

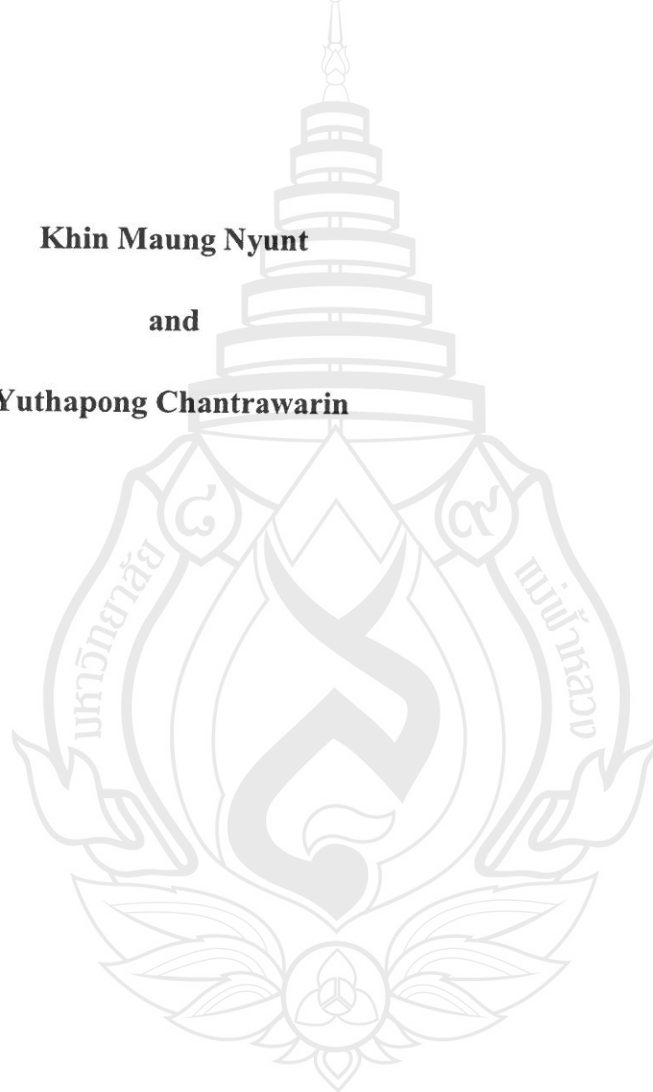
Comparative Foreign Policies of Thailand Myanmar

For the Past Five Decades

Khin Maung Nyunt

and

Yuthapong Chantrawarin



December 2011



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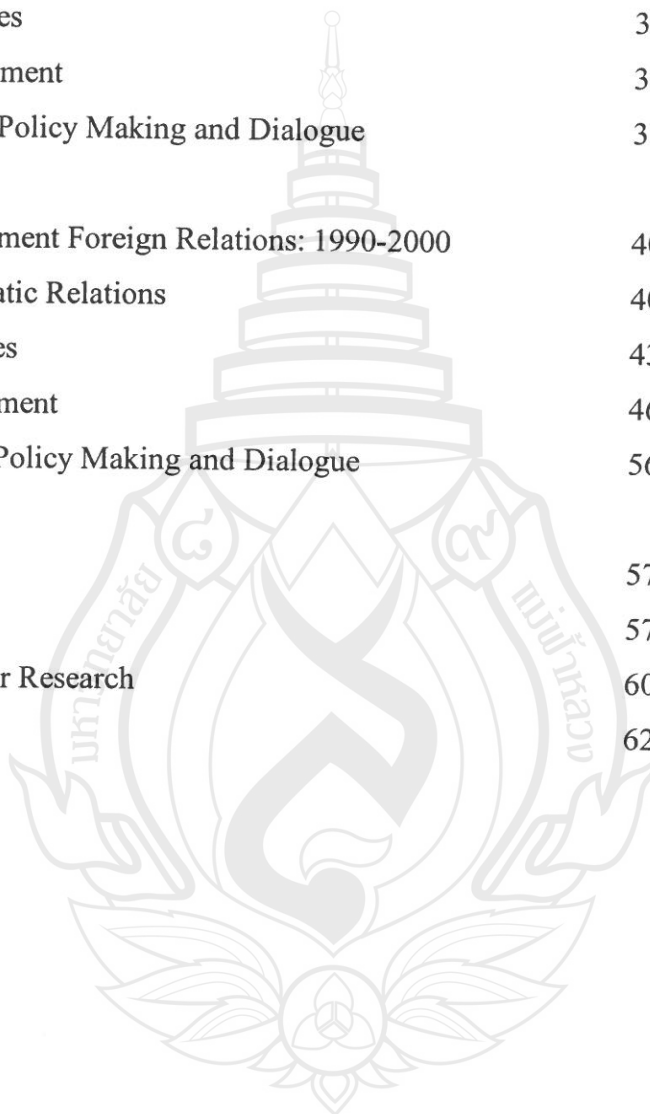
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Abstract

This research investigates the direction and perspective of foreign policy of Thailand towards Myanmar both in historical and contemporary contexts and to seek the resolution, bilateral benefit and multilateral cooperation. It also suggests directions and perspectives for further cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar. The framework of present foreign policy analysis is based on four main areas: (i) borderland and ethnic issues, (ii) foreign policy and diplomatic relation, (iii) economy, trade and investment and (iv) rational and principles for policy making and dialogue.

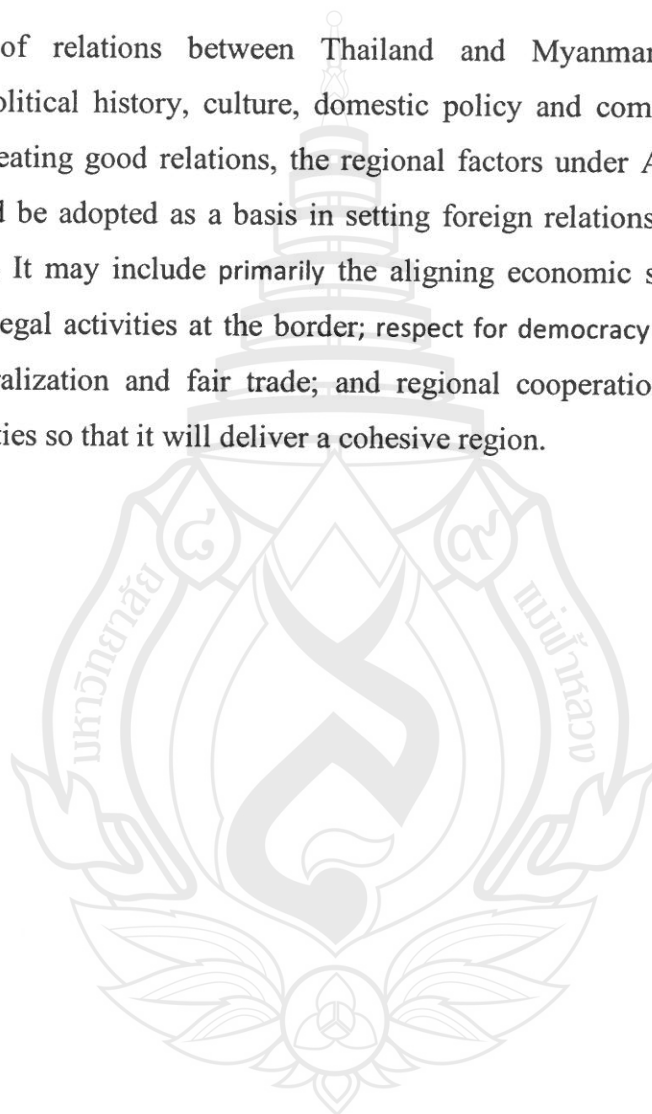
Diplomatic form of friendship commenced in Thai-Myanmar relations in the 1950s. The Kuomintang (KMT) catastrophe influenced significantly these relations in 1950-60. Thai-Myanmar relations commenced in the 1950s by signing the “Thai-Burma Treaty”, and establishing exchange of visit and cooperation.

Thai-Myanmar relations for the period: 1960-1970 were less amicable since the two countries had different ideological sets in economic and political systems and foreign policies. Myanmar commenced socialism and followed a strict neutralist foreign policy in the preserve of national solidarity in 1962. Thailand pursued a capitalism and strongly anti-communist policy. The dominant role of the military in Thailand was presented in foreign policy process comprising the Supreme Command Headquarters, the military’s high commander, and the National Security Council.

The ideology on a new role of Thailand as a regional economic power was initiated in the 1990s and it was reflected substantially in Thai Foreign Policy in particular with Asian countries. Thailand Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond established civilian role in Thai democratic political system, while the notion of withdrawal of military role emerged during eight years of his administration. Prime Minister Chatchai’s regional development vision of foreign policy that would promote Thailand’s role in mainland Southeast Asia has been reverberated by other Thai leaders. General Chavalit focused on open borders among Thailand, Indochina, and Yunnan Province of China, while Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun aimed Thailand as the “gateway to Indochina”. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai expressed Thailand as a regional “financial center.”

General Chavalit's visit to Myanmar enhanced the Thai-Myanmar cooperation in refugee settlements in Tak Province that were jointly administered by the Thai and Myanmar Red Cross societies. Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai described his country's security concerns due to influx of refugee and the need for corporation. Constructive engagement has become a political issue in Thailand in the 1990s, reflecting the conflict over values in foreign policy.

Major determinants of relations between Thailand and Myanmar constitute geography (border), economy, political history, culture, domestic policy and commonality of approach in foreign affairs. In creating good relations, the regional factors under ASEAN and international best practices should be adopted as a basis in setting foreign relations policy and processes of these two countries. It may include primarily the aligning economic system with international ones for avoiding illegal activities at the border; respect for democracy and human rights; enhancing economic liberalization and fair trade; and regional cooperation in socio-economic and environmental activities so that it will deliver a cohesive region.



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Scope and Method of Study

Foreign policy, by definition, indicates the policy that guides the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behavior of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs. Diplomacy is the tool of foreign policy, and war, alliances, and international trade may all be manifestations of it”.¹

In other words, it can be defined as “A country's foreign policy, so-called the foreign relations policy, consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve its goals within international relations milieu. The approaches are strategically employed to interact with other countries. Due to the deepening level of globalization and transnational activities, the states will also have to interact with non-state actors. The aforementioned interaction is evaluated and monitored in attempts to maximize benefits of multilateral international cooperation. Since the national interests are paramount, foreign policies are designed by the government through high-level decision making processes. National interests accomplishment can occur as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations, or through exploitation. Usually, creating foreign policy is the job of the head of government and the foreign minister (or equivalent). In some countries the legislature also has considerable oversight”.²

By reviewing it, a country's foreign policy reflects a set of goals on the country's relations with other countries in the areas of economics, politics, social and military activities. Foreign policy also involves dealing with groups that are not countries but these are called non-state actors such as religious groups, and international organizations and non-government organization (NGO).

This research attempts to draw and synthesize Thai-Myanmar relations based on various studies in this area. The framework of present foreign policy analysis is

¹ Encyclopedia, Britannia, “Foreign Policy”, Available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/213380/foreign-policy>.

² Wikipedia, The New Encyclopedia, “Foreign Policy”, Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_policy

based on four main areas: (i) borderland and ethnic issues, (ii) foreign policy and diplomatic relation, (iii) economy, trade and investment and (iv) rational and principles for policy making and dialogue.

Myanmar has changed officially her name from the Union of Burma to the Union of Myanmar in June 1989. In this report, the term 'Burma' is used in Chapters 2 to 4 for the purpose of simplicity and consistency in providing references in this report in line with the earlier studies, while the term Myanmar is used in the rest of chapters.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Since Myanmar is one of Thailand's neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, and its role can be considered as a regional gateway to two large continents: China and India, Thailand has paid a particular attention. However, the situation along Thai-Myanmar frontier has become much conflicting in the 1990s, which was resulted from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The long standing controversy between two countries ranges from the demarcation of border to illegal trade. On one hand, this has been viewed from Thailand's perspective as the imported problem from Myanmar namely ethnic minority, political refugees, selling of drugs and migrant workers. On the other hand, Thailand is also considered as the core cause of the conflict made by, for example, Thai business exploiting natural resources particularly deforestation mineral extraction and Thai fishing boats invading Myanmar waters. The conflicts as such seen to be unavoidable for both countries sharing common border. The problems, therefore, have to be finally resolved by the respective nations. However, since 1990s the relationship between Thailand and Myanmar offered a negative signal. It turned out to be in terms of mistrust each other and adversary diplomatic policy towards neighbor. The conflict often broke out by Myanmar's claim for instance on Thai involvement in supporting armed ethnic minorities in Myanmar and the claim reporting that Myanmar is the base for narcotics production exported to Thailand. The manifestation of conflict might develop from mobilizing the troops to the border to the fire exchange from both sides resulted in closing the border check points. The resolution was later often made by mutual dialogues both in government to government and local officers' level negotiations such as the 'Joint Border Committee.' For several years, the situation is prone to be recurring repeatedly without signal of sustainable friendship.

Despite the fact that Thailand has adopted the ‘Constructive Engagement’ policy towards Myanmar, the actual situation appeared to be in another direction from Thailand’s perspective. The diplomatic statement could not nevertheless affirm peaceful approach. The constructive engagement policy was first introduced by Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun who delivered his speech during 24th ASEAN summit of minister of foreign affairs in 1991 mentioning that “ In relation to Myanmar, we believe in Constructive Engagement policy which enables them to fully act as an honorary member to create our promising future in Southeast Asian region.”

It has been undoubtedly clear that such policy could not guarantee the constructive diplomatic relation. The geographical proximity does not equal to the closed companionship and the common culture value could not bring about our better understanding each other. As Thailand can be the proactive stakeholder, Thailand may require to examine two primary questions: How is Myanmar significant geographically to Thailand? And what are the importance of Myanmar to Thailand. These two issues are discussed briefly below.

Firstly, in term of geopolitics, Myanmar and Thailand has long been neighboring country having share longest border up to 2,400 kilometers ranging from upper Chiang Rai to Ranong borderland. Besides, throughout the curse of about 500 years of history the respective nations have been defined as both friend and enemy; war and peace, disconnectivity and cooperation, interchangeably. By considering the geographical reality, the two countries have burden to seek how they could live together friendly.

Secondly, by taking the first issue into account, it is required to examine the way Thailand could stand with Myanmar. As Thailand has played important role in ASEAN and the global arena, what kind of international relation policy should Thailand consider? ‘Western Democracy’ implying that Thailand may not support the military authoritarianism, denouncing human right abuse, leaving Myanmar alone in global community, this will cause the hostile relationship with Myanmar but good friendship with the western world.

Alternatively, rather we think about putting down those problems at the first place by using constructive engagement policy towards Myanmar, defending neighboring country on the world stage. This would benefit all three stakeholders: Thailand, Myanmar and rest of the world. Another approach is used of ‘localism’ by

rejecting western influence and domination. This can benefit Thailand and Myanmar living nearby rather than supporting those distance like western countries.

Finally, the significant differences in term of political structure, Thailand can realize that this basic can affect the relationship of these two countries. In Thailand, each department involving in Thailand's foreign policy process with Myanmar seem to be independent from each other and proceeded foreign policy according to their expertise. For example, the Ministry of Defense tends to use military approach whereas the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is prone to employ diplomacy. In Myanmar the political regime was military authoritarianism implying that the system is centralized and they consider these problems as domestic affairs, thus they tend to use force in resolving the conflict. With regard to economy, even though Thailand and Myanmar have market oriented systems, there is the economic disparity since Thailand can get more benefit in mutual activities and much more economically advanced. This may lead to the asymmetry of exchange, not win-win situation in all negotiations. Further, in socio-cultural perspective despite the fact that both share, same cultures there are many differences in practice, tradition, language and ethnicity which can be the gap of these two societies.

