

Thai Buildup in Disputed Waters

Bangkok.

Thailand alerted its border police and reinforced its naval forces off the southeastern coast yesterday following a sea battle with Cambodian gunboats.

Two patrol boats and a destroyer-type vessel were dispatched to the disputed waters 200 miles southeast of Bangkok, where a gun battle erupted Thursday leaving one Cambodian vessel sunk and six Thai marine police wounded, government sources said.

Police said a Thai gunboat went to the rescue of a fishing trawler, which had been seized by the Khmer Rouge about 20 miles off the Thai coast, and ran into a hail of

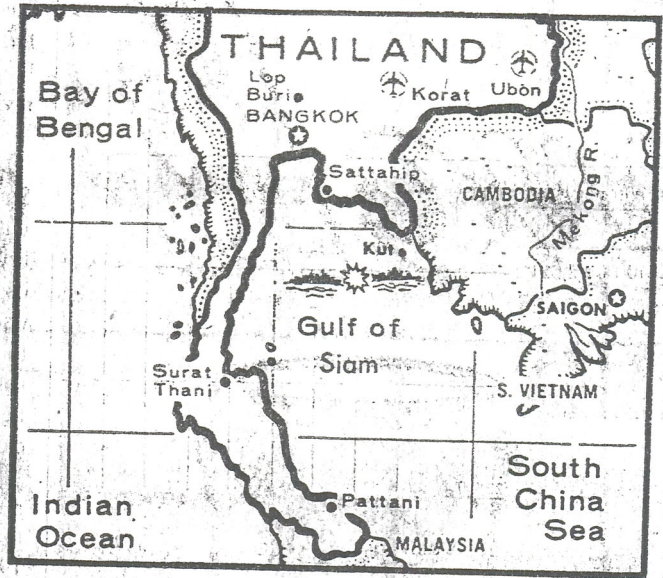
fire from two small Cambodian vessels. One of the Khmer Rouge vessels was sunk, but the Thais were unable to rescue the fishing boat with about 30 crewmen aboard.

The fate of the fishermen was not known.

The Khmer Rouge are the Communist-led rebels who took over Cambodia in April.

Thai authorities said the incident occurred near the Thai-controlled island of Kut and inside Thailand's territorial water. But both Cambodia and Thailand claim a wedge of water extending out from the southeastern frontier.

A series of incidents have



UPI Telephoto

Thai and Cambodian vessels fought near Kut island

occurred in the Gulf of Siam, off the Cambodian coast since the Khmer Rouge seized power April 17. The most dramatic was the seizure of the American merchant vessel Mayaguez last month and its recapture by an American task force.

Associated Press