FROM BANGKOK TO BEIJING ON THE EARLY COLD WAR: THE UNDERGROUND DIPLOMACY OF FIELD MARSHAL PIBULSONGKRAM GOVERNMENT, 1955 -1957

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Abstract- On the Calendar of International Relations, Most Scholars in Thailand would probably remember that 1975 was the beginning of relations between Thailand and the People's Republic of China. However,since 1955Field Marshal Pibulsongkram Government attempted to establish a relations between Bangkok-Beijing by The Underground Diplomacy. Until the signing of the Mutual of Understanding, Thailand and China.Finally, the Bangkok-Beijing secret rapprochement was short-lived. The Pibulsongkram government came to an abrupt end in 1957 following a coup executed by Military Dictator - Field Marshal SaritThanarat. Secret contact with Beijing was then terminated.

Keywords- Cold War; Thailand and the People's Republic of China; Pibulsongkram

I. INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War, Thailand's role can be clearly understood in Pro- the United States and anti-communist policy. Thailand's significance in regional security was reflected in the view of its security patron, the United States The latter viewed that Thailand was the heart of the region and its freedom would be critical to the survival of Southeast Asia. The United States, therefore, decided to position its defensive system,leading to the establishment of the headquarters of the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in Bangkok in 1955. As a critical fortress of the free world in the region, the United States poured military and economic assistance to Thailand during the Cold War. it was the foreign policy and diplomacy of "bending as bamboo and never breaking," which had helped keep Thailand's relative independence throughout the colonial period the Second World War and Cold War.

II. THE TWO PERSPECTIVES ON BANGKOK-BEIJING RELATIONS ON COLD WAR THE MAINSTREAM PERSPECTIVE

The mainstream perspectivesdescribed the relationship between Thailand and China after the Chinese revolution (1949) under communist terror threat. As a result, the foreign policy of Thailand was Pro- United States and against China. for instance, Donald E. Nuechterlein,Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia(1965)[1]; R. Sean Randolph, the United State and Thailand: Alliance Dynamics, 1950-1985(1986)[2]; KobkuaSuwannathat-Pian,Thailand's Durable Premier: Phibun through Three Decades 1932 - 1957(1995)[3]; all of which have concluded similar that during the Cold War the foreign policy of Thailand wastotally dominated by the United States and Thailand's traditional policy and diplomacy of "bending as bamboo and never breaking," which had helped keep Thailand's relative independence throughout the colonial period , the Second World War and the Cold War.

III. THE REVISIONIST PERSPECTIVES

Unquestionably, it was Thailand's traditional policy and diplomacy of 'bending as bamboo and never breaking,' which had helped keep Thailand's relative independence throughout the colonial period the Second World War and the Cold War.While Chinese scholars continued to discuss the meeting between Zhou En-laiand Prince Narathip,ThaiForeign Ministerat Bandung, Indonesia (1955) and then Pibulsongkram was send underground missions to China on the early Cold War[4].The Revisionist perspectives described the foreign policy of Thailand did not fall under communism terror and not all over the United States dominance as The mainstream. At least, Thailand attempted to determine the independent foreign policy with China during 1955-1957.SleoangMook, "Foreign Policy of Field Marshal Phibulsongkramto the people's Republic of China

[1]E. Donald Nuechterlein, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia . (Ithaca : Cornell University Press.1965)

[2]R. Sean Randolph, The United State and Thailand : Alliance Dynamics,1950-1985 . (Berkeley: Institution of EastAsianStudiesUniversity of California,1986).

[3]KobkuaSuwannathat-Pian,Thailand's Durable Premier : Phibun through Three Decades 1932 – 1957. (Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press,1995).

[4]Wang Junfu , "*Thailand – China Relations*," Thailand and China Relations:Foreward and Backward. KeianDhirawit and JiaJeajung (eds.), (Asia Institute, Chulalongkron University,2001).

(*1948 - 1957)*"[5] (2001); Daniel Mark Fineman,A Special Relationship: the UnitedState and Military Government in Thailand 1947 – 1958(1997)[6].Nattapoll, "Thailand – China's relationship on political conflict : Underground Diplomacy (1955-1957) of the Field Marshal Pibulsongkram Government"[7]

The purpose of this study are investigate the change of the foreign policy of Field Marshal Pibulsongkram Governmentto the People's Republic of China by using the various secret delegations to bridge relations with China (1955-1957) amongConflict within The Triumvirate and the royalist had led to the coup September 16, 1957.

Thai Fear of 'Resurgent' China

Thailand in the early period of the Cold War possessed by The mainstream perspective that Thai leaders did not believe that their country was safe and secure. They feared a resurgent China. The Thai fear of China intensified as the communists took over the Chinese mainland.The Thai government, under Field Marshal Pibulsongkram, which came to power in 1948, was alarmed by the prospect of China being controlled by the communists. As early as September 1949, Pibulsongkram declared in an interview with the United Press that Thailand was ready to go to war, and if attacked, would welcome American and British troops in the country.[8]

Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Pibulsongkram administration began to ally Thailand more closely with the United States. The Thai ruling elites considered communism incompatible with the Thai way of life, given that Thai society was traditionally attached to the monarchy, Buddhism, and the patron-client relationship.[9] Furthermore, the strengthening alliance between Thailand and the United States, in the eyes of the Thai leaders,was beneficial to Thai national interests. Both Thailand and the United States not only shared similar anti-communist outlooks, but Thai rulers also believed that an alliance with the United States would help Thailand withstand the threats from 'Red' China, and would provide Thailand with financial and technical aid necessary for the development of the country.

