

### Soviet Is Encouraged

Since Mr. Nixon proclaimed his new policy for Asia — encouraging nations there to take a greater role in their defense — Thailand has not only given gentle encouragement to overtures from the Soviet Union and other European Communists powers but, more important, has also lifted the anathema on Communist China and has opened an avenue of communications with North Vietnam.

Bangkok now says that it welcomes open discussions with Peking on any subject. Last October, a permanent "China-watching" task force was established in the Foreign Ministry to keep top officials informed of all facets of possible change in China. While continuing to oppose the seating of Peking in the United Nations, officials indicate this is no longer a matter of principle, but can be solved when a solution is found to the issue of who will hold the Chinese seat on the Security Council.

The Foreign Ministry is also carrying out a study on the possibility of ending Thailand's ban on trade with China. Although official contacts with Peking are denied, it is commonly assumed here that there have been contacts through the large community of overseas Chinese, who are influential in Thai commerce.

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