Among conflicts, challenges, and opportunity happening during the course of diplomatic relation, it is undoubtedly requiring to reflecting upon the international policies in these two countries.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the present research are as follows:

- (i) To investigate the direction and perspective of foreign policy of Thailand towards Myanmar both in historical and contemporary framework;
- (ii) To comprehend the nature and core causes of the conflicts in respective countries in during last 50 years 1950-2000 so as to seek for the resolution, bilateral benefit and multilateral cooperation;
- (iii) To suggest the constructive directions and perspectives for further cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar; and
- (iv) To encourage the study on international relations emphasizing neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.

1.4 Research Methodology

The development of Thai-Myanmar relations in the past 50 years beginning from the declaration of the diplomatic relation in 1947 to 2000 is used as a framework of the study. Within this chronology, how the domestic situation and changes in these countries affected the relationship of respective nations are studied in this research. The time frame of analysis is divided into five periods; each of them covers 10 years.

The comparative scheme of common and different foreign policy of Thailand and Myanmar will be applied in order to seek for the opportunities of mutual interest and cooperation. The methodological approaches include:

- (i) identifying constant and variable factors determining foreign policies of major actors from a comparative perspective, including various techniques employed by states at the bilateral and multilateral levels;
- (ii) applying the different theoretical approaches such as ‘actor model’ in decision and other alternatives: political leaders’ influences and function of a foreign policy and phenomena of foreign policy; and
- (iii) identifying its strengths and weaknesses and specifying the relevant foreign policy phenomena.

The presentation of this research is as follows: Chapter 1 discusses the scope of study, objective, research problems and methodological approaches. Chapter 2 commences with the establishment of Thai- Myanmar relations after the World War II, in particular, 1947-1960. Chapter 3 analyses foreign policy alienation while Chapter 4 focuses the limited foreign relations. Chapter 5 explains friendship relations: 1980-1990, in contrast, Chapter 6 explains the constructive engagement policy:1990-2000. In analyzing Thai-Myanmar relations for each decade, the framework of analysis is based on the following: four main areas: (i) Borderland and ethnic issues, (ii) Foreign policy and diplomatic relation, (iii) Economy, trade and investment and (iv) Rational and principles for policy making and dialogue. Chapter 7 concludes and provides recommendation for further study, highlighting the policy change for the period 2000-2010.

1.5 Literature Review

This research sheds light not only on the understanding of one particular issue but also does contribute to the overview picture of the state of knowledge on Thai-Myanmar diplomatic relations. The relevant literatures in this field are as following.

There is a wide range of study with respect to Thai-Myanmar relations, but in terms of comparative foreign policy it is lack of such study in this area; thus this research bridges the gap.

Pornpimon Trichot (1984) presented a paper entitled “Thai-Myanmar relations in 50 years” at a seminar organized by the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University in November 1991. She painted a picture of development in Myanmar foreign policy in 50 years by classifying it into three major periods. The first point is ‘Neutralism’ used in Myanmar beginning from gaining independence from British in 1948 to 1962. During that time Myanmar was with all powerful nations, sided both with the democratic and communist worlds. Meanwhile, Thailand tended to be anti-communist and was with the western faction.

Period	Myanmar International Policy	Thai International Policy	Diplomatic Relation
1948-1960	Non-alignment	Pro-American/Anti-communist	Friendship
1960-1970	Neutral-Isolation	Pro-American	Alienation
1970-1980	Isolation	Omni-directional	Limited Relation
1980-1990	Market-oriented	Battle field to Market place	Friendship
1990-2000	Market and Security	Constructive Engagement	Conflict

Bhansoon (1980) investigates Thai foreign policy under the Kukrit Pramoj Government focusing on two major foreign policy decisions: the decision to seek the complete withdrawal of American forces from Thailand in 1976 and the decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1975. It commented that the Kukrit Pramoj Government's decision on the U.S. troop withdrawal reflected a combination of Allison's models II and III. However, the evidence was not conclusive and did not clearly reflect bureaucratic maneuvering and bargaining between the Thai military and civilians.

Recent study on Thai- Myanmar relations is undertaken by Kavi Chongkittavorn (2001), which discusses briefly Thai-Myanmar relations from 1946 to 2000 in the context of a short history reflecting ethnic minorities on the border, migrant, border trade, illicit drug and a brief statement on new Thai policy towards

Myanmar under General Chatchai Chunhawan government including constructive engagement. Bussynski (1994), and Innes-Brown and Mark Valencia (1994) discuss rational on the development of 'constructive engagement' in Thai foreign relations reflecting regional issues of Myanmar's strategic location, the possible effect of collapse of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) on regional power rivalry between China and India and economic opportunity and prospects in Myanmar. Nyunt(1998) studies trade between Thailand and Myanmar including the growing nature of border trade and regional development, in contrast, Kudo (1989) study examines border industry in Thailand addressing Myanmar border trade with her neighboring countries. LePoer (1987) provides history of Thai politics and foreign relations from the Ayuthaya era to 1987 addressing the development of military rule in its impact on democracy, establishment of civil government and economic development in Thailand. UNCTAD (2003) provides foreign direct investment flows and stock in Myanmar for the period 1990-2001 reflecting FDI by country and FDI by sector including Thailand's total investment in Myanmar and Thailand FDI by type of business sector such as hotel industry.

With respect to Borderland and ethnic issue e.g. the border conflict, Human Right Watch-Myanmar, UNHCR (1998) discusses the nature, number of refugees and status of Myanmar refugees and provides recommendations to governments of Thailand and Myanmar and international community, in particular, Japan, the U.S., ASEAN Members States, and the European Union, Australia, and Canada. Lang (2002) discusses the historical, political and economic conditions that led the predicament of Myanmar refugees along Thai-Myanmar border, examine the nature, causes and possible solution in the context of improved foreign relations between these two countries as well as the regional and international interests.

The 'role theory and foreign policy' is examined by Thies (2009) emphasizing on accomplishment, failures, and future potential based on the previous studies in particular, Walket (1987) which expresses descriptive, organizational and explanatory value of role theory in foreign policy. Holsti's study (1970) identifies seventeen roles expressed by states between 1965 and 1967 comprising: bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional-subsystem collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development, isolate, and protective one. The studies towards foreign policies that

identify national role conceptions included Wish (1980), Shih(1988), Chafetz et al (1966) and Le Prestre (1977). The studies of Sarbin and Allen (1968), Stryker and Statham (1985) and Vertzberger (1990) investigate role theory based on three major dimensions: status, value and involvement. Status dimension indicates a position in social structure and its associated duties, in contrast, value dimension refers to relevant of actor's role enactment. The involvement dimension includes two aspects: the concept of belonging to a larger group and the amount of effort or participation. In most studies on the foreign policy, the individual and state level analyses are often combined in analyzing the leaders of the state.

Glenn Palmer and Clifton Morgan (2010) review and apply some concepts or theories to some practices in foreign policy based on a theoretical approach, and integrate a number of different approaches. It discusses how states develop their foreign policy. In particular, states want to maximize security- by assuming that states pursue two things, or goods, through their foreign policy: change and maintenance. It implies that States try both to change aspects of the international status quo that they don't like and maintain those aspects they do inspire. Thus it may make trade-offs between policies designed to achieve change or maintenance. A state's ability to do so is largely a function of its relative capability, and since national capability is finite, a state. This study also illuminates the trade-offs decision makers face in selecting among policies to maximize utility, given a state's goals. Moreover this study applied the theory to cases ranging from American foreign policy since World War II to Chinese foreign policy since 1949 to the Suez Canal Crisis. It suggests the implications for foreign policy substitutability. It also undertake statistical analyses of a wide range of behaviors, and to support the theory. This research attempts to apply relevant foreign policy relations based on available information and data. Summary of changes in leadership and role in Thailand and Myanmar are provided in the following section.

1.6 Summary of Changes in Leadership and Role in Thailand and Burma

1.6.1 Summary of Changes in Leadership and Role in Thailand

Period of Government	State Leader and Major Role
1947	Field Marshal Phibul Songkram resumed by a coup d' etat state power and established a new Constitutional setup with Kovit Abhai Wongse as Prime Minister
1958-1963	Marshal Sarit Thanarat built the broad foundation including investment in transport, power, irrigation, education and health
Dec 1963-Oct 1973	Thanom Kittikachorn set a shorter timeframe for the country's transition from the military leadership structure to an elected government
Oct 1973- Feb 1975	Professor Sanya Dharmasakti represented the first civilian government after more than fifteen years of military rule
March 1975-April 1976	Mon Rajawongse (M.R.) Kukrit Pramoj initiated the withdrawal of the U.S. troop from Thailand; aligned relations with China and Vietnam
Oct 1976 –Oct 1977	Seni Pramoj and Kukrit Pramoj were two civilian governments elected by democratic processes.
Nov 1977- Feb 1980	Thanin Kraivichen formed anti-communist military government
March 1980-1987	General Prem Tinsulanond set Balance-of-power policies and improved Thai-Myanmar relations
Feb 1988-Feb 1991	General Kriangsak Jamanandana was appointed as Prime Minister when the State Administration Council, and developed better diplomatic relations with neighboring countries: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.
March 1991-Apr 1992	Gen. Chatchai Chunhawan was Prime Minister who improved relations with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar; and initiated many infrastructure projects including Mass Rapid Transit Authority Army Commamder Suchina Kraprayoon over the new Government of Chatchai Chunhawan;
Sept 1992-July 1995	Anand Panyrachun as Prime Minister as an interim government promulgated a new constitution
July 1995-Nov 1996	Chun Leekpai became a Prime Minister in the first term; a shift in the policy towards Burma emerged and a policy of constructive engagement became a major foreign policy. Banham Silpa-archa was Prime Minister of Thailand from

1995 to 1996. He has held different cabinet posts in several governments.

Nov 1996-Nov 1997

General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh was Thailand's 22nd Prime Minister from 1996 to 1997. He enhanced Thai-Myanmar relations but economic crisis forced him to resign.

Nov 1997 –Feb 2001

Chun Leekpai became Prime Minister in the second term to lead Thailand out of its economic crisis.



1.6.2 Summary of Change in Leadership and Role in Burma

Period of	State Leader and Major Role
Government	
4 January 1948	The Union of Burma formally gained its independence. U Nu became the country's first Prime Minister.
1962 March 2	A military coup d'état occurred and established a new government: a Revolutionary Council chaired by General Ne Win. The rationale for the coup was ostensibly to preserve the Union avoiding the threat of disintegration of major ethnic groups in the Union.
April 30	The Burmese Way to Socialism: the guiding ideological basis of the regime was published.
1963 February 23	All banks (public, private, foreign, domestic) were nationalized.
1974 January 3	The new constitution was promulgated.
1969 November 1	Seven banks combined to form the Union of Burma People's Bank.
1969 February 10	Elections were held for the Pyithu Hluttaw.
1969 March 2	The Revolutionary Council dissolved itself and transferred its powers to the Pyithu Hluttaw.
1969 March 21	The seventh biennial meeting of the Pyithu Hluttaw was held. Maung Maung Kha was appointed as Prime Minister to replace Sein Win and U Lwin was ousted from the Cabinet.
1981 9 November	U Ne Win resigned as President, but retained his influential position as leader of the Burma Socialist Programme Party BSSP (He was replaced in the presidency by U San Yu).
1988 September 18	Gen. Saw Maung overthrew the Government and established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The country was renamed as the Union of Myanmar, in an attempt to distinguish the multi-ethnic state from the majority Burma ethnic group.
18 June 1989	
27 May 1990	A general election in victory for the NDL that won 392 of the 485 seats.
20 March 1992	The replacement of General Saw Maung, Chairman of the SLORC, as Minister of Defense by General Than Shwe.
15 November 1997	It announced the dissolution of the SLORC and establishment of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Chapter 2

Friendship Thai-Burma Relations: 1947-1960

2.1 Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relations

It has been widely recognized that the foreign policy of the Government of Thailand was openly anti-Communist and anti-Comintern in the Cold War context; in fact it had rapidly warm relations with the Western Powers. The policy of Burmese leaders was clearly anti-Communist, but it was strictly confined to internal affairs and has some significance in the Government's international relations. Burma left the British Commonwealth and adopted a neutral and later non-aligned policy throughout the cold war period.

Thai-Burma relations commenced in the 1950s by signing the Thai-Burma Treaty, and establishing exchange of visit and cooperation. In Thailand, Field Marshal Phibul Songkram assumed state power by a coup d' etat and formed a new Constitutional as well as a new Government with Kovit Abhai Wongse as Prime Minister. The situation in Burma and the other parts of Southeast Asia faced communist uprising and Marshal Phibul Songkram despatched Thai military forces to the Burmese border.

During August 1954 Thai Prime Minister Chatichai paid a personal visit to Burma with his wife and associates. This visit contributed much to the sudden improvement of relations between these two countries. A statement was issued simultaneously in Bangkok and Rangoon on 6th October 1955, in order to strengthen the same and to perpetuate it for future generations of the two countries. There was the circumstances of unreserved friendship of 1955.

In 1955, Air Commodore Clift and Air Marshal Dawee Chulasapaya visited Burma and extended the friendship. Thailand also received visits of high level government officials from Burma. The friendship that blossomed in 1955 and the Royal Thai Goodwill visit in performed March 2-5, 1960.

Burma gained her independence from Britain in 1948 and U Nu became Prime Minister. The Thai-Burma Friendship Treaty constituted as the Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between these two countries. It was documented that the Treaty was signed in Bangkok in October 1956 and was ratified in May 28, 1957 in Rangoon. This treaty lasted for some 10 years.

2.2 Borderland and Ethnic Issues

It has been widely accepted that Koumingtang(KMT), the Nationalist Chinese political party of Taiwan, retreated into Burma from Yunnan in 1950 and 1951 during the period of Communist Chinese occupation in the province. They formed a force of some 6000 troops and established strong bases in the Shan States, comprising the Kokang and Wa areas, to Kengtun town in Monghsat and Mongyawn. Thus there were clashes and battles with the Burmese Army. The forces grew to about 12000 men as they recruited local Chinese and trained them systematically. The KMT announced themselves the Anti-Communist and Anti-Russia Resistance, Yunnan Province.

It is stated that the KMT main supply base was located in Chiangmai and it was responsible for communications and supply of material through the following routes:

(a) Chiangmai-Chiangrai-Maesai-Tachilek (in Burma); (b) Chiangmai Cheingdao Monghsat (both in Burma),-Papun (in Burma); (c) Chiangmai-Maeseriang-Papun (in Burma); and (d) Chiangrai-Tak-Measaud-Myawaddi- Phaloo (both in Burma).

A major operation arrangements made between Thailand and Burma governments in this period was that there was no bombing or launching an attack within one mile of the Thai frontier, and a 48 hours' notice to the Thai Government if Burma forces wanted to operate right up to the border. A Thai liaison team operated with the advance hours of the front line command of Burma Army during the Yangyiaung operations. Burma reported to the United Nations on the KMT aggression and sleeked a resolution condemning the Nationalist Chinese Government of Formosa in March 1953. The United States Government with the cooperation of the Government of Thailand and China established a mechanism for effective withdrawal of the offending troops. A Four Nations Military Commission was formed in Bangkok under the chairmanship of the US Military Attaché. In the Four Nations Commission, the Thai Delegation was led by Colonel Chatichai Chuhavan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Army, and Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Home Minister and Director-General of Thai Police. The leader of the Burmese Delegation was Colonel Aung Gyi. Burma participated from the beginning, May 22, 1953 to September 18. However Burma left the Commission due to Taiwan's sudden volte-face on mutually agreed plan of evacuation of the KMT through Thailand.

