astri Suhrke, "Indochina: The Nemesis of ASEAN," in *Southeast Asian Affairs 1981* (Aldershot: Gower, 1981), p.64.
306. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, pp.137–138.
307. Emmers, *The Role of the Balance of Power Factor*, p.176.
308. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p.91.
309. Emmers, *The Role of the Balance of Power Factor*, p.173.
310. Chatichai Choonhavan, Speech at the 20th meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers, Pattaya, Thailand, 17–18 October 1988. Transcription is reproduced in *ASEAN Newsletter*, No. 29, September–October 1988, p.4.
311. Kraisaak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview. 8 January 2002.
312. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.
313. Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, "Riding the Vietnamese Tiger," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.10, No.4, March 1989, pp.343–361.
314. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, "Some Thoughts on ASEAN Security Co-operation: An Indonesian Perspective." *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.12. No.3, December 1990, pp.172–185.
315. *FEER*, 4 May 1989, p.21.
316. *The Nation*, 21 June 1989, p.8.
317. Kraisaak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001; Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
318. *Asia 1989 Yearbook* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1989), p.243.

319. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, January 1989, p.2.
320. *The Nation*, 16 April 1989, p.2.
321. *Jakarta Post*, 28 February 1989, quoted in Leszek Buszynski, "New Aspirations and Old Constraints in Thailand's Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXIX, No.11, November 1989, p.1071.
322. Although other components of the CGDK did attend the meeting as a whole was not arranged in a quadrilateral format where all four Cambodia factions were equally represented.
323. *Bangkok Post*, 3 July 1990, p.4.
324. *FEER*, 14 December 1989, p.11.
325. Kusumaatmadja, "Some Thoughts on ASEAN Security Co-operation: An Indonesian Perspective," p.166.
326. Rajaratnam, "Riding the Vietnamese Tiger," p.352.
327. Colbert, "Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Towards a Regional Order," p.260.
328. Borwornsak Uwanoo, personal interview, 2 January 2002; Sukhumbhand Paribatra, personal interview, 8 January 2002.
329. Colbert, "Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Towards a Regional Order," p.252.
330. *Thairath*, 8 February 1989; *Matichon*, 8 February 1989.
331. Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p.101.
332. Buszynski, "New Aspirations and Old Constraints in Thailand's Foreign Policy," p.1070.
333. *FEER*, 19 July 1990, p.14.
334. Vongchant. *The Impact of the Kampuchean Crisis on ASEAN's Unity*, p.124.
335. Lee Kuan Yew. *From Third World to First*, p.337.
336. Interview with Chatichai Choonhavan, excerpt is produced in *FEER*, 8 June 1989, pp.24–25.

337. Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
338. This was the first official visit by any ASEAN member since Malaysian Foreign Minister Rithandeen's in January 1980.
339. Nayan Chanda, "ASEAN's Odd Man Out," *FEER*, 1 March 1984, p.8.
340. Susumu Awanohara, "Murdani's Modification," *FEER*, 8 March 1984, p.36.
341. See Susumu Awanohara, "Where there's a will...", *FEER*, 1 March 1984, p.9.
342. Carol Jean Bowman, *Exploring the Effects of Regime Fragmentation on Foreign Policy Behaviour in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The George Washington University, 1999, p.318.
343. Bowman, *Exploring the Effects of Regime Fragmentation*, p.319.
344. *Asia 1989 Yearbook*, p.243.
345. Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First*, p.325.
346. Colbert, "Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Towards a Regional Order," p.260.
347. *FEER*. 14 February 1991, p.14.

CHAPTER SIX

348. Robert S. Ross, "China and the Cambodian Peace Process: the Value of Coercive Diplomacy," *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXXI, No.12, December 1991, p.1170.
349. For accounts of the Sino-Soviet conflict, see, for example, Serger N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993); Donald S.Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961* (Princeton: University Press, 1962); John Gittings, *Survey of the Sino-Soviet Dispute: A Commentary and Extracts from the Recent Polemics, 1963-1967* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968.)
350. *Beijing Review*, 30 March 1979, p.23.

