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THE MILITARY IN THAI POLITICS 1981–86

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THE MILITARY IN THAI POLITICS 1981–86

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Preface

This is a study of the role of the military in Thai politics after the fall of the Young Turks in April 1981 up to the dissolution of the House of Representatives in May 1986. The period saw an interesting change in the military's perception of politics as it began to expand its role in civil affairs. This expansion included several programmes in rural development, peace-keeping duties and mass mobilization in rural and urban areas. The Army also emphasized its involvement in democratic development at the grassroots as a measure to defeat communism. Whether this role expansion indicates that Army leaders are now prepared to play the game by the rules, exercising their political role short of a seizure of power is still debatable and deserves further serious study. This study, however, intends only to examine the political implications of the military's increasing commitments to domestic and developmental tasks. It is my hope that the study will provide not only a better understanding of the Thai civil-military relations but also a clearer picture of the nature of the problems involved in the democratic development of Thailand in the 1980s.

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