It has been reported that a total of 5338 KMT troops including families and dependents were evacuated, assisted by Thai Government's direct assistance on Thai side of the border, while three major operations were conducted by the Burmese Army in 1954 and 1955. Burma's concern was that KMT, Karen and Mon insurgents used Thai territory as bases and sources of arms and ammunition or of refuge arouse strong feelings among the Burmese. There other problems pressing to the Thailand and Burma Governments were very lucrative opium trade in the "Golden Triangle".

The Nation, newspaper of Thailand reported on 18 April 1958 that Kuomintang irregularly sent their aid to the insurgents in Northeastern Burma from the Thai side. About 2,000 troops were known to have come through Thailand, travelling to their area at the border in motorboats along a tributary of the Mekong River.

2.3 Economy, Trade and Investment

Major activities of these two countries comprised activities in relation to customs, border tariff, border conference and exchange of military officers. In September 1, 1958 the following agreements were signed by these two countries as follows:

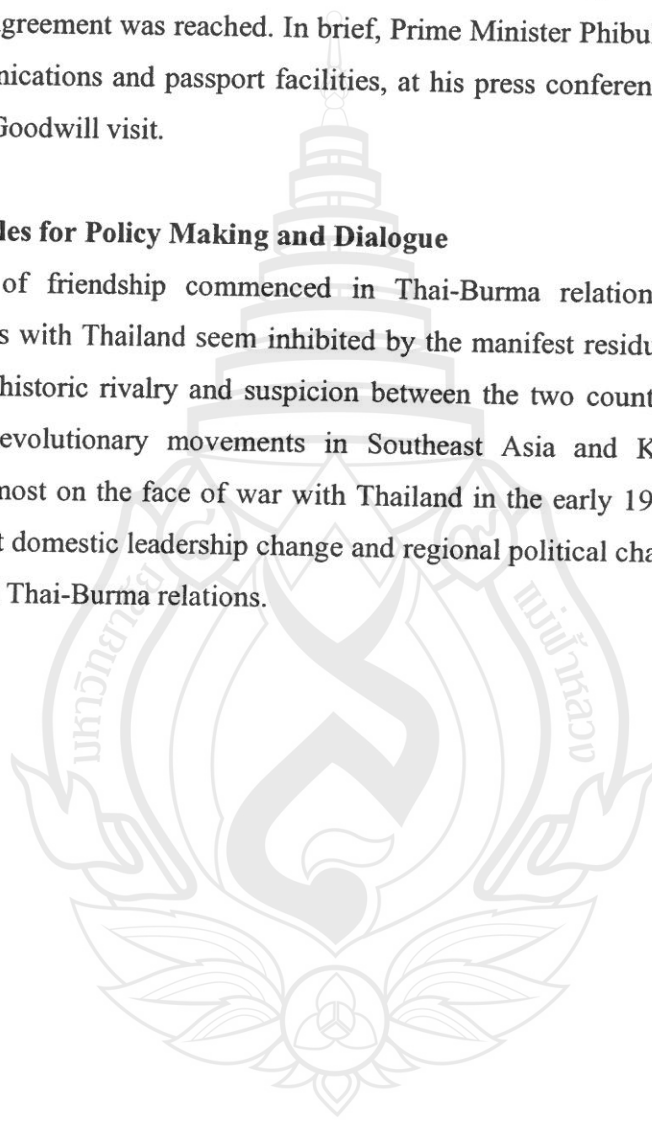
- (1) Memorandum of Understanding on Customs Matters;
- (2) Memorandum of Understanding on Border Traffic;
- (3) Memorandum of Understanding on Police Matters and Friendly relations Between Military Personnel; and
- (4) Memorandum of Understanding on Border Conferences.

During 1954 and 1955 a trade agreement between Burma and Thailand was negotiated extensively. Thai's agenda in that meeting included a common rice export pricing, reducing duty for teak logs to be floated down to the Salween river from Mae Hon Song to Moulmein port for export, reducing duties for domestically produced Burmese products; improvement of communications by reconstructing the Siam-Burma railway, opening a Thai-Burma highway, and simplifying producers of passport and visa formalities. The Burma's agenda reflected exporting minerals extracted in the Tenasserim Devision through Thai ports and rice procurement agreement between government to government. Major difficulties faced by Thailand Business sector included Burma's rice procurement policy through Government to Government agreements since it was under the private sector. There were difficulties

for obtaining Thai funds for the likely proposed projects as illegal extraction of Burmese teak from Mongpan town close to Thai border, and illegal mining of minerals in the Thai side of Tenasserim were traditional. Myanmar government also found the difficulties that the existence of terrain living conditions, the need of heavy expenses to warrant posting Customs and other officials to regulate such traditional illegal practice. These trade negotiations were conducted in both Bangkok and Rangoon, but no tangible agreement was reached. In brief, Prime Minister Phibul was able to improve communications and passport facilities, at his press conference in Rangoon at the end of his Goodwill visit.

2.4 Rational and Principles for Policy Making and Dialogue

Diplomatic forms of friendship commenced in Thai-Burma relations in the 1950s. Burma's relations with Thailand seem inhibited by the manifest residue of the sentiments of the past historic rivalry and suspicion between the two countries. Due to the Communist revolutionary movements in Southeast Asia and KMT catastrophe, Burma was almost on the face of war with Thailand in the early 1950s. However, it is observed that domestic leadership change and regional political change in both countries influenced Thai-Burma relations.



Chapter 3

Foreign Policy Alienation: 1960-1970

3.1 Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relations

There were significant leadership change and changes of leader as well as role of state occurred in different direction in both Thailand and Burma. In the former, high degree of perception on the withdrawal of military role in public administration began, while in the later, the role of military in public administration emerged.

In Thailand, Government of Thanom Kittikachorn (December 1963-October 1973) became the Prime Minister after the death of Premier Sarit Thanarat. His government became an elected one after the reestablishment of democratic institutions and the holding of a general election in 1969. The National Executive Council headed by Thanom governed the country. In December 1972, he became Prime Minister again, with dictatorial powers provided by an interim constitution promulgated in that year.

It was observed that three Thai-Burmese high-level meetings were held in 1964, 1972, and 1973 to discuss issues on common interest, in particular, border problems. Thai Prime Minister Thanom visited Burma in 1966 and promised to control the anti-Burmese activities of the Burmese refugees. Ne Win in turn pledged to prevent the use of Burma as route to invade Thailand. The relations between the two countries improved after Ne Win's friendly visit to Thailand in 1973. He made a second visit to Thailand in March 1979 as a guest of His Majesty the King. The Burmese President also had the opportunity to discuss with Prime Minister Kriangsak on possibilities for greater co-operation in solving common problems of two countries.

In October 1973, the government arrested of students protesting against the constitution led to a bloody, massive student demonstration which greatly contributed to the collapse of the Thanom regime in Thailand. Sanya Dharmasakti's Government administered Thailand for the period: October 1973-February 1975. It indicated the first civilian government after more than fifteen years of military rule in Thailand.³ After the student uprising, Sanya was appointed by the Thai King to head an Interim Government to a new constitution and make preparations for a new election. The interim constitution from Thanom regime was remained in place but the old National Assembly was replaced with a new one.

Burma had traditionally pursued a non-aligned foreign policy since becoming independent in 1948. General Ne Win seized power in 1962, isolated Burma from the world, and pursued autarkic economic policies until 1988. A new government so-called a Revolutionary Council chaired by General Ne Win was setup in March 1962. The Burmese Way to Socialism: the guiding ideological basis of the regime was published from 1962.

Foreign policy reflected the strongest line of continuity between the parliamentary and military periods. The Revolutionary Council announced its “adherence to a policy of positive neutrality,” guaranteeing “the continuance of the existing cordial relations with all countries.” Evidence also suggested that a policy of seclusion, i.e., having a little contact with the world in particular in the areas of the perceived threat of external involvement in the insurgent movements at Thai-Burma border.

3.2 Borderland and Ethnic Issues

The need to suppress border crime was received major attention in this period and a joint statement was published on 9 September 1958. The police of both countries agreed to extend to each other the fullest co-operation in exchanging information on border crimes and by maintaining close contact with each other in conformity with the laws of either country and in consonance with international practice. It was also agreed to establish the military personnel mutually inclusiveness arrangement so as to enhance and foster present friendly relations.”

It was reported that about 600 to 700 Karen tribes from Burma raided the Thai border town of Mae Sot on 15 May 1960, they set fire to government building and killed at least four Thai border patrol policemen. It pointed to the Burmese Government to co-operate with the Thai Government. It was reported in February 1963 that the situation on the Thai-Burmese border became a critical again. The Tak Province and Amphur Mae Sod were especially threatened by Karen guerillas. About 1,000 Karen guerrillas gathered under the leadership of Bo Mya and were active at a distance of only two kilometers from the Thai border.

It led Thailand and Burma to engage in a serious dialogue to solve the border problems. The Burmese Foreign Minister, U Thi Han, visited Bangkok and held discussion with the Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, in March 1963. They

formed a Joint Frontier Committee to ensure security in the border areas where the Karens were active.

3.3 Economy, Trade and Investment

Thailand and Myanmar share a 2400- mile border, a common religion, way of life and culture. Border trade was initiated primarily only for the people living at the border. A Joint Frontier Committee published a joint communiqué on 19 May 1963, announcing the measures that they agreed to take to control the activities of the rebels on the border. In order to punish and prevent border crimes effectively, the two countries agreed that the police of the one country might cross the boundary-line anywhere and operate up to five miles within other's territory. A Burmese-Thai High Level Committee was also formed with the Burmese and Thai Foreign Ministers as joint Chairmen, to meet and confer on measures to strengthening border security, solving specific border problems that might arise from time to time, and promote economic and cultural co-operation in general. Moreover they, further, created a General Border Committee, a number of Regional Border Committees and sub-regional border committees to advise the necessary measures to resolve common security problems and other associated. The Burmese General Border Committee was headed by the Vice Chief of Staff, Defense Services while the Thai General Border Committee, by the Chief of Staff, Supreme Command.

The Minister of Interior, announced on 24 August 1966 that more than 10,000 refugees from Burma were given political asylum in Thailand during the past five years. Those refugees comprised Karens, Indians and others who were dissatisfied with the policy of the Government of Burma. Thai Government accepted the refugees on humanitarian grounds and their residence was limited to refugee settlements in the border areas.

It was also reported that Thailand provided political asylum to the Burmese leader U Nu on 26 October 1969, who had been ousted from the Premiership in 1962 by a coup d'état. Thailand granted him political asylum provided that he should not engage in political activities against the Burmese Government while in Thailand. The *Bangkok Post* reported on 30 December 1971 that U Nu established his headquarters in a mountain in the Mae Sod District in the Tak Province in Northern Thailand. In addition, another report said that he was equipped with a powerful radio transmitter and a U Nu had raised about seven guerrilla units implying a major irritant in Thai-

Burmese relations. It is stated that U Nu's stay permit was provoked in 1973 to halt the deterioration in Thai-Burmese relations.

3.4 Rational and Principles for Policy Making and Dialogue

The fundamental goals of Thailand's foreign policy were the maintenance of national independence and the integrity of the Kingdom. Two other principles indicated multiplicity and diversity of contacts with both Asian and Western nations, and a policy of seeking counterbalance in their foreign associations so as to avoid over dependent on one nation or a small set of factors.⁴

It was found that when the United States disengaged from Asia in 1972, such pattern of Thai foreign policy started to change extensively in response to the US policy change. It was stated that Thailand Foreign policy for the period 1948 - October 1973 was classified as the policy aligned with the United States and strongly anti-communist³.

Prime Minister Kukrit (March 1975 to April 1976) refocused Thai foreign policy to take account of the rapidly changing situation both internally and in Southeast Asia as a whole.

In brief, Thai-Burma relations for the second decade: 1960-1970 was less amicable given major changes in government apparatus of both countries. It has been widely recognized that the two countries had different ideological sets in economic and political policies and foreign relations policies. Burma commenced socialism and followed a strict neutralist foreign policy in the preserve of national solidarity. Thailand pursued a market economy under capitalism and strongly anti-communist policy. The isolationism was the ideology set that Burma pursued to avoid the foreign economic domination and established an autarkic socialist economic system. Burmese cultural was also filtered by the government by controlling the media and the school system, and eliminating sources of decadent Western influence.

³Shaplen, 1970. pp 275-276, cited in Sen, 2001.

Chapter 4

Limited Foreign Relations: 1970-1980

4.1 Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relations

Thailand's foreign policy for the period 1970-1980 reflected mostly in Cambodia issues highlighting several outstanding characteristics in this regard. Major factors influencing this position are summarized below. First, the dominant role of the military in Thailand was prevailed comprising the Supreme Command Headquarters, the military's high commander, and the National Security Council (CNS). The military's role in foreign policy process was established particularly in terms of the priority attached to defense links with the United States. Border Security was responsible for the provincial military from which the foreign Ministry was excluded. It was reported that the military's coordinated effort to support the Khmer Rouge as a buffer against Vietnam prevailed. Finally, Thailand foreign policy was linked to external allies China and the United States which could support Thailand against Vietnam from the perspective of the National Security Paradigm of Thailand.

Thai politics and foreign policy (1963-71) oriented to Lao PDR where a Pathet Lao victory would destabilize the North and Northeast and open Thailand to a direct attack by communist forces. Thailand allied itself closely with the United States' position in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), permitting bases in Thailand to be used for raids on both the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and Cambodia.⁴

In October 1973, hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied in Bangkok to demand the release of detained democracy activists. This movement went into a confrontation with the armed forces, leading to hundreds of protesters being slaughtered. With the military split and the movement growing despite the repression, Thanom left the country.

The Cambodian–Vietnamese War began along the land and maritime boundaries of Vietnam and Kampuchea between 1975 and 1977. Vietnam launched a full-scale invasion of Kampuchea on 25 December 1978, and subsequently occupied the country after the Khmer Rouge was removed from power. During the Vietnam

⁴ Wikipedia, The New Encyclopedia, Cambodian–Vietnamese War, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodian%E2%80%93Vietnamese_War

War, Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge communists had formed an alliance to fight U.S.-backed regimes in their respective countries⁵.

The Government of Kukrit Pramoj (March 1975-April 1976)

Mom Rajawongse (M.R.) Kukrit Pramoj was the thirteenth Prime Minister of Thailand, serving in office from 1975-1976. Following the promulgation of a new constitution in 1974 and elections in January 1975, a coalition of conservative and liberal political parties, his dominated the government led by Kukrit Pramoj. Kukrit's government attempted to redefine Thailand's relationship with the United States, taking into account the ending of the Vietnam War and the US rapprochement with China. Kukrit initiated the withdrawal of US troops from Thailand and opened lines of communication with China. Thailand could establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam in 1976.

Thai foreign policy under the Kukrit Pramoj Government highlighted two major foreign policy decisions: the decision to seek the complete withdrawal of American forces from Thailand in 1976 and the decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1975. The evidence suggested that the Kukrit Pramoj Government's decision on the American troop withdrawal reflected a combination of Allison's models II and III.

The central theme of this study was to apply the decision-making approach of Allison to the two foreign policy decisions examined. It found that the Kukrit Government's decision on the American troop withdrawal was based on a combination of Allison's Models II and III: the interplay between organizational process factors and bureaucratic politics. However, the evidence from interview responses and related references were not conclusive and did not clearly reflect bureaucratic maneuvering and bargaining between the Thai military and civilians.⁶

The decision appeared to be determined essentially by internal and external pressures. The actions taken were the result of logical and rational choices of the Kukrit Government which seems best explained by Allison's Model I. In the process of implementation of the American troop withdrawal, particularly in the Ramasoon

⁵ The US Library of Congress, in "History of Thailand", *Area Handbook of the US Library of Congress*.

