

Royal Thai Army's Role in De-escalating the Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute: A Case
Study of Suranaree Command (2012-2022)



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Relations
Department of International Relations
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2022
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

บทบาทของกองทัพบกในการลดระดับความขัดแย้งในพื้นที่ชายแดนไทย-กัมพูชา:
กรณีศึกษาของกำลังสุรนารี (พ.ศ. 2555 - 2565)



สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญารัฐศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศ ภาควิชาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศ
คณะรัฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
ปีการศึกษา 2565
ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Independent Study Title Royal Thai Army's Role in De-escalating the Thai-
Cambodian Border Dispute: A Case Study of Suranaree
Command (2012-2022)
By 2nd Lt. Phromnachanok Ketphan
Field of Study International Relations
Thesis Advisor Associate Professor SUPAMIT PITIPAT

Accepted by the FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, Chulalongkorn University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts

INDEPENDENT STUDY COMMITTEE

..... Chairman

(Assistant Professor TEEWIN SUPUTTIKUN)

..... Advisor

(Associate Professor SUPAMIT PITIPAT)

..... Examiner

(Captain Dr. Hassachai Mangkang, RTN)

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

พรหมณชนก เกตุพันธุ์ :

บทบาทของกองทัพบกในการลดระดับความขัดแย้งในพื้นที่ชายแดนไทย-กัมพูชา:

กรณีศึกษาของกำลังสุรนารี (พ.ศ. 2555 - 2565). (Royal Thai Army's Role in De-escalating the Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute: A Case Study of Suranaree Command (2012-2022)) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : รศ. ดร.ศุภมิตร ปิติพัฒน์

ตั้งแต่วันที่ พ.ศ. 2551 ถึง พ.ศ. 2554

จากในกรณีของปราสาทเขาพระวิหารจะเห็นได้ว่าการปักปันเขตแดนสามารถถูกนำมาเป็นภัยคุกคามด้านความมั่นคงและก่อให้เกิดการปะทะทางทหารได้ กองทัพบกเป็นกำลังหลักในการปกป้องชายแดนทางบกของราชอาณาจักรไทย โดยปัจจุบันยังคงมีภัยคุกคามด้านความมั่นคงตามแนวชายแดนอยู่ ดังนั้นงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้จึงต้องการวิเคราะห์ความพยายามในการลดระดับความขัดแย้งตามชายแดนไทย-กัมพูชา ของ กองกำลังสุรนารี จากการสัมภาษณ์แบบไม่เปิดเผยตัวตนและการใช้แหล่งข้อมูลเปิดเนื่องด้วยความลับทางราชการ งานวิจัยจะพิจารณาผลการดำเนินงานของกองกำลังฯ ตั้งแต่ พ.ศ. 2555 ถึง พ.ศ. 2565 รวมถึงผลการดำเนินงานของหน่วยงานอื่นซึ่งปฏิบัติหน้าที่ตามชายแดนเช่นกัน งานวิจัยเปิดเผยว่าการปฏิบัติทางทหารของกองกำลังฯ นั้นมักเป็นการลาดตระเวนและเฝ้าตรวจเพื่อตรวจจับปัญหาใด ๆ ที่เกิดขึ้นแล้วแก้ปัญหาอย่างรวดเร็วพร้อมกับหน่วยงานของทางกัมพูชา แต่กองกำลังฯ ไม่สามารถแก้ปัญหาที่มีมาช้านานเช่นการปักปันเขตแดนด้วยอำนาจของหน่วยที่จำกัด ข้อจำกัดนี้ทำให้หน่วยงานที่เป็นทหารและไม่เป็นทหารต่างสร้างกลไกต่าง ๆ เพื่อเสริมสร้างความร่วมมือระหว่างสองประเทศ ทั้งนี้ เพื่อให้ชายแดนมีสภาพแวดล้อมที่สงบและเป็นมิตร เหมาะแก่การพบปะทางการทูตในภายภาคหน้า

สาขาวิชา ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศ ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

ปีการศึกษา 2565 ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก

6480089424 : MAJOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

KEYWORD: Desecuritization, De-escalation, Suranaree Command, boundary demarcation

Phromnachanok Ketphan : Royal Thai Army's Role in De-escalating the Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute: A Case Study of Suranaree Command (2012-2022). Advisor: Assoc. Prof. SUPAMIT PITIPAT

As witnessed from 2008 to 2011 in the case of the Preah Vihear temple, boundary demarcation can become securitized and lead to armed clashes. The Royal Thai Army of the Kingdom of Thailand is primarily responsible for securing the land border. Along the Thai-Cambodian border, security threats still exist. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze how the Suranaree Command, one of the RTA's border defense units, has performed its de-escalation efforts on the contentious Thai-Cambodian border. Using anonymous interviews and open-source information due to the confidentiality of the unit, this research investigates the Command's performance from 2012-2022, along with other agencies which operate on the same border. The study revealed that the Suranaree Command's military operations primarily involve reconnaissance and surveillance to detect any upcoming issues and solve them promptly with Cambodian counterparts. Still, the unit cannot solve prolonged issues, such as boundary demarcation, because of its limited authority. This makes military and non-military agencies establish various mechanisms to enhance cooperation between the two countries to create a more peaceful and friendly border environment for forthcoming diplomatic meetings.

Field of Study: International Relations

Student's Signature

Academic Year: 2022

Advisor's Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and warmly thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Supamit Pitipat, who made this work possible and complete. His guidance and feedback always reminded me to think outside the box and explore new possibilities for this research. I am also thankful to the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, for this learning opportunity and to all its faculties and staff, who always create a comprehensive learning environment. Finally, I would like to thank my family for always supporting me during the compilation of this Independent Study.



Phromnachanok Ketphan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
.....	iii
ABSTRACT (THAI).....	iii
.....	iv
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Rationale.....	1
1.2 Research Question.....	4
1.3 Research Objectives.....	4
1.4 Argument.....	4
1.5 Literature Review.....	5
1.6 Analytical Framework.....	10
1.7 Research Method.....	13
1.8 Research Outline.....	14
Chapter 2 Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute after the 2011 Election.....	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Border Settlement Mechanisms.....	16
2.3 Border Dispute Settlement Efforts during Yingluck’s Administration.....	17
2.4 Border Dispute Settlement Efforts after the 2014 Coup.....	20
2.5 Policy Implementation Mechanisms.....	23

Chapter 3	Suranaree Command's De-escalation Efforts	25
3.1	From State's Desecuritization Efforts into the Suranaree Command's De-escalation Process	25
3.2	Situational Environment	27
3.3	The Suranaree Command's Execution	30
3.4	Dispute Settlement's Effectiveness.....	33
3.5	Summary	34
Chapter 4	Factors Supporting Suranaree Command's De-escalation Efforts	35
4.1	Introduction.....	35
4.2	Forest Agencies.....	35
4.3	Law Enforcement.....	36
4.4	International Mediation.....	37
4.5	Economic Interdependence.....	39
4.6	Society and Culture.....	40
4.7	Healthcare	40
4.8	Summary.....	41
Chapter 5	Findings and Summary.....	42
5.1	Findings.....	42
5.2	Additional Guidelines	43
REFERENCES	45
VITA.....	55

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Rationale

2020 marked the 70th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Thailand and Cambodia. With an almost 800-km shared border, both countries have been developing trade relations and cooperation in challenges such as climate change, illegal border crossing, drugs, human trafficking, and, most recently, the pandemic.¹

Despite various bilateral security and economic measures, Thai-Cambodian relations were challenged significantly when the armies of both sides exchanged fires at the Preah Vihear temple in 2008 and 2011 over the national affiliation of the area around the temple.² Although the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluded in 1962 that the Preah Vihear temple and its vicinity were situated in the Cambodian territory, Thai nationalists were angered after UNESCO approved Cambodia's unilateral request to list the temple as a World Heritage Site in 2008.³ The clash began again in early February 2011, leading to Cambodia's request to the ICJ to interpret the 1962 judgment concerning the term "vicinity" used in the 1962 findings.⁴



The ICJ concluded on November 11, 2013, that the temple is "situated in territory under the sovereignty of Cambodia," including the promontory described in paragraph 98.⁵ Since then, the adjacent land surrounding the promontory and other overlapping areas caused by different interpretations of the 1904 Treaty and the

¹ Ry Sochan, "Thai Diplomat's Visit Focused on Economy Plans," *Phnom Penh Post*, December 21 2021, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national-politics/thai-diplomats-visit-focused-economy-plans>.

² "Forgotten Conflicts: Cambodia and Thailand," CONIAS Risk Intelligence, updated October 28, 2021, <https://conias.com/en/border-conflict-cambodia-thailand/>.

³ Nopporn Wong-Anan, "Temple Spat Rages in Thailand after UNESCO Listing," *Reuters* July 8 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-temple-idINBKK15784420080708>.

⁴ Request for Interpretation of the Judgment of 15 1962 in the Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand), ICJ General List No.151 (ICJ 2011).

⁵ *Request for Interpretation of the Judgment of 15 1962 in the Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand)*.

1907 French map have remained disputed. This led to military deployment from both sides along the border ever since but in a more cooperative way.

From 2008 to 2013, The Preah Vihear Temple case was part of political rhetoric throughout the period. Protesters from the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) or the "Yellow Shirts" had often rallied up to condemn the pro-Thaksin governments as "treason" for ceding to Cambodia's listing of the temple.⁶ This has led to military build-up from both sides, intensifying domestic outrages to become causes for border security threats. Military forces had exchanged fires sporadically, with neither side admitting to initiating the confrontation.⁷ In other words, the situation on the Thai-Cambodian border had been partly worsened by Thai domestic nationalistic outrages.



Moreover, in late December 2008, Abhisit Vejjajiva's administration was formed under the Democrat Party, which had been tolerating its members joining the PAD rallies. Kasit Piromya, a prominent PAD activist who once labeled Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, a "gangster," was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs during Abhisit's regime, making Thai-Cambodian relations more politicized and threatened.⁸ Later on, for the administration of Yingluck Shinawatra, the ties between both countries had "improved dramatically," partly because Thaksin Shinawatra, her older brother, had good relations with Hun Sen.⁹ However, by the time July 18, 2011, ICJ's decision to withdraw troops from the "provisional demilitarized zone" (PDZ) was implemented, it was Yingluck who had to order it, making her administration "weak

⁶ "Waging Peace: ASEAN and the Thai-Cambodian Border Conflict," International Crisis Group, updated August 11, 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/waging-peace-asean-and-thai-cambodian-border-conflict>.

⁷ "Thai, Cambodia Troops Clash for Fourth Day," Taipei Times, updated February 7, 2011, <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2011/02/08/2003495341>.

⁸ "Thai Ministry Seeks to Clarify 'Gangster' Gaffe," The Cambodia Daily, updated April 2, 2009, <https://english.cambodiadaily.com/news/thai-ministry-seeks-to-clarify-gangster-gaffe-62922/>.

⁹ "Ousted Thai Leader Embraces Cambodian PM," September 17, 2011, <https://www.voanews.com/a/ousted-thai-leader-embraces-cambodian-pm-130015693/167999.html>.

in the eye of the nationalists.”¹⁰ Therefore, the Thai-Cambodian border dispute had been “politicized” by domestic anti-government or ultranationalist movements before it became a security issue by utilizing military deployment in the disputed areas.

Following the constitutional court’s decision to remove Yingluck in early May 2014 for abuse of power, the military led by General Prayut Chan-o-cha staged a coup, vowing to “restore order and enact political reforms.”¹¹ Since the coup, opposition movements have criticized the government’s legitimacy.¹² Nevertheless, the situation continued to be soothed during Prayut’s administration regarding the Thai-Cambodia border.¹³ A few media agencies have mentioned any situation on the Thai-Cambodian border as if it has become less relevant. From 2012 onward, there have been no reports of clashes, inferring that military-to-military talks have gone well since.



The Royal Thai Army (RTA) has been active in securing all parts of the Thai land border ever since the beginning of the border dispute and throughout mentioned administrations. For the Thai-Cambodian border, the 1st Army Area established the Burapa Command as a border security unit to secure some areas along the Thai-Cambodian border. At the same time, the 2nd Army Area also established the Suranaree Command to secure the rest of the border.¹⁴ As a primary force, the RTA formulates a border security strategy to ease tensions on the border which are seen as national security threats. The improved situation since 2012

¹⁰ Martin Wagener, "Lessons from Preah Vihear: Thailand, Cambodia, and the Nature of Low-Intensity Border Conflicts," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 30, no. 3 (2011): 46, <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341103000302>.

¹¹ "Thailand Military Seizes Power in Coup," BBC, updated May 22, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27517591>.

¹² "Legitimacy and Military Rule in Today's Thailand," *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, updated April 1, 2017, <https://kyotoreview.org/yav/legitimacy-military-rule-thailand/>.

¹³ "Uncertainty at Home Brings Calm to the Thai-Cambodian Border," *East Asia Forum*, updated November 20, 2014, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/11/20/uncertainty-at-home-brings-calm-to-the-thai-cambodian-border/>.

¹⁴ "2nd Army Area announces 6-month accomplishments, stresses security on the Northeast," June 18, 2019, <https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/detail/TCATG190618222941029>. (in Thai)

signifies that the Army border defense Commands have successfully limited or de-escalated the border conflict in the recent decade.

This research depicts Suranaree Command as a case study since the unit's area of operations covers most of the Thai-Cambodian border. The author believes that by analyzing the performance of this Command, the results can most likely infer the overall de-escalating efforts along the border of the two countries conducted by the RTA, which serves as Thailand's primary border security agency.

