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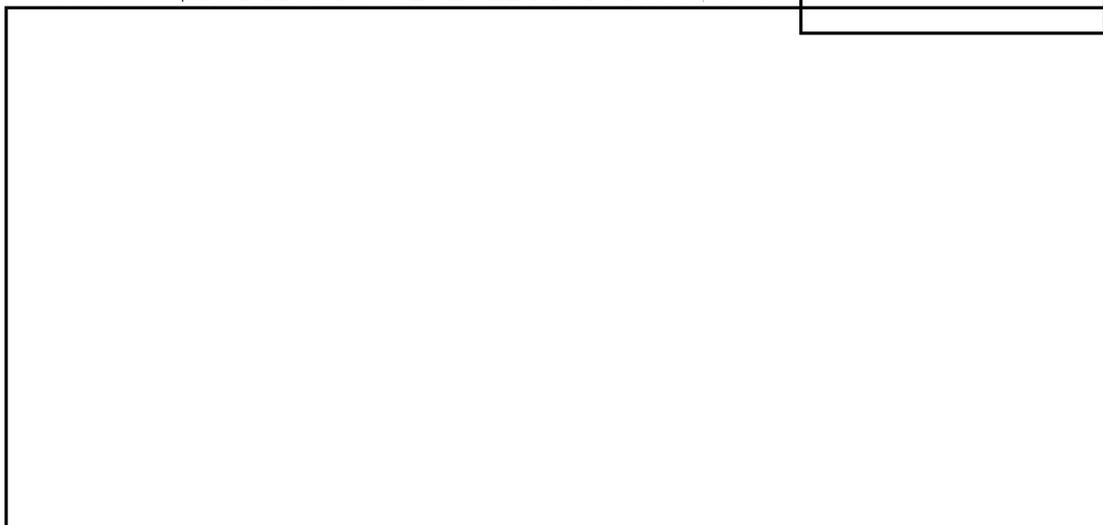
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THAILAND: Attempts to change Thai foreign policy have thus far met with little success.

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THAILAND: FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT'S ATTEMPTS TO BRING ABOUT ADJUSTMENTS IN THAI FOREIGN POLICY THUS FAR HAVE MET WITH LITTLE SUCCESS.

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[REDACTED]

THANAT RECENTLY DESCRIBED TO AMBASSADOR UNGER IN UNUSUALLY FRANK TERMS THE RESULTS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S MONTHS-OLD CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH HANOI AND PEKING. WITH REGARD TO BANGKOK'S PRIVATE DIALOGUE WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION THAT HAS BEEN IN THAILAND SINCE LAST FALL, OSTENSIBLY TO NEGOTIATE THE REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, THANAT STATED THAT "NOTHING WORTHWHILE" HAS THUS FAR BEEN PRODUCED. HE LIKENED THE MEMBERS OF HANOI'S DELEGATION TO COMPUTERIZED "TALKING MACHINES" AND "LISTENING DEVICES" WHO, POWERLESS TO ACT ON THEIR OWN, REFERRED EVERYTHING BACK TO HANOI.

THANAT WAS SIMILARLY DISENCHANTED WITH THE RESULTS OF THAI OVERTURES TO PEKING, ALTHOUGH HE COUCHED HIS REMARKS IN SOMEWHAT LESS PESSIMISTIC LANGUAGE. HE HALF JOKINGLY CLAIMED TO BE AWARE OF "RUMORS" THAT THE CHINESE WERE INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH BANGKOK, BUT ONLY IF THEY COULD BE TREATED IN THAILAND ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH THE US. THANAT HAS BEEN EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOGUE WITH PEKING THROUGH A VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT HIS EFFORTS HAVE MET WITH ANY SUCCESS WHATEVER.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SOME MONTHS, THANAT EVEN HAD A FEW NICE THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE US. HE SAID THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAD NO DOUBTS WHATSOEVER ABOUT PRESIDENT NIXON'S POLICIES AND FUTURE INTENTIONS IN INDOCHINA, ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY FEARED THAT IN A CRISIS THE PRESIDENT MIGHT BE "GRAVELY HAMPERED" BY US DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES. IT WAS THE US AMBASSADOR'S IMPRESSION THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE DRIVE INTO THE LAOTIAN PANHANDLE MAY HAVE ALLAYED SOME OF THANAT'S DOUBTS ABOUT WASHINGTON'S COMMITMENT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN ADDITION, WASHINGTON'S RECENT EFFORT TO ENGAGE IN CLOSER CONSULTATIONS

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WITH THANAT ON THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES OF PL-480 RICE SALES AND THE CHINESE UN REPRESENTATION QUESTION MAY BE HAVING A CALMING EFFECT ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

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THE APPARENT LACK OF INTEREST ON THE PART OF HANOI AND PEKING HAS BEEN COMPOUNDED BY THANAT'S FAILURE TO ATTRACT SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM BANGKOK'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP FOR IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY. THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS FINDING HIMSELF INCREASINGLY ISOLATED FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF THAI POLICY MAKERS AND MAY FEEL HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO MODERATE HIS POSITION VIS-A-VIS WASHINGTON, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. MOREOVER, THE RECENTLY INTENSIFIED FIGHTING IN LAOS, COUPLED WITH INCREASING COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA DENOUNCING THAI TROOP INVOLVEMENT THERE, HAS, IF ANYTHING, MADE BANGKOK MORE AWARE OF ITS DEPENDENCE ON THE US FOR SECURITY.

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