⁶ Bhasoon, 1980.

Case where non-combat troops also had to leave Thailand, a conflict of opinion occurred within the circle of key decision-makers and concerned organizations. They maneuvered to achieve their desired results according to their organizational preferences. The maneuvers contained the seven principles, that was drafted by the Thai Foreign Ministry, the status of the technicians, and the withdrawal deadline. The military and the civilians could not agree on these issues and they tended to justify their stances according to their organizational interests. In this case, it is apparent that organizational position determined policy stance, or to use Allison's well-known aphorism i.e., the choice of standing position depends on given existing position. Accordingly, the implementation process of the Ramasoon Case combined both organizational process factors and bureaucratic politics.

The Kukrit Government's decision to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC was hypothesized as a result of a long conflict of organizational interests and varying perceptions between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. This hypothesis was validated during the initial phase of its formulation process preceding the events of October 1973 when the Thai military government still played a dominant role in matters of national security policy. This was the case when Foreign Minister Thanat began to talk about a gradual rapprochement with China and the Thai military did not support his move and even dismissed him from his Cabinet post following the 1971 coup. However in when the Kukrit Government made the decision to establish diplomatic relations with the China, the decision-making process did not result from a long conflict of organizational interests and varying perceptions of key decision-makers between the military and the Foreign Ministry or from organizational action and output. The decision was in fact made in a similar manner to that of the American combat troop withdrawal, i.e., as a response to changes both within and outside the country. The decision, then, more closely followed the explanation of Allison's Model I. The cases under study showed that rational policy is still relevant for providing a more complete and meaningful explanation for the study of Thai foreign policy. Therefore, in applying Allison's decision-making approach to the Thai context, the researcher acknowledges that the models were not mutually exclusive; it was conceivable that a thorough policy analysis would have to employ elements of each of Allison's three models.

The Government of Kukrit Pramoj (March 1975-April 1976) and Seni Pramoj (April 1976-October 1976) indicated civilian government in Thailand.

General Kriangsak Chomanan (November 1977- February 1980), the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, was selected by the coup's Revolutionary Party as Prime Minister. He was later appointed by the King. The second Cabinet was formed after the April 1979 elections. This government was stable for a few months but collapsed on 28 February 1980 as Kriangsak resigned from the premiership. Some explanations for his resignation included public dissatisfaction over inflation problems, high prices increases in oil, gas, and electricity, the governments slowness in fulfilling its promises to the farmers, and mismanagement and corruption. Prem Tinsulanond (from 14 March 1980) showed as the new Prime Minister was appointed on 3 March and his Cabinet was formed on 14 March under the existing the Parliament and the constitution.

With respect to Thai-Burma relations, it was showed that Thailand's assurances of non-support for the Burmese rebels were reported repeatedly during the visits by Thai Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun in January 1977 and by Prime Minister Prem in July 1980.

It is observed that Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan established a new role of Thailand as an Asian Newly Industrialized Economy (NIE) and a regional economic power. It reflected a regional vision for Thailand's foreign policy. He emphasized the importance of developing economic relations with Indochina and forming it into the wider community of Southeast Asian countries. The vision of Thailand as the economic power in mainland Southeast Asia and as generator of the area's economic transformation received a support based on the military's concept of the "Golden Land" (Suwannaphume). Army Chief Chavalit referred to this idea in January 1989, which embraced all of mainland Southeast Asia, including Indochina, Thailand, and Burma, in an area of prosperity. Deputy Supreme Commander Pat Akkanibutr also raised the idea on a new consensus that was emerging in Thailand over foreign policy, based on the philosophy of economic achievement in Thailand over foreign policy.

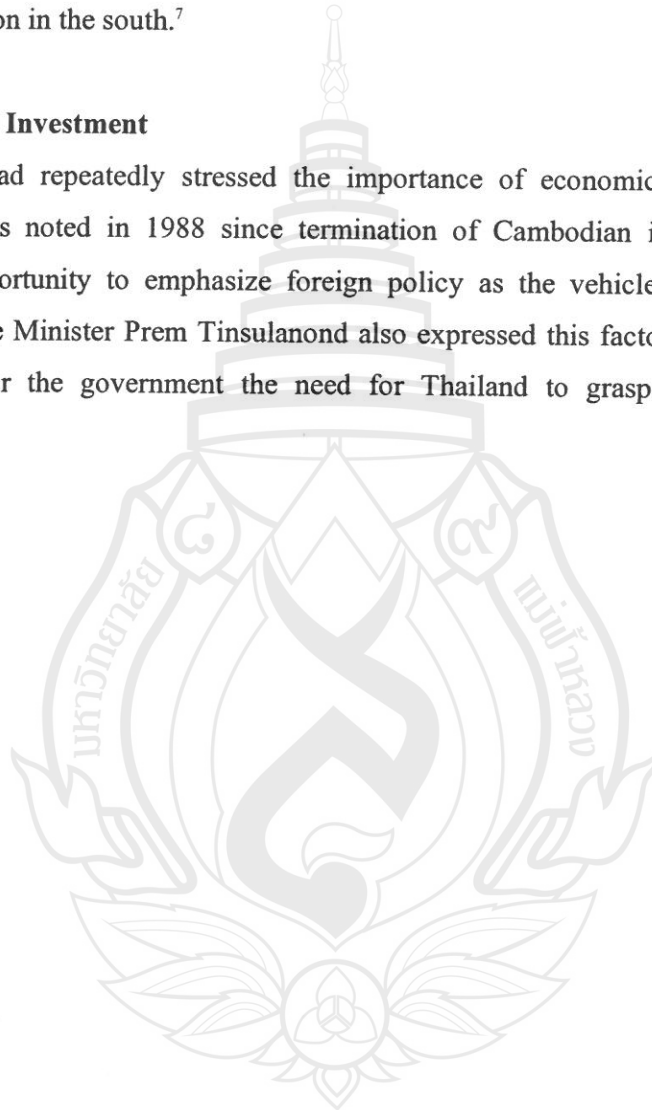
4.2 Borderland and Ethnic Issues

Almost all ethnic minority groups of Burma who are living along the border had formed the armed fronts since 1974. The major ethnic groups represented by one or more rebel armies whose members periodically have sought refugee in Thailand include the Karen, Shan, Karenni, and Mon. It was reported that these armed minority

groups, live on both sides of the border. The Karens are one of the largest ethnic minority groups in Burma, with an estimated population of about three to four million. Since 1968, the Karen formed mainly the Karen National Union (KNU) and its armed wing, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), which could raise an estimated 10,000 soldiers in 1980s. The KNU also held significant territory in Burma and operated along a 500-kilometer stretch of the Thai border, from Papun in the north to Tenasserim Division in the south.⁷

4.3 Economy, Trade and Investment

The Thai leader had repeatedly stressed the importance of economics in foreign policy, a shift was noted in 1988 since termination of Cambodian issue provided Thailand an opportunity to emphasize foreign policy as the vehicle for economic expansion. Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond also expressed this factor as one of the three tasks for the government the need for Thailand to grasp the opportunities.



⁷ Human Rights Watch, UNHCR, 1988.

Table 4.1 Major Export Markets of Burma by Selected Countries
(Millions U.S Dollars)

Source: IMF, *Direction of Trade Statistics*, Year book, various issues.

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Singapore	9.69	9.34	10.98	14.88	13.43	12.07	17.3	33.63	30.1	57.29	59.17
Thailand	-0.01	0.01	0.06	0.17	0.75	-	0.61	0.61	1.12	13.25	3.45
Japan	8.04	12.47	14.6	34.51	21.85	21.47	20.92	19.58	26.91	79.69	41.29
Malaysia	6.21	3.02	3.04	4.32	3.7	5.79	5.39	2.48	8.03	18.34	11.57
Hong Kong	6.31	4.62	3.53	3.86	9.35	7.49	12.28	12.85	25.24	37.39	31.36
Indonesia	6.98	4.04	0.23	2.44	43.8	12.42	39.3	30.91	26.69	50.5	39.22
Spain	0.46	0.82	1.43	0.13	0.58	-	0.02	0.31	-	1.84	0.01
China	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.05	-	4.89
Korea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.37	3.64	0.85
U.S	0.32	0.16	3.31	0.22	1.2	0.49	0.37	0.94	2.01	11.55	2
Germany	4.83	6.74	5.67	8.06	7.73	4.46	7.73	10.73	12.94	11.39	10.84
Denmark	4.03	3.9	4.22	6.21	4.22	6.21	7.49	0	4.06	7.17	4.91
Belgium	0	2.65	3.55	7.64	5.62	3.8	5.54	6.12	6.65	9.53	3.85
Netherlands	2.88	3.93	3.07	4.58	4.41	10.69	3.21	4.88	4.43	8.65	14.05
Sri Lanka	15.25	15.03	17.33	5.35	35.22	1.85	24.47	21.67	28.85	11.45	28.03
Others	40.87	57.29	51.97	38.12	49.52	71.66	47.97	80.97	54.47	136.16	159.55
Total Exports	105.87	124.02	122.99	130.49	192.38	158.4	192.6	225.68	233.92	457.84	415.04

Table 4.2 Major Export Markets of Burma by Selected Countries
(In percent)

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Singapore	9.2	7.5	8.9	11.4	7.0	7.6	9.0	14.9	12.9	12.5	14.3
Thailand	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.5	2.9	0.8
Japan	7.6	10.1	11.9	26.4	11.4	13.6	10.9	8.7	11.5	17.4	9.9
Malaysia	5.9	2.4	2.5	3.3	1.9	3.7	2.8	1.1	3.4	4.0	2.8
Hong Kong	6.0	3.7	2.9	3.0	4.9	4.7	6.4	5.7	10.8	8.2	7.6
Indonesia	6.6	3.3	0.2	1.9	22.8	7.8	20.4	13.7	11.4	11.0	9.4
Spain	0.4	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0
China	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
Korea	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.8	0.2
U.S	0.3	0.1	2.7	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.9	2.5	0.5
Germany	4.6	5.4	4.6	6.2	4.0	2.8	4.0	4.8	5.5	2.5	2.6
Denmark	3.8	3.1	3.4	4.8	2.2	3.9	3.9	0.0	1.7	1.6	1.2
Belgium	0.0	2.1	2.9	5.9	2.9	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.1	0.9
Netherlands	2.7	3.2	2.5	3.5	2.3	6.7	1.7	2.2	1.9	1.9	3.4
Sri Lanka	14.4	12.1	14.1	4.1	18.3	1.2	12.7	9.6	12.3	2.5	6.8
Others	38.6	46.2	42.3	29.2	25.7	45.2	24.9	35.9	23.3	29.7	38.4
Total Exports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculations based on Table 4.1.

The trade between Burma and Thailand for the period 1970-1980 was insignificant in terms of values and market share as shown in Tables 4.1 to 4.4 . Burma's exports to Thailand increased from \$0.01 million (0.01 %) of total export in 1970 to \$3.45 million (0.08%) in 1980. With respect to imports, Burma imports from Thailand showed 0.01 million in 1970 (% of total import) to 1.25 million (0.2%) of total imports in 1980. Trade relations between Thailand and Burma were insignificant in those period. Major trade partners were Japan, Sri Lanka, Germany, Denmark, Belgium and Netherlands.

Table 4.3 Burma's Major Import Market by Selected Countries (Millions U.S dollars)

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Singapore	1.51	1.67	1.53	1.51	9.43	13.07	13.42	36.59	15.26	13.07	47.73
Thailand	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.11	0.21	2.58	0.67	3.2	1.31	1.38	1.25
Japan	39.88	50.26	36.84	30.22	54.8	74.3	63.08	255.55	99.63	113.26	342.94
Malaysia	0.89	3.73	1.79	0.16	3.57	3.7	7.9	13.68	5.95	8.54	14.86
Hong Kong	6.37	4.31	1.47	0.41	2.33	1.4	2.08	4.39	1.48	1.48	4.15
Indonesia	0.04	-	0.15	-	2.46	0.07	0.02	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.15
Spain	0.11	0.26	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.76	0.22	0.05	-	0.29	0.03
China	0.05	-	-	-	-	-	0.04	-	16.83	16.58	29.3
Korea	1.79	1.01	0.75	0.24	1.77	11.58	6.98	19.72	11.21	6.48	10.05
U.S	8.93	5.63	6.13	3.66	5.4	29.17	10.31	17.79	42.22	41.13	39.33
Germany	11.65	15.72	11.8	9.87	11.57	16.14	11.95	19.97	24.86	30.48	58.2
Denmark	1.45	1.85	1.68	0.51	1.32	1.8	0.65	2.82	1.38	0.5	4.3
Belgium	-	3.13	2.78	0.69	1.16	2.7	0.94	3.32	2.92	5.58	3.2
Netherlands	2.57	3.73	2.09	4.66	6.27	6.04	17.97	14.7	6.94	7.15	13.6
Sri Lanka	0.33	-	0.09	0.06	-	-	0.16	0.5	0.1	0.06	-
Others	76.51	77.45	68.58	54.21	77.6	85.65	57.51	6.03	96.13	85.89	216.36
Total Exports	152.09	168.8	135.74	106.34	177.97	249.96	193.9	398.39	326.29	331.94	785.45

Source: IMF, *Direction of Trade Statistics*, Year book, various issues.

Table 4.4 Burma's Major Import Market by Selected Countries
(In percent)

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Singapore	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.4	5.3	5.2	6.9	9.2	4.7	3.9	6.1
Thailand	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.2
Japan	26.2	29.8	27.1	28.4	30.8	29.7	32.5	64.1	30.5	34.1	43.7
Malaysia	0.6	2.2	1.3	0.2	2.0	1.5	4.1	3.4	1.8	2.6	1.9
Hong Kong	4.2	2.6	1.1	0.4	1.3	0.6	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.5
Indonesia	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spain	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
China	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2	5.0	3.7
Korea	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.2	1.0	4.6	3.6	4.9	3.4	2.0	1.3
U.S	5.9	3.3	4.5	3.4	3.0	11.7	5.3	4.5	12.9	12.4	5.0
Germany	7.7	9.3	8.7	9.3	6.5	6.5	6.2	5.0	7.6	9.2	7.4
Denmark	1.0	1.1	1.2	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.5
Belgium	0.0	1.9	2.0	0.6	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.7	0.4
Netherlands	1.7	2.2	1.5	4.4	3.5	2.1	9.3	3.7	2.1	2.2	1.7
Sri Lanka	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Others	50.3	45.9	50.5	51.0	43.6	34.3	29.7	1.5	29.5	25.9	27.5
Total Exports	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Calculations based on Table 4.3.

4.4 Rational and Principles for Policy Making and Dialogue

At the end of cold war in Indochina in 1972, the philosophy of formulation of regional economic power in support of national security and development emerged in Thailand foreign policy. The ideology on a new role of Thailand as a regional economic power was initiated in Thai leadership and it was reflected substantially in Thai foreign policy in particular with Asian countries.

