An Analysis of the 1981 Unsuccessful Thai Coup

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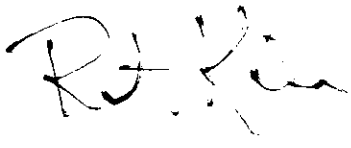
This thesis presented is my own work and has not been submitted to any other institution for any other degree, diploma or other qualification.



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Abstract

This study examines the unsuccessful 1981 coup d'etat and compares and constrasts it with several other "effective" coups d'etat in Thailand's history; those of 1933, 1947, 1957 and 1976. Each coup d'etat is examined via a model that analyzes circumstances, participants, motivation and consequences. Additionally, the study examines the factors in Thailand's society, political system and military that encourage or inhibit coupmaking. Finally, this examination explores the consequences--both specific and general--of the 1981 coup d'etat attempt and of previous coups d'etat on the future of Thailand.

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since the 1932 Revolution ended Thailand's absolute monarchy, the military coup d'etat has become the most common method of change in the Thai political system. The military regularly intervenes to change governments by staging a coup and Thailand has witnessed as many military coups as it has parliamentary elections. From 1932 to 1981 there has been an average of one coup every three and a half years. This paper seeks to analyze the latest in the long line of coup attempts, the 1981 unsuccessful coup d'etat, in comparison with other "effective" coups(those that resulted in a change of regime) and will attempt to explain the effects of these coups on Thailand. Aside from the 1981 coup, the 1933, 1947, 1957 and 1976 coups will be examined.

To this end, the study will first examine the conditions and characteristics of both Thai society and the Thai military that allow or encourage coupmaking. Thailand's low level of politicization is cited by many observers as a key characteristic that facilitates the military's intervention in politics. Traditional, social and historical factors contributing to this "political passivity" will be examined in an effort to explain the military's frequent intervention.

The study also examines conditions within the military itself which encourage coupmaking. Contemporary coup theory will be examined here in an effort to analyze the Thai case of intervention. As there is no one theory which is totally applicable to the Thai situation, the study divides the search

for factors predisposing the Thai military to intervention into three sections: the Past Political Involvement of the Military; the Military's Perception of its Role and the Intrinsic Organizational Qualities of the Military. Citing high levels of factionalism and other destabilizing factors within the military, this section of the study concludes that the Thai military may be disposed to intervene to the extent to which it is unprofessional.

In examining the 1933, 1947, 1957 and 1976 coups d'etat, the study's second section offers a "model" with which to analyze and compare each coup. This model includes an examination of each coup's circumstances, participants, motivation and consequences. In detailing the circumstances, the study examines the chain of events that resulted in a crisis opportunity for coupmaking. The study examines the participants in terms of faction, rank, age and military experience where possible. The coupmakers' motivations for intervention are analyzed in light of both pre-coup and post-coup activities. The consequences --both long and short term--of the coups on Thailand's military, society, politics and economy are also examined.

The Third section of the study seeks to analyze the unsuccessful 1981 coup d'etat following the pattern of investigation or model established in the previous section. This analysis of the circumstances, participants, motivations and consequences of the 1981 coup attempt will aid in determining the effects of the coup on the nation's military, economy, political system and society. Since the 1981 coup was unsuccess-

ful, certain elements of this section of the study, such as coupmakers' motivations, are open to conjecture. Yet, applying some of the same tools of investigation as used in the study of previous coups, it is possible to develop a fairly comprehensive model of this unsuccessful coup d'etat.

Finally, the study assesses the role of the 1981 coup, and other coups examined, in the future development of Thailand. The coups' effects on the social, economic, political and military modernization of Thailand are examined. To this end the chapter seeks to answer the following questions: "How did the 1981 coup differ or resemble other coups? What are the consequences of coups on Thailand? Are further coups possible? This study concludes that while the outcome and certain characteristics of the 1981 coup differed from the other coups examined, the general traits of the 1981 coup resembled those of previous coups and reinforced the conclusion that many of the social and military characteristics that encourage coup-making in Thailand still exist. The study adds, "Coups D'etat will undoubtedly remain the main engine of change within the Thai political system until a stable political institution is reached, yet coupmakers will not be as easily disposed to intervene as they have been in the past."

CHAPTER ONE

WHY DO COUPS OCCUR IN THAILAND?

In any investigation of the military's intervention in politics,[1] it is necessary to look at both the conditions in the military as well as those in the society affected that give rise to, encourage or permit coup-making. As Samuel Finer has noted, "Military intervention is, clearly, a product of two sets of forces--the capacity and propensity of the military to intervene and conditions in the society in which it operates."[2] Hence, no study of coup-making in Thailand can be complete without an examination of those factors in both the nation's military and society that relate to the armed forces' intervention in politics.

Conditions in Thai Society Which Encourage Coups

As many observers[3] have pointed out, one of the most dominant characteristics of Thailand's political scene is the low political participation of the populace. Whether this characteristic of the Thai people is labeled "political passivity"[4] or "apathy," it is one of the key socio-political characteristics that facilitate military intervention in the political arena.

Since 1932, with the exception of brief periods of civilian rule, political power has been in the hands of the "bureaucratic polity"[5]--the military, police and civil servants--instead of the populace via political parties. Thus, power struggles have taken place within this framework: "...the arena of politics, the focus of rivalry, and the struggle for power, wealth and other public values have moved within the bureaucracy itself."[6]

All this has occured to the exclusion of the Thai populace.

Finer classifies Thailand as a country of "minimal political culture" and describes it as one of the "placid, coherent and still predominantly traditionalist societies which indulge their ruling elites in their struggle for power without feeling at all involved in it."[7] He also writes, "(political) issues are decided by the factions of the professional armed forces with the rest of society as mere onlookers."[8] In such a state the government can be overthrown by coercion without difficulty because there is no reaction from the mass of the population. The military can then assume control over governmental positions with the understanding that it will remain indefinitely. This "minimal political culture" has few barriers to the use of force. "In essence, the legitimacy enjoyed by men the in power and by the political system as a whole is so slight as to present no check on the ambitions of contending groups."[9]

One has only to examine the role of the majority of the Thais in the nation's historic developments in the twentieth century--the fall of the absolute monarchy, a succession of military coups, the Japanese Occupation, dictatorships--to realize that the citizens of Thailand have (with brief exceptions) remained spectators rather than actors in their nation's political processes.

Yet, while it is obvious that much of the Thai populace has chosen to remain aloof from politics, that is not to say that the entire populace has exhibited a disdain for or an aloofness from politics. There is evidence of a growing, and

increasingly vocal, segment of the populace which has sought and achieved a greater role in the nation's political process. For example, after the 1973 change of government, there was "both organized and spontaneous activity by formerly 'submerged' groups: students, labor unions, and, for the first time, independent peasant associations."[10] The period 1973-1976 when the military temporarily conceded power to the civilians, sometimes termed Thailand's "experiment with democracy," saw a marked increase in the politicization of the populace. However, for the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to note Finer's concept of Thailand as a country of "minimal political culture" and accept the observation that the majority of the populace still exhibits a reluctance to become involved in the political struggle for power.

Investigating why the majority of Thais have demonstrated an unwillingness to become involved in the political process should help uncover conditions that permit and/or encourage coup-making. Wilson and Hindley, in their investigations of Thai political culture,[11] have outlined several factors or characteristics of Thai society that discourage or inhibit widespread political participation. These are deference to authority; conduct based on status systems and the legitimization of power by the possession of power (the karma system).

Before examining these three major components of Thais' worldview, it is important to include a proviso. As Hindley explains, "While it is clearly hazardous to generalize about an entire people's life view...the relative homogeneity of the Thai people makes such broad statements more applicable to a

larger proportion of Thais than would be the case in more heterogeneous societies."[12] In addition to these social characteristics, there are numerous historical characteristics that have also contributed to political passivity among Thais. These too will be examined later.

As one observer has noted, "The politics of a people is played out within the limits of their view of the world."[13] Thus, the above three cultural characteristics have had a great impact on the political behavior--and the lack of it--of Thais. Rooted in Buddhist tradition, these world views have remained largely unquestioned by Thais throughout history. Viewing the world as a "moral continuum," Thais see all elements of the world interrelated by power which is earned by virtue. As Wilson has noted, "One result of this view of the world...is the idea that in the human universe one's place is a result of one's own will and that one is therefore ultimately responsible for one's own position in society."[14]

According to this view of the world, one who has achieved power has done so by means of his virtue (karma or merit-making). Thus power and virtue are inextricably linked. Taken a step further, this view helps to explain why Thais show deference to and acceptance of authority; as long as this authority is legitimitized by the presence of power. This authority may extend from the king, through the bureaucracy to the church and even into the family unit. Related to this acceptance of legitimate authority is an acceptance of existing rules of conduct. While these elements are traditional, they are still in force today:

"Society and politics have been modernized to a degree, but without a profound disruption of the pre-existing value and deferential systems."[15]

How do these traditional beliefs affect political activity in Thailand? One observer writes, "In the political world these characteristics have a profound effect on the fundamental attitude toward law and institutions. Although scrupulous attention is given to the formalities of procedure, there appears to be little faith in the necessary regularity of the workings of law and institutions. Intervention by persons of power in the application of law appears to be accepted without disturbance. In such an attitude toward law lies some explanation of the easy recourse to periodic coups d'etat for the modification of political structures and for the adjustment of constitutions."[16] Likewise, the Buddhist emphasis on karma "tends to preclude those suffering from poverty or injustice from blaming others for their misfortune and thus from criticizing (or attempting to change) the system of government, the state or society itself."[17]

Generally speaking, political parties and politicians do not fit into the traditional hierarchy of rank and status. (Thais have been described by some observers as having a "disdain" for politics.) Further, the urban educated elite hold a much higher status than the rural-based politicians who thus have a hard time emerging as a national force.

The concept of deference has also stifled the political process by thwarting the natural drive of potential leaders who

"were expected to be greng jai (deferential), patiently waiting until they reached the age of 45 or preferably 50. By then only the rare person was not co-opted into the older bureaucratic system, socialized into its patrimonial values and (corrupted)."[18]

As already noted, these specific cultural characteristics of Thailand's Buddhist society are not the only factors responsible for the nation's low level of politicization. One must also examine to what extent Thailand has or has not experienced conditions that have prompted other populations into political action against an established power. There are numerous historical factors that have reinforced traditional passivity, or at least not disturbed it. Among these are the fact that Thailand was never colonized; was not involved in large scale wars; has not suffered from social or economic insecurity and contains no group capable of voicing frustrated political ambitions or aspirations. An examination of these conditions should help explain why Thailand has not experienced the degree of politicization other countries have and perhaps help to explain how, in turn, the military has managed to intervene without significant objection by the populace.

1. Thailand Was Never Colonized

Often, colonization spurs political and social development. "In its direct form, colonial rule destroys or severely damages the indigenous authority and deference structures...the native political elite is often forced to gain (solicit) mass support through the inculcation of material and political aspirations that the colonizing country will not or cannot meet."[19] Never

colonized, Thailand's political elites'governing legitimacy has never been questioned. Nor has the elite been forced to enlist the masses in political uprisings against a common foe. In fact, the degree to which Thailand was exposed to colonial influence, "only strengthened the ruling elite, compared to the periphery, by improving the military's warfare capacity and introducing administrative reforms, etc."[20]

2. Thailand Was Not Involved in Large Scale Wars

For more than two centuries, Thailand has not engaged in a war with a neighbor or major world power. Hence, the ruling elite have been spared the possible discrediting a defeat often brings. Further, the nation was saved the social and political upheavals that often stem from the humiliation of defeat. While Thailand has been involved in the Korean and Vietnamese wars on a limited basis, these experiences have resulted in increased foreign aid and a concomitant increase in status for the ruling elite.

3. Thailand Has Remained Free From Insecurities

Just as Thailand has not been involved in a major war, it has also remained comparatively secure, both economically and physically. In a nation troubled with insecurity, the legitimacy of the government is often questioned when it fails to provide the basic services expected of it. Thailand has not suffered greatly from any collapse of administrative efficiency nor has the economy reached crisis proportions. An efficient police force has kept citizens relatively secure and at least a minimum of social services is available to

the citizenry.

4. Thailand Has No Significant Frustrated Sector

In order to produce "significant political position within the environment of an efficient distatorship, there must be either large numbers with important frustrations or strategically located smaller groups, such as military officers or minorities."[21] Aside from the intelligentsia and the Chinese minority of Thailand, no powerful group with political or economic frustrations has made excessive demands on the ruling elite. The Thai masses do not exhibit unrealistic aspirations. The bulk of the population is rural and appears reasonably secure without large gaps between aspirations and fulfillment. Further, the urban middle class is not a social/political force and thus is not a threat to the military's intervention in politics. (Thailand has, however, experienced rural-based insurgencies begun by both communist and separatist elements. Yet none of these have posed a major threat to the urban power base of Bangkok.)

