

THAILAND AS A PENETRATED POLITICAL SYSTEM

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The Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the concept of penetration [as a political phenomenon] and its relevance to United States-Thai relations from 1949 to 1968. Before any of the relevant data pertaining to the United States-Thai relations for the given period can be analyzed or categorized, a definition of terms is immediately necessary. *Penetration* as it will be used here, refers to that particular political phenomenon by which members of a given national society (U.S.) play an active role in exerting influence upon another national society (Thailand). United States' penetration, as it applies to Thailand, shall be interpreted as the effect produced by official and unofficial Americans on the Thai political system through persuasion and example without the use of force or direct control.

It is well recognized that the word "penetrated" is often used to connote subversive activities.¹ No such interpretation is intended here, for as Rosenau explains "a penetrated system can be authoritarian or democratic, dynamic or static, modern or primitive" with penetrated processes conceived "to be legitimate and authoritarian for the society in which they unfold."² Moreover, the primary concern of this study is to describe the evolutionary process by which Thailand became a penetrated political system and not to investigate legitimacy or any other related political concept in the traditionally legal context.

National society is purposely used in place of the less flexible terms like *nation* or *state* to better conceive of the national system as "an interaction unit"³ with boundaries defined more in terms of activities than by legalities.⁴ Generally, a *penetrated political system* is characterized by "nonmembers of a national society actively participating, usually directly and authoritatively, through actions taken jointly with the societies members, in either the allocation of its values or the mobilization of support on behalf of its goals."⁵ The active role played by these nonmembers is described by Rosenau as follows:

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¹The Meeker Memorandum representing the official U.S. legal defense on the Vietnam situation, speaks of North Vietnamese "penetration" into South Vietnam as an instance of "indirect aggression".

²James N. Rosenau, "External and Internal Relationships," in R.B. Farrell ed., *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics*. (Evanston, 1966), p.65.

³*Ibid.*, p.62.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, p.65.

These members not only exert influence upon national systems but actually participate in the processes through which such systems allocate values, coordinate goal-directed efforts, and legitimately employ coercion. They not only engage in bargaining with the system, but they actually bargain within the system, taking on behalf of one or another of its components. Most important, the participation positions of nonmembers of the society in value-allocative and goal-attainment processes is accepted by both its officialdom and its citizenry, so that the decisions to which nonmembers contribute are no less authoritative and legitimate than those in which they do not participate. Such external penetration may not always be gladly accepted by the officials and citizens of a society, but what renders decisions legitimate and authoritative is that they are felt to be binding, irrespective of whether they are accepted regretfully or willingly.⁶

Generally it is proposed that the United States' *goal* in Thailand is to provide for vital functions of government and the necessary stability to *cope with the communist threat*. While containment of communism is the main goal of the United States in Thailand, other significant and somewhat related objectives are pursued. Modernization, in furthering economic expansion and to a lesser degree, democratic institutions, are other less significant objectives. Most specifically it is proposed that:

1. The United States, through evolutionary processes of involvement (i.e. trade, aid, etc.) has "penetrated" the Thai political system.
2. The primary objectives of United States' penetration are containment of communism and economic expansion.

The primary sources for the data are The New York Times, The U.S. State Department Bulletin, The Bangkok Post, The Bangkok World, several Thai newspapers, and books and articles written by Frank Darling, Virginia Thompson and Walter F. Vella.

The research will involve a study of Two main periods. The First period (1949-1958) represents the significant years in which the United States began playing an active role both within the Thai political system and from with out , through the initiation and promotion of large scale economic and military assistance programs.

The Second period [1958 - 1968] could be divided into two periods. The years 1958-1963 represent a period of almost one-man rule under Field Marshall Sarit, whose unchallenged position was obtained, and then promoted and supported, by use of United States military assistance. The years 1964 -1968 was the most significant period of United States penetration, with increases evident on all levels of the Thai national system.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.64, Also see David Easton "The Perception of Authority and Political Change", in Carl J. Friedrich, ed. *Authority* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 181-199.

UNITED STATES' PENETRATION 1949-1958

The United States' most significant penetration in this crucial period of Thai politics took the form of a grand assistance program in an attempt to seek-out and support a viable anti-communist regime. The immediate result was a chaotic move toward complete military dictatorship, and succession of governments through military coup. As Vella states, "After February, 1949, all Thai political leaders had in effect accepted force as a legitimate basis for government."⁷ The United States military aid was at first used more for the purposes of enhancing the positions of internal rivals, than for any external communist threat. A shining example of the abortive role United States military assistance sometimes play is exemplified in what has since come to be known as the "Manhattan Affair."

The Manhattan was a United States warship of World War II stock, which on June 29, 1951 was to be turned over by American officials to the Thai government. However, during the official ceremony aboard the ship Prime Minister Phibun was kidnapped by navy officials who had long been dissatisfied with Phibun's policy of favoring the Thai army, police and air force at the expense of the Thai navy. In an attempt to appease the shock and dismay of the United States officials in Thailand, the navy officials declared, "We did not intend to insult much appreciated goodwill to Siam, but we were compelled by patriotic motives."⁸

An attempt was made for several hours to negotiate the differences between the navy rebels and the government, but this effort failed with each side accusing the other of being "communist inspired."⁹ The following day bitter fighting broke out in Bangkok with the army, police and air force pitted against the navy and the marines. The army and police shelled naval installations while the air force bombed naval strong posts including the flagship "Sri Ayudhya" on which Phibun was held captive. Phibun dove from the ship as it was sinking and swam to shore.¹⁰ Phibun eventually made his way to territory controlled by the loyal government forces, where he made an appeal through broadcast to the navy rebels to stop fighting. Soon after Phibun's plea the navy surrendered. The abortive coup lasted three days and caused a reported 603 civilian casualties and 3,000 military casualties in addition to extensive destruction of public and private property.¹¹ The indirect role the United States played in the abortive revolt did not go wholly unnoticed. The air force was equipped with a considerable number of good American made aircraft manned by competent American trained pilots, and this was a major factor for the govern-

⁷Vella, p. 132.