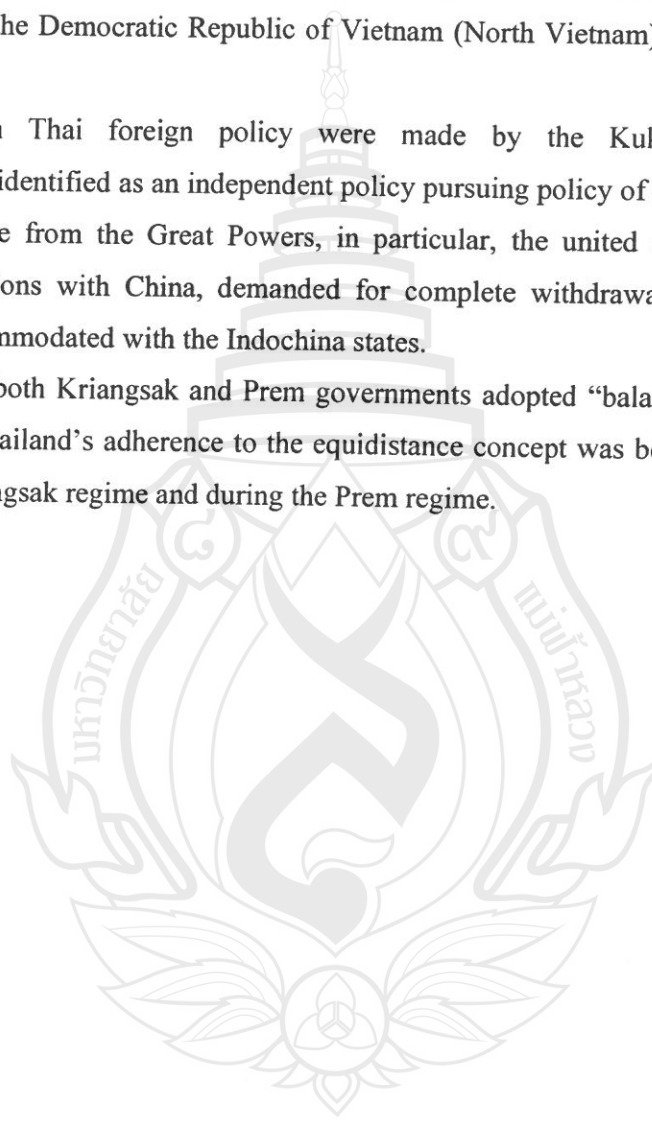
The previous studies classified Thailand foreign policies into three types as follows: pro-West, pro-communist, and non-aligned. Foreign policy of Thailand in the third decade can be regarded as mostly under the pro-West category based on the above classification. It is generally recognized that the Thanom and Thanin governments advocated a strongly pro-American and anti-communist foreign policy. Policy adjustments in line with the systematic change from "cold war" to "détente", were gradually carried out by the Sanya government. Thus as pointed the scholars out

by Thai Foreign Policy during this transitional period can be regarded as less pro-American and less anti-communist.⁸

Thai politics and foreign policy (1963-71) oriented towards Laos where a Pathet Lao victory would destabilize the North and Northeast and open Thailand to a direct attack by communist forces. Thailand allied itself closely with the United States position in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), permitting bases in Thailand to be used for raids on both the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and Cambodia⁹.

Major changes in Thai foreign policy were made by the Kukrit's administration. It has been identified as an independent policy pursuing policy of non-alignment and equidistance from the Great Powers, in particular, the united state Thailand normalized relations with China, demanded for complete withdrawal of American troops, and accommodated with the Indochina states.

It was reported that both Kriangsak and Prem governments adopted “balance-of-powers” policies and Thailand’s adherence to the equidistance concept was better maintained during the Kriangsak regime and during the Prem regime.



⁸ Sen, 2001.

⁹ The US Library of Congress, in “History of Thailand”, *Area Handbook of the US Library of Congress*.

Chapter 5

Enhanced Friendship Relations: 1980-90

5.1 Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relations

Thailand was stable under Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond's eight consecutive years of administration during 1980-87. As in past decades, the military continued to influence in the political process. Prime Minister Kriangsak stepped down in February in 1987. He was succeeded by General Prem Tinsulanond enabling Kriangsak the first ex-military Prime Minister ever to give up power voluntarily.

It has been reported that the Thai military officers were divided into several cliques in 1980. One of the more influential cliques was known "the Young Military Officers Group," so-called "the Young Turks." The influential members of this group belonged to Class Seven of the elite Chulachomkhlaio Royal Military Academy. The aim was to enhance military professionalism as well as to ensure a decisive role for the military in the Thai political process. In 1980, their support was key to Prem's ascension to the Prime Ministership. In April 1981, however, they turned against Prem due to loss of confidence upon him and he was also taking sides with rival military cliques opposed to the Young Turks. The Young Turks controlled the capital city for two days, but they failed to win the monarch's tacit consent, which had been crucial to the traditional legitimization of a coup. Thirty-eight coup plotters including their leaders, Colonel Manoon.

In August 1981, Prem Tinsulanond relinquished his post as Army Commander in Chief but continued to head his second coalition cabinet. After a cabinet crisis brought on by the withdrawal of the Social Action Party from the ruling coalition. The second coalition comprised the Chart Thai Party, the Democrat Party, and the United Democracy Party.

It is found that in the 1980s, the military dominance in politics, however, underwent some changes, because the officer corps was not as cohesive as it had been previously and hence was less able to impose its will. Another factor was the Generals' own growing perception that a coup was undemocratic, if not uncivilized. It resulted in, increasing number of generals and colonels in retirement chose to involve themselves in party politics. In the election held on April 18, 1983, for example, the Chart Thai Party captured 73 of 324 seats in the House of Representatives led by

retired Major General Pramarn Adireksan, which had a large number of retired military officers.

On September 9, 1981, a small group of army and air force officers undertook a coup. The coup collapsed after ten hours. In 1985, Thailand overcome another military challenge to its constitutional government in the form of an abortive coup, again led by Manoon, the Young Turks colonel who engineered the unsuccessful coup in 1981.

Tensions between the army and the Democrat Party also appeared in Thailand's first gubernatorial election for Bangkok in November 1985. Former Major General Chamlong Srimuang, former leader of the Class Seven military academy graduates won the contest. Chamlong ran as an independent but was strongly supported by Arthit. Another factor was Arthit's decision to set up the army's "election-monitoring center" in connection with the forthcoming election. It was view by most Thai critique as an unwarranted foray into politics. On May 27, the government dismissed the army commander in chief and replacing him with General Chaovalit Yongchaiyut.

Prime Minister Chaovalit established immidiately the image of his army leadership by promising to keep the military out of politics, by dissolving the army's election watchdog center, and by pledging military neutrality in the election.

He pledged his support for "the parliamentary government", in September 1986 addressing that there would be "no more coups" as long as he was in charge of the army. On April 22, 1987, the Prem administration faced a no-confidence debate in parliament, the second one since October 1986. Eighty-four opposition members sponsored the no-confidence motion against the entire cabinet.

In Myanmar, a public uprising, the current military government, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) seized power in 1988. Free and fair elections took place in 1990, and the National League for Democracy (NLD) party, under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi, won 82% of the seats. However, the results of the elections were not honoured by the regime which maintained power.

5.2 Borderland and Ethnic Issues

It is well known that most minority groups live on along sides of the Thai-Myanmar border. The Karens were one of the largest ethnic minority groups in Myanmar, with an estimated population of between three to four millions. Since 1984,

significant numbers of Karen refugees crossed into Thailand. By the end of 1990 there were some 4,000 Karenni refugees in Thailand, in small camps near the Thai town of Mae Hong Son.

It was reported that the Myanmar armed forces launched yearly dry-season offensives against the Karen National Liberation Army, and the number of Karen refugees in Thailand rose accordingly between 1984 and 1992 in particular. Some 9,000 Karen arrived in Thailand in January 1984, in the midst of a major offensive against the KNU and other members of the coalition of ethnic groups called the National Democratic Front (NDF). It reached more than 20,000 in 1987. Before 1998, it was possible for the refugees to return to their villages in during the rainy season when fighting generally ceased, though they would invariably be forced to flee to Thailand once the dry-season offensives commenced. However, from 1988 onwards, as the SLORC won increasing areas of KNU territory and, using civilians as forced laborers to build roads into these areas, were able to maintain their positions during the rains, such seasonal migrations were no longer possible, and the refugees became a permanent nature in Thailand. In April 1992, an attack on Sleeping Dog Mountain, known as the largest ever offensive against the KNU, brought the total number of refugees in Thailand to over 70,000¹⁰.

Thai government policy and practice towards Myanmar student asylum seekers has been described as inconsistent and contradictory in the previous studies. Thai Foreign Ministry initially termed the first Myanmar students to arrive “war refugees” but changed within days as “temporarily displaced persons” and rejected any role for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in assisting them. Under pressure from Myanmar to return the students, Thailand repatriated 135 students on October 8, 1988. On October 17, the SLORC announced that twenty-seven reception centers along the Thai-Myanmar border were to be established and that amnesty would be offered to all students who returned to Myanmar by November 18.

It is stated that a new vision of Thai Foreign Policy expressed by Prime Minister Chatichai Chunnhawan during his administration (1988-91) was exercised but which has its roots in contemporary Thai-Myanmar history.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, UNHCR, 1988.

On November 22, the Thai cabinet decided to offer asylum to those Myanmar students who applied for asylum, one-day visit of Gen. Chavalit to Myanmar the Thai government opened a repatriation center at the provincial airport in Tak Province, to be jointly administered by the Thai and Myanmar Red Cross societies. No role for UNHCR was provided. UNHCR only reached an agreement with the Thai government on assistance to Myanmar in mid-1989 after the Thai army had sent at least 387 Myanmar students back to Burma from the Tak Repatriation Center.

The evidence suggests that the movement of refugees across the border has also contributed to bilateral tensions between two countries. Myanmar Refugees seek employment opportunities in Thailand and escape fighting among the various insurgent groups. The Thai government expelled many of migrant workers and refugees in the wake of the 1997 economic crash. Clashes between the Myanmar military and the Karen ethnic minority during the spring and summer of 2000 produced periodic flows of refugees into Thailand, further exacerbating the situation as victims of the fighting sought refuge across the border.

Drug trafficking across the border has become one of the primary concerns in Thailand-Myanmar relations. While opium and heroin from the Golden Triangle Area spanning Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar have long been a concern for Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States. The Thai government was especially concerned with the more recent trafficking in methamphetamines. The Thai press made numerous references to an epidemic of methamphetamine addiction throughout the country, to call for increased interdiction.

The principle traffickers reported often in various reports included the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the strongest group of minority insurgents in Myanmar. But it is currently in a cease-fire agreement with the government. The Myanmar government widely viewed the drug traffickers' role as proxy fighters against other indigenous groups, especially the Shan State Army (SSA).

The previous studies showed that the growing presence of Chinese political advisors in the border region and a genuine concern for drug trafficking in the China, as well as the need for intelligence on the activities of Taiwan military advisers and intelligence officers in the region. It was reported the need of more aggressive military actions against drug smugglers, including strikes into Myanmar border area.

However, Myanmar government made counter-report that Thailand allowed the SSA and the UWSA, both allegedly involved in the drug trade, to operate on Thai soil.¹

Myanmar's building of embankments on the Moei River and construction of shops along the border by the Thais have resulted in protests by the governments of both countries. Additionally, Myanmar announced the Thai military of aiding the KNU in assaults on government troops. There were also disputes over territorial waters on the seas off Thailand. In January 1999, the Myanmar government reported a Thai naval vessel of firing at one of its naval ships.

The new shelter was located in an unsafe area. An operation to transfer more than 12,000 Karen refugees living in the Salween National Park to Mae La Ma Luang Camp in Sop Moei District. The operation at Ban Mae Ye Tha, the shelter of more than 1,800 refugees, ended in failure because all refugees refused to move to the camp and staged a protest. Following negotiations with respective officials, many of these refugees agreed to return to Myanmar. On February 23, the refugee transfer operation which took place at Ban Ko Pa and Ban U Da Tha also ended in failure after only 137 of all 2,207 refugees there cooperated. The refugees fled from Myanmar into Thailand in 1995 after the KNU forces were defeated by the Myanmar troops. More than 1,800 of them sought refuge in Ban Mae Yeh Tha, 2,207 others in Ban Ko Pa and Ban U Da Tha, 2,350 in Ban Mae Sa Kerb¹¹.

Official sources revealed that the illegal workers were mostly Myanmar working in Kanchanaburi, Tak, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Ranong and other border provinces. The Labour and Social Welfare Ministry continues to confer with employers and convince them to terminate the employment of unskilled, illegal workers. Thai authorities pledged to find Thai workers as replacements. The National Committee on Employment chaired by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai has announced that the Government will deport about 300,000 illegal alien laborers over the next six months.

It has been argued in Thai perspective that the SLORC's military offensives against the KNU headquarters and other strongholds through out Thai-Myanmar border have proved that it was not only internal affairs of Myanmar but also it was an obvious threat to the peace and security, and stability of the neighboring countries.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai described his country's security concerns in *Asiaweek* as follows: “When we talk about security we have to talk about other problems, for instance, illegal immigrants and minorities fleeing from fighting in neighboring countries. Then there is the problem of drugs manufactured in neighboring countries, smuggled into Thailand.”

5.3 Economy, Trade and Investment

Prime Minister Chatichai's regional development vision of foreign policy that would promote Thailand's role in mainland Southeast Asia has been echoed by other Thai leaders. General Chavalit, talked in terms of open borders between Thailand, Indochina, and Yunnan Province of China. Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun observed Thailand as the “gateway to Indochina” and cast in the pivotal role of a commercial, financial, and distributive center for mainland Southeast Asia. According to Anand, Thailand should take the important task of overcoming the area of Southeast Asia. Chuan Leekpai expressed similar ideas, referring to Thailand as a “financial center” to the outside world.

A similar idea involves creation of a ‘Northern Quadrangle’ involving southern China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and northern part of Thailand. Thai companies promoted the construction of a 225-km road connecting Yunnan with Thailand and Myanmar. It noted that this concept rooted in the earlier idea of a union of all Thai speaking peoples, a “Greater Thailand” popularized during the premiership of Phibun Songkhram in the 1940s and 1950s.

The trade between Myanmar and Thailand for the period 1980-1990 played an important role in terms of trade volume and market share as shown in Tables 5.1 to 5.4. Our analysis showed that Myanmar recorded a relatively large positive market share of in her exports and imports during 1981-1990. Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$3.51 million (4.5 %) of total exports in 1981 to \$29.64 million (16.04%) in 1986. With respect to imports, Myanmar imports from Thailand showed 4.5 million in 1981 (0.5% of total imports) in 1981 to 16.04 million (2.4%) of total imports.

Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$0.01 million (0.01 %) of total exports in 1970 to \$3.45 million (0.08%) in 1980. With respect to imports, Myanmar's imports from Thailand showed 0.01 million in 1970 (% of total imports) to 1.25 million (0.2%) of total imports.

Table 5.1 Major Export Markets of Burma by Selected Countries
(Millions U.S Dollars)

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Singapore	43.36	55.04	63.91	60.83	62.09	57.85
Thailand	3.51	13.53	22.33	30.27	34.28	29.64
Japan	37.34	44.32	42.6	29.26	32	44.58
Malaysia	9.86	20.35	25.93	25.62	24.36	9.13
Hong Kong	40.77	27.78	24.4	24.92	22.98	30.87
Indonesia	31.19	22.76	48.94	18.73	0.64	0.9
Spain	0.06	0.69	13.44	17.02	7.15	2.2
China Rep	5.47	13.81	14.38	13.23	40.56	52.22
Korea	23.79	3.27	5.82	12.25	9.36	4.39
U.S	3.37	16.27	10.63	13.36	13.27	13.91
Germany	16.55	8.99	9.36	12.55	10.16	11.01
Denmark	0	9.37	9.05	12.02	10.01	7.5
Belgium	2.22	11.24	10.66	10.02	4.87	2.47
Netherlands	6.84	10.72	7.9	9.99	9.8	8.03
Sri Lanka	26.21	16.12	28.97	5.77	4.14	2.51
Others	195.59	226.94	207.5	229.25	218.08	228.36
Total Exports	446.13	501.2	545.82	525.09	503.75	505.57

Source: *IMF Direction of Trade Statistics*, Year book, various issues.