1.2 Research Question

How has the Suranaree Command played a role in de-escalating the Thai-Cambodian border dispute from 2012 to 2022?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to investigate and analyze how Suranaree Command has implemented the border security strategy guided by the Royal Thai Army for de-escalation efforts and to explore possible guidelines for a future approach toward Cambodia to enhance border reconciliation between the two countries further.

1.4 Argument

This research argues that the Suranaree Command has utilized military and non-military mechanisms at every level to foster talks along the Thai-Cambodian border. Mechanisms such as the General Border Committee (GBC) and the Regional Border Committee (RBC) have encouraged both sides to continue engaging in border talks. However, the discussions do not cover sensitive issues such as boundary demarcation, as doing so might escalate tensions on the border again. By circumventing the demarcation issue, talks between both militaries, with support from other agencies, aim to build trust and cooperation in different dimensions to benefit the locals and the political leaders.

1.5 Literature Review

The literature review for this research will be divided into two sections. The first section will comprise articles on the interpretations of both sides on relevant materials such as maps, treaties, and the ICJ decisions. It will also recollect how those interpretations guided the decision-making process. The second part will contain articles on domestic outrages in Thailand and Cambodia following the border dispute. It explains the rhetoric and interests of some political actors that place the Preah Vihear temple into something more of a “pile of stones.”

1) Document Interpretations

Nichan’s article depicts the 1904 and 1907 treaties as the root of the dispute. While the 1904 unmapped treaty used the “watersheds of the Dangrek Mountain range” as the border between Cambodia and Siam, the map included in Annex I of the 1907 treaty located the temple “on Cambodian soil.”¹⁵ The first treaty did not require any map, as watersheds could be visibly spotted. However, the 1907 treaty’s purpose was to indicate the exchange of territories included in the 1904 treaty. Therefore, A map is included to conduct new boundary demarcation, but without mentioning watersheds as used in the 1904 treaty. Moreover, because of “a lack of the Siamese technical staff,” the second Mixed Commission heavily relied on French officials. Even if the ICJ stated in the 1962 ruling that Thailand never objected to the map until Cambodia submitted the Preah Vihear temple case, this does not mean that Siam ever officially accepted the map. Ubonwan further argues on the 1907 map that there was no evidence regarding the Joint Commission reconnoitering the Dangrek range.¹⁶ The boundary on the 1907 map is also inaccurate with the watersheds, making the Siamese government “mistakenly understood” that the map corresponded with the watershed lines as agreed in the 1904 treaty.¹⁷

¹⁵ Nichan Singhaputargun, "The Thailand–Cambodia Preah Vihear Temple Dispute: Its Past, Present and Future," *Contemporary Conflicts in Southeast Asia* 3 (2015): 113, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0042-3_6.

¹⁶ Ubonwan Yoosuk, "The Preah Vihear Temple: Roots of Thailand-Cambodia Border Dispute," *International Journal of Asian Social Science* 3, no. 4 (2013): 923, <https://archive.aessweb.com/index.php/5007/article/view/2465>.

¹⁷ Yoosuk, "The Preah Vihear Temple: Roots of Thailand-Cambodia Border Dispute," 924.

The 1962 ruling's only concrete conclusion was the Cambodian ownership of the temple without addressing the boundary lines. These results led to Thailand "[erecting] a barbed wire fence in July 1962, separating the temple from the area surrounding it" to deny Cambodia any claim of the surrounding territory or further encroachment.¹⁸ Apart from the conflict, when the Preah Vihear temple was to be considered a World Heritage Site at the 32nd World Heritage Site Meeting in July 2008, Thailand proposed "a joint application list for historical sanctuaries," which included the temple to Cambodia multiple times. However, Cambodia rejected it as it saw the temple solely owned by Cambodia, as evidenced in the 1962 judgment.¹⁹

Phan's study points out another interpretation from both sides: not on any documents but on the conflict itself. Phan concludes that while Cambodia attempted to get ASEAN to resolve the conflict between two ASEAN members since 2008 to raise the border dispute to a regional concern, Thailand insists on placing the dispute as a bilateral one.²⁰ This disagreement regarding the level of the conflict led to ASEAN's refrain from any engagement. Even under the chairmanship of Indonesia in 2011, the Terms of Reference (TOR) facilitated by Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa failed to reach any agreement because Thailand rejected having "observers" as third parties involved in the dispute.²¹

Lee's article interprets the "mismapping" as "the violation of sovereignty and hence the desecration of the nation's authenticity" as people have become "emotionally attached to the embodied map."²² Therefore, In April 2011, Cambodia requested the ICJ to interpret the 1962 ruling again after protracted armed clashes

¹⁸ Singhaputargun, "The Thailand–Cambodia Preah Vihear Temple Dispute: Its Past, Present and Future," 116.

¹⁹ Singhaputargun, "The Thailand–Cambodia Preah Vihear Temple Dispute: Its Past, Present and Future," 120.

²⁰ Hao Duy Phan, "Institutional Design and Its Constraints: Explaining Asean's Role in the Temple of Preah Vihear Dispute," *Asian Journal of International Law* 5, no. 1 (2014): 9-10, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s2044251314000113>.

²¹ Phan, "Institutional Design and Its Constraints: Explaining Asean's Role in the Temple of Preah Vihear Dispute," 11.

²² Sang Kook Lee, "Siam Mismapped," *South East Asia Research* 22, no. 1 (2014): 42, <https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2014.0196>.

and political quagmires in the area between 2008 and 2011, focusing on the term “vicinity.” While Cambodia measures it as “4.6 square kilometres inclusive of the entirety of the promontory of Preah Vihear and the hill of Phnom Trap,” Thailand marks the term only “0.25 square kilometres immediately adjacent to the temple.”²³ However, Lee argues further that the infringement of authenticity from the mismapping also becomes a “political force that mobilizes nationalistic actions.”²⁴ The sense of national identity loss resulted in different interpretations from each side to claim its authenticity, especially since the 1962 judgment created uncertainty about the boundary line.

This section concludes that document interpretations from each country originated from the Annex I map, which has no proof of accuracy. The short-term conflict settlement from the 1962 ruling resulted in a prolonged conflict of interpretation, which had become a common pretext for political and nationalistic mobilizations.

2) Domestic Conflict in Thailand and Cambodia

An article by Putri and Muhyidin argues that the Preah Vihear conflict resurfaced due to “the interests of the political actors of both countries.”²⁵ Instead of resolving disputes, both leaders exploit them to maintain power. For Cambodia, Hun Sen needed to retain his position as the Prime Minister and the CPP, the ruling party. With Cambodian people seeing the Preah Vihear temple as one of national pride, Hun Sen recalled the 1962 decision by the ICJ and UNESCO’s listing of the temple as a World Heritage Site during his campaign to reiterate the protection of sovereignty and deny Thailand’s claims, resulting in winning the 2008 Cambodian election.²⁶ For Thailand, the Democrat Party, an opposition party in the parliament, criticized the joint statement endorsing UNESCO's decision on the temple, which Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej initiated from the People’s Power Party’s (PPP) and

²³ Lee, "Siam Mismapped," 51.

²⁴ Lee, "Siam Mismapped," 42.

²⁵ Indah Merdeka Putri and Ali Muhyidin, "Cambodian and Thai Political Actors Interest in Preah Vihear Temple Border Conflict in 2008-2011," *Jurnal Politik* 4, no. 2 (2019): 223, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jp.v3i2.73>.

²⁶ Putri and Muhyidin, "Cambodian and Thai Political Actors Interest in Preah Vihear Temple Border Conflict in 2008-2011," 220.

Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama. The Democrat Party declared that the government “sold Thai sovereignty out” without consulting the Ministry of Defense and Thai society.²⁷ This led to protests by the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD), which shared interests with the Democrat Party in toppling the PPP from power. Before the 2008 election, Thai activists allied with the PAD who tried to enter the border area got captured by Cambodian troops, further fueling people’s anger toward the border dispute.²⁸ This allowed Abhisit Vejjajiva to gain political support and win the 2008 election.

Nevertheless, the unclear conflict resolution by the Abhisit government forced the Pheu Thai Party led by Yingluck Shinawatra to accuse the government of “[using] the Preah Vihear temple conflict as a tool to achieve its interests regardless of the extent of the losses Thailand suffered.” Anger at Abhisit’s failed leadership led to political upheaval in 2010, resulting in “significant casualties,” with demonstrators “finally subdued by the military, resulting in 92 deaths.”²⁹

Nichan’s article also explains that the PAD feared that the joint statement endorsing UNESCO’s decision might allow Cambodia “to conduct the management plan of the temple with a borderline encroaching Thai territory.” This could result in Thailand ceding the disputed area of 4.6 km² to Cambodia.³⁰ In July 2008, the Constitutional Court accepted the petition letter led by the Democrat Party. It concluded that the joint statement was unconstitutional due to a violation of Article 190 and “declared it null and void,” demonstrating inconsistent attitudes of Thailand toward Cambodia, which also resulted in excluding the area surrounding the temple

²⁷ Putri and Muhyidin, “Cambodian and Thai Political Actors Interest in Preah Vihear Temple Border Conflict in 2008-2011,” 221.

²⁸ Putri and Muhyidin, “Cambodian and Thai Political Actors Interest in Preah Vihear Temple Border Conflict in 2008-2011,” 222.

²⁹ Putri and Muhyidin, “Cambodian and Thai Political Actors Interest in Preah Vihear Temple Border Conflict in 2008-2011,” 222.

³⁰ Singhaputargun, “The Thailand–Cambodia Preah Vihear Temple Dispute: Its Past, Present and Future,” 121.

from UNESCO listing.³¹ This, therefore, worsened the Thai-Cambodian border situation.

Ubonwan and Rattanasengchanh's studies also complement Putri and Muhyidin's work above that political elites used the dispute to promote nationalism for political support.³² Hun Sen viewed the temple's listing as a World Heritage Site as "a reaffirmation of Cambodian nation-ness" and centered his 2008 election campaign on the temple. This strategy abled him to divert Cambodians' attention from other domestic issues and win the election. While in Thailand, pressure from ultra-nationalists and upcoming elections coerced Abhisit to do something about the temple dispute.³³ One of the events of Abhisit's stance on the conflict was in April 2009 when armed clashes occurred. His motive not to yield to Cambodia's request for compensation from damages demonstrated his efforts to "build public support after low approval ratings."³⁴ The rejection of peace talks that Cambodia proposed in 2011 was also to show Abhisit's strong stance toward the territory to build support for the election in the same year.³⁵ Rattanasengchanh also concludes that Hun Sen united the Cambodian people "through the politicisation of the temple" by vilifying Thailand and portraying himself as the defender of the temple, which has become the nation's symbol.³⁶

To summarize this review section, from 2008 to 2011, political actors from both sides exploited the border conflict to gain popularity and political support. Claiming the territory under dispute was prioritized over the loss of lives and insidious domestic turmoil. By turning border security threats into political rhetoric,

³¹ Singhaputargun, "The Thailand–Cambodia Preah Vihear Temple Dispute: Its Past, Present and Future," 121-22.

³² Yoosuk, "The Preah Vihear Temple: Roots of Thailand-Cambodia Border Dispute," 925.

³³ P. Michael Rattanasengchanh, "The Role of Preah Vihear in Hun Sen's Nationalism Politics, 2008–2013," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 36, no. 3 (2017): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341703600303>.

³⁴ Rattanasengchanh, "The Role of Preah Vihear in Hun Sen's Nationalism Politics, 2008–2013," 75.

³⁵ Rattanasengchanh, "The Role of Preah Vihear in Hun Sen's Nationalism Politics, 2008–2013," 77.

³⁶ Rattanasengchanh, "The Role of Preah Vihear in Hun Sen's Nationalism Politics, 2008–2013," 81.

the Preah Vihear temple has been politicized and eventually securitized by both countries.

Overall, it can be concluded that many works in the chosen period (2008-2013) referred to in this review strongly emphasize stages of politicization and securitization of the border conflict. However, there has been no study on efforts to “desecuritize” the conflict to avoid further Thai-Cambodian armed clashes. This Independent Study, therefore, aims to study and set objectives to analyze the process of desecuritization of the issue.

1.6 Analytical Framework



The articles in the literature review have concluded that one promising approach to studying the conflict settlement along the Thai-Cambodia border is the theory of “securitization” and “desecuritization.” Ole Weaver argues that security should not be “a synonym for everything that is politically good or desirable.” Instead of widening the “referent object” concerning security toward any perceivable threats at individual or international levels, Weaver prefers to keep the security concept at the state level.³⁷ This suggests that the state (or political elites, to be more specific) has the privilege to label something as a security threat when the sovereignty or independence of the state is at stake, making it be resolved with “whatever means are necessary to block it.”³⁸ Therefore, societal issues can be “politicized” when brought into political contexts such as campaigns, debates, resolutions, or referendums for the interests of particular groups. Nevertheless, suppose the political officials regard some political issues as dangerous for the state’s survival. In that case, they can “securitize” them by prioritizing them in the national strategy. Because it is exclusively the government’s call, each administration can illustrate something as a security threat if resolving them fit its interests.

However, securitization of an issue barely circulates within only the declared state. An attempt to securitize issues such as borderlines, illegal immigration, and

³⁷ Ole Weaver, “Securitization and desecuritization,” (1993): 3.

<https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/assets/pdf/Waever-Securitization.pdf>.

³⁸ Weaver, “Securitization and desecuritization,” 7.

trade balance can also invoke reactions in countries related to those issues. It coerces those countries to consider implications for their security. As seen during the Abhisit administration, Thai-Cambodian border disputes could be securitized to trigger nationalism in Thailand, which also provoked Cambodia. One securitization can therefore be transformed into another securitization in other countries. Securitization, therefore, risks aggravating relevant external actors and stirring up existing tensions.

