

(b) as a model for insurgencies in other states; and (c) as an indication of American inability to support its allies successfully in their hour of need.

Thailand's primary concern over Indochinese developments falls into the first category. With active insurgencies operating in north and northeast Thailand supported by many of the ethnic Laotians residing in those areas, Thai officials fear the use of Pathet Lao bases in Laos for insurgent supply and training. Speculative reports of such developments appear frequently in the Bangkok press. These northern regions have suffered from government neglect for decades, and the size of the ethnic Laotian population living there (eleven million) is some five times that in Laos itself. Because, then, of ethnic differences, rural exploitation and central government neglect, as well as more recent military repression, parts of northern Thailand appear ripe for Indochinese-based guerrilla warfare should the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao so choose.

Thai officials are painfully aware of their country's vulnerability and America's inability to help with this kind of domestic problem. Therefore, in order to assure the Vietnamese Communists that Thailand will no longer permit its territory to be used by the United States to hamper Vietminh activities in Indochina, the new Thai Government formed in March 1975 under Kukrit Pramoj has called upon the United States to withdraw its forces by August 1976. The reasoning behind the decision is no idle display of nationalism but rather a recognition of the changed political coloration of mainland Southeast Asia coupled with a desire to demonstrate to the Vietnamese Communists that Thailand poses no threat to their newly-acquired status. This is the same kind of "politics of weakness" that worked so well for Sihanouk in Cambodia through most of the 1960s. And, so far as the Vietminh have no further expansionist designs (that is, so far as Hanoi views its primary goal as having been achieved through the attainment of the hegemonic position in Indochina), Thailand with its new policy may well be able to rest secure from outside threat. Foreign Minister Chatchai Chunchawan has stated that Thailand is moving away from close dependence on the United States and toward a new relationship with China to prove its adherence to regional neutrality as stated in the 1971 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) declaration.

Meanwhile, the Thai military are increasing their own operations in the northern and northeast provinces, which have

been declared under a state of emergency. Similar military measures are being taken in co-operation with Malaysian authorities in the south in the face of stepped-up Malay Communist guerrilla attacks. In sum, Thailand appears to be following two policy lines in the wake of Communist victories in Indochina: an externally conciliatory policy toward the Vietminh and their allies and a domestic policy of military pursuit and insurgent destruction. The idea behind these two policies is that, so long as external insurgent aid can be neutralized, Thailand will be able to control its internal dissidents.

Philippine review

In the Philippines, a land far removed from any direct mainland Communist threat, President Marcos has called for a general review of the American security relationship. Western analysts do not believe this review will lead to an abrogation of the base treaties, particularly since the air and naval complexes at Clark and Subic Bay would be the last U.S. strongholds in Southeast Asia when the Americans leave Thailand. Rather, it appears that the Philippines is taking advantage of the increased importance of its location to negotiate new monetary compensation for the bases, which, under the current treaty, are free of any charge until 1991. Facing an expanding guerrilla war against Moslem dissidents in the south and a rapidly growing foreign-exchange deficit because of increased fuel costs, the country needs new sources of cash. Many officials believe that base rentals could be a partial answer to these needs. This mercenary explanation of Philippines motives in the base negotiations should not be taken to mean that there is no concern about the reliability of future U.S. commitments. Concern about Indochinese developments has been expressed by a number of officials who are particularly disturbed by the equivocal reaction of the American Congress. Marcos has stated that he wants the ambiguities in the Philippines-U.S. Security Treaty clarified so that Manila will know in what specific cases of aggression the United States will be obliged to come to the Philippines' assistance. Moreover, the Philippines wants to examine closely the implications of moving America's Southeast Asian defence line from Thailand back to its islands.

Perhaps the country most concerned about U.S. behaviour in Indochina is the one least susceptible to a challenge of the Indochinese type — Japan. In Japan's case, doubts about the U.S. alliance go back to the "Nixon shocks" of 1971, which demon

*Thailand's
decision
to demand
U.S. withdrawal*