RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

The southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, otherwise known as *changwat chaidaen pak tai* (southern border provinces), where most of the current violence is taking place, proves to be the hardest region for the Thai government to integrate with Bangkok. These provinces have also experienced endless turmoil since they were brought under Bangkok's rule. These resistance movements have taken place particularly between the years of 1950s up to 1980s, but in the last decade, have lost much of their momentum as a result of improved diplomatic and economic relations with the central government of Bangkok. However, the beginning of the twenty-first century again witnessed a recurrence or resurgence of similar uprisings. Why has the conflict reappeared? This paper attempts to understand the causes leading to the resurgence of the conflicts despite its waning in the 1980s and 1990s. The paper will focus in particular on the domestic factors "enabling" the conflict by referring to some of the recent events that have taken place in southern Thailand. The paper argues that the violence in the south is very much attributed to the government's policy, especially the issue of its heavy-handed strategy and in turn, the paper will demonstrate the positive correlation between persecution and violence. The term persecution in this paper is, however, confined to the government's heavy handed strategy that is reflected mainly by operations carried out by the security forces.

Keywords: *Southern Thailand, violence, resurgence.*

BACKGROUND

"The South is Burning" was the title of a regular column in *The Nation*, a Thai English language daily for most of the year 2005. Indeed the recent spate of violence engulfing southern Thailand has attracted serious attention not only in Thailand but regionally as well as internationally. The southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat,[1] are most affected and continue to witness almost daily killings and bombings and to date, despite many attempts at quelling the violence, none have borne a solution and these provinces continue to be threatened by the turmoil.

It appears that this region has never been free from unrest, and the present level of violence is escalating. Considering the targets 'victimized' by unidentified actors with unknown motives or purpose, the violence has brought both confusion, and endless speculation.

What are the causes and contributing factors to the emergence and escalation of violence despite its waning in the 1980s and 1990s?[2] A number of studies have been carried out with the intent to understand the underlying causes for the insurgencies in the south, and each with different interpretations and perceptions. This paper highlights some of these root causes and elaborates on other new related factors, focusing in particular, on the domestic factors contributing to the resurgence of violence in the south.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Historically, the states (provinces) of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat were part of the old Kingdom of Patani,[3] which was a major port and political center in the isthmian region between the 16th and 18th centuries.[4] These provinces were ruled by independent Malay Rajas whose only obligation to the neighboring powerful Siamese state was the tri-annual payment of tribute in the form of the *bunga mas dan perak* (ornamental gold and silver tree) as well other forms of payment in cash and kind.[5]

In the late eighteenth century, however, the Kingdom of Patani was brought under the rule of Bangkok; its rulers, nevertheless, remained largely autonomous in conducting the domestic affairs of their respective states (provinces). In the late nineteenth century, Siam facing increasing western imperialist threat embarked on a move to tighten its hold on outlying frontier provinces such as those in the northern and southern part of its kingdom. Thus, through the Royal Decree of 1901, Siam placed the provinces of the Kingdom of Patani under its direct rule, resulting in the centralization of the latter's administration and its finances through a centrally- controlled Revenue Department.[6] This marked the beginning of resistance movements against direct Thai rule.

The Malay-Muslims, who are the predominant ethnic group in these southern provinces, in particular the ruling elite and the senior Muslim clerics, reacted to Bangkok's incursion, initially, by organizing informal resistance movements. Their objections stemmed from

the dissatisfaction with the assimilation policies imposed by Bangkok, in its attempt to integrate the Malay-Muslim provinces into the realm and culture of the Thai-Buddhist kingdom. .

The resentment among the Malay-Muslims was manifested in varying forms of confrontation, such as attempts to ignore policies imposed by central government, in what could be termed as "everyday forms of resistance".[7] Examples of the means taken to express their grievances were through boycotting meetings, as well as by refusing to pay taxes.[8] This reaction was common when the central government imposed the policy of divide and rule, which the Malays perceived as an attempt to control and take possession of their homeland. The conflict therefore, became driven by a reactionary impulse to strive for autonomy in order to preserve the territorial sovereignty.

Over time, steps taken by the central government to impose its policy of assimilation as a means to integrate the Malay-Muslims into the Thai-Buddhist majority, was seen by the former as an issue that needed to be addressed 'aggressively'. This was due to the fact that policies introduced by the central government were viewed as disregarding the rights and uniqueness of the Muslim community. For instance, the Thai laws replacing the local *shariah* and *adat* laws, as well as the Education Act promulgated in 1921, were actions perceived by the Malay-Muslims as a means to destroy their existing system of laws and education, and their implementation noticeably caused strong resentment among the Malay-Muslims. [9] Thus, they 'woke-up' to a struggle and fight to preserve their identity as a distinct Muslim community. Apparently, the earlier struggle for autonomy and territorial preservation of sovereignty intensified with efforts to preserve this identity. The causes of the conflict during these periods are discernible, and the actors readily identifiable among the local Malay-Muslims in particular.

Bangkok's policies of assimilation threatened the culture of the Malays, in particular the Malay language, *Adat* (cultural norms) and religion. This is evident from the policies of assimilation seen during the premiership of Federal Marshall Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944). [10] Under his infamous policy, the *Ratthaniyom*, the word *Malay* in describing the identity of Malays in southern Thailand was abolished. This was perceived by the Malay-Muslims in the south as blatant disregard for the history and identity of the Malays, and in turn prompted the emergence of the struggle for an independent Patani.

Phibun's policies were seen as insensitive to the uniqueness of their culture, beliefs, and ethnic-minority 'way of life'; this included the minority Chinese community as well. For example, Muslims were reportedly forced to worship idols, which led to serious anger among the Malay-Muslims as idolatry is strictly forbidden by their belief. This policy only renewed conflicts in the region such as the Namsai rebellion, despite the central government's effort to win the hearts of the Malay-Muslims through political representation in the parliament. It prompted the Malay-Muslim leaders of the period to call for secession of the related provinces namely, Satun, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat from the Thai Kingdom.

After World War II, the term 'separatism' was markedly attributed to Malay-Muslims in this region. It was then that Malay leaders of the related southern provinces put much emphasis on a struggle for irredentism with the Malayan Federation and independence of the four southern provinces namely Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun. Endless insurgencies, directly linked to the Malay-Muslims, escalated when the Phibun government stepped in for a second term (1948-1957). Under his regime, the Malay-Muslims in the south suffered the worst political oppression. This sequence of extreme repressive and offensive policy may explain the sudden growth of insurgency in the region. Some scholars also argue that 'separatism' was in fact 'invented and reinforced' by Thai authorities as a pretext to excuse their suppressive intervention and policies of intimidation in the region, in order to crush the political assertions of the Malay-Muslims and their fight to defend their Malay Muslim identity.[11]

Despite the fact that the earliest resistance movement stemmed from the Malay-Muslims resentment over the annexation of the "independent" Greater Patani into the Thai Kingdom, the official national history of Thailand portrays the Thai Kingdom as the sole possessor of the Malay states in the south, including Greater Patani.[12] It also asserts that the demands of western imperialism forced Siam to cede parts of its traditional territories in order to retain its own independence. Therefore, based on the official central government perspective, the discourse argues that Thai independence was maintained partly by the loss of territory, referring in particular to the loss of Siamese territories to France following the Paknam incident of 1893. [13] On the other hand, the Malay-Muslims justify their struggle as a fight for their right to restore or defend lost lands usurped by an alien authority. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the continuous struggle of the Muslims in southern Thailand was to regain the independence of the Kingdom of Greater Patani. This hope ended prematurely following the signing of the Anglo-Siamese treaties of 1904 and 1909 marking a complete incorporation of the southern provinces with the Kingdom of Siam.[14] These two contradicting and conflicting views appear irreconcilable, and inevitably contribute fuel for the insurgencies in southern Thailand.