Conversely, to “desecuritize” something is to “[turn] threats into challenges and security into politics.”³⁹ Desecuritization results in settlement through political means, no further armed clashes, and stabilizes all parties' status quo. In the case of the Thai-Cambodia border, the Abhisit administration has “securitized” the temple dispute to gain political support for the 2011 election. However, after Yingluck's victory the same year, her administration did not stress the urgency to reduce tensions with Cambodia or devise any specific plan for security or related agencies to solve the border dispute. Instead, the administration expressed full compliance with the ICJ ruling from 2011 to 2013 as a primary means to “desecuritize” the border situation with Cambodia. After the 2014 coup, there had been no major armed clashes as the new administration under General Prayut utilized internal mechanisms for “desecuritization” to contain and improve the border situation.

To fully implement desecuritization efforts, two steps must happen: 1) de-escalation process and 2) cooperation establishment. For de-escalation, it is a direct response to “escalated” tensions after something is securitized by reducing the use of security measures such as firepower demonstration or unit deployment and reverting the situation to normal. Once tensions on the border are contained, mechanisms for cooperation establishment will be introduced to the area to create an environment for a peaceful resolution. This latter step aims to address the underlying causes of the issues through diplomatic talks instead of sporadic military responses of the former. By relying on comprehensive dialogues and exchanges of information, cooperation establishment helps shape desecuritization efforts into a more peaceful and sustainable process that complies with the rule of law.

³⁹ Weaver, "Securitization and desecuritization," 10.

Actors implementing both steps can come from various sectors whose work relates to the Thai-Cambodian border. At the governmental level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and its Cambodian counterpart conduct meetings of the Thailand - Cambodia Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JC) regularly to discuss bilateral cooperation such as upgrading border checkpoints, prevention of illegal activities along the border, and managing Cambodian migrant workers.⁴⁰ For the defense sector, the Thai-Cambodian General Border Committee (GBC) is held annually for Defence Ministers from both sides to convene on maritime and land security.⁴¹ Other sectors, such as healthcare, education, trade, energy, and forestry, also delegate representatives to the border to conduct missions for the well-being of the locals. At the regional level, Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and Cambodia's General Directorate of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection (GDANCP) formulated a joint 5-year plan in 2018 to promote bilateral coordination to strengthen protected areas and mutually improve biodiversity corridors.⁴² The military also annually holds the Regional Border Committee (RBC) meetings between Thailand's 2nd Army Area Commander and Cambodia's 4th Military Regional Commander to discuss security issues along the Thai-Cambodian border.⁴³ At the local level, meetings of the Governors of Thai - Cambodian Border Provinces are held for provincial and local authorities on both sides to discuss cooperation and mutual concerns on border provinces.⁴⁴ The de-

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

⁴⁰ "Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand held talk with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia," 2021, <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/thaicambodiabilat08062021-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683c>.

⁴¹ Wassana Nanuam, "Border battlefields to be developed," *Bangkok Post*, February 15, 2019, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1629507/border-battlefields-to-be-developed>.

⁴² "Thailand-Cambodia coordinate to protected areas and trans-boundary," National News Bureau of Thailand, updated June 21, 2018, <https://thainews.prd.go.th/en/news/detail/WNEVN6106270010008>.

⁴³ "Thai, Cambodian border military holds 23rd meeting," *Khmer Times*, July 26, 2022, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501119638/thai-cambodian-border-military-holds-23rd-meeting/>.

⁴⁴ "The Sixth Meeting of the Governors of Cambodian-Thai Border Provinces." <http://www.fad.moi.go.th/images/Document/TheMeeting/6.The-meeting-of-Governors-Thailand--Cambodia-Eng.pdf>.

escalation process and cooperation establishment can occur simultaneously or separately at every level.

Nevertheless, for every desecuritization effort, as the border always involves security and protection of sovereignty, the military then becomes the first responder for any encounter before other border mechanisms. Therefore, the Suranaree Command as a regional border defense unit is chosen for this research because its units are deployed to most of the Thai-Cambodian border area and have the military capability to respond to hostile acts if they occur initially. Its role then covers reducing arisen tensions and improving relations with the other side within its authority. However, the military nature of the Suranaree Command implies that the unit works better on the “de-escalation” process. Therefore, the other step of desecuritization, cooperation establishment, needs more than a military aspect to holistically and sustainably “desecuritize” the border situation.

1.7 Research Method

This research will be conducted as qualitative research, which can be categorized into steps as follows:

1) Documentary Research

First, this research needs to examine the existing policies and plans that impact the Thai-Cambodian border. Some documents will be derived from the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as both maintain and strengthen relations with foreign countries. Some also will be retrieved from the National Security Council, particularly on border defense. Documents include but are not limited to:

- 1) National Security Policies and Plans implemented from 2014 to 2022
- 2) Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers
- 3) 20-year Foreign Policy Masterplan
- 4) Policies of the Minister of Defence (from Fiscal Year 2014 to 2022)
- 5) Border Security Management Strategy 2016-2021 and Implementation Plan

for Border Security Management Strategy 2016-2021

2) Historical Research

After examining existing policies and plans, this research will utilize case studies to investigate any conflict resolution efforts from the Yingluck administration to the Prayut one. The research will also study the mechanisms of each administration to examine their perspectives on the border dispute.

3) Interviews

Interviews with relevant agencies will follow the existing data analyses explained above. As this research aims to examine the performance of the Suranaree Command, it will request delegates from the commands in different levels and responsibilities. The purpose is to understand their practical experience dealing with the border issue regarding policies and implementation. Delegates from this Command can explain how they plan their daily tasks: by observation and situational analysis, by their higher-ups, by responding to Cambodia's stance, or by all mentioned. They also can suggest developing better policies toward Cambodia from the operational-level and tactical-level perspectives. Delegates will include staff-level officers explaining the policy-receiving process and tactical-level officers giving hands-on information on the field operations.

4) Data Analysis

After obtaining textual and practical information, this research will utilize the theory of securitization/desecuritization to explain the border dispute settlement with Cambodia after 2012. This step will examine how to measure the effectiveness of the Suranaree Command's performance and explore other factors behind the de-escalation process. Lastly, guidelines to develop a more practical border dispute settlement toward Cambodia will also be devised.

1.8 Research Outline

This research consists of four sections as follows:

Section 1: Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute after the 2011 Election

This section will explore how Yingluck and Prayut administration has shown efforts to ease tensions on the Thai-Cambodian border. The findings from this section will be bounded by the concept of "securitization" to reveal each administration's

drive and mechanisms to push the border conflict to the agenda. It also will include how border-related policies have been implemented at different levels.

Section 2: Suranaree Command's De-escalation Efforts

This section will explain how the Suranaree Command has received and implemented policies guided by the higher-ups. It also describes the environment of the border and its effects on the Command's operations. Interviews from the Command personnel will be primarily cited to find out any challenges at tactical and operational levels and to explore indicators to measure the effectiveness of Suranaree Command's efforts in de-escalating the border dispute.

Section 3: Factors that Support Suranaree Command's De-escalation Efforts

This section will continue to explore other factors that support Suranaree Command's de-escalation efforts. This includes works by other agencies on the border that are not military-related and other agencies that are not stationed near the border but have influence there. It then will explore how mechanisms in each agency play out and compare which factor contributes the most to easing tensions on the border.

Section 4: Findings and Summary

This section combines all the findings from all previous sections to illustrate the overall framework for de-escalating the border conflict by the Suranaree Command. It also will propose any conclusions aligned with the "securitization" theory that can make the policy-making process more proactive.

Chapter 2

Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute after the 2011 Election

2.1 Introduction

Since the 2011 election, there have been no more armed clashes between Thai and Cambodian soldiers on the border. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen regarded the victory of Yingluck Shinawatra as a changing tide that could foster bilateral ties again. The relationship between Hun Sen and Thaksin Shinawatra, Yingluck's brother and Former Thai Prime Minister appointed in 2009 as an economic advisor to the Cambodian government, seemed to make Yingluck's effort to rebalance matters possible. However, after the ICJ's final ruling on the Preah Vihear Temple in 2013, nationalist sentiments and anti-government protests encouraged Yingluck to take a firm stance on the border issue. After the 2014 coup led by General Prayut Chan-o-cha, the border conflict seemed to have been stabilized and was left out of the political realm because of the junta's focus on domestic trust-building. Regardless of the changes in the government, mechanisms such as the General Border Committee (GBC) and the Regional Border Committee (RBC) have been implemented for bilateral peace talks and cooperation but avoided sensitive issues such as the boundary lines.

2.2 Border Settlement Mechanisms

Since both countries had signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia on the Survey and Demarcation of Land Boundary in 2000, the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) established in 1997 is responsible for joint surveys and demarcation, and to produce maps afterward. Foreign Ministers of both countries co-chair the Commission. The General Border Committee (GBC) and Regional Border Committee (RBC) were also established in 1995 to be co-chaired by Defence Ministers and military commanders responsible in the region. These committees discuss general issues that help loose tensions on the border, such as drug

smuggling, illegal logging, and border trade.⁴⁵ Governments from both countries have utilized these mechanisms for talks on border issues, and meetings are held alternatively in Cambodia and Thailand.

2.3 Border Dispute Settlement Efforts during Yingluck's Administration

Yingluck's victory in the 2011 election was also celebrated in Cambodia, as Hun Sen sent a congratulatory note to her vowing to "alleviate tensions" and restore "traditional friendship, good neighbours, and fruitful cooperation between our two countries' peoples."⁴⁶ Hun Sen's enthusiasm implied that Yingluck's government, which the Pheu Thai party led, would be in his favor to support his rule in Cambodia without interference like the anti-Thaksin government led by Abhisit during 2008-2011. As mentioned above, Thaksin's good relationship with Hun Sen made border de-escalation much more possible. Nevertheless, personal connections between two national leaders cannot rule over the Thai military's firm stance on the border.

The situation has improved noticeably for the Thai-Cambodian border since Yingluck came to power in August 2011.⁴⁷ In addition to her connection with Hun Sen, the ICJ provisional measures in July 2011, which ordered both countries to "withdraw all military personnel currently present in the zone as thus defined," also set up a more peaceful environment.⁴⁸ Her official visit to Cambodia on September 14, 2011, evidenced the revival of relations.⁴⁹

But the "de-escalation" of the situation could be only marked by the ceasefire, as both countries still wanted to gain influence in the area. In July 2012,

⁴⁵ *Information Thai People Should Know about the Phra Viharn Temple and Thailand – Cambodian Negotiation*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011), <https://dl.parliament.go.th/handle/20.500.13072/357154> (in Thai)

⁴⁶ Pavin Chachavalpongpan, "Thai-Cambodian Conflict: The Failure of ASEAN's Dispute Settlement Mechanisms," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 1, no. 1 (2013): 80-81, <https://doi.org/10.18588/201305.000005>.

⁴⁷ Chachavalpongpan, "Thai-Cambodian Conflict: The Failure of ASEAN's Dispute Settlement Mechanisms," 82.

⁴⁸ *Request for Interpretation of the Judgment of 15 1962 in the Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand)*.

⁴⁹ Robert Carmichael, "Yingluck Visit Boosts Thai-Cambodia Relations," *Voice of America* 2011, <https://www.voanews.com/a/yingluck-visit-boosts-thai-cambodia-relations-129882118/145287.html>.

both sides began withdrawing military personnel from the temple's surrounding area in compliance with the ICJ order a year ago.⁵⁰ However, those soldiers were just replaced by police forces and continued to monitor the disputed area.⁵¹ Therefore, both started deploying forces other than “military personnel” to the border to circumvent the accusation of refusal to comply with the ruling. Locals along the border, especially Locals living in the Kantharalak district of Si Saket province, fear that withdrawing military forces from the area could make the area of 4.6 km² surrounding the temple more at risk of being seized by the Cambodian forces. In Kantharalak district, locals put a sign: “Do not Withdraw soldier on Khoa Phrawihan Mountain.”⁵² They stated that they used the watershed lines to draw boundaries between Thailand and Cambodia. Yingluck had no official address to assure the locals that their well-being would not be ignored.

The ICJ's final ruling on the disputed land surrounding the temple was expected in October 2013. In January, the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) submitted a seven-point proposal to the government not to accept the ICJ ruling, reiterating that the decision would not be legally bounded.⁵³ Both Hun Sen and Yingluck ensured that public peace would be maintained regardless of the ruling.⁵⁴ This implies that both leaders agree to follow the ICJ's decision, although nationalist sentiments in Thailand have developed since the first armed clashes.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

⁵⁰ "Thai, Cambodian Troops Leave Disputed Area," *Al Jazeera*, July 18, 2012, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/7/18/thai-cambodian-troops-leave-disputed-area>.

⁵¹ "Military withdrawal from the Preah Vihear temple, the beginning of territory lost," *MGR Online*, July 21, 2012, <https://mgronline.com/daily/detail/9550000089501> (in Thai)

⁵² "Sri Saket locals protest against military withdrawal from the Preah Vihear temple, fearing loss of territory to Cambodia," *MGR Online*, July 17, 2012, <https://mgronline.com/local/detail/9550000087944>. (in Thai)

⁵³ "PAD asks govt not to accept ICJ ruling," *Bangkok Post*, January 8 2013, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/329813/govt-asked-not-to-accept-icj-ruling>.