⁸Time, (July 9, 1951)

⁹New York Times, (July 8, 1957) p.7.

¹⁰The Bangkok Post (July 2, 1951)

¹¹Darling, p. 237.

ment victory.¹² For many days after the incident, "American guns killed out people" became a much voiced rumour around Bangkok.¹³

However, the incident did not seriously deter the United States' role in the Thai political system. For after 1951, the real power was in the hands of General Phin, Pao and Sarit, but, as Darling maintains the ruling military clique "decided to retain Phibun because he was now extremely popular with the Americans and he could maintain the cordial relations which enabled Thailand to receive much desired military and economic aid.¹⁴" On December 2, 1951 the Ratprahan [ruling military clique] seized the government and established themselves as a "Provisional Executive Committee"¹⁵ headed by Phibun. The Phibun government now exercised virtually unlimited power, with all opposition considered Communist inspired. The Communist threat was used as an excuse to arrest striking railroad workers, to impose increased censorship on the local press, and finally to overthrow the 1949 constitution.¹⁶ United States officials in Thailand did not show much dismay over the undemocratic developments, because the major United States objectives were still being pursued by the Thai government. These objectives being, "to keep the government [Thai] closely allied to the Western bloc so it could serve as an advanced base in the struggle against Communism and a source of raw materials."¹⁷ As Thompson states, "Despite misgivings about the increasingly undemocratic trend of its government, the Western powers have courted Thailand because of food surpluses, its exports of such valuable commodities as rubber, tin and teak, and its prevailing conservatism."¹⁸ The general effect of Secretary of State Dulles stress on regional security, the result of the Geneva conference, and the subsequent SEATO agreement in 1954 caused the Thai political system to evolve even further away from the Western values of constitutional and democratic government and more toward traditional authoritarian rule.

In 1954, when Secretary Dulles called for a policy of "united action" and advocated a military pact for Asia, the British proposed that stress on an economic agreement would do more to promote the stability of the area.²⁰ Thailand reacted to Dulles' proposal warmly and even offered the use of military bases in Thailand, and subsequently joined in the signing of the first

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹³*New York Times*, (July 5, 1951), p. 10.

¹⁴Darling, p. 20.

¹⁵*The Bangkok Post.*, Nov. 30, 1951.

¹⁶*The Bangkok Post.*, January-December 1, 1951.

¹⁷Darling, p. 245.

¹⁸Virginia Thompson, "Thailand: Nationalism and Prosperity", *Current History* (August, 1952), p. 97.

¹⁹*New York Times*, April 7, 1954, p. 1.

²⁰*Ibid.*, April 14, 1954, p. 1.

Asian-Western collective defense agreement in history-the South East Asia Treaty Organization. However, Dulles made United States intentions clear when he added a special clause to the original agreement which bound the United States to the treaty“only” in the advent of“communist aggression.” In the event of other aggression the United States agreed to “consult” with the other member nations.²¹ In 1954 the United States agreed to build a 297 mile strategic highway [Friendship Highway] into northeastern Thailand at a cost of 30 million dollars, and to assist in building modern airfields to handle jet aircraft, coupled with increased economic aid with the primary objective now being “to bear the burden of defense preparedness.”²²

The United States clearly showed where its real interests lie in the years following the formation of SEATO which produced a marked decrease of United States’ support of technical cooperation [by 4,200,000] that was in turn transferred to defense support.

American Aid Expenditures in Thailand
[1952 - 1956] ²³

U.S. FISCAL YEAR	TECHNICAL COOPERATION	ECONOMIC AID [Defense Support]
	\$	\$
1952	7,200,000	—
1953	6,500,000	—
1954	8,800,000	—
1955	4,600,000	29,700,000
1956	4,800,000	29,500,000
1957 ²⁴	4,500,000	30,000,000

This rapid increase and expansion of the Thai military placed a great burden on the Thai economy, and the Thai leaders after 1955 began to express a desire to transfer United States’

²¹Following the special provision entitled “Understanding of the United States of America” is stated that “The United States of America is executing the present treaty does so with the understanding that its recognition of the effect of aggression and armed attack and its agreement with reference there to in Article IV, paragraph 1, apply only to communist aggression or armed attack it will consult under the provision of Article IV, paragraph 2.” *The SEATO Treaty* (September 8, 1954).

²²U.S. State Department Bulletin, XXVI (July 26, 1954).

²³Thailand - U.S. Technical and Economic Cooperation 1951-1956, International Cooperation Administration (May, 1956).

²⁴New York Times, May 21, 1957, p.9.

aid from the military to economic programs.²⁵ However, Secretary of State Dulles strongly opposed this suggestion, and emphatically states "The United States military and economic air programs are well-balanced and there is no reason for change."²⁶ Dulles position was supported by the visiting Admiral Radford, who stated in Bangkok, that "the large American military aid programs in Thailand would continue."²⁷ A major factor in obtaining increased military assistance was the influence exerted by Major General William J. Donovan, who was then United States Ambassador to Thailand. Donovan already had a fine reputation in Thailand as the former head of the O.S.S. during World War II, and for his support and close collaboration with Pridi and the Free Thai movement. Donovan was Eisenhower's personal choice for the job, and his primary objective was "to prepare the country for an eventual Communist assault."²⁸ Ironically enough, Donovan was assigned to assist Phibun, who had collaborated with the Japanese during World War II, while Pridi, who had courageously served the O.S.S. during the war, was in Peking cooperating with the Chinese Communists.²⁹ As Ambassador, Donovan kept in close contact with President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles, through frequent trips and numerous talks in which he constantly stressed the need for increased United States military assistance to Thailand. Moreover, while accompanying the Thai military and police officers on inspection tours of the threaten border provinces, Donovan continually emphasized the need for a strong military defense.³⁰ Donovan also exerted his influence to increase the size of the Thai police force to balance the expanding power of the Thai army, to prevent either one from becoming too dominant. Donovan's successor John E. Peurifoy had recently received wide acclaim for his decisive role in the ouster of the pro-Communist Arbanz regime in Guatemala. He also proved an excellent manipulator of power within the Thai political system, to maintain the necessary momentum to achieve United States' objectives in Thailand. As Darling points out:

Noting the rapidly expanding power of the police force under General Phao, Peurifoy exhibited a general tendency to increase American support of the Thai army, thus continuing the policy initiated by Donovan to maintain an internal balance of power His primary objective in Thailand was to assist its development into a major defence base for the security of Southeast Asia and to keep the Thai government alert to the Communist threat."³¹

²⁵Darling, p.239.