Table 5.2 Major Export Markets of Burma by Selected Countries
(In Percent)

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Singapore	9.7	11.0	11.7	11.6	12.3	11.4
Thailand	0.8	2.7	4.1	5.8	6.8	5.9
Japan	8.4	8.8	7.8	5.6	6.4	8.8
Malaysia	2.2	4.1	4.8	4.9	4.8	1.8
Hong Kong	9.1	5.5	4.5	4.7	4.6	6.1
Indonesia	7.0	4.5	9.0	3.6	0.1	0.2
Spain	0.0	0.1	2.5	3.2	1.4	0.4
China Rep	1.2	2.8	2.6	2.5	8.1	10.3
Korea	5.3	0.7	1.1	2.3	1.9	0.9
U.S	0.8	3.2	1.9	2.5	2.6	2.8
Germany	3.7	1.8	1.7	2.4	2.0	2.2
Denmark	0.0	1.9	1.7	2.3	2.0	1.5
Belgium	0.5	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.0	0.5
Netherlands	1.5	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.9	1.6
Sri Lanka	5.9	3.2	5.3	1.1	0.8	0.5
Others	43.8	45.3	38.0	43.7	43.3	45.2
Total Exports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculations based on Table 5.1.

Table 5.3 Burma's Major Import Market by Selected Countries
(Millions U.S Dollars)

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Singapore	48.05	95.15	59.9	52.56	62.25	42.37
Thailand	4.5	5.84	7.42	16.6	12.16	16.04
Japan	321.14	253.68	197.32	198.92	204.56	234.82
Malaysia	21.39	12.88	11.13	9.53	13.31	9.24
Hong Kong	5.1	18.91	8.15	9.97	8.1	6.39
Indonesia	0.15	4.31	0.4	3.37	4.6	5.33
Spain	0.27	0.01	0.05	0.27	0.11	0.65
China Rep	25.99	34.51	34.82	33.52	38.59	41.41
Korea	0.58	24.6	13.22	13.02	17.15	30.38
U.S	49.5	37.29	16.94	17.49	10.78	17.6
Germany	55.13	76.71	156.54	70.67	83.02	52.24
Denmark	2.7	17.13	3.82	2.87	3.22	3.88
Belgium	6.7	10.66	2.47	3.93	4.39	4.23
Netherlands	16.74	25.32	15.71	13.43	18.9	37.61
Sri Lanka	0	7.54	0.03	0.73	0.01	0.03
Others	265.06	273.5	193.32	175.81	170.93	165.78
Total Exports	823	898.04	721.24	622.69	652.08	668

Source: *IMF Direction of Trade Statistics*, Year book, various issues

Table 5.4 Burma's Major Import Market by Selected Countries
(Millions U.S Dollars)

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Singapore	5.8	10.6	8.3	8.4	9.5	6.3
Thailand	0.5	0.7	1.0	2.7	1.9	2.4
Japan	39.0	28.2	27.4	31.9	31.4	35.2
Malaysia	2.6	1.4	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.4
Hong Kong	0.6	2.1	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.0
Indonesia	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.8
Spain	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
China Rep	3.2	3.8	4.8	5.4	5.9	6.2
Korea	0.1	2.7	1.8	2.1	2.6	4.5
U.S	6.0	4.2	2.3	2.8	1.7	2.6
Germany	6.7	8.5	21.7	11.3	12.7	7.8
Denmark	0.3	1.9	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
Belgium	0.8	1.2	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.6
Netherlands	2.0	2.8	2.2	2.2	2.9	5.6
Sri Lanka	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Others	32.2	30.5	26.8	28.2	26.2	24.8
Total Exports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculations based on Table 5.3.

Trade Channels and Type of Commodities Traded at the Border

Along the Thai-Burma border, six main border outposts are used for the cross-border trade in this period. These are:

- (1) Mae Sai
- (2) Mae Hong Song
- (3) Mae Sariang
- (4) Mae Sod
- (5) Kra Buri
- (6) Ranong

The nature of trade and the type of goods traded were different in these border outposts. In general, fishery products and charcoal, beans and pulses are popular imports into Ranong while live animals, precious stones, and beans pulses, are brought across the frontier into Thailand at Mae Sod.

Total Trade Flows at Burma-Thailand Border¹²

Table 4.3 illustrate that Mae Sai' the largest border export and import market out of all the six border market points along the Myanmar-Thailand border. In 1986, ninety three percent of total border exports to Myanmar were through Mae Sai. The second largest is Mae Sod while Ranong is the third. Total border exports and imports increased rapidly during 1983 to 1986. Total border exports from all Myanmar-Thailand border stood at 55 million baht in 1983. It increased to 135 million baht in 1986. Thailand's total border imports from Myanmar were 53 million baht in 1983. It rose to 59 million baht in 1986.

¹² Khin Maung Nyunt , 1998.

Table 5.5 Thailand's Border Trade with Burma (in thousand Baht)

Custom Ports	1983		1984		1985		1986	
	E	M	E	M	E	M	E	M
Mae sai	52713	531	139263	1002	97175	756	123923	795
Mae Hong Song	-	2861	-	7886	-	10029	-	5863
Mae Sariang	-	8394	-	661	-	4343	-	1638
Mae Sod	7	3757	72596	6956	24414	4952	6495	2366
Kra Buri	-	3901	-	11129	-	12710	-	12074
Ranong	2587	33637	1286	144458	2576	80412	4735	35980
Total	55307	53081	213145	172092	124165	113202	135153	58716

Source: Department of Customs, Bangkok, Data compiled and rounded to the nearest thousand from computer print-out that department, where E: Export, M : Import

Since some traders either bringing in goods into Thailand or taking them into Myanmar would evidently evade the customs check points, the statistic for flow goods to either side would doubtless be much more. This also was the impression obtained during the visit to two border areas.

Table 5.3 also shows the importance of border trade in contrast to the official trade between Thailand and Myanmar. Thailand's total border exports to Myanmar rose from 35.6 percent of its exports to 62 percent in 1986. Thailand's border imports from Myanmar represented 21.7 percent of total official imports from Myanmar in 1984. It was 11 percent in 1986.

Myanmar domestic production alone would not supply all the domestic needs. Government's import policy also gave priority to the imports of capital goods because of shortage in foreign exchange.

5.4 Rational and Principles for Policy Making and Dialogue

Thailand Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond established civilian role in Thai democratic political system while the notion of role of withdrawal of military's dominance role emerged during eight years of his administration. Chatichai's regional development vision of foreign policy that would promote Thailand's role in mainland

Southeast Asia has been echoed by other Thai leaders. Chavalit focused 'open borders' among Thailand, Indochina, and Yunnan Province of China while Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun aimed Thailand as the "gateway to Indochina". Chuan Leekpai expressed Thailand as a "financial center" to the outside world.

The trade between Myanmar and Thailand for the period 1980-1990 played an important role in terms of trade volume and market share. Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$3.51 million (4.5 %) of total export in 1981 to \$29.64 million (16.04%) in 1986. With respect to imports, Myanmar imports from Thailand showed 4.5 million in 1981 (0.5% of total imports) in 1981 to 16.04 million (2.4%) of total imports. Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$0.01 million (0.01 %) of total export in 1970 to \$3.45 million (0.08%) in 1980. With respect to imports, Myanmar's imports from Thailand showed 0.01 million in 1970 (% of total import) to 1.25 million (0.2%) of total imports.

Since the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) could not provide sufficient production for domestic consumption both legal and black market trade at Thai-Myanmar grew substantially. The civil uprising in 8.8.88 led number of students to drive out at Thai-Myanmar border and accumulated the number of refugees. A series of operations by Myanmar armed force at the various Thai-Myanmar borders, in particular, KNU and SSA were intensified in this period. It resulted in the number of Karen refugees in Thailand increased substantially between 1984 and 1992.

Gen. Chavalit's visit to Myanmar enhanced the Thai-Myanmar cooperation in a refugees repatriation center at the provincial airport in Tak Province in Thailand, to be jointly administered by the Thai and Myanmar Red Cross societies. No role for UNHCR was provided. Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai described his country's security concerns due to influx of refugee and the need for corporation.

In other words, the intensifying of Myanmar troop at the border and occupying at this area by Myanmar troop in this decade demonstrated, in part, the strong cooperation and better relations between the two countries. Otherwise, it failed to achieve this position as experienced in this decades.

Chapter 6

Constructive Engagement Foreign Policy: 1990-2000

6.1 Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relation

In Thailand Army Commander Suchinda Kraprayoon assumed the position of Prime Minister in March 1992. The riots in Bangkok in May 1992 led to the resignation of Prime Minister Suchinda. The evident also suggested that the Thai military would probably never again assumed direct control in Thailand, and would be less use of the military in its security priorities and Thai foreign policy. The evidence suggested that the elected Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai attempted to “roll back” the military from its previous commanding position and encourage the army to become professionalized in its field by abstaining from politics. It also stated that the size of the military is to be cut by 15% over five years, and Thailand’s 700-1,000. Generals will be reduced in number as inactive posts are decreased from 500 to 200, and the announcement of military promotions will be reduced from twice to once a year.

In Myanmar remained unclear in the 1990s since, the SPDC’s absolutely controlled the process in the absence agreement between SPDC and both political parties and ethnic groups. Since the mid-1990s, SPDC concluded cease-fire arrangements with most ethnic groups, halting fighting with the ethnic group of the Karen and Shan in Myanmar and resulting in massive displacement of people. From 1993 to 1996, a tightly controlled National Convention worked on a constitution of Myanmar.

General Chatichai became Prime Minister of Thailand and a shift in the policy towards Myanmar emerged in this period. Chatichai’s policy intended to change ‘From battlefields to marketplaces’, and developed a policy of constructive engagement. Most analysts commented that Thailand’s constructive engagement policy reflects a diplomatic rhetoric to conceal deeper intentions and goals of the Thai foreign policy initiative. Three basic considerations of Thailand’s foreign policy towards Myanmar have been discussed in the literature and Thailand’s foreign policy process as follows: First, Myanmar is located in a strategic location in the context of Thailand’s regional vision of the larger Southeast Asian community. Thai leaders considered Myanmar as an important land bridge for trade between Southern China

and the Indian Ocean. As land-locked parts of Southwest China (Yunan) constitute a considerable growth potential, Myanmar's strategic location has become increasingly important for the economic development of the region.

Second, the Thai politicians observed that a sudden collapses of SPCD could lead to the disintegration of the country, due to Myanmar's limited experience in democracy and unresolved ethnic issues. Thai leaders viewed that a disintegrated Myanmar constitutes a serious threat not only to the Thailand-Myanmar border but also to the whole Southeast Asian region in the context of a regional power rivalry between China and India. Third, trade with Myanmar is an important determinant in Thai foreign policy. Thailand could see an opportunity to extract Myanmar's natural resources such as timber, minerals, cheap commercial crops and maritime products.¹⁰

Chatichai declared it a land bridge for trade between southern China and the Indian Ocean, and said viewed as the new task after the settlement of the Cambodian issue which was the integration of Myanmar into mainstream Southeast Asia. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai characterized Thailand as a bridge by which that might be accomplished to invite its representatives to ASEAN Ministerial Meeting of July 1993 as an observer.

In addition, a salient factor which constituted new Thai foreign policy towards Myanmar reflected the special interests of both military and business elites who tend to benefit most from establishing relations with Myanmar. These elites engaged in the extraction enterprises in Thailand's neighboring countries, and were overwhelmingly influential in the Thai foreign policy process.¹¹ It suggests the corporate and special interests of the Thai military played an important role in the formulation of Thai foreign policy.

A ceasefire and a mutual withdrawal of forces was arranged to promoting the Thai Foreign Ministry to claim that constructive engagement provided the framework for the defusing of a border conflict.

Thai businesses, in general, acquired formal access to the policy making under General Prem Tinsulanonda's government in the 1980's. To allow all business associations to participate in the policy-making process, General Prem Tinsulanonda

¹⁰ Leszek Buszynski. 1994. "Thailand's Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey* Vol. XXXIV, No.8, August.

¹¹ Marc Innes-Brown and Mark J. Valencia. 1994. "Thailand's Resource Diplomacy in Indochina and Myanmar" in *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 14(4), March.

(1979-1988) used more institutionalized approach and allowed Thai business into foreign policy process. Therefore leading Thai business associations, such as the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Thai Bankers' Associations were incorporated into the Joint Public and Private Sector Consultative Committee (JPPSCC) in 1981. In addition to these formalizing access to policy-making process, Thai military and business elites traditionally used extra-legal means as compliment ways to ascertain their interests in the foreign policy process. In the case of Thai foreign policy toward Myanmar, it is more prevalent since these vested interest have been benefitting most from relations with Myanmar military government.

The third factor in Thailand's constructive engagement policy is trade. Army Commander Chavalit's visit to Yangon in December 1988, Bangkok established a trading relationship with the Myanmar military in consideration of which support for insurgent minority groups was dropped. After the appointment of army chief General. Surayut Julanond in 1998, the army has been cooperating closely with the Foreign Ministry to work out and coordinate a common policy towards Myanmar.

Constructive engagement has been supported by the Chuan government. In the first meeting of the Thai-Myanmar Joint Commission in September 1993, Thailand described the incarceration of Aung San Suu Kyi as an "internal affairs" of Myanmar. The general view of the Thai government was that democracy cannot be imposed on Myanmar and should be allowed to develop naturally. Deputy Prime Minister Surin Pitsuwan, emphasized the importance of constructive engagement as a means of bringing about democratic change in Myanmar through incentives.¹²

The most negative relations surfaced on 10 May 2000. The Foreign Ministry issued a hard-hitting press release in response to accusation in the *New Light Myanmar*. that Thailand provided shelter to Karen rebel groups in order to protect its black-market trade. The two-page release of Thai foreign policy criticized soundly Yangon for the spillover of problems from Myanmar. It said that because of continuous fighting inside Myanmar, women, children and old people had to cross over to Thailand for safety. Thailand had to take care them and it had become a burden for the country. In subsequent months, the Myanmar regime used its mouthpiece, the *New Light of Myanmar*, to continue to criticize Thailand and its leaders.

However, when the ILO decided to impose punitive sanctions on Myanmar in November 2000 at the ILO meeting , the Thai government had voted along with other

ASEAN members to support Myanmar. The evidence indicated that Thailand's policy towards Myanmar has tended to be positive.

6.2 Borderland and Ethnic Issues

Thailand's security focus shift on maritime interests in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman sea in the period under study. In particular, the Air Force and Navy had defined as protection of the southern seaboard, Thailand's fishing fleet, and protection against piracy. In the meantime, the "safe area" was filled to its capacity with the influx of refugees from the border after fall of Manerplaw, headquarters of the KNU to the Myanmar army in January 1995. It was closed to new arrivals after February 1996. UNHCR resumed assistance to those who registered to go to the "safe area" but who were not admitted; the "safe area" remained closed to new arrivals by May 1998.

On February 12, 1992, the Interior Ministry announced that all Myanmar students must report for an initial registration leading to eventual entry to the "safe area" between February 17 and May 15, indicating that the group which would be allowed into the "safe area" would be a smaller pool than that of UNHCR-recognized refugees. The Ministry of the Interior became the sole administrator of the "safe area" and responsible for "screening procedures." They had been selected by the Interior Ministry out of 1,333 applications.

The "safe area" was finally closed to all new residents in July 1996. In May 1998 those who were illegally in the camp, that is, registered only with UNHCR but not with the Ministry of the Interior, were given a deadline of June 3 to leave the camp.