The Haji Sulong uprising which took place in 1948 under the leadership of Haji Sulong, a renowned Muslim cleric in Pattani, is one such incident demonstrating the struggle by the Muslims of the southern provinces for an independent Patani. The Thai forces succeeded in defeating this uprising, however, Haji Sulong's attempts were later continued by other individuals through organizations such as the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), which spearheaded the movement for a liberated Pattani throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE 1980S – EARLY 2000

However, during the 1980s and 1990s, relative peace prevailed in the southern region, with few and intermittent incidents of violence, which were quickly quelled by the

government. This in turn led to the waning role and influence of Pattani liberation movements such as the PULO and BERSATU in the period of 1980/90s.[15] A shift in government policy during these years has been viewed as contributing to peace and stability in southern Thailand. For instance, a new ruling under General Prem Tinsulanond had adopted policies that supported the right and freedom of Muslims in practicing their belief and faith.[16] The Prem government also initiated a program offering amnesty for separatists who laid down their arms. More importantly, economic development brought by the Democrat Party-led government to the southern border provinces under the 'National Security Policy for Southern Border Provinces' contributed immensely to the relative peace in southern Thailand.[17]

Nonetheless, peace in the southern border provinces proved to be short-lived. The opening of the twenty first century began to witness the resurgence of the conflict. From 2002 onwards, the region came under increasing attention for incidents of crime involving drugs and arms. PM Thaksin Shinawatra declared in February 2003, a war on drugs, resulting in a high death toll and heavy losses incurred by drug smuggling groups as well as incidents of possible victimization by the security forces.[18] In June 2003, during Thaksin's visit to Washington, three prominent community leaders were arrested and charged with membership of Jemaah Islamiyah, apparently an attempt to impress President Bush.[19] As security forces became more concerned over possible links between violence in the south and Muslim fundamentalist, the frequency of searches and seizures increased, especially in the *pondoks* (religious schools).[20] An activist lawyer, Somchai Neelapaijit who accused the police of barbarically torturing arrested suspects, "disappeared" in 2004, and subsequently, although four police officers were arrested and accused of abducting him, Somchai never re-appeared and was later declared dead. The tensions associated with the conflict in the region continued unabated and the old pattern of school arson, railway bombings, and attacks on police posts in the three southernmost provinces re-emerged.

Undeniably, these instances provided an enabling environment for continual and escalating violence, which could be seen in three major outbreaks. The first on 4 January 2004, involved carefully coordinated attacks in which militants raided an army arsenal, torched schools and police posts, and subsequently set off several bombs.[21] The second, on 28 April 2004, involved synchronized attacks on eleven police posts and army checkpoints across Pattani, Yala and Songkhla, ending in a bloody showdown at the Krue Se mosque where the Thai army gunned down 32 men. By the end of the day, 105 militants, one civilian, and five members of the security forces were dead.[22] The third, on 25 October 2004, began with a demonstration outside a police station and ended with the deaths of at least 85 Muslim men and boys, most from suffocation after arrest because of being piled over each other in army trucks while being transported from the scene of crime (Takbai, Narathiwat) to an army base in Pattani, a journey of almost three hours. [23]

After the 4 January 2004 attack, when government declared martial law and sent extra numbers of police officers to the region, the pattern of violence changed. Not only

were government officials murdered, civilians too were fatally shot or hacked to death in a spate of violent acts. The unrest caused the deaths of not only Muslims; Buddhists too were victimized. Between the years of 2004 and 2005, approximately 1000 casualties involving various groups of societies, regardless of ethnicity have been recorded. As reported during January to November 2004 alone, there were 1,253 incidents of violence in the south.[24]

As the uprisings mostly took place in the provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, home to the majority of ethnic Malay Muslims in Thailand, some hold the view that the people in these provinces are indeed the actors behind these life-threatening incidences. The violence is generally perceived as an attempt to achieve the goal of re-establishing an independent Kingdom of Patani. Besides the demographic factor, this assumption arises from the historical evidence that paints Malay-Muslims as a rebellious group contending with the central government. In particular, those Malay-Muslims who have organized some forms of liberal movements, just to name a few, the long established separatist movements such as Patani United Liberation Front (PULO), National Revolutionary Front (BRN), and Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani (GMIP), are often labeled and alleged to be responsible for the unrest. Despite the strong accusation towards this particular group, their involvement in this sudden surge of conflicts is yet to be proven, and the motives of the uprisings are still vague.

History clearly depicts the struggle of the Malay-Muslim minorities for autonomy and independence, a cause particularly evident during the 1950s to about the 1970s. The clash between the state (Bangkok) and the groups seeking autonomy led to a few arrests, deportation, and deaths of mostly members actively involved in the struggle. There were few cases of mass civilian deaths during this period as opposed to the more recent period. This change is alarming and indicative of a change in the pattern of the conflict. Indeed, the high casualties involving civilian Muslims themselves i.e. the Kru Sue and Takbai incidents and more recently the incident leading to 131 (Malay Muslim) Thais from the conflict region fleeing to Malaysia to seek refuge indicated that these groups of Malay-Muslims have become increasingly vulnerable to the spate of unrest in the south. In addition, the unidentified actors behind the resistances have succeeded in causing Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims to be highly suspicious of each other. The latter were labeled as stereotypical terrorists that apparently 'forced' some to migrate; the case of the 131 Thais mentioned earlier is an example. If the Malay-Muslims were indeed the actors behind these insurgencies, the begging question posed is how they would benefit from the killing of their own ethnic members.

Some analysts also point out that police corruption, drug running, and theft by local criminal gangs, are often responsible for the violence.[25] PM Thaksin, on 27 July 2002 declared:

> There's no separatism, no ideological terrorists, just common bandits. ...In some places, it is conflict between local politicians. In others, it's conflict over the profits from drugs and vice. Elsewhere, it's a result of personal

> conflict. Sometimes there is politics in the background too. In sum, it's varied, but no ideological terrorism.[26]

Nonetheless, despite this statement that the unrest has nothing to do with a 'separatist movement', events and government policies in the south have proven otherwise. The continuous indictments of religious teachers for breeding militants may well be an important indicator that the government also believes that separatist groups might be the actors behind the unrest.

These allegations aside, the way Bangkok managed the conflict in the south too can be viewed as a major factor that led to the escalating violence in the south. For instance, the dispatch of more than 3000 troops to the areas after the incidence of 4th January not only frightened the local community, but at the same time their heavy-handedness and insensitivity to Islamic practices also triggered anger among the local Muslims. The introduction of martial law to preserve peace is also questionable because it has somewhat contributed to the tensions. In response to this law, a group of social critics has called for the government to lift martial law as it only creates mistrust and misunderstanding between the residents and authorities, as well as contributing to the escalation of problems.[27] Perhaps, martial law is one of the key factors in fanning mistrust between residents and authorities and is likely to exacerbate the situation.

VIOLENCE AND HEAVY-HANDED STRATEGY

The correlation between violence and persecution as suggested by Byman is expanded in this paper to understand the current state of affairs in the southern Muslim provinces of Thailand. According to him, group movement becomes violent when government persecution increases.[28] Moreover, Byman explains that, violence erupts due to inevitable persecution by the government as well as the retaliation of government. By retaliating against any particular group, the state not only creates hostility towards the government, but also heightens awareness of a cause that may otherwise have remained obscure. Byman also cautions that violence by the state could poison inter-communal relations leading to lasting hostility.