351. *Beijing Review*, 20 April 1979, pp.9–10.
352. The other two were the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and the reduction of Soviet military presence along the Sino-Soviet border.
353. For history of Sino-Vietnamese relations and the role of the Soviet Union see, for instance, Robert S. Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975–1979* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); W.R.Smyser, *The Independent Vietnamese: Vietnamese Communism Between Russia and China, 1956–1979* (Athens: Ohio University, Centre for International Studies, 1980); Gareth Porter, “China in Southeast Asia,” *Current History*, September 1986, pp.249–279.
354. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts* (SWB), FE/5841 A3/3, 17 June 1978.
355. *Beijing Review*, 12 October 1981, p.18.
356. Document on Indochina Federation released by Vietnam on 7 April 1978. Cited in Nguyen Manh Hung, “Sino-Vietnamese Conflict: Power Play Among Communist Neighbours,” *Asian Survey*, Vol.XIX, No.11, November 1979, p.1046.
357. Michael Leifer, “The Stakes of Conflict in Cambodia,” *Asian Affairs*, June 1990, pp.155–161.
358. Nguyen Manh Hung, “Sino-Vietnamese Conflict: Power Play Among Communist Neighbours,” pp.1037–1052.
359. *Washington Post*, 11 November 1978.
360. Ross, *The Indochina Tangle*, p.252.
361. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)- CHI*, 1 July 1981, p.E2.
362. Amitav Acharya, Pierre Lizée, and Sorpong Peou, “The Road to the Paris Conference: The Cambodian Peace Process in Historical Perspective,” in Amitav Acharya, Pierre Lizée, and Sorpong Peou (eds.), *Cambodia – The 1989 Paris Peace Conference: Background Analysis and Documents* (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus International Publications, 1991), p.xxxvii.
363. Leszek Buszynski, “Thailand: the Erosion of a Balanced Foreign Policy,” *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXII, No.11, November 1982, pp.1052,1067.

364. Speech of Anand Panyarachun, Thailand's Representative to the United Nations, in the United Nations General Assembly on 19 November 1968. Transcription is reproduced in R.K. Jain, *China and Thailand, 1949–1983* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1984), pp.144–151.
365. See Surachai Sirikrai, "Thai Perceptions of China and Japan," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.12, No.3, December 1990, pp.247–267; and Buszynski, "Thailand: the Erosion of a Balanced Foreign Policy," pp.1037–1055.
366. Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), p.105.
367. See John F.Copper, "China and Southeast Asia," in Donald E. Weatherbee (ed.), *Southeast Asia Divided: The ASEAN-Indochina Crisis* (Boulder. Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), p. 55.
368. Siddhi Savetsila, "Thailand and the World," *Nation Review*, 13 April 1985.
369. Chulacheep Chinwanno, "Two Decades of Thai-Chinese Relations: Political, Economic, and Social Co-operation, 1975–1995," in Nipat Jitprasong and Ruangsak Yueyai (eds.), *Sino-Thai Relations: Twenty Years of Friendship* (Bangkok: Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University, 1995) (in Thai), p.22.
370. R. Bates Gill, "China Looks to Thailand: Exporting Arms, Exporting Influence," *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXXI, No.6, June 1991, pp.526–539; David Shaw, "Thailand Paying a Price for Security," *Military Technology*, Vol. XIV, No.12, 1990, pp.24–33; Bilveer Singh, "The Meaning of the "New" Sino-Thai Axis," *Asian Defence Journal*, October 1989, pp.4–10.
371. *Bangkok Post*, 7 March 1987.
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376. *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 11 December 1986, p.4.
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383. SWB, FE/0369 A3/2, 27 January 1989.
384. Details of Chinese statements in this paragraph draw from McGregor, "China, Vietnam, and the Cambodian Conflict: Beijing's End Game Strategy," pp.274–275.
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387. *The Sunday Times* (Singapore), 19 March 1989, p.1.
388. *The Nation*, 27 October 1989, p.1.
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390. See, for example, Michael Leifer, "Power-sharing and Peacemaking in Cambodia?," *S AIS Review*, Winter/Spring 1992, p.148; Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945–1995* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), pp.179–180.

