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ASSESSMENT OF THE NEW THAI CABINET

The most striking features of the new cabinet are: (1) the complete purge of members of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat's old Revolutionary Party; (2) the increased emphasis on civilian technocrats at the expense of the military; (3) the exclusion of most of Field Marshal Praphat Charusathian's followers and the retention of several men from the last cabinet who were closely identified with Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn, and (4) the continued exercise of government leadership by the traditional Thai elite.

Sarit's Revoluntionary Party had ruled Thailand since 1957. It was represented in the last cabinet by Prime Minister Thanom, Deputy Prime Minister Praphat, Minister of Industry General Krit Siwara, Minister of Public Health General Prasoet Ruchirawong, Minister of Communications General Phong Punnakan, and Deputy Minister of Defense Air Chief Marshal Bunchu Chantharubeksa. Thanom and Praphat also held portfolios for Defense, Foreign Affairs, and Interior, making the Revolutionary Party overwhelmingly dominant. Krit and Bunchu apparently continue to command the Army and Air Force, respectively, but at best have only an indirect voice in the new cabinet.

A number of civilian technocrats have been carried over from the last cabinet. They include Kamon Wannaprapha, Aphai Chanthawimon, Osot Kosin, Phuang Suwannarat, Somphop Hotrakit, Bunsom Martin, and Sa-at Hongyon. To their number have been added Bunma Wongsawan, Charunphan Itsangkhun Na Ayutthaya, PrinceChakraphan Pensiri, Chanchai Lithawon, Prakop Hutasing, Udom Posakritsana, Arun Sorathet, Yua Susayan, Charun Sibunruang, and Sem Pringphuangkaeo. Only five cabinet members--Lt. General Sawaeng Senanarong, Air Chief Marshal Thawi Chunlasap, General Surakit Mayalap, Lt. General Prachuap Suntharangkun, and Police Lt. General Chumphon Lohachala--are military or police officers on active duty.

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Conspicuous by their absence from the new cabinet are former Minister of Commerce Prasit Kanchanawat, Deputy Minister of Interior Thawin Sunthonsarathun, and Deputy Minister of Interior Malai Huwanan, all close associates of Praphat. Somewhat surprisingly, Thawi, Sawaeng, and Chatchai Chunhawan, all identified with Thanom, have been retained. Sawaeng and Chatchai remain in their former positions but Thawi, whose star had seemed to be on the wane prior to the previous government's fall, has been given the important Defense portfolio. The implication seems to be that, while it was necessary for both Thanom and Praphat to step aside, Praphat is being held primarily to blame for the troubles of the last ten days.

The most significant feature of the new cabinet, however, is the seemingly purposeful attempt to demonstrate continuity with the past. This is evidenced by the large number of hold-overs and the appointment of men from the Thai traditional elite to fill the gaps. For at least the short term this should mean no radical departure from policies that directly affect our interests in Thailand. Indeed, for the next several weeks the new government can be expected to be preoccupied with getting itself organized and dealing with the pressing domestic issues which precipitated the fall of its predecessor.

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THE THAI CABINET (EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 16, 1973)

Prime Minister Sanya Thammasak

Deputy Prime Minister Sukit Nimmanhaemin

Minister Attached to the Prime Minister's Office Lt. General Sawaeng Senanarong

Minister of Defense Air Chief Marshal Thawi Chunlasap

Minister of Finance Bunma Wongsawan

Minister of Foreign Affairs Charunphan Itsangkhun Na Ayutthaya

Minister of Agriculture and Cooperativs Prince Chakraphan Pensiri Chakraphan

Minister of Communications Rear Admiral (Ret.) Chali Sinthusophon

Minister of Commerce Chanchai Lithawon

Minister of Interior Kamon Wannaprapha

Minister of Justice Prakop Hutasing

Minister of Education Aphai Chanthawimon

Minister of Public Health Dr. Udom Posakritsana

Minister of Industry Osot Kosin

State Universities Bureau Minister Arun Sorathet

Deputy Minister of Defense Admiral (Ret.) Thawin Rayananon

Deputy Minister of Defense Surakit Mayalap

Deputy Minister of Finance Yua Susayan

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Major General (Inactive Reserve) Chatchai Chunhawan

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Cooperative Police General (Ret.) Phichai Kunlawanit

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Deputy Minister of Communications
Lt. General Prachuap Suntharankun

Deputy Minister of Commerce Charun Sibunruang

Deputy Minister of Interior Phuang Suwannarat

Deputy Minister of Interior
Police Lt. General Chumphon Lohachala

Deputy Minister of Justice Somphop Hotrakit

Deputy Minister of Education Dr. Bunsom Martin

Deputy Minister of Public Health
Dr. Sem Pringphuangkeo

Deputy Minister of Industry Sa-at Hongyon

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