²⁶The Bangkok Post, March 24, 1956.

²⁷*Ibid.* July 30, 1965.

²⁸Newsweek, July 26, 1954.

²⁹Darling, p. 260.

³⁰The Bangkok Post, March 29, 1954.

³¹Darling, pp. 261-262.

The Bandung Conference posed a momentary threat to United States strategy in Thailand as Thai attitudes toward the Communist bloc appeared less hostile. There occurred a new support for neutralism and even proposals for trade, with Red China. Several leaders of Thailand's opposition party took advantage of the temporary thaw in relations and accepted the Communist Chinese invitation to visit China. However, further friendly developments in Thai - Chinese relations were quickly curbed by repressive actions by the Thai government in which the United States through its SEATO agencies played no small part. After 1955, United States officials, who through SEATO inevitably became more involved in the Thai political system, "used the SEATO organization primarily to install a stronger fear of Communism in the Thai government and people."³² Moreover, only SEATO committee meetings dealing with military affairs and subversion have received significant United States support. The effect of the anti-Communist drive of the SEATO organization on the Thai political system was evident even in closing months of 1955, when in October the Thai government announced that since Thailand was a SEATO member, it could not honor the many appeals for the release of political prisoners until the "foreign views" of other members[U.S.] were considered.³³ However, as United States interference in the Thai political system become more apparent, hostility also increased. In 1956 the growing hostility toward United States interference become more avert, with a likewise mounting opposition to the United States-supported Phibun government. Anti-government factions, which included leftists, opportunists, and many of the long time political opponents of the ruling military clique, criticized United States military aid and the SEATO alliance. The government opposition charged that the United States was controlling the Thai government,³⁴ and further accused the United States of competing in the rice trade and causing the low prices for rubber and tin, and of failing to increase economic aid.³⁵

In 1957 the Phibun government feeling that it was in a secure enough position to withstand any opposition called for a public mandate through general elections. As Darling points out:

³²*Ibid.*, p. 268. The practice of U.S. officials of instilling the fear of Communism in the hearts and minds of Thai people via U.S. agencies in Thailand is still widely employed. While a Peace Corps teacher in a small town in Northern Thailand, I and my students had the unpleasant experience of having to sit through several propaganda movies distributed by USIS(U.S. Information Service)through the Thai Mobile Development Units (MDU). The Anti-communist message was always clear, with one such movie even representing the Communists as a giant red blob expanding and oozing out over Thailand. The grotesque movement of red blob over the map of Southeast Asia was accompanied by tense frightening background music. Upon requesting an explanation from the lone American with the MDU team, he nonchalantly replied "We wanted to show this movie six years ago but the government (Thai) found it too objectionable. However, now (January, 1966) we have a free hand to show almost anything we wish....." Don't you ? " (As recorded in my Diary-Journal, January 26, 1966.)

³³The Bangkok Post, October 18, 1955.

³⁴*Ibid.*, January 13, 1966.

³⁵New York Times., June 10, 1957, p. 13.

“The desire of Phibun to obtain a large turn out for the elections also revealed the desire of the Thai Government to give appearance of having wide popular support regardless of the fact that the representatives who were elected by the people would have little of any significant influence on the policies of the government.”³⁶

The election took place on March 21, 1957 and took the government completely by surprise as early returns at the polls showed most of the civilian opposition candidates leading. However, a barrage of ballots were cast just before the polls closed and the government managed a slight majority.

Ballot box stuffing and other all too obvious irregularities in Phibun's desperate attempt to salvage the election caused much public resentment and posed a major moral defeat for the Phibun government. Some provincial capitals [e.g. Uttaradit] reported more votes for Phibun-supported candidates than there were eligible voters.³⁷ At Chulalongkon University about 2,000 students protested the irregularities of the elections in a mass rally in which they lowered the flag to half-mast “in memory of dead democracy.”³⁸ In an attempt to quell public resentment Phibun declared a state of emergency, banned all public gatherings, and put Sarit in charge of the armed forces and police to carry out his dictates. As Darling asserts, “Army troops armed with American tanks and machine guns seized strategic posts throughout Bangkok while the Royal Air Force using American-made jet fighters flew low level flight a few hundred feet over the city.”³⁹ Kukrit Pramoj, a highly respected man of royal birth and leader of the Progressive Party, asserted that this oppressive and intimidating display of government military power “put terror in the hearts of the people and destroyed their morale.”⁴⁰ Three days after the demonstration, Thai delegates to the SEATO Conference asserting that the anti-government demonstration was a Communist plot stated, “Thailand is on the side of the free world, therefore you can guess it must be a country in the Communist bloc which engineered and supported the trouble.”⁴¹ The general “acceptance of the excuse that all internal opposition to the Phibun government was Communist-inspired.”⁴² Kukrit Pramoj, was arrested for insulting the United States Ambassador Max Bishop for the United States role in suppression of Thai opposition, in his newspaper.⁴³ The arrest of the popular Kukrit and the

³⁶Darling, p. 281.

³⁷*Ibid*, p. 326.

³⁸*New York Times*, March 3, 1957, p. 34.

³⁹Darling, p. 326

⁴⁰*Siam Rath Weekly Review*, March 21, 1957.

⁴¹*The Bangkok Post*, March 4, 1957.

⁴²Darling, p.337.