⁵⁴ Thanida Tansubhapol and Wassana Nanuam, "Yingluck Calls Urgent Meet over Preah Vihear Ruling," *Bangkok Post*, October 17 2013, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/375040/yingluck-calls-urgent-meet-over-preah-vihear-ruling>.

On November 11, 2013, the ICJ finally ruled that “Cambodia had sovereignty over the whole territory of the promontory of Preah Vihear.”⁵⁵ Although it did not give Cambodia all the land it claimed, the ruling sparked protests demanding the government secure Thai territory.⁵⁶ Following the ICJ verdict, Yingluck stated in a televised address that the verdict favored Thailand and the negotiation would continue.⁵⁷ However, Thai military forces were not explicitly ordered to withdraw from the border area. They remained there as talks between both countries still yet to take place, with the military urging Thai people not to jump to conclusions too soon.⁵⁸ The unchanging military deployment resulted from domestic nationalist sentiments which accused Yingluck of giving up land to Cambodia. The ICJ ruling, therefore, produced no effects on Yingluck’s decision-making, in contrast to her stance of compliance earlier before the final ruling. As the PAD pointed out earlier about the ICJ’s jurisdiction, the ruling only alters the area each side can deploy soldiers into, not constraining any power of both leaders to utilize military instruments. The border de-escalation done by the Court is then short-lived.

According to Thearith Leng, even though both countries have utilized mechanisms to ease tensions, such as General Border Committee (GBC) and Joint Border Committee (JBC), they “have not brought up any sustainable solution, but a status-quo of the conflict.”⁵⁹ The 8th GBC in December 2011, in which Defence Ministers from both sides discussed the withdrawal of troops from the zone defined

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

⁵⁵ "UN Court Rules for Cambodia in Preah Vihear Temple Dispute with Thailand ", United Nations, updated November 11, 2013, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/11/455062>.

⁵⁶ Thomas Escritt and Amy Sawitta Lefevre, "Thailand Braces for Trouble as U.N. Court Backs Cambodia in Border Row " *Reuters*, November 11, 2013 <https://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-thailand-cambodia-idCABRE9AA0D120131111>.

⁵⁷ Thanida Tansubhapol and Apinya Wipatayotin, "ICJ Delivers Win-Win Ruling," *Bangkok Post*, November 12, 2013, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/379318/icj-delivers-win-win-ruling>.

⁵⁸ "PM Insists Troops Will Stay Put," *Bangkok Post*, November 13, 2013, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/379507/pm-insists-troops-will-stay-put>.

⁵⁹ Thearith Leng, "Cambodia’s Contemporary Security Challenges " *NIDS Joint Research* 11 (2014): 9, http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/joint_research/series11/pdf/01.pdf.

in the July 2011 ruling, had not resulted in any quick resolution.⁶⁰ The 5th JBC meeting in February 2012 also concluded with a new border checkpoint but no address on the boundary demarcation, which would have impacted the ICJ ruling a year later.⁶¹ Stagnant outcomes from both mechanisms suggest that they hold no significant influence on the border dispute if the political officials from both sides perceive that the dispute's uncertainty can be exploited for their domestic standings.

The overall de-escalation efforts of the Yingluck administration have centered on the ICJ provisional measures in 2011 to withdraw troops and order ceasefires. Both sides benefited from peace and avoided risky decisions to ease domestic tensions. While Yingluck may seem to have a firm stance not to use the issue to gain political support like the previous administration, complying with the ICJ means maintaining good relations with Hun Sen while not risking further casualties in clashes. However, the Thai military had a significant political influence on the border since the issue involved sovereignty, something the military has a core duty to protect. After the final ruling in 2013, Yingluck had little say in the Army's decision to redeploy troops as the National Defense Plan instructed.⁶² With the demarcation process left untouched, bilateral talks were conducted on other issues to maintain a peaceful border environment.

2.4 Border Dispute Settlement Efforts after the 2014 Coup

Following the prolonged massive protests on an amnesty bill back by the government, Yingluck's administration was overthrown by a coup in May 2014 led by General Prayut Chan-o-cha. In the past, when an anti-Thaksin movement successfully toppled the pro-Thaksin regime, Thai-Cambodian relations became "tense and

⁶⁰ "Thai Defence Minister Attends Thai-Cambodia Border Meeting in Phnom Penh ", *Pattaya Mail*, December 22, 2011 <https://www.pattayamail.com/thailandnews/thai-defence-minister-attends-thai-cambodia-border-meeting-in-phnom-penh-8838>.

⁶¹ "JBC Concludes with New Border Checkpoint ", *Pattaya Mail*, February 15, 2012 <https://www.pattayamail.com/thailandnews/jbc-concludes-with-new-border-checkpoint-10117>.

⁶² Wassana Nanuam, "Army to Reshuffle, Not Withdraw Troops at Temple, Sukumpol Says " *Bangkok Post*, July 12, 2012, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/302022/army-to-reshuffle-not-withdraw-troops-at-temple-sukumpol-says>.

adversarial,” as seen in 2008 when Abhisit became Prime Minister.⁶³ Nevertheless, this time, Hun Sen seemed to welcome this new Prime Minister, as evidenced by compliance with Prayut’s request to pardon Veera Somkwamkid, a nationalist imprisoned for eight years for espionage and trespassing.⁶⁴ Cambodia’s domestic tension has lessened pressure on the border, as “Hun Sen has his hands full at home, with mounting international scrutiny and potentially debilitating sanctions against his one-party dictatorship and systematic dismantling of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party.”⁶⁵ While in Thailand, the regime also signaled to Cambodia that they needed to stabilize the domestic situation before discussing border dispute settlement.⁶⁶ Prayut’s political grip with the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) as a junta would have pushed for a decisive boundary demarcation effort better than previous administrations. However, it seems like the junta has avoided such a sensitive issue to affirm "border peace" to the Thai people. During this period, it is better for both leaders not to escalate any tensions.

There is evidence of Prayut’s administration circling border talks around general issues but not attacking the core ones. General Prawit Wongsuwan, Thailand’s Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, met General Tea Banh, his counterpart, at the 10th GBC meeting in Phnom Penh on December 24, 2014. The meeting resulted in an agreement representing a commitment “to maintaining peace and to stopping illegal trafficking of humans, drugs, and logging, across both land and sea borders.”⁶⁷ While these issues are significant for national interests, General Prawit stated that the Preah Vihear temple dispute was not on the agenda of the meeting.⁶⁸

⁶³ Thitinan Pongsudhirak, "All Quiet on the Thai-Cambodian Front," *Bangkok Post*, January 18, 2019, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/1613074/all-quiet-on-the-thai-cambodian-front>.

⁶⁴ "Cambodia Frees Activist as Ties Warm with Thai Junta," *Reuters*, July 1, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-thailand-idUSKBN0F64QG20140701>.

⁶⁵ Pongsudhirak, "All Quiet on the Thai-Cambodian Front."

⁶⁶ Jenne, "Uncertainty at Home Brings Calm to the Thai-Cambodian Border."

⁶⁷ "Cambodia, Thai Defense Ministers Meet on Border Issues," *Voice of America*, December 24, 2014, <https://www.voanews.com/a/reu-cambodia-thai-defense-ministers-meet-on-border-issues/2571729.html>.

⁶⁸ Wassana Nanuam, "Hun Sen Denies Hiding Reds," *Bangkok Post*, December 27, 2014, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/452387/hun-sen-denies-hiding-reds>.

In another visit along with NCPO officials to Phnom Penh in September 2017, General Prayut received a hug from Hun Sen, signifying warm relations between Prime Ministers in addition to talks on opening border crossings and setting up rail links and a friendship bridge between both nations.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, General Prawit stated during the visit that bilateral mechanisms at all levels, including the GBC and RBC, have shown great collaboration, resulting in better living conditions for the locals residing near the border. He emphasized the need to establish "hotlines" for each mechanism at any level to resolve any issues swiftly.⁷⁰ The established communications between counterparts signify that any issues that occurred would be notified to the related units and that both sides can develop a solid relationship from the high level (such as the Ministry of Defence) to the lower level (such as a task force unit), which can help to limit future tensions and misunderstandings. However, those communications would be on general issues, with each level having limited authority. This limitation means that an issue related to a more severe issue (such as boundary demarcation) would not be solved quickly.

In the 14th GBC meeting in Phnom Penh in February 2019, both sides pushed for "former border battlefields to become joint border development areas, particularly in Chanthaburi and Trat," which would be later established via the RBC.⁷¹ While this proposal seemed to enhance border security and economic cooperation, it again had nothing to do with the real prolonged security issue such as the boundary demarcation. Later in April, General Prayut and Hun Sen met to congratulate the Completion of the Thailand – Cambodia Friendship Bridge (Ban Nong lan – Stung Bot) linking Thailand's Aranyaprathet to Cambodia's Poi Pet district. Both sides stressed boosting trade and investments and making the Thai-Cambodian border a "land of peace and cooperation" through more checkpoints and rail links. However, General Prayut also pointed out that the border issue "must not interfere

⁶⁹ Wassana Nanuam, "Hun Sen, PM Agree on Closer Links," *Bangkok Post*, September 8, 2017, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1320231/hun-sen-pm-agree-on-closer-links>.

⁷⁰ "Prayut leads the Councils of Ministers to join Thai-Cambodian Meeting with warm ambience," *Matichon Weekly*, September 7, 2017, https://www.matichonweekly.com/hot-news/article_52889. (in Thai)

⁷¹ Nanuam, "Border battlefields to be developed."

with the development" and let the issue be negotiated in related mechanisms (such as the JBC).⁷² Both events in the same year only boosted economic connectivity and cooperation in limited areas, but prolonged disputes, such as one surrounding the temple, have not been on the table. The "border issues" that both sides mentioned and agreed not to allow to affect bilateral relations cannot be prevented effectively until boundary lines are pushed to the agenda.

In the 15th GBC meeting in November 2022, both sides emphasized landmine clearing operations, call center scams, and drug trafficking.⁷³ In contrast to signing agreements or promises to deal with matters, all three issues emphasized in this meeting, primarily demining actions, were noticeable proof that cooperation established through various mechanisms has been successful. Landmine clearance has also been operating without being hampered by border issues.⁷⁴ Despite the mountainous border, both sides work together on this humanitarian mission to benefit all locals, creating a better environment for security forces from both sides to operate.

Overall, the border dispute settlement efforts after the 2014 coup have been affected by Prayut's legitimacy dilemma from staging the coup and mutual economic interests. Prayut had no interest in bringing up the temple to the center of his politics because doing so would further damage his domestic standing. Therefore, cooperation has existed, but mainly in economic and humanitarian manners, to avoid ruining the relationship between the two nations.

2.5 Policy Implementation Mechanisms

Since the ceasefire in 2011, settlement efforts have continued to be limited to general issues such as drugs, illegal crossing, illegal lodging, and tax evasion. The

⁷² "PM talks with Hun Sen on developing the border into peaceful areas," *Thai Post*, April 22, 2019, <https://www.thaipost.net/main/detail/34181>. (in Thai)

⁷³ Wassana Nanuam, "Neighbours Pledge to Target Scammers," *Bangkok Post*, November 26, 2022, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2446519/neighbours-pledge-to-target-scammers>.

⁷⁴ Torn Vibol, "Thailand, Cambodia Join Hands in Demining along Border," *Khmer Times*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501189420/thailand-cambodia-join-hands-in-demining-along-border/>.

root cause of the border dispute is the incomplete boundary demarcation that has not been touched on in any GBC or RBC meetings. All meetings evade the issue with the acknowledgment that the only appropriate mechanism to discuss the demarcation process is the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC). As the RBC operates under the framework of the GBC and the GBC on JBC, the absence of the JBC for more than a decade (last time in 2012) resulted in transferring the border burden to the GBC, which the Defence Minister leads. The GBC has become the primary policy-making mechanism since 2012 and pushes its agenda to the RBC, which Army commanders lead in securing the border. The Regional Border Committee then has a responsibility to implement policies and guidance from the GBC into effect, such as promoting good understanding between local authorities and local cooperation, maintaining information exchange between counterparts, and establishing communications between military forces from both sides to tackle any upcoming issues promptly.

Under the RBC, the agencies responsible for securing border areas are all Border Defense Commands. Each Command drafts and implements its own Border Defense Plan each year, following guidance from the RBC to conduct military operations on the border when the nation is not at war. Another agency that guides the Border Defense Commands is the Army Operations Center, the direct Chain of Command of all Border Defense Commands.

Therefore, Suranaree Command, whose area of operations includes a large area of the Thai-Cambodian border, is guided by two separate sets of mechanisms. The first one is the bilateral mechanisms, such as the GBC and the RBC, to ensure that it complies with international agreements and that both countries maintain peaceful means to settle the dispute. The second set is its Chain of Command in the Ministry of Defence to ensure that the Command conducts operations to protect the national interests. Suranaree Command operates at a policy-implementation level with policies guided by internal and external parties with the same objective of de-escalating the border situation and preventing any conflict from developing into a more lethal manner.