391. See, for example, Leszek Buszynski, *Gorbachev and Southeast Asia* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.132–146. Buszynski highlights the significance of factors indigenous to Vietnam's security and economic predicament, and the emergence of some reformists within the Vietnamese leadership.
392. *Beijing Review*, 29 May–4 June 1989, p.4.
393. Sino-Soviet Joint Communiqué, Beijing, 18 May 1989, reproduced in *Beijing Review*, 29 May–4 June 1989, pp.11–13.
394. SWB, FE/0340 A3/2, 21 December 1988.
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396. SWB, FE/0378 C2/1, 7 February 1989.
397. Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
398. *FBIS*-CHI, 25 July 1989, p.4.
399. Gary Klintworth, "The Outlook for Cambodia: the China Factor," in Gary Klintworth (ed.), *Vietnam's Withdrawal from Cambodia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1990), p.53.
400. *Washington Post*, 20 July 1990.
401. Ross, "China and the Cambodian Peace Process: the Value of Coercive Diplomacy," p.1183.
402. Klintworth, "The Outlook for Cambodia: the China Factor," p.54.
403. See Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, pp.207–208.
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405. Klintworth. "The Outlook for Cambodia: the China Factor," p.50.
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409. SWB, FE/0598 A3/1, 27 October 1989.
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413. Borworsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
414. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, personal interview, 9 January 2002.
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418. For instance, in 1990 Thailand's deficit with China was as large as 21 billion baht.
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420. *FEER*, 15 February 1990, p.9.

CHAPTER SEVEN

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422. Gary R. Hess, "The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia: The SEATO Structure of Containment" in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye (eds.), *The Great Powers in Asia 1953–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp.272–295; Evelyn Colbert, *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941–1956* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1977), chapter 11.
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424. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p.415.
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427. *FEER*, 27 October 1988, p.17.
428. *FEER*, 22 June 1989, p.22.
429. Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, p.19.
430. Frederick Z. Brown, *Second Chance: The United States and Indochina in the 1990s* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989), p.41.
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432. Data from the Department of Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. [Reproduced in Om-anong Noi Wong, *Cambodia: Thai Foreign Policy Under the Prem Tinsulanond's Government* (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1998), p.149.] These figures include Foreign Military Sales, Military Assistance Programme, Economic Support Fund, International Military Education and Training Programme, and Development Assistance.
433. *Bangkok World*, 2 April 1985, p.1.
434. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, "Irreversible History? ASEAN, Vietnam, and The Polarisation of Southeast Asia," in Karl D. Jackson, Sukhumbhand Paribatra, and J. Soedjati Djiwandono (eds.), *ASEAN in Regional and Global Context* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), p.222.
435. *FEER*, 14 July 1983, p.12.
436. Richard T. Childless, "The Thai Challenge: Balancing the Superpower

Triangle Through a Period of Regional Change,” in Clark D. Neher and Wiwat Mungkandi (eds.), *US-Thailand in a New International Era* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1990), p.25.

437. Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965–2000* (Singapore: Times Editions, 2000), p.377. Lee said that he and his foreign minister managed to persuade the Americans to give modest aid to the two non-communist resistance forces.
438. Brown, *Second Chance*, p.6.
439. Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, pp.19–20.
440. Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, pp.28–29.
441. Wiwat Mungkandi, “Thai-American Relations in Historical Perspectives,” in Karl D. Jackson and Wiwat Mungkandi (eds.), *United States-Thailand Relations* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), p.4.
442. See J.H. Esterline, and M.H. Esterline, *How the Dominoes fell: Southeast Asia in Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986).
443. Sarasin Viraphol, personal interview, 11 January 2002. According to Sarasin, he himself and M.R. Kasem S. Kasemsri (who was the permanent secretary of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time) were the officials who first used the term ‘common denominator’ in this context.
444. Christopher Brady, *United States Foreign Policy towards Cambodia, 1977–92: A Question of Realities* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp.183–185.
445. Brown, *Second Chance*, p.6.
446. This assertion was made by an unnamed source interviewed by Michael Hass; in Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, p.15.
447. Data from the Political Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. [Reproduced in Noiwing, *Cambodia: Thai Foreign Policy Under the Prem Tinsulanond’s Government*, p.149.] The figures are made up of Foreign Military Sales, Military Assistance Programme, Economic Support Fund, International Military Education and Training Programme, and Development Assistance.

448. Clark D. Neher, "Changing Perceptions of US-Thai Relations," in Clark D. Neher and Wiwat Mungkandi (eds.), *US-Thailand in a New International Era* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1990), p.91.
449. Neher, "Changing Perceptions of US-Thai Relations," pp.85–86.
450. Siddhi Savetsila, Speech at the Asia Foundation, 6 October 1988.
451. *FEER*, 2 February 1989, p.63. Although some in Thailand said that the effect of this cut would not be highly significant, there were concerns that the US might extend its retaliation by applying section 301 of the US Trade Act which could hurt exports in non-GSP categories.
452. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) EAS-88-247*, 23 December 1988, p.56.
453. *Siamrath*, 23 January 1989.
454. *Thairath*, 25 January 1989.
455. *Bangkok Post*, 10 December 1988, p.1.
456. *Bangkok Post*, 10 December 1988, p.3.
457. *FEER*, 5 January 1989, p.66.
458. *Bangkok Post*, 13 January 1989.
459. Chatichai Choonhavan, Opening Address at the International Strategic Seminar organised by the Supreme Command, Thailand, on 23 April 1989. Excerpt is produced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, April 1989, p.13.
460. Kraisaak Choonhavan, personal interview, 14 December 2001; Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
461. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh. personal interview, 9 January 2002.
462. Text of Chatichai's Aide Memoire to President George Bush, reproduced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, February 1989, pp.13–14.
463. Surakiart Sathirathai, in an interview with *The Nation*, in *The Nation*, 1 March 1989, p.4.

464. Stephen J. Solarz, "Cambodia and the International Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1990, p.107.
465. *The Nation*, 13 April 1989.
466. *The Nation*, 1 March 1989, p.4.
467. Text of Chatichai's Aide Memoir to President George Bush, reproduced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, February 1989, p.13.
468. *Inter Press Service*, 16 November 1989.
469. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, May 1990, p.7.
470. Interview with Kraisaak Choonhavan, *Siamrath*, 29 August 1990. Kraisaak spoke of the triangular efforts of Bangkok-Washington-Tokyo.
471. See Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, p.110.
472. Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, p.115.
473. *Washington Post*, 20 July 1990.
474. Charan Kullavanijaya, personal interview, 10 January 2002.
475. *FEER*, 22 June 1989, p.22.
476. *The Associated Press*, 24 May 1990.
477. *International Herald Tribune*, 19 July 1990, p.1.
478. *The Independent*, 6 September 1990, p.14.
479. Hass, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States*, p.111.
480. *Bangkok Post*, 20 July 1990.
481. Ibid.
482. "Interview with Kraisaak Choonhavan," *Siamrath*, 26 August 1990.
483. Ibid.
484. Charivat Santaputra, personal interview, 25 December 2001.
485. *Washington Post*, 28 July 1990.