⁴³*The Bangkok Post*, April 2, 1957.

exposing of the facts about the role of the American-owned Sea Supply Company in providing arms and training to the Thai police,⁴⁴ only increased public opposition to the Phibun regime. Sarit, whose power and prestige was increasing as fast as Phibun's was diminishing, requested Phibun's resignation. When he refused, Sarit staged a bloodless coup using army troops equipped with American arms to seize government by force.⁴⁵ Sarit had only Pao's opposition to deal with, which he proceeded to successfully crush with his superior American military equipment which was generously allocated by the United States aid officials in an attempt now to offset the internal balance of power, and back the staunch anti-Communist pro-American Sarit.⁴⁶ At first Sarit assumed only the role of a manipulator in the background, allowing Pote Sarasin to become Prime Minister, and also tolerating another experiment with democracy, by proposing another election to take the place of the fraudulent election under Phibun. Pote continued many of the policies of the Phibun government in defending Thailand's pro-American foreign policy and Thai membership in SEATO despite the opposition in the Thai press.⁴⁷ As the local opposition increased Sarit expressed a desire to intensify the suppression of these "Communist inspired" groups to ensure continued American trust, confidence, and aid.⁴⁸ Just what comprised a "Communist" was rather dubious, and as Darling points out; "By 1958 the charge that the Communist threat had increased and a plot was underway against the government had pretty well become a standard practice by the party in power any time it faced serious internal opposition."⁴⁹

Sarit, became impatient with the Pote government and on October 21, 1958 he led the Thai army supported by United States Sherman tanks in occupation of Bangkok's strategic points. Simultaneously, the police began a sweeping arrest of newspaper editors, writers, labor leaders, teachers, students, and businessmen who were accused of being Communist or Communist sympathizers.⁵⁰ Sarit, upon taking the official reigns of government, declared martial law, abolished the 1952 Constitution, dissolved the Assembly, and banned all political parties.⁵¹ Soon afterwards, the Revolutionary Party [Sarit's supporters] declared that all persons arrested in violation of the new improved anti-Communist Act would be prosecuted without recourse to the Civil Courts and instead would be tried by a military court martial.⁵² The immediate reaction of United States officials in Bangkok upon hearing that Sarit would continue the pro-United States foreign policy

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, July 27, 1957.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, September 17, 1957.

⁴⁶Darling, p. 336.

⁴⁷*New York Times*, September 23, 1958 p.3.

⁴⁸*The Bangkok Post*, October 20, 1958.

⁴⁹Darling, p. 351.

⁵⁰*New York Times*, October 22, 1958, P.7.

⁵¹*The Bangkok Post*, October 20, 1958.

⁵²*New York Times*, October 22, 1958, p.7.

was reported as one of relief and gratitude. As one official stated; : We are gratified to hear that Sarit is considered most definitely favorable to the United States.”⁵³ American businessmen in Thailand, like the United States government, accommodated themselves to the military dictatorship and expressed their support for a stable and efficient government regardless of government suppression of individual freedom.⁵⁴

With the rise of Sarit to absolute power United States influence was even greater expanded within the Thai political system. Within a year [1958 – 1959] Sarit managed to eliminate all political opposition and most remnants of constitutional government. The virtual one-man rule which persisted until Sarit’s death [1963] greatly aided the efficient and expedient medium by which the United States officials implemented United States programs and objectives within the Thai political system. The general official United States attitude toward the Thai military dictatorship, which has continued to the present, was expressed by the Advisor to President Johnson on Far Eastern Affairs, Ulexis A. Johnson. In 1966 he said of the Thai military government;

“Its record since 1938 demonstrates that the lack of a constitutional structure and the domination of a government by men in uniform is less important than the attitudes and achievements of the governing group. What some would term a military government in Thailand has been able to avoid repression and achieve a remarkably high degree of “consent of the government” while pursuing progressive economic policies. [*State Dept., Bulletin* vol. LV, No. 1426, 1966 p. 640]”

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Briefly reviewing this significant period [1949–1958], some general conclusions as to the role of the United States in “penetrating” the Thai political system can be drawn. It becomes quite evident that the increase of United States military aid during this period closely coincides with a subsequent narrowing of the Thai political base and a general move further away from constitutional democracy. However, in all fairness to the successive military governments vague and unwilling attempts at parliamentary government, it can also be shown that the general Thai public and members of the Assembly were largely unprepared for accepting democratic responsibilities. Many of the Assemblymen in opposing the policies of the Phibun government had little sense of compromise.⁵⁵ This problem was further complicated by the general confusion

⁵³The Bangkok Post, October 22, 1958.

⁵⁴Darling, p.342.

generated by the United States in supporting almost diametrically opposing objectives. On the one hand the United States officially propagated that their primary purpose in Thailand was to promote and defend the democratic way of life, while on the other hand the United States promoted a staunch and stable anti-Communist Thai government at any cost in individual freedom. Unofficially the latter objective was the primary purpose of United States interest in Thailand, and many a Thai patriot whose democratic expectations were excited by the initial United States interest in economic assistance and educational exchange, became wholly disillusioned.

The real United States interests became even more evident after 1954 when the majority of economic assistance began to be used for defense support. In general, United States military assistance served more for the purpose of suppression of local Thai opposition than in containing Communist expansion. Actually the Communist threat to Thailand during this period was almost non-existent but being grossly exaggerated by both American and Thai officials, it resulted in the death and imprisonment of many persons who merely opposed the party in power.⁵⁶ In the years 1948 to 1951 the only effective opposition [the Royalist Party] was quelled by the military faction through an Anti-Communist campaign which was supported by United States military aid and then approved by the United States officials in Thailand.⁵⁷ Another result of the increase in United States military assistance was a greater dependency of the Thai government upon United States approval in the formulation of both domestic and foreign policy. Often the United States influence represented the most significant variable, when the Thai military clique was deciding upon a new prime minister, SEATO chairman, or any new government action or designed to alter the Thai political system.