Chapter 3

Suranaree Command's De-escalation Efforts

3.1 From State's Desecuritization Efforts into the Suranaree Command's De-escalation Process

As the Commander-in-Chief of the Army during the border crisis, Gen. Prayut expressed his intention to resolve the situation peacefully without escalating the border conflict into war. In 2013 he stated that he had proposed to Yingluck, the then-Prime Minister, to convert the border area and checkpoints into special economic zones to reduce illegal trade and de-escalate the conflict along the border.⁷⁵ After he became the Prime Minister a year later, he and Hun Sen both agreed to foster relations by emphasizing bilateral trade and investment and not making the border dispute interfere with economic development.⁷⁶ Since then, the boundary demarcation issue and the Preah Vihear case have been swept under the rug in bilateral talks, as both countries see peace on the border as a mutual interest.⁷⁷ Gen Prayut stated in an episode of the national broadcast "Bring Peace Back to the People" that the NCPO's intent was not to create any further conflict or dispute but to emphasize conflict de-escalation in the country.⁷⁸ Therefore, the government's 2014 Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers put "maintaining national security and foreign affairs" as one of its 11 policy areas. The policy area included "enhancing trust and confidence with [neighboring] countries...and cooperation for preventing and resolving disputes and resolving boundary problems through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms."⁷⁹ Instead of endorsing disputed land claimants that might provoke hostilities, the government sought border disputes to

⁷⁵ "Army Chief stresses no fear toward Cambodia, but worries about war's impact on citizens," *MGR Online*, October 28, 2013, <https://mgronline.com/politics/detail/9560000134394>. (in Thai)

⁷⁶ "Big Too' talks on economic cooperation with 'Hun Sen'," *Post Today*, October 17, 2014, <https://www.posttoday.com/politics/324807>. (in Thai)

⁷⁷ "Thai PM resumes talks with Cambodia on cooperation on trade, investment, energy and economy," (October 31, 2014, JS100). <https://www.js100.com/en/site/news/view/7349>. (in Thai)

⁷⁸ "'Prayut' claims to already have a 5-year vision plan, and just needs only 1 year to build fundamentals for the next ", January 9, 2015, *Prachatai*, <https://prachatai.com/journal/2015/01/57338>. (in Thai)

⁷⁹ Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers, 4 (Council of Ministers, 2014).

be desecuritized so that economic or security cooperation could occur. As a result, Thailand and Cambodia have been developing economic relations, such as establishing transportation routes and border economic zones to utilize the disputed area more mutually beneficially.

Because the government has emphasized collaboration between neighboring countries such as Cambodia, the Royal Thai Army has undertaken military operations that would support the government's policy on border security. Since 2012, and especially after the 2014 coup, the Army has taken an active role in the Thai-Cambodian border situation. Every Commander-in-Chief of the Army (or informally called the Army Chief) has visited, or been visited by, the Cambodian counterpart to ensure that both countries maintain good communications. Gen. Udomdej Sitabutr, the next Army Chief after Gen. Prayut took the governmental control, carried on Gen. Prayut's initiative to restore Cambodian relations. During his visit to Cambodia, Gen. Udomdej emphasized various means with his Cambodian counterpart, such as establishing joint reconnaissance, cooperating on illegal logging, and expanding border villages to prepare the areas for special economic zones.⁸⁰ Gen. Apirat Kongsompong, the Army Chief from 2018 to 2022, also visited his counterpart, Hun Manet. Both sought to maintain peace along the border to create a proper development and trade environment.⁸¹ They also agreed to utilize "more consensus-based and sweetened military arrangement" to strengthen relations.⁸² Moreover, most Army Chiefs and Defence Ministers since 2012 have experience on the Thai-Cambodia border.⁸³ Their on-field experiences have familiarized them with their Cambodian counterparts since both sides were junior officers, paving solid bonds

⁸⁰ "Udomdej declared talk with Cambodia went smooth without addressing the Preah Vihear temple," (January 22, 2015, Sanook). <https://www.sanook.com/news/1735261/>. (in Thai)

⁸¹ "Army Chief "Big Daeng" meets "Hun Manet" for the first time," *MGR Online*, January 30, 2019, <https://mgronline.com/indochina/detail/9620000010484>. (in Thai)

⁸² Aun Chhengpor, "Ahead of Election, Thai Army Chief Visits Cambodia to Bolster Ties," *Voice of America*, January 30, 2019, <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/ahead-of-election-thai-army-chief-visits-cambodia-to-bolster-ties/4765417.html>.

⁸³ Thitinan Pongsudhirak, "All Quiet on the Thai-Cambodian Front: Drivers, Dynamics, Directions," *South East Asia Research* 26, no. 4: 342, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967828x18809591>.

between both Armies. As a result, the RTA's defense policy on containing and preventing conflict for national security, per the Prime Minister's efforts on border desecuritization and personal affiliations between high-level officials, has facilitated the RTA's mission to forge trust and confidence between both nations.

As the RTA has established 7 Border Defense Commands (BDCs) to monitor and manage the Thai land border following the Office of the Prime Minister Order No.97/2521 on Border Defense since 1978,⁸⁴ the BDCs will be the key players in implementing border desecuritization efforts practically. Out of seven, the Burapa Command and the Suranaree Command are responsible for securing the Thai-Cambodian border. Since their establishment, the BDCs have operated under the guidance of the Border Defense Order issued by the Army Operations Center to deter or eliminate any security threats on the border.

The Suranaree Command upholds the 3 Core Missions of the Army Operations Center to guide its border security operations. The 3 Core Missions are 1) Border Surveillance and Security 2) Border Area Management and Dispute Resolution 3) Collaboration with Neighboring Countries.⁸⁵ All three Core Missions are therefore aligned with the government's de-escalation efforts by operating under conflict prevention and de-escalation to ensure stability on the border.

3.2 Situational Environment

The environment must first be addressed before understanding how the Suranaree Command has de-escalated the border dispute. The primary cause of issues on the Thai-Cambodian border is using different maps to determine borderlines. Thailand follows the demarcation in the L7018 1:50000 scale map, while Cambodia follows the 1:200,000 scale map.⁸⁶ This has caused many overlapping areas protected under the MOU in 2000. As of September 2022, "13 border areas [on

⁸⁴ "History of Surasakmontree Command," https://surasakmontri.rta.mi.th/?page_id=12.

⁸⁵ "3rd Army Area declares mission with its sub-units ", *Thairath*, July 11, 2019, <https://www.thairath.co.th/news/local/north/1613285>. (in Thai)

⁸⁶ *Information Thai People Should Know about the Phra Viharn Temple and Thailand – Cambodian Negotiation*, 14.

the Thai-Cambodian border] have been agreed upon by both sides and demarcated, while 11 more are being negotiated,” said an Army spokesperson.⁸⁷ The border disputes, therefore, primarily involve these 11 disputed areas that are not to be altered or trespassed until both sides reach an agreement.

Terrain: Out of the 798 km distance, The Thai-Cambodian border is mainly marked by watersheds of the Dangrek Mountain range (approximately 524 km). Local settlements are then located near but not on the borderline. The accessibility to the border for Thailand is different from Cambodia. Thai locals settle their residents far off the border (about 5 km) as many areas are listed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment as part of forest conservation. However, the forest areas of the Dangrek Mountain range on the Cambodian side, after being divided by the watersheds, appear much smaller and thinner, making Cambodian locals able to settle much closer to the border.⁸⁸

Population: According to a former Suranaree personnel, local peoples along the Thai-Cambodian border are familiar with one another.⁸⁹ Some are relatives, and there is no conflict between locals along the border. In the past, traveling back and forth across the border was a regular activity. But now that the official crossing points have been established, these locals must enter through those points to go to the other side with border passes, which cost them (20,000 riels or about 200 baht).⁹⁰ These measures then compel some people who cannot afford the border pass to use unauthorized paths to cross the border.⁹¹ The Suranaree Command is, therefore, responsible for detecting such illegal crossings and sending them to Cambodian border agencies. Although there have been reports that Cambodian people have

⁸⁷ Wassana Nanuam, "Cambodian Border Growing Clearer," *Bangkok Post*, September 2, 2022, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2382191/cambodian-border-growing-clearer>.

⁸⁸ "Data on Forest Conservation (Map)," (DSI). <http://map.dsi.go.th/>.

⁸⁹ "Interview with a former Suranaree personnel on Command's Performance," interview by Phromnachanok Ketphan, June 8, 2023.

⁹⁰ "Tough Rules in Place for Border Passes," *Bangkok Post*, January 3, 2018, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1389318/tough-rules-in-place-for-border-passes>.

⁹¹ Lay Samean, "Healthy Demand for Border Passes as Checkpoints Reopen," *Phnom Penh Post*, May 24, 2022, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/healthy-demand-border-passes-checkpoints-reopen>.

attempted to cross the border to seek jobs in Thailand illegally,⁹² it has nothing to do with the disputed areas along the border. Therefore, illegal crossing attempts, such as to meet their relatives or to seek job opportunities, are not directly related to the prolonged border conflict as their targeted destinations are mostly inland.

However, one activity that can raise the border issue is trespassing in prohibited areas along the border under the MOU in 2000. There are reports that border locals have been accused of building houses or planting crops that transgressed the areas.⁹³ This illegal act can occasionally occur since those locals might not be aware of the MOU agreed upon by the two governments and merely want to find resources or expand their households.

Economy: Thailand and Cambodia have various points of entry: 7 border checkpoints, two temporary checkpoints, and nine checkpoints for border trade.⁹⁴ These checkpoints boost border trade, tourism, and local interaction, all monitored by Border Defense units, including Suranaree Command. Thai-Cambodian border trade continues to expand and has become a key import and export route.⁹⁵ In September 2022, Minister of Interior Sar Kheng discussed with Thai officials to consider opening three more border checkpoints to boost economic connectivity, such as better transportation and lifting some bans on goods.⁹⁶ Therefore, economic activity along the borders has been active and has become increasingly relevant to national interests.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

⁹² "22 People Thwarted in Attempt to Illegally Cross Border into Thailand," *Khmer Times*, December 15, 2022, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501203274/22-people-thwarted-in-attempt-to-illegally-cross-border-into-thailand/>.

⁹³ "Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (1)," interview by Phromnachanok Ketphan, April 5, 2023.

⁹⁴ "Thai-Cambodian border crossing points." <http://www.fad.moi.go.th/images/Document/PointofEntry/1.Point-of-Entry-Cambodia.pdf>.

⁹⁵ "Cross-Border Trade with Cambodia Jumps 16.63 Percent to 144.9 Billion Baht in 2021," *Khmer Times*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501020980/cross-border-trade-with-cambodia-jumps-16-63-percent-to-144-9-billion-baht-in-2021/>.

⁹⁶ TNN, "Border trade can grow even more; Cambodia request opening 3 more crossing points," (YouTube, 2022). <https://youtu.be/ONG7xYlb-Es>. (in Thai)

3.3 The Suranaree Command's Execution

According to an interview with a staff-level officer, The Suranaree Command is guided through two sets of mechanisms: the bilateral mechanisms and guidance from the RTA.

As for the bilateral mechanisms, the Suranaree Command received guidelines from the Regional Border Committee (RBC) meeting, which takes place once a year. The RBC meeting is co-chaired by Thailand's Commander of the Second Army Region and Cambodia's 4th Military Region commander. The Suranaree Command's Commander also sits in every RBC meeting so that any outcomes from the meeting can be received and implemented by the Suranaree Command as the border defense unit promptly.



The second set of mechanisms is through the Army Operations Center (AOC), the direct Chain of Command of the Suranaree Command. It holds a weekly Video Tele Conference (VTC) with all Border Defense Commands. The conference generally emphasizes retaining border stability so that other agencies in the border area can comprehensively perform their duty. This includes agencies such as healthcare, the Immigration Bureau, the Royal Forest Department, and the Department of Foreign Trade. Every year, the AOC drafts a general Border Defense Order so that each Border Defense Command can draft its own Border Defense Plan in alignment with the AOC's guidelines.⁹⁷ The following sub-section is organized by categorizing the Command's execution into each of the 3 Core Missions of the AOC.

Border Surveillance and Security: At the tactical level, the Suranaree Command operates by deploying task force units to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance on the border. These task force units and the Cambodian counterparts established Cordial Meeting points along the border to meet weekly to update situations and concerns during patrols. They also share contacts (called "hotlines") to resolve any issues occurred responsively. Moreover, both sides conduct Joint Reconnaissance regularly so that each side can ensure that the Patrol units and any

⁹⁷ "Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (2)," interview by Phromnachanok Ketphan, June 9, 2023.

locals encountered do not violate any regulations, especially in the prohibited areas as agreed in the 2000 MOU. In contrast with previous armed clashes, bilateral security cooperation at such a tactical level enhances transparency and mutual understanding, reducing the risk of escalating any upcoming dispute into exchange fires.

Border Area Management and Dispute Resolution: Suranaree Command operates with adherence to various laws depending on the missions, as there are not only military-related security issues along the border. Other issues, such as border trade, crimes, immigration, logging, taxes, and health, have other agencies to handle, and each issue has its laws and regulations to follow. When the mission is not security-based, Suranaree Command personnel become "Assisting Officers" to facilitate other agencies' tasks.

But when the mission is security-based, such as reconnaissance or unit mobilizations, the Martial Law is implemented, although not entirely. Martial Law has been declared on all 21 border districts under the responsibility of the Suranaree Command. However, its implementation is limited since the military can easily communicate with the other agencies in the area without having to centralize agencies in the area. Martial Law along the Thai-Cambodian border is used at a bare minimum to facilitate military operations.⁹⁸ Such limited use of the law has demonstrated that Thailand should have no dubious challenges to economic development with Cambodia.

As for border dispute resolution, some border locals are found to be extracting resources from those prohibited areas. In the interview with a staff officer, he mentioned that "these locals may seem like they do not know that the areas are prohibited, but one can hardly ignore valuable trees such as Siamese Rosewoods."⁹⁹ When a violation of the MOU occurs, Task Force personnel on duty who detect the violation will "object" and call Cambodian counterparts to intervene and negotiate with the locals immediately, and vice versa. The Suranaree Command and its

⁹⁸ Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (1).

⁹⁹ Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (1).