This paper attempts to reveal that the current turmoil is predominantly caused by events that may be ascribed to Byman's thesis. His proposition is used because this paper strongly suggests that the current wave of violence is no longer indicative of violence committed for ideological or religious motives as perceived in the past (1950-1970s). Among the indicators used to differentiate the present turmoil from the earlier struggles namely, the indiscriminate pattern of attacks and targets (victims of attacks), as well as the lack of any group laying claim to responsibility, strongly suggest that new and unknown perpetrators are at work. In addition, the current wave of violence, unlike in the past, appears millenarian in nature because it appears to have won "mass" support and the active role of the masses in sustaining the almost daily events of skirmishes,

uprisings and retaliations against government security forces. This pattern of greater people involvement is a clear departure from the past when only members of separatist organizations were predominantly involved.[29]

As far as the term 'persecution' is concerned, its use in this paper is referred and confined to government (Bangkok) policies in the south that seem to be heavy handed. This heavy handedness is demonstrable in many instances, such as the role played by the security forces in the south, as well as the issue of extra judicial killings perceived as violating human rights. To support this argument, instances of the government's 'failure' to investigate certain cases, the excessive use of force and the lack of coordination among security forces are highlighted in this paper. This is in line with Byman's analysis, which describes a worsening violence pursuant to increasing government persecutions when no venue is available for moral outrage to counter the ethnic tension that leads to further group cohesion.[30]

In fact, the history of the Malay-Muslims in Southern Thailand provides ample evidence of organized collective action by members of this group to promote and defend their interest. With the exception of a few minority groups, most minorities in Thailand were unequally treated via policies that perpetuated practices that violated the widely recognized standards of human rights. Consequently, people who are treated unequally resent such treatment and repeatedly attempt to improve their condition.[31]

In the case of the Muslim south, the aim to gain greater autonomy and independence was evident when Malay-Muslims, in particular, reacted to protest against policies imposed by the central government which failed to give due respect to their unique belief, culture, and religious practice. This movement intensified after World War II, and then incorporated the call for irredentism with the Malayan Federation vis-à-vis separation of the related provinces. Again, these events 'produced' the term "separatism" in the south. However violence itself is dynamic in nature and the driving 'dynamic' factors leading to the occurrence and recurrence of violence also change. Relevant explanations based on the concepts of "relative deprivation" and "internal colonialism" is now increasingly discussed by scholars to understand the causes of insurgencies or separatist movements. These discussions revolve around the issue of violence as a specific response to economic, cultural, and political subordination or deprivation of minority communities by the state; in other words, internal colonialism.[32]

Nevertheless, over time, despite the government's effort to provide political avenues and economic development in the south, violence continued to erupt. Therefore, economic factors and (the lack of) political representation alone cannot sufficiently explain the current state of affairs in these provinces; instead other factors have exacerbated the situation. The ultra-nationalist element of government policy found during Phibun's premiership seems to be absent in the current regime. Undeniably, the current approach is less "nationalist" (e.g. absence of attempts to "Siamese" the Malays of the south), instead the arbitrary and heavy-handed implementation of government policies indicate weak governance and the lack of respect for human security, in turn, encouraging a condition of lawlessness in the southern region.

RESURGENCE OF CONFLICT

In order to understand the present unrest in southern Thailand, it is essential to highlight some of the recent major outbreaks in this area.[33] As mentioned earlier, the first incident occurred on 4 January 2004 when an unidentified armed group attacked a Royal Thai Army Base in Cho Airong district in Narathiwat. Four soldiers were killed and some 400 weapons were stolen in the attack. At the same time, 20 schools were set on fire in what appeared to be a coordinated operation and resulted in the killing of another four Thai soldiers.[34]

Following this, on 28 April 2004, an armed political group launched coordinated attacks on government facilities in Pattani, Yala, and Songkhla provinces. The 28th of April is the anniversary of separatist uprisings in the south - the Haji Sulong uprising - that occurred in the year 1948, when many Muslims were killed in three days of violence. The memory of that past incident was "resurrected", to some extent, when on 28 April 2004, groups of men armed with knives, machetes, and guns, attacked 11 bases and checkpoints in the southern provinces, resulting in the deaths of five members of the Thai security forces. The security forces, in response, killed over 100 Muslims. In one incident 19 young men were shot dead by the security forces in Susoh village, Sa Ba Yoi district, Songkhla province; fifteen of whom were reported to have had gunshot wounds in the back of the head, suggesting they were shot while fleeing or killed in what amounts to be extra-judicial executions. In another major incident that day, security forces killed 31 men inside the Krue Se mosque in Pattani province, after some of them had attacked a nearby check point and killed two members of the security forces.[35]

Again, on 25 October 2004, some 1,500 people gathered in front of Tak Bai police station, Narathiwat province, protesting the detention of six 'village defense volunteers'. After several hours, demonstrators reportedly attempted to storm the police barrier. The security forces used a water cannon and tear gas to disperse the crowd; some of the demonstrators then threw rocks and other materials at the security forces. The soldiers fired shots into the air and at head height directly into the crowd. Seven people were shot dead during the demonstrations and many demonstrators were beaten while forced to lie for hours in the hot sun with their hands tied behind their backs. About 1300 people were subsequently loaded into trucks, lying in piles of one above the other, and transported to Inkayut Military Camp in the province of Pattani. The journey took five hours, during which time those on the bottom layers were crushed by those piled on top of them. Seventy-eight people died, reportedly as a result of suffocation, renal failure, and collapse of major internal organs.[36]

Prior to the eruption of major uprisings, it is vital to note that the relative peace in the region, sustained for almost a decade, was broken in 2001. In the years between 1993 and 2000, there were only a few incidents of separatist violence, accounting for a handful of casualties. In 2001 alone, 19 policemen were killed and 50 insurgency-related incidents were reported across the three most affected provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. In 2002, several police stations were attacked by guerillas who seized

large amounts of arms and ammunition, and killed some 50 police officers and soldiers in 75 insurgency-related incidents throughout the year. In 2003 official sources counted 119 incidents, and the violence only escalated in 2004.[37]

On the one hand, the current conflict in the southern provinces can be perceived as a rebellion against the state by groups of dissatisfied members of the nation, in which the rebels have organized themselves through a movement based on ethnic identities.[38] While on the other hand, the present state of affairs in south Thailand appears as a reemergence or continuance of older separatist movements that declined in the 1980s and 1990s.