486. "Cambodian Peace Negotiations: Prospects for a Settlement," hearings before the Sub-Committee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 20 July and 19 September 1990, p.64 (101-1118). Cited in Brady, *United States Foreign Policy towards Cambodia*, p.153.
487. "United States Policy Toward Cambodia: Prospects for a Negotiated Settlement," hearings before the Sub-Committee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 12 September 1990, p.4. Cited in Brady, *United States Foreign Policy towards Cambodia*, p.153.
488. *Washington Post*, 20 July 1990.
489. Such occasions are, for example, during his meeting with US President George Bush in February 1989; and in his opening address at the International Strategic Seminar organised by Thailand's Supreme Command on 23 April 1989, (excerpt is produced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, April 1989, p.13.)
490. See, for example, Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in the Second World War* (Chicago University Press; Cambridge University Press, 1959); and R.P. Barston (ed.), *The Other Power: Studies in the Foreign Policies of Small States* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973).
491. Wiwat Mungkandi, "Changing Perceptions of Thai-US Relations," in Clark D. Neher and Wiwat Mungkandi (eds.), *US-Thailand in a New International Era* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1990), p.80.
492. Data from the Customs Department, Ministry of Finance, Thailand, published in *Statistical Handbook of Thailand* (Bangkok: National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister, multiple years).
493. Chatichai Choonhavan, speech at the National Institute of Development Administration, 10 February 1989. Cited in Mungkandi, "Changing Perceptions of Thai-US Relations," p.77.
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CHAPTER EIGHT

495. Borwornsak Uwanno, personal interview, 2 January 2002.
496. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletter*, May 1989, p.3.
497. Sukhumbhand Paribatra. personal interview, 8 January 2002.
498. *The Nation*, 18 March 1989.
499. Chatichai Choonhavan, "Thailand and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s," Opening Address at the Willamsburg XVII Conference, organised by the Asia Society, New York, and the Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University at Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 11–14 January 1990. Transcription is reproduced in *Thailand Foreign Affairs Newsletters*, January 1990, pp.9–13.
500. Siddhi Savetsila, personal interview, 25 January 2002.

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1. Some news articles are acquired from the Lexis-Nexis database.
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Nation Review

Phuchadkarn (in Thai)

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Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB)
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The Straits Times
The Sunday Times (Singapore)
Vitassara (in Thai)
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APPENDIX

DETAILS OF THE INTERVIEWS

A. THE INTERVIEWEES

The interviewees were identified so as to represent the groups which were most relevant in the case of Chatichai's foreign policy towards Indochina. Generally, they fell into four main groups: Chatichai's advisers, the military, Foreign Ministry officials, and Thai academics/experts on the subject. The following list provides the details of the interviewees. They are listed chronologically, with the date of each interview indicated at the end of each interviewee's detail. The information in the brackets after the names of the interviewees is their positions during the Chatichai government. The current positions of each interviewee were correct at the time of the interviews. It must also be noted that one high-ranking official at the Thai Ministry of Defence wished to remain anonymous.

1. Mr. Kraisak Choonhavan (adviser to Chatichai, 1988–91), Currently Chairman of the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee, Thailand. [14 December 2001]
2. Professor Suchit Bunbongkan, Professor of Politics and International Relations, and currently Thailand's Constitutional Court judge. [19 December 2001]

3. Mr. Sunai Phasuk, Cambodia Specialist. Currently a programme manager of the Asian Network for Free Elections, Forum-Asia, Thailand. [20 December 2001]

4. Professor Kusuma Snitwongse, Chairperson of the Advisory Board, Institute of Security and International Studies, Thailand. [21 December 2001]

5. Mr. Arsa Sarasin (Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1991–92). Currently Chairman of Padaeng Industries, Plc. [24 December 2001]

6. Dr. Charivat Santaputra (Siddhi's close aide). Currently Deputy Director-General, Department of International Organisations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. [25 December 2001]

7. Professor Borwornsak Uwanno (adviser to Chatchai, 1988–91). Currently Secretary-General of the King Prapokklao Institute, Thailand. [2 January 2002]