Cambodian counterpart must regularly deploy units for joint border reconnaissance. Because, if not detected, these locals might continue trespassing the prohibited sites, leaving traces of settlement that may become legal evidence later. The overall border situation is not being solved effectively because both sides can bring up the MOU in 2000 only to warn people from entering the prohibited areas but not to conduct the joint demarcation, as doing so would not be in a tactical-level dialogue.

The objections can be escalated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs level but never have to reach that level. Even if both Foreign Ministers acknowledge the violation, the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC), which can approve the outcome of survey and demarcation works by the Joint Survey Team (JST), has not been convened for over a decade.¹⁰⁰ The Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JC), also hosted annually by Foreign Ministers, has not brought up any demarcation issue. Therefore, any violations on the border are just dealt with in their contexts without addressing the prolonged cause.

Collaboration with Neighboring Countries: In addition to joint reconnaissance and swift dispute resolution, the RTA ordered Thai-Cambodian border defense units to conduct the "Parallel Strengthened Villages Project" to strengthen and materialize border security and to develop Thai-Cambodian relations by learning about each other's lifestyle and culture. This project includes religious events, tree planting, healthcare services, knowledge sharing, and food donations.¹⁰¹ The villages are established along the Thai-Cambodian border, 64 on the Thai side and 46 on the Cambodian side so that both sides can participate in various project activities.¹⁰² This project creates opportunities for locals from both sides to strengthen their bonds and for agencies from various sectors to collaborate on border dispute resolution inclusively.

¹⁰⁰ "PM discusses with Cambodian Deputy PM and FA Minister on stressing cooperation at every level," (Royal Thai Government, February 23, 2023). <https://www.thaigov.go.th/news/contents/details/65379>.

¹⁰¹ "Parallel Strengthened Villages Project," *Banmuang*, August 9, 2019, <https://www.banmuang.co.th/news/region/159582>. (in Thai)

¹⁰² Nanuam, "Cambodian Border Growing Clearer."

3.4 Dispute Settlement's Effectiveness

One staff-level officer in the Suranaree Command summarized the unit's overall performance: "We can object to minor violations such as trespassing, planting trees, or building cottages, but not the major violations such as road-buildings or infrastructure constructions."¹⁰³ Each side has limited authority on the border, and the best it can do is explain to the counterpart that the locals violate the 2000 MOU. However, after the patrol units warn the locals about the law, violations still exist today. The Suranaree Command has adhered to the 2000 MOU as it conducts a VTC weekly with the AOC, ensuring that all operations units respect the laws agreed upon and signed by the government. It also has stressed to Thai locals not to make any fuss on the border so that situation can be under control quickly with such a small number of units the Suranaree Command possesses.

For bilateral mechanisms, all officers included in this research agreed that the RBC and GBC meetings are merely held as proof that both countries have means to stay connected with one another. It was listed as a duty for every official involved in each committee to hold meetings established in the MOU and any bilateral agreements related to border cooperation.¹⁰⁴ Talks that are occurred through these mechanisms have always omitted sensitive topics such as the boundary lines to retain a "cooperative environment" to be presented to the public. According to the TOR 2003, or "Terms of Reference and Master Plan for the Joint Survey and Demarcation of Land Boundary between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Kingdom of Cambodia," there are five steps of boundary demarcation as follows¹⁰⁵: 1) Search for Locations of All 73 Previously Installed Boundary Marks 2) Drawing an Orthophoto Map 3) Determining Routes for Surveys on the Orthophoto Map 4) Surveys for the Establishment of Geographical Boundary Lines 5) Installing Boundary Marks.

The survey and demarcation process is stuck at the first step because not all locations have been agreed upon. The agreement cannot be done at the Suranaree

¹⁰³ Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (2).

¹⁰⁴ Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (2).

¹⁰⁵ *Information Thai People Should Know about the Phra Viharn Temple and Thailand – Cambodian Negotiation*, 45. (in Thai)

Command level because the deal maker would be the JBC at the Foreign Ministry level. With no severe repercussions for violating the MOU, border locals will always attempt to trespass the prohibited areas until detected by Suranaree task forces or Cambodian counterparts who conduct reconnaissance by that time. This joint routine then seems like a “time-buying” duty that waits until the next JBC meeting is held again, as tactical-level officers and the Command have no legal authority over the boundary demarcation.

Another consideration in dealing with regular attempts to violate the MOU is that there are more than security issues on the border. General issues such as healthcare, forestry, economy, and education have played more active roles in developing the well-being of the locals. This makes the civilian sectors in border areas able to identify military operations easier, thus making military commanders unable to tackle border issues more lethally toward the trespassers.

3.5 Summary

Despite the limited authority of the Suranaree Command that cannot solve the boundary demarcation issue, its personnel can actively engage in joint operations with the Cambodian counterpart to create a more peaceful environment along the border. Bilateral cooperation at the tactical level helps contain and de-escalate conflict. It allows other governmental and non-governmental agencies to collaborate with the other side to conduct their tasks risk-free.

Chapter 4

Factors Supporting Suranaree Command's De-escalation Efforts

4.1 Introduction

Other than the Suranaree Command, guided mainly by the RTA, other agencies aim to create a peaceful and beneficial environment on the border. According to an officer, all Thai agencies involved along the border share contact with their Cambodian counterparts.¹⁰⁶ These agencies' tasks are guarded and supported by Suranaree units, ensuring that no border dispute should erupt to intervene in developmental activities.



4.2 Forest Agencies

Because most of the border area is covered by forest, military units do not have enough capability or subject matter experts to deal with illegal logging and poaching. Therefore, agencies such as the Department of National Parks, Wildlife, and Plant Conservation and the Royal Forest Department (both under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment or the MNRE) have played active roles in those issues. Both countries established the joint committee on border illegal logging prevention in 2013 to conserve Siamese rosewoods in prohibited areas. However, violation still exists today as media agencies have regularly reported the arrests.¹⁰⁷ In 2018, The MNRE of Thailand and its Cambodian counterpart signed an MOU to promote bilateral cooperation on managing the biodiversity conservation area on the Thai-Cambodia border.¹⁰⁸ This MOU is followed by the joint 5-year forest conservation plan to deal with deforestation and poaching on the border more

¹⁰⁶ Interview with a staff-level Suranaree officer on Command's Performance (1).

¹⁰⁷ "Solving Illegal Siamese Rosewood Logging on Thai-Cambodian Border," (July 23, 2013, ryt9).
<https://www.ryt9.com/s/cabt/1697557>. (in Thai)

¹⁰⁸ "Thailand - Cambodia sign an MOU on cooperation on protected and conserved areas, and transnational biodiversity," (January 31, 2018, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment).
<https://www.mnre.go.th/th/news/detail/10516>. (in Thai)

practically and sustainably by emphasizing joint patrols by both sides.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the MNRE held an ASEAN Dialogue on Promoting SMART Patrol System in July 2019 with delegates from ASEAN countries to conduct knowledge sharing of its patrol system on detecting and preventing illegal hunting and logging. The aim was to integrate countries like Cambodia into the system and build collaboration on forest conservation on the border.¹¹⁰

With well-established procedures between forest agencies and the Suranaree Command to manage illegal forest activities and transparency of the patrol system, such as joint patrols and cordial meetings, forest agencies become a part of confidence-building measures to ease tensions on the border.



4.3 Law Enforcement

Besides forest agencies, law enforcement agencies ensure that all activities conducted by civilians and officials follow relevant regulations and the rule of law. Every arrest on the border must be coordinated with police units to continue with legal procedures because the Suranaree units who conduct reconnaissance have no legal authority. Police units must be attached to military patrol units to arrest locals who trespassed in prohibited areas or illegally crossed the border.¹¹¹ If the arrested locals are Cambodian, Thai units will coordinate with Cambodian police units via "hotlines" to transfer them to their legal agencies, and vice versa. These bilateral mechanisms make each arrest short-lived and able to be dealt with promptly.

Moreover, The Department of Special Investigation (DSI) and delegates from the Cambodian National Police meet annually to cooperate in dealing with human

¹⁰⁹ "DNP and Cambodia's Ministry of Environment Begin Cooperation on Forest and Animal Conservation," (June 27, 2018, National News Bureau of Thailand).

<https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/detail/WNEVN6106280020002>. (in Thai)

¹¹⁰ "DMCR Joins International Conference for Strengthening Quality Reconnaissance in ASEAN," (July 31, 2019, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources). <https://www.dmcr.go.th/detailAll/34252/nws/11>. (in Thai)

¹¹¹ Wassana Nanuam, "Army Chief Visits Troops near Preah Vihear," *Bangkok Post*, July 6, 2015, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/614216/army-chief-visits-troops-near-preah-vihear>.

trafficking by exchanging information and case proceeding guidelines.¹¹² This meeting between the two agencies boosts interagency capabilities and coordination. The DSI also holds workshops for foreign law enforcement agencies, including Cambodian officials, to fight and enhance transnational crime investigations.¹¹³ One of the accomplishments of joint police operations is the crackdown on call center scammers in 2022, arresting 74 Thai scammers located in Cambodia.¹¹⁴

By jointly cooperating in legal proceedings, any illegal activities on the border can be prosecuted without creating tensions between law enforcement officials. Knowing each other's law enforcement procedures helps reduce arrest uncertainty and prevent any upcoming conflict from escalating into a broader context.



4.4 International Mediation

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional intergovernmental organization that both Thailand and Cambodia are its members. It aims to promote peaceful resolution and diplomacy to address conflicts. The ASEAN has established various platforms for talks, such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The fact that the ARF has never brought up the boundary demarcation topic can be understood because addressing a highly controversial issue would not bring any peaceful environment between Thailand and Cambodia. Instead of directly mentioning the issue, both can agree on other general topics on the same diplomatic platform to ensure the continuity of "the ASEAN way" principle of not interfering with members' sovereignty.¹¹⁵ For instance, between 2020-2022, the ASEAN Summits

¹¹² "DSI Annual Report 2022," (DSI, 2022), 127.

<https://www.dsi.go.th/Upload/5362ea5d1989fe3c4fcea803b54088cd.pdf>.

¹¹³ "DSI Annual Report 2022," 118.

¹¹⁴ Erich Parpart, "Call Centre Scammers Arrested in Cambodia in Joint Operation," (July 11, 2022, Thai Enquirer). <https://www.thaienquirer.com/41633/call-centre-scammers-arrested-in-cambodia-in-joint-operation/>.

¹¹⁵ Dinita Setyawati, "Cambodia, Thailand and the ASEAN Way," *New Mandala*, November 18, 2012, <https://www.newmandala.org/cambodia-thailand-and-the-asean-way/>.

emphasized collective pandemic recovery efforts and resilience from COVID-19.¹¹⁶ Since the spread of the disease, immigration officials at checkpoints have well-organized border screening, health advising, and quarantine.¹¹⁷ Cambodian migrant workers in quarantine were also given financial support from Royal Thai Embassy for their well-being.¹¹⁸ When the pandemic eased, both sides agreed to reopen border checkpoints again.¹¹⁹

The landmine clearing operations on the Thai-Cambodian border were also discussed at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summit to demonstrate bilateral efforts on the livelihood of both countries.¹²⁰ After the summit, both Prime Ministers agreed on joint mine action along the border, regardless of whether the mine is in Thailand or Cambodia.¹²¹



Although any outcomes from ASEAN diplomatic platforms have no legal bindings, they remind Thailand and Cambodia to cooperate on mutual border issues instead of becoming hostile toward each other on border disputes. This reflects the ASEAN platforms' aim to build confidence and connectivity between nations to create a more amicable environment for peaceful resolution. They also serve as gatekeepers so that any suspicious acts on the border will reflect each nation's respect for the international regulations and norms on the international stage. Becoming a part of ASEAN, therefore, contain Thai and Cambodian officials to conduct themselves more mindfully and diplomatically toward each other.

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

¹¹⁶ "Chairman's Statement of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits," (November 11, 2022, ASEAN), 5. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/01-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-40th-and-41st-ASEAN-Summits-rev.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Ploy Phutpeng, "Thailand controlling spread of COVID-19 along important trading border with Cambodia," (June 30, 2020, WHO). <https://www.who.int/thailand/news/feature-stories/detail/thailand-controlling-spread-of-covid-19-along-important-trading-border-with-cambodia>.

¹¹⁸ "Thailand Contributed Bht 3,000,000 to Support the Well-Being of Cambodian Migrant Workers in Quarantine," (March 25, 2021, Royal Thai Embassy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia). <https://phnompenh.thaiembassy.org/en/content/3million-2564-2>.

¹¹⁹ Yin Soeum, "Poipet Reopens Crossing to Travellers," *Khmer Times*, May 2, 2022, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501067323/poipet-reopen-crossing-to-travellers/>.

¹²⁰ "Cambodia, Thailand Agree to Clear All Mines on Border," *The Nation*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.nationthailand.com/world/asean/40022368>.

¹²¹ Vibol, "Thailand, Cambodia Join Hands in Demining along Border."

4.5 Economic Interdependence

As Thailand and Cambodia have developed relations, economic connectivity has become a critical factor in both nations' growth. The exports of Thailand to Cambodia have increased at an annualized rate of 12.2%, while exports of Cambodia to Thailand have increased at an annualized rate of 7.21%.¹²²

The number of border checkpoints has been increasing. As of now, there are 18 checkpoints.¹²³ These checkpoints will allow goods to be transited and boost tourism in both countries, all benefiting economic development. More permanent checkpoints mean more profits for both countries as they provide much broader activities protected by laws from both countries. Officials from both sides have consistently engaged in talks on promoting checkpoints for border trade, which are unilateral establishments, to permanent border checkpoints.¹²⁴

As for infrastructure, Cambodia imported power from Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos due to “local water shortages in Cambodia which impact its domestic hydropower.”¹²⁵ Some transmission lines have been established in Cambodia, as it has imported electricity to tourism hubs and other cities since 2008.¹²⁶ In 2019, Cambodia purchased 300 MW of power from Thailand, showing Cambodia’s dependence on neighboring countries to reach the rising demand.¹²⁷

The two countries' economic dependency potentially has reduced border tensions. As the state-level policymakers support economic growth, both Armies will ensure that no incidents could disrupt trade and investment.