Close cooperation between the two governments greatly increased during this period with both the Thai government and the United States government professing "common interest" as the basis of the union. Common interest for the Thai government meant a common fear of Communism and an eagerness in receiving all available United States assistance to promote both the United States Anti-Communist objectives and their own personal common interests. Common interest for the United States meant the building of Thailand as a stauncher anti-Communist ally, and an expansion of United States economic interests in Thailand. To accomplish their objectives, the United States played upon the personal economic and political interests of prominent Thai military leaders [i.e. Phibun, Sarit], to gain a foothold within the Thai political system. The United States eventually strengthened their position within the Thai political system by introducing American military and civilian advisors, technicians, and teachers at virtually every level of the Thai political bureaucracy.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 377.

This "penetration" by the United States into the Thai political system has only continued to strengthen the above-mentioned political phenomena. The "semi-scientific" content analysis of United States' "penetration" in Thailand for the years 1958 – 1968 which follows gives further evidence of the continuation of United States penetration in Thai political processes to contain communism and advance United States economic interests.

UNITED STATES PENETRATION OF THAI POLITICAL PROCESSES

[1958 – 1969]

Ordinarily the United States aid missions have stayed aloof from local administrative differences, but there have been instances like that in Thailand where the mission served as a liaison unit among several departments of a ministry, enabling them to carry out important tasks that never would have been done otherwise.⁵⁸

THE METHOD

A content analysis of the U.S. Department Bulletin is employed in a survey of United States – Thai relations for the period 1958 – 1968. All "instances of penetration," represented by United States nationals [nonmembers] influencing the Thai political system either by persuasion or example, were subsequently recorded. General "instances of United States penetration" include military and economic assistance, bilateral treaties and agreements, United States corporate business and other non-government agreements, good will tours, official visits by high ranking United States nationals in the government, training of Thai nationals in the United States, defence conferences, official pronouncements, and United States military excesses and troop movements in Thailand, initiation of "special" United States communication media [i.e. U.S.I.S. anti-communist movies program, Voice of America, United States military and anti-communist exhibits, etc]

In determining "instances of penetration" the usual strict word count type of content analysis was avoided. Rather, "instances of penetration", are represented by activities, and pronouncements, to which an entire article [i.e. LBJ's speech in Bangkok] is devoted. Those treaties and agreements for which no text was presented were usually enumerated in the back of each weekly publication under the heading "Bilateral Agreements."

These "instances of penetration" are systematically categorized based upon the nature of penetration. The seven categories are represented as follows:

- I. Treaties and Agreements [and joint Communiques]
- II. Educational exchange.
- III. Loans and other assistance.

⁵⁸John B. Montgomery, *The Politics of Foreign Aid*. (New York).

- IV. Promotion of United States economic objectives.
- V. Direct United States involvement to reduce subversion or carry out other military objectives in Thailand.
- VI. Conferences [SEATO] and Pronouncements and requests for assistance to support anti-Communist objectives.
- VII. Good will tours and other visits.

A rather arbitrary method was used in determining what kind of penetration characterized category III as opposed to category IV. Example of the specific instances of penetration are presented below to better illustrate the rationale in characterizing instances of penetration in the various categories.

I. Treaties and Agreements

- 1. Agreement relating to the establishment of a Peace Corps program in Thailand. Effected by exchange of notes at Bangkok, November 20 and 28, 1961. Entered in force November 28, 1961 [1962]⁵⁹
- 2. United States and Thailand Sign Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations-Thanat Khoman and Graham Martin signed at Bangkok on May 29 1966. [Ratified by Senate in July, 1966]. [1966]⁶⁰
- 3. Satellite Communications System-Supplimentary agreement on arbitration. Done at Washington, D.C. June 4, 1965. Signed at Bangkok November 21, 1966. Entered into force November 21, 1966. [Vol. LV, No. 1433, Dec. 12, 1966, p. 906]
- 4. Agreement extending the loan of a destroyed escot to Thailand. Effected by an exchange of notes at Bangkok, April 22, 1965. Entered into force April 22, 1965. [1965]⁶¹

II. Educational Exchange

- 1. United States and Thailand entered into an Educational Exchange agreement... It provides broadened and more flexible authority for visits and interchange by professors, students, and research scholars.....Since 1951 more than 300 Thai nationals have been awarded grants under the program for teaching and study in the United States. Eighty percent of these received advanced degrees in the

⁵⁹U.S. State Department Bulletin., Vol. XLVI., No. 1183 (Feb. 26, 1962) p. 350.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, vol. LIV. No. 1408 (June 20, 1966) p. 991.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, vol. LII No. 1352 (May 24, 1965) p.834.

United States before returning to Thailand. During the same period 13 Americans have gone to Thailand under similar grants. [1963]⁶²

2. Agreement for financing certain educational programs. Signed at Bangkok, May 24, 1963. Entered in force May 24, 1963.

III. Loans and other assistance [e.g. military and economic aid].

1. The United States and the Government of Thailand signed an agreement on April 10, at Washington, D.C. by which the D.L.F. will lend Thailand \$1,750,000 to be used by the Ports Authority of that country for the purchase of a 2,000 cubic meter hopper dredge to help maintain the channel of the Chao Phraya River at the port of Bangkok. [1959]⁶⁴
2. United States pledges \$12 million to Mekong River Project and Nom Ngum project in Thailand. [1966]⁶⁵

IV. Promotion of United States Economic Objectives

1. D.L.F. Loan to Thailand - "It should be borne in mind that the great majority of the loans authorized by D.L.F. in the public sector will have important benefits for [American] private enterprise..... [1958]⁶⁶
2. Thai - United States cooperation by Ambassador U.A. Johnson, "Also, very importantly and significantly for the United States, Thailand has adopted the philosophy of encouraging private enterprise and private foreign investment as the road to economic development..... A few American firms have already established themselves and some others are seriously considering various manufacturing enterprises, for, while modest in size, Thailand offers an attractive market for many goods." [1960]⁶⁷
3. United States and Thailand sign tax convention - "certain provisions of the convention will reduce United States taxes and thereby the overall cost of financing with respect to certain United States business activities in Thailand." [1965]⁶⁸

⁶²*Ibid.*, vol. XLVIII., No. 1251, (June 17, 1963) p.945.

⁶³*Ibid.*, vol. XLVIII, No. 1252, (June 24, 1963) p.998.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 1959, p. 598.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, vol. LIV, No. 1397, (April 4 1966) p.552.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 1958, p. 1065.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, vol. XLII, No. 1995, (June 20, 1960) p.1001.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, vol. LII, No. 1343, (March 22, 1965) pp. 437-8.

4. Private investment team made up of United States businessmen and United States government officials sent to assist Thailand. Six months later the team reported "By and large current conditions in Thailand for new private investment provide a base which must be preserved and which can be extended. Unlike many other countries, there is little, if any hostility toward private business, and foreign capital enjoys freedom of entry and exit. Internal security to persons and property is good. The skillful management of the country's internal and external finances has produced the kind of stability conducive to investment, particularly foreign investment which seeks maximum freedom to remit earnings and repatriate capital. There is every indication of a labor force which is adaptable, reliable and increasingly skilled technically. Underlying all these favorable factors is a country agriculturally rich and potentially capable of supporting a greater population at increasingly higher levels of living with consequent expansion of the local market. [1959]⁶⁹
5. Funds requested to Finance Export Expansion Program. "Our commercial staffs abroad will be expected to increase their efforts to develop specific opportunities for United States exports and generally improve the services which they offer. This means more personal attention and assistance to American businessmen and more time spent with the foreign business community. Our embassy staffs will also devote more time to assisting and supporting the increased level of trade fairs, trade missions, and travel promotion being planned. In Bangkok our mission will be expected to provide general supervision and local personnel for the permanent United States trade centers being planned for those cities as part of the export program." [1960]⁷⁰
6. Thailand in 1959 introduced a complete ban against imports from Communist China.....About 70 types of goods are subject to individual import license because their importation is considered unduly competitive with locally produced items. None of these items so restricted is of significance in United States-Thai trade.....Thailand's exchange rate is free and stable, and importers may freely convert local currency into foreign exchange, including United States dollars for the settlement of bona fide commitments. [1960]⁷¹

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 1959, p.514.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, vol. XLIII, No. 1107, (Sept. 12, 1960) p.419.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, vol. XLII, No. 1092, (May 30, 1960) p.886.

V. Direct United States involvement to reduce subversion or carry out other United States military objectives in Thailand.

1. Thai countermeasures to Communist threat - "The security roads project which will be completed this year, will for the first time make two areas in the north and northeast Thailand - accessible to Thai security forces throughout the year. These roads will also bring as an extra dividend great economic benefits... In connection with internal security, we are engaged in retraining 16,000 provincial police. A similar but more intensive program has been carried out with the 6,300 men of the border police. We have supplied a portable radio transmitter in the northeast to help counter the powerful voices of Radio Peking and Radio Hanoi. This station, broadcasting mostly in the Northeast dialect, has become the most popular in the Northeast. Our military assistance is aimed at encouraging the Thai to continue in these directions and to make their armed forces more effective." [1965]⁷²
2. SEATO Announces 1963-1964 Schedule of Military Defense exercises....." from June 11 to 19, SEATO held its largest ground defense exercise Dhamarajata [Operation Sea Serpent], in Thailand, with that country and the United States as co-sponsors. [1963]⁷³
3. Dean Rusk ".....On May 13 we consulted with the Thai government and on May 15 our first units landed at Udorn, across the river from Laos. The Communist advance stopped..... We have recently concluded an agreement with Thailand for establishing logistic facilities and prepositioning equipment that would, in case of future necessity, even more rapid and effective deployment of American and other SEATO forces to that country. This will still further increase the military advantage we enjoy throughout much of the area of secure and controlled access by sea in addition to our access by air. An essential ingredient of any successful defense will, of course, always be the willingness and desire of the people attached vigorously to do all they can in their own defense. [1963]⁷⁴
4. V.O.A. [Voice of America] Begins Lao and Thai Language Broadcasts to Southeast Asia - opening statement by Dean Rusk. "These new Voice of America broadcasts which we inaugurate today are dedicated to the cause of better understanding and friendship between our country and yours..... I believe that these V.O.A. broadcasts will enable all of you to know and under-

⁷²*Ibid.*, vol. LII, No. 1345, (April 5, 1965) pp. 489-490.

⁷³*Ibid.*, vol. XLIX, No. 1275, (Dec. 2, 1963) p.863.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, vol. XLVII, No. 1244 (April 29, 1963) p. 638

- stand Americans better..... I welcome these broadcasts because they will serve as a constant reminder that we are united in a common effort. [1962]⁷⁵
5. Thai - United States Relations by Ambassador G. Martin ".....thus, among the 35,283 members of the American Armed Forces in Thailand, as of January 5, there were some 8,000 engaged in the construction and maintenance of strategic roadways, communications, networks, port facilities, military supply depots, and other installations which have been judged by SEATO members to be essential for the security of this area..... An American Special Forces unit has been deployed here on a training mission which will give Thailand additional military units skilled in counter-insurgency operations [1967]⁷⁶
 6. Thailand Grants United States Permission to Use U Tapao Airbase by Dean Rusk. "Another great contribution which Thailand has made to the allied war effort in Vietnam is the use of Thai military installations and facilities are made available by Thailand as a member of SEATO and are critically important to us as we carry out our part of the war effort. United States Air Force planes flying from Thai bases at Takhli, Udorn, Korat, Ubon and Nakorn Phanom are of immeasurable importance in meeting the aggression against South Vietnam. The completion of the air base at U Tapao and the Thai Government's decision to permit its use by B-52's will greatly increase the effectiveness of our air operations..... By its action today, Thailand has shown once again that it knows, as does the United States, that is by standing together as allies that we preserve our own independence and freedom." [1967]⁷⁷
 7. The United States and Thailand by G. Martin..... "During the past 3 years there have been literally hundreds of times when I have at the request of our Government, presented requests to the Thai for additional assistance..... Pending completion of training of Thai pilots, we provided last year at Thai request a company of unarmed American helicopters to provide the all-important element of mobility and logistical flexibility of Thai security units." [1967]⁷⁸
 8. President Sends Troops to Thailand by J.F.K. "A threat to Thailand is of grave concern to the United States. I have therefore ordered certain additional American military forces into Thailand in order that we may be in a position to fulfill speedily our obligation under the Manila Pact of 1954." [1962]⁷⁹