Perhaps these perceptions stem from a long held belief that associate Malay Muslim political activism with separatism. Conversely, we argue, that these 'facts' are manipulated and used to explain the current conflict in southern Thailand by portraying the Malay-Muslims as unreliable citizens, always resistant to the rule of Siam, and thus providing the pretext for severe repressive measures. The resistance in the south can also be understood as a reactionary expression of ethnic minorities excluded from full membership in the state apparatus with appropriate effective government representation. In line with this argument, Thanet claims that:

> ... because the real story had never been reconstructed into the discourse of the Malay-Muslim national struggle. On the other hand, the Thai government seems to reconstruct a story of uprising and eventually separatist movement against the Thai state as an easy way out to explain the turmoil in the South. [39]

Some Thai scholars like Pirayot Rahimmula refute the claim that the current conflict is a reemergence of the past, describing, instead, the situation in Thailand's southern provinces as being much different from that in the previous decades. [40]

Admittedly, Bangkok has been putting much effort to bring about economic prosperity in the south, but despite this, the turmoil in the south continues. The central government enlisted the help of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) to create plans for bringing further economic development to the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.[41] Surin Pitsuwan, a prominent Muslim representative from the south, who was also Thailand's former Foreign Minister and past member of the UN Commission on Human Security, commented that violence in the south cannot be resolved by government led economic development alone. He concurs that no amount of development, funding, or projects, would solve the problem because certain aspects of human security are not present. Therefore, it seems that economic development alone is not the solution, because the real answer is an end to state sponsored violence and oppression.[42] Although the Malay-Muslims in the south live in one of the poorest parts of Thailand, their grievances are indeed, not economic but rather political, and even well thought-out development policies will not solve the unrest effectively unless

the political grievances are addressed. History indicates an endorsement of this thesis, as almost every step the government has taken has exacerbated the problem.

As far as the current state of affairs in southern Thailand is concerned, violence is more likely to be used to quell protests and riots, and the more violence used by the authorities, the greater is the likelihood that challengers will respond with increased violence. Therefore, it may not be far-fetched to say that, state authorities who use violence and force to subdue challengers mistakenly believe that this policy will bring a less likelihood of open challenge. The government might think that the more 'extreme' force used, the less likely are chances for open rebellion. However, in implementing this strategy, events on the ground reflect that it has only awoken 'sleeping resistors' more prone to aggressive action, especially after World War II.

Elsewhere, Gurr and Harff explain that less severe kinds of force also include execution and detention without due process of law.[43] This opinion relates well to the scenario in the restive south, where there are strong indications the government applies such methods against ethnic minorities; including a number of such arrests and incidents of torture and executions. Undeniably, the almost weekly arrests of the Malay-Muslims by security forces and the issue of 'disappearances' along with the violation of human rights, intensifies and further confirms that southern Thailand is no stranger to this draconian method. These methods essentially constitute systematic 'persecution', and are irrationally executed by Thaksin's demands that his forces achieve major goals within ridiculous deadlines. He has adopted military tactics such as the zoning of the villages in the southern provinces, thereby making them into political issues. At the same time, he denies villages' development money while providing insufficient resources for the local authorities to hunt down insurgents.[44]

GOVERNMENT POLICY IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

History has shown that violence in the south intensifies when policies employed by the central government are deemed unbearable and that government persecution further increases violence. However, despite these lessons, implementation of the prescribed remedies for insurgency has eluded Bangkok's attention. Thus, there is a need for the current regime to diagnose and understand the issues more accurately. In a statement to *The Nation*, Bersatu leader Wan Kadir Che Man, said the problems of the south "must be solved only using the principles of mercy and good governance".[45]

Failure to Diagnose the Violence Accurately

Bangkok's failure to understand and provide solutions to abating the conflict in the south, reflected through an 'unfriendly' policy in handling the issues there, is indeed, reflective of 'persecution'. For instance, despite the absence of concrete proof linking

the present violence with separatism, Malay-Muslims or Islam, the central government repeatedly points its fingers at these groups and therefore contributes to growing suspicion towards ethnic Malay Muslims in the country. Labeling Muslims as militants, for example, the case involving 200 Muslims, of whom half were residents of Narathiwat province, blacklisted as Islamic militants despite repeated denials by these people is a case in point.[46]

Although historical narrations 'allege' and 'accuse' the Malay-Muslims as the actors behind earlier conflicts, by simply categorizing them as the present protagonists of unrest appears somewhat unfair in light of the above-mentioned denials, which ostensibly implicate criminal involvement. This policy appears to be against the law which asserts, "one is innocent until proven guilty". Take, for example, the arrest of Muslim religious teachers following the attack on January 4, 2005, which clearly indicated Bangkok's strong suspicion of this ethnic minority.[47]

A number of events demonstrate the government's inconsistency in addressing the issue. For example, despite the current regime's effort to portray the insurgencies in southern Thailand as having nothing to do with ideology or specific terrorism on the part of separatists, consistent public statements reflect otherwise, implicating Muslims in Thailand's deep south are behind these incidents en masse. A case in point is when Thaksin blamed the recent unrest on Islamic teachers in the area. He claimed:

> We know who is responsible for the violence. These teachers are crazy. ...They do not care about the lives of innocent people. Before they were targeting soldiers and police, but now they are going after everyone because they have gone crazy.[48]

Nevertheless, the continuous arrest and disappearance of the Muslims taken by national security forces confirms that the government is certain that they are behind the violence. Thus, the inaccuracy in diagnosing the problem has made this ethnic minority a victim of the situation. Not only are they the targets of the security forces, but at the same time, this 'diagnosis' widens the gap between the Malay-Muslims and Buddhists in the south, and as described by Byman, "violence by the state can poison communal relation".[49] No doubt, by placing excessive emphasis on the issue of 'separatism' and 'Malay-Muslims' vis-à-vis the current turmoil, the situation provides fodder for greater inter-ethnic animosity and suspicion. For example, a report in *The Nation* regarding financial assistance made by Bangkok to 55 families, both Buddhists and Muslims, who lost family members to violence claimed:

> Many Buddhist are angry because they suspect the recipients [of financial assistance] are families of insurgents, while Muslim locals suspect that much of the violence is by security forces".[50]

Dismantling of Important Institutions

Despite a number of bombings recorded in the year 2000, government policies post-2000, ironically, appear to have further contributed to the escalation of violence in the southern region. The Thai Rak Tai (TRT) party-led government's decision to impose greater control over a region traditionally dominated by the Democratic Party _ TRT's main opponent _ is viewed as a main cause behind the insurgencies. For instance, the decision made by Thaksin, upon taking office in 2001, to make changes in the Thai government's policy in the south signaled the escalation of dissatisfaction among the southerners, particularly the Malay-Muslims.[51] He abandoned the policy of the previous governments and introduced a reimplementation of central rule in southern Thailand; in 2002 Thaksin abolished the Administrative Center for the Administration of Southern Border Provinces (ACASBP), established in 1989 by Prem Tinsulanond, then Prime Minister. Thaksin also terminated the 43rd Civil-Police-Military Joint Quarter (CPM 43) in May 2002.[52] It is worth noting that the decision to disband these two offices stemmed from a belief that the separatist insurgency had long been resolved. In addition, the ongoing shootings and bombings were perceived as a by-product of residual turf wars between criminal gangs. Consequently, the decision to disband these two outfits associated with maintaining peace and order in the south was undertaken. However, strong allegations claim that these offices were dismantled by the Taksin regime because they served the interest of the opposition parties.