¹²² "Thailand (THA) and Cambodia (KHM) Trade," (OEC). <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/tha/partner/khm#bi-compete>.

¹²³ "Thai-Cambodian border crossing points." (in Thai)

¹²⁴ "Thai Armed Forces heighten Thai-Cambodian border relations," *Khaosod Online*, January 17, 2019, https://www.khaosod.co.th/around-thailand/news_2099145. (in Thai)

¹²⁵ PwC, "Regional electricity trade in ASEAN," (2022), 9. <https://www.pwc.com/sg/en/publications/assets/page/regional-electricity-trade-in-asean.pdf>.

¹²⁶ "Cambodia to import electricity from Thailand with ADB's help," (January 31, 2008, Asian Development Bank). <https://www.adb.org/news/cambodia-import-electricity-thailand-adbs-help>.

¹²⁷ Thou Vireak, "Power Trade Talks with Thailand Are Planned," *Phnom Penh Post*, November 5, 2019, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/power-trade-talks-thailand-are-planned>.

4.6 Society and Culture

Thailand and Cambodia's cultural similarities and local connectivity facilitate exchanging lifestyles and cultures. Occasionally, higher-rank officials are invited to the other side for Buddhist services, such as the Kathin ceremony.¹²⁸ They also celebrate every New Year together by giving monks alms to get Thai and Cambodian locals to interact with one another using a religious dimension.

In addition to religious activities, both countries exchange students to study each other's language. Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and its Cambodian counterpart reached an agreement in 2005 to create a bilateral language project. The project established Thai language courses at the Royal University of Phnom Penh while opening Khmer language courses at Mahasarakam University in Thailand.¹²⁹

This program aims to guide new generations to have good attitudes toward different languages and cultures, boosting relations between the two countries.

Sports activities along the border also create opportunities for both locals and tourists to connect with one nation and the other. Activities such as friendship cycle tours and running races are held multiple times yearly to promote tourism and cooperation between nations as their routes are along the border.¹³⁰

4.7 Healthcare

Many Cambodians are reported to travel across the border to go to hospitals in Thailand, both private and public. Medical personnel in near-border provinces can also speak Khmer, making Cambodians relieved and confident in medical services.¹³¹ Families of the sick can also take opportunities to travel to various places in

¹²⁸ "2-Nation Kathin of Thailand-Cambodia; Cambodian Royal joins as Host," *Banmuang*, November 3, 2017, <https://www.banmuang.co.th/news/region/94767>. (in Thai)

¹²⁹ "Two Thai-Cambodian Universities Offer Language Exchange Program," *Siamrath Online*, September 28, 2022, <https://siamrath.co.th/n/386322>. (in Thai)

¹³⁰ "Cambodia-Thailand Friendship Cycle Tour Promotes Tourism," *Phnom Penh Post*, July 30, 2022, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cambodia-thailand-friendship-cycle-tour-promotes-tourism>.

¹³¹ Nopparat Kingkaew, "Cambodian Millionaires Come Together to Hospitals in Mueng Surin " *Post Today*, October 14, 2016, <https://www.posttoday.com/international-news/460309>.

Thailand, making “medical tourism” even more profitable. Moreover, visitors can take medical services promptly at a few checkpoints, improving the accessibility of healthcare facilities for both Thai and Cambodian locals near the border.¹³²

4.8 Summary

As activities along the border involve agencies in various dimensions, military operations are insufficient to create a comprehensive environment to ensure not only border conflict but also the well-being of locals on the border. Missions of other agencies become confidence-building measures to reduce distrust of officials involved in all aspects. Efforts from non-military agencies that support the Suranaree Command's execution then help border desecuritization by increasing the transparency of their procedures to their counterparts, maintaining communication, and focusing on civilian needs.



¹³² "D-Day of 'Principle Healthcare,' Cancer Centers open in Thai-Cambodian border provinces," *Matichon Weekly*, June 16, 2022, https://www.matichonweekly.com/healthy/article_567237. (in Thai)

Chapter 5

Findings and Summary

5.1 Findings

The Suranaree Command was established to secure the Thai border, with part of its area of operations covering most of the Thai-Cambodian border. Fighting over the ownership of land near the Preah Vihear temple from 2008 to 2011 demonstrated the duty of the Command as a border defense unit to expel any aggression or threats to national interests. However, militaries needed to revise their defense procedures from reactive to more proactive to comply with the international norm of peaceful resolution as embedded in the United Nations and the ASEAN, of which both Thailand and Cambodia are members. Communication has been established, and information has been exchanged dynamically since the ceasefire.

It turns out that neither side wants to escalate the conflict. Every caught transgression usually ends with a talk between patrol officers and a peaceful halt. Both sides do not want to request higher-echelon officers to get involved in any talks as it is not worth aggravating them in such a small matter. It might also be because officers deployed near the border might ask the locals to trespass the disputed areas to extract resources such as Siamese rosewoods; their interests can be disrupted if high-level officers detect any obscurity of border units' performance. As a result, military units from both sides prefer keeping any risky encounters at the tactical level, implicitly containing border activities from escalating into the state's perception.

Any mechanisms on the border do not necessarily address conflict resolution. Instead, they merely demonstrate the continuity of compliance of the Suranaree Command and its counterpart with international agreements such as the MOUs or ASEAN Charter and provide platforms to solve short-termed issues. Routines on those mechanisms were established and agreed upon by both sides so that no questions would be asked from their higher-ups. Nevertheless, any of the talks currently taking place cannot and choose not to push for boundary issues, as it could potentially escalate the situation into a hostile issue and bring both countries to the ICJ ruling

again. This would contradict both countries' interests in promoting peace along the border to help stabilize domestic politics, the realms that both leaders seek to stabilize. As states benefit from economic interests such as border trade and power purchases, provoking sensitive topics could disrupt connectivity and impair the government's diplomatic and economic performance. Consequently, both sides realized those international mechanisms' practicality and left the other side to conduct their duty without much intervention.

Therefore, while the desecuritization efforts by the RTA implemented by border defense units such as the Suranaree Command can de-escalate or eliminate factors that contribute to border conflict, it does not guarantee long-term resolution as doing so is not within its domain. The most that the Suranaree Command can do is ensure that any conflict on the border is not escalated and can be promptly contained within its area of operations.



5.2 Additional Guidelines

Instead of letting the Suranaree Command become merely a "time-buying" unit, the states need to reconsider the authority of military units on the border, which the 2000 MOU limits. It might be possible to pass the boundary demarcation issue down to the GBC or the RBC level since they both involve military units familiar with the border. This can also empower officials who have established relationships with counterparts from the other side to conduct joint surveying or negotiation.

One can hardly ignore the modernization of the military in neighboring countries. Cambodia is reported to purchase military weapons from China continuously,¹³³ However, this has not triggered any response for the RTA, as there have been no visible threats from Cambodia's security action. As all the RTA's policies focus on defensive plans, strengthening deterrence capabilities for potential border aggression is the best course of action. Nevertheless, military purchases must be appropriate for contemporary threats. As for border security, conventional arms

¹³³ "Cambodia Says to Increase Arms Purchases from China," *Reuters*, July 29, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-cambodia-idUSKCN1U00HS>.

cannot be deployed efficiently. Instead, intelligence collection capabilities such as surveillance, target acquisition, or counterintelligence technology might be preferable.

There are still concerns beyond the Suranaree Command's control that can crumble every effort to de-escalate conflict or improve cooperation. As "securitization" is kept at the state level, suppose one government decides to securitize an issue for political interests again. In that case, there is a high chance that the other side will also securitize the same matter. For instance, if Cambodia must invoke nationalism for political purposes (such as transition for the next Prime Minister), boundary demarcation can be securitized again if the government considers that inciting antagonism toward Thailand is still attainable.

De-escalation efforts of the Suranaree Command toward border desecuritization is limited but functional as long as both sides still believe that communication and confidence-building measures are preferable methods for securing national interests on the border instead of confrontation. De-escalation efforts and cooperation establishment mechanisms on general issues then perform as growing networks that constrain both sides from the need to use lethal methods, which will become more economically and diplomatically harmful day by day and convince that peace and prolonged dispute settlements can co-exist on the border.

REFERENCES

- "2-Nation Kathin of Thailand-Cambodia; Cambodian Royal Joins as Host." *Banmuang*, November 3, 2017. <https://www.banmuang.co.th/news/region/94767>.
- "2nd Army Area Announces 6-Month Accomplishments, Stresses Security on the Northeast." June 18, 2019. <https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/detail/TCATG190618222941029>.
- "3rd Army Area Declares Mission with Its Sub-Units ". *Thairath*, July 11, 2019. <https://www.thairath.co.th/news/local/north/1613285>.
- "22 People Thwarted in Attempt to Illegally Cross Border into Thailand." *Khmer Times*, December 15, 2022. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501203274/22-people-thwarted-in-attempt-to-illegally-cross-border-into-thailand/>.
- "Army Chief Stresses No Fear toward Cambodia, but Worries About War's Impact on Citizens." *MGR Online*, October 28, 2013. <https://mgronline.com/politics/detail/9560000134394>.
- "Army Chief 'Big Daeng' Meets 'Hun Manet' for the First Time." *MGR Online*, January 30, 2019. <https://mgronline.com/indochina/detail/9620000010484>.
- "'Big Too' Talks on Economic Cooperation with 'Hun Sen'." *Post Today*, October 17, 2014. <https://www.posttoday.com/politics/324807>.
- "Cambodia-Thailand Friendship Cycle Tour Promotes Tourism." *Phnom Penh Post*, July 30, 2022. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cambodia-thailand-friendship-cycle-tour-promotes-tourism>.
- "Cambodia Frees Activist as Ties Warm with Thai Junta." *Reuters*, July 1, 2014. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-thailand-idUSKBN0F64OG20140701>.
- "Cambodia Says to Increase Arms Purchases from China." *Reuters*, July 29, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-cambodia-idUSKCN1UO0HS>.
- "Cambodia to Import Electricity from Thailand with Adb's Help." January 31, 2008. Asian Development Bank. <https://www.adb.org/news/cambodia-import-electricity-thailand-adbs-help>.
- "Cambodia, Thai Defense Ministers Meet on Border Issues." *Voice of America*, December

- 24, 2014. <https://www.voanews.com/a/reu-cambodia-thai-defense-ministers-meet-on-border-issues/2571729.html>.
- "Cambodia, Thailand Agree to Clear All Mines on Border." *The Nation*, November 23, 2022. <https://www.nationthailand.com/world/asean/40022368>.
- Carmichael, Robert. "Yingluck Visit Boosts Thai-Cambodia Relations." *Voice of America*, 2011. <https://www.voanews.com/a/yingluck-visit-boosts-thai-cambodia-relations-129882118/145287.html>.
- Chachavalpongpan, Pavin. "Thai-Cambodian Conflict: The Failure of Asean's Dispute Settlement Mechanisms." *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 1, no. 1 (2013): 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.18588/201305.000005>.
- "Chairman's Statement of the 40th and 41st Asean Summits." November 11, 2022. ASEAN. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/01-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-40th-and-41st-ASEAN-Summits-rev.pdf>.
- Chhengpor, Aun. "Ahead of Election, Thai Army Chief Visits Cambodia to Bolster Ties." *Voice of America*, January 30, 2019. <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/ahead-of-election-thai-army-chief-visits-cambodia-to-bolster-ties/4765417.html>.
- "Cross-Border Trade with Cambodia Jumps 16.63 Percent to 144.9 Billion Baht in 2021." *Khmer Times*, February 8, 2022. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501020980/cross-border-trade-with-cambodia-jumps-16-63-percent-to-144-9-billion-baht-in-2021/>.
- "D-Day of 'Principle Healthcare,' Cancer Centers Open in Thai-Cambodian Border Provinces." *Matichon Weekly*, June 16, 2022. https://www.matichonweekly.com/healthy/article_567237.
- "Data on Forest Conservation (Map)." DSI. <http://map.dsi.go.th/>.
- "Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Held Talk with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia." 2021, <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/thaicambodiabilat08062021-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683c>.
- "Dmcr Joins International Conference for Strengthening Quality Reconnaissance in Asean." July 31, 2019. Department of Marine and Coastal Resources. <https://www.dmcr.go.th/detailAll/34252/nws/11>.

