Imagined Land?

The state and southern violence in Thailand

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edited by

Chaiwat Satha-Anand

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Imagined Land? The State and Southern Violence in Thailand

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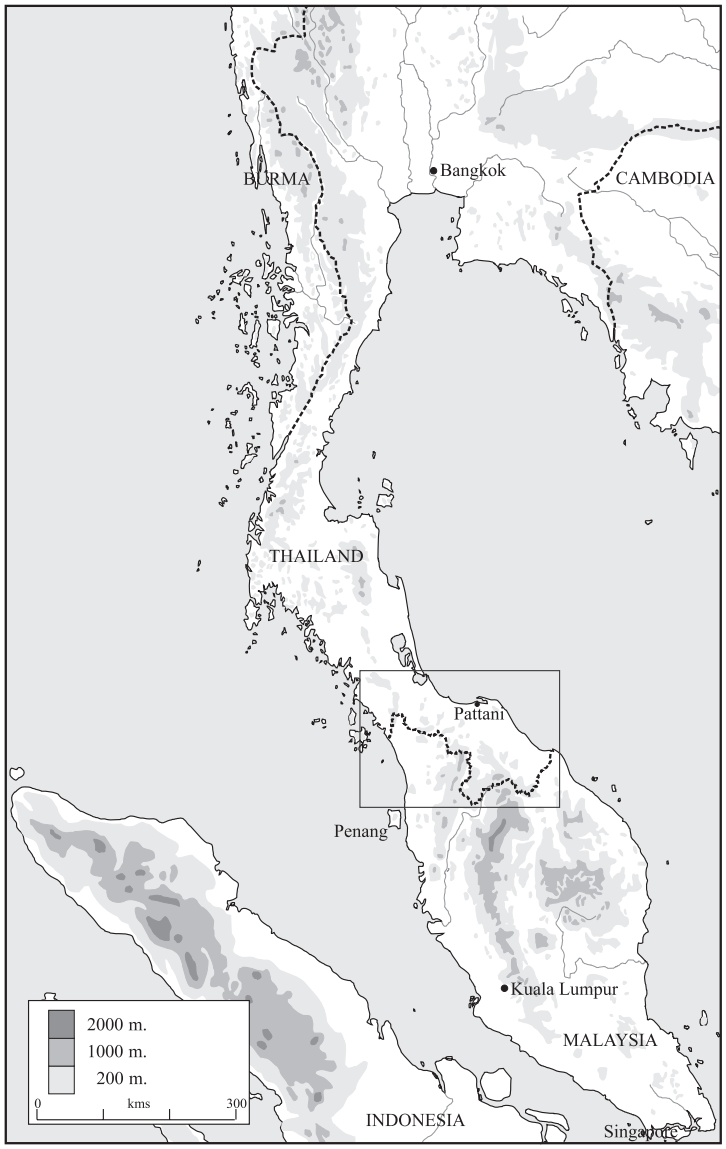

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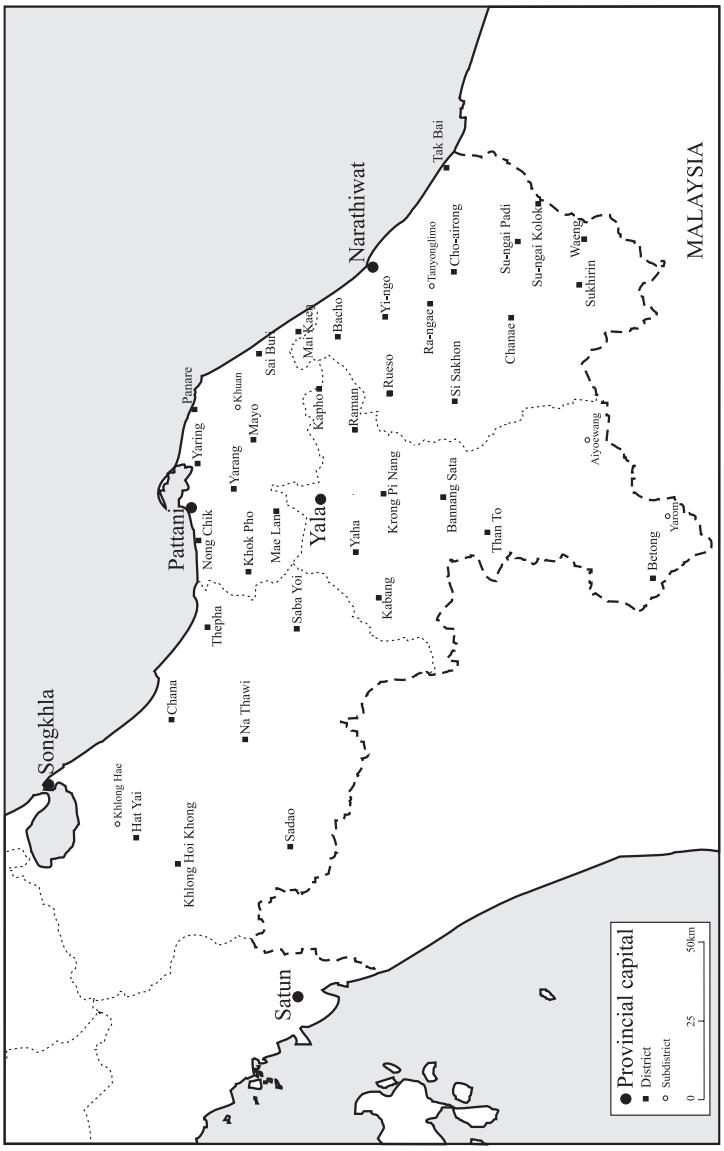

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Preface by the Thailand Research Fund

For many years both government and various other parties have been interested in finding ways to solve the problem of violence in Thailand's southern border provinces. Some believe that Thai society "knows" too little about the southern border provinces, while others feel that the violence flared up so badly because government had no policy capable of dealing with it.

This set of research is the result of the first year of a project under the Thailand Research Fund's Senior Research Scholar program on "Nonviolence and violence in Thai society." This project began by questioning widespread beliefs that the reasons why Thailand cannot solve the southern problem are because there is a lack of knowledge, or because there is no solution, or because there has been no attempt to propose a solution. This project studies the basic data and knowledge underlying government policy on security in the southern border provinces, paying attention to the barriers facing the efforts to re-establish peace. The project also examines how relations between people of different cultures have been impacted by policy and implementation in the current context of violence. And against the background of the war against terror in which the U.S. is the main player, the project looks at the "image" of violence in the Thai south in the imaginations of the U.S. and the Muslim world.

In recognition of the importance of this project on "Nonviolence, violence and Thai society," the Thailand Research Fund has provided support from 2006 to 2009. In the first year, nine sub-projects were brought to a successful conclusion by the efforts of the research team. Matichon Press saw the value of publishing the results in Thai in a book that appeared in early 2008. TRF is very pleased that Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, has seen the value of making these results available to a wider international audience. TRF sincerely hopes that the dissemination of the results of this research will prompt new directions in the southern border provinces, based on a foundation of knowledge, for the benefit of Thai society as a whole.

Professor Piyawat Boon-long
Director, The Thailand Research Fund

Editor's preface

If a book has a life, someone very wise told me that a preface is like a biography of a book. To write about a book's life is to recount how it has come into being, how it has grown up, and what it took to bring it into the present shape and form. Needless to say, there are numerous people and institutions involved in the life of a book such as *Imagined land.*

Imagined land is the fruit of the first year's research under the Senior Research Scholar project entitled "Nonviolence and violence in Thai society," funded by the Thailand Research Fund. I remember that the first meeting of the three-year project involved more than twenty researchers. The first year researchers were enthusiastic about conducting serious research on perhaps the then most urgent and puzzling problem of Thai society, the violence in the south. The focus was born out of a blend of kindness and wisdom of people and organizations who saw the importance of research-based knowledge and were willing to provide the necessary resources. After the researchers agreed to be a part of the project, and conducted their research with help from their assistants, colleagues, and informants in the field, their drafts were sent to critics whose constructive criticisms during the research seminar were incorporated into this book. Then there was the process of finding publishers for the works. I was very happy that Matichon published this book in Thai in February 2008. But when we thought about putting this book out also in English, I had to explore the possibilities of translating all but two of the chapters into English, and finding a publisher. This would have been impossible without guidance and support from my friends and colleagues around the world, as well as my editor for this book, perhaps one of the best in the field I have been privileged to work with. In addition to the software of the book, those who are responsible for its production in Tokyo are no less gracious. I must also acknowledge Matichon's Press for kindly agree to see this book published in English. It could be said that the life of a book such as *Imagined Land* is made possible because of the hearts, the minds, and the hands of so many.

All contributors to this volume wish to thank Professor Piyawat Boon-Long and Professor Vichai Boonsaeng from the Thailand Research Fund whose support for the Senior Research Scholar project made it possible to do research with full understanding of the nature and problems of social science research in Thailand. We are also grateful for helpful comments from General Prathompong Kesornsuk, Dr Uthai Dulyakasem, Dr Niti Pawakapan, Colonel Anuchart Bunnag, Assistant Professor Chidchanok Rahimmula, Professor Amara Pongsapich, Assistant Professor Suchart Sethamalinee, Dr Sukree Langputeh, and Mr Supalak Ganjankhundee during the research seminar held at the Sirindorn Anthropology Center on August 18-19, 2006 with the kind arrangements and organization of Professor Kaisri Sriaroon and Dr Paritta Chalermpow Ko-anantakul. For turning the book into English, we are grateful to our translators, Khun Sudina Paungpetch, Sutharin Koonphor, Oranuch Anusaksathien, Nissara Horayangura, and Nualnoi Thammasathien for chapters 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 respectively. We are honored to have Dr Chris Baker to help as the English editor. His knowledge, speed, thoroughness, and attitude made it a delightful experience to have a chance to work with him. I have to thank Professor Garry Rodan of the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University for

connecting me with some publishers. Importantly, it was the decision of Dr Ryoko Nishii and Islam in Southeast Asia (ISEA) project, The Research and Educational Project for Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS): the Research Institute for the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies to provide funding for the translation, and editing, and above all to publish this work in English which gives it a rare opportunity to reach a wider audience. Finally, I must thank Dr Suwanna Satha-Anand whose understanding and wisdom I have been privileged to enjoy; Ajarn Chayanit Poonyarat, director of my Senior Research Scholar project, for her effective administrative skills; Khun Janjira Sombutpoonsiri, Julaluck Damrongviteetham, and Thanyatorn Saipanya from Peace Information Center, Foundation for Democracy and Development Studies for their engaging work at different phases of the project; as well as my colleagues, the administrators and staff at the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University for their continued support over the years.

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Chaiwat Satha-Anand
August 2008

Contributors

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Introduction: Imagined land? The state and southern violence in Thailand

Chaiwat Satha-Anand

In late July 2007, the Thai army spokesperson told the press that since June 2007, the combined force of Civilian-Police-Military 47 had moved in to arrest some 1,930 terror suspects in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. Thai security officials believed that though most of the people arrested were fronts for the insurgents, some three hundred among them were the real thing. The military believed that the situation had significantly improved because there had been no resistance to the arrests, nor had any relative of those taken come out to protest.[1]

Around the same period, Supara Janchitfah, an award-winning investigative journalist who has long followed violence in the area, traveled with the Committee on Justice and Peace to examine several cases of unexplained violence in the south, including the case of one Kayariya Paomani from Bannang Sata who was arrested by the Thai authorities and later shot to death. In the official record, this man was killed by the insurgents while being taken to a military camp. But empirical evidence suggests otherwise since none of the officials who guarded the prisoner was injured in any way while later forensic examination concluded that the cause of death was something very heavy crushing his lungs before shooting started. Talking with the man's family, Supara reported that they did not want to reopen the case. The dead man's wife was worried about how to carry on raising her children alone, while the second daughter's concern was about the family's safety, if they chose to bring this case before the court of law. [2]

This Thai journalist also recalled her experience while on a recent visit to probe "the truth" about violence in southern Thailand. On the way out of a particular troubled area, some ten armed officers stopped her group, and searched both the luggage in the car's trunk as well as what they were carrying. The group informed the officers that they had earlier obtained proper clearance from the authorities. She tried to be rational with them, asking why they would not let the group out of the area after they had permitted the group to enter? There was no answer.[3] Though the point is not made explicitly, her readers could sense the journalist's feeling that what had happened to her and her colleagues was incomprehensible because the officials' act seemed irrational. When asked, the question was met with silence. More importantly, "this incomprehensibility" has co-existed with violence since the day the new round erupted with the attack against the military armory on 4 January 2004. In her own *Violence in the mist*, Supara wrote in the introduction that a lot of people asked who were behind the recent violence in southern Thailand. She pointed out that there is no clear-cut answer as to "who are the villains?" in the many stories told about violence in Muslim-dominated southern Thailand. Part of the reason for this is because "southern Thailand" today is not unlike a "land in the mist" which makes it next to impossible to see things at any distance with a sense of clarity.[4]

Yet when people—both civilians and officials, Buddhists and Muslims—have fallen like leaves as victims of violence, a question can be raised as to what the authorities, tasked with protecting the lives of the country's citizens, have been doing? Can't they solve anything? There are many who attempt to come up with answers.

Surachart Bamrungsuk, a noted academic specializing on military and security affairs, believes that the main problem is a lack of uniformity of thought between "the hawks and the doves" in the Thai security community which results in a lack of concrete and integrated policy and practices by Thai officials. There is also a discrepancy between policy and practice in solving southern violence.[5] Another security specialist, now a deputy secretary general of Prime Minister Abhisit, Panithan Wattanayakorn, believes that the Thai state cannot solve this problem because instead of relying on "existing" Thai strategy, it has imported "other people's strategy," especially that of the sole super power, and this strategy is inflexible, based on a completely different rationality, and at times self-contradictory.[6] By contrast, some local Malay Muslim academics maintain that the government has been unable to solve the problem of southern violence because of its lack of understanding of how Muslim society in the south has evolved through time and how it is connected with global society at present. [7]

These are some academics' opinions on southern violence in Thailand. They are not really based on research. Recently the Institute of Public Policy Development under the Prime Minister's Office published its own research on solutions to violence in the south. After pointing out that previous governments' assimilation policies were based on different paradigms and contrasted understandings of Thai political history, the Institute argues that the state has not tried to understand the problem, and has refused to accept the reality of cultural diversity in the area. The state can get away with this because Thai society is weak in knowledge and understanding.[8] Another significant research project on government policies in relation to the present southern violence was led by Uthai Dulyakasem and funded by the National Research Council. This project questioned whether government policies on southern Thailand had been "good policies"; to what degree had policy implementations been in line with changes of the time; and how have policies been evaluated during the past decade. The researchers found that government policies, formulated at the national level without much understanding of local specificities, have been part of the problem since they have engendered conflict, mistrust, and fear.[9]

Nidhi Eoseewong and the academics of Midnight University have written much about the Malay Muslims of southern Thailand since the re-emergence of "unrest" in 2004. They argue that the continued escalation of violence has resulted from "the government's naïve management, dedicated unwillingness to learn, and use of incompetent officials." These factors are the product of "Thai society's ignorance and unwillingness to learn," accumulated through "studying distorted national history, constructing a national culture with unequal space for diverse peoples, jingoistic nationalism, development policies that have always been prejudiced against the marginalized in the country, media and education that lull the majority into ignoring injustice, governments that allow officials to use their authority at will, and so on."[10]

I am curious to know whether policy and implementation in southern Thailand have been this pathological. This research is an attempt to raise several questions. Has the Thai state always faced southern violence, and especially the new escalation, without any comprehensive policy? Has it worked in ignorance, without any willingness to learn about the Malay Muslims, their ways of life and history? Or have those who have to deal with the issue of southern violence, especially on the side of the Thai state, imagined this land and its people as a "special space," and then translated this imagination into policies and practices that "do not go far enough, nor see things with clarity"? Have both the insurgents and ordinary people become victims of this failure of understanding?

My introduction begins by pointing out connections between main research

questions and the nine projects that constitute the nine chapters in this book. Then I underscore the key research findings, especially those which have surprised me in relation to governments' attempts to solve the problems. Finally, I discuss some theoretical issues that have a bearing on the solution of the southern violence and on further research.

I would argue that any examination of the Thai state's understanding, policy making, and implementation needs to be based on knowledge gained from field and documentary research, and not mere general opinion. Through knowledge, it might be possible for the Thai state to find new directions for overcoming the southern violence by moving beyond the dominant myths clouding Thai society.

Research questions and researchers

This research project begins with questions common among critics of how the Thai state has tried to "solve" the problems of violence in southern Thailand. I have transformed these common, and seemingly plain, questions into the following research questions.

> Does the Thai state have any security policy designed to deal with problems of violence in southern Thailand? If these policies do exist, to what degree are they capable of responding to changing conditions? More importantly, have these security policies been formulated with some knowledge about the southern provinces? If, as some academics have criticized, Thai society is mired in "ignorance" about the land and peoples of the southernmost provinces, then on what grounds have these security policies been based?
>
> Are there discrepancies between these policies and their implementation? If so, how do such gaps persist? If the Thai state is aware of them, has anything been done to curtail this problem in the future?
>
> It is said that, since the dramatic explosion in 2004, not only has the new violence robbed ordinary people of their lives and properties, but has also adversely affected the once normal relationship between the majority Malay Muslims and the minority Buddhists in the area. Apart from rumor and hearsay to that effect, has this relationship been radically changed? Has it soured so badly that people have to leave their houses to find new homes elsewhere as generally believed?
>
> The southern violence exists in a global context of conflicts and violence in an age when the American empire has unilaterally declared war against terrorism and has tried to reshape the world in its own image. It is important then to understand the place of Thailand's southern violence in the American imagination. Due to the geographical nexus between the Thai south and maritime Southeast Asia where Islam and Malay culture are dominant, it is also important to understand the geopolitical location of southern violence in the imagination of the Muslim world.

The researchers who worked on these projects transformed these questions into their own more focused research agendas in accordance with each researcher's expertise and specific circumstances. The researchers who come together in this project include: Mark Tamthai, a renowned philosopher, who traces the evolution of government policy; Rattiya Saleh, an authority on the Malay language in the south, who looks at relations between Muslims and Buddhists; Zakee Phithakkumpol, a young Muslim researcher from Hat Yai, who studies migration away from the troubled area; Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng, a Silpakorn University anthropologist from

Yala who conducted a rather thorough survey of the literature; Decha Tangseefa, a Thammasat University political scientist who approaches government officials' manuals from a freshly unusual theoretical perspective; Matthew Wheeler, an American researcher formerly at the Rand Corporation who places the southern problem in the context of US policy; the Islamic scholar, Imtiyaz Yusuf, an Indian Muslim born in Tanzania and educated in the North America, who looks at the southern problem in the context of the Muslim world; Somkiat Boonchu from the National Security Council who appropriately studies security policy with Mark Tamthai; Colonel Pimonpan Ukoskit from the Chulachomklao Military Academy who explores how different military units in the area performed their functions; and Rungrawee Chaloemsripinyorat, formerly with Associated Press, who used her access to local officials to study human rights violations. It is evident that researchers in this project come from diverse backgrounds. Some are from the capital and others from the south. Some are Thai, others foreign, some senior academics and others first time researchers. Some work in the universities, while others do not. Some have previous experience in this field, while others come fresh to the area. They come from various disciplines: philosophy, anthropology, language studies, communication, Islamic studies, and political science. It is perhaps this fantastic diversity that has led to different and exciting answers to the research questions.

Addressing the research questions: nine studies, data, and findings

The first chapter is a comparative study of national security policies. Mark and Somkiat found that there have been several security policies since 1978. Each has a different emphasis, but central to most is a shared understanding of security as "territorial defense" and an attempt at "consolidating state power." Both policy formulation and evaluation have been Bangkok-centric. The most distinctive policy, however, was that in force from 1999 to 2003 because there was public participation in the process of policy formation, and because the policy adopted a comprehensive notion of security covering how the Thai people's ways of life could be protected.[11] This policy attempted to broaden "ownership" of national security work to include the ordinary citizens of the country. But when there was a discrepancy between how "national security" was understood at the policy level and its definition in the hearts and minds of those working in the field, there was an escalation of violence in the last years of this most unique security policy.

Mark and Somkiat argue that, despite a common belief that there was a lack of policy uniformity in solving problems in the south, there was indeed a "strong uniformity" about the use of violence and the priority of defending the state's power. The problem therefore is not a lack of uniformity. Rather, it is unfortunate that this uniformity is not about pursuing ways for ordinary people to lead normal and peaceful lives which should be the state's most important goal. Pursuing a goal of peace through violent means never bears fruit.

Chapter two is an attempt to assess whether Thai society has any "knowledge" concerning the southern provinces. Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng's survey of literature covers theses and research reports written in Thai and English between 1978 and 2004, beginning with the year of launching the first southern security policy discussed in chapter one, and ending with the year of the dramatic rise in violence. During these twenty-six years, there were 337 pieces of academic writing on the subject, of which ninety-two focus on private Islamic schools and *pondoks* (traditional Islamic boarding schools), while the rest are on politics, government, and culture.

Phrae points out that research on southern Thailand lags behind other regions, particularly the action research on community development in the north, especially in terms of participation from problem formulation through analysis to evaluation. Much knowledge that might contribute to national policy is missing. There has been little study of the international context and international relations of the south.[12] There is almost no study on the effects of economic development on the local population. Patani history was studied only in the context of national Siamese history, not as a location with its own specific identity and past. While the southern border provinces, always in the margin of the cultural, exist at the margins of national history, Narathiwat is at the margin of the margin. It has no place either in the Thai national history nor in local Patani history. There seems to be no place for a history of Patani that does not conform to the plot of dominant national history. It simply cannot emerge in the context of the nation-state historiography whose main plot has been compiled almost wholly by state institutions.

Chapter Three begins the process of addressing the problem of discrepancy between government policy and implementation. Rungrawee is interested in the criteria used to recruit security officials, the implementation of policy on the ground, and the trends in human rights violations. She finds that the violation of human rights exists both at the structural and policy levels. For example, violations occurred under the 2005 Emergency Law, under Thaksin Shinawatra's earlier policy of forceful apprehension which at times led to arrests of ordinary citizens without sufficient evidence, and under a judicial system which is still unfair to suspects.

Most important, perhaps, is Rungrawee's finding that some official practices remain outside the law, despite rules and regulations stipulated by the Southern Border Provinces Peace-Building Command such as an instruction that search and arrest that must be done "gently" in accordance with rule of law, religious principles, local beliefs, and culture. She found that commanding officers working in the field seem to understand the problems facing them well. They have given thought to what kind of officials would be best for the job under such circumstances. A police general remarked: "The problem of violence results from belief and ideology, so people's ideology and thinking need to be changed, by altering the behavior of government officials, because problems have been created by what officials did in the past."[13] The "Defense and Resource Development Force," for example, was very particular about this. Officers coming to serve in the area had to agree to stay at least three years to ensure continuity. Personal histories were carefully scrutinized. Those with heavy debts, drinking problems, or other bad behavior were not to be recruited because the Force believes that local people's satisfaction is crucial for their operations in this area.

If the policies and attitudes of these commanding officers have been this good and carefully thought out, some with ties to local people in the south might wonder why there have been news and rumors about human rights violations by government officials?[14] Rungrawee also reports that some policemen told Buddhist youths in Yala that they could shoot suspicious people and the police would protect them.

Perhaps such discrepancy between policy and practice depends on several factors. First, there are different recruitment criteria used by different units in the area. The rangers, for example, prefer to recruit those with "vengeful minds against the terrorists who have slaughtered their families and friends." [15]

Second, the organizations tasked with solving the southern violence have not prepared themselves for this complex responsibility. The army's prime objective is to prepare soldiers to fight conventional wars to defend the country. Most policemen and women have been trained to fight criminals. They have problems dealing with

something not unlike guerrilla warfare. The army spokesperson once said that " All this war needs is a Sri Thanonchai, but the soldiers are Panthai Norasingh." [16]

Third, the desire to take vengeance for fallen colleagues was important. A junior officer sought permission from his commanding officer to shoot at a suspect whom he believed to be an insurgent. His superior objected to his request by saying, "We are policemen with duties. Death comes. It will never end if they shoot us and we shoot them back. We have to think how to turn people to like us, to love us." While impressive, the problem is whether such reasonable and honorable words, encouraging the men to be tolerant and to solve the political problem with non-violence, are adequate to pacify the policemen and soldiers working in the field who are under immense pressures arising from losses of their friends' lives. They may have not only a desire for revenge, but also a feeling that respect for human rights has become an obstacle to carrying out their duty in the three southern provinces.

Chapter four continues the issues raised in the previous chapter. Pimonpan Ukoskit describes a soldier asking local children a simple question after the Tak Bai incident on 25 October 2004: "What do you want to be when you're grown up?" The soldier told the researcher that: "If you ask a Buddhist boy, he will say he wants to be a policeman or a soldier. But a Muslim boy will say he wants to be a bandit. Why? It's because he wants to kill policemen and soldiers." The answer reflects how profound the problem in the south has become, both in terms of differences between Buddhist and Muslim children, and contrasting feelings towards soldiers, police, and insurgents. I wonder about the future of a society where such contrasts can exist in the minds of its young members.

This issue indicates that how people approach their work in this area depends on how they construe the problem of violence and how sensitive they are to matters of detail. These factors lead back not only to the recruitment process discussed in Chapter Three, but also to operational procedures that themselves stem from organizational differences.

Chapter four is important because it is based on an understanding of the researcher, a military officer herself, that different military units perform their duties with different levels of efficiency. Though they are all soldiers within a similar military culture, various units have their own organizational cultures. The way that policy is translated into practice depends on the commanding officers' ideas and experience. Many have served in regions other than the three southern border provinces. Pimonpan finds that the King's Private Guards from Bangkok carried out their duty with the highest degree of success. As the "King's Private Guards" or the "King's Men", they could change people's attitudes and make their work more acceptable. Their organizational culture binds them to observe the Royal Guards' codes of honor very strictly, inhibiting them from any conduct unbecoming while trying to dutifully serve the people.

In addition, Pimonpan insist that all units must be fully aware that "a military operation does not constitute a war." As a result, the main weapons are not guns but communication. Crucial for a successful undertaking of their tasks is the military's own organizational culture that needs to cultivate humility and rein in the soldiers' own egos.

Chapter five is a study of Thai officials' training manuals in order to examine the ways in which the Thai state has prepared its personnel for working in the violent context of southern Thailand. Decha analyzed fourteen government officials' training manuals developed over the past eighty-three years from the time of King Rama VI. Three important questions were raised: what kinds of discourse of the Thai state have

been reproduced by these manuals; if these discourses themselves have been responsible for the southern violence, what have been the "prices" paid by the Thai state and society for preserving them; and what are the dangerous implications of treating this area as "special."

Only one of the fourteen manuals, *Working with Muslim communities*, was produced by something other than a security-related state agency. Of the remaining thirteen, nine were orientation materials for those beginning to work in the southern border provinces, and all appear to be based on two "originals," one compiled in 1923, and the other in 2000. The rest reproduce similar contents with minor language modifications, or used the whole text unchanged with additional contents.

Upon closer reading, Decha found some traces of alteration. But these changes suggest a decline in the Thai state's ability to re-imagine its relationship to different peoples, and to accord proper respect and dignity. The 2004 manual advises Thai officials to try to get to know Muslim teachers and religious leaders by engaging in conversation or calling a meeting "just for ceremony." This is interesting not only because it recommends such superficial contact with Muslim religious leaders, but also because it was copied from the 1923 manual published eighty-three years earlier. Yet there is a slight difference. The 1923 manual recommended calling a meeting "with suitable ceremony," not "just for ceremony." The difference in tone reflected a change in the Thai state's discourse. Perhaps the new breed of officials who prepared the manual had insufficient knowledge of Thai and therefore failed to see the subtle difference between "with suitable ceremony" and "just for ceremony." Or perhaps the consciousness that this relationship needed special care no longer exists. Whatever the reason, this discourse helps reproduce the insignificance of the "Others" living in this specific space in the eyes of Thai government officials.

Put another way, the fact that there was little change in these manuals demonstrates the persistence of ways of preparing officials for duty in the southern border provinces despite the basic fact that the local, national, regional, and global contexts have undergone spectacular change over almost a century. The manuals reproduce a dominant discourse of the Thai state with Bangkok as its center, and of a nation-state that is determined to "terminate the historical existence of those who have been made into 'the others'." Such persistence indicates that no matter what changes have taken place, the Thai state has not altered its "way of thinking about" the southern border provinces as a strange land at the margin that needs to be accommodated or annexed into the state's preferred form of imagined community.

The report of the National Reconciliation Commission maintains that the relationship among different peoples is more important than the relationship between state and people because it is the cradle of sustainable national security.[17] Many seem to believe that the strong ties that once bound different peoples have been dangerously weakened because of the violence. Pian in Saba Yoi district, Songkhla, for example, is a community with 10,000 Buddhists and Muslims. They once lived in a cordial relationship, going to one another's traditional feasts because many believed that both peoples shared the same "grandparents." But today they are no longer close as they once were, whether trading rice or selling liquid rubber or playing sports together. Even the tea shop has ceased to be a common space.[18]

Chapter six is an attempt to discuss the effects of violence on local Buddhist–Muslim relations. Is it true that these relations have soured so badly as many seem to believe? In this chapter, Rattiya Saleh *returned* to four villages in the three provinces where she had studied such relationships a decade earlier. In her previous study, she found that local Buddhist–Muslim relations were cordial because both sides accepted

"value differences" and co-existed by depending on what she calls "the crystal of productive friendship"—a kind of friendship, born from the womb of the patron-client system and crystallized through time, essential for fostering strong ties among peoples with different religions.[19] This time, however, she found a heightened degree of mistrust among the villagers. They were afraid to deal with strangers. When asked about the surrounding violence, they refused to talk about it. Violent incidents involving both state actors and ordinary people lay beyond the sphere of acceptable conversation. Those who dared to speak at all told the researchers that they wanted to help the government but "hated" the fact that the authorities only listened to some influential people. They were prepared to shame even village leaders who had become unpopular. Not only did they not cooperate with the authorities in apprehending the insurgents, some disenfranchised villagers also chose to side with the insurgents. Although the researcher, who is a Malay Muslim woman with excellent language skills, was very familiar with local informants and those who live in these research sites, she faced immense problems in collecting data because of the fear and lack of safety in the area.

Yet in cases where relationships between Buddhists and Muslims remained strong, she found several factors responsible. They included religiosity, kinship that could be traced long into the past, traditional elites who continued to be respected, and older generations who still possessed a communal memory that bound different peoples in some kind of cultural web.

She also found that Buddhists who earned their living from tapping rubber in Si Sakhon, Narathiwat, had no problem whatsoever. They claimed that Muslim villagers took good care of them because, "We are both poor people so we must help one another. Luckily we both speak Malay, so we can become friends more easily." Rattiya argues that for those who have a similar level of social power and are able to communicate in the local language, the ties continue to be strong. Using local Malay to communicate between Buddhists and Muslims in everyday life has been common in Thai society since the Ayutthaya period when court officials used Malay to communicate with the Dutch East India company in Batavia (Jakarta today). The use of Malay as an international language in the court was later replaced by Chinese in the Thonburi period.

Rattiya searches hard for those cultural elements, such as the acceptance of diversity of "values" and the patron-client system, that can foster strong ties between the Buddhists and Malay Muslims. But the difficulties she herself encountered in conducting this research, the silence of the informants, and the lack of cooperation among the villagers speak volumes about how the violence has corroded local inter-religious relations. By emphasizing the cultural power of the older generation to hold the communities together, she implies that relations are bound to change with the passing of the old generation and the coming of the new. The violence that at times seems to target older people has not only taken human lives but also weakened the ties that have helped sustain these communities, with their rich cultural differences, for so long.

Common wisdom suggests that with the increase in violence, people will migrate out of the area. In late 2006, a mass daily reported that violence had pressured so many to leave their homes that the number of Buddhist had dwindled from 300,000 to "less than half" of that number.[20] Prior to 2003–4, the number of Thai Buddhists in the area had already decreased despite the fact that their fertility rate was higher than their mortality rate. This would mean that the Buddhists had migrated out of the area *even before* the new wave of violence exploded in early 2004, and therefore violence

alone could not explain the migration. Possibly economic opportunities outside the area were luring the better educated Buddhists away.[21]

In chapter seven, Zakee Phithakkumpol studies violence-related migration in the three southern provinces including its after-effects on the migrants. His research questions include: "if violent incidents impact upon people generally, why is it that only some people choose to migrate?" Using migration theory and data collected in Hat Yai, he found that violence is only one of the reasons for migration. Economic factors and employment opportunities have been significant as reasons for both Buddhists and Muslims to migrate. Moreover, there are times when official data is misleading, such as when all of a family leaves except the household head and yet the house registration remained unchanged. In cases like this, there is no migration officially, but in reality many people have moved.

It is generally accepted that the southern violence has been an internal problem caused by insurgents who had little chance of receiving "direct assistance" from international terrorist organizations such as JI (*Jemaah Islamiyah*) or *al-Qaeda* due in part to pressures coming from the American and Singaporean governments as well as some Muslim countries caught between "aversion to the terrorist groups and an intense dislike of the US."[22] But it goes without saying that the southern violence has international and global dimensions, partly due to the geo-cultural connection with the "Malay world" or "Malay civilization" (*Tamadun Melayu*) which is by and large responsible for the production of "Malay identity" through the use of Malay language,[23] and partly through the ties that bind southern Muslims as Muslims with the broader Islamic communities of faith.

The last two chapters in this volume try to situate the southern violence in the imagination of the U.S. and of the Muslim world respectively. Local Muslims as well as some security analysts believe that the U.S. has somehow been connected with the situation in southern Thailand since the new violence erupted in 2004 due perhaps to President Bush's global war against terror. Matthew Wheeler deals with this problem in chapter eight by arguing that the (official) American position is based primarily on defending American interests in the region. More importantly, he delineates the following criteria that inform the American basic understanding of the situation:

> Violence in southern Thailand is domestic both in terms of its causes and forms.
>
> The causes of violence have been aggravated through the ages, in part by the lack of good governance.
>
> There has been no direct and clear foreign involvement in this conflict.
>
> The use of repressive measures and the violation of human rights will increase the risks that violence will become more intensive, expansive, and protracted.
>
> The expansion, intensity and protraction of this deadly conflict will increase the chance of foreign involvement by international terrorist organizations.

The American government finds it counterproductive to directly intervene in the problem of the southern violence. In fear of being misunderstood, the American government carefully screens its official stances and activities. As a result, all security-related projects designed to assist Thailand have to go through the "label and location test." There must be no label indicating any direct American involvement in suppressing southern insurgency. These projects therefore take such forms as vocational support for Muslim women in the area, and disseminating information about the lives and rights of Muslims in America. However, Wheeler also points out that some American analysts or international studies institutions maintain that the U.S.

government should be more active in helping Thailand deal with this problem. Some have even advocated sending "special forces" to southern Thailand to provide consultancy aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Thai security agencies.

Wheeler concludes his chapter with the American trepidation about the Muslim world, and especially about the process whereby activists become militants before finally turning to be terrorists. Many factors contributed to this process including injustices suffered by Muslim minorities that generate vengeful political anger. The American government has been worried about southern Thailand precisely because it believes that these conditions do exist in the area.

In the last chapter, Imtiyaz Yusuf locates the southern violence within the imagination of the Muslim world. He argues that the root of the southern conflict is ethnic rather than religious. He examines how the southern violence impacts upon relations between Thailand and the Muslim world, both within a long-term historical perspective of the relations between Buddhism and Islam, and within a narrower geographical perspective of Thailand's relations with her Muslim neighbors and other parts of the Muslim world.

Both the strength and weakness of this chapter stem from the fact that the Muslim world is vast, and incorporates many local cultural worlds with their own civilizational specificities. Besides the theological differences between Sunni and Shi-a, Islam has emerged historically from the soils of different civilizations. The notion of "the Muslim world" itself encompasses Arab, Turkish, Persian, and Malay, among others. Yusuf points out that in Thailand there are "two types of Islams." First, Muslims who try to integrate into Thai society are scattered from Chiang Rai in the north to the upper south. These Muslims see themselves as members of a minority religion in a country with different faiths yet a dominant Buddhism. Second, the Muslims of lower southern Thailand resist integration and see Islam as constitutive of their ethnic identity as inhabitants of an area forcefully annexed into the modern nation-state only a century ago.[24]

It goes without saying that to cover the whole "Muslim world" in a chapter is impossible. Yusuf therefore chooses only the cases of Pakistan and Iran to elaborate on the educational links between Thailand and the "Muslim world." Importantly, however, this chapter discusses two significant issues: past Muslim thinkers' views on Buddhism, an extremely rare topic even among Muslims in Thailand; and an affirmation of the diversity of Muslims in Thailand in terms of their backgrounds, sources, and streams of faith that glide through the changing religious contexts and global politics.

Yusuf also tries to analyze how the "Muslim world" perceives the southern violence. He distinguishes between the official perspectives of Muslim diplomats and Muslim international organizations on the one hand, and the views in the Muslim print and electronic media on the other. Cyberspace has echoed with sympathy and anger over Muslim brothers and sisters suffering under a repressive non-Muslim regime, while the official discourses—the product of intense negotiation, sometimes involving the Thai Foreign Ministry—consist of carefully chosen words.

While Wheeler in chapter eight focuses on the "official" relationship between the U.S. and Thailand, Yusuf in chapter nine underscores the "civil society ties" between Muslims in Thai society and the Muslim world. Though less visible, the relations between Muslims in Thailand and those in the Muslim world, based on membership in a community of faith, have been quite strong. This reality might increase the Thai authorities' apprehension that such strong ties fostered by the existence of an imagined community of faith have sometimes contributed to events in

the south.

New thoughts and strange findings

Apart from these analyses and answers discussed above, these researches have thrown up some findings that are new and thought-provoking. Consider the following.

> Some of the *pondok* owners refused to register for fear that the government would take over their schools. The document also indicated the government's concerns about foreign interference in the *pondoks*. The behavior of the principal of a *pondok* in Yaha district of Yala province raised some suspicion. He was a Malaysian who, unlike other teachers, never stayed permanently in one place, but traveled throughout the four Southern provinces to teach at different *pondoks*. Moreover, during the seizure of the… insurgents' camp in Betong district of Yala … the authorities found student identification cards issued by a suspected *pondok*. In addition, according to the report a common characteristic of the *pondoks* was the insertion of political teaching in the curriculum.

Many might readily believe this was an official opinion on *pondoks* in late 2004. But in fact it is taken from note by an assistant secretary general of the Thai National Security Council in February 1967! Only the word "communist" (before "insurgents") and the year 1966 have been excised. It seems to me that some problems in the south have changed very little, judging from the state's attitudes and actions.

It is often said that those with authority do not understand the problems and hence fail to overcome them because they don't have "knowledge" about the area. But the literature survey in chapter two uncovered that General Kitti Ratanachaya, former commander of the Fourth Regional Army responsible for the south, wrote a thesis on relations between Muslims and Buddhists, both officials and civilians, in 1989. He found that the relationship was negative due to misunderstanding and mistrust. In 1999, General Kwanchart Klaharn, another commander of the Fourth Regional Army from 2004 onwards and a member of the National Reconciliation Commission, studied relations in southern Thailand with a focus on the factors conducive to co-existence in a plural society. He found that Buddhists and Muslims could co-exist peacefully, and it was "corrupted government officials" who had caused violence in southern Thailand. A former secretary general of the National Security Council, Prakij Prajonpajjanuek, conducted research on "Southern border provinces: engendering sustainable peace and security" in 1992. Many of those who have served the Thai state in the corridors of power have some knowledge about the problem of southern violence. In fact the nexus between "knowledge" and the formulation and implementation of security policy might surprise critics who faulted Thai policy makers on their lack of knowledge.

But it is the relationship between "knowledge" and government officials' operations in the field that matters. Chapters three and five discuss the recruitment criteria and training procedures for officials based in the troubled area. When Americans came to train Thai soldiers and civilians on "Legal perspectives on anti-terrorism" in March 2006, they found the Thai participants lacked even basic understanding on the principles of "Rules of Engagement," a set of guidelines for the use of force by armed state personnel in combat situations. A seminar report published in an American agency's journal pointed out that the American trainers had to insert a lecture on "Rules of Engagement" before they could proceed as planned.[25] Not only do Thai officials lack "knowledge" pertaining to local society, culture, and history, but also lack "knowledge" of rules governing acutely dangerous situations. But the fact

that the American trainers found Thai officials in the field did not understand "Rules of Engagement" does not mean that there are no rules of engagement currently in use. In fact, the Army has its own "Ten Commandments" on how soldiers should conduct themselves in the field, including rules about not abusing the villagers, and about not exercising discrimination. These commandments became the army's directives under former Supreme Commander, General Surayud Chulanont, who later became prime minister after the 19 September 2006 coup d'etat.

Some government officials perceive Malaysia as a threat to Thai national security. But people in the southern border provinces are connected to Malaysia because of geographical proximity. In chapter six, Rattiya discusses the case of Ramong in Betong, Yala, a village with a population of one thousand and only 10 per cent Buddhist. Muslims and Buddhists in the village have been living peacefully side by side but they have a closer relationship with Malaysia than Thailand. For Ramong villagers, it is easier to go to Malaysia than to the town of Yala.

Besides territorial connection, geo-cultures also weave Malays into a community spanning Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and southern Thailand. But it is fascinating to find that "Malayness" does not have to be defined from outside the province of Pattani. There was a time when it was Patani that defined "Malayness" as evident in the case of a Malaysian who came to southern Thailand in order to fulfill his father's admonition that "If you want to 'know' the Malays, go to live in Patani and learn about their society's traditions."

These strange realities and analyses beg a more profound question of how this wonderland should be re-imagined?

Conclusion: imagined land?

The contributions in this volume suggest that the area plagued with violence at present is a "special space." As a result, there have always existed specific security policies designed for this particular area under the name "National security policy (for) southern border provinces." Thai society has produced a vast amount of "knowledge" on this specific area. Because it suffers from "security problems," civilian and military officials must go through special recruitment processes and be oriented by a set of "manuals" specifically prepared to help them perform their duties in just such a context. The gaze of the American empire is fixed on southern Thailand because the area has become a part of the Southeast Asian anti-terrorism war front, and the gaze of the Muslim world is drawn because a Muslim minority is seen as suffering at the hands of an unjust non-Muslim government. Victims of violence, both Buddhists and Muslims, ordinary people and civil servants, lose their lives, families, and livelihood, while others just decide to leave.

When the contributors of this volume presented their findings at an academic seminar organized by the Senior Research Scholar Project, Thailand Research Fund, at the Sirindhorn Anthropology Center on 18–19 August 2006, there were high expectations that the research would have direct practical application, particularly Decha's work on official manuals. But Decha's presentation generated much frustration among the audience. Many were working in the field and hoped for practical answers they could try to implement. But his framing of the study, using sophisticated theoretical apparatus peppered with postcolonial language, is extremely important for opened up new ways to view the problem with borrowing from "Borderland Studies." From this theoretical perspective, the "space" itself influences the relationship between cultures and the state, and this relationship in turn shapes and

contributes to the escalation of violence.

I would argue that no matter how a space or territory is imagined, or by whomsoever, problems of violence could arise. In the final analysis, though land, space, and territory are geographical concepts, they are also part of a juridico-political geography, permeated with power. For those who are in control of the land, it seems normal and logical to exercise the power that has been in their possession for so long that the traces of pre-existing freedoms are hard to find.[26]

The main problem is how to prevent this land that is imagined as "special" in different senses of the term by so many involved, from descending into greater violence that will bring about further destruction to lives and the cultural ties that have bound different peoples together.

Violence, especially war, not only causes casualties but also destroys existing collective integrity. War, and other forms of extreme political violence, are carried out "to destroy the very way the enemy perceives itself, the way it forms its identity."[27] Among ethnic groups with clear spatial distinctions from "the Others", ethnic identities become connected with the lands where they were born. The land is no longer a mere physical entity but a site of symbolic power. When the ties binding people to their lands are undercut by violence, the lives that derive meanings from such ties simply end. A Palestinian woman told a remarkable story from the West Bank. She saw her elder brother collapse and die before her very eyes when he was told that his land had been occupied by the Israelis to build a new settlement. For such people, "land is all they have," it is the very thing that connects them together.[28] When this connection is nurtured by historical consciousness and constantly drummed up by the pain of unending violence, it means more than mere ethnic identity in a material sense because it endows the natural geography with a sense of the sacred, giving birth to sacred geography.[29] Perhaps this is why in so many cases, struggles for freedom from foreign occupation stress the connection of people to land, and then chain this connection to their struggle. This is what has happened in the case of Palestinians all over Israel and the occupied territories. In this sense, it could be argued that the "land" occupied by Israel helps produce the Palestinian identity since it has become a "space" for the Palestinians to preserve and lead their lives. The land has become an emblem of Palestinian existence, and the theft of this land is "the sign of the Israeli will to efface the Palestinians."[30]

To prevent the "land" from becoming a legitimizing space for violence among different peoples with histories of pain is not easy. It is even more difficult when this task has to be undertaken in the context of violence used by all sides. The research findings in this volume, however, indicate traces of ways for this imagined land to exist within an imagined community that is the modern Thai nation state. These traces include past security policies based on the reality of cultural diversity with respect for "otherness"; the awareness of some commanding officers working in the field who have tried to issue rules and regulations conducive to rights, liberty and human dignity; and a residuum of cultural ties binding Buddhists and Muslims.

But to empower this knowledge to the degree that it could halt future violence depends on the capacity of the Thai people to re-imagine their community with sufficient space to allow the different peoples who were here before the modern nation-state, and who were perhaps born from a different imagination, to be able to live side by side with dignity.

Endnotes

1 *Bangkok Post*, 30 July 2007.

2 Supara Janchitfah, 'Living in the crossfire,' *Bangkok Post*, 29 July 2007.

3 Supara, 'Living in the crossfire.'

4 Supara Janchitfah, *Violence in the mist: reporting on the presence of pain in southern Thailand* (Bangkok: Kobfai, 2004), p. 15.

5 Surachart Bamrungsuk, *Wikrit tai! su duai yutthasat lae panya* (Southern crisis: fighting with strategy and wisdom) (Bangkok: Animate Group Publishers, 2004), pp. 158–65.

6 Panithan Wattanayakorn, 'Botbat lae itthiphon khong maha-amnat nai thai' (The role and influence of super powers on Thailand), in Kaew Withoonthien et al., ed., *Khwam ru lae khwam mai ru 3 changwat chaidaen tai* (Knowledge and ignorance of the three southernmost provinces) (Bangkok: Health Promotion Cooperative Study Project for Three Southern Provinces, Social Agenda Committee, and Health Promotion Support Funds, 2006), p. 124.

7 Worawit Bahru, 'Kan ko kanrai kap kan sang santiphap khong prachachon' (Terrorism and people's peace-building) in Kaew, *Khwam ru lae khwam mai ru*, p. 139.

8 Saowaluck Kittiprapasr et al., *Naeothang dan nayobai nai kan kaekhai panha nai 3 changwat chaidaen phak tai* (Policy directions for solving southern border provinces problems) (Bangkok: Public Policy Development Institute, 2006), pp. 58–9.

9 Uthai Dulhyakasem et al., *Nayobai khong rat lae kan nam nayobai khong rat su kan pathipat kap kan kaekhai panha khwam khatyaeng nai changwat chaidaen phak tai yang yangyuen* (State policy and policy implementation and sustainable conflict resolution in southern border provinces: a research report) (Bangkok: National Research Council, 2007).

10 Nidhi Eoseewong, 'Kamnam bannathikan' (Editorial introduction), in Nidhi, ed., *Malayu sueksa: khwam ru phuenthan kieo kap prachachon malayu muslim nai phak tai*) (Melayu studies: basic knowledge about Malay Muslims in the south) (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Midnight University, 2007), pp. 8–9.

11 Some scholars believe that this particular security policy contains "the best understanding of the different peoples and the land in the southern border provinces." See Uthai, *Nayobai khong rat*, p. 71.

12 To the best of my knowledge, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee has completed its report on *Raingan kan wichai rueang panha khwam runraeng nai changwat chaidaen phak tai lae phon katop to khwam samphan rawang prathet khong thai* (Violence in the southern border provinces and its impact on Thailand's foreign relations) (Bangkok: Research and Development Committee, the Thai Senate, 2006). But because this report appeared in 2006, it lies outside the scope of the research discussed in chapter two of this volume.

13 Interview with Police Major General Worapong Siewpreecha, deputy commander, Police Bureau Operation Front and Deputy Metropolitan Police Commander, 21 April 2006, by Rungrawee in chapter three of this volume.

14 For example, the villagers believe that it was the Thai authorities who shot at their cars killing two people at Pondok Taseh in Yala on 9 March 2007; or the case of a ranger killing four Malay Muslims in Patae, Yaha District, Yala in the evening of 22 May 2007. These incidents are some of the cases which the student protesters (the network of people's protection students) at the Central Mosque in Pattani from 31 May to 4 June 2007, put forward and called for further investigation by the government.

15 See http://www.geocities.com/taharnpran4/dna.htm.

16 Rungrawee's interview with Colonel Akra Thipyaroj, the Army spokesperson on 26 December 2005 in chapter three of this volume. Sri Thanonchai is a mischievous trickster in local Thai folktales, while Panthai Norasingh is a historical figure from the Ayutthaya period who sacrificed his life out of loyalty to the king.

17 National Reconciliation Commission, *Overcoming violence with the power of reconciliation* (Bangkok: National Reconciliation Commission, 2006), pp. 40–1.

18 Chayanit Poonyarat, 'Changwat chaidaen phak tai kap khwam pen pai dai khong kan

samanchan' (The southern border provinces and reconciliation possibilities), unpublished manuscript, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, 3 August 2007, pp. 10–1.

19 Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan rawang sasanik thi prakot nai changwat pattani yala lae narathiwat* (Inter-religious relations in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat) (Bangkok: Thailand Research Fund, 2001).

20 *Daily News,* 25 December 2006.

21 Ammar Siamwalla, 'Panha chak "kan phatthana" lae "kan mai phatthana"' (Problems from "development" and "maldevelopment"), in Kaew, *Khwam ru lae khwam mai ru,* p. 114.

22 Lieutenant General Nanthadej Meksawasdi, *Pathipat kan lap dap fai tai* (Dousing southern fire: covert operations) (Bangkok: Ruamduay Chuai Kan Publishers, 2006), pp. 152–4. The author of this book is a long time intelligence officer and was very close to prime minister Surayud Chulanont. It is interesting to note that there are some foreign scholars who firmly believe that there have been concerted efforts on the Thai side to claim that southern violence is a domestic problem and thus conceal the role of foreign involvement. I understand that Zachary Abuza, who writes on terrorism and the Muslim world, has written on this "conspiracy of silence" among Thai officials and academics on international terrorist organization involvement in southern Thailand.

23 Nidhi, 'Kamnam bannathikan,' p. 18.

24 Imtiyaz Yusuf, *Faces of Islam in southern Thailand* (Washington D.C.: East-West Center Washington Working Papers, No.7, March 2007).

25 Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 'Rules of Engagement discussed,' *Partners*, April 2005, p. 6; available at http://www.dsca.mil/newsletter/E-Partners%200406v2.pdf.

26 Michael J. Shapiro, *Violent cartographies* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneasota Press, 1997), pp. 15–6.

27 Renata Saleci, 'The fantasy structure of nationalist discourse,' (1993) cited in Shapiro, *Violent cartographies*, p. 13.

28 Geoffrey Aronson, *Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada: creating facts on the West Bank* (1990) cited in Glenn Bowman, 'A country of words: conceiving the Palestinian nation from the position of exile,' in Ernesto Laclau, ed., *The making of political identities* (London and New York: Verso, 1994), p. 169, fn. 45.

29 See similar opinion in Anthony D. Smith, 'The ethnic sources of nationalism,' in Michael E. Brown, ed., *Ethnic conflict and international security* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 30.

30 Aronson, *Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada* cited in Bowman, 'A country of words,' p. 169.

1

National security policies on the southern border provinces, 1974–2003

Mark Tamthai and Somkiat Boonchoo

This chapter studies the development of national security policies on the southern border provinces over thirty years (1974–2003). The technique of the study is to analyze policy in each period from four dimensions: the meaning of "national security" in that period; the process of devising policy; the contents of policy; and the methods of evaluating that policy.[1] Ideally the study would also cover the intentions behind the policy in each period, but this information is not explicit in the documents on which the study is based. The study ends in 2003 as the subsequent outbreak of violence represented a major change.

The chapter begins with some background on the problem of the southern border provinces, and a review of policies over 1959–73, the period prior to this study. The study of policy over thirty years is divided into three sub-periods—1974–77, 1978–98, and 1999–2003—based on the differences in the thinking process, analysis of the situation, process of policy-making, and policy characteristics. The chapter ends with a comparative analysis of policies over the thirty year period, highlighting the significance of changes in 1999.

Background to the problem of the southern border provinces

Political violence can occur in any country where minorities feel as if they do not belong in the mainstream society or are disrespected by a government policy aimed at assimilation and destruction of their cultural identities. This is the case of Thailand's southern border provinces. The perceptions of the ethnic Malay population in the area are tied to the historical fact that their territory was under the Thai state's domination. Throughout history, there have been continuous struggles to gain independence. In the early Rattanakosin period, Pattani, which had been subdivided into the seven provinces of Pattani, Nong Chik, Yala, Yaring, Ra-ngae, Raman, and Sai Buri, made several attempts to break away from Bangkok. Some of the important reasons, according to Rattiya Saleh in her article, "Pattani Darussalam," were[2]

> the settlement of the Buddhist Thais in the seven provinces as a means to create a balance of power and prevent insurrections by the local people who were dissatisfied with the government, and the constant conflicts between the citizens of the seven provinces and the government. Some of the province governors were secretly stocking up weapons and recruiting men to fight the government.

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), political reforms aimed at

centralizing power instituted the *thesaphiban* system (territorial control from the capital) as the main mechanism to allow Bangkok to exercise tighter control over tributary states. Resenting their diminished power, the governors of the seven provinces rebelled, only to be crushed by the Bangkok government. Following the 1932 political revolution in Siam, the *thesaphiban* government was replaced with the provincial administration, which subsequently reorganized the seven provinces and other Malay territories into the southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Songkhla, and Satun. Bangkok's centralization of power through the *thesaphiban* system that eroded the authority of the provinces' rulers occurred at a time when British policy in the Malay states was geared towards elevating the local rulers or Sultans. The British created disunity between rulers and ruled by emphasizing the higher status of the former vis-à-vis the latter, and also encouraged the Chinese to seize economic control for the convenience of the government. During the Second World War, when the Japanese occupied Malaya, an independence movement formed. The struggles for independence of the Malays continued after the war and had an impact on Thais of Malay descent, who in 1947 built a stronger organization which has been in operation ever since.

Factors contributing to the structure of violence

In the view of the Thai government, the independence movement of the Malay states, also known as the Pattani states, represented an act of rebellion. However, when considering the fundamental characteristics of the southern border provinces, it is clear that there were other factors, in addition to history, contributing to the formation of the independence movement and its continued support by the people.

Located in the remote part of the country amidst jungles and mountains, the southern border provinces do not allow easy access and communications with Bangkok. The Thais of Malay descent usually prefer Malaysia to Bangkok as a traveling destination because of the convenience of the ground and water transportation connecting the southern provinces and Malaysia. This geographical factor draws the Malay Thais closer to Malaysia than to Bangkok.

Like the rest of the country, the southern border provinces are governed through the central authority in Bangkok. However, for the Malay Thais, who have their own distinctive culture, way of life, and historical perceptions, the regulations and policies handed down by the Bangkok government with no regard to these characteristics or the citizens' participation are seen as more beneficial to the center than to their area. Moreover, most of the governing officials are Buddhists who have little or no knowledge of the local language. A key issue is that this poor understanding of the local culture and traditions creates wide gaps in communication and political control.

The Thai Malays are devout Muslims whose way of life does not blend with the society of Buddhist Thais and ethnic Chinese. Although there was no major conflict or complete separation between the Thai Muslims and Buddhists, their different cultural and religious identities kept them apart. The Thai Muslims did not interact in a way to promote unity with the community of Thai Buddhists, who were a minority in the area. As a result, the Buddhist population and public officials were largely indifferent to the grievances of the Thai Muslims. A study by Piyanart Bunnag indicates that,[3]

> Islam was the most important variant or factor that alienated the Malays in this region from the majority of the population in Thailand…. The Islamic influence caused the Thai Muslims to feel alienated, believing that they were not Thais, but Malays, like their cousins in Malaysia.

The Thai Muslims in the southern border provinces live in a sufficient economy where they depend on natural resources for their livelihood. Because wealth remained in the hands of non-Muslims, there was a widespread feeling among the Muslim population that the region's natural resources were being exploited by outsiders to the Muslims' disadvantage. Furthermore, the southern border provinces lagged far behind the rest of the country in terms of development. The stark contrast with the economic growth in nearby Malaysian villages led Thai Muslims to resent the Thai government's neglect of their well-being, which further alienated them from the rest of the nation.

Policies prior to the 1932 political revolution

As tributary states, the southern border provinces, then called the Malay states, were allowed self-government, but were required to pay tribute to the Thai capital every three years in the form of *Bu-ngamas*, the Malay term for trees adorned with gold and silver. When the capital was at war, the states also had to provide assistance by sending troops, weapons, and supplies. Nevertheless, wartime also created an opportunity for the states to revolt. After a series of periodic rebellions that the capital put down successfully, the government in the early Rattanakosin period decided to divide the Malay states into smaller tertiary provinces under the control of Songkhla province. Bangkok then appointed the governors of these provinces. This policy of "divide and rule" resulted from several rebellions by the Pattani rulers. Considering the large size of Pattani a threat, King Rama I ordered that it be broken down into the seven provinces of Pattani, Yaring, Sai Buri, Ra-ngae, Raman, Yala, and Nong Chik, all placed under the authority of Songkhla province. The king also appointed the province governors from the ranks of Thais and Malays who had assisted in quelling the revolts and gave them the title of Phraya. Although these provinces could collectively be considered a state, they were officially referred to as a "territory" because of their dependency to Songkhla province.

However, Bangkok took into account the delicate feelings of the Malays. During the reign of King Rama V, policy makers were careful to avoid a policy that might further antagonize the Malays. The new regulations were based on three principles, which can be summarized as follows:[4]

> No change in taxation, but an end to monopoly.
>
> The use of the Islamic judicial system known as *to-kali* courts should not be abolished, but reformed by selecting well-respected teachers of Islam to serve as the "Dato Yuttitham" (judges). For cases involving Muslims or when a Muslim defendant had to be tried under Islamic law, such as family cases, each side could select one or more Datos to be the bench in the Thai court.
>
> The current governors were to receive pensions.

The policy regarding the seven provinces was clearly specified in the "Regulations for the governing of the seven provinces of 1897." These regulations placed great emphasis on the selection of officials for the posts in the area by stipulating that

candidates must possess sufficient knowledge of the local Malay language to be able to communicate with the people and understand their religious beliefs and practices. Moreover, the regulations allowed the application of the customary Islamic laws in cases involving families and inheritance, which would be adjudicated by the *to-kali* who were well-respected and knowledgeable in Islamic law.

On 6 July 1923, King Rama VI approved a "Protocol in the policy making for the governing of the Pattani territory," which put an end to regulations or practices disrespectful of Islam. Moreover, under the new protocol officials had to exercise fairness in tax collection and justice in their treatment of the people. Any officials guilty of wrongdoings would be punished by law. The citizens should not have to waste time that could be spent towards their livelihoods on contacting the officials. The candidates for government positions in the area had to have good character and receive training in the local culture and customs before starting work. Finally, the protocol mandated that any new regulations affecting the well-being of the people had to be based on careful consideration.

Policies after the political revolution

Piyanart Bunnag's study on the governing policies for the Thai Muslims in the southern border provinces (1932–1973) summarizes development of policy between the political revolution of 1932 and the political crisis of 1973 as follows:[5]

> The policies of the period between 1932 and 1973 were aimed at creating harmony by raising awareness among the Thai Muslims that they were citizens of Thailand. At the same time, these policies were based on compromise, acceptance, and endorsement of the Thai Muslims' uniqueness in terms of religion, society, and culture. This could be characterized as a policy of integration. However, whenever a movement posed threats to the country's stability and autonomy, the government also had a policy to put down the movement and restore the situation to normal as quickly as possible.

Policy development, 1959–1973

In 1959, an act established the National Security Council as the main body to advise and give policy recommendations on security to the prime minister and the cabinet. In fact, the National Security Council evolved from the Council on the Defense of the Kingdom, which was formed in 1910 at the beginning of King Rama VI's reign. Following the enactment of the National Security Act, the Office of the National Security Council was created to support the tasks of the National Security Council by recommending policies, guidelines, and measures regarding national security issues. The work of the National Security Council is closely related to the intelligence and strategic and psychological operation services. Between 1959 and 1973, counter-communist insurgency remained the most important issue on the government's national security agenda, with problems in the south listed among the top priorities.

The process of making national security policies

Before discussing national security policies on the southern border provinces, the process involved in the making of the policies must be understood. The perception of

national security at a given time shapes the analysis of the problem which in turn guides the process of making policy. National security policy is approved by all the cabinet members and serves as the guidelines for their work. The policy-making process begins with the analyses of the situation, threats, and future trends. In the past, policy makers relied on the intelligence, strategic operation service, and analysis by the officers at the Office of the National Security Council for policy prescriptions. At present, academic works and data from private developmental organizations are increasingly incorporated into policy decisions. Policy proposals are then discussed in the policy committee of the National Security Council. The council then meets to decide on recommendations to the cabinet.

There is a significant difference between national security policy and the policies of administrative departments. The ability of a department to deal with a wide-ranging issue is usually limited by the scope of its responsibility and conditioned by the cooperation of other departments. In contrast, national security policy requires the coordination and cooperation of all government agencies for power and efficiency in solving problems.

Policy from 1966

Piyanart Bunnag cited the statement of a deputy secretary of the National Security Council on 20 March 1987 regarding the roles of the Council in recommending policies for the southern border provinces as follows:[6]

> In the period between 1959 and 1966, there was no clarity yet in the formulation of national security policy. The National Security Act established the National Security Council in 1959, but the Office of the National Security Council, which was a supporting organization, was created in 1962. The guidelines for security policies on the southern border provinces proposed by the Office of the National Security Council and approved by the government in 1964 entrusted the Ministry of Education with language-related tasks and the Ministry of Interior with counter-insurgency. Due to the situation at that time, the policy focused on the socio-psychological aspect and problems with various insurgent groups.

The Office of the National Security Council holds documents on security policies for the southern border provinces dating back to 1966. There is no record of security policies prior to that year, but it can be assumed that the policy mentioned in the above quotation came into operation in 1964. Before that, security policies were devised at the departmental level.

The directions of security policies in the southern border provinces reflect the analysis of the situation in each period. National security documents from 1966 to 1973 demonstrate that the government had separate policies to target different issues. In 1966, there were two security policies regarding the southern border provinces, both of which focused on education.

The first policy concerned the *pondok* schools.[7] In essence, the creation of new *pondok* schools was prohibited, while existing *pondok* schools had to apply for permits and register within six months. After that, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior would oversee the step-by-step transformation of *pondok* schools into private schools within a specified period of time.

The second policy addressed the fact that "Thai Muslims in the four southern provinces increasingly received their education in Jeddah or Cairo."[8] On the whole, the

situation was not considered to be threatening enough to warrant a special measure for remedy. However, the policy called for rules regarding the documentation and qualifications of those wishing to make pilgrimage to Mecca.

A report in February 1967 by the Office of the National Security Council on the 12-day field trip of the council's deputy secretary (in charge of policy) to study the situation and living conditions of the citizens in the south illuminated the views on the problems in the south at the time. The policy concerning the *pondok* schools was set out as follows:[9]

> *Pondoks*, institutions for religious education, can be breeding grounds for ideologies that are dangerous to national security. Therefore, they must be placed under stricter oversight by government officers. The policy mandating the registration of *pondoks* in 1966 has not achieved its intended results mainly due to the lack of communication and understanding between officials and the owners of the *pondoks*. Some of the *pondok* owners refused to register for fear that the government would take over their schools. The document also indicated the government's concerns about foreign interference in the *pondoks*. The behavior of some principals of *pondoks* in Yaha district of Yala province raised some suspicion. These principals were Malays who, unlike other teachers, never stayed permanently in one place but traveled throughout the four southern provinces to teach at different *pondoks*. Moreover, during the seizure of the communist insurgents' camp in Betong district of Yala in late 1966, the authorities found a student identification card issued by a suspected *pondok*. In addition, according to the report a common characteristic of the *pondoks* was the insertion of political teaching in the curriculum.

Regarding the popularity of education in the Middle East among Thai Muslims in the southern provinces, the Ministry of Interior informed the National Security Council about the progress in implementing policy regarding Muslim students in January 1967 as follows:[10]

> The fact that Thai Muslims in the southern provinces have increasingly gone to study in Jeddah or Cairo may have resulted from scholarships from the Arab countries to sponsor young Thai Muslims to pursue secondary and college education in these countries. Some Thai Muslim children who accompanied their parents on their religious trips to Mecca also used the opportunity to seek their parents' permission to continue their studies in the Arab countries. In response to these cases, the Ministry of Interior has proposed measures to limit scholarships from Arab countries. These measures were approved by the cabinet in November 1967. The matter is placed under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will work in conjunction with other government agencies on implementing and overseeing the following measures:
>
> 1. All embassies and consulates must be informed of the new rule that requires them to report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the offering of scholarships to Thai students and the importation of instructors to teach in Thailand;
>
> 2. Any associations or private organizations applying for scholarships from foreign sources must seek approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
>
> 3. When an individual applies for or receives a foreign scholarship that may carry political implications, the Office of the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation must bring the case to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for consultation; and

4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs requires Thai embassies and consulates to oversee Thai scholarship students and report to the department's news office. Regarding Thai Muslim children remaining in the Middle East for school after accompanying their parents to Mecca, the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Police Department, requires those wishing to travel to Mecca to meet certain qualifications as a preventative measure.

The above report by the Ministry of Interior demonstrates that the policy prescribed by the National Security Council was implemented by the related departments through measures devised in accordance with the cabinet's resolution.

In 1969, the National Security Council and the government approved a policy that would remain in effect until 1973. This policy, by drawing connections between the military and educational dimensions, marked the beginning of the multi-faceted consideration of problems in the south. Before going into the details of the policy of 1969, it is important to understand the perspectives on the southern problems and the approaches in analyzing the situation prior to the formulation of this policy. In 1967, a group of directors and officials in the Office of the National Security Council traveled to the southern provinces to study the situation. The report from the trip suggests that the government agencies at the policy level began to view the problems in the southern border provinces as stemming from a multitude of factors. In contrast to the past where the problems had been tackled separately, this shift led to a perception of the problems in broader, interrelated dimensions. The following excerpt from the report reveals the views on the security problems in the south, which influenced the directions of subsequent policies.[11]

Critical spots in the south

The citizens residing in southern Thailand can be categorized into three main groups, namely Chinese, Malay Muslims, and Buddhist Thais. There are also some Chinese Muslims, Buddhist Chinese, and Thai Muslims. The Thai government considers these people Thai citizens because they live in Thailand. A survey shows that the Malay-speaking Muslims in Thailand's southern provinces account for more than 80 per cent of the population in the area. This has caused some socio-psychological problems with respect to ethnicity, language, and religion in the region. Moreover, these people live far away from the center of Thai culture and government. Almost all of the names of the districts, sub-districts, and villages are in the Malay language, while the Thai authorities in the area are Thai-speaking Buddhists. Such contradictory characteristics remain an obstacle to unifying the citizens.

Some observations

Government officials have not made serious and consistent efforts to reach out to the citizens in the four southern provinces who are of Malay descent and hardly speak Thai, especially those in the rural areas. The government's advertisements and campaigns on psychological warfare have not spread as widely as they should. The focus should be turned towards the local newspapers or the printed media produced by the government. There should be an increase in the circulation of printed materials in the villages to counter the current propaganda of enemies, even if the materials have to be handed out free of charge. Anti-communist messages broadcast on the radio in this area should not be the same as those in the central region because the population in this area does not yet have much understanding of the issue. The

matter concerning the local radio station broadcasting in the Malay language should be given further consideration….

The implementation of development programs in the south under the Central Directing Center for National Security has been effective in reaching the rural population, but should be expanded to target the sensitive area. After a certain period of time, the job should be handed over to the local authorities. It is not advisable for the taskforce of the Central Directing Center for National Security to remain in one place for a long time because that can lead to the ineffectiveness and boredom of the members of the taskforce who have less duties to perform….

The speedy and effective implementation of the programs to improve the well-being of the people, the communications, especially between the rural and urban areas, the number of elementary schools and teachers, and the public health is necessary. Moreover, there should be measures to enhance the efficiency and qualifications of the local authorities.

Policy on stability and security, 1969

In late 1969, the National Security Council and the cabinet approved another security policy on the southern border provinces after the two issue-based policies of 1966. The "Policy on the stability and security of the southern border provinces" marked the beginning of referring to the problematic areas as "the southern border provinces," instead of just "the southern provinces" used in previous policies. This change indicated that the security agencies had narrowed down the scope of the policy to address problems in the areas adjacent to the Malaysian border.

There were two consecutive policies on the stability and security of the southern border provinces. The first went into effect following the cabinet's approval on 18 November 1969, and remained in use until early 1974, when it was replaced by the second. The contents of the 1969 policy focused on three aspects, as follows:[12]

Suppression. The number of soldiers and police will be raised to the same level as that of the counter-insurgent force in the northeast. The focus is on the prevention of foreign-supported insurgencies and infiltrations and the more efficient use of news and intelligence to target the separatist movement, communist terrorists, and Malay communist guerillas. In the area of government, it is imperative to improve the performance of public officials and punish those whose conduct has caused grievances among the people. In addition, the authorities must instill a sense of loyalty to the nation and the king into the Thai Muslims….

Development. Due to the lack of foreign assistance (unlike other regions) and the inadequate budget for development projects proposed by the Committee to Develop the South, it is advisable to give priority to development programs that have direct political impact on the people….

Education. It is crucial to have a project aimed at reforming education in the four southern border provinces. A study must be conducted to determine why the majority of the people in the area prefer not to speak or learn the Thai language, and find a solution immediately. The prevailing attitude is based on a misconception that learning and speaking Thai is a form of religious misconduct. Other issues include the lack of schools and teachers in the rural areas, lack of support for the education

of adults, the Thai Muslims' preference to send their children to pursue religious studies abroad, and the effective dissemination of information in the area.

The contents of the 1969 policy show that the government directed efforts on counter-communism and counter-terrorism in areas close to the Thai-Malaysian border. For areas further from the border, emphasis was on the development of infrastructure that would have a direct impact on the population and on the presence of government officials in the areas. At the same time, the government also stressed the importance of the cultural assimilation of Thai Muslims through learning and speaking the Thai language.

The Intelligence Advisory Committee in the Office of the Prime Minister held a meeting in September 1972 to evaluate the implementation of the government's policy on the southern border provinces.[13] The report from the meeting assessed the situation regarding the separatist movement and the implementation of the government's policies on the security in the southern border provinces between 1966 and 1969. The important points of the document are as follows:[14]

The policy to transform the pondoks into private schools. Since 1966, the conversion of *pondoks* into private schools that teach the Islamic religion has not been very successful. The reason was the lack of coordination between local officials of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education, who avoided taking responsibility by passing the buck to each other. The fact that senior local officials did not give much attention to the problem made junior officials who were aware of the issue do the same. Moreover, the owners of the *pondoks* were not willing to convert their schools into private schools because doing so would affect their income and influence. Some owners feared that once their schools were placed under the supervision of the authorities, their freedom in running their own schools would be reduced. As a result, these owners often stood in the way of the assistant teachers sent by the government to teach the Thai language. They also refused to appear at meetings with government authorities and ignored the teaching of mandatory general subjects. These problems illustrated the ineffectiveness of the policy. New *pondoks* are established illegally all the time, especially in remote areas. As for the registration of the existing *pondoks*, the majority of them have not yet registered in 1970.

The policy to steer the Thai Muslim children away from going to study in the neighboring countries and the Middle East. The establishment of the teacher's college in Yala province and the founding of Songkhla Nakharin University campus in Pattani province have boosted the interest in education among the Thai Muslims. This also has contributed to an increase in the enrollments of Thai Muslim children in elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, the government offers special privileges for Thai Muslims who wish to enroll in public institutions. They are not required to take the entrance examination and are eligible for scholarships. The purpose of these privileges is to encourage the learning and speaking of Thai among Muslims. However, there are some important factors behind the Thai Muslims' inclination to send their children to study in Kelantan state, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. These factors include religious and nationalistic considerations, propaganda by the separatist movement and foreign countries, and the underdeveloped educational management in the four southern border provinces.

In addition, the report also indicated that once Thai Muslims began sending their children to study in government institutions, they were faced with the problem of

insufficient Thai teachers and facilities to support the increase in the enrollment of Muslim students.

> *Reform in government.* Bribery is a main cause for citizens, both Buddhists and Muslims, distancing themselves from public authorities. It also has led to the Muslims' resentment and rejection of the Thai state. The operations in counter-insurgency have not been very effective due to the lack of manpower and equipment. Information is difficult to obtain because the people are not willing to cooperate with the authorities….
>
> *Economic improvement.* The main source of income for the population in the area comes from rubber plantations. A fall in the price of rubber results in a decrease in people's income. In contrast to the Malaysian government's immediate response, the Thai government has not been able to take care of this problem. Furthermore, in spite of the considerable improvements in local roads, the insufficient network of service roads and inconvenient transportation system remain a problem. The people in the area have been using these two issues to compare their situation with those of the Malaysians and the other regions in Thailand….
>
> *Socio-psychological improvements.* The policy to promote knowledge of the Thai language among Thai Muslims has not been very effective. In spite of the policy, the staff at the local public radio station still broadcast programs in Malay without much supervision. The Malaysian television network also has more influence on Thai Muslims compared to its Thai counterpart in terms of the quality of the programs and the language, which most people understand….
>
> *Prevention of foreign-supported infiltrations and subversion.* It is still difficult to prevent infiltration and subversion instigated by foreigners. Located by the sea and adjacent to the Thai-Malaysian border, the area can be accessed easily by infiltrators. In addition, the scope of the operations of the Thai Intelligence Agency is not wide-ranging. The lack of coordination between the staff at the operational level also has resulted in the failure to detect the movement of enemies in a timely fashion….
>
> *Religious reform.* The "Thammajarik Islam" project carried out by the Ministry of Interior according to the cabinet's resolution of May 1970 has achieved some positive results in providing correct religious knowledge to the Thai Muslims.

In 1973, the cabinet agreed on the National Security Council's recommendations regarding the Ministry of Education's proposal for educational reform, namely an extension of the policy to convert the *pondoks* into Islamic private schools. The policy proposal called for close cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education in overseeing the registration of *pondoks* as well as a sufficient budget to upgrade Islamic private schools. The Ministry of Education was entrusted with implementing the reform, which would be carried out on a three-year or five-year plan in conjunction with the educational reform project of the Ministry of Interior, the National Social and Economic Development Plan, and the National Education Plan.

It can be concluded that the security policies on the southern border provinces between 1966 and 1973 placed great emphasis on education and socio-psychological work. This can be seen in the efforts to create a sense of belonging to the Thai nation among the Muslims through learning and understanding Thai, which were undertaken concurrently with the suppression of terrorist groups, prevention of infiltration and subversion, and economic development. Nevertheless, what was missing in these policies,

but had figured most prominently during the reigns of Kings Rama V and VI as seen in the Regulations for the Governing of the Seven Provinces of 1897, was the respect for religious and cultural identities. The acceptance, honoring, and non-discriminatory treatment of Thai Muslims did not form the basis of policies in the period between 1966 and 1973. Instead, policies were geared towards strengthening the state's power through the strict regulation of religious education, prevention of foreign influence on the religious beliefs and ideology of the local people, especially youth, and the suppression of terrorist and separatist groups.

First phase, 1974–7

During the four years between 1974 and 1977, the National Security Council issued three national security policies with regards to the southern border provinces. Compared to other periods, this phase witnessed the highest number of policies in use. Moreover, there were also executive orders and attempts by the prime minister to form dialogues with the Malaysian leader on the problems. This flurry of policy-making came about because the southern border provinces and other regions of the country were under widespread communist attacks. In the case of the southern border provinces, the nature of the violence was complicated by proximity to Malaysia. The major players included Malay communist insurgents, southern communist insurgents, and terrorist or separatist groups.

National policy on stability and security in the southern border provinces (1974)

The policy of 1974 was a continuation of the policy in 1969 that went by the same name. On the whole, the two policies shared similar contents and points of emphasis. One of the new features in the 1974 policy was the promotion of unity in the problem-solving operations of the government agencies by putting the officials in charge under the same unit. Another important feature was the attempt to persuade key members of the insurgencies to cooperate with the authorities. The policy also recommended an initiative to form good rapport with foreign governments as a means to dissuade them from lending assistance to insurgent and terrorist groups. The main points of the policy included:[15]

> Speed up the suppression of insurgent and terrorist groups. Increase the number of officers and use immediate and decisive measures in executing tasks in order to support the goals of development work.
>
> Induce the key players who are involved in the unrest like Pohsu[16] to cooperate with the authorities. Make every effort to weaken the force and influence of terrorist groups.…
>
> Form an understanding with governments of nations that have provided support to the terrorist groups in the area. This is because some might have misunderstood the Thai government's treatment of the Muslims. At the same time, keep track of students and pilgrims traveling overseas as well as use psychological publicity to give them a correct understanding.

In 1975, the prime minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj issued an executive order to establish the Peace-Keeping Division for the Southern Border Provinces. He appointed Lieutenant General San Jitpatima, Commander-in-Chief of the Fourth Army Division, as

director of the new division. Under the director's command were the deputy commander of the Provincial Police, the deputy commander of the Border Patrol Police, the governors of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat provinces, the commander of the Fourth Division of the Border Patrol Police, and the commander of the Ninth Division of the Provincial Police. The executive order provided the director with authority to deploy civilian, police, and military forces to solve problems related to the security of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat provinces. The director also had the power to recommend the appointment and transfer of public officials in these provinces for the prime minister's approval. The new peace-keeping division served as a mechanism to unify the operations of the various government agencies under the same taskforce and leadership. Prior to this executive order, the government body responsible for suppression was the Office of Internal Security. The decision to form a separate peace-keeping division for the southern border provinces probably reflected the intensified situation in the area and the lack of unity among local agencies in charge of the operations.

Shortly after the creation of the Peace-Keeping Division for the Southern Border Provinces on 6 October 1975, the National Security Council on 17 October agreed on policy specifically designed to tackle terrorism in the southern border provinces and put the director of the Division in charge of implementation.

Policy on terrorism in the southern border provinces, 1975

The main points of the policy are as follows:[17]

> Immediate and complete suppression is required as a measure of expediency because if the situation is left unresolved, it will become more difficult to find a solution. It is necessary to increase the number of soldiers to complement the efforts of the police and administrative officials, all of which will be under the command of the director of the Peace-Keeping Division in the Southern Border Provinces. The budget must be raised in response to the deficiencies in weapons, equipment, and transportation vehicles, as well as the delay in the payment of the officers' salaries. The officers working in the hostile areas also should be paid at a higher rate than those in normal areas that have no incidents.

In addition to the use of force in controlling terrorism and the creation of unity between civilians, police, and soldiers, this policy was the first to take into account the morale of officers operating in the dangerous environment. The salary incentive has continued to the present, but remains a contentious subject for officers who feel that they are risking their lives and deserve the pay increment. The issue has had some adverse effects on cooperation between officers in the area.

The outcome of the Policy on the Stability and Security of the Southern Border Provinces of 1974, which paved the way for contact with key players in the terrorist groups, resulted from the collective effort of several individuals. Most prominent was the deputy minister of interior, Police Lieutenant Colonel Boonlert Lertpreecha, who took the lead role in convincing Pohsu Medisa and his men to give in to the authorities. In late 1975, the National Security Council responded to an inquiry made by the director of the Peace-Keeping Division in the Southern Border Provinces about the guidelines for prosecuting those who had negotiated with Boonlert. This response demonstrates that policy was aimed at aggressively destroying the structure of terrorist groups. In this document, prime minister Kukrit established the ground rules as follows:[18]

- No problem for individuals without incriminating evidence (do not prosecute)

- The individuals with arrest warrants must be prosecuted by law, but given the lightest sentence if found guilty. This is to show compassion towards those who have repented and turned themselves over to the authorities.

Policy to solve the security problems in the southern border provinces, 1975

In late 1975, the secretary general of the National Security Council and his colleagues made a trip to study the situation in the southern border provinces. The report on the trip, submitted to prime minister Kukrit in early December of that year, illuminated the perspectives of officials in the policy units on security problems in the area. Thanks to the report, the prime minister ordered that the matter be discussed in the meeting of the National Security Council, which led to the launch of another policy three weeks later.

The views of the National Security Council officials in the report had a direct impact on the new policy:[19]

> Problems related to the misconduct of police and administrative officials such as corruption, trade in contraband, and oppression have caused the people's suffering and provided conditions for the communist terrorists to attack the government and solicit support from the people. Those found guilty of misconduct must be relocated out of the area and punished severely.
>
> The intelligence system of the area is not effective enough to benefit the government's operations, and must be improved immediately.
>
> At present, coordination between the administrative branch, police, and army is at a low level. Mostly, operations are carried out separately in different directions. This must be changed.
>
> Another important issue to report here, based on the statements of several high-ranking officials in their conversations with the secretary of the National Security Council, is that the personnel of every agency in the provinces as well as the citizens are looking up to Bangkok as the center and model in performing their jobs, especially in terms of law enforcement. These people believe that Bangkok's commitment will reassure and encourage them to keep the provinces safe and secure according to the law. This matter deserves the attention of government departments in Bangkok, which should consider appropriate measures to set and maintain a good example.

The seven issues covered by the policy to solve the security problems in the southern border provinces of 1975 are as follows:[20]

> Relocate and severely punish officers and officials engaged in corruption, trade in contraband, oppression, and causing suffering to the people.
>
> Rethink the preventive and corrective measures to meet the situation where communist terrorists have exerted increasing influence in the villages in the south. Switch from the use of large forces to undertake operations to continuous use of small patrolling units to pursue and eradicate the terrorists.
>
> Upgrade the intelligence system to make it more effective.

Promote more coordination between the administrative branch, police, and army.

Have the Committee on the Thai-Malaysian Border meet with the Malaysian authorities for assistance and cooperation with regard to terrorists smuggling in and out of Malaysia. Expand the agreement on cooperation in preventing and suppressing crimes in the border area. Use a gentle approach in dealing with Malaysia, and aim at the high politics. Convince the Malaysians that their future security also depends on the security of Thailand.

Prioritize the urgency of projects in social and economic development. Consider the priorities along with timing of the work in the area of suppression.

Appoint an official from the Department of Public Relations to the Committee on the Security of the Southern Border Provinces for the purpose of accurate, immediate, and consistent public relations.

After the policy of 1975 took effect, prime minister Kukrit went on a tour of inspection in the south from 29 January to 1 February 1976. He gave several speeches on the policy to administrative officials and soldiers in Pattani, Narathiwat, and Songkhla provinces. Kukrit also spoke to the citizens via radio and television broadcast on Channel 10 Hat Yai on eight occasions. The Office of Task Coordination, Department of Administration, produced a summary of the prime minister's speeches on his government's public administration policy. The key points are as follows:[21]

Peace-keeping

The Kingdom of Thailand is a united entity that cannot be separated.

The government wants peace in the southern border provinces. The soldiers assigned to the area are considered the keepers of peace, territorial integrity, and power of the king. Therefore, the government will not withdraw troops from the area.

The methods used in suppression should not be exceedingly violent or out of proportion to the acts of crime (oppression of the citizens). Otherwise, there will be more dangers in the forms of secret assistance from Islamic countries that sympathize with the terrorists or the investigation of the matter by the United Nations. Exercise caution.

Beware of the influence and interference of international communist movements that could complicate the problems in the southern border provinces and cause unrest.

Social aspects

All sides must face and accept the reality that the population in the southern border provinces consists of two different demographic groups, namely Thai Muslims and Thai Buddhists. Each group has its own unique identity.

All sides, including the government, must respect one another's differences.

With the differences in mind, the government should avoid any attempt to lessen these differences. Failure to do so can result in disunity and retaliation because the people do not want to give up their identities (such as language and dress code).

It is essential to make the two sides appreciate each other's differences and realize that these differences should not be a divisive issue.

The government will treat all citizens in the country equally and will not grant any special privileges to any provinces or the south in particular, but the citizens of

Thailand in general (nobody is above anybody else). This means that everyone has equal rights in education, and that the government will not endorse a special treatment of anyone and will put an end to existing privileges to ensure equality. At the same time, the government will compensate for the loss of special privileges in education through the improvement of all pre-college institutions to extend opportunities for all citizens in the south regardless of ethnicity or religion.

The government will adhere to freedom of religion as guaranteed by the constitution. Citizens are free to choose their religion, and the government will not restrict that freedom, or induce them to do anything against their religious beliefs and customs. As for the religious schools or *pondoks*, the government will not get involved, influence, modify, or interfere to the effect of turning them into private or other types of schools. When the purpose of the *pondoks* is for religious education, the government will support them to focus only on religious teaching. For all other areas of education, whether secondary or vocational studies, the government will establish separate schools.

The government will promote pre-college education in the southern border provinces by expanding and raising the standard of both the secondary and vocational institutions. This will create opportunities for youths to receive education and work their way into college and employment after graduation.

Economic aspects

The government, through the administrative agencies, will speed up the social and economic development in the southern border provinces immediately by targeting goals that can be achieved in a relatively short period.

Economic development will focus on the citizens' livelihood by supporting existing jobs and creating new ones in the areas of agriculture, fishery, and industry.

Government

The people in the southern border provinces who were born in Thailand, whether they are minorities, majorities, or of any religious and ethnic backgrounds, are considered Thai nationals and entitled to all the rights and freedom described in the constitution.

Civil servants

The selection criteria for civil servants will be based on integrity, morality, compassion, and ability to work efficiently for the benefit of the people in the area.

A major problem is the civil servants who are transferred from the center to the area. Their attitudes should be adjusted accordingly.

Efforts must be made to encourage citizens to cooperate with the authorities and the government in the public interest.

On the issues concerning Malaysia in the policy of 1975, prime minister Kukrit met with Malaysian prime minister, Dato Hussein Onn, on 12 February 1976, at Rincome Hotel in Chiang Mai. Although the meeting covered several other important subjects, only those related to the problems in the southern border provinces will be discussed here:[22]

Prime minister Kukrit said that regarding the problems of the minorities, the Thai government did not suspect any involvement of the Malaysian government. However,

> the local authorities speculated that there might have been some forms of support from certain members of the Malaysian government, which could have been more of moral support rather than direct support. It was necessary for all the authorities involved to have correct understanding of this issue.
>
> The problems with the Chinese communist insurgents should be deliberated separately in the forum of the Committee on the Thai-Malaysian Border. Thailand had some incidents with minorities along its borders with Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, where some minorities and authorities had been involved without the knowledge of the Thai government. Out of concern over the situation, the Thai government arranged for the departure of former prime minister of Myanmar, U Nu, from Thailand. Regarding Cambodia, the Thai government did the same for In Tam. Several Laotian leaders who had been in exile in Thailand were also asked to leave the country or to move away from the Thai-Laotian border. Although the situation had improved, the Thai government still had to deal with problems of refugees from neighboring countries from time to time….
>
> Prime minister Dato Hussein Onn stated that Malaysia pledged through words and actions that it would not interfere with the internal affairs of Thailand. While there was a strong commitment to this pledge at the government level, it was still difficult to achieve that at lower levels because some people showed their sympathy towards the minorities. Nevertheless, the Malaysian government would do everything in its power to exercise control over the matter and pacify the situation in the event of unrest. Malaysia did not wish to cause any worries for Thailand or for itself over these problems. It was therefore necessary to consider the mechanism to solve them. Malaysia had nothing to hide; and all the issues would be brought eventually to their conclusions….
>
> Prime minister Kukrit said that Thailand had faith in the good will and honor of Malaysia and would not do anything that could lead to a misunderstanding between the two countries.

The exchange between the two leaders illustrates their open and sincere conversation on the issues. The close relationship between the two yielded some positive results. Thailand subsequently played an important role in peacefully resolving and ending the problems of the Malay communists through the three-way negotiations consisting of representatives from Malaysia, the Malay communist insurgents, and Thailand. It was not surprising that in 1993 Tansri Rahim, Commissioner of the Malaysian Police Department, met with high-ranking officials in Thailand to offer assistance in solving problems of terrorism in the southern border provinces in return for Thai help with problems of the Malay communists. The offer was accepted by the Thais, but the work progressed slowly due to the subsequent change in the policy of the army in charge of the south.

The policy to solve the problems in the southern border provinces of 1975 remained in effect until 1977, when a new policy was launched.

Second phase, 1978–98

There were three national security policies on the southern border provinces in the period between 1978 and 1998. In contrast to those in the first phase, the policies in the second phase contained clear objectives, tackled security problems in broader dimensions, and promoted the coordination of the work of local government agencies. It was also the

first time that the administration of the southern border provinces was delegated to two levels, namely the national and local levels. At the national level, the prime minister took direct responsibility and was assisted by the Office of the National Security Council, which prepared the details for the prime minister and coordinated policy tasks. At the local level, the commander of the Fourth Army Division was in charge. The Southern Border Provinces Administration Center was established to oversee the civilian work and coordinate local administrative tasks. The Directing Center for the Forty-Third Combined Police and Army Forces was entrusted with the suppression of all forms of terrorism.

National policy on the southern border provinces of 1978

Approved by the cabinet on 24 January 1978, the policy's objectives and main focus were as follows:[23]

Objectives

Encourage the local citizens, especially youths, to learn and speak Thai. Build up the people's confidence in the government and the main institutions of the nation and dissuade them from using religious differences as a divisive issue.

Raise the income level of the local citizens to prevent crime and all kinds of threats. Form a better rapport with Islamic nations regarding the current conditions of Thai Muslims. Provide these countries with information about government policy and ask them not to support terrorists. Increase the efficiency of operations to solve the problems in the southern border provinces….

Policy prescriptions

Socio-psychological aspect: Quicken the pace of work to popularize the learning and speaking of Thai among young Muslims. Encourage them to enroll in secondary and vocational schools by offering them special quotas to these institutions. Increase the study of general subjects in the private schools that were converted from *pondoks*. Build up trust between the government and the people to steer youths away from joining the movement, with particular attention to those going to Islamic countries for study or pilgrimage.

Local politics: Encourage Thai Muslims to participate in local government and voice their opinions on problems. Carefully select officials to work in the area and make sure that they treat Thai Muslims with fairness. Persuade key persons involved in the unrest to cooperate with the government. Improve local administration through national and local mechanisms, which will work together to oversee the coordination of the policy tasks.

Foreign relations: Work with Malaysia, Indonesia, and other Islamic countries to prevent terrorism through international politics. Form a good rapport with Islamic countries in order to bring about solutions to problems in the southern border provinces.

Economic aspect: Speed up the broadening of the economic base by increasing production, expanding the job market, and raising the income level of Thai Muslims. Extend the provincial highways and rural roads and maintain them in good condition in all seasons for economic and counter-terrorist purposes.

National defense: Increase the forces of the Fourth Army Division to suppress terrorism with a focus on large local operations and support the organization of paramilitary forces. Encourage citizens to cooperate with the authorities in collecting news and information and preventing terrorist attacks.

It can be concluded that the policy of 1978 put great weight on counter-terrorism and peace-keeping. It began to promote the participation of Thai Muslims in terms of problem-solving and economic and infrastructural developments. The policy also aimed at building up a positive attitude and attachment to Thai citizenship among local people. To implement the policy, the prime minister, General Prem Tinsulanonda, signed Executive Order No. 8/2524 on the improvement of administration in the southern border provinces. The executive order resulted in the founding of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center and the Directing Center for the Forty-third Combined Police and Army Forces described above. This policy remained in use for ten years before a new policy came into effect in 1988. During the ten years of the policy's implementation, the obvious strengths of the policy lay in the operations carried out by the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center and the Directing Center for the Forty-third Combined Police and Army Forces. The two agencies helped bridge the gap in the coordination of local government operations and had an emotional impact on Thai Muslims. This is particularly true because the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center gave priority to the participation of religious and local leaders as well as Thai Muslim scholars in the development of problem-solving approaches in the southern border provinces.

National security policy on the southern border provinces of 1988

The cabinet approved the policy on 8 November 1988. The timeframe for this policy was set for five years (1988–1992) as a result of the revision of the policy of 1978 and the changed circumstances. In fact the policy was not superseded until 1994.

The objectives and contents of the policy of 1988 were as follows:[24]

Objectives. Spread the learning and speaking of Thai among Muslims. Increase the openness of the Muslims' society and make all sides appreciate cultural differences. Include the Muslims' leaders in the problem-solving process. Work with moderate Islamic countries in stemming the influence of fundamentalists. Raise the standard of living of the people. Keep the area safe from all forms of terrorist acts and threats….

Policy prescriptions. Policies can be divided into six categories. The main points of these policies are to some extent the continuation of the policy in 1978.

Socio-psychological aspect: The focus still remains the learning and speaking of Thai as well as secondary and vocational education.

Politics: Take into account Muslim leaders in government efforts to solve problems and bring about social development. Enhance cooperation with moderate Muslims. Respect peaceful demands for rights but reject the use of violence or threats in demands. Contain the spread of divisive ideology. Improve the civil service system as well as the civil servants in order to maximize efficiency and reach more people. The civil servants must understand the social conditions and religious beliefs of the population in the area.

Foreign relations: Work with friendly countries, especially Malaysia and Indonesia, to contain the terrorist movements and the spread of radical ideology at the international level.

Economic aspect: Channel efforts into expanding the economic bases in industry and services. Coordinate development plans among all the agencies. Support the openness of society.

Peace-keeping: Focus on aggressive political work and put military pressure on targeted terrorist groups and Malay communists. Persuade the terrorists to surrender and join the effort in developing the Thai nation instead. Maintain the prevention and suppression of terrorism. Cut the support from both inside and outside of the country to isolate terrorists.

The implementation of the policy during the period 1988–94 succeeded in creating understanding and reducing the distrust between public officials and Thai Muslims to a satisfactory degree. The major strength still lay in the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center, which achieved concrete results in enhancing the people's participation in the development and problem-solving processes through the creation of the Advisory Committee. The membership of the committee included religious leaders and scholars whom the local people respected. As for the suppression of terrorist groups, the government managed to weaken terrorist groups to the point where they lost the capacity to initiate any large attacks on government forces. Nevertheless, the problems of terrorism remained. The portion of the policy that did not see much progress was the aim to bring about unity in the thinking of officials in charge of the operations.

National security policy on the southern border provinces of 1994

Approved by the cabinet on 7 June 1994, this policy also was set for a five-year timeframe. This time the emphasis was on the economic development in the area because it was determined that the economy was a powerful tool for solving the problems and strengthening society. The objectives and the important issues included:[25]

Objectives. Stress the importance of development in the economy and other areas, which must be balanced with the promotion of local cultural identity. Build good relations between officials and citizens. Allow the people to participate more in solving their problems. Keep the citizens safe from terrorist threats. Make Muslim nations understand and cooperate with Thailand in finding constructive solutions to problems….

Policy prescriptions. Policies are devised to meet fifteen objectives. In economic development, promote and facilitate trade and investment in the area, especially by improving transportation, communication, and government services. In the socio-psychological area, increase the participation of religious organizations, scholars, and local political sector in the planning of human resources and improvement of quality of life and livelihood. Narrow the gap in the use of language in communication between citizens and government agencies by supporting the learning of each other's languages. In terms of government and administration, reform the civil service in order to make it dependable for the citizens instead of being an institution that creates conditions for social conflict. Promote cooperation between the government sector and the people, especially in local administration. Focus on upgrading the whole intelligence system to provide for the immediate and

> timely use of information for peace-keeping. Improve border defense, suppression of terrorism, and mechanisms to defend rural communities. Use tactics to pressure and suppress along with political measures to allow the terrorists to return to live peacefully in society. In the area of foreign relations, enhance the degree of relations and cooperation in politics, economics, and society with Islamic nations. Increase the efficiency of local working units in communicating and cooperating with neighboring countries for the development of the area.

In 1996, there was a proposal to reorganize the structure of the agencies responsible for directing and coordinating policies at the local level. This was the result of the abrogation of the Internal Peace-Keeping Act of 1974, which ended the authority of the Commander of the Fourth Army Division as the Director of Internal Peace-Keeping. The government then issued Executive Order No. 36/2537 on reforming the administration of the southern border provinces. The order divided the administration of the area into two parts, namely the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center, responsible for civilian development work, and the Directing Center for the Forty-third Combined Police and Army Forces, in charge of suppressing all kinds of terrorism. During the period of this policy, when the focus was on economic development as the driving force behind the solutions to the problems, the concrete achievement was the joint economic development project between Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, known as the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). The project enjoyed some success in stimulating investment and development before it slowed down as a result of the Asian economic crisis of 1997. Since then, the IMT-GT has not made any impressive progress. The new issue that was added to the agenda for the southern border provinces during this time was narcotics. Terrorism was controlled to some extent, but remained a problem.

Third phase, 1999–2003

This phase saw the most recent national security policy on the southern border provinces. After this policy's expiry in 2003, the southern border provinces along with some portions of Songkhla province have been the targets of periodic unrests and violent attacks well into the present. In light of these circumstances, the government has assumed direct responsibility in dealing with the issue and bypassed the mechanisms of the National Security Council in contrast to the practice in previous periods. As a consequence, there has not been any new proposal on national security policy for the southern border provinces other than policy directly designed by the government.

The policy between 1999 and 2003 differed from the previous policies in terms of the process in devising the policy, which emphasized participation and a vision for collective efforts and aspirations in creating stability in the area. The contents of the policy are as follows:[26]

> Vision of the solutions to the problems in the southern border provinces: Everyone in the area is able to live peacefully in accordance with their religious and cultural identities. This should be especially true for the majority of the population in the area, the Thai Muslims, who will "live as Muslims in Thai society."
>
> Everyone appreciates cultural diversity as a force and source of wisdom for peace, stability, and sustainable development. The powerful impact of diversity also provides the path to the constructive relations and joint efforts in the area of development with neighboring countries and Muslim communities.

> The citizens in the area have the opportunity to take part in the problem-solving process and development. All sides work together to safeguard the way of life of the members of the society against external pressure.

In addition, the perspectives on the problems and the thinking process in the formulation of the policy were distinctive. They can be summarized as follows.

Thought process

All the previous proposals of the national security policy for the southern border provinces emphasized problem analysis and approached the problems based on their priorities. Policies were designed for coordinated and mutually supportive solutions to all of the problems.

The thought process behind the policy of 1999–2003 originated from the conclusion of everyone involved that the strategy in formulating the policy should be integrated, considering all the factors as interrelated and tackling all the problems at the same time in a coordinated and consistent manner for permanent results.

Policy-devising process

The Office of the National Security Council compiled information including follow-ups and evaluations of government agencies responsible for implementation of policies, suggestions from all local agencies in charge of operations, and results of seminars held by public, private, and citizen sectors to assess and examine policy issues. The Office stressed the importance of broad participation by all segments in expressing their opinions and critiques on policy issues in all stages of policy formulation.

The policy of 1999-2003 consisted of three main objectives and nineteen policy prescriptions. The main points are as follows:[27]

> *Objectives*
>
> Develop the capacities of society and its members to cope with social changes. Emphasize human equality, coexistence amidst cultural diversity, and the ability to use diversity as the driving force in solving problems. Create an environment conducive to the development of the people's and society's capacities by improving all aspects of the environment to pave the way for such development. Cultural diversity and local wisdom must be taken into account to enable people's participation in problem-solving and development. Use cultural dynamics as a constructive force in dealing with social conflicts and keeping the society safe, peaceful, and free of violence….
>
> *Contents of the policy*
>
> The policy to develop the capacities of society and its people focuses on improving the knowledge and understanding of all segments so that they can appreciate the value of cultural diversity and local wisdom, and cooperate with one another. Scholars and youths should be the main actors in problem-solving and development. Improve the quality of personnel to make them suitable for the tasks in the southern border provinces.
>
> The policy to create an environment conducive to the development of the society and its people emphasizes the protection and promotion of the people's way of life,

livelihood, religious practices, and good relations with neighboring countries and the Muslim world. The official rules and regulations must be adjusted in accordance with the way of life of citizens. Efforts must be made to produce educational curricula, including at university level, that suit the people's way of life.

The policy to enhance participation in problem-solving and development stresses the significance of the roles and cooperation of all social segments in areas such as natural resources management and environment. It also promotes the strengths and efforts of families and communities in working together. Drug problems must be solved by creating immunity for youths and setting up a network of cooperation between homes, schools, and mosques to prevent drug use and assist the addicted with rehabilitation.

The policy received a favorable response from local people because they had taken part in its formulation and felt that they owned it. Moreover, the policy was translated into Jawi-scripted Malay, standard Malay (Rumi), and English for public distribution. During the policy period between 1999 and 2002, conditions in the southern border provinces were relatively peaceful. Although there were some incidents of terrorism, these were not as violent or damaging as before. However, the situation became more intense elsewhere in the region, especially in the Philippines and Indonesia. At the same time, regional terrorist groups had spread into Singapore, Malaysia, and southern Thailand. Nevertheless, this had not yet caused any rise of violence in the southern border provinces.

A major change in the administration of the southern border provinces took place in 2002, when the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center was dissolved by the government so that the provinces would be administered through the regular administrative channels. The work of the Center was delegated to the provinces' administrative bodies. Operations to suppress the terrorist groups and keep peace were transferred to the Commanding Division of the Ninth Provincial Police. The Fourth Army Division remained in charge of defending the border and the territory. In January 2004, a gun robbery took place in the army camp of a Development Soldier Unit in Narathiwat province and snowballed into a series of violent acts. The government formed the Directing Committee on Policy and Peace-Keeping, which was an organization at the national level. The new body was entrusted with devising new policies as well as setting guidelines and measures to reach solutions. The Directing Bureau of Peace-Keeping in the Southern Border Provinces was also established to oversee and coordinate all related work of government agencies in the area. It still remains in operation.

Comparative analysis over the past thirty years

Through all periods, security meant the "defense of the territory," and the "preservation of the state's authority," with Bangkok playing a central role in formulating and assessing these policies. In the policy of 1999, a change was made to expand the meaning of security to cover the people's way of life and their participation in policy making. While the change extended the "ownership" of national security policy to the citizens, the meaning of "national security" as prescribed in the policy was not always consistent with what the citizens involved had in mind. This was a factor behind the increase in violence in the southern border provinces towards the end of the 1999–2003 policy.

Policies on the southern border provinces prior to 1999 were devised to overcome the perceived causes of violence in the area. Some policies were designed to overcome a perceived lack of development, and therefore allocated budgets for economic development and construction of roads. However, problems persisted after much development had taken place. As a result, the perceived cause of the problem shifted to external influences brought into the area by Thai Muslims who had been educated in the Middle East and returned home to build up their power and cause trouble. In response, the policy prescribed several measures to tackle this problem. While each policy was based on its own rationale, all of them stemmed from the same underlying assumption that what was at stake was "the preservation of the state's power" or "the ability to control violence."

In 1995, Thailand was in the midst of a fast-paced political reform and democratization, which spawned fears of unrest and violence caused by popular protests against authority. Out of this concern arose an attempt to redefine the meaning of security. This new perspective on security came at the time of drafting the National Security Policy on the Southern Border Provinces of 1999–2003. A peace strategy was proposed as an experimental way to deal with social conflicts in the south. Policy-makers reached two conclusions on why previous policies had not achieved their intended outcome. The first failure was "misconception of the problems." Instead of aiming at "preservation of the security of local people's lives," policies were founded upon an attempt "to preserve the state's power." The second reason for failure was the fact that the policies were directed from the center.

When the goal was changed to "how to keep the local people's lives secure," the process in formulating national security policy had to be adjusted accordingly. In order to find out what caused people in the area to feel insecure, afraid, uncomfortable, and distrustful of the authorities, the people had to be consulted. Therefore, a new process that involved the people in the policy decision was added, resulting in meetings between officials and the people, and joint efforts to draft policy proposals.

The new approach concluded there were two main reasons for people's insecurity and fear. First, some actions by government agents were seen as unfair by citizens in the area. In the face of injustice, people felt helpless because they could not respond without putting themselves at risk of being seen as instigating trouble in the area and challenging the state's authority. If they filed a complaint, they would be accused of causing trouble and suspected of being separatists. The preoccupation with the separatist movement gave the authorities great latitude in dealing with the people. As a consequence, people felt oppressed by the unfair treatment of the authorities.

Second, because of their deep-rooted fear of communism, the authorities' way of thinking proved difficult to change. Some officials considered the people's demand for their rights and complaints on unfair treatment as evidence of their sympathy with the separatist movement in spite of the fact that these actions represented political participation in the democratic system.

At present, ideological conflict at the global level has changed from democracy versus communism to the West versus the terrorist movements. This has led to a misconception that people in the southern border provinces have been influenced by external factors. For those, especially foreigners, who do not know the history of the area or understand its issues with the Thai state, the situation in the south as seen in the news

is readily interpreted as related to the international terrorist movement.

The National Security Policy on the Southern Border Provinces of 1999 expressed concern for youth. The first concern was over their fear caused by the feeling of helplessness in the face of injustice. The second concern was religion. People in the area assumed that Thai society did not consider them part of the Thai citizenry because some Thais did not accept the different religion and culture of the area.

The policy of 1999 contained three major suggestions. First, stability could be achieved in the south only when Muslims were able to "live as Muslims in Thai society," and accepted as equal to any other Thais. This idea had a profound meaning. It assured them that they had a place to stand in Thai society. The second suggestion was to "turn the fear of differences into stability based on difference." It was suggested that the stability of the country would be better bolstered by the appreciation of cultural diversity rather than assimilation that aimed at making everyone similar. The explanation for this idea was the fact that diversity provided society with more options to solve its problems successfully. The third suggestion was that "stability comes from the participation of the people." The people's sector should be involved in decisions on stability. The issue was not just the government's responsibility.

In the follow-up of the policy of 1999, two observations were made. First, some officials had thought along the same lines as this policy, but had not spoken up because their opinions were incompatible with mainstream ideas. With the new policy in effect, these officials were able to carry out their tasks more easily. This contributed to the successful implementation of the policy to some extent. Second, at the same time there were a number of officials who disagreed with this policy and considered it dangerous to the state's power. It took some time to convince some of them to change their minds. However, quite a few maintained their position and refused to comply because there was no enforcement. The result was a situation where two groups of officials with different views on policy worked along parallel paths. One group followed the new policy in their jobs while the other followed the old one. The citizens were the ones to suffer from this discrepancy because they had no way of knowing which group of officials they would be dealing with. As a consequence, the fear that these people had towards authority persisted.

A lack of unity in solving problems has often been cited as a cause of policy failure in the south. However, when perceived from a different angle, there has been unity in the use of force and unity of belief about the priority attached to the preservation of the state's power. Therefore, the real issue was not a lack of unity, but the fact that unity did not translate into efforts to enable people to live in peace, which should be the state's goal. Using violence to create peace has never succeeded.

There were two factors behind the deteriorating situation in the south from 2003 onwards.

First, some officials disagreed with the National Security Policy because their definition of "national security" was different from that of the policy. As a result, they deliberately carried out their jobs in direct opposition to the policy.

Second, throughout the five years of the 1999–2003 policy, violence in the south stemmed from personal conflicts. The use of violence became legitimate in dealing with problems like narcotics. The position of the state was that the end justified the means, with disregard for the actual impact. It was short-sighted to shoot for a goal without considering the negative consequences. Concern about drug addiction among youth

warranted some measures to deal with the matter. But it did not warrant the use of violence in the society in which the children lived and grew up. If the concern was over youth in the long run, some serious thought should have been devoted to considering what kind of society could be created within the framework of the stability strategy.

If the resort to violence is made legitimate, it creates a social environment where violence becomes the only way to settle conflicts. For example, opinions of people reported by the media, especially after the "Krue Ze incident," demonstrated unprecedented approval of the use of violence. Such approval raised the question whether Thais were really supportive of violence or there were certain groups trying to create propaganda by publishing this approval in the media. There is a formula generally used to describe "Thainess." This rigid prescription makes the population in the south feel that they share no quality of Thainess even though they are citizens of Thailand. Some Thais are indifferent towards the use of violence against people whom they consider "not-Thai." The Thai state perceives itself as a unitary state with ethnic homogeneity, even though this is patently not true. In fact, Thailand is a unitary state consisting of different ethnicities. Several small groups reside along the borders. The largest of these is the Malay Muslim group in the southern border provinces. In the mid twentieth century, an attempt was begun to unify and assimilate all the various groups. The change of the country's name from Siam to Thailand was emblematic of this policy. At that time some believed that national safety and collective defense required all peoples to be united. This was an attempt to make "other truths" disappear. As a result, people questioned why those in the south wanted to dress differently and have a different education system. There was a conviction that everyone in the state had to be the same in order to coexist.

Endnotes

[1] The study was based on documents, not interviews. The study of the policy content is straightforward; the meaning of "national security" in each period has to be inferred; the process of policy-making is difficult to track because of limited data; and evaluations were very unsystematic. Despite these limitations, this approach helps to explain why policies have failed. The research was difficult because the problem is ongoing. Officials were reluctant to talk. Getting access to documents, even those that are technically declassified, was not simple. The quality and usefulness of such research will improve only when Thai society has greater appreciation of truth and knowledge, when officials are more willing to discuss their work with outsiders, and when agencies are prepared to employ researchers who might come up with something new.

[2] Rattiya Saleh, 'Patani darussalam su khwam pen changwat pattani yal lae Narathiwat' (Pattani Darusalam: creating the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat), in *Silapa watthanatham chabap phiset History of 3 Southern Border Provinces* (*Art and Culture Magazine*, special edition)(Bangkok: Matichon, 2004), p. 250.

[3] Piyanart Bunnag, *Nayobai kan pokkhrong khong rathaban to chao muslim nai changwat chaidaen phak tai* (Policy for governing the Thai Muslims in the southern border provinces, 1932–1973) (Bangkok: Research Center, Chulalongkorn University, 1991), p. 44.

[4] Ministry of Interior, *Prarachahatthalekha rachakan thi 5 thi kieo kap pharakit khong krasuang mahatthai* (Royal letters of the Fifth Reign regarding the work of the Ministry of Interior), pp. 419–420.

[5] Piyanart, *Nayobai*, pp. 283–291.

[6] Piyanart, *Nayobai*, pp. 218–221.

[7] Office of the National Security Council, 'Ekkasan nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat rueang nayobai kieo kap pono' (Document on national security policy regarding *pondoks*), Cabinet Resolution, 14 June 1966.

[8] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat rueang nayobai rueang khon thai islam nai 4 changwat phak tai niyom ook pai rian thi jettha ruea khairo mak ying khuen' (National security policy regarding the fact that the Thai Muslims in the southern border provinces increasingly prefer to study in Jeddah and Cairo), Cabinet Resolution, 14 June 1966.

[9] Office of the National Security Council, 'Raingan kan doenthang pai sueksa sathanakan lae saphap khwam pen yu doi tua pai khong prachachon nai phak tai' (Report on the field trip to study the situation and living conditions of the people living in the south), 21 February 1967.

[10] Ministry of Interior, 'Rueang nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat' (Memorandum regarding the national security policy), to the Office of the National Security Council, 26 January 1967, pp. 1–2.

[11] Office of the National Security Council, 'Raingan kan doenthang.'

[12] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong plotphai nai changwat chaidaen phak tai' (Policy on the stability and security in the southern border provinces), Cabinet Resolution, 18 November 1969.

[13] The Intelligence Advisory Committee undertakes high-level intelligence analysis. The body was chaired by the Director of the National Intelligence Office and comprised of the heads of the security and news units in the civilian, police, and army sectors. It was replaced by the National Intelligence Coordinating Center, which has continued the work to the present.

[14] Intelligence Advisory Committee, Office of the Prime Minister, 'Kan praman sathanakan rueang khabuankan bang yaek dindaen' (Evaluations of the situation regarding the separatist movement), addendum to 'Report on the Implementation of the Government Policy,' pp. 39–44.

[15] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat rueang khwam mankhong plotphai khong phuen thi changwat chaidaen phak tai' (National security policy on the stability and security of the southern border provinces), Cabinet Resolution, 9 April 1974.

[16] The *nom de guerre* of a prominent militant at that time.

[17] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai kieo kap sathanakan jon ko kanrai nai chagwat chaidaen phak tai' (Policy regarding the terrorist situation in the southern border provinces), National Security Council Resolution, 17 October 1975.

[18] Office of the National Security Council, 'Panha kieo kap klum jon khao mop tua' (Problems regarding the surrendered terrorists), document no. 0404/10513, 14 November 1975.

[19] Office of the National Security Council, 'Rainngan kan doen thang pai sueksa sathanakan nai changwat phak tai' (Report on the field trip to study the situation in the southern border provinces), memorandum, document no. 0402/11003, 1 December 1975.

[20] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai kaekhai panha khwam mankhong nai changwat phak tai' (Policy to solve the security problems in the southern provinces), National Security Council Resolution, 29 December 1975.

[21] Office of Task Coordination, Department of Administration, 'Ekkasan srup kham prasrai khong phan nayok rathamontri nai okat doen thang pai truat rachakan phak tai' (Summary of the prime minister's speeches during his trip to the south) between 29 January and 1 February 1976.

[22] Transcripts of the conversations between prime minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj and Malaysian prime minister, Dato Hussein Onn at Rincome Hotel, Mueang district, Chiang Mai province, 12 February 1976.

[23] Office of National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat kieoo kap changwat chaidaen phak tai (National security policy on the southern border provinces)', Cabinet Resolution, 24 January 1978.

[24] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat kieo kap changwat chaidaen phak tai pho so 2531–2537' (National security policy on the southern border provinces, 1988–1994).

[25] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat kieo kap changwat chaidaen phak tai' (National policy on the southern border provinces), Cabinet Resolution, 7 June 1994.

[26] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat kieo kap changwat chaidaen phak tai' (National security policy on the southern border provinces), Cabinet Resolution, 7 September 1999.

[27] Office of the National Security Council, 'Nayobai khwam mankhong haeng chat kieo kap changwat chaidaen phak tai' (National security policy on the southern border provinces), Cabinet Resolution, 7 September 1999.

2

The body of knowledge on the south over twenty-six years

Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng

The southern border provinces have been heavily studied in various disciplines due to the perception that they pose a "threat" to national security for different reasons. After the arms raid in Narathiwat in early 2004, the number of incidents increased ten times over the previous year, and in 2005 rose to around two thousand.[1] These incidents seem to reiterate the perception that the southern border provinces are a land of conflict and violence, hence one of the clear and present threats to Thailand's national security.

Designated a special zone for decades, the southern border provinces have been studied by a number of academics in order to gain knowledge and insights into the area and its people. These studies search for the roots of unrest in order to overcome it for the sake of national security. Yet Chaiwat Satha-Anand, who has been following the situation in the south for almost thirty years, thinks that one of the shortfalls of the research on Pattani is the lack of literature review.[2]

This chapter asks the question, "How much did Thai society know about the south prior to the upsurge of violence in 2004?" through a review of theses and research papers on the region, both in Thai and English.

Research on the south has been closely related to issues of national security. From 1978 to 2003, the government issued four successive national security policies relating to the south.[3] The National Security Council (NSC) has been in charge of security policy in the southern border provinces since 1966, and initially placed the main priority on education. In 1974, NSC expanded its policy to target three individual problems.[4] Only in 1978 did it adopt a comprehensive 'National security policy on the southern border provinces' to deal with all aspects of the problem.[5] The NSC policy went through four phases. The first two, which ran for fifteen years, aimed to convince Muslims, especially the young, to learn the Thai language. These policies dealt mainly with educational institutes, particularly the private Islamic schools and the *pondoks*. The other two policy areas focused on political and economic aspects, including international relations and national security issues. This research therefore divides the literature review into two main categories: those on education, and those dealing with politics, administration, and socio-cultural issues.

The first section below surveys earlier reviews of literature on the south. The second contains an overview of research trends across the twenty-six years of the study from 1978 to 2003. The third section looks at works on education, and the fourth at works on political and socio-cultural issues. The fifth examines the trends of research in relationship to the changing policy on national security. The conclusion reviews the whole period with observations and recommendations for future research.

Reviews of literature

In the past twenty-six years, there have been seven reviews of the state of knowledge on the south—three in English, two in Japanese, and two in Thai.

Ratchanee Kalyanakunawut from Prince of Songkhla University surveyed the literature in 1990 under the title, 'A survey of literature on problems in the southern border provinces, 1986–1995.' The research was funded by the Southern Border Province Administration Center (SBPAC) in order to serve as a database for decision-making by executives and responsible officials. The study reviewed ninety-seven items. Ratchanee concluded that problems were on the decrease because government policies had been successful in all aspects except the economy. Ratchanee also remarked that most of the literature studied the problems of Muslim communities, while hardly any scrutinized problems among Buddhist communities living in the same area. Ratchanee recommended that there should be further research to collect baseline data on Thai Buddhist communities in the south to help formulate appropriate development policies.

In 1992, Chaiwat Satha-Anand wrote an article, 'Pattani in the 1980s: academic literature and political stories,' examining literature as a "narrative" on Pattani. Chaiwat reviewed six doctoral theses, four research papers, and twenty-three academic articles from the period 1980–9. Chaiwat analyzed the politics of the words used for the area and its people, especially the difference between "Patani" and "Pattani," and between "Malay Muslims" and "Thai Muslims," in works written by insiders on the one hand and outsiders on the other. Chaiwat pointed out that these two sets of words came up constantly in the literature and that most authors appeared to realize the implications of their choice of word. Most importantly, these two sets of words play a part in defining the historical framework of the relationship between Bangkok and Pattani, which in turn determines who are the heroes and villains in each narrative.

Chaiwat made a second survey covering the subsequent decade in 'The study of Pattani: a decade in academic landscape 1991–2000,' in chapter 2 of 'Violence and "truth"management: Half century of Pattani.' In this work, Chaiwat reviewed several reviews of literature—in English, Japanese, Thai, and Malay—on a century of Pattani's history after annexation by Siam. Omar Farouk Bajunid (1999) studied the literature in English on Muslims in Thailand, concluding that most of the studies concentrate on Muslims in the south and neglect other Muslim communities in Thailand.[6] Mitsuo Nakamura (2000) surveyed the body of knowledge in Japanese about Islam in Southeast Asia, while Atsushi Kitahara and Osamu Akagi made an overview of Thai Studies in Japan. Both Japanese reviews point out that Japanese-language studies on the Pattani Malays, both in Islamic Studies and Thai Studies, focus on changes within Muslim communities as a result of media influence or the interrelationship between groups in local politics.[7]

Srisompob Jitpiromsri, a local researcher from Prince of Songkhla University, reviewed Thai-language theses and research papers on the Pattani Malays from his university in the disciplines of social sciences and anthropology from 1988 to 2000. Srisomphob found that almost all of the theses came from the Faculty of Education or the Faculty of Social Sciences and Anthropology. Most studied the south from the point of view of government officials, government agencies, and the impacts of government development projects on local communities, using quantitative methods. Research papers by lecturers were more varied as a result of the shifting focus of various funding agencies. Chaiwat commented that while the researchers from Prince of Songkhla University focused on community studies and diverse cultural practices, researchers from other universities and institutions concentrated on understanding the roots of conflict in the south.[8]

Reviews of "local" Malay-language research on Pattani point out that these

works focus on Malay Muslims in Pattani as an ethnic minority within Thai society, especially from a historical angle, highlighting the history of the Malay uprising. In 'Violence and "truth" management,' Chaiwat concludes that the bulk of academic works on the south belong to two different schools of historiography. International research on the one hand, and local research on the other, tend to select different historical events to study, in order to justify either Siamese rule or Pattani resistance, resulting in a "gap" of interpretation over the history of the south.[9]

Alexander Horstmann's article on 'Ethnohistorical Perspectives on Buddhist–Muslim relations and coexistence in southern Thailand: from shared cosmos to the emergence of hatred?' reviewed English-language ethnographic studies on the south of Thailand and on the Malay Peninsula, in order to portray the development of the relationship between Muslim and Buddhist communities from 1969 to 2002. Horstmann not only looked at the inter-ethnic relationship in the three southern provinces, but also presented a comparative study of the relationship between Malay Muslims in the south, Malay Muslims in the state of Kelantan of Malaysia, and Thai Muslims in the north of Thailand. The author pointed out that literature about the south tends to present the Muslims as if they were homogenous, and that the main research question often concerns the various extents to which Muslim minorities have been integrated into Thai Buddhist society. Horstmann found that over the thirty-three years of his review, studies on the south had shifted focus from analyzing social structure to cultural interpretation and to more complex aspects of social transition. Horstmann indicated that local academics, meaning Thai academics, place a rather heavy emphasis on the study of ethnic identity, and that as this line of research is often framed by the nationalistic policy of the Thai state, they portray the relationship between Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims as harmonious, united, and compromising, to the extent that it becomes overly romanticized.

Each of these reviews of literature has a specific focus. Ratchanee's work concentrated on studies about problems in the three southern provinces. Chaiwat's first piece of research chose to review only doctoral theses, research works, and articles in English, while the second piece of research was a review of reviews. Omar Farouk focused on Muslims as a minority, while Alexander Horstmann took an ethno-historical perspective. Srisompob Jitpiromsri limited himself to theses and research works from Prince of Songkhla University. The present survey aims to build on these surveys by extending the scope more widely to include works from various academic institutions and agencies both in Thai and in English, in order to provide a more comprehensive overview on the body of knowledge regarding the south.

Time, trends and types of literature

This survey covers theses and research works from universities and official agencies. The main survey includes works from universities across the country, including Chiang Mai, Thammasat, Srinakarintarawirote-Prasarnmit, Silpakorn, Mahidol, Burapa (Srinakarintarawirote, Bang Saen), Thaksin (Srinakarintarawirote, Songkhla), Prince of Songkhla, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Rajabhat Yala, and the National Defence College of Thailand. The review also includes nine doctoral theses from universities abroad, including University of Hawaii, Stanford University, Harvard University, State University of New York, Australian National University, and University of Bielefeld in Germany. The survey also covers research works from official institutions such as the Office of the National Research Council of Thailand, the Thailand Research Fund, the Office of National

Culture, the SBPAC, and Provincial Educational Bureau 2.

The survey found 337 works on the south. From 1978 to 1987, there were ten items per year on average, rising to fifteen over 1988 to 1997 (see Figure 2-1). The peak was in 1998, when there were forty-four items, half of which came from NIDA, and twelve from Prince of Songkhla University. Most of them were supported by research funds within the universities. Over 1999–2003, the number declined from this peak but at fifteen per year was still higher than before 1998.

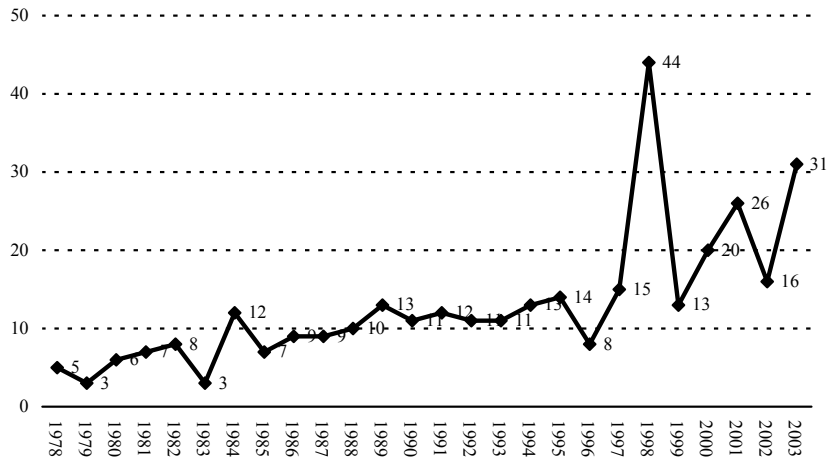

Figure 2-1 Number of research works, 1978–2003

The peak in 1998 may have resulted from two major factors. First, the third phase of the national security plan for the south came to an end, resulting in evaluation reports on the educational schemes and on the impact of several projects such as community self-help and the project to establish an economic triangle in the southern border provinces. Second, during the period of 1996–8, unrest had been on the increase. The number of incidents rose from twenty-seven in 1995, to forty-two in 1996, eighty-two in 1997, and 139 in 1998—the highest figure over the whole period from 1978 to 2003.

The trend of increase in research output across the 1978–2003 period may result from three reasons. The first reason was policy failure. A cabinet resolution on 24 January 1978 instigated the policy to make more Malay Muslims speak Thai. Yet ten years later, the target had not been achieved. The cabinet therefore passed another resolution to revise this policy in February 1987. This resolution identified the lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation as a key reason for failure. It was recommended that Prince of Songkhla University be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation. The subcommittee of the Steering Committee on the Southern Border Province agreed to use findings by Prince of Songkhla University as a tool to "identify targets and loopholes in order to adjust the annual work plan."[10]

Second, more institutions began to contribute to the research. In the first ten years (1978–87), several students of the National Defence College worked in the field in the south. They produced fourteen research works in this decade (and over the rest of the period). Lecturers from Prince of Songkhla University, especially those in the faculties of education, social sciences, and anthropology, were another group contributing greatly to the increase of field research on the south in this period. But

until 1987, no university in the southern border provinces had a postgraduate program, hence all masters theses on the south came from universities in Bangkok such as Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, Srinakarintarawirote-Prasarnmit, Mahidol, Kasetsart, and Silpakorn. From 1987 onwards, there were masters programs in Prince of Songkhla University, Thaksin University, and NIDA. The Faculty of Education of Prince of Songkhla University established a masters program on educational administration in 1988, and the College of Islamic Studies followed suit in 1989. Academics from these two institutions contributed greatly to the production of literature on the south. In the same year, Thaksin University launched masters programs on educational administration and Thai Studies. Then in 1994, NIDA branched out to the region, by setting up a course on social development in Yala.[11] The launch of several masters programs contributed to the increase in research works on the southern border provinces.

The third factor is related to the situation on the ground, and especially the trend of increase in the number of incidents over 1998–2003 compared to the earlier period (see Figure 2-2). Particularly in 1998, 1999, and 2000, there were more than a hundred incidents. This increase could be one of the reasons why several agencies including academic institutions became more interested in the southern border provinces.

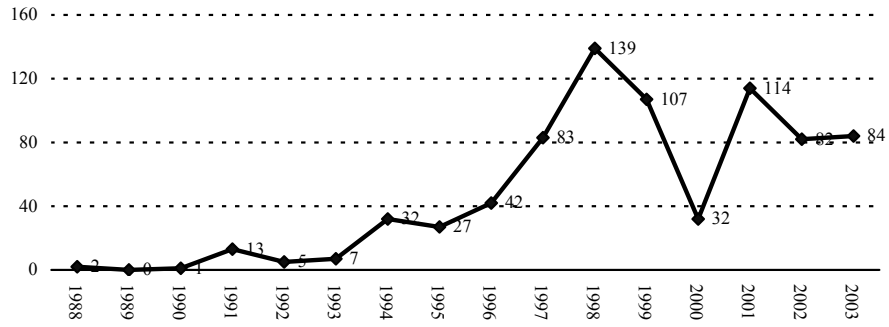

Figure 2-2 Number of violent incidents in the southern border provinces, 1987–2003

The total of 337 works includes 210 theses and 127 research studies. In the period of 1978–1987, there were more research studies than theses because the universities in the south did not yet have masters programs. Most of the research works came from the National Defence College of Thailand and Prince of Songkhla University. Those from the College tended to focus on politics and administration, and often perceived the south as a threat to national security. Examples include Banjob Pongsophon on 'Separatist movements, regions, and administration in the south' (1979); Phaluek Srawasi on 'Suppressing unrest in the south' (1981); Linpitch Satjaphan on 'Measures to prevent and suppress instigators in the southern provinces' (1982); and Songserm Waisopha on 'Concepts of fighting terrorism in the southern border provinces' (1986). The research from Prince of Songkhla University in this period focused on socio-economic analysis, livelihood, and the migration patterns of Muslims in Pattani.

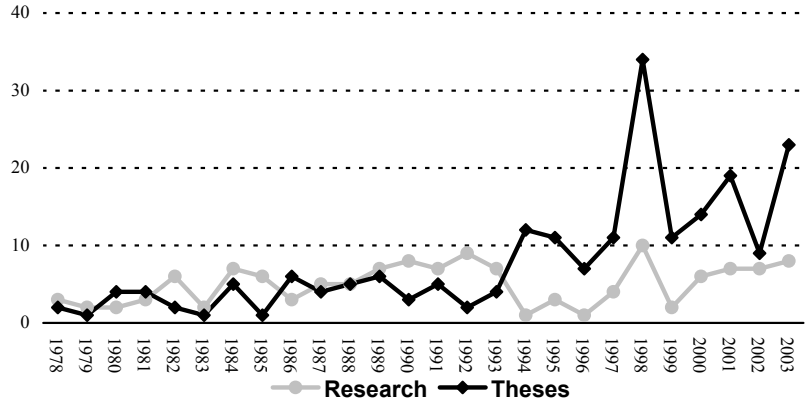

Figure 2-3 Research papers and theses on the south, 1978–2003

Among the 337 works, 92 dealt with education, with a particular focus on private Islamic schools, while 245 were on politics, administration, and socio-cultural issues. The works on education are considered as a separate category because they comprise one third of all works done in the past twenty-six years, and they have some significant implications on security policies concerning the southern border provinces.

Works on education

As government security policy focused on private Islamic schools and *pondoks*, so did the research.

These works came from universities or institutes with faculties of education. Prince of Songkhla produced the highest number of thirty-seven, including nineteen research papers and eighteen theses (see Table 2-1).

Table 2-1 Research works and theses on education

Institutes	Numbers
Prince of Songkhla University	37
Government agencies	10
Chulalongkorn University	9
Srinakarintarawirote (Prasarnmit)	8
Thaksin University	6
Kasetsart University	3
National Defence College of Thailand	4
NIDA	3
Chiang Mai University	2
Thammasat University	2
Ratchabhat Yala University	2
Srinakarintarawirote (Bang Saen)	2
Silpakorn University	2
Ramkhamhaeng University	1
Mahasarakham University	1
Total	92

All but three of the ninety-seven works in the education category focused on private Islamic schools. The most popular topic was teaching and learning methods, and academic development, including educational tools in general subjects such as Thai, maths, sciences, and English. The second most popular topic was the perception and participation of teachers, executives, and students on various issues as well as on the management of private Islamic schools. The trend of these works differed across the four sub-periods corresponding to the phases of national security policy in the south.

1978 to 1987

Most of the twenty-three works in this decade were surveys on opinions and needs of school executives and teachers on educational management, personnel, supports on academic development, and physical education. Surveys on students' opinions and values focused on their plans for tertiary education and their occupational preference. Surveys also focused on students' comments about Home Room activities, and sex education. In addition, a certain number of works analyzed the management of private Islamic schools and evaluated the teaching quality in general subjects, especially Thai, maths, and sciences.

The research by Samoer Nakphong from the National Defence College of Thailand is an exception in this period. His research on 'Private Islamic schools in Educational District 2 and national security' looked at the development of private Islamic schools in a historical framework. He pointed out that these schools developed from the *pondoks* that played an important role in the Muslim way of life and that the *pondoks* were "where those who have ill-intentions towards Thailand take opportunities to persuade Thai Muslims to have negative attitudes towards the country, which could lead to problems concerning national security."[12]

1988 to 1993

Works of this period are more interesting than those from the previous and following periods. Of the total of twenty-nine works, twelve focused on the development of the curriculum and of learning and teaching tools on general subjects including Thai, maths, sciences, and English. Many of these studies were completed in 1988 or 1989. They include a study, carried out by a masters degree student from the Faculty of Education of Chulalongkorn University, comparing mathematical ability between junior high school students from state schools and those from private Islamic schools. Other examples include research on capacity-building in English teaching, and on models to evaluate the standard of Thai teaching.

Rung Kaewdaeng examined the policy process on Thai teaching in private Islamic schools. His work sheds light on why there are many research on the evaluation and development of curriculum and teaching tools in the period 1987–8. At the time policy-makers believed that "encouraging Thai Muslims to speak, read, and write in Thai, while maintaining their culture, could be the first step to create awareness of Thai identity." In 1988, the government set up a subcommittee to monitor and evaluate this policy, especially the promotion of education in the Thai language among Malay Muslims. Prince of Songkhla University was the main institution responsible.[13]

There were also four works on using a curriculum of Islamic Studies at the primary level, and on the development of teaching tools in religious studies in private Islamic schools. In addition, there were surveys of students' opinions and needs about

continuing their education, as well as their attitudes towards school management, including the evaluation of schools and teachers in private Islamic schools.

There are three outstanding pieces of work from the National Defence College in this period: the work of Chuphan Trachu on 'The roles of private Islamic schools in the development of young Muslims in the southern provinces'; Rung Kaewdaeng's research on 'Educational development, religious and cultural promotion for national security in the southern border provinces'; and the work of Winit Krajangson on 'Educational problems in the three southern provinces and their effects on national security'. Although the works of Chuphan Trachu and Rung Kaewdaeng focus on different issues, both found that Muslims prefer to send their children to Islamic schools rather than state schools because Islam is a way of life, and therefore Muslims need to learn about their religion to have proper conduct in their daily life. Education in state schools does not correspond with the beliefs and cultural values of local people. These two research works also pointed out that encouraging Malay Muslims to learn Thai is key to security building in the south.

Chuphan's work also discusses about the *pondok* system along the same lines as Samoer Nakphong's work. He comments that *pondok* schools do not have a standard curriculum, and as a result "some religious teachers could inculcate nationalistic sentiments among the students, making them believe that Thai Muslims are Malays because they speak Malay and follow Islam, while the Thai Buddhists belong to another nation."[14] At the same time, Chuphan sees the potential role of private Islamic schools in linking religious and worldly studies, and recommends that the government take special care of these schools.[15]

1994 to 1998

There were nineteen works in this period. In 1994, there was no study on private Islamic schools or *pondok* schools. Over 1995–8, most of the research focused on evaluation, including the evaluation of English teaching, of reading and understanding, speed, effectiveness of small group learning in science subjects, and problems in using an Islamic curriculum. In addition, there were works on the perception of teachers regarding internal monitoring and management in private Islamic schools, as well as studies on human resource management by school executives.

Two interesting works of this period are Annop Niamkong's research on 'The educational policies of the Thai state for the Malay Muslims in the four southern provinces, 1957–1973'; and Somphong Pankla's work on 'The educational management policy of the Thai state in Thai Muslim communities in the southern border provinces, 1932–1992'. These two pieces of research showed that Muslims in the southern provinces want their children to take religious studies. Most of them prefer to send their children to *pondok* schools where Malay and Arabic are the main teaching languages. The government, by contrast, wants Muslims to learn Thai and general subjects. The mismatch of demands has created obstacles in pursuing education policies in the southern border provinces. Past governments had all tried to adjust the education policies for these provinces. One major policy had been to upgrade the status of *pondok* schools to private schools for religious studies. But after such upgrading, there were problems over shortage of teachers on general subjects, lack of teaching tools, as well as a need to change the curriculum to suit students who learn Thai as their second language. There was another policy to provide incentives for Muslims to send their children to state schools by providing Islamic Studies for high school students in schools where over 50 per cent of students are Muslim; and by allocating special quotas for Muslim high school students to attttend universities,

especially Prince of Songkhla University.

1999 to 2003

In this period, there was a change. In the first two periods, works focused on private Islamic schools, and especially on their curriculum on general subjects and the evaluation of academic and administrative capacity. This trend continued in the third period, but there were also two research papers on the traditional *pondok* schools. Nanthakarn Bendem-ali's study of 'Factors affecting the continuation of traditional *pondok* schools in the southern border provinces' asked why the traditional *pondok* system still exists in the area, and concluded that *pondoks* are popular because parents and students are keen to preserve their religious and cultural identity, and because Muslims in the south "do not see any benefits in sending their children to state schools because it does not do them any good. But if their children have religious education, they will be highly respected in the society."[16]

Bongkot Naphaphong's study of 'The socio-cultural aspect of social security arrangements: a case study of a traditional *pondok* school in Ban Buerami, Yaring District, Pattani' looked into the *pondok* school system as an institution for Islamic studies which provides social capital for Muslim communities. This social capital includes enhancing peace, ethics, and social concerns by following the model set by the religious teachers (*toh-kru*). Pondok schools were nurtured as centers of good values.

Other works on private Islamic schools also displayed a different focus compared to studies in the previous periods. Archawin Chaisuwan's work on 'The participation of teachers in private Islamic schools in setting up the Pattani river conservation network' examined teachers' roles in communities. Jiraporn Mansatewit's 'The development of teaching approach to create multi-cultural awareness in pre-school children in the southern border provinces' emphasized the multi-cultural nature of the south.

Winit Sangkarat's 'Past, present, and future of private Islamic schools in the southern border provinces' analyzed the government's policy on education in the Muslim communities in the south over 1889–1996. Like Annop Niamkong's work, this study used Chai-anan Samudavanija's idea of the triple characteristic of the Thai state (*trilaksana rattha*). These two studies have very similar findings that Thai Muslim communities have strong identity, culture, and sense of community which empower them to negotiate with the state; and any intervention or change in the educational system can be done with the involvement of the monarchy.

Most works on the educational standard of private Islamic Schools and *pondok* schools were theses from faculties of education; while works on curriculum evaluation and the development of academic capacity of these two institutions were mainly produced by Prince of Songkhla University which took the lead in this area of research over 1982–2003. Other agencies involved in evaluation research were the Bureau of Education District 2 and Chulalongkorn University. Srinakarintarawirote University also had a number of students researching in the field on issues similar to those adopted by Prince of Songkhla University.

Research on politics, society, economy, and culture

There were 245 works on political and socio-cultural issues. Most of them emerged from faculties of political science, social anthropology, social sciences and

humanities, Thai studies, social and community development, as well as religious and comparative religious studies from thirteen major academic institutes.

Table 2-2 Theses and research papers on political and socio-cultural issues

Institutes	Numbers
NIDA	62
Prince of Songkhla University	59
Thaksin University	30
Government Agencies	26
National Defence College of Thailand	19
Chulalongkorn University	12
Thammasat University	11
Foreign universities (PhD theses)	9
Mahidol University	7
Chiang Mai Unversity	4
Silpakorn University	2
Ratchapat Yala	2
Kasetsart University	1
Srinakarintarawirote Prasarnmit	1
Total	245

NIDA accounted for the highest numbers of research works on the south, sixty-two in total (see Table 2-2). This was because NIDA's Faculty of Social Development, established in 1989, set up a regional branch in Yala in 1994 in collaboration with Sirindhorn Public Health College. The regional expansion provided more opportunities for government officials and employees in both public and private sectors in the south to pursue masters degrees. Most students in this course were government officials, and as a result most of the works focused on public administration, or the attitudes of government officials and of the public towards government development projects. Other works studied the quality of life of different groups of people from the angle of family, health, and economics, as well as the roles of religious and political leaders in communities.

Prince of Songkhla University produced fifty-nine works, the second highest in this period, with a range of different focuses. There were works on community economy and livelihood, such as studies on fishing communities; on women's roles; on socio-economic changes; on local development; and on the effects of environmental degradation. Works from Prince of Songkhla University did not focus on politics or administrative issues.

After Thaksin University established a masters program in 1989, it also contributed to the output. Most of the works from this university looked into the rituals and customs of Muslims, Buddhists, and Chinese in the three southern provinces. Examples include studies on the annual celebration of the Thais in Pattani (1994), the *Chak phra* Festival (pulling decorated boats carrying Buddha images along the river) in Pattani (1994), food in the rituals of the Thai Chinese (1996), wedding traditions of the Thai Muslims in Sai Buri District (1998), the roles of religious places such as the Chang Hai Temple in Pattani (1999) and Tuyong Temple (2001), and studies on local handicrafts such as *kolae* boats, Thai Muslim dances (2001), and the production of Pattani *kris* (2003).

Most of the works from the National Defence College focused on strategic matters or socio-psychological aspects of politics and administration. Some of the works are not in the public domain for reasons of national security. However, judging from the titles, most of the research papers questioned whether the south is a "problem" for national security, and what policies were needed to address the problem in various aspects.

Theses and research papers from Chulalongkorn University can be categorized under three headings. First, six studies are about government. Two of them examine government policies on the south; and the other four are on the attitudes of people in the four southern-border provinces towards Malaysia (1979), the elites and power structure (1988), political participation of Muslim leaders (1989), and political interactions between mosques and government agencies (2001). Second, five works are in sociology and anthropology. Two of them focus on the relationships between ethnic groups in the south, while others are on acceptance of the role of Muslim women in modern professions (1987), the preservation of *pondok* traditions (1999), and the conservation of Muslim ethnic identities (2000). Third, works from the History Department looked at government policies towards Thai Muslims (1988), and the relationship between Chinese and Muslims viewed through a case study of the Lim Kor Niew Shrine (2000).

Thammasat University contributed thirteen works including four theses from the Social Administration Faculty; five from the Faculty of Political Science; one from the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology; and three research papers from the Thai Studies Institute. The theses from the Faculty of Political Science focus on policy, while those from the Faculty of Social Administration study the welfare of the Muslims communities, working conditions in factories, and factors affecting decisions over continuing higher education. The first research paper from the Thai Studies Institute studied the kinship system through local literature within a framework of religion and politics. The second paper was the transcript of a seminar in which three prominent scholars on the south participated, and the third was a compilation of research by Surin Pitsuwan and Chaiwat Satha-Anand.

In addition, there were nine doctoral theses from overseas universities, all in either political science or sociology-anthropology. Five were written by Thai academics, and four by foreigners. They differ from theses produced in Thai universities. The Thai products tend to emphasize primary data collection and quantitative approaches, while the overseas works have more rigorous theoretical grounding and place more emphasis on qualitative approaches, especially anthropological field work.

On politics, government, and administration

There is a body of work that focuses on the south as a "problem" as a result of the existence of an ethnic minority that is Malay Muslim rather than Buddhist Thai and that has greater geographical and cultural affinity with Malaysian Malays than with other Thais.[17] The Malay Muslims are different from the Thais in history, religion, language, traditions, norms, education, and economic background, and these basic differences create problems for the Thai state.[18] The feeling of alienation of the Muslims in the south, combined with the infiltration of separatist ideology, has resulted in insurgency movements.[19] Once the problems are seen as stemming from the difference between the Malays in the south and the rest of the Thais in the country, the solutions that follow are homogenizing policies to create unity. The government thus opted for an approach of integration and cultural harmonization.

Policy studies have been produced continuously from 1982 to 2003, mostly by the National Defence College, but also from the Faculties of Political Science at Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities. There are also three doctoral theses in this area.

The first research paper in this area emerged from the National Defence College in 1982 on 'Measures to prevent and suppress insurgencies in the southern border provinces,' followed by Thanin Pha-aem's 'Policy on security problems in the southern border provinces' in 1984, and the doctoral thesis of Panomporn Anurugsa on 'Political integration policy in Thailand: the case of the Malay Muslim minority' in the same year.

Surin Pitsuwan's thesis came out in 1982, and his research paper on 'Political conditions leading to human rights violation in the southern border provinces' was published in 1984 as part of a book on human rights problems in the four southern border provinces published by Thammasat University's Thai Khadi Research Institute. In addition, there was Jetsada Urupipatthanaphong's 1986 study on 'Policy implementation for the southern border provinces: a case study of Narathiwat province'; Piyanart Bunnag's much cited 1988 work on 'Policies of the Thai government towards the Thai Muslims in the southern border provinces, 1932–1973'; Prakit Kanyaban from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University on 'Policies to solve problems in the southern border provinces: a case study on policy implementation related to socio-psychology' in 1988; and Suparuek Hongphakdi's 'Policy implementation in the three southern border provinces,' a public administration thesis from Thammasat University.

Almost all policy studies on the south point to the fact that Thai governments have always treated this region as a special case. Jetsada Urupipatthanaphong wrote, "when considering government policies from the Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Rattnakosin eras through the abolition of absolute monarchy in 1932 until the present, it is clear that the Thai state always has special policies on governing the southern border provinces."[20] Piyanart Bunnag stressed that the Thai government had always been aware of a southern problem, and that since before 1932, the government had aimed to achieve integration through policies inducing cultural changes among people that the government viewed as different from the majority in the country. These policies targeted the *pondok* schools which are important social institutions for Muslims to preserve their language, religious and cultural identities. The government was successful in changing a certain number of *pondok* schools into private Islamic schools teaching general subjects according to the national curriculum of 1982.

Yet these studies reach differing conclusions. Some see integration policies as unproblematic, while others think these policies have created conflict. Piyanart Bunnag concluded that "the problems are not caused by government policies but by the implementation work of officials in the areas. The government therefore needs to constantly monitor and evaluate policy implementation."[21] Pichet Thongsrinoon, however, pointed out that the government's integration policies did not correspond with the socio-cultural structure of the Thai Muslim communities and that there were also problems over corrupt officials. Pichet suggested that there should be more public participation in policy making and implementation.[22]

These works begin from the proposition that people in the south are an "ethnic minority" because of difference in history, religion, and culture. Chaiwat Satha-Anand's research on 'Islam and violence: a case study of violent events in the four southern border provinces, 1976–1981' suggested that such conflicts are merely "a representation of the structural complications which enhance the unrest. Conflicts

between the Malays and the Thai state result from social injustice and poverty. In this sense, problems in the south do not differ from those in the rural areas of the northeast of Thailand, but the conflicts in the south appear more acute because of the difference in religion, language, ethnicity, and historical imposition."[23] Chaiwat's conclusion was in line with that of Surin Pitsuwan, namely that human rights violations in the southern border provinces are caused by the injustice of government officials towards Muslim communities. Muslims received more severe punishment for crimes committed.[24] From these two research papers, Chaiwat concluded that "any policy formulated with misunderstanding and distrust cannot solve the problems in the long run."[25] If the findings of these two papers had been used to frame the southern problem in a new way, the policy approach in the south might have taken a different course since 1984.

Literature in the policy category also includes a number of works on educational policies. Uthai Dulyakasem's 'Education and ethnic nationalism: a study of the Muslim Malays in southern Siam' looked into the educational policies of the Thai state towards Malay Muslims as part of the policy on integration. Panomporn Anurugsa analyzed the integration measures implemented by the Thai state, including the educational integration focusing on the *pondok* schools in 1982.

Four works examined the reactions and attitudes of local leaders and government officials towards government policies. The most cited works in this category are Chalermkiat Khunthongpetch's 1986 thesis on 'The opposition to government policies in the four southern border provinces of Thailand, under the leadership of Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir, 1939–1954,' and Pornphan Khemkhunasai's 'A study of Thai Muslims' attitudes towards government integration policies' (1990), supported by the Office of National Cultural Committee. Two years later, Pornphan also received funding from the Office to carry out a study on 'The attitudes of government officials in Narathiwat towards government cultural policies.' These three works focused on elites in the south. Chalermkiat's thesis emphasized the role of the important Muslim leader of his time, Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir, while Pornphan's work surveyed the attitudes of *imam, koteb,* and *bilan*, the three highest religious leaders in Muslim communities, and the attitudes of local government officials, who are also considered elites in the context of the southern border provinces.

In this period there were no research works that looked into ordinary people's attitudes towards government policies. However, one research paper studied the social characteristics of Thai Muslims and their reactions to government policies. Surapong Sothanasathien's research reviewed beliefs about this ethnic minority in order to make policy suggestions which correspond with the needs of local Muslims.[26] This research painted a different picture of the Thai Muslims from other works. While most of the works tend to see the Muslim communities as introvert and extremely devout, this study pointed out that Muslims are "sociable, and open to new initiatives from outside," especially when they have to accept new discourses and policies from government. They are willing to follow policies as long as these do not "infringe on their religious belief too much." Fraternity in the Islamic tradition encourages the Muslims to accommodate others with understanding and good human relationships. The government's perception that Muslim communities are not open to outside interactions is therefore suspect. If the government was not fixated with the concept that this ethnic minority is different from the majority, it would realize that they are actually similar to villagers in other regions of Thailand. Differences in language and dress can be found in other regions too.[27] Surapong's work is interesting in that it portrays Muslim society in the southern border provinces as dynamic, unlike other

works on politics and government that see the problem as static over the two decades.

On religion

Works in this group study religions in terms of social beliefs and their roles in society, rather than focusing on theological debates. Some examples include Lamom Khomapat on traditional beliefs about mother and child health of Muslim women in the four southern border provinces (1993), Khaneung Senathammachak on the Lim Kor Niew Shrine (1995), Kamalas Bunpetch on 'Roles and effects of Ratburana (Chang Hai) temple' (1999)**,** Yanin Petchsueant on the history of beliefs surrounding the famous amulet of the Chang Hai Temple (2001), and Sakda Sewiset's work on 'Islam and self-development: a case study of Muslim student organizations in five southern border provinces' (2003).

On customs, rituals, and handicrafts

This group includes general studies on customs and rituals, including those using structuralist-functionalist approaches. They deal with various cultures in the south, not only the Muslims, and include comparative studies on Muslim and Buddhist rituals, as well as cultural intermingling between the two communities. Prime examples are Soonthorn Nawakawin on the cultural mix in Yala (1994), Wattana Chantornrojana on the *Chak phra* Festival (1994), Ismae Salae on ritual food and the wedding tradition of the Thai Muslims in Sai Buri and Pattani (1998), and Suwit Thinnakorn's work on the production of *kris* in Pattani (2003). Almost all of these works are from Thaksin University.

These studies clearly reflect the cultural diversity of the south. While studies on religion tend to focus on each religion separately, the studies on traditions and rituals usually present comparative views on the religions and cultures that coexist in the three southern border provinces.

On Muslim women

There are thirteen works on this theme, two in English, and eleven in Thai. Most of them focus on Muslim women or provide a comparative view of Muslim women and their Thai Buddhist counterparts. This survey includes only some of the works in this theme, to convey an overview of Muslim women in the south.

The first work on this theme is the doctoral thesis of Chavivun Prachuabmoh, written in 1980 on 'The role of women in maintaining ethnic identity and boundaries: a case study of Thai Muslims (the Malay-speaking group) in southern Thailand.' This thesis analyzed the role of Muslim women in maintaining ethnic identity through motherhood. It pointed out that Thai Muslims in the southern provinces maintain their identity through historical practice, familial ties, community activities, and religious and educational institutions. Their identity is formed partly by the interactions between their culture and the Thai Buddhist culture. Women play an important role in preserving the Malay Muslim identity.

The next piece of research written by Dolmanaj Baka and Wae-useng Madaehoh in 1986 compared the roles of Muslim women in urban and rural areas, and found that in both areas Muslim women maintain their status according to Islamic principles.

In 1991, Parichat Priyanond received funding from the National Research Council of Thailand to conduct a study on women participation in rural development projects, comparing Muslim women's groups with Thai Buddhist women's groups in the three