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, vol. XLVI, No. 1184, (March 5, 1962) p. 377.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, vol. LVI, No. 1441, (February 6, 1967) pp. 597-8.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, vol. LVI, No. 1457, (April 10, 1967) pp. 597-8.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, vol. LVI, No. 1458, (June 5, 1967) p. 851.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, vol. XLVI, No. 1197, (June 4, 1962) p. 904.

VI **Conferences [SEATO], Pronouncements, and requests for assistance to promote Anti-Communist Objectives.**

1. Request for economic aid by Dean Rusk. "In Thailand and Laos, it is necessary to conduct substantial economic aid programs to thwart increase Communist subversion and insurgency." [1967] ⁸⁰
2. SEATO Council Reaffirms Resolve to Repel Aggression by Dean Rusk. ".....and we as a Council have expressed concern with the continuing serious threat of subversion to the Asian member countries to Thailand in particular. The members of the Council have reiterated their determination to do whatever is necessary to assist their ally to eliminate this threat." [1967] ⁸¹
3. Joint Communique—The Vice President of the United States [L.B.J.] and Prime Minister of Thailand [Sarit] have completed a series of meetings during the Vice President's visit to Thailand over the past few days..... Both governments examined possible ways to strengthen Thai defense capabilities, agreed to explore ways in which this might be achieved through greater joint efforts and mutual sacrifices and the military assistance program involving the armed forces. [1961] ⁸²
4. Foreign Aid message to Congress by President Johnson. "Nearly 85 percent of our assistance to this region is directly or indirectly related to our effort to block Communist aggression..... In Laos and Thailand these funds will finance economic development and security which will assure that armed conflict will not engulf all of Southeast Asia." [1967] ⁸³
5. Foreign Aid - L.B.J. to Congress. "The remainder of My request -- \$197 million - is for aid to countries whose security is directly threatened. This is concentrated in programs for Laos, Korea, and Thailand. Each country is a key links in our defense system. Each lives in the shadow of great hostile powers. Each is well worth the investment."

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, vol. LVI, No. 1457, (May 29, 1967) p. 832.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, vol. LVI, No. 1455, (May 15, 1967) p. 832.

⁸²*Ibid.*, vol. XLIV, No. 1147, (June 19, 1961) pp. 958-9.

⁸³*Ibid.*, vol. LVI, No. 1445, (March 6, 1967) p. 384.

6. President Johnson Meets with Thai Cabinet Ministers..... the President further indicated that the United States would continue to supply equipment and training to assist actions already undertaken by Thailand to stamp out insurgency instigated by outside forces..... and that the United States continued to adhere fully to its commitments in Thailand by SEATO agreement of 1954 and the special communique between Thanat and Secretary Rusk in 1962. [1966]⁸⁵

VII Good Will Tours and Other Visits

1. Thai National Assemblymen Visit the United States- Secretary Dulles, in outlining for the visitors his views on the world situation, emphasized the necessity for all free nations to cooperate in maintaining their freedom in the face of the Communist threat..... The Secretary told the group of legislators that the United States considers Thailand a nation deeply dedicated to freedom and rejoices in the friendship and alliance of the two countries. [1958]⁸⁶
2. Astronaut Schina and Borman made Far Eastern Tour- Schina and Borman visited Thailand during a general good will tour of the Far East..... [1966]⁸⁷
3. Johnson Visit Thailand - [L.B.J.'s speech in Bangkok] We are Pacific neighbours, with common interest, with a common destiny..... We already feel in the night that we have spent here, that we are home, and it is no wonder- because, after all, the one thing that trip symbolizes and establishes is that we are Pacific neighbours..... Considering your own history, I think it is understandable way the people of Thailand should be puzzled by those who suggest that you are being "used" or "dominated" by Americans..... [1966]⁸⁸

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, vol. LIV, No. 1392 (Feb. 28, 1966) p. 325.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, vol. LV, No. 1427 (October 31, 1966) p. 669.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 1958, p. 644.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, vol. LIV, No. 1393 (March 7, 1966) p.364.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, LV, No. 1430, (New. 21, 1966) pp. 766-9.

UNITED STATES PENETRATION OF THAI POLITICAL PROCESSES

[1958 - 1968]

CATEGORIES

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	TOTAL
1958	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	10
1959	1	-	2	2	2	3	1	11
1960	3 + [2]	1	1	4	-	1	-	10
1961	2 + [1]	1	1	1	-	2	-	77
1962	3 + [2]	-	1	1	2	3	-	11
1963	2 + [4]	2	1	1	2	3	-	11
1964	2 + [2]	-	1	1	2	1	1	8
1965	2 + [4]	-	1	5	5	4	1	18
1966	5 + [7]	-	4	6	8	12	4	39
1967	3 + [8]	-	4	7	15	20	4	54
1968	2 + [4]	-	3	5	12	14	4	40
TOTAL	26 + [34]	5	21	32	49	63	16	214

Rationale: The State Department Bulletin was chosen for three main reasons:

1. It presents consistently the official and unofficial goals of the United States in Thailand.
2. The main spokesmen of these United States goals in Thailand are leading United States policy makers [LBJ, Rusk, Dulles, W.W. Rostow, Goldbert etc. - The Dept. of State Bulletin is "The Official weekly record of the United States Foreign Policy."]
3. It was the most available source with no missing volumes.