Some members of KNU formed the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) in December 1994 and joined the Myanmar military in a series of attacks on the KNU that began at Manerplaw in January 1995. Some 9,000 Karen civilians were evacuated to Thailand after the fall of Manerplaw, but they found no sanctuary from the combined DKBA and SLORC forces once there. The peak of the attacks came in April 1995 when, over a four-day period, Mae Ra Ma Luang camp, accommodating 4,583 refugees, Kamaw Lay Khlo camp, housing over 4,000 refugees, Mae Tha Wah

camp, which accommodated 6,400 refugees, Shoklo camp, and Kler Ko camp, which accommodated 3,726 refugees¹³.

In 1996 a massive forced relocation program was launched in areas where the population was thought to be sympathetic to the KNPP. It reached to 12,500 Karenni refugees in that area in March 1998. By the end of March, virtually the whole river valley of the Tenasserim River was occupied by the Myanmar army. In advance of the SLORC troops, some 10,000 new refugees fled and attempted to cross the border between Umphang and Sangaklaburi in Thailand. By September 1996 over 450 villages in the area between Namsan - Kurng Heng - Mong Nai had been forced to move to sites along main roads or near army garrison towns. The KNU was viewed as an effective buffer zone between Thailand and the Burmese government.

Thailand's corporation with Myanmar due to Thai's economic interests affected the refugees from 1991 onwards. The Mon refugees in the southern border were allocated in five camps in the mountainous region to the northwest of the Thai town of Sangklaburi. As in other areas along the border, the camps were administered by the Mon themselves, with humanitarian assistance provided by international NGOs who were members of the "Myanmar Border Consortium".

It was reported that all of the refugee camps in this area were situated along the proposed Yadana pipeline. By the middle of 1992 the three camps closest to Nat Ei Daung, where the pipeline was to enter Thailand, were forced by the Ninth Division to relocate to a single camp at Hla Brad. This camp, renamed Loh Loe, became the largest refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar border, with over 8,000 residents.

New arrivals were allocated at the sites at Pa Yaw, just on the border, and Bee Ree, just over it on the Myanmar side. By 1995 the two camps had some 6,000 refugees, including some who had moved from Halokhani. All received assistance from the Consortium with the blessing of the Thai authorities.

The total number of internally displaced Mon in the area showed nearly 9,000, and they were still living in territory controlled by the NMSP under the terms of the cease-fire agreement. With the consent of the Thai authorities, they continued to receive cross-border aid from NGOs in Thailand.

¹³ Human Rights Watch, UNHCR, 1988.

At the end of May 1997, this site had 1,548 refugees on the Thai side of the border. In mid-March 1998, 340 refugees from this site were moved to Ban Don Yang refugee camp, with the remainder returning once more to Myanmar. In June 1997, when the 400 refugees in the Mon Army Mergui District (MAMD) area were repatriated, UNHCR was invited by the Ninth Division and the Thai Ministry of the Interior to send its roving protection officer to observe the repatriation. In November 1997 a group of some 1,000 Karen who had newly arrived in Thailand but had been refused permission to enter the camps at Nu Pho were forcibly repatriated by the Thai army.

Refugees from the Karenni state in the northern border region had fewer problems, possibly because their numbers were small. It was reported that there was an additional commercial reason for the acceptance of the Karenni: the "long-necked women" who became a major tourist attraction in Mae Hong Son. May 1998, when 567 new refugees arrived, bringing the total camp population to over 13,000¹⁴.

The government's policy towards Myanmar refugees reflected the strong influence of the army and the National Security Council in maintaining the existing policy with some variation, since 1992. Key elements of policy change in 1998 included: "allowing Myanmar to cross into Thailand only to flee active fighting; denying entry to or forcibly repatriating those fleeing human rights abuses; · keeping camps perilously close to the border; · restricting the role of UNHCR; and · encouraging cease-fire agreements between the ethnic insurgents and the Myanmar government.

Facing with the huge drug trade problem, Thailand attempted various options in the short and medium terms. It was argued from Thailand's perspective that the Myanmar regime and the Wa minority were working together in the drug trade. In this regard, army chief General Surayut Chulanont's pointed to use surgical strikes on Wa-operated drug factories along the Thai-Myanmar border. It suggested that any military action across the Thai-Myanmar border to destroy drug-producing factories or mobile units would definitely have far-reaching ramifications on Thai-Myanmar relations and the unity of ASEAN¹⁵.

In conclusion before the extensive political reform in Thailand in 1997, Thai-Burmese ties were mainly driven by personal friendship. For instance, the leaders of

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kavi Chongkittavorn, 2001.

the armed forces from the two countries met often and resolved conflicts on an ad hoc basis and through gentlemen's agreements or military to military approach. In the past, strong military ties omitted and obliterated other key policy-makers including the Foreign Ministry, the National Security Council, the Interior Ministry and other related organizations. But with reform, the Foreign Ministry took the lead in the formation and execution of Burma policy.

Thailand's position on flexible engagement suggests that it is willing to adhere the principle of non-interference. Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan stated in July 2000 that issues such as drug trafficking and refugees are not purely domestic¹⁶. Flexible engagement would also open the door for Thai involvement in Myanmar's treatment of its Karen minority, as Karen refugees are putting considerable pressure on Thailand's society and economy.

6.3 Economy, Trade and Investment

The SLORC introduced new market economic policy in the 1990s and encouraged both sides to forge new ties based on the economic interests. A significant coincidence occurred in Thailand's foreign policy shift from the emphasis on security priorities to regional economic development, while the SLOR introduced an open-market economic policy. It is widely accepted that ten provinces that share the border with Myanmar are Mae Hong Son, Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Tak, Kanchanburi, Ratchaburi, Petchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumpon and Ranong.

It was reported that some 48 logging concessions have been granted to 30 Thai companies operating in Myanmar but the Yangon military regime gave notice in June 1993 that these contracts would be reviewed in view of alleged Thai support for minority groups and claims that the Thais went beyond their allotted quotas in felling trees. Concessions previously given to Thai companies supposedly were to be granted to minority groups in Myanmar. Thailand faced similar pressure from Yangon over fishing concessions as the military regime revoked all current licenses. The Thais argue that this was a response to Thailand's hosting of the visits of eight Nobel Peace Prize recipient to be built from the Gulf of Martaban into Thailand, and the government has been criticized for setting pipeline in the Mon ethnic area.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Thailand is a major trade partner since the SLORC came to power, and it was currently one of the major foreign investors in Myanmar. In addition, Thailand ranks as Myanmar's third largest trading partner. Given the ever-expanding economic ties between the two countries, it is certain that Thailand's unprecedentedly cordial relations with Myanmar will hold in the future also.

In 2002, the border trade (import and export) of Thailand with its neighboring countries increased around 17.6% or approximately Bt208.62 billion. This amount included an export value of Bt125.18 billion, which increased by 15.0%, and an import value of Bt83.72 billion, increased by 21.9%. To sum that up, Thailand gained a favorable balance of trade over neighboring countries totaling Bt41.75 billion, expanding by 3.9% in 2001. The border trade of Thailand with its neighboring countries is a very significant issue for the Thai government. In this regard, sustainable relationships must be maintained in order to create genuine trust between nations.

Thailand mainly imported fuel, especially natural gas, from the neighbor, accounting for over 91.6 percent of total imports from this country. Over 82.5 percent of exports from Thailand were agro-industrial products, fuel and garments.

According to a recent assessment by Thai Farmers Research Center Co., Ltd., trade relations between Thailand and Myanmar was healthy due to the opening of the first Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge over the Moei River in Mae Sod District, Tak Province, in northern Thailand. Thai commodity exports across the Moei reached Baht 8.4 billion during the first three quarters of 1997, while imports were valued at Baht 2 billion. The result for Thailand was a trade surplus of over Baht 6.4 billion - for the fifth consecutive time in the last five years. The construction of a Thai-Myanmar gas pipeline through rich forests in Kanchanaburi to bring natural gas from Myanmar's Yadana field must continue although there are still shortcomings to be corrected.

ASEAN countries indicated the main source of FDI in Myanmar accounting for three of the top four top investors. Five ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) collectively invested in 155 projects worth US\$3,757 million. These projects accounted for over half of the total FDI flows to Myanmar. Thailand constituted third largest investor investing in 47 projects with

US\$ 1264 million in Myanmar. The European Union had 47 projects worth over US\$2,181 million.

The major thrust of this policy involves establishing economic and diplomatic ties with Myanmar. Thailand's fundamental argument for the policy stated that the isolationist policy adopted by the U.S. and other western industrialized countries were more likely to alienate the SPCD regime and damage prospects for political liberalization in Myanmar. Thailand encouraged economic engagements with Myanmar, such as trade and investment, in order to initiate economic development in Myanmar as well as cooperation with the SPCD towards a more lenient, domestic policy using diplomatic channels.

Table 6.1. Myanmar's Major Foreign Investors by Country

As of June 2000 (in US\$ millions)

Country	No. of Projects	Approved Amount
Singapore	69	1,510
United Kingdom	35	1,372
Thailand	47	1,264
Malaysia	27	597
USA	16	582
France	3	470
The Netherlands	5	239
Indonesia	10	239
Japan	22	233
China (incl. Hong Kong)	35	169
The Philippines	2	147

Source: Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar.

Table 6.2. Myanmar's Major Foreign Investors by Industry
As of June 2000 (in US\$ millions)

Region/economy Sector/industry	Total	Primary	Agri. hunting, forestry and fishing	Mining and quarrying	Secondary	Tertiary	Construction	Trade	Real estate	Unspecified tertiary	Unspecified
TOTAL WORLD	192.01	116.7	5.53	111.19	25.00	54.67	0.04	3.04	48.00	3.59	-4.38
Developed Countries- DC	108.85	96.33	-	96.33	9.71	-	-	-	-	-	2.81
Western Europe	56.42	51.63	-	51.63	2.40	-	-	-	-	-	2.39
European Union	56.42	51.63	-	51.63	2.40	-	-	-	-	-	2.39
North America	44.70	44.70	-	44.70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United States	44.70	44.70	-	44.70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other DC	7.73	-	-	-	7.31	-	-	-	-	-	0.42
Japan	7.73	-	-	-	7.31	-	-	-	-	-	0.42
Developing Countries	79.77	9.31	0.13	9.18	14.64	51.63	0.04	-	48.00	3.59	4.19
Asia	79.77	9.31	0.13	9.18	14.64	51.63	0.04	-	48.00	3.59	4.19
South, East and South	79.77	9.31	0.13	9.18	14.64	51.63	0.04	-	48.00	3.59	4.19
China	0.52	-	-	-	0.52	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hong Kong, China	4.72	-	-	-	0.66	4.06	-	-	4.06	-	-
Indonesia	3.48	3.48	-	3.48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	2.23	-	-	-	2.23	-	-	-	-	-	-
Republic of Korea	7.17	-	-	-	6.83	-	-	-	-	-	0.34
Singapore	55.69	5.79	0.13	5.66	2.81	47.09	-	-	43.94	3.15	-
Thailand	5.96	0.04	-	0.04	1.59	0.48	0.04	-	-	0.44	3.85
Unspecified	3.39	11.08	5.40	5.68	0.65	3.04	-	3.04	-	-	-11.38

Source: Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar.

Table 6.3 Thailand Exports to Myanmar
(Millions of Baht)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1 Exports						
2 Japan	236,099.4	237,523.9	270,765.9	308,416.3	312,842.6	408,341.0
3 NAFTA	267,279.2	270,736.6	379,152.1	537,343.3	516,776.0	637,938.2
4 Canada	15,274.7	15,176.5	19,877.3	25,504.3	26,605.6	31,224.5
5 Mexico	1,319.7	1,760.3	4,723.1	11,052.0	10,809.3	15,025.4
6 United States of America	250,684.8	253,799.8	354,551.7	500,787.0	479,361.1	591,688.2
7 EU (27) 1/	232,163.1	234,306.8	302,063.0	413,213.6	382,666.7	452,132.5
8 ASEAN 3/	305,660.1	305,529.5	390,410.1	409,056.9	411,650.3	537,507.0
9 Brunei Darussalam	1,600.4	1,883.8	2,146.9	2,109.1	1,591.2	1,616.9
10 Indonesia	20,216.1	24,411.4	38,520.3	41,812.5	36,757.2	53,769.6
11 Malaysia	38,724.2	51,070.5	77,679.9	73,248.0	80,458.3	113,407.0
12 Philippines	10,329.4	15,989.7	21,570.5	31,219.1	35,087.1	43,452.0
13 Singapore	197,321.1	171,041.1	199,445.3	194,487.3	192,177.1	241,868.5
14 Cambodia	8,323.9	9,190.0	9,620.0	12,412.1	13,382.2	13,912.9
15 Laos	8,831.5	9,200.8	11,814.0	15,265.3	15,567.2	15,382.0
16 Myanmar	8,659.3	8,078.7	12,572.6	14,127.1	14,934.7	20,234.1
17 Vietnam	11,654.2	14,663.6	17,040.6	24,376.3	21,695.2	33,864.2
18 Middle East	63,264.9	54,076.9	59,931.2	76,342.6	77,294.2	83,784.7
19 Others	76,722.2	65,457.2	84,908.2	115,550.5	106,201.4	109,453.0
20 Total exports	1,406,310.1	1,412,110.6	1,806,699.7	2,248,321.2	2,215,179.9	2,773,827.0

1/ Prior to May 2004, EU comprises 15 countries : Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark,

Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands,

Portugal and Sweden.

Since May 2004, EU comprises 25 countries, including also Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia since Jan 2007, EU comprises 27 countries, including also Bulgaria and Romania.

2/ Prior to 1995, the data represents Czechoslovakia.

3/ Prior to 1999, ASEAN does not include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Source : Customs Department

Table 6.4 Thailand Exports to Myanmar
(In Percent)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Exports						
Japan	16.8	16.8	15.0	13.7	14.1	14.7
NAFTA	19.0	19.2	21.0	23.9	23.3	23.0
Canada	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1
Mexico	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5
United States	17.8	18.0	19.6	22.3	21.6	21.3
of America						
EU (27) 1/	16.5	16.6	16.7	18.4	17.3	16.3
ASEAN 3/	21.7	21.6	21.6	18.2	18.6	19.4
Brunei	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Darussalam						
Indonesia	1.4	1.7	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.9
Malaysia	2.8	3.6	4.3	3.3	3.6	4.1
Philippines	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.6
Singapore	14.0	12.1	11.0	8.7	8.7	8.7
Cambodia	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5
Laos	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6
Myanmar	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7
Vietnam	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.2
Middle East	4.5	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.0
Others	5.5	4.6	4.7	5.1	4.8	3.9
Total exports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculation based on Table 6.3.

Table 6.5 Thailand Imports from Myanmar
(Millions Baht)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1	Japan	538,711.4	518,106.4	492,079.8	420,297.5	464,573.2	615,661.8
2	NAFTA	228,445.8	246,689.8	286,290.3	265,722.8	261,819.7	312,395.6
3	Canada	11,940.9	13,810.1	12,887.4	10,688.2	12,663.9	13,820.4
4	Mexico	4,557.0	3,905.7	6,100.8	5,289.3	5,692.3	4,994.9
5	U.S.A	211,947.9	228,974.0	267,302.1	249,745.3	243,463.5	293,580.3
6	EU (27) 1/	289,776.0	286,575.1	277,969.5	227,113.7	228,108.0	262,247.4
7	ASEAN 3/	234,981.6	244,537.1	247,630.2	266,576.7	302,359.9	415,230.8
8	Brunei	7,209.7	5,449.7	2,627.0	983.7	5,644.5	19,746.7
9	Indonesia	16,760.9	23,809.1	27,248.8	36,443.6	41,876.0	51,969.6
10	Malaysia	80,582.0	91,381.1	91,581.1	90,297.0	95,219.1	134,621.9
11	Philippines	14,436.4	14,583.5	17,050.2	25,526.5	30,934.0	44,714.9
12	Singapore	103,683.5	101,410.0	96,916.5	98,780.7	113,039.0	137,050.1
13	Cambodia	3,986.6	1,210.4	2,205.1	1,010.7	556.9	316.7
14	Laos	1,737.7	1,734.9	1,734.2	1,297.6	2,140.5	3,013.6
15	Myanmar	5,510.9	3,292.7	2,535.3	2,591.0	4,263.4	10,466.7
16	Vietnam	1,073.9	1,665.7	5,732.1	9,645.8	8,686.5	13,330.5
17	Middle East	66,731.7	103,564.6	144,229.8	139,034.4	163,598.9	255,685.3
18	Others	72,539.6	104,437.6	111,317.7	98,282.7	104,763.0	121,870.4
19	Total imports	1,763,591.3	1,832,825.2	1,924,283.0	1,774,066.2	1,907,390.6	2,494,141.1

1/ Prior to May 2004, EU comprises 15 countries : Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden.