- "Dnp and Cambodia's Ministry of Environment Begin Cooperation on Forest and Animal Conservation." June 27, 2018. National News Bureau of Thailand.
<https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/detail/WNEVN6106280020002>.
- "Dsi Annual Report 2022." DSI, 2022.
<https://www.dsi.go.th/Upload/5362ea5d1989fe3c4fcea803b54088cd.pdf>.
- "History of Surasakmontree Command." https://surasakmontri.rta.mi.th/?page_id=12.
Information Thai People Should Know About the Phra Viharn Temple and Thailand – Cambodian Negotiation. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011.
<https://dl.parliament.go.th/handle/20.500.13072/357154>
- "Thailand-Cambodia Coordinate to Protected Areas and Trans-Boundary." National News Bureau of Thailand, Updated June 21, 2018,
<https://thainews.prd.go.th/en/news/detail/WNEVN6106270010008>.
- "Interview with a Former Suranaree Personnel on Command's Performance." By Phromnachanok Ketphan. June 8, 2023.
- "Interview with a Staff-Level Suranaree Officer on Command's Performance (1)." By Phromnachanok Ketphan. April 5, 2023.
- "Interview with a Staff-Level Suranaree Officer on Command's Performance (2)." By Phromnachanok Ketphan. June 9, 2023.
- "Jbc Concludes with New Border Checkpoint ". *Pattaya Mail*, February 15, 2012
<https://www.pattayamail.com/thailandnews/jbc-concludes-with-new-border-checkpoint-10117>.
- "Uncertainty at Home Brings Calm to the Thai–Cambodian Border." East Asia Forum, Updated November 20, 2014,
<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/11/20/uncertainty-at-home-brings-calm-to-the-thai-cambodian-border/>.
- Kingkaew, Nopparat. "Cambodian Millionaires Come Together to Hospitals in Mueng Surin " *Post Today*, October 14, 2016. <https://www.posttoday.com/international-news/460309>.
- Lee, Sang Kook. "Siam Mismapped." *South East Asia Research* 22, no. 1 (2014): 39–55.
<https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2014.0196>.
- Leng, Thearith. "Cambodia's Contemporary Security Challenges ". *NIDS Joint Research*

11 (2014): 3-13.

http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/joint_research/series11/pdf/01.pdf.

"Military Withdrawal from the Preah Vihear Temple, the Beginning of Territory Lost."

MGR Online, July 21, 2012. <https://mgronline.com/daily/detail/9550000089501>

Nanuam, Wassana. "Army Chief Visits Troops near Preah Vihear." *Bangkok Post*, July 6, 2015. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/614216/army-chief-visits-troops-near-preah-vihear>.

———. "Army to Reshuffle, Not Withdraw Troops at Temple, Sukumpol Says " *Bangkok Post*, July 12, 2012.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/302022/army-to-reshuffle-not-withdraw-troops-at-temple-sukumpol-says>.

———. "Border Battlefields to Be Developed." *Bangkok Post*, February 15, 2019.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1629507/border-battlefields-to-be-developed>.

———. "Cambodian Border Growing Clearer." *Bangkok Post*, September 2, 2022.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2382191/cambodian-border-growing-clearer>.

———. "Hun Sen Denies Hiding Reds." *Bangkok Post*, December 27, 2014.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/452387/hun-sen-denies-hiding-reds>.

———. "Hun Sen, Pm Agree on Closer Links." *Bangkok Post*, September 8, 2017.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1320231/hun-sen-pm-agree-on-closer-links>.

———. "Neighbours Pledge to Target Scammers." *Bangkok Post*, November 26, 2022.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2446519/neighbours-pledge-to-target-scammers>.

"Ousted Thai Leader Embraces Cambodian Pm." September 17, 2011.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/ousted-thai-leader-embraces-cambodian-pm-130015693/167999.html>.

"Pad Asks Govt Not to Accept Icj Ruling." *Bangkok Post*, January 8 2013.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/329813/govt-asked-not-to-accept-icj-ruling>.

"Legitimacy and Military Rule in Today's Thailand." *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Updated April 1, 2017, <https://kyotoreview.org/yav/legitimacy-military-rule-thailand/>.

"Parallel Strengthened Villages Project." *Banmuang*, August 9, 2019.

<https://www.banmuang.co.th/news/region/159582>.

Parpart, Erich. "Call Centre Scammers Arrested in Cambodia in Joint Operation." July 11, 2022. *Thai Enquirer*. <https://www.thaienquirer.com/41633/call-centre-scammers-arrested-in-cambodia-in-joint-operation/>.

Phan, Hao Duy. "Institutional Design and Its Constraints: Explaining Asean's Role in the Temple of Preah Vihear Dispute." *Asian Journal of International Law* 5, no. 1 (2014): 7-15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s2044251314000113>.

Phutpeng, Ploy. "Thailand Controlling Spread of Covid-19 Along Important Trading Border with Cambodia." June 30, 2020. WHO.

<https://www.who.int/thailand/news/feature-stories/detail/thailand-controlling-spread-of-covid-19-along-important-trading-border-with-cambodia>.

"Pm Discusses with Cambodian Deputy Pm and Fa Minister on Stressing Cooperation at Every Level." Royal Thai Government, February 23, 2023.

<https://www.thaigov.go.th/news/contents/details/65379>.

"Pm Insists Troops Will Stay Put." *Bangkok Post*, November 13, 2013.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/379507/pm-insists-troops-will-stay-put>.

"Pm Talks with Hun Sen on Developing the Border into Peaceful Areas." *Thai Post*, April 22, 2019. <https://www.thaipost.net/main/detail/34181>.

Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers. Council of Ministers, 2014.

Pongsudhirak, Thitinan. "All Quiet on the Thai-Cambodian Front." *Bangkok Post*, January 18, 2019. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/1613074/all-quiet-on-the-thai-cambodian-front>.

———. "All Quiet on the Thai-Cambodian Front: Drivers, Dynamics, Directions." *South East Asia Research* 26, no. 4: 330-46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967828x18809591>.

"Prayut' Claims to Already Have a 5-Year Vision Plan, and Just Needs Only 1 Year to

- Build Fundamentals for the Next ". January 9, 2015, *Prachatai*.
<https://prachatai.com/journal/2015/01/57338>.
- "Prayut Leads the Councils of Ministers to Join Thai-Cambodian Meeting with Warm Ambience." *Matichon Weekly*, September 7, 2017.
https://www.matichonweekly.com/hot-news/article_52889.
- Putri, Indah Merdeka, and Ali Muhyidin. "Cambodian and Thai Political Actors Interest in Preah Vihear Temple Border Conflict in 2008-2011." *Jurnal Politik* 4, no. 2 (2019): 219-36. <https://doi.org/10.7454/jp.v3i2.73>.
- PwC. "Regional Electricity Trade in Asean." 2022.
<https://www.pwc.com/sg/en/publications/assets/page/regional-electricity-trade-in-asean.pdf>.
- "Thai Ministry Seeks to Clarify 'Gangster' Gaffe." *The Cambodia Daily*, Updated April 2, 2009, <https://english.cambodiadaily.com/news/thai-ministry-seeks-to-clarify-gangster-gaffe-62922/>.
- Rattanasengchanh, P. Michael. "The Role of Preah Vihear in Hun Sen's Nationalism Politics, 2008–2013." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 36, no. 3 (2017): 63–89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341703600303>.
- Samean, Lay. "Healthy Demand for Border Passes as Checkpoints Reopen." *Phnom Penh Post*, May 24, 2022. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/healthy-demand-border-passes-checkpoints-reopen>.
- Setyawati, Dinita. "Cambodia, Thailand and the Asean Way." *New Mandala*, November 18, 2012. <https://www.newmandala.org/cambodia-thailand-and-the-asean-way/>.
- Singhaputargun, Nichan. "The Thailand–Cambodia Preah Vihear Temple Dispute: Its Past, Present and Future." *Contemporary Conflicts in Southeast Asia* 3 (2015): 111-35. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0042-3_6.
- "The Sixth Meeting of the Governors of Cambodian-Thai Border Provinces."
<http://www.fad.moi.go.th/images/Document/TheMeeting/6.The-meeting-of-Governors-Thailand--Cambodia-Eng.pdf>.
- Sochan, Ry. "Thai Diplomat's Visit Focused on Economy Plans." *Phnom Penh Post*, December 21 2021. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national-politics/thai-diplomats-visit-focused-economy-plans>.

- Soeum, Yin. "Poipet Reopens Crossing to Travellers." *Khmer Times*, May 2, 2022.
<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501067323/poipet-reopen-crossing-to-travellers/>.
- "Solving Illegal Siamese Rosewood Logging on Thai-Cambodian Border." July 23, 2013.
 ryt9. <https://www.ryt9.com/s/cabt/1697557>.
- "Sri Saket Locals Protest against Military Withdrawal from the Preah Vihear Temple, Fearing Loss of Territory to Cambodia." *MGR Online*, July 17, 2012.
<https://mgronline.com/local/detail/9550000087944>.
- "Forgotten Conflicts: Cambodia and Thailand." CONIAS Risk Intelligence, Updated October 28, 2021, <https://conias.com/en/border-conflict-cambodia-thailand/>.
- "Thai-Cambodian Border Crossing Points."
<http://www.fad.moi.go.th/images/Document/PointofEntry/1.Point-of-Entry-Cambodia.pdf>.
- "Thai Armed Forces Heighten Thai-Cambodian Border Relations." *Khaosod Online*, January 17, 2019. https://www.khaosod.co.th/around-thailand/news_2099145.
- "Thai Defence Minister Attends Thai-Cambodia Border Meeting in Phnom Penh ".
Pattaya Mail, December 22, 2011
<https://www.pattayamail.com/thailandnews/thai-defence-minister-attends-thai-cambodia-border-meeting-in-phnom-penh-8838>.
- "Thai Pm Resumes Talks with Cambodia on Cooperation on Trade, Investment, Energy and Economy." October 31, 2014. JS100.
<https://www.js100.com/en/site/news/view/7349>.
- "Thai, Cambodia Troops Clash for Fourth Day." *Taipei Times*, Updated February 7, 2011,
<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2011/02/08/2003495341>.
- "Thai, Cambodian Border Military Holds 23rd Meeting." *Khmer Times*, July 26, 2022.
<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501119638/thai-cambodian-border-military-holds-23rd-meeting/>.
- "Thai, Cambodian Troops Leave Disputed Area." *Al Jazeera*, July 18, 2012.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/7/18/thai-cambodian-troops-leave-disputed-area>.
- "Thailand - Cambodia Sign an Mou on Cooperation on Protected and Conserved Areas,

- and Transnational Biodiversity." January 31, 2018. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. <https://www.mnre.go.th/th/news/detail/10516>.
- "Thailand (Tha) and Cambodia (Khm) Trade." OEC. <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/tha/partner/khm#bi-compete>.
- "Thailand Contributed Bht 3,000,000 to Support the Well-Being of Cambodian Migrant Workers in Quarantine." March 25, 2021. Royal Thai Embassy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. <https://phnompenh.thaiembassy.org/en/content/3million-2564-2>.
- "Thailand Military Seizes Power in Coup." BBC, Updated May 22, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27517591>.
- Thanida Tansubhapol, and Wassana Nanuam. "Yingluck Calls Urgent Meet over Preah Vihear Ruling." *Bangkok Post*, October 17 2013. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/375040/yingluck-calls-urgent-meet-over-preah-vihear-ruling>.
- Thanida Tansubhapol, and Apinya Wipatayotin. "Icj Delivers Win-Win Ruling." *Bangkok Post*, November 12, 2013. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/379318/icj-delivers-win-win-ruling>.
- Thomas Escritt, and Amy Sawitta Lefevre. "Thailand Braces for Trouble as U.N. Court Backs Cambodia in Border Row " *Reuters*, November 11, 2013 <https://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-thailand-cambodia-idCABRE9AA0D120131111>.
- TNN. "Border Trade Can Grow Even More; Cambodia Request Opening 3 More Crossing Points." YouTube, 2022. <https://youtu.be/ONG7xYlb-Es>.
- "Tough Rules in Place for Border Passes." *Bangkok Post*, January 3, 2018. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1389318/tough-rules-in-place-for-border-passes>.
- "Two Thai-Cambodian Universities Offer Language Exchange Program." *Siamrath Online*, September 28, 2022. <https://siamrath.co.th/n/386322>.
- "Udomdej Declared Talk with Cambodia Went Smooth without Addressing the Preah Vihear Temple." January 22, 2015. Sanook. <https://www.sanook.com/news/1735261/>.

- "Un Court Rules for Cambodia in Preah Vihear Temple Dispute with Thailand " United Nations, Updated November 11, 2013, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/11/455062>.
- Vibol, Torn. "Thailand, Cambodia Join Hands in Demining Along Border." *Khmer Times*, November 23, 2022. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501189420/thailand-cambodia-join-hands-in-demining-along-border/>.
- Vireak, Thou. "Power Trade Talks with Thailand Are Planned." *Phnom Penh Post*, November 5, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/power-trade-talks-thailand-are-planned>.
- Wagener, Martin. "Lessons from Preah Vihear: Thailand, Cambodia, and the Nature of Low-Intensity Border Conflicts." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 30, no. 3 (2011): 27-59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341103000302>.
- "Waging Peace: Asean and the Thai-Cambodian Border Conflict." International Crisis Group, Updated August 11, 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/waging-peace-asean-and-thai-cambodian-border-conflict>.
- Weaver, Ole. "Securitization and Desecuritization." (1993). <https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/assets/pdf/Waever-Securitization.pdf>.
- Wong-Anan, Nopporn. "Temple Spat Rages in Thailand after Unesco Listing." *Reuters* July 8 2008. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-temple-idINBKK15784420080708>.
- Yoosuk, Ubonwan. "The Preah Vihear Temple: Roots of Thailand-Cambodia Border Dispute." *International Journal of Asian Social Science* 3, no. 4 (2013): 921-29. <https://archive.aessweb.com/index.php/5007/article/view/2465>.



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

VITA

NAME Phromnachanok Ketphan

DATE OF BIRTH 7 July 1997

PLACE OF BIRTH Bangkok

INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School
The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina

HOME ADDRESS 29 Soi Nak Niwat 42, Nak Niwat Road
Ladprao District
Bangkok, 10230



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY