

# U.S. undermines Thailand's security

by Michael O. Billington

Top officials of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) recently informed representatives of the Armed Forces of Thailand that the close collaboration and friendship between the military forces of the two nations is finished, making official what this news service has documented for two months. The United States has once again sacrificed an ally on the pagan altar of Anglo-American geopolitics.

This treachery becomes all the more despicable upon examination of the excuses given for the U.S. declaration. First, the U.S. administration complained of human rights abuses during the crisis in May which brought down the elected military-allied Thai government. The Pentagon spokesman completely ignored the fact that the demonstrations against the government were organized and financed by U.S. government agencies, as we documented in *EIR*, June 12, 1992, and that these demonstrations had become extremely violent long before the Army shooting and the resultant tragedy.

The U.S. representative added that Thailand has refused to follow the orders of the United States to close down the black market trade across the Cambodian border with the Khmer Rouge, and to impose sanctions on the Burmese government. Here, too, the U.S. ignored the obvious fact that Thailand has no capacity to close the vast jungle border with Cambodia, nor could it achieve anything by threatening Burma.

The hypocrisy of the U.S. policy is most glaring when compared with U.S. policy toward China, the nation which arms and sponsors the genocidal Khmer Rouge, as well as the military regime in Rangoon. While Thailand has supported the United States since World War II, including with the blood of its soldiers in two American wars in Asia, it is now being discarded, as the United States plays its new version of the "China Card."

The ongoing U.S.-run coup against Thailand has left that nation increasingly defenseless on three fronts: domestic terror, the threat of a U.S.-U.N. military breach of Thai sovereignty, and economic warfare.

## Domestic terror

On Aug. 13, a bomb exploded in a crowded train station in the southern city of Hat Yai, killing three and injuring 72. Police have blamed Muslim separatists for the bombing, although no one has taken credit as yet. The separatists have been generally subdued over the past three years, and have

not carried out this kind of blind terror in over six years.

The military units which have, over the years, successfully contained and defused such insurgency, saving Thailand from the genocidal wars that engulfed several of its neighbors, now have their hands tied. One of the first acts of interim Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, who was appointed (under intense U.S. pressure) after the forced resignation of Prime Minister Gen. Suchinda Kraprayoon in June, was to abolish the 20-year-old decree that made the military responsible for domestic security, and to dissolve the military unit which carried out that responsibility. This policy change was carried out in a climate of anti-military hysteria orchestrated by the western media, supposedly to prevent a military role in the suppression of demonstrations. But it has also left the military with no mandate to combat terrorism. Thai military professionals have expressed deep concern that the police forces are totally unprepared and unequipped to deal with the problem.

## Military threats

Thailand is also being threatened with sanctions or even military action by the Anglo-Americans and their U.N. puppet apparatus. U.S. Undersecretary of State Robert Zoellick, at the July meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), denounced Thailand over the Cambodia and Burma issues. Thailand's insistence that it does not support the Khmer Rouge has done nothing to stop the threats. Zoellick said: "As the U.S. demonstrated in the Gulf war, we will not stand by when new tyrants threaten our national security interests. We have national security interests in the Pacific, too."

The *Washington Post* on Aug. 12 accused Thailand of encroaching on Cambodian territory, and of claiming a section of northwestern Cambodia as Thai territory. The article quoted unnamed U.N. officials complaining that "as many as 200 Thai military intelligence officers are now operating deep inside Cambodia."

## Economic warfare

On the economic front, military leaders are being removed from their positions as directors of Thailand's major state sector industries. This has two immediate consequences. One, these are sectors crucial to national security (communications, rail, air, ports, etc.). Second, the International Monetary Fund and the desperately bankrupt Anglo-American financial establishment have been pressing for the privatization, hoping to loot these highly successful businesses. Merrill Lynch and others, for example, have targeted Thai Airways.

The *Journal of Commerce*, in a commentary published on Aug. 13 entitled "Thailand's Anti-Military Coup," called for overturning the entire structure of the Supreme Command. On the business front, the article said, "Indeed, any hopes of a military reform will flounder if the generals are not removed from the board rooms."