Since May 2004, EU comprises 25 countries, including also Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia since Jan 2007, EU comprises 27 countries, including also Bulgaria and Romania.

2/ Prior to 1995, the data represents Czechoslovakia.

3/ Prior to 1999, ASEAN does not include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Source : Customs Department

Table 6.6 Thailand Imports from Myanmar
(In Percent)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Japan	30.5	28.3	25.6	23.7	24.4	24.7
NAFTA	13.0	13.5	14.9	15.0	13.7	12.5
Canada	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6
Mexico	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
United States	12.0	12.5	13.9	14.1	12.8	11.8
of America						
EU (27) 1/	16.4	15.6	14.4	12.8	12.0	10.5
ASEAN 3/	13.3	13.3	12.9	15.0	15.9	16.6
Brunei	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.8
Darussalam						
Indonesia	1.0	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.1
Malaysia	4.6	5.0	4.8	5.1	5.0	5.4
Philippines	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.6	1.8
Singapore	5.9	5.5	5.0	5.6	5.9	5.5
Cambodia	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Laos	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Myanmar	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4
Vietnam	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5
Middle East	3.8	5.7	7.5	7.8	8.6	10.3
Others	4.1	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.5	4.9
Total imports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculation based on Table 6.5.

The role of Thai-Myanmar relations embedded extensively in the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program: established in 1992 with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

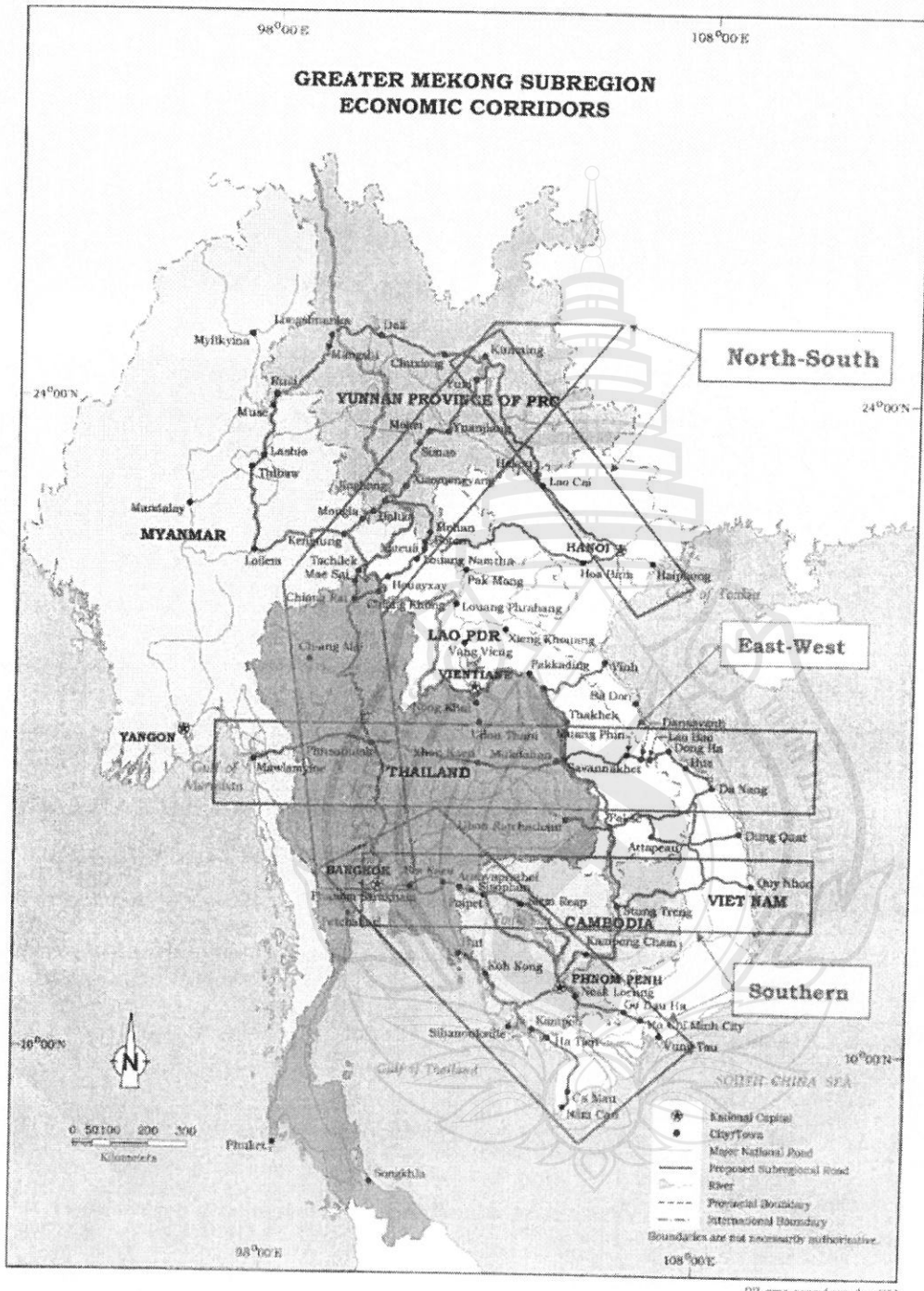
The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) consists of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The GMS Program: a program of subregional economic cooperation to enhance the shared histories and cultures. The program covers the nine priority sectors: agriculture, energy, environment, human resource development, investment, telecommunications, tourism, transport infrastructure, and transport and trade facilitation. The GMS Program, with the support of ADB and other development partners, is helping the participating countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through increased connectivity, improved competitiveness, and a greater sense of community (the three Cs).

Three regional corridors have been promoted under the GMS program:

- (i) the East–West Economic Corridor (EWEC), the only direct and continuous land route between the Andaman Sea and the South China Sea;
- (ii) the North–South Economic Corridor (NSEC) with three subcorridors, namely, Kunming to Bangkok via the Lao PDR or Myanmar; Kunming to Ha Noi and on to Hai Phong, and Nanning to Ha Noi; and
- (iii) the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC), which includes three subcorridors including the route linking Bangkok to Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Minh City.

The GMS program adopted the economic corridor approach to regional development in 1998, and has anchored regional projects and initiatives on these corridors.

Figure 1 Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Corridors



6.4 Rational and Principles for Policy Making and Dialogue

Constructive engagement has become a political doctrine not only in Thailand but also in the ASEAN as a whole in the 1990s. It resulted largely in enhancing cooperation in trade and investment, technology and regional development as well as foreign policy process and decision making in this period: 1990-2000. The evidence also suggested that the enhanced friendship has also provided two countries opportunity to solve other border problems contributing to national security issues.

Thai democrats argue that the social basis for democracy in Thailand will always be uncertain and unstable unless foreign policy and domestic values are aligned, and that a government pursuing constructive engagement with Myanmar cannot be very committed to democratic values domestically.

It has been widely recognized that Thai-Myanmar relations provide great opportunities and challenges for these two neighboring countries, in particular, in the long term when political, economic, social, security and connectivity situations were embedded cohesively under the ASEAN integration. Major challenges, in particular in medium term, reflect the national security and social issues such as drugs smuggling, ethnic insurgency, and influx of refugee, trafficking, illegal logging, and issues of health, crime and unemployment. The evidence suggests profoundly that the ASEAN framework and other regional development framework constitute better means towards establishing a cohesive region.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Findings of the Study

This research aims to investigate the direction and perspective of foreign policy of Thailand towards Myanmar both in historical and contemporary context and to seek the resolution, bilateral benefit and multilateral cooperation. It also suggests direction and perspective for further cooperation between two countries. The framework of present foreign policy analysis is based on four main areas: (i) borderland and ethnic issues, (ii) foreign policy and diplomatic relation, (iii) economy, trade and investment and (iv) rational and principles for policy making and dialogue.

This research not only sheds light on the understanding of one particular issue but also contributes to the overview picture of the state of knowledge on Thai-Myanmar diplomatic relations.

Diplomatic forms of Friendship commenced in Thai-Myanmar relations in the 1950s. Myanmar's relations with Thailand seem inhibited by the manifest residue of the sentiments of the past historic rivalry and suspicion between the two countries. Due to the Communist revolutionary movements in Southeast Asia and KMT catastrophe, Myanmar was almost on the face of war with Thailand in the early 1950s. However, it is observed that domestic leadership change and regional political change in both countries influenced Thai-Myanmar relations in the first decade under study.

Thai-Myanmar relations for the second decade: 1960-1970 were less amicable since each government has had different ideological sets in economic and political systems, and foreign policies. Myanmar commenced socialism and followed a strict neutralist foreign policy in the preserve of national solidarity in 1962. While Thailand pursued a capitalism and strongly anti-communist policy. The first Treaty was signed in Bangkok in October 1956 and was ratified in May 28, 1957 in Yangon.

First, the dominant role of the military in Thailand was presented comprising the Supreme Command Headquarters, the military's high commander, and the National Security Council (CNS). The military's role in foreign policy was established particularly in terms of the priority attached to defense links with the United States. Border Security was responsible for the provincial military from which

the foreign Ministry was excluded. It was reported that the military's coordinated effort to support the Khmer Rouge as a buffer against Vietnam prevailed. Finally, Thailand foreign policy was linked to external allies China and the United States which could support Thailand against Vietnam from the perspective of the National Security Paradigm of Thailand.

The ideology on a new role of Thailand as a regional economic power was initiated in Thai leadership and it was reflected substantially in Thai Foreign Policy in particular with Asian countries in the third decade: 1970-1980.

Thailand Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond established civilian role in Thai democratic political system while the notion of role of withdrawal of military dominance role emerged during eight years of his administration. Chatichai's regional development vision of foreign policy that would promote Thailand's role in mainland Southeast Asia has been echoed by other Thai leaders. Chavalit focused open borders between Thailand, Indochina, and Yunnan Province of China while Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun aimed Thailand as the "gateway to Indochina". Chuan Leekpai expressed Thailand as a regional "financial center."

The trade between Myanmar and Thailand for the third decade: 1970-1980 was insignificant in terms of values and market share. Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$0.01 million (0.01 %) of total export in 1970 to \$3.45 million (0.08%) in 1980. With respect to imports, Myanmar imports from Thailand showed 0.01 million in 1970 (% of total import) to 1.25 million (0.2%) of total imports in 1980. Trade relations between Thailand and Myanmar were insignificant in those period. Major trade partners were Japan, Sri Lanka, Germany, Denmark, Belgium and Netherlands.

The trade between Myanmar and Thailand for the fourth decade: 1980-1990 played an important role in terms of trade volume and market share. Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$3.51 million (4.5 %) of total export in 1981 to \$29.64 million (16.04%) in 1986. With respect to imports, Myanmar imports from Thailand showed 4.5 million in 1981 (0.5% of total imports) in 1981 to 16.04 million (2.4%) of total imports. Myanmar's exports to Thailand increased from \$0.01 million (0.01 %) of total export in 1970 to \$3.45 million (0.08%) in 1980. With respect to imports, Myanmar's imports from Thailand showed 0.01 million in 1970 (% of total import) to 1.25 million (0.2%) of total imports.

Since the BSPP failed to provide sufficient production for domestic consumption, both legal and black market trade at Thai-Myanmar border grew substantially. The civil uprising in 8.8.88 led number of students to drive out at the Thai-Myanmar borders and accumulated in number of Myanmar refugees. A series of operations by Myanmar armed force at the various Thai-Myanmar borders, in particular, KNU and SSA were intensified in this period: 1980-90. It resulted in the number of Karen refugees in Thailand increased substantially between 1984 and 1992.

Gen. Chavalit's visit to Myanmar enhanced the Thai-Myanmar cooperation in a repatriation center at the provincial airport in Tak Province, to be jointly administered by the Thai and Myanmar Red Cross societies. No role for UNHCR was provided. Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai described his country's security concerns due to influx of refugee and the need for corporation.

Constructive engagement has become a political issue within Thailand in the 1990s, reflecting the conflict over values in foreign policy. Critics claim that constructive engagement benefits the military regime and gives it no incentive to change or to democratize. Thai democrats argued that the social basis for democracy in Thailand will always be uncertain and unstable unless foreign policy and domestic values are aligned, and that a government pursuing constructive engagement with Myanmar cannot be very committed to democratic values domestically.

Both countries deeply concerned with the involvement in the drug trade by several insurgent groups, especially after one of them was involved in two high-profile security crises in 1999 and 2000. It is argued that the disagreements between Thailand and Myanmar in the 2000s could seriously deteriorate in the near to medium term, jeopardizing ASEAN's cohesion. A border still constitute a source of dispute until the present and has yet to be sought by strengthening better foreign relations policy.

Myanmar's political challenges may lie on enhancing freedom and transition to an elected civilian government, in the presence of various ethnic groups. The major issues include deep-rooted problems of low social capital, and a weak middle class and frail civilian institutions under military rule to become amber resources to Myanmar into an advance democratic state. Myanmar is relatively open to the region. China, India, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries have established workable relationships; and thus it exhibits no threat to international or regional

security and peace. Given opportunities, Myanmar should establish civilian institutions better foreign policy in cooperating domestic policies towards enhancing international relations.

7.2 Recommendation for Further Research

This section summarizes recent developments in domestic policy and foreign relations policy in regional context. Future Thai-Myanmar relations depend mainly on recent geopolitical change in both countries. In 2003, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR signed the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) to “increase competitiveness and generate greater growth along the borders”. The strategy is intended to be funded by the private sector, and through grants and soft loans from donors.

The main political party, NLD, remains marginalized and its leader, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest. It will affect Thai-Myanmar relations through Thai international relations.

In Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra was Prime Minister of Thailand from 2001 to 2006. This Defense Minister Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, dropped all conditions for political liberalization and improvement of human rights inside Myanmar.

In 2004, an officially announced “Myanmar Seven point Roadmap for constitutional and political reform”, reconvened the National Convention and promised the transition to a semi-civilian regime. The architect of these arrangements with the ethnic groups, then Prime Minister Lt. Gen Khin Nyunt, was deposed in 2004 and replaced by Lt. Gen Soe Win. At the end of 2005, the administrative capital was moved from Yangon upcountry to a newly built town, Naypyidaw referring to “Royal Residence”.

Major determinants of relations between Thailand and Myanmar constitute geography (border), economy, political history, culture, domestic policy and commonality of approach in foreign affairs. In creating good relations, regional factors under ASEAN and international best practices. It is worth studying the effect of domestic policy and regional integration policies on these two countries relations

for the period: 2000-2011. It may include primarily the aligning economic system with international ones for avoiding illegal activities at the border; respect for democracy and human rights; enhancing economic liberalization and fair trade; and regional cooperation in socio-economic and environmental activities so that it will deliver a cohesive region.



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