8. Mr. Norachit Singhaseni (Siddhi's Chief-of-Staff). Currently Director-General of the Department of East Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. [4 January 2002]

9. M.R. Kasem S. Kasemsri (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1986–90). Currently Managing Executive, Cerberus Co. [8 January 2002]

10. M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra (adviser to Chatchai, 1988–89). Currently a Member of Parliament for the Democrat Party, representing a Bangkok constituency. [8 January 2002]
11. General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (Acting Supreme Commander and Army Commander). Currently Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Thailand. [9 January 2002]
12. Colonel Dhanadetch Pringthongfoo (Chavalit's close aide). Currently a senior staff member in the Office of the Secretaries to the Minister of Defence, Thailand. [9-10 January 2002]
13. General Charan Kullavanijaya (Political-Military Co-ordinator). Currently an adviser to the Thai-Rak-Thai Party, Thailand. [10 January 2002]
14. Dr. Sarasin Viraphol (Siddhi's close aide, a high-ranking Foreign Ministry official). Currently Executive Vice President of CP Group, Thailand. [11 January 2002]
15. Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana (Deputy Secretary-General of the National Security Council). Currently Secretary-General of the National Security Council, Thailand, [14 January 2002]
16. Air Chief Marshall Siddhi Savetsila (Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1980–1990). Currently a Privy Councillor. [21, 25 January 2002]

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEWS

All interviews were held in Bangkok during December 2001–January 2002. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour and most interviews were not tape-recorded. The interviews were qualitative and semi-structured in the sense that although general questions and issues were specified, the interviewer was more free to probe beyond the answers in a manner which would not have been the case in structured interviews. However, the interviews were not open-ended but were designed to focus on relevant issues. The interviewees were given in advance both a brief summary of the research and a set of questions and issues on which the discussion would be mainly based. Nevertheless, there was flexibility and variation in the interviews, depending on each interviewee's position in relation to Chatichai's policy. During the interviews, I sought both clarification and elaboration on the answers given. All interviews were conducted in Thai language. Utmost care was given to the translation into English so as to ensure the accuracy of the meaning.

C. QUESTIONS AND ISSUES GIVEN TO THE INTERVIEWEES

To give the interviewees some general ideas and scope of what the discussion would focus on, they were provided in advance a set of questions and issues as follows:

1. policy initiation

- What do you think were the main reasons behind this policy?

2. implementation

- What are your views about the implementers and their roles?

- What do you think about the timing of the policy?

3. Responses to the policy

- How did you interpret the responses from Thailand's domestic groups, ASEAN, China, the US, and the Indochinese countries?

- What kind of impacts do you think these responses had on the policy and its performance?

- To what extent were the responses anticipated?

4. Success/ failure of the policy

- Do you consider General Chatichai's policy towards the Cambodian conflict a success? If so, which aspects were successful?

- To what extent was the success/failure influenced by responses of other countries to the policy?

D. MY REFLECTION OF THE INTERVIEWS

I found the interviews useful mainly because, in many cases, the interviewees offered first-hand experiences and accounts of the events which were significant additions to the information already available. Also, to have an opportunity to discuss the issues in person with the interviewees allowed me not only to hear their views but also to see their gestures which, in some cases, clearly indicated how passionately they felt about particular issues. The fact that the events in question happened more than a decade ago probably enabled the interviewees to speak more freely about them. However, this method also has its limitations, as it depends on the memories and recollection of the interviewees. One scholar has pointed out that memories could be skewed by the human tendency to remember best what was done best, or bent by the better judgement of hindsight,

or simply softened and dulled by the passage of time.⁵⁰³ By seeking to interview key figures on the different sides of the policy (for instance, the advisers and the Foreign Ministry officials), it was hoped that these problems would be partly overcome. Like other methods of conducting a research, interviews have their advantages and disadvantages. By seeking to minimise the latter, I found that interviewing is a useful method which formed an important part of this research. The information from the interviews was used in conjunction with other relevant primary and secondary sources.

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