SUMMARY

In summary, it is evident that the Thai people "have not undergone those experiences, traumatic or otherwise, that have produced widespread political action and opposition in other countries."[22] Also, for various reasons, Thais have demonstrated a high degree of political passivity. Thus, Thailand fulfills Luttwak's first pre-condition of a coup: "The social and economic conditions of the target country must be such as to confine political participation to a small fraction of the

population."[23] Additionaly, since so few of the nation's citizens participate in the nation's political system, the process for political change has not been institutionalized, making the nation ripe for military intervention:"The likelihood of military intervention rises in the absence or weakness of agreed-upon procedures for peaceful political change."[24] Another observer has noted that Thailand is an excellent example of a country with all the proper conditions for a coup d'etat: "Since high political posts are held by only a very few people and since governmental participation is concentrated in the bureaucracy, it is possible to dominate the entire political system by merely controlling the bureaucratic structure. And, since extrabureaucratic institutions have been inconsequential, they are easily bypassed."[25] Hence, a combination of factors--both social and historical--facilitate coup-making. A lack of societal inhibiting factors offer the military little or no resistance to intervention.

Conditions in Thailand's Military Which Encourage Coups

Having looked at the social factors that affect the military's intervention in politics, let us now examine those factors in the military itself that encourage coup-making. While many observers[26] have offered "checklists" or various theories that seek to explain or uncover factors in the military that stimulate intervention, no one model seems completely suitable for the Thai case. Just as Huntington's "Praetorian Society"[27] theory is only partially applicable to Thailand, his views linking "professionalism"[28] to intervention are not totally applicable to Thailand. His conten-

tion that the development of professionalism within the officer corps is a very powerful force inhibiting the military's desire to intervene is too limited for the Thai case. Like other theories, it disregards the Thai military's role as a controlling member of the "bureaucratic polity" and does not make allowance for Thailand's interlocking patron-client relationships (which may encourage intervention in spite of a high degree of professionalism).

Other observers have pointed to the military's protection of corporate interests as the prime motives for coupmakers.[29] Still others have claimed the opposite, positing that armies intervene not out of corporate grievances but merely out of idiosyncratic motives.[30] Other theories focus on the social background of the coup promoters as an explanation for their intervention.[31] In describing recent developments in coup theory, one observer recently wrote: "If the frequency of coups does indicate the universal vulnerability of Asian and African states to military intervention, then it may be fruitless to construct systematic theories of coup behavior...Theoretical emphasis (of coup theory) has shifted so rapidly that there has scarcely been time to gather material that might support or refute the explanations being propounded."[32] Obviously, there is no one general theory or model that satisfactorily explains why coups occur which could be applied to Thailand's case. Yet coup theories cannot be disregarded. Rather, a model for investigating the Thai case must be built, picking and choosing elements from various coup theories. To that

end, this investigation of military characteristics that encourage coupmaking in Thailand will divide the search for factors predisposing the military to intervention into three sections: the Past Political Involvement of the Military; the Military's Perception of Its Role and the Intrinsic Organizational Qualities of the Military.

Past Political Involvement of the Military

Ever since the 1932 coup d'etat replaced rule by royalty with rule by the military, the Thai military has dominated (with certain exceptional periods) Thai politics. "Of the 61 coup (1932) members, 35 held positions in the cabinet...Of the 35 cabinet members, 15 were from the Army, 5 from the Navy and 15 from the civilian bureaucracy...it is clear that the coup of 1932 marked the date of successful direct military intervention in Thai political history and paved the way for military domination in politics in later periods."[33] Military leaders have also virtually monopolized the key posts of prime minister, minister of defense and minister of the interior. Military men have held the post of prime minister for 30 out of 48 years and even when the prime minister was a civilian, the defense minister has been a military man.

One investigation of the military in the cabinet from the period 1932-1977 shows that the average military share of positions in the 39 cabinets of that period was 39 percent.[34] Except for two periods of transition from military rule (1944-1947 and 1973-1976), the military has never given up its control over the government. Thai military leaders have "...acted

as politicians skilled in bargaining, negotiation, compromise and patronage."[35]

Since neither the constitution (generally) nor tradition prohibits military officers from holding positions within the government bureaucracy and since the military is the best organized[36] bureaucratic agency in Thailand, it is natural that the military has dominated the bureaucratic elite: "Military influence is exerted directly through officer bureaucrats in virtually every department of the civil service."[37]

While some members of the military may have acted as politicians, that is not to say the military is anxious to assume direct political roles. The military (with certain exceptions such as Sarit) has shown a disdain for active participation in politics. "The ideal of the Thai military regime is an apolitical society, namely a society which allegedly releases the executive from harassing pressures by interest groups and permits a maximum avoidance of 'compromise politics'."[38]

With the exception of Sarit, military leaders who had seized power in coups have tended to leave the day to day political leadership to practiced politicians. (Yet they may still invariably distrust or have little confidence in politicians.) As in Perlmutter's Ruler Praetorian Army, they "distrust politicians to the extent that they themselves feel it necessary to occupy formal positions in the governmental structure."[39] By letting politicians "get on with their business," the military could devote their time to more professional pursuits.

Yet, sometimes, the military leaders--having toppled the previous government in a coup--had no choice but to enter the political arena: "In certain periods they formed political parties...Essentially their power was based on the capability to consolidate support from commanders of combat forces...and to form coalitions with parliamentary politicians...Thus the constant search for some kind of acceptable parliamentary model, blending popular soverignity with military power."[40]

The military views its interventionist role as more that of a moderator than a permanent replacement. They will intervene "when some convulsion or decision of the civil authorities seems to threaten what they think are the permanent interests of the nation."[41] The military has no intention of (or at least claims to have none) replacing the politicians in the political process but wishes to "remain distinct and outside them...with the power to intervene..."[42] However, it must be noted that while the majority of the military disdains politics a minority "who show an inclination toward broader political military activities are selected and specialized for these tasks...because of the structure of command these men have influence disproportinate to their number."[43] History encourages the Thai military to consider intervention in a crisis.

The Military's Perception of Its Role

How does the Thai military view its role? Do senior military officers limit their role to protecting the state from external and internal foes? How do they define these limits? How does the military justify its involvement in

politics? By attempting to discover how the military views its role (or purpose or mission), the military's motives for intervention can be better understood.

Every military possesses a distinct consciousness that seeks to set itself apart from the civilian and governmental sectors. As Finer writes, "the military is aware of its special and separate identity distinguishing it from civilian corporations...It is this self awareness that permits the military to conceive that they have a unique duty...to watch over the national interest."[44] In Thailand, the military views its role through a nationalistic perspective. "One of the most important justifications for the maintenance of the military is as a symbol of national status in the world, bearer of the national honor, the defender of national independence."[45] It follows that whenever the national honor or independence is threatened, the military stands ready to intervene. However, the Thai military's wide-ranging interpretation of what constitutes a threat allows for much leeway: After the 1947 coup d'etat, Phibun remarked; "Public opinion wanted a change and, as it could not be done by constitutional means, the former government having a majority in Parliament, we decided to get rid of it."[46] The 1976 coup which ended a period of democracy and returned the military to power was executed in the name of "nation, God and king."

Beyond infusing nationalism into its military, military training stresses love of duty, love of nation and love of honor. Training also stresses leadership and agressiveness.

"From these fundamental attitudes the officer corps tends to the position that 'what is good for the army is good for the country.' Government is viewed as an administrative task subject to command discipline, and politics is conceptualized in a limited and highly paternalistic fashion."[47] It is important to note that "love of nation" is not the same as "love of government." The Thai military makes a distinction between serving the government and serving the nation. Thus, coup leaders have justified their actions by attempting to safeguard the nation from the machinations of political leaders. This dichotomy tends to dispose the military to intervene when they perceive the "government" threatening the "nation." "A (military) mission that differentiates between service to 'the government' and service to 'the nation' encourages the armed forces to move directly into politics."[48]

The military also views itself as a modernizing force in the nation's economic development. Having become heavily involved in the commercial sector from the era of the country's entry into "economic nationalization" in the post-War period, the military increased its role as "Commercial Soldiers" through Sarit's regime. This role of soldier as economic modernizer has seen the military expand its power base into the commercial world, with obvious consequences: "The ability of the military to act as a political coalition partner often depends upon the extent of its own economic base. The more economic resources it has at its command, the greater is its scope for domestic politics. In turn, the scope of its economic enterprises seems to expand with broadening of its political involvement."[49] In

the Thai case, greater involvement in commerce has often led to a greater involvement in politics which has, in turn, led to increased motives for intervention.

Before turning to an investigation of factors within the military's organization that facilitate coup-making, mention must be made of the military's role in counter-insurgency activities and its relationship to intervention.

Having long been involved in counter-insurgency operations, the Thai military is staunchly anti-communist. Indeed, the military has often justified its intervention as necessary to prevent communist infiltration. It is in this role as a counter-insurgency force that the military may abuse its powers and seek to intervene. "The fundamental assumption that unregulated democracy is too dangerous because it allows communists to seize power by manipulating democrats, is shared by almost all the leaders of the armed forces."[50] The promoters of the 1976 coup sought to justify their takeover by claiming, "...it was felt the communists could take advantage of the situation to mobilize disaffected factions to set up an effective nucleus for revolution."[51] Yet, this is not to say that all claims of communist infiltration that have been offered to justify military intervention are faulty. Far from it. The point being made is merely that by adopting the role of counter-insurgents, the military inevitably is drawn into political disputes. Its role as defender of the nation may be at risk when manipulative officials seek to justify political intervention on military--or security--grounds.

Organizational Qualities of the Military

Huntington notes three ingredients of professionalism in the military: expertise of officership, social responsibility of officership and the corporate character of officership.[52] He cites professionalism as the key factor that keeps the military out of politics. The more professional an army is, he argues, the less prone it will be to intervene. While other analysts question Huntington's thesis, citing instances where a "professional" military has intervened in politics, it is sufficient for this study to apply Huntington's definition of professionalism to the Thai military and note that in certain respects the Thai military falls short of Huntington's ideal model of a modern professional military and so would be, in Huntington's view, more likely to indulge in political intervention.

Huntington's first element of professionalism, military expertise, can be said to be fairly highly developed in Thailand, especially when compared to other Third World countries. While the military has not been tested in international warfare, it has shown improving results in its counter-insurgency operations. It is also well-equipped with an influx of modern weapons and modern weapons systems from the United States. Likewise it is a well trained and well organized division. This expertise however can dispose the military to intervene. Since an "expert" military controls the "instruments of violence" it has the capacity to intervene in politics.

In meeting the second of Huntington's elements of professionalism, social responsibility, the Thai military falters. As one

analyst notes, "Cultural traditions of bureaucratic corruption and the absence of countervailing civilian political forces have worked together against the growth of a deep sense of social responsibility among the (Thai) officer corps."[53] As mentioned above, the Thai military, although nationalistic, espouses the theory that military needs take precedence over the needs of the Thai society. Aside from such projects as the Mobile Developments Program (which was linked more to counter-insurgency measures than civic action), the military's record has been wanting. Huntington says professionalism leads to the development of an ethical code of duty to society. But the Thai military have a different view of their duty than that of abstaining from intervention which is the ethic that Huntington thinks will be developed.

It is Huntington's third factor, corporate identity, that demonstrates the low level of professionalism extant in the Thai military. And this also offers a link between low levels of professionalism and intervention. The development of a corporate identity has been hampered by factionalism. An outgrowth of Thailand's patron-client systems, factionalism is evident throughout all sections of the country's bureaucratic polity. The upper ranks of the military are particularly affected. "The principal cliques cut across organizational boundaries, encompassing not only military officers but also civilian bureaucrats and some business leaders."[54] A faction like the "Commercial Soldiers" who supported Sarit and profited both economically and career-wise, is an example of a clique which supports the argument that factionalism contributes to coup-making. "It was precisely the

internal personal conflicts within the Thai military elite in the 1950s and 1960s that strengthened the predisposition to solve conflicts by coups and countercoups."[55]

Other factions within the military have been based on more than economic patron-client relationships. Factions can be formed by various means, based on various common experiences. "Informal groups in the Thai army could be developed through a number of factors--graduates of the same class at the military academy, close links between men involved in a particular event (the 1932 coup promoters, the 1947 coup initiators, officers in the army unit which fought in Korea, Laos and Vietnam), intermarriage between leading families, and membership of the same corporate boards."[56]

Although the Thai military is highly factionalized it is also characterized by a propensity to protect its corporate interests whenever it feels they are being threatened. These threats can take the form of proposals to reduce funding, reduce its political clout, weaken its autonomy, etc. (Thompson has broken corporate grievances into two categories; positional and resource. The former include perceived threats to autonomy, monopoly, self-esteem and political position. The latter include dissatisfaction with pay, promotions, appointments, budget, training facilities, inter-service favoritism, and general military policy or support for military operations.)[57] Finer oberves: "The military is jealous of its corporate status and privileges. Anxiety to preserve its autonomy provides one of the most widespread and powerful of the motives for intervention."[58] In the next chapter specific instances in which corporate grievances led to intervention will be examined.

To ensure that its corporate interests are protected, the Thai military seeks to obtain total control over the decision making apparatus--the Parliament. "It feels necessary to have a position in Parliament to make sure that other groups of politicians or parties which have different ideas on major military, social, economic and foreign issues and policies, will not act against their interests."[59]

To the extent to which the Thai military is unprofessional, therefore, it may be disposed to intervene. High levels of factionalism, both within the military and between it and other elements, have invariably led to the tensions that have fostered the military's intervention in politics.

CHAPTER TWO

COUPS IN THAILAND

This chapter seeks to analyze several coups in Thailand: those of 1933, 1947, 1957, and 1976. Each of these coups can be described as "effective," in that they resulted in a change of regime. In an effort to set up a model of Thai intervention, each coup will be examined via the following elements:

Circumstances: What was the chain of events that resulted in a "crisis opportunity" suitable for coup making? Factors contributing to the military's intervention will be examined.

Participants: Who were the coupmakers? In examining the factions responsible for the coup, matters of rank, age and military experience will be examined where possible.

Motivation: Why did the coupmakers intervene? This section seeks to uncover the military's reason for intervention, making use of the coupmakers' official post-coup statements as well as analyzing possible motives in light of both pre-coup and post-coup activities.

Consequences: What were the immediate and long-term results or consequences of the coup? Each coup had an effect on the military, society, politics, economy and even the monarchy in its own way. This section seeks to discover both the immediate and long-range effects of the coups examined.

The June 1933 Coup

Circumstances

The 1932 Revolution that abolished the absolute monarchy

was more than a coup but less than a revolution. Whereas a revolution is usually characterized by the overthrow of an oppressor by the oppressed classes, the 1932 Revolution merely realigned the power structure. While the powers of the monarchy were lessened, the populace was still not included in the decision making process. The 1932 "Promoters" labeled the coup a "Revolution" but, according to one commentator, it "represented nothing more than a realignment within a dominant power bloc which was made up of the pre-capitalist ruling class."[1]

A provisional constitution proposed a three-stage approach to democracy: The People's Party (composed of the Promoters) in control of government; the People's Assembly, part-elected, part-appointed and direct election to the Assembly when more than half the population had completed four years of education. Although pleased with the changes, the liberal faction of the Promoters--especially Pridi's group--demanded more radical changes in the social and economic life of the country. To this end, Pridi introduced an economic plan that called for nationalization of all farm land and other quasi-socialist measures. The plan was condemned by both the Prime Minister and the conservativies in the coup group as "communistic."

Thisepoch-making "Revolution" was soon marked by political infighting and factionalism. One observer notes, "... because the constitution established no firm pattern of administration and set no effective limitations to the exer-

cize of power, the new regime was open to shameless abuse and violation of trust."[2]

Worried that Pridi's civilian faction would attempt to oust them by a vote of no confidence, Phya Manopakorn's conservatives--who controlled the State Council--closed the Assembly "for the safety of the state and the welfare of the people." A new cabinet was formed and Pridi was advised to leave the country. It was this crisis; the rejection and branding of Pridi as a communist, and the closing of the Assembly plus the repeal of part of the Constitution that set in motion the wheels of the 1933 coup.

With Pridi in exile, his civilian group eliminated from the government, and with the Assembly closed, Phya Manopakorn's group needed only the support of the Army to stabilize their new government. Yet, on June 10 the four military leaders of the People's Party (Colonel Phya Phahol, Colonel Phya Song, Colonel Phya Ritthi and Lt. Colonel Prasas) submitted their resignations from the military. With the resignation of the four senior military leaders and their replacements assigned by the Prime Minister, a faction of junior military officers "came to agree that it was time for them to strike, if they were not to die a slow death."[3]

Participants

The coup group of 1932, the Promoters, was composed of various military and civilian factions. While the group worked in relative harmony planning and executing the 1932 coup, their differences surfaced soon after they toppled the

government. "When their common goal--the access to the ruling power--was attained, they no longer thought about the question of their mutual survival but rather about the question of the expansion of their own power."[4]

There were four factions that participated in the power struggles that followed the 1932 coup and led to the 1933 coup. First, the Prime Minister (a former judge of the Court of Appeal) headed a faction composed of members of his administration, many of whom had played no part in the Revolution. The second faction was composed of the senior clique of the 1932 Promoters. Holding the rank of lieutenant colonel and above, these senior army leaders were led by Colonel Phya Phahol, Commander-in-Chief of the Army. The third faction was the Royalists. Although their power was greatly diminished by the switch to the constitutional monarchy, the princes looked on the closing of the Assembly as a possible prelude to a return to rule by royal decree. The fourth faction was composed of the "junior clique" of the 1932 Promoters. This was made up of three groups; a civilian faction headed by Pridi Banomyong; an army faction headed by Lt. Col. Luang Phibun, Deputy Commander of the Artillery, and a Navy faction headed by Commander Luang Sinthu. Thawatt explains, "The members of these junior factions were largely drawn to join the revolution by the personalities and friendship with the faction leaders."[5]

It was the military members of this junior faction that staged the coup against the Manopakorn government.

While the coup was led by Colonel Phya Phahol, leader of the 1932 Revolution, he offered his leadership only at the last moment and had little, if anything, to do with the plotting and carrying out of the coup itself. The coup was led by Phibun and Deputy Commander Luang Suphachalasai of the Navy.

Phibun, born in 1897 in Nondhaburi province was a graduate of the Thai Military Cadet Academy (1914) and had attended the General Staff Academy in Bangkok. He won a scholarship to study military science in France where he met Pridi and other Thai students. After his participation in the 1932 coup, he was appointed Deputy Commander of the Artillery. Luang Suphachalasai, born in 1895 in Bangkok, graduated from the Thai Naval Academy and also took part in the 1932 Revolution. Like Phibun, he became an influential military officer because of his participation in the 1932 coup.

It is interesting to note that aside from Phya Phahol, the 1933 coup was staged by junior officers (e.g. Phibun and Suphachalasai) and their troops. Many of the coupmakers had cooperated with their senior officers in staging the 1932 coup. It was against many of those same officers that this junior officer faction staged the 1933 coup. Just as their participation in the 1932 coup had proved the importance of junior officers in staging a coup so did their 1933 actions: "the success of the revolution demonstrated quite clearly the power and influence of the junior officers. It proved that men in the relatively low ranks of major,

captain or lieutenant command the units and the loyalty of soliders upon whom the success or failure of a coup d'etat depends. This is due to the fact that company commanders (majors or captains) and platoon leaders (captains or lieutenants) are naturally closer to their troops in the barracks than the desk-bound colonels and generals."[6] The 1981 coup would have interesting similarities with this successful coup.

Motivation

Four days before the resignations of the military leaders became effective, the government of Phya Manopakorn was toppled by a military coup. Staged by Phibun and his junior military faction--with the grudging cooperation of Phya Phahol, the Commander-in-Chief--the coup was followed by the standard communique stating that the Army, Navy and Civil Service have taken control the government, mentioning the former government's closure of the National Assembly and abrogation of the constitution as the reasons for the coup. Yet was this coup, masterminded by the ambitious junior officer, Phibun, really a struggle for constitutional principles?

In describing various motives for military intervention, Finer includes "national interest": "All armed forces which have become politicized...hold in some form or another a similar belief: that they have some special and indeed unique identification with the 'national interest' ...and feel authorized to exercize (their role of custo-

dian) when some convulsion or decision of the civil authorities seems to them to threaten what they think are the permanent interests of the nation."[7] This motive was emphasized by the coupmakers who, in their letter to the deposed Prime Minister, stated, "...When careful consideration has been given, it was perceived that such measures of the administration brought about the State Council would only lead the country, beloved of our people, to disaster as the ultimate end."[8] However, while one can only conjecture how concerned the coupmakers were with their own career interests, as opposed to the "national interests," it is necessary to briefly examine their situation. Phibun's junior faction was quite literally being squeezed out of the power picture. The rift between the junior and senior military factions is well documented--Phya Song had made several attempts to transfer Phibun from his position as Deputy Commander of the Artillery to a less powerful post. He also had considered sending several members of the junior military faction to study abroad. Even though these measures failed, his eventual alliance with the Prime Minister's clique demonstrated his opposition to the junior military faction. Further, upon the senior officers' resignation, their posts were filled by officers who had not been members of the People's Party and, thus, possible opponents to the junior officer clique.

The resignation of Phahol. "...Would place them at the mercy of the old officials with whom they had been at odds... the old officials (would) have a free hand in getting rid of

them later..."[9] Their careers were at stake. Was it the preservation of the Constitution or the preservation of the junior faction's own career interests that compelled them to overthrow the government? Given the group's lack of demonstrable interest in democratic rule (Phibun and others had signed the decree closing the Assembly and abrogating the Constitution), it was more likely the latter.

Consequences

The most obvious consequence of the 1933 coup was the institution of direct military rule. Phya Phahol, Commander-in-Chief, was appointed Prime Minister and his cabinet was filled with numerous members of the junior military faction. The coup also launched and ended many important political and military careers. Except for Phahol, the members of the former senior military clique were denied posts of power in the new government. Phibun's career was accelerated as he replaced Phya Song as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Members of his faction were brought into the government to the extent that, in 1938 when he became Prime Minister, "he brought in 20 junior clique personnel to his cabinet while members of the senior clique were excluded from his government."[10] Pridi was returned to Thailand, cleared of charges of communism and appointed a minister in government.

The coup also marked the first time demonstrable force had been used in the overthrow of a modern Thai government. Whereas the 1932 coup was carried out via a military bluff, the 1933 coup utilized mobilized forces. Also, the coup

was legitimized by the new government: "...the Assembly unanimously passed a law to acknowledge the change of administration by the coup d'etat to be lawful."[11] Additionally, to the extent that the coup was caused by factionalism within the military, it set a precedent that has continued throughout the history of modern Thailand.

Most importantly, the coup signalled a new central role of the military in the power structure of the state. From now on, whoever controlled the alliance of the military would control the government. As this consolidating coup fulfilled Huntington's pattern of "anticipatory, breakthrough and consolidating coups,"[12] it firmly established the emergence of Thailand's "praetorian regime." (Huntington separates all coups into three categories: anticipatory, breakthrough and consolidating. If the 1932 coup is considered a breakthrough coup, then the 1933 coup can be seen as a consolidating coup in that its leaders hoped to consolidate some of the changes that had been made by the earlier coup--and which they felt were in danger of being lost.)

The November 8, 1947 Coup d'etat

Circumstances

The post World War II years saw Thailand experience a brief constitutional interlude. With the Allied victory, Phibun and his military faction fell from power and was replaced by his civilian rival, Pridi. While Pridi's government saw the emergence of party politics and a fully-elected

Assembly, it did suffer from corruption and instability.

Phibun's overthrow in 1944 was "a challenge to the role of the army in politics."[13] In the eight cabinets from 1944 until the 1947 coup, only five military officers were represented. Then, in 1946 the civilian government passed a law barring civil servants from holding political posts. This particularly threatened the military men who had long been accustomed to political posts as well as positions in the military. With its power base challenged for the first time since it had dominated the political scene, the military could not be expected to acquiesce to civilian rule: "One aspect of the overthrow of Phibun in 1944 had been the dismantling of his control clique within the army and a strong attempt to prevent the development of any new group of army politicians. Such an effort was widely resented among the officers, however."[14] A crisis would provide the justification for the military's return to power.

Although the civilian faction was heading the government, it did not control the government. With an increase in financial scandals and reports of profiteering, smuggling, corruption and inflation, the civilian government became the subject of much critical debate with the Assembly. With the death of the King--and with the implication that Pridi was somehow involved--and with the increased infighting among the civilian politicians, the military seized upon the crisis opportunity and staged a successful coup d'etat.

Participants

The Coup D'Etat Group (Khana Rathaprahan) was composed mostly of army officers. The navy was not keen to get involved as top naval officers had been close to former Prime Minister Luang Thamrong and others were critical of Phibun. The Coup D'Etat Group was headed by 33 army officers, 2 air force officers and one police officer.[15]

Although Phibun did not take a direct role in the coup, his "approval of the idea was the equivalent of promoting the event."[16] Kamol Somvichian writes, "...Phibun was not the key man behind the action. The Coup D'Etat Group was led by Lt. Gen. Phin Chunahawan, Col. Kat Katsongkhram, Col. Khun Jamnong Phumiwet and Colonel Nom Ketnut. Phibun was said to have been brought in 'to render prestige' to the group."[17]

General Phin commanded the First Army Division, the pivotal division in Bangkok. He was a close Army associate of Phibun and was the father-in-law of Phao. Wilson notes that Phin "was active in recruiting army commanders to the coup."[18] Colonel Kat, the coup's second-in-command, was subsequently arrested and charged with plotting a rebellion in 1951. While Phin may have led the group, a group of young army officers provided the necessary troop support. Foremost among these was the Commander of the First Regiment of the Army's First Division, 39-year old Colonel Sarit Thanarat. Others included Lt. Col. Thanom Kittikachorn, Lt. Col. Praesert Ruchirawongs and Lt. Col. Praphat Charusathein--names that would feature heavily in future political and military endeavors.

The success of the 1947 coup was guaranteed by the active service officers commanding key forces in Bangkok. Besides Sarit and his deputy, these included commanders of the armored regiment, the anti-aircraft regiment, the first cavalry squadron and officers of the Royal Military Academy. These younger officers were more traditionalist and "had not the same degree of exposure to Western education and culture, and were thus less interested in the parliamentary process" than the 1932 Promoters.[19]

Thus, the 1947 Coup D'Etat Group was composed almost exclusively of Army officers--who attempted to restore the military's dominant role in government. (Again, junior officers, Army, this time--would supply the manpower behind the coup.) Yet, before long (in 1949 and 1951), this army faction would find itself threatened by both Naval and Marine factions in Thailand's never-ending jockeying for power.

Motivation

Near midnight on November 8, 1947 the civilian government of Prime Minister Thamrong was toppled by a bloodless coup. One of the stated purposes of the coup was "to exonerate the honor of the Army which has been trampled underfoot."[20]

Finer speaks of the "mood to intervene"[21] and includes "self-esteem" and "humiliation" as two elements of the interventionist mood. The 1947 intervention can be partially explained along Finer's lines. Setting aside the obvious, and inevitable, explanation of intervention as a means of

protecting the national interest, the military's motives seem defensive. Finer writes that "self-esteem may be a sense of self-importance." As recounted above, the military staged a coup to "exonerate" the military's honor. Surely the attempted prohibition of the military's participation in politics would have been viewed by the military as an attack upon its honor--it had participated in the national political process since 1932. More importantly, the military had been "humiliated by their association with the losing side,"[22] when Phibun (having aligned his military faction with the Japanese) was ousted after World War II. While it seems reasonable to claim that the military was disposed to intervene--at least partially--because of its wounded pride, the aspect of "national interest" must not be overlooked.

After the Coup D'Etat Group took control of the country it announced its justification for intervening: "...the country faced an emergency such as never happened before. The economic and living conditions of the people were affected and deteriorated to a serious degree. Under such circumstances, it could have been anticipated that the country would continue to get worse and could finally reach disaster, if the situation was not remedied in time...(the) promoters had no desire other than to remedy and stem the deterioration of the country as a means towards alleviating the hardship of the people and ameliorate the country to permanent security. Their purpose is not one of personal benefit or reward in any way."[23] Elsewhere, the coupmakers announced, "...it is necessary to

seize power...in order to aid in cleaning up the dishonesty and evil of various kinds in the government circle."[24]

While the coupmakers claimed they were acting in Thailand's national interest, the fact remains that they used unconstitutional means to achieve their ends. As already noted, Phibun readily admitted to this usurpation of the constitution. Locked out of the Assembly by Pridi's civilian faction, the Coup D'Etat Group saw no alternative and resorted to the same interventionist technique that had ushered in constitutionalism in 1932 and had consolidated military rule in 1933. Additionally, the motive of career and corporate interests must be mentioned. The military, and especially the army, was in the unaccustomed position of being an observer--rather than an actor--in the nation's political theatre. Civilian threats to the military's "integrity" (real or imagined) moved the military to protect its corporate interests. As in 1932, the military resisted any civilian interference in its corporate affairs. The coup group was composed mainly of army officers anxious to reinstate the military's place in the political arena and, in turn, boost their personal careers. Thus personal as well as corporate interests were additional motivating forces behind the 1947 coup.

Consequences

One of the most important consequences of the 1947 coup was the marked decline in importance of the National Assembly. Also, by overthrowing the Constitution, the plotters weakened the concept that it was the framework of politics and could be changed only by orderly procedure. By interrupting the strong,

if divisive, party system that existed under the civilian government, the coup stifled party development. With Phibun's military power base, the importance of political parties was diminished. Kamol writes, "Since the real political power was no longer based on the electoral strength but rather on the military power, the existing political parties did not find it imperative to recruit new members."[25]

When Phibun and his military faction decided unanimously to get rid of Pridi's government, they chose might over parliamentary procedure. Again, a change of regime was legitimized by the use of power. Once in power, the new rulers were accepted. Thus, the 1947 coup furthered the concept of "he who has power deserves power" or "power legitimizes power."

Finally, the 1947 coup had personal and factional consequences. As mentioned above, the Coup D'Etat Group was composed mainly of Army officers. With Phibun's accession to the head of government, Army officers--to the exclusion of the other services--received key professional and political promotions. The coup was also noteworthy for its effect on several individuals. As the 1933 coup had returned Pridi to political prominence, this coup displaced him. It returned Phibun to power and center stage while boosting the careers of the younger military members of the Group such as Sarit, Thanom, Pramarn Siri and Chartchai, all of whom were promoted to the ranks of lieutenant general and major general. Chai Anan notes, "They were given cabinet posts which commensurated with their strategically important military positions. Sarit, for example,

rose from lieutenant colonel in 1947 to lieutenant general in 1950 and was given command of the powerful First Army Region. In 1951 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense."[26] Soon the 1947 Coup Group would become so involved in economic as well as political endeavors that they would come to be known as the "Commercial Soliders."

The September 16, 1957 Coup D'Etat

Circumstances

The ten-year period between the 1947 coup and the 1957 coup was marked by internal political conflicts. The military once again enjoyed access to political power and the ruling cliques had to overcome attempts by Pridi's backers (including some military officers) to stage countercoups in 1949 and 1951. Furthermore, the military was factionalized by major power struggles as it expanded its involvement in the economy. Just as the coup groups had previously controlled the political machinery, this regime moved into the economy, both in legal and illegal activities. (After Sarit's death, his estate was estimated at $150 million, $30 million of which was said to have been embezzled from the state treasury.)

In 1955 Prime Minister Phibun permitted the formation of political parties and public meetings and promised to hold elections in two years. More than 20 political parties were formed, including the government party (the Serimanankasila Party) formed by Phibun, Sarit and police director-general Phao and its main rival, the Democratic Party. The governmental party provided additional power bases for Sarit and

Phao who quickly formed cliques within it.

The February 1957 election was blatantly rigged by the government and was hotly contested by the public yet Phibun refused to call a new election and was widely criticized, along with Phao, by the public and factions within the military. Sarit, Thanom, Praphat and 45 other army officers resigned in protest against Phibun's new cabinet and public demonstrations called for Phibun and Phao's dismissal. With the support of the public (outraged over the rigged elections) and the monarchy against Phibun the Army was ready to intervene; "...it now had all the necessary ingredients to act: the national crises, the mood to act and the legitimacy of its intervention."[27]

Participants

Sarit's military clique, described by one analyst as a "military-technocratic-intellectual" grouping, included Thanom and Praphat, all of whom had attended the Royal Military Academy together and who had worked together in the 1947 coup. By 1956 Thanom was Commander of the First Army (a post of high strategic importance) and Praphat was his deputy. Other senior army officers and air force officers were in Sarit's clique. A number of young technocrats rounded out the group. Like the Phao clique, the Sarit group was well represented on the boards of various commercial enterprises.

Sarit Thanarat, born in Bangkok in 1908 was the son of a military officer. He entered a military academy at 11 years of age and entered active service at 20. His posts included Deputy Commander of the Army Infantry School, Commandant of

the Military Academy and Commander of an artillery regiment. His career was accelerated after his participation in the 1947 coup--in which he commanded a Bangkok infantry battalion--and he rose to the post of Commander of the First Army following his successful supression of an attempted coup in 1949. He subsequently held the posts of Deputy Minister of Defense and Defense Minister in Phibun's cabinet. In 1954 he replaced General Phin as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the next year was appointed Admiral of the Navy and Air Marshal of the Air Force. In 1956 he was made a Field Marshal. During the mid-50s, he also became active in the commercial world, sitting on the boards of directors of over 20 companies.

Sarit had not been educated abroad and had never excelled in academic endeavors. He attracted members to his faction not only by his power (military and economic) but by his personality; "Sarit's personality seemed to fit in with the Thai's image of the ideal leader. His distinctive quality (or what seemed to have been his quality) coincided with a cherished Thai virtue, karuna (kindness)."[28]

General Thanom was Sarit's immediate deputy in the Army as Commander of the First Army and Praphat was his deputy as Commander of the First division. Brigadier General Krit Sivara and Major-General Praesert Ruchirawong, commander of the anti-aircraft division rounded out the military coup group. Thus, the 1957 coup group were senior military officers, well-entrenched in military, political and economic power systems.

Motivation

Whatever motives should be ascribed to the coupmakers must be seen in the light of the factional tensions that preceded the coup. Wilson notes, "It is a temptation to say that the breakup of the Phibun-Phao-Sarit group was inevitable...both Phao and Sarit became the heads of separate clique structures based in different institutions, the fates of which were bound to the success of their leaders. Phao as director of the police and secretary general of the government's parliamentary organization led a complex group which was free of and opposed to the dominance of the army under Sarit. These factors were the basis of the tension which led to the coup..."[29]

In addition to the intra-military rivalries that motivated previous coups, this period was marked by a new element--the military's links to commerce. Since the military leaders of the 1950s had vast economic interests to protect, their corporate interests were naturally extended to cover political and commercial activities. "It is quite clear that the Thai military-politicos in the past were primarily concerned with political-economic power and status more than the corporate interest or 'professionalism' of the Armed Forces."[30]

The "humiliation" of the military, caused by Phibun's alleged complicity in the election scandal, must also be noted as a possible motive. Sarit and his group considered themselves highly professional and were greatly disturbed over Phibun's "unprofessional" activities.

Sarit claimed that he staged the coup in response to

demand for a new and fair election. To Sarit's credit, he did attempt to make good on his attempt following the coup. He invited Pote Sarasin to head the provisional government. An election was held in December. Having been aware of the factionalized state of national politics--with more than 20 political parties jockeying for support--and factions operating in the military and the economy, Sarit may have intervened for motives of "national interest." On the other hand, with Sarit's subsequent sorry record of economic corruption, the coup may also be seen as a military faction seeking to preserve its political-economic power bases.

Consequences

The 1957 coup had the effect of legitimizing the military's involvement in the economic development of Thailand. Girling explains, "It was with Sarit's victory over his rivals that the 'ratification' of business-bureaucratic collaboration took place."[31] Further, Sarit expanded his power base to include the commercial enterprises that took part in the government's modernization. Thus, for the first time, the military expanded its patron-client system into the commercial arena. Unfortunately, many of this regime's "private interests" later proved to be earned at the expense of the Thai people's "national interests."

The coup also led the military to use its participation in political parties--permitted since the 1955 ban on politics was lifted--to eliminate opposition in both the military and political arenas. The successes of the military's Unionist

Party, formed by the coupmakers, encouraged the military to expand its role.

Finally, like other coups, this one also had its effect on careers. The members of the 1957 coup group, Thanom, Praphat, Krit, Praesert and others, dominated the military-political scene for the next 15 years. (Sarit died in 1963). Krit rose rather spectacularly from Second Army Commander to Commander-in-Chief by 1973 and "remained a power behind the scenes after the fall of Thanom and Praphat until his death in 1976."[32] On the other hand, the careers of Phibun and Phao were ended by the coup.

The October 6, 1976 Coup

Circumstances

After the ousting of the government's military leaders in 1973, the caretaker government and the civilian government that followed were marked by instability and unrest. Weakened by inflation, labor/student unrest and widespread politicization and radicalization, the government proved ineffectual.

The threat of subversion, especially that thought to be a communist-inspired, was felt by many of the nation's rightist elements, including the military. Given the international situation at the time, with the fall of Indochina and Thailand's own growing insurgency problems, it was not surprising that the military expressed great alarm at the possible threat of "subversives." A variety of movements were formed to demonstrate against these "leftist" activities (socialists,

student groups, intellectuals, labor unions, liberal academic): the royally-sponsored Village Scouts and vocational student groups, the Nawaphon movement and the military-backed Red Gaurs.

During this period of confused transition from military rule which saw Thailand factionalized to an unprecedented extent, the military suffered from infighting and factionalism and exhibited some of the same signs of polarization as did the populace. It should be remembered that the military at this time was suffering from an image tainted by the graft and corruption and other failings of its predecessors who had been ousted in disgrace. Also, the military had lost its political supremacy.

With the fall of South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos occurring during this period of open politics, the conservative military faction grew even more alarmed over the threat of communism. Especially affected were those officers who had fought in Vietnam. Among these was a group that came to be known as the Young Military Officers Group (or "Young Turks," as they would later be branded).

When students felt ostracized by their exclusion from the political process, violent demonstrations became common. The return of ousted military leaders Thanom and Praphat in 1976 led to massive student demonstrations. On October 6 as students were taking part in a sit-in, police attacked the students. A riot ensued and set the stage for a military coup.

Participants

It is a testimony to the factionalization of the military

that the 1976 coupmakers came from all branches of the armed forces. Whereas the majority of Thai coupmakers have traditionally come from the usually-dominant Army sector, the 1976 coup was staged by a coalition of armed forces officers. After 1973 the Army developed a leadership crisis when the dominant military leader (Praphat having followed Sarit) was deposed. Senior officers realized that, with the military's ousting from the political process in 1973, the old patron-client networks would have to be revised. Thus, the period 1973-1976 witnessed increasing infighting and factionalism within all branches of the military.

Prior to October 1976 several factions within the military had reportedly been considering staging a coup. Generals allied with Major General Pramarn, a retired general and leader of the Thai Nation Party, and loyalists of Krit Sivara, former Minister of Defense and commander-in-chief, were among those planning a coup during this period.

In any event, the coup was a service-wide exercise, with the participation and involvement of all branches. Sanctioned by the King, the coup was led by Admiral Sangard Chaloryu, 61, the recently-retired Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Sangard, a 1940 graduate of the Royal Navy Cadet Academy, rose to Deputy Chief to Staff of the Navy in 1971, was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and Deputy Commander of the Navy subsequently. In 1973 he became Army Commander-in-Chief. The navy officer was promoted to Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in 1975 and had retired from service a

month before the coup.

The takeover was announced by Supreme Command Headquarters and the coupmakers formed a caretaker body, the National Administrative Reform Council. The council's original base of 15 (most of whom were in the Supreme Command) was widened to 24 so as to include field commanders and their deputies who were actually in charge of the troops. Of these 24 officers, 16 were from the Army with the rest from the Navy, Air Force and Police. Thus, Sangard and a group of ranking senior ranking officers from all the services and the police had pre-empted an Army-led coup.

Figuring importantly in the 1976 coup was General Kriangsak Chomanan, Assistant Army Commander. Described by some as the "mastermind" of the coup, the general had been trained in the United States and had enjoyed a rapid rise through the army yet had a rather narrow power base. He was named Secretary General of the coup group's council and could count a number of field commanders among his supporters. Among these were the Young Turks who commanded the majority of the Army's major combat units in Bangkok. While the Young Turks or their troops did not "participate in the killing of students... (their) troops made the coup fait accompli."[33]

Thus the 1976 coup resembled the 1932 coup in that it was staged by a coalition or "consortium" of military leaders. However, as in 1932, the army dominated. Yet it did not enjoy the exclusivity it had experienced in the 1933, 1947 and 1957 coups. It is important to note that the 1976 coup,

sanctioned by the King, was "masterminded" by senior officers with the support of younger field commanders.

Motivation

With the turmoil that characterized the latter period of the 1973-1976 experiment with democracy, came a host of motives for the military to intervene. First, the prohibition of the military's participation in politics severely damaged their political power base and led to civilian interference in the military's corporate interests: "Their autonomy was challenged by the interference of civilian politicians in the military's internal affairs especially in the promotion exercises, national security policy formation and communist supression activities."[34] Along with the military's long-standing disdain for civilian politicians, their absence from Parliament and the threat of interference from politicians moved them that much closer to intervention.

With the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam--instigated by the civilian government--the military was looking at a sizable loss of U.S.-supplied training and supplies. Although the political climate favored the pullout of troops from the country, the military had little to gain from the move. In effect, the pressure exerted by the civilian government was a direct threat to the military's corporate interests.

As already mentioned, the threat of communist infiltration was a very real one during this period. Although the military had some control over various anti-communist paramilitary groups, it found it necessary to intervene since the civilian

government proved reluctant to deal with the "communist threat." When the King publically intimated that communists were attempting to overthrow the government, the military's intervention was legitimized: "At the present time however, a campaign of subversion by various means has been systematically formented in our land...hostile parties certainly aim to take over and dominate...All soliders...should be full aware and careful of the dangers which are creeping in nearer and nearer to us."[35] There could now be little doubt that, with subversion spelled out so clearly, the military should intervene "in the interest of the nation."

Just as the coupmakers of 1947 had been moved in part by the aim to rectify the military's humiliation and loss of self-esteem that had resulted from the excesses of the previous regime, the 1976 coupmakers showed similar signs. Finer's example of Pakistan, in which the Army was motivated to intervene out of humiliation has parallels to the 1976 case in Thailand: "The army felt outraged," Finer writes of Pakistan, "at being part of a regime which cut such a pitiable figure internationally."[36] Finer's examples of "vicarious humiliation" which contribute to a "mood" to intervene have obvious similarities to events in the mid-1970s in Thailand.

Thus the 1976 coup emanated from a variety of interventionist motives: corporate interests, national interest, an effort to repolish the military's tarnished image and the seemingly ever-present desire of the military to dominate the political process.

Consequences

One of the most obvious consequences of the 1976 coup was its effects on the insurgency. Convinced that leftist factions which had emerged during the period of open politics were supported by communist infiltrators, the military supressed personal freedoms via its various anti-communist programs. This had the unfortunate effect of driving many of the disaffected students, farmers and other demonstrators into the arms of the communist insurgents: "...This coup contributed directly to expanding the revolutionary capabilities of the Communist Party of Thailand. This is particularly ironic, given the pervasive anticommunist rhetoric of the rightist groups in 1975 and 1976, and the official justification for the military coup: 'To protect Thailand from the communist menace'."[37]

Like the previous two coups, the October coup also suppressed political growth. Under the guise of the National Administrative Reform Party the coupmakers installed an authoritarian constitution. A military dictatorship followed 12 months later. Again, the military made its view of politics and politicians clear; they looked on both as seedbeds of instability as the military negated whatever democratic strides had been made during the period of open politics.

The coup thus returned the military to its familiar role, dominating the political system. With its close links to the monarchy, the military tightened its grip on the political, social and economic sectors of the nation.[38] By intervening,

the military also reaffirmed its authority. After its ousting from politics in 1973, the military intervened "to show who was boss." They had tolerated social dissent, even some leftist infiltration to an extent; it was then made clear that the military would not accept disturbances to society beyond certain limits.

The coup period also witnessed factionalism within the army. A growing number of the military grew disenchanted with the military's lack of response to the disturbances caused by the politically active, and sometimes radical, students, unionists and politicians. Describing a group of "professional soliders" dismay with the military's lack of action, one writer notes: "They became increasingly frustrated with their Army Commanders' attitudes and behavior under civilian governments. They were dissatisfied that the image of the whole officer corps was inextricably linked with the so-called three tyrants (Thanom, Praphat, and Narong). They were unhappy with the infighting among the generals before and after the October 14 1973 incident and were of the opinion that basic fighting units of the Army (the battalions) had been neglected."[39]

Thus the 1976 coup returned the military to power but the condition of that military was in doubt. Factionalism had surfaced as an ominous problem with cliques scrambling to set up patron-client networks and exert their pressures on the government. Furthermore, the professional interests of the military had been threatened by the pullout of the military's important "professionalizing" factor--the U.S.

military presence. How would the military cope with its own internal problems in the face of an equally troubled nation?

CHAPTER THREE

THE ATTEMPTED APRIL 1 1981 COUP D'ETAT

This chapter seeks to analyze the unsuccessful 1981 coup d'etat following the pattern of investigation established in the last chapter. This analysis of the circumstances, participants, motivations and consequences of the 1981 coup will aid in determining the effects of the coup on Thailand's military, economy, political system and society.

Circumstances

The circumstances that led up to the 1981 unsuccessful coup must be seen in the light of the political events of the post-Kriangsak period. After Kriangsak resigned as Prime Minister--claiming he could no longer count on the military's support for his government--General Prem Tinsulanond, Defense Minister and Army Commander-in-Chief, was appointed by the King to replace him. (The Constitution permitted the King to appoint as Prime Minister anyone who is accepted by the military and has majority support in the Parliament even if he is not a member of Parliament.) A professional solider--not a politician,--Prem would have to rely on rule by coalition since he had no party of his own. The new Prime Minister could count, however, on the loyalty of the appointed Senate (composed of senior military officers and civil servants loyal to the government) and some members of the coalition parties: Social Action, Chart Thai, Democrat, Siam Democrat and the National People's Party. Chai Anan notes, "Prem, unlike Sarit had to depend on support from the National Assembly which was composed of

the elected House of Representatives and the appointed Senate."[1] Prem was thus put in the position of having to balance political, bureaucratic and military interests in order to preserve the government. How would this political neophyte cope with a political system that had been chafing under the bit of Kriangsak's authoritarian political structure? And how would the professional solider contend with a highly politicized and factionalized military? As one observer subsequently noted, "A political crisis would occur if Prem failed to reconcile party interests or if the military lost confidence in him and sought to stage a coup d'etat."[2]

Appointed Prime Minister in March 1980, Prem was scheduled to retire from the Army in September. Since he was not a politician, losing his military power base would leave him vulnerable. When his commission was extended another year, the event "brought about intense conflicts within the Army especially between Major General Arthit Kamlangek and the Young Turks,"[3] the latter objecting to Prem's extension. An increasingly factionalized Army resulted from the political maneuverings necessitated by the Prime Minister's military-political alliance.

It wasn't long before the coalition parties were at each other's throats. Although Prem had appointed members from different parties to the same ministries, in the hope of instituting a system of checks and balances, the parties were soon accusing one another of economic malfeasance. The Social Action Party and the Chart Thai Party accused one another of

irregularities involving the sugar industry (kickbacks and hoarding). In February, 1981 the Social Action Party accused its rival of interfering with SAP's mandate to purchase oil for the government. Again, charges of kickbacks and corruption were traded and SAP "decided to withdraw from the coalition government to protest Prem's inability to reconcile the conflict."[4]

The Social Action Party's withdrawal resulted in the formation of a new government and cabinet on March 13 1981. Yet, Prem remained as Prime Minister thanks to the fact that no one party could command a majority vote in Parliament. To fill the Social Action Party's void of support, the Mass Line Party and the United Party joined the new government. Both were led by military officers. The Mass Line Party was headed by Major General Sudsai Hasdin, leader of the infamous Red Gaur movement of 1976.

Many were disappointed with Prem's new cabinet and voiced doubts about its effectiveness. The Young Turks "had expected General Prem to bring in competent and respectable persons into the new cabinet and Sudsai, in their opinion, was far from being qualified for the cabinet post."[5] Other appointments were criticized as mere patronage postings and nepotistic and "many began to doubt Prem's commitment to putting national interests above parties, friends, and private interests. Even the military officers surrounding Prem disapproved of the Prem II cabinet officers."[6]

Concurrent with these criticisms was the Young Turks' anger over moves to promote Prem's second extension of tenure as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. They claimed the extension was in reality a ploy to facilitate Major General Arthit Kamlangek's accession to the post in the future--a move which could disenfranchise them. Rumors that the Young Turks faction was about to be transferred to less significant military posts also fanned the fires. Additionally, the group "blamed all the social and economic difficulties--high inflation, budget deficits, the depletion of the monetary reserve fund, unemployment and the high crime rate--on Prem's indecisiveness, which was attributed to his conservative attitudes and the absence of a real power base."[7]

With a new government that was widely attacked and with a highly-factionalized army split by career-minded rivals, Prem was balancing astride a shaky power base. And with a military faction, the Young Turks, that had both the motivation and the means for attempting a coup, the military government of General Prem looked like a prime candidate for a putsch. With the disastrous cabinet selection, the Young Turks had the crisis opportunity they may have been waiting for.

On March 31 five Young Turk colonels tried to convince Prem to abolish his government. Prem refused and fled with the King to Korat. The plotters enlisted General Sant Chitpatima, the Deputy Army Commander, to lead the coup. On April 1, army units seized key points in Bangkok as the

Revolutionary Council (the plotters' group) decreed the parliament, government and constitution dissolved. Extensive social, economic and political reforms were announced and elections were promised. Yet, Prem, aided by the monarchy's presence, had rallied the Air Force and the Commanders of the Second, Third and Fourth Army regions. On April 3, the rebel troops surrendered.

Participants

The Young Turks was a faction of middle ranking army officers who had been holding discussion meetings since 1973. The group, consisting mostly of battalion commanders was formed after the 1973 Revolution and claimed to stand for professionalism and reform in the military; "...(the group) got together for serious discussions on the increasingly turbulent political situation and what they perceived to be the serious disintegration of the Army."[8]

The core of the group was built around members of Class Seven (1960) of the prestigious Chulachomkalao Military Academy and had much in common. They were all platoon leaders at the Academy, shared similar middle class backgrounds, had attended the Army Staff College and had fought in Vietnam. As they progressed through the ranks they retained their ties and by 1977 had enough power to help oust Thanin's government. The group had progressed to the extent that "...by 1977 (the Young Turks) had developed their role one step further--that of an arbitrator in the political system--whereas during 1973-1976 the group was acting merely to safeguard the military

corporate interests. After 1976 (they)...became more concerned with a larger political issue--the effectiveness of the Thai political system."[9]

To that end, the Young Turks aided in installing Kriangsak in 1977 and withdrew their support in 1980 in favor of Prem. With Prem's installation as Prime Minister in 1980, the group was able to "bargain for military positions for their group members and block appointments and promotions of members of other factions in the Army."[10] As members of the Senate and high ranking officers in the Army, they gave Prem the support he needed since he lacked a political power base.

It would be valuable here to briefly examine the makeup of the core group of the Young Turks. As already mentioned, the core group was composed of senators in the appointed Assembly. The group also boasted an adviser and a Secretary General to the Prime Minister--Choopong Matavaphand and Colonel Chamlong Srimuang, respectively. The core group consisted of the following:

Colonel Chamlong Srimuang
Secretary General to Prime Minister

Born in 1935, Chamlong received various military scholarships and served in Vietnam with the Royal Thai Volunteer Force. One observer described his contribution to the group's early formation: "it was he--often working alone--who was the driving force for the movement that was taking place."[11] Although he was one of the group's founders, Chamlong did not take an active role in the coup, choosing instead to remain at his post serving the Prime Minister.

Lt. Col. Prajark Sawangjit
Commander 2nd Infantry Regiment (Prachinburi)

Born in 1937, Prajark joined the Infantry and graduated from the Army Staff College in 1969 and served in Vietnam in 1971. He achieved notoriety in 1977 when troops under his command repelled Khmer Rouge intruders and halted a Vietnamese border incursion in 1980. He joined the Young Turks in 1977 and was appointed a senator in 1979. Although he was considered outspoken by some, he had "played an important part in some policy changes instituted by the government of Thanin and Kriangsak."[12] He led the coup force into Bangkok on March 31.

Colonel Manoon Rupekajorn
Commander 4th Cavalry Regiment (Bangkok)

Born in 1935, Manoon graduated from the Military Academy in 1960, was posted to the cavalry, served under Prem at the Cavalry Training Center, attended the Thai Army Staff College and served in Vietnam. An observer of the coup attempt noted, "Manoon, widely regarded as the brains behind the movement, kept a low profile during the action, despite being appointed Secretary-general of the Revolutionary council."[13]

Colonel Chanboon Phentragul
Commander 31st Infantry Regiment (Lopburi)

Born in 1934, Chanboon entered the infantry after graduating from the Military Academy, attended the Army Staff College and served in Vietnam. Chai Anan notes, "Chanboon was regarded as one of the best combat officers in the Thai Army."[14]

Colonel Choopong Matavaphand
Commander 1st Cavalry Regiment (Bangkok)

Born in 1934, Choopong joined the cavalry where he served

under Prem, attended the Army Staff College in 1969 and served in Vietnam.

Colonel Pridi Ramasoot
Commander 1st Infantry Regiment (Bangkok)

Born in 1934, Pridi joined the infantry and attended the Army Staff College in 1967 and served in Vietnam.

Colonel Saengsek Mangklasiri
Commander 11th Corps of Engineers (Rajburi)

Born in 1936, Saengsek entered the Engineer Corps after attending the Military Academy, attended Army Staff College and served in Vietnam.

Other Young Turks included Colonel Sakorn Kitviriya, Commander 1st Military Police Battalion (Bangkok); Colonel Bunsak Potchareon, Commander 2nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (Bangkok); Colonel Pallop Pinmanee, Commander 19th Infantry Regiment (Kanchanaburi); Colonel Bovorn Ngarmkasem, Commander 21st Artillery Regiment (Bangkok) and Colonel Virayuth Invasa, Commander Military Cadets Regiment (Bangkok).

Other military officers were members of the group but its informal nature makes membership difficult to define. One observer notes, "The Young Turks comprised an inner ring of perhaps 15 to 16 colonels and an outer circle of 29 or 30..."[15] Chai Anan notes, "The informal group recruited its new members from officers in the battalions which the core group commanded. In early 1981 about 50 army officers from the rank of captain to colonel were members..."[16]

Even though the Young Turks commanded many of the strategic battalions and regiments surrounding Bangkok (although they

didn't control the pivotal First Army Region prior to the coup attempt) they felt it necessary to enlist a veteran military officer to head the coup. After Prem refused to lead the Young Turks in a coup against his own government, General Sant Chitpatima, Deputy Army Commander-in-Chief agreed to lead the coup. Born in Pattani Province in 1921, Sant had excelled in campaigns against communist insurgents and Muslim separatists and was reportedly in line for Prem's post. His military career included posts as Assistant Chief-of-Staff, Deputy Chief-of-Staff and Chief-of-Staff of the Army. A close friend of Prem since childhood and chairman of the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee, Sant had reportedly been angered over Prem's extension of tenure as Commander-in-Chief and felt he was being prevented from promotion to the top military post.

As leader of the Revolutionary Council, Sant may be seen--in retrospect--as a curious choice. With the bulk of his career spent in the South, he had not established the patron-client links within the military that many of his fellow senior officers had. Nor was his personal reputation beyond reproach: "He did not have much support within the Army itself and his public image had been soiled by allegations that he had built an expensive house and that his wife was engaged in business dealings."[17]

Sant was the nominal leader of the coup and was joined by Admiral Samut Sahanawin, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy; Air Chief Marshall Phaniang Kantat, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force and Lt. General Wasin Itsarangkun na Ayutthaya,

Commander of the First Army Region. With the cooperation of Wasin, and representatives of 14 battalions under Young Turk command, the coup force numbered over 8000 men--the largest force ever raised in a Thai coup d'etat.[18]

Motivation

Like other coup groups, the Young Turks exhibit an interesting mixture of possible motives for intervention. While one can cite their seemingly genuine concern for the national interest, their corporate concern for improving the military's expertise and self-esteem and their more dubious personal career-related motives, one is puzzled by some of their actions. How, for example, would the Young Turks justify their own jockeying for position in the Army given their expressed desire for a "more professional" military? Also, why did they instigate a coup against the soldier who had been their "mentor" and patron--General Prem? More to the point, why did they ask him to lead the coup when his "indecisive" leadership was part of the justification for their rebellion?

Unfortunately, it is impossible to uncover many of the group's true motives for their actions since we have only their pre-coup and coup statements with which to form an opinion. Since the group never gained power, and was unable to implement--or abandon--their proposed reforms, their motives can only be estimated. Nevertheless, it is possible to uncover some of their motives from their pre-coup actions and statements and the emphasis given certain subjects in

their coup communiques.

As already noted, the Young Turks had been highly critical of many of their senior officers. They blamed many of their superiors for not resisting the intervention of politicians in military affairs during the 1973-1976 period of "open politics" when the Army lost much of its autonomy. Yet it should be noted that age differences may have also affected their negative opinion: "There were also intergenerational conflicts between senior officers in their fifties and the Young Military Officers Group whose members were in their early thirties and mid-forties."[19] Also, the younger officers would have been excluded from many of the long-established military/economical/political patron-client relationships.

Additionally, their experience in the countryside--combatting the rural-based insurgents--had sharpened their empathy with the rural poor and, in turn, may have increased their disdain for some of their fellow officers who they accused of ignoring and exploiting the peasantry. As one former aide explains, "Perhaps by sheer coincidence they were the first class with real experience in fighting insurgents. What they had seen was how badly off the rural people were. And that's how their contempt for the generals in Bangkok grew."[20]

Their attacks on Prem focused on his "indecisiveness" but also alluded to his extension of tenure as Commander-in-Chief as "unprofessional." In the group's communiques, "The Principal Policy of the Revolutionary Party," complaints against the military were enunciated: "The armed forces' capabilities

must be further improved if they are to effectively perform their two important duties...The war which the Thai Armed Forces now confronts is completely different from those of the past, and the old strategy is not sufficient to guarantee victory in this new kind of war."[21] Thus, the Young Turks were partly motivated by corporate interests--a desire to upgrade the expertise of the military.

The group was also surely motivated by "national interests." While the post-coup communiques speak of "deteriorating economic and social conditions" and the coupmakers' being "forced to take drastic action in the interests of the people,"[22] this type of pronouncement is standard fare for Thai coupmakers. Yet there does exist evidence that the Young Turks had been sincerely interested in the economic and social modernization of Thailand prior to the coup.

Since their founding, the Young Turks had become known as ambitious officers who had firm ideas on Thailand's economic development. "Some of them were inspired by Israeli and South Korean development models while others sought to tackle economic problems through political means. Though they might differ on the paths of and strategies of development, they all agreed on the necessity of transplanting a full democratic system into the country. They planned to destroy the economic monopoly groups and nationalize important economic sectors such as banking, oil and logging industries."[23] (Prajark's subsequent admission to the existence of a "blacklist" naming capitalists "to be dealt with" lent the group's development

plans socialist overtones.)

The group had offered Prem advice on economic matters and had even "presented a memo on current economic problems"[24] to him in 1980. Chai Anan noted that Major Sanchai Buntrigswat, the group's policy maker, had been influenced by Samuel Huntington's writings: "He was convinced by Huntington's thesis that the military could effectively spearhead a reform movement in a developing society where civilian authority was weak and disorganized."[25] While the economic platform they presented during the coup borrowed freely from the Democratic Soliders faction, it can be seen as evidence of their sincerity in modernizing the national economy--especially improving the lot of the rural sector. While their grasp of the problem may have been questioned, few doubted their sincerity. One ex-minister commented, "They had simplistic half-baked solutions for problems, they didn't understand the complexity of national issues,"[26] Yet few observers of the Young Turks would deny that, while they may have misdirected their energies and offered underdeveloped modernization plans, they did intervene partly in the interests of "nation, God and King."

The personal or career-oriented motive should also not be overlooked. While it should not be viewed as a main motivating force, it nevertheless contributed to the intervention. The Young Turks had protested against General Prem's possible extension of tenure as Commander-in-Chief several times. As already noted, they feared the move was a vehicle for easing Major General Arthit (no friend of theirs) into

Prem's military spot later. Also, the group had heard the rumor "that many senior army officers were seeking the transfer of the Young Turks to less significant posts..."[27] Their loss of the strategic posts they held would lessen their importance. Finally, the Young Turks must have been aware that they had made many enemies as a result both of their outspoken opposition and their rapid promotions: They had been "...openly criticised ...for turning their backs on the seniority system and stepping out of line."[28] And they must have been aware that their meteoric rise through the ranks was envied by other officers. Says one observer, "what particularly annoyed senior officers were moves by the Young Turks to gain promotions while at the same time staying in direct command of field units--the instruments which ensured their political potency."[29] All these factors reinforced their feeling of factionalism, propelling them to intervene in the belief that not only were they a separate faction but that they were "first among equals." (Sant's participation in the coup can also be ascribed to career motivations--he reportedly was angered by Prem's extension of tenure and hoped to become commander-in-chief.)

Consequences

Even though the Young Turks' coup attempt ended in failure, it did have both short and long-term effects on the military and the nation. The coup's long-term consequences--such as its effects on the institution of the monarchy--will be examined in the next chapter.

One of the most obvious consequences of the 1981 coup was

the increase in factionalism within the military. Although the Young Turks were expelled from the Army for their part in the coup, "Other factions filled the power vacuum...General Amnat Damrikarn, Assistant Commander-in-Chief of the Army, emerged with increased powers as officers close to him assumed many of the command positions vacated by the Young Turks.[30] Besides the emergence of new factions within the military, it has been reported that a growing number of younger Army officers have adopted much of the Young Turk's philosophy--especially their modernization plans--even though they may disagree with the way in which the group tried to implement it. Evidence of this support may be seen in certain factions within the Army that have supported reinstatement for the Young Turks, notably General Pin Thammasi, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief.[31] General Arthit strongly resisted the moves, widening the rift.

With the expulsion of the Young Turks, the Army also suffered a notable loss of expertise. As already mentioned, many of the officers in the coup group had impressive service records and had been destined for positions of greater responsibility within the Army. With 37 officers expelled and 21 transferred to less strategic positions, the military suffered an undeniable loss of skilled commanders. Further, the coup was an obvious blow to the Army's corporate image and self-esteem.

The coup also altered several factors in the long tradition of coupmaking in Thailand. First, the coup's failure proved that taking Bangkok is not sufficient to guarantee a strategic

victory. As one long-time observer of Thai coups d'etat noted: "The rebels thought that taking over Bangkok was enough. This coup theory was true once when communciations with the regions were poor. But now armies can be flown into Bangkok or brought here rapidly on superhighways. Telecommunications are immediate. A coup can almost be as quickly squashed as it is mounted."[32] Secondly, the coup was plotted and executed by battalion-level commanders, a lower rank than gererally stage coups. Thus the Young Turks may have set not only a political example but a strategic one to the younger factions within the military.

Specifically, the coup led to General Prem's decision not to seek another term as Commander-in-Chief. Opposition within the Army to his extensions of tenure had continued and caused him to relinquish his military post. Just as the coup ended many careers, it propelled others. Foremost among these was General Arthit Kamlangek and his faction. Arthit, a longtime opponent of the Young Turk faction, had actively aided Prem in supressing the coup and was rewarded with the post of Assistant Commander-in-Chief and Commander 1st Army Region.

The Young Turks' development plans also had an effect on the nation. The Revolutionary Council's modernization plans were adopted in part by Prem's government. Having seen the enthusiastic reception given the group's rural development plans, Prem instituted similar rural modernization schemes several months after the coup attempt.

Thus, while the Young Turks failed to topple the government, they nevertheless made some lasting impressions on the

nation. As one eyewitness said, "They rang all the right bells... the Young Turks may not have been personally appealing to the populace but many of their political and modernization plans were enthusiastically received."[33] So, while the Young Turks may have faded from the military scene (only to reemerge in the political arena?), many of their ideas live on. The long range consequences of their actions and other coups will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This chapter seeks to assess the role of the 1981 coup--and other coups in general--on the future development of Thailand. The coup's effects on the social, economic, political and military modernization of Thailand will be examined. To this end, the chapter will attempt to answer the following questions: How did the 1981 coup differ or resemble other coups? What are the consequences of coups on Thailand? Are further coups possible?

How Did The 1981 Coup Differ From or Resemble Other Coups?

In comparing the 1981 and previous coups, this section will analyze the coups along the same lines as used in previous chapters. It will compare the coup's circumstances, participants, motivations and consequences.

Circumstances

As in 1933, the circumstances leading up to the 1981 coup attempt were marked by infighting and factionalism within the military. Just as a faction of junior military officers, disenchanted with their senior officers, had staged the 1933 coup, so did the junior "Young Turks" express a disdain for many of their senior officers and attempt a similar maneuver. Additionally, both groups had heard rumors that they were to be disenfranchized. The circumstances leading up to the 1981 coup also resembled those of 1957; in both periods the military was factionalized as officers strove to build up their political and economic, as well as their military, power bases.

Just as the Young Turks supported, then withdrew their support for Kriangsak, so the 1947 coupmakers in Sarit's clique had first backed, then opposed, Phibun's regime; creating dissension and factionalism within the military ranks. Although the military prior to the 1976 coup was factionalized (witness the moderate and conservative elements) this infighting did not have the direct consequences as it did in other coups. Thus, a factionalized military in 1981 led to the existence of a faction within the military that was capable of staging a coup d'etat. The Young Turks, like their 1933 counterparts, had both the motive and the power to intervene. (It could be said that the Young Turks sought to consolidate their power--they had effective control of the military's promotional apparatus under Prem--much as their 1933 counterparts had.)

In exploring circumstances one must differentiate between factionalism within the military and within the ruling elite. Along with factionalism within the military, the pre-1981 coup period was also marked by a split within the ruling elite; a characteristic which has facilitated coupmakers in the past. Infighting among the civilian politicians in 1947 and the instability of the 1973-1976 civilian rule had both contributed to the crisis opportunity that encouraged the military to intervene. The squabbles between the Social Action Party and the Chart Thai Party in 1980-1981 led some to believe that the coalition of military and government was inhibited by factionalism and encouraged the Young Turks to intervene.

The circumstances that led up to the 1981 coup attempt

differed from other pre-coup periods examined in that there was no distinct, direct threat to the military or the nation. While the Young Turks may have perceived threats to their own careers there was no distinct crisis, merely a general mood of indifference with Prem's government. Whereas the National Assembly was closed in 1933 and Pridi was exiled, the Young Turks could not claim that Prem's second government, no matter how poor his choice of cabinet ministers may have been, could have justified a coup. The death of the King and the scandals of the civilian government in 1947; the rigged elections of 1957 and the riots of 1976 were much more distinct threats to the government and the nation than the "crises" claimed by the 1981 coupmakers. The populace in 1981 exhibited none of the politicized or radicalized characteristics that had threatened stability in 1973. Nor was the military significantly victimized by corruption or other wrongdoing (as in 1957) or liable to lose its power in the government. Likewise, the military and the political sectors coexisted comparatively well, aside from some cracks in the coalition, during the period preceding the 1981 coup. The crisis opportunity, as described by the Young Turks, was more an internal political than a military matter.

Participants

The 1981 coup is notable in that it was staged by a younger group of officers than any other coup since 1933. The core group of the Young Turks was composed of middle ranking officers in their mid-40s. Not since Phibun and Suphalchassi

(37 and 38, respectively) masterminded the 1933 coup, had such a young faction of military officers staged a coup d'etat. (In 1947 Phin had enlisted the aid of junior officers--Sarit, Praphat and Thanom--in staging the coup but only in a support capacity.) The 1976 coup was staged by a consortium of senior military officers while the 1981 coup leaders were--aside from the nominal leaders--generally of the battalion commander level.

Like the 1947 coup, the 1981 attempt was staged mostly by army officers. Since 1947, the army had emerged as the dominant coupmaking branch of the military. Even the 1976 coup, said to have been staged by a consortium of officers from the armed forces,was masterminded by the army. Interestingly, the 1981 coupmakers, like many rebel officers before them, had taken part in a previous coup attempt. While they claimed not to have taken an active role in the 1976 coup, the Young Turks did command troops involved in the coup. Likewise, the 1933 coup-makers had participated in the 1932 Revolution and the 1957 team of Sarit, Thanom and Praphat had, as already mentioned, played a role in the 1947 coup d'etat.

The 1981 coupmakers also followed "coup precedent" by enlisting a senior military officer to head the coup. Like Phya Phahol in 1933, Phibun in 1947 and Sangard in 1976, General Sant, Deputy Army Commander-in-Chief, lent his name to the coup. As already noted, Sant was a last minute and a curious choice. Apparently the coupmakers felt that the coup needed a senior military officer to lend an aura of respectability to the activities.

In any event, it is evident that the Young Turks did not choose Sant for the forces he commanded. They themselves commanded many of the strategic battalions and regiments surrounding Bangkok: First Infantry Regiment; First Cavalry Regiment; Second Anti-aircraft Artillery Regiment; Twenty-First Artillery Regiment; First Military Police Battalion; Military Cadets Regiment; First Artillery Regiment. Unlike most other coupmakers before them, they did not control the First Army Region until they enlisted the aid of Lt. General Wasin immediately prior to the coup. Historically, the control of the First Army Region--Bangkok and its surrounds--has proved vital to the success of a coup. With the addition of Wasin's troops, the coupmakers had assembled a force of over 8000 troops; more than any other coup faction had ever raised.

It should be noted that the Young Turks, the core group of the 1981 coupmakers, were a more tightly-knit, more homogeneous group than any which had previously attempted a coup. While they shared many characteristics with the 1933 coupmakers--their junior officer rank, their education abroad, their approach to the military in the modernization of Thailand--they stand alone among coupmakers as a large; organized, talented, and experienced group of officers. Finally, the Young Turks were not a disenfranchized faction at the time of their coup attempt. As senators, they participated in the political system. Hence, they boasted both military and political power.

Motivation

Without exception, every coup group has claimed it inter-

vened in "the national interest." The 1932 Promoters as well as the 1933 junior faction which overthrew the Promoters claimed they were intervening in order to improve the economic and living conditions of the nation. Each group sought to justify its intervention on similar grounds. Thus, it's not surprising to note that in all the coups included in this study, the motive to protect Thailand's national interest is cited by the coup-makers.

While the Young Turks claimed to be motivated by national interests, their personal motives cannot be overlooked, as has already been noted. In this regard, they bear a striking similarity to the 1933 coupmakers who had been threatened with reassignment and a general liquidation of their political and military power. Both groups of coupmakers were being squeezed out of potentially powerful relationships. Likewise, the coups of 1947 and 1957 were also motivated, in part, by career related considerations. Factionalism and career motivations seem to go hand in hand. As long as the Thai military remains factionalized, it will be more easily disposed to intervene.

The 1981 coupmakers also cited corporate interests among their reasons for staging a coup. Whereas the 1947 and 1976 coupmakers claimed the military had been humiliated by interference from civilian rulers and the 1957 group cited Phibun's complicity in a scandal, the Young Turks claimed corporate interests of the military needed to be improved. They termed the military "unprofessional" and demanded an increase in its levels of expertise. Whether or not they were correct is open

to conjecture. When the Thai military has felt threatened by the civilian sector (usually the politicians) it has often claimed that its corporate interests were being victimized. Like other motivations of intervention, the citing of "corporate interests" has often been abused by coupmakers. While there may have been real threats to the military's corporate interests in 1976 it is more difficult to justify the intervention in 1981 on similar grounds.

While the 1981 coupmakers cited many of the same motivations for intervention as did previous coupmakers, it is difficult to judge the sincerity of their motives since they never came to power. Nevertheless, it is evident that, like most coupmakers, the Young Turks intervened out of a combination of motivations.

Consequences

Lastly, the long range consequences of the failed coup may be the most disturbing element of the uprising. Where other coups have at times resulted in a stronger, more unified, military, the 1981 attempt saw the continued factionalization of the military. As already noted, the Young Turks had many supporters of their words if not their actions within the military and the failed coup began to seem only a symptom of a spreading disease.

In addition to the consequences already noted, the coups' effects on the institution of the monarchy must be noted. Traditionally, the monarchy has been above politics. Yet, as a result of several coups (notably, the 1976 coup), the monarchy has involved itself in the day to day governing of

the nation. While the monarchy has generally not become involved in politics--aside from brief intrusions such as in 1933 and 1973--the 1976 coup saw the King offering his support for a return to the military regime. While the King's intervention in 1976 weakened his standing with Thai students and intelligentsia, many saw it as merely a stabilizing force. However, the monarchy's involvement in 1981, the King "stooping" to the level of politics, has been more widely viewed as a dimunition of the institution of the monarchy. Indeed, the Young Turks attacked Prem for involving the monarchy and the King's role in the coup has led to widespread concern for the image of the monarchy.

Although the 1981 coup failed, it did reinforce the concept that other coups have; namely, that the political system exists at the behest of the military. Just as previous coups have abrogated constitutions and closed the National Assembly, this coup reminded the Thai populace that the military has the capability to intervene and change the government. Additionally, this coup, like those before it, removed some of the military from the "playing field." Unfortunately, this unsuccessful coup resulted in the dismissal of a highly skilled and widely experienced group of army officers.

Finally, this coup attempt was not a departure from coup-making in Thailand, but resembled previous coups. The main difference was that the Young Turks were proposing a more radical program of change than had been previously proposed. Instead of working through the military and political channels open to

them, this faction of middle-ranking officers sought to change the government by violent means and overestimated their support.

What Are The Consequences of Coups on Thailand?

In the fifty-one years since a coup d'etat overthrew the absolute monarchy, Thailand has been engaged on a seemingly never-ending quest for a stable political system. Governments have risen and fallen with astonishing frequency. And the military has not hesitated to intervene in its quest for what is believed to be a more suitable form of government. How has this frequent intervention affected the nation?

First, it must be stressed that this paper is limited to examining the effects of coups' d'etat, not the overall role of the military in Thailand. Let's first examine coups' effect on Thailand's political system. Generally, coups have stifled political growth in Thailand. As we have seen, a common pattern following a successful coup is the banning of political parties, the abrogation of the constitution and the closure of the Parliament. While inevitably done "in the nation's interest," this abrogation of the political system reinforces the populace's (and the military's) opinion of the political process as ineffective. By intervening and not allowing the political system to develop and mature, the military stifles attempts to institute a viable political system in Thailand. With the constant threat of military intervention looming large, the populace cannot be expected to look on the parliamentary system as a legitimate alternative to military rule. Its effectiveness and authority

is limited by the threat of military intervention. The undemocratic nature of the coup d'etat thus frustrates the populace's participation in the political process.

Coups also tend to factionalize and polarize both society and the military. Since the society as a whole does not view military intervention as legitimate, a coup invariably results in divided loyalties. The 1976 coup is an example of the military's intervention polarizing society. Likewise, just as a coup is often the result of a factionalized military, it often makes divisions more bitter or produces more factions within the ranks. After the 1981 coup attempt the military showed increasing signs of factionalization, as has been noted. After the 1976 coup, a highly factionalized military contested for power.

Generally, coups in Thailand have been a destabilizing influence. They have interrupted whatever political developmental progress was being made and have alienated the public from participating in the political process. The military's intervention has prevented politicians from gaining the experience of ruling and becoming competent statesmen. While Thailand has been engaged in an often turbulent search for a legitimate political system, the military coup d'etat has served to stifle that search, frustrate the society's and politicians' participating in it and perpetuate the military's internal weaknesses.

While it is too early to judge the full effect of the coup on the monarchy it is possible to judge the effect of the monarchy on the coup. The outcome of future coups will depend more on the legitimizing influence of the monarchy than on the

military or political might of the coupmakers, thus, significantly altering the rules of the game of military intervention. From now on, a coup d'etat can only be successful if the coupmakers either enlist the support of the monarchy or silence it.

Are Further Coups Possible?

Any investigation of the possibility of further coups occuring in Thailand must begin with an examination of the conditions that give rise to coupmaking. As stated in the first chapter, both social and military conditions encourage coupmaking in Thailand. Historically, the populace's low levels of political participation has led to political passivity--a condition which facilitated military intervention because it minimized the danger of turmoil should the military intervene.

Is the populace still politically passive? Although there have been periods such as the open politics period of 1973-1976 in which increasing and diverse numbers of the populace participated in the political process, the bulk of the population still disdains politics. Political parties still do not have the widespread support necessary for representative politics. The populace has not had enough experience with an uninterrupted period of "open politics" to adapt itself. Since political passivity is still the dominant characteristic of the Thai populace, the populace presents no significant barrier to the military's intervention in politics.

Just as the bulk of the population has not become involved

in politics, no extrabureaucratic institutions have emerged to challenge the ruling legitimacy of Thailand's "bureaucratic polity." Given the military's dominant, if not legitimate, role as caretaker of the government and nation, military intervention is unlikely to be questioned or inhibited. (Aside from the monarchy.)

Similarly, conditions in the military appear to still encourage--or at least not inhibit--intervention. The military still disdains politics and politicians (witness the Young Turks' and other conservative military factions' actions during 1973-1976) and is not reluctant to intervene when it fears politicans are undermining either the national interests or the military's corporate interests. The Young Turks listed politicians' intervention in military affairs as one of the motivations for their coup and other coupmakers have continued to justify their actions by attacking the political system. In short, while some of the military seem to be improving their political skills, the bulk of the military still views the ambitions of politicians as a potentially destabilizing force--one to be only grudgingly accepted. As long as this anti-politics attitude persists within the military, intervention will remain a distinct possibility.

Likewise, as the military is disposed to intervene by its anti-political stance, it also is motivated by its "defensive" attitude regarding corporate interests. The military remains jealous of its corporate interests and benefits and has been quick to defend them--even to the point of intervention--

from outside interference. As long as the military retains its demand for autonomy, any interference can be considered a threat to the corporate interests and dispose the forces to intervene.

As already mentioned, factionalism in the military, both within and between divisions, is still a destabilizing factor and one that historically has had links to intervention. The 1981 coup was the direct result of a factionalized military and reports indicate that the post-coup armed forces exhibit similar signs of infighting and factional rivalry. Until the military becomes a more cohesive, more professional, force, factionalism will carry with it the threat of intervention.

On the other hand, there are two signs that the military may be less disposed to intervene. Although the military still shows signs of factionalism, it has improved in another of its "professional" characteristics; its expertise. The military has successfully carried out anti-insurgency and border-security campaigns, improving both the capabilities as well as the self-esteem of the military. Additionally, the military has been allocated increased funds for self-improvement and material, boosting its expertise. If one ascribes to Huntington's theory, that the more professional the military the less likely it is to intervene, then the Thai military may be said to be less inclined to intervene than in the past.

While coups continue to be a distinct possibility in the future of Thailand, one last factor may outweigh many others in their prevention. That is the influence of the monarchy. As already, noted, the monarchy has expanded its role to a more

direct participation in the government. Specifically, its intervention in 1976 legitimized the military takeover just as its alliance with the Prem forces doomed the coupmakers' attempts to topple the government. Thus, future coupmakers will have to enlist the support of the monarchy or weigh the possibility of staging a coup without the legitimizing presence of the monarchy--a seemingly impossible task. Thus, the monarchy's involvement in politics may limit the number of coups.

Are further coups likely? Yes and no. While the society and the military both exhibit many of the same coup-encouraging characteristics that they have for years, two factors may mitigate somewhat against military intervention. Coups d'etat will undoubtedly remain the main engine of change within the Thai political system until a stable political institution is reached, yet coupmakers will not be as easily disposed to intervene as they have been in the past.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

1. S.E. Finer, The Man on Horseback; The Role of the Military in Politics, London, Pall Mall Press, 1962 (second edition 1975), p. 23. Finer defines the military's intervention in politics as "The armed forces' constrained substitution of their own policies and/or their persons, for those of the recognized civilian authorities."

2. Ibid., p. 23

3. See Donald Hindley, "Thailand: Politics of Passivity," Claude E. Welch, Arthur K. Smith, Military Rule and Rule: Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations, John Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics.

4. See Hindley, op. cit., p. 177 for definition of political passivity.

5. Fred Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity, Honolulu, East-West Center Press, 1966

6. Ibid., p. 197

7. Finer, op. cit., p. 129

8. Ibid., p. 130

9. Claude E. Welch, Arthur K. Smith, op. cit., p. 28

10. Girling, op. cit., p. 195

11. See David A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1962 and Donald Hindley, op. cit.

12. Hindley, op. cit., p. 181

13. Wilson, op. cit., p. 72

14. Wilson, "Political Tradition and Political Change in Thailand," in Modern Thai Politics, Clark Neher, (editor), Cambridge, Mass, Schenkman, 1976, p. 332

15. Hindley, op. cit., p. 182

16. Wilson, Politics in Thailand, p. 81

17. Girling, op. cit., p. 154

18. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, "The Thai Young Turks," pp. 2-3

19. Hindley, op. cit., p. 179

20. Moshe Lissak, Military Roles in Modernization: Civil-Military Relations in Thailand and Burma, p. 474

21. Hindley, op. cit., p. 180

22. Ibid., p. 181

23. E. Luttwak, "Coup D'Etat, A Practical Handbook," p. 37

24. Claude E. Welch & Arthur K. Smith, op. cit., p. 30

25. Clark Neher (editor), Modern Thai Politics, p. 244

26. See Donald Horowitz, Coup Theories and Officers' Motives: Sri Lanka in Comparative Perspective, pp. 1-15 for a concise overview of the "evolution" of coup theory

27. See Samuel Huntington's definition of praetorianism in Political Order in Changing Societies, pp. 192-263

28. See Huntington's definition of professionalism in The Solider and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations, pp. 11-18

29. See, among others, the works of William Thompson

30. See Samuel Decalo, Coups and Army Rule in Africa, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976, pp. 14-15 (Cited in Horowitz, op. cit., p. 7)

31. For a detailed list see Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 1-12

32. Ibid., pp. 10-11

33. Chai-Anan, op. cit., p. 6

34. Ibid., p. 8

35. Ibid., p. 8

36. See Wilson, op. cit., p. 181 and Finer, op. cit., pp. 6-7 for more on the organizational components of the (Thai) military

37. Welch & Smith, op. cit., p. 97

38. Lissak, op. cit., p. 471

39. Parlmutter and Bennet, eds., The Political Influence of the Military, p. 208

40. Chai-Anan, op. cit., p. 3

41. Finer, op. cit., p. 36

42. Ibid., p. 36

43. Morris Janowitz, Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations, pp. 123-125

44. Finer, op. cit., pp. 61 and 71

45. Wilson, op. cit., p. 186

46. Ibid., p. 190

47. Welch & Smith, op. cit., p. 97

48. Ibid., p. 12

49. Janowitz, op. cit., p. 153

50. Girling, op. cit., p. 215

51. Ibid., p. 217

52. Huntington, Solider and State, pp. 11-18

53. Welch & Smith, op. cit., p. 99

54. Ibid., p. 99

55. Chai-Anan, op. cit., p. 18

56. Ibid., p. 47

57. William Thompson, "Corporate Coup-Maker Grievances and Types of Regime Targets, Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 12, No. 4, January 1980, pp. 485-496

58. Finer, op. cit., p. 47

59. Montri Chenvidyakarn, "Why Thailand is Always Plagued By Coups," Bangkok Post, April 8, 1981, p. 1

Chapter Two

1. David Elliott, Thailand: Origins of Military Rule, p. 86

2. John F. Cady, Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development, pp. 502-503

3. Thawatt Mokarapong, History of the Thai Revolution: A Study in Political Behaviour, p. 191

4. Ibid., p. 174

5. Ibid., p. 175

6. Kamol Somvichian "The Military in Thai Politics," unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, 1969 London University, p. 55

7. Finer, op. cit., p. 35 pp. 35-36

8. Thawatt, op. cit., p. 163

9. Ibid., pp. 198-190

10. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 12

11. Thawatt, op. cit., p. 166

12. Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 205

13. Wilson, op. cit., p. 177

14. Ibid., p. 24

15. Ibid., p. 177

16. Ibid., p. 249

17. Kamol, op. cit., p. 125

18. Wilson, op. cit., p. 179

19. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 13

20. Wilson, op. cit., p. 177

21. See Finer, op. cit., pp. 61-70

22. Kamol, op. cit., p. 125

23. Ibid., p. 125

24. Quoted in Wilson, op. cit., p. 250

25. Kamol, op. cit., p. 77

26. Chai Anan, op. cit., pp. 13-14

27. Kamol, op. cit., pp. 202-203

28. Ibid., p. 185

29. Wilson, op. cit., p.29

30. Chai Anan, op. cit., pp. 19-21

31. Girling, op. cit., p. 81

32. Ibid., p. 128

33. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 33

34. Ibid., p. 23

35. Robert Zimmerman, "Reflections on the Collapse of Democracy in Thailand," p. 81

36. Finer, op. cit., p. 63

37. David Morell and Chai Anan Samudavanija, "Thailand's Revolutionary Insurgency: Changes in Leadership Potential," Asian Survey, Vol. 19, No. 4, April 1979, p. 315

38. See David Elliott's Thailand: Origins of Military Rule, pp. 138-139 for details on the military's commercial links

39. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 23

Chapter Three

1. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 52

2. Surachai Sirikrai, "General Prem Survives on a Conservative Line," Asian Survey, Vol. 22, No. 11, November 1982, p. 1094

3. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 51

4. Surachai, op. cit., p. 1094

5. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 54

6. Surachai, op. cit., p. 1095

7. Ibid., p. 1096

8. John McBeth, "A Profile of the Young Turks' Camp," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 19, 1981, p. 44

9. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 35

10. Ibid., p. 51

11. John McBeth, op. cit., p. 44

12. "Ambition and Idealism and the First Army," Asiaweek, April 17, 1981, p. 17

13. John McBeth,"The Coup That Never Was," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 10, 1981, p. 10

14. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 29

15. John McBeth, "A Profile of the Young Turks' Camp," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 19, 1981, p. 44

16. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 63

17. Theh Chongkhadikij, "PM Held the Trump Card," Bangkok Post, April 4, 1981, p. 1

18. For a detailed breakdown of forces in cluded in the coup attempt see John McBeth, "The Coupmakers' Order of Battle," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 10, 1981, pp. 12-14

19. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 41

20. John McBeth, "A Profile of the Young Turks' Camp," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 19, 1981, p. 53

21. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, U.S. Information Service, April 7, 1981, p. J16

22. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, U.S. Information Service, April 2, 1981, p. J3

23. Surachai, op. cit., p. 1097

24. Chai Anan, op. cit., p. 61

25. Ibid., p. 59

26. John McBeth, "A Profile of the Young Turks Camp," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 19, 1981, p. 53

27. Surachai, op. cit., p. 1096

28. John McBeth, "A Profile of the Young Turks' Camp," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 19, 1981, p. 44

29. Asiaweek, op. cit., p. 17

30. Larry Niksch, "Thailand in 1981: The Prem Government Feels the Heat," Asian Survey, Vol. 22, No. 2, February 1982, p. 193

31. Per Author's personal information via report with Thai ISOC officers

32. Theh Chongkhadikij, op. cit., p. 1

33. Author's interview with Denis Gray, Associated Press, Bangkok Bureau Chief

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