Another more general reason for choosing the State Department Bulletin to content analysis, was to give a greater credibility to the relatively unfavorable propositions vis a vis the State Department. It seems that a periodical which gives credibility to these propositions via quotes by LBJ., Dulles, W.W. Rostow, Rusk enhances the credibility more than a periodical which continually quotes well-known critics of United States foreign policy in Asia [Felix Green, F. Falk, Edgar Snow etc.]. Moreover, the State Department is rather thorough in reporting its activities in Thailand. However, it is realized that the source which is most available and consistent need not be the most significant, but that is essentially the shortcoming of even the most sophisticated and scientific content analysis.

EXPLANATION AND CONCLUSIONS

The first numbers in category I represent those "instances" which were categorized simply as treaties and agreements in general, while the numbers in parenthesis represent those treaties and agreements which specifically fit one of the other six categories.

The total number of "instances of penetration" for the eleven year period is 214, while the years 1965 to the present represent the sharpest increase in those categories [IV, V, VI] most directly pertaining to containment of communism and United States economic expansion. This sharp increase could possibly be attributed to the general escalation of the Vietnam War and the general implementation of President Johnson's acquired powers through the Tonkin Resolution. Though this is only mere speculation it might be interesting to do a follow-up study on the "instances of penetration" in the years after a peaceful settlement is negotiated, since there seems to be a modest decline in penetration for 1968, when a reversal in U.S. policy of escalation in Vietnam began to materialize. However, the general purpose of this research project was only to describe the evolutionary process by which the United States penetrated the Thai political system. The more specific purpose being to give evidence that the primary objectives of United States penetration in Thailand is the containment of Communism and expansion of economic interests. While these propositions are not absolutely proven to be true, the evidence presented by the "traditional" research method in the first section and the "semi-scientific" method employed in the above table, does give these propositions some credence in light of the most available and relevant data. As the Chinese philosopher Fung Yu Lau asserts: "I hesitate to say that it is absolute truth, because to determine what is absolute truth is too great a task for any human being, and is reserved for God alone, if there be one."⁸⁹

Appendix-A Simple Illustration of How an "Instance of Penetration" Can be Operationalized.

General hypothesis:

U.S. penetration of any Asian nation varies directly with the number of Peace Corps Volunteers sent to work in such nation.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Fung Yu-Lau (ed., y Derk Bedde), *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. (London, 1966) p. 27.

⁹⁰The rationale for expecting a possible relationship between U.S. penetration and PCVs comes from a previous research project done for Dr. Shapire. In an attempt to measure Peace Corps effectiveness in terms of the objectives set forth in the Peace Corps Act of 1961, a survey of Thai's and returned PCV's from Thailand was conducted. Though the sampling was limited (N = 30) the over-all results did support one of Rosenau's criteria of a penetrated systems vis., the Peace Corps, as nonmembers in the Thai national system, provide the "Necessary intensive face-to-face interaction and absorption of valuable information," giving greater legitimacy and acceptance to the authoritative imposition of values and goals by higher level nonmembers (Americans) of the penetrated system. (see Rosenau p.68).

Specific hypothesis:

U.S. penetration of the Thai national system varies directly with the number of Peace Corps Volunteers sent to work in Thailand.

The variables operationalised:

1. U.S. penetration as measured by count of "instances of penetration" annually 1958-68.
2. Number of Peace Corps Volunteers sent to work in Thailand annually 1961-67.

Sources for data:

Mayes, Adrian, *Volunteers in Development: Annual Peace Corps Reports*; U.S. State Department Bulletin.

Sampling:

Total number of Peace Corps Volunteers at end of each fiscal year.

Data:

Year	U.S. Penetration	No. of PCVs
1961	7	0
1962	11	45
1963	11	227
1964	8	245
1965	18	242
1966	39	356
1967	54	495
1968	40	400

Explanation of Findings**The specific hypothesis:**

U.S. penetration of the Thai national system varies directly with the number of Peace Corps Volunteers sent to work in Thailand.

The first graph [showing the number of PCVs as a broken line and U.S. penetration as a normal line] gives some indication of a possible relationship between the two variables. The scattergram [Figure 2] supports the visual depiction of the plotted points on the graph, and the computed correlation coefficient [64]. The plotted points on the scattergrams do not deviate much from the straight line which approximates the direction and division of all points. The general direction of the line does indicate a positive (+) relationship. The .64 correlation coefficient could be interpreted as quite significant, when considering the sharp increases of both variables for the years 1965-1967 and decrease in 1968. If this trend continues when projected to future U.S. - Thai relations, more precise conclusions might be drawn as to the possible significant relationship between the Peace Corps and over-all U.S. penetration. [See *Following page*]

Appendix II

An attempt to assess the Thai "reaction" to U.S. penetration in the Thai economy was made through a content analysis of Thai language newspapers. However, the sporadic appearances of relevant articles [which coincide with the sporadic laws on censorship] and the many missing volumes made this approach applicable only for purposes of description. Following are some of the excerpts of some of the articles reflecting Thai "reaction" to U.S. penetration [Oct.-Nov. 1964].

Oct. 7, 1964 - Thai Rath p. 1.

"Meantime our Thai rubber is deteriorating in quality and not better variety of rubber has been produced yet, the U.S. is dumping the rubber market with her rubber and synthetic rubber is also in greater demand."

Sep. 2, 1964- Chao Thai p. 1.

"10 U.S. business firms are seeking investments in Thailand through A.I.D."

Nov. 1, 1964- Kiattisak p.2

"National Development Minister Pote Sarasin had stated at a press conference that Thailand had made a formal protest to the United States against her dumping her tin stockpile on the world market."

Nov. 22, 1964- Thai Rath p.2.

"The figures for last year [1963] U.S. imports from Thailand were \$28 million and the current year [1964] \$15.9 million. While Thailand has increased its imports from the U.S., the U.S. has decreased her imports from Thailand and stated that this shows a very unfavorable balance of trade for Thailand vis-a-vis the United States."