Clearly, the decision made by the central government to dismantle its effective crisis management institutions proved a major contribution to the re-emergence and escalation of the unrest. Initially, ACASBP was established to address two major problems in the administration of the southern provinces namely, poor coordination among agencies, and corruption. It was empowered to reward, punish, or remove officials on the basis of performance and over one hundred (100) civil servants, with more than eighty percent (80%) police officers, were transferred out of the region between 1975 and 1995.[53] The center also conducted regular seminars for Malay-Muslim leaders to share their grievances. In addition, it emphasized educational efforts to understand the Malay-Muslim culture by organizing training of non-Malay officers in cultural awareness and communicating in the local Pattani Malay dialect.[54] Secondly, the CPM 43 was set up to coordinate security operations under strict orders to ensure that extra-judicial killings and disappearances ceased.[55] Subsequently, from the 1980s through early 1990s, incidents of violence decreased significantly, and membership in armed organizations dwindled as fighters took up amnesty offers, thus, abandoning their fight to participate in development programs or join the army.[56]

Ever since the abolishment of these two offices, the south has witnessed an increasing number of violent episodes. According to Ministry of Interior statistics, insurgency related incidents rose from 50 (in 2001) to 75 (in 2002) and 119 (in 2003) [57] and then, in a dramatic escalation, over 1000 in 2004. Insurgency-related incidents can mean sniper attacks, usually directed at members of the security forces or/and arson attacks,

usually on schools, as a symbol of dissatisfaction against Bangkok's assimilation policies. In addition and more recently, the incidences of crude explosive devices and small homemade bombs, again, usually directed at the security forces or government buildings, have increased. However, since January 2004, these attacks have been increasingly directed towards soft targets such as noodle shops, small eateries, street vendors and school buses. [58]

The abolition of these institutions clearly led to escalation of violence when security officers were no longer subject to the rules or bound by an institution, which enforced accountability. As the establishment of ACASBP was to serve as an interface between the south and Bangkok, one could easily predict the consequence following its disbanding. The locals lost their avenues to lodge complaints concerning corrupt or incompetent officials, who, if allegations were proven, would be transferred within 24 hours. Not only that, the closure of CPM 43 disrupted a delicate balance between security agencies in the southern provinces. Therefore, if the dissolution of ACASBP and CPM 43 did not directly cause the resurgence of violence, it certainly weakened the government's ability to handle any administrative crisis in the south effectively.

Inefficiency in Conducting Investigation

Thai civil society groups have noted the government's inability to identify, in most cases, the individuals and groups responsible for the violence in the south. Former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, Chairman of the National Reconciliation Commission, commented in July 2005, that in 85% of murder cases the government could not identify the perpetrators.[59] This failure on the part of authorities to properly investigate the killings of Buddhist and Muslim civilians in the three provinces has contributed to the overall climate of fear. Responding to this, many hold the view that, under Thaksin, Thailand is no longer a country that is serious about human rights. Issues related to human rights and civil engagements have been disregarded; the state of human rights, civil participation, and freedom of expression all appear to stand upon shaky ground.[60] Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International confirmed this when she claimed that:

> Thaksin Shinawatra and his Cabinet members have not treated the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) with any respect. The NHRC has been in place since 2001, but the government has completely ignored its work and requests. When subpoenas were sent to officials, especially those related to the nation's security apparatus, they were ignored. Government officials have not cooperated fully with the commission. Often, they have held condescending views of the NHRC.[61]

In addition, the Thai National Human Rights Commission stated in April 2004, just a week before the Krue Se incident that:

> The present problems result from the reactions of Muslim brothers and sisters who decided to stand up and fight after having accumulated grievances and frustrations over a long period... For example, police captured and tortured people to secure confessions... Many cases of missing persons have not been investigated. [62]

As mentioned earlier, the disappearance of lawyer cum Muslim rights activist, Somchai Neelapaijit, is a blatant case of disregard for the safety and rights of people either championing the cause of the affected minority or those who are suspected of being involved.

Lack of Coordination among Security Forces

The lack of unity and cooperation among security officials may be a key inhibiting problem in state operations in countering the unrest in the region.[63] Thaksin admitted that authorities were struggling to stop the violence due to a lack of unity among the officials on the ground, openly stating that "the violence could take place (almost daily) since there is no unity among operative officials".[64] In addition, the Prime Minister has frequently changed both military Commanders and Defense Ministers responsible for addressing the violence in the south, resulting in 'allegations' and 'criticism' for sending confusing signals in handling the situation.[65] In early October 2004, he assigned Defense Minister Chetta Thanarajo to take charge of southern affairs, but changed his mind soon after by giving the job to Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyuth.[66] Later the Prime Minister decided to name General Sirichai Tanyasiri to replace his deputy as the new security chief for the southernmost provinces. In responding to this issue, *The Nation* commented that:

> From hometown favorite Deputy Prime Minister, Wan Muhammad Noor Matha to former military man, General Thammarak Isavanguna, Thaksin has dispatched just about every top political leader to the region.[67]

The daily further reported that the 'violent' government policies in the south, mainly carried out by the security forces is the major issue that caused the local resentment.[68] The nation's revered monarch, King Bhumibol too was concerned of the way security officials mishandled the turmoil in the south. The monarch expressed his 'uneasiness' in a televised address, saying that if military and police officers handled the situation properly, people would be able to live in peace and happiness. Certainly, the deactivation of the ACASBP, along with the transfer of all those responsible for security in the entire southern region, from the Royal Thai Army's 4th Army Region to the Royal Thai Police, marked the beginning of the end of good governance in the south.[69]

The lack of coordination among security officers was most evident when hostility erupted between the army and police. The mishandling of former "military intelligence assets"

by the local police after the January 4, 2004 raid aggravated the military's resentment of the former.[70] The police blatantly killed dozens of former separatists who had accepted amnesty offers and were then serving as military informants.[71] The rivalry amongst security agencies in the post January 4 episode ended with the transfer of Assistant Police Chief, Lt. General Wongkati Maneerin, who openly claimed that the defense structures then gave the military too much power. Disputes such as this, between the military and police represent a mere tip of the iceberg. These inter-departmental quarrels are seen as an integral part of Thailand's bureaucracy because of overlapping duties and unclear divisions of labor; partly, an indirect result of the abolishment of the two institutions, ACASBP and CPM 43, as mentioned previously.

Excessive Use of Force

Not surprisingly, government response towards the conflict in the south has received a number of negative reactions at various levels of society. Historian, Thanet Aphornsuvan, claims that a government that uses violence to instill fear discourages the inherent honesty and search for truth in society.[72] Other academics like Prajak Kokgkirati from Thammasat University share similar views. According to Prajak, "...we may have arrived at a new point in Thai history, where violence is responded to with even more violence." The way Thailand handles certain matters, especially concerning humanitarian issues, has resulted in the lost of confidence amongst locals in the south in the present regime. For instance, the 'transparency' of the central government is questionable when it failed to give fair explanation over the issue of the disappearance of Somchai Neelapaijit. On 12 March 2004, Somchai, who was representing Malay Muslims who were arrested for alleged involvement in violence, and who strongly advocated the lifting of martial law in the south, 'disappeared' in Bangkok. Four police officers were subsequently arrested and accused of abducting him. Chavalit let slip in parliament that he knew Somchai was already dead.[73] For almost two years, the government denied the fact that the lawyer was killed by its own officers, and on 14 January 2006, Thaksin for the first time, officially admitted that Somchai was killed by government officials in 2004.[74]

Indeed, the manner in which the central government responded to the recent major outbreaks in the region intensified further the anger among the southerners, Muslims in particular. The humanitarian tragedies of April 28 and October 25 demonstrate that the government lacks willingness to hold its security forces accountable for their actions. Consequently, a growing perception among Muslims is that the administration in general and the security forces in particular, are anti-Muslim, adding fuel to increasing complexities of an already difficult situation.[75] For instance, following the October 25 Tak Bai tragedy, Prime Minister Thaksin responded by suggesting that the deaths in the army trucks that day were the Muslims own fault for fasting during Ramadhan.[76] In particular, his statement that "it's normal that their bodies could not handle it, it is not about someone attacking them" frustrated and angered Muslims in the south.[77] To add insult to injury, Commander of the Narathiwat Marine task force, Traikwan Kraireuk, added, "If they were normal people ... and not fasting or on drugs, as I suspect many of

them were ... they would probably not have died". In response to criticism, Traikwan further explained that "it was not heavy-handed, I used the velvet glove. If I'd used the iron fist, they would all be dead."[78]

No doubt, this type of official response sparked international as well as domestic condemnation, and at the same time portrayed blatantly the government's insensitivity to the Muslims. Regardless of who the actors are, such comments are "powerful" enough to trigger the anger of the masses. Voices representing the Malay Muslims such as that of Nimu Magajeh, Deputy Chairman of Yala's Islamic Committee illustrate the people's frustrations at the government's heavy-handed strategies. Nimu stressed that:

> Violence in the south would continue unabated if Thaksin remained stubborn and hot-headed...if he will insist and rely on tough action and the use of disproportionate force, we will not see peace....Whereas Thaksin is a decisive prime minister, but it'd be more beneficial if he became flexible and lenient with local people.[79]

Thaksin, meanwhile, was more than aware of this situation and the threat he faced from the situation in the south. To illustrate this, *The Nation* reported the following.

> ...More violence hit the south yesterday as Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra flew to Narathiwat on an inspection tour of the three troubled provinces marked by secret meetings and subterfuge under maximum security. Thaksin's tightly-controlled visit was accompanied by a massive military presence and a secret schedule. ...Officials diverted media attention by pretending to welcome the Prime Minister at a military base in Pattani in the morning. But Thaksin finally appeared at the Narathiwat governor's office in the afternoon...[80]

Hence, it is clear that his actions and decisions confirm that he knows the locals in the south are not happy with his administration's handling of the problems in that troubled region.

Obviously, based on the daily newspaper reports, the violence in the south is seen more as a reaction to suppressive strategy, whereas the grievances of the local people mostly revolve around requesting the central government to respond to the conflict moderately. In addition, the lack of respect for cultural differences and cultural freedom is a sore point contributing to tensions between the state and the Muslims. In relation to this point, Wan Kadir Che Man, the exiled leader of BERSATU, contends that:

> ... the violence occurred largely because of misunderstandings between the two sides, especially between Thai government officials and the Muslims in general. ... It is important that both sides realize that the problem in Pattani cannot be solved by suppression or by a war of liberation[81]

There are also those who view the present conflict in the south as a justification for a large military presence in that region. Among them is Fakharuddin Boto, a Narathiwat Senator who claimed the turmoil in the southern region as "...to create a scene to justify the existence of the security agencies in the region, so that the current security arrangements remain in place".[82] These sentiments from local Malay leaders can be construed, to some extent, as representative of the mindset of the people of the south, and it is overtly clear that the use of heavy-handed military strategies and perceived suppression of the local people is one major grievance against the state and its policies.

The following episode illustrates one of the many instances of what maybe termed "politics of fear", faced by the southerners, as a result of action by the state police and army.

> "I was very frightened to see a lot of security officials (at my house) when I opened the door. It was very late. I was speechless and did not ask them why they came to search my house." [83]

In response to this incident, Major Jittanart Punnotok, the Fourth Army spokesman, said the Army was unable to identify the security officials who carried out the search.[84] The incident reflects both the security officers' inefficiency and incompetence, or on a more sinister note, the planned tactics of intimidation common to all repressive regimes. Commenting on the government's heavy handedness, Piya Kitthaworn, a political scientist from the University of Pattani, said he was disturbed by the hatred expressed against Malay Muslims by people in Bangkok, as reflected on website postings such as the following: "The government's heavy handed tactics seemed to have been received with applauses in Bangkok".[85]

The growing conflict in the south indicates that the presence of security forces is ineffective in suppressing the violence in the region and therefore their role must be reviewed in view of the negative reaction to Bangkok's heavy-handed strategy in handling the crisis there. Cultural insensitivity and an increasing number of human rights violations committed by the police and military have provoked fear and anger and in turn this has only strengthened the cause of insurgency. Several other measures taken by the security forces, such as intrusions into private religious schools, the arrests of teachers, and the army's frequent search and arrest hunts, have eroded the local people's will to cooperate with the security forces as well.[86]

There have been a few instances where insurgents have left behind notes at the scene of an attack, stating that as long as the authorities continue to arrest and kill innocent people, the insurgents too will counter-retaliate in similar fashion. For example, on 14 October 2005, the head and body of a Buddhist man, one of the reported 15 beheadings, was found with a note stating that, "As long as you continue to kill innocent people, we will kill your innocent people."[87] Responding to this issue in a roundtable discussion held by *The Nation* titled "Life after 28: What it takes for us to live together again",

eight analysts offered the following conclusion: "the government continues to fail in the south because it keeps sending the *wrong men* to implement the *wrong policy*."[88] PULO also asserted that police and army brutality led to the renewed insurgencies.[89] It is also worth mentioning that, police have traditionally been feared and hated more than the military by residents of the southern provinces,[90] partly because they have more day-to-day contact with villagers and also because the army was seen to be delivering tangible benefits through its role in implementing development projects.[91] But since the army's violent role in the Krue Se Mosque and Tak Bai incidents, the army too is seen and viewed with suspicion and contempt.

Military

Without doubt, the January Fourth attack embarrassed the Thai government and enraged Thaksin. He even went all out to blame the Army for incompetence by saying that the murdered soldiers deserved to die. *The Nation* reported the Premier as saying 'If you have a whole battalion there and you're still negligent, then you deserve to die.'[92] In an effort to contain the turmoil and mysterious attacks, the central government imposed martial law and more troops were dispatched to the area. This law permits soldiers to carry out searches without a court order, thus empowering the military further.

In response to the April 28 bloodshed, Thirayuth Boonmi, renowned Thai sociologist, stressed that the government should use the military infrastructure only when necessary and the paradigm of the security apparatus should shift from militarism to the construction of multiple security levels with an emphasis on a diversity of social, cultural, and ethnic groupings. Yet, the government repeatedly uses the military to handle the conflict even though this approach has consistently failed.[93] Martial law has received much criticism from the southerners, and many are of the opinion that the enforcement of martial law in the south is the main reason for the continuing problems, as it is a key factor prompting mistrust and misunderstanding between residents and authorities. [94]

In sum, the policies of the current government vis-à-vis military strategies have not helped much in quelling the restive south. Ill-conceived initiatives, focused on military force, continue to aggravate the situation in the troubled provinces.

Police

The dissolution of CPM 43 is viewed as stemming from Bangkok's belief that the ongoing bombings and shootings in the south were the product of residual turf wars between criminal gangs which should be handled by the police.[95] As a former police officer, Thaksin tended to see any instability primarily as problems of law and order. Mc Cargo also mentioned that:

> The extraordinary powers given to the police amounted to a carte blanche to target awkward locals for extra judicial execution. Among those killed were longstanding informers with close ties to the military as the intensified interagency rivalry played itself out. [96]

The behavior of the police also confirmed local suspicions that they were bent on attacking Malay-Muslims rather than protecting them. People are often more scared of the police than "terrorists" in the south, despite the almost daily sniper attacks, as Thanet describes:

> One of the tactics was to 'carry away' [Thai: *oum*] those suspects and make them disappear. The police came to the house and told the suspect to follow them to the police station for investigations. Usually they came without warrant but the villagers had no way to resist the police. Many days went by before the victims' wives and relatives began to sense that something was not right. This was what people in that area talked about, "If the suspect were carried away by the army, chances were that he might be able to come home. But if he was carried away by the police, chances were that he would be gone for good.[97]

Despite the fact that the actors behind the insurgency are still unclear, the police tightened its grips on suspected Malay-Muslims by using heavy-handed tactics. This was reinforced after the January 4, 2004 raid, when the action of police officers suggested that every Malay-Muslim male was a suspect. The integrity of the police force was further questioned when Pattani Senator Den Tohmeena claimed they were trying to abduct and kill him because they suspected he was behind the violence in the south. He said he had learned from several high-ranking sources that a plan had been hatched to abduct him in a similar fashion as the disappearance of Muslim lawyer, Somchai Neelapaijit.[98] This action has fanned the perception that the Thai police, in particular, are unreliable and lack accountability.

CONCLUSION

A thorough analysis of newspaper reports indicates strongly that the southern insurgency does not reflect any conflict over the preservation of sovereign territory as it used to be in the past, while at the same time, it is no longer logical to associate it with the struggle for irredentism with Malaysia. However, some studies still attempt to suggest and categorize the revolts as initiated by some active separatist group which aimed to 'free' the related provinces from Thailand, and even worse, relate it to terrorism. In view of the repeated denials by the Muslim leaders in the south of such allegations, the pertinent question that needs to be asked is why are the separatist groups hesitant to make a proclamation that they are indeed a movement aiming to separate the related Muslim provinces from Thailand, as they did in the past. *Chularatchamontri* Sawas Sumalayak,

the Kingdom's advisor on Islamic affairs, himself dismissed suggestions that the *pondoks* teach militancy. He responded "Our nation has more than 63 million people with different languages and different cultures; there is no need to talk about separatism just because of these differences."[99]

Meanwhile, PULO made clear of its stand when the movement denied allegations that they were planning attacks in Phuket, Bangkok, and Pattani, by saying, "It is not our policy".[100] Wan Kadir Che Man, on the other hand, made an announcement about his intention to step down from BERSATU, and clearly stressed that the on-going violence in the south does not have anything to do with the movement. He mentioned that, BERSATU only struggles for the recognition of Malay people and not about using force, as it does not have any military capability and does not control troops on the ground.[101] He further described the south as very different from the past, "Today, bombs are going off and officials are assassinated and nobody is claiming credit."[102] In addition, responding to the strategy adopted in the south as 'hit-and-run' assassination, a former BRN member commented, "We would never dream about doing the kind of things they have done".[103] In light of these revelations, the present unrest in the southern states seems to indicate either a cunning dissimulation or the absence of any role in what truly plagues the south. More importantly, they signify the irrelevancy of any association with the old motive of separatism.

As for government policies in the south, besides the use of excessive force, it is obvious that blunders in handling the problem include dismantling effective crisis management institutions. The government's decision to disband the two government special offices namely, the ACASBP and CPM 43 was a critical error that deepened the problems of information gathering and information analysis.[104] Doubtless, these special units were the 'contributors' for the relative calm in the region, and were in fact established to respond to allegations that there were limited avenues for redress for perceived injustices and bureaucratic wrongdoings by the state officials on the local people. Their dismantling created a vacuum, giving room for subsequent officials to abuse the powers given to them, which in turn caused a gross mistrust among the locals. This amplified the resentment in the south, and consequently opened old wounds that were healing, in turn fanning the recurrence of insurgency.

To reiterate the main arguments in this paper, we refer to surveys conducted by the Asia Foundation and The King Prajadhipok Institute (KPI), released in 2005, which concluded that a significant majority (83.6%) of respondents in the south believe that one of the causes of the problem has been the failure of the government to understand the local people. In addition, only 32.4 % of respondents expressed any satisfaction with how the government was handling the southern unrest.[105] These findings underscore the argument of this paper that failure to diagnose and respond accurately to the conflict in the south, has, in fact, intensified the resentment and is a major factor in provoking the disturbances in the southern provinces.

ENDNOTES

[1] For a long time the troubled area in the south has been known as the 'Four Southern Provinces' (*si changwad pak tai)* including Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun. After the 1970s, attempts were made to determine the area under conflict, which led to the designation of the 'three southern provinces' of Pattani Yala and Narathiwat. Muslims in Satun, on the other hand, have well assimilated themselves with the Thai culture compared to other Muslim provinces in the south. See, Thanet Aphornsuvan, "Origins of Malay-Muslim "separatism" in Southern Thailand", Asia Research Institute, Working Paper No.32, 2004, www. nus. ari. Edu.sg/pub/wps.htm (30 December 2005).

[2] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand: Contours, Causes and Consequences since 2001", *Journal of Contemporary Southeast Asia,* 2005, 4(2):p.3.

[3] Patani refers to the name of the ancient Malay kingdom of Patani, prior to its disintegration in 1809. Pattani is the official Thai transliteration used to refer to the province (*muang)* of the same name in present day Thailand. In this paper, the Kingdom of Patani refers to the area of Greater Patani which included the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat along with four other provinces which collectively formed the *khaek jet huamuang* (seven Malay tributary states), prior to Siam's administrative reorganization in 1906.

[4] Patani became well known to the international world especially after the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese (1511). On Patani's early history see, A.Teeuw and D.K. Wyatt, *Hikayat Patani: The Story of Patani.* 2 Vols, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1970.

[5] On the gold and silver see, Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, *Thai Malay Relations: Traditional Intra-Regional relations from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries,* Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 56-57. On Malay views on the same subject see, James Low, trans., *Marong Mahawangsa: The Kedah Annals,* Bangkok: The American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1908, p.101.

[6] On the administrative reforms impacting the former Kingdom of Patani in the early 1900s see, Margaret L. Koch, "Pattani and the Development of a Thai State", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS),* Vol.50, Pt 2; Nantawan Haemindra, "The Problem of the Thai Muslims in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand, Part 1 and 2, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies (JSEAS),* 7/2 (1976) and 8/1 (1977).

[7] The term is borrowed from anthropologist James C.Scott. See his, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

[8] For example the villagers of *Baan* Namsai (Namsai Village) in Mayo district, Pattani refused to pay taxes and rent on land to the Thai state as a reaction to Siam's Compulsory Education Act of 1922. This incident is referred as the Namsai Rebellion.

[9] See, M. Ladd Thomas, "Muslim Separatism in South Thailand" in Andrew D.W. Forbes (ed.), *The Muslims of Thailand, Vol. 2: Politics of The Malay-Speaking South*, Bihar: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, 1989, p. 20. On reforms in education in the south and Malay reaction see, Uthai Dulyakasem, 'Education and Ethnic Nationalism: A Study of the Muslim Malays in Southern Siam', Ph.D, Stanford University, 1981.

[10] See, Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*, Bangkok: Thai Khadi Research Institute, 1985, pp. 87-92 ; Corner Bailey and John Miksic, ""The Country of Patani in the Period of Awakening"- A Chapter From Ibrahim Syukri's *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani*", in Andrew D.W. Forbes (ed.), *The Muslims of Thailand, Vol. 2*, pp. 156-157.

[11] Thanet Aphornsuvan, "Origins of Malay-Muslim", p.3.

[12] ibid, p.1

[13] For a thorough analysis of the Paknam incident of 1893 see, Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994, pp. 141-150.

[14] For details see, Margaret L. Koch, "Pattani and the Development of a Thai State", pp. 69-88; Nantawan Haemindra, "The Problem of the Thai Muslims in the Four Southern Provinces", 7/2 (1976), pp. 197-225 and 8/1 (1977), pp. 85-105.

[15] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand", p.2.

[16]Former commander in-chief of the army who became Prime Minister in 1980, and was reappointed to the position several times subsequently.

[17] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand", p.3.

[18] Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thaksin: The Business of Politics in Thailand*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004, p.236. See also, *Time* 7 Feb 2005, p. 18-19.

[19] ibid.

[20] ibid.

[21]International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad", Asia Report No. 98, 2005 , www. crisis. grouporg/home/ index.cfm? Id=3436&1= (21 October 2005), pp.17-31.

[22] ibid.

[23] ibid.

[24] Chidchanok Rahimmula, "Violence in Southern Thailand: A Crises Issue", in Uthai Dulyakasem & Lertchai Sirichai (ed.), *Knowledge and conflict resolution: The crises of the border region of Southern Thailand*, Nakhorn Sithammarat: School of Liberal Arts Walailak University, 2006, p. 32.

[25] Thailand's Restive South, *BBC News*, 26 October 2004.

[26] Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thaksin : The Business of Politics in Thailand*, p.234.

[27] Martial law blamed for tensions, *The Nation*, 08 March 2004.

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[29] Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "Understanding the Situation in the South as a "Millenarian Revolt", in *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 6, March 2005. http:// kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto.u.ac.jp/issue/issue5/index.html.

[30]Syed Serajul Islam, "Recent Violence in Southern Thailand", T*he MESSAGE International*, 2004, http: // messageonline. Org/ 2004novdec/ Thailand, (21 October 2005) p.44.

[31] T.R. Gurr & Harff B, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, pp. 5-7.

[32] For a discussion on the theory of internal colonialism and in particular reference to Thailand see, David Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in South-East Asia*, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 158- 165.

[33] We have relied mostly on reports by Amnesty International as we found their reports the most reliable, objective, and neutral in presenting the facts on the crisis in south Thailand.

[34] Amnesty International, *Thailand:* "If you want peace, work for justice", AI Index: ASA 39/001/2006, 2006, http: // web.amnesty. or/library/ index ENGASA390012006 (12 February 2006).

[35] ibid.

[36] ibid.

[37]Amnesty International, Thailand: Memorandum on Human Rights Concerns, AI Index : ASA 39/013/2004, http: //web.amnesty.or/library/ Index ENGASA390132004 (12 February 2006).

[38] Thanet Aphonsurvan, "Origins of Malay-Muslim", p.4.

[39] ibid.

[40] Faculty member of the Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani campus, at the time he gave this opinion which was published in *The Nation*, April 3, 2002.

[41] Southern Economy, NESDB to Work Out Strategies For Region, *The Nation*, 7 November 2004.

[42] Unrest in the South: Outrage Over Claims of Torture, *The Nation*, 5 March 2004.

[43] T.R Gurr & B, Harf, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, p. 90.

[44] Fresh Barbs Mar Thai-Malaysia Relation, *The Nation*, 4 March 2005.

[45] Editorial: A Skewed Police Investigation, *The Nation*, 9 December 2004.

[46] Muslim Refugees: KL Shelters 'Fleeing Muslims', *The Nation*, 2 September 2005.

[47] International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad", p.19.

[48] *The Star*, 27 August 2004.

[49] D. Byman, "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism", p. 150.

[50] Southern Unrest: Attacks Hit Train Station, Killing One, *The Nation*, 30 January 2006.

[51] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand".

[52]Chidchanok Rahimmula, *The Situation in Southern Thailand*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

[53] Ornawong Noiwag, 'Political Integration Policies and Strategies of the Thai Government Towards the Malay-Muslims of Southernmost Thailand (1973-2000)', Ph.D dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 2001, pp.183-188 cited in International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency Not Jihad", p.11.

[54] International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad", p.11.

[55] ibid.

[56] ibid.

[57] Anthony Davis, Ethnic divide widens in Thailand, *Jane's Terrorism & Security Monitor,* 17 November 2004; figures compiled by Panitan Wattanayakorn, Political Scientist at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, cited in International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad", p.16.
See International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad".

[59] Amnesty International, Thailand: "If you want peace, work for justice".

[60] Regional Perspective: Amnesty, NHRC To Put Spotlight on Human Rights, *The Nation*, 26 July 2004.

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[64] Growing Unrest: Brazen Killings Continue in South, *The Nation*, 14 October 2004.

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[66] ibid.

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[68] BBC News, 18 November 2004.

[69] Syed Serajul Islam, "Recent Violence in Southern Thailand".

[70]Analysis: Making Sense Of The Muddle in the South, *The Nation*, 26 January 2005.

[71] International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand : Insurgency, Not Jihad".

[72] *Bangkok Post*, 26 March 2003.

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[75] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand".

[76] International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad".

[77] *Post Today*, 27 October 2004.

[78] ibid.

[79] Violence in the South: Re-election 'bodes-ill', *The Nation*, 24 January 2005.

[80] Talks on Trouble: Tanks, Snipers Guard PM in Deep South, *The Nation*, 14 February 2004.

[81] EC Sets Election Date For February 6, *The Nation*, 9 December 2004.

[82] Same Faces, But Motives Have Changed, *The Nation* , 3 April 2002.

[83] Testimony of a third year student at the College of Islamic Study about a raid carried out by dozens of soldiers and police in uniform at 3 am in Pattani. See, Southern Violence: Three Students' Homes Searched, *The Nation*, 22 July 2004.

[84] ibid.

[85] Den Says Police Try To Abduct And Kill Him, *The Nation* , 10 May 2004.

[86] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand".

[87]Amnesty International, Thailand: "If you want peace, work for justice".

[88]The eight members were a security analyst, an Army General, a peace advocate, a historian, a political scientist from the region, two Muslim sociologists and an activist with a Muslim youth group. See *The Nation*, 10 May 2004.

[89] Refugee incident: Pulo Denies the Role in Muslim Exodus, *The Nation,* 12 September 2005.

[90] Observations made by Dr. Omar Zaid, Editor for ISTAAC in Kuala Lumpur.
"I have first hand experience of the Thai people at the grassroots level in both Bangkok and the Northeast regions of the country. Without reservation, I can say that many a Thai citizen fears the police because of their open collusion with known criminal elements and Chinese Triad organizations involved in drugs, sex slavery, and extortion through high interest money lending; veritably enslaving and terrorizing the common citizen, and preventing any redress through legal channels.

[91] International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad".

[92] *The Nation*, 5 January 2004.

[93] Den Says Police Try to Abduct and Kill Him, *The Nation*, 10 May 2004.

[94] Statement made by Thailand's former Public Health Minister Dr. Sem Pringpuangkaew, reported in Martial Law Blamed For Tensions, *The Nation*, 8 March 2004.

[95] International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad".

[96] Duncan Mc Cargo, "Understanding The Conflict in the Thai South Through Domestic Policies", Paper presented at the Ninth International Conference on Thai Studies at Northern Illinois University, 3-6 April 2005, pp-15-17, cited in International Crisis Group , "Thailand : Insurgency, Not Jihad", p.34.

[97] Thanet Aphornsuvan, "Origins of Malay-Muslim"

[98] Den Says Police Try To Abduct And Kill Him, *The Nation* , 10 May 2004

[99] ibid.

[100] Refugee Incident: Pulo Denies Role In Muslim Exodus, *The Nation*, 12 September 2005.

[101] Interview: Bersatu Leader Calls It A Day, *The Nation*, 4 July 2005.

[102] ibid.

[103] Analysis: The Turning Point That Wasn't, *The Nation*, 27 January 2005.

[104] Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand".

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