In 1950, Thailand became the first Asian country to recognise the Bao Dai regime in Vietnam as well as the first Asian country to offer to send troops to help the United Nations' war effort in Korea. In July of the same year, an educational and cultural agreement was signed between the United States and Thailand. In September, a large-scale economic and technical co-operation agreement between the two countries was concluded. In October, a Thai- the United States military aid agreement was signed,providing, inter alia, for the equipment of nine Thai battalions over a period of two years, the supply of coastguard vessels and some land transport for the Navy as well as some armament for the Air Force.

Similarly, the United States policymakers, adhering to the logic of the domino theoryas first promulgated by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954, feared that the fall of any one Southeast Asian state to communism would lead an adjacent state, and eventually the entire region, to capitulate to communism. In that connection, the Americans regarded Thailand, the only independent country in Southeast Asia with a relatively stable economy and government, as the fortress against communist expansion into the region. With their complementary foreign policy objectives, Thailand soon became the most important American ally in mainland Southeast Asia.

"When the Opportunity came! "

After the 1951coup, Thailand has the three powerful political groupsor "The Triumvirate" - Field Marshal Pibulsongkram, Police General PlaoSriyanond and Field Marshal SaritThanarat. At that time,Thai'sforeign policy was closer to the U.S. andparticipated in the Korean(1953-1954). The United States assisted large-scale economic and technical co-operation agreement between the two countries. The foreign Department supported The Government, Pibulsongkram. The Pentagon supported The Thai Army, SaritThanarat and Cental Intelligent Agency supported,The Police, PlaoSriyanond. However, Pibulsongkram tried to balance his power on political conflict among two groups.

Amidst this conflict and Pro-the United States,Pibulsongkram was loss his political legitimacy form Thai Society. Pibulsongkram had plane to visited "Free - World" in 1955.He wanted to change thai political atmosphere to democracy .Latter, His government issues Political Parties Act, 1955 and permited to Free speech. In order to changed foreign policy to the neutral which relations with China.

[5]SleoangMookYingchaiyakamon, "*Foreign Policy of Field Marshal Phibulsongkram to the people's Republic of China (1948 - 1957)*M.A. in International Relations, Chulalongkorn University,2001.

[6]Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: the United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 96.

[7]Nattapollchaiching, "Thailand – China's relationship on political conflict : Underground Diplomacy (1955-1957) of the Field Marshal Pibulsongkram Government,"RattasartSarn ,2008, Special Issue,pp. 29-80.

[8] Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: the United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

[9]Melvin Gurtov, China and Southeast Asia --the politics of survival; a study of foreign policy interaction (Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington Books, 1971).

Despite co-operating so closely with the United States diplomatically and militarily, the Pibulsongkram administration by no means explicitedabandoned Thailand's traditional policy of 'bending as bamboo and never breaking.' As China appeared to ditch a policy of global confrontation in favour of a new concept of "peaceful co-existence" in 1955, Pibulsongkram was willing to approach Beijing. Thailand participated in the Bandung Conference in April 1955, and was somewhat impressed by the apparent moderation of the Chinese representative, Zhou En-lai. Although being aware that the danger from China continued to exist, the Pibulsongkram government decided to initiate secret contact with Beijing following the Bandung Conference.

The mission of the Chinese delegation to the underground wasimplied that Thailand signed to reunite with China and preparations secret negotiations to take place with government representatives both in Yangon. By the US Mission to the underground.[10]

1. The underground movement of diplomats interface opened platform to negotiations between the representatives of Thailand and Mr. Yao Zhong Ming, China's ambassador to Rangoon, on December 16 and 17,1955, and signedthe Mutual of Understanding, Thailand and China.at Rangoon. On a second language is English and Chinese. The material was as follows: First, the two countries intend to expand the relationship under the principles of respect for territorial integrity. Secondly, China and Thailand have sympathy pleased to expand economic ties and the final. When it is appropriate to expand the two countries' relations to a normal level .

2. After the first underground mission, The relationship Thailand - China began to furiously the secretly and openly. Most mission were from Thai government circles. Later that month The Thai MPs traveled to China (Jan 16 – Feb 21, 1956).

3. In late June1956, the Secret Trade Commission has assigned to sell tobacco to China. Latter, the monks went to the Buddhist Association of China (Sept. 7 - Oct. 13,1956).

4. In the same month, The Secret Thai Navyhas assigned to visited China (September 1956) and celebrated the National Day of China. And then, The government has sent Former Minister of Commerce negotiated to sell rice to China (late January 1957).

5.Finally, The government has sent "Cultural ambassador" to China. the basketball team from Thammasatuniversity went to China (April 1957).

However, the Bangkok-Beijing secret rapprochement was short-lived. The Pibulsongkram government came to an abrupt end in 1957 following a coup executed by Field Marshal SaritThanarat. Sarit also deserted the traditional Thai diplomacy of 'bending as bamboo and never breaking' and allied

Thailandunequivocally with the United States and the West. This coincided with the fact that China in the meantime also abandoned 'peaceful co-existence' principle and resumed a militant, aggressive international policy.

Thailand, under the Sarit administration, therefore had no second thought about reconciling its relations with China, and was ready to co-operate closely with the United States in quelling revolutionary movements in Indochina in return for American protection and aid.Field Marshal SaritThanarat pursued a strong anti-communist and pro-American policy throughout the period that he was in power.

The last but not less,Thailand's traditional foreign policy of "bending as bamboo and never breaking" throughout the tumultuous decades of the Cold War.

CONCLUSION

The changing thaiforeign policy to maintain neutral policy which trying to open relations with China on 1955-1957 caused ambiguity to the Washington when the United States Embassy to Thailand had reported that Thailand's moved close China . Meanwhile, Pibulsongkram,ThaiPreminister had refused to open relations with China.The1957coupwas not only to overthrow the Pibulsongkramgovernment but also had a major effect on the Thai's foreign policy of Thailand backward to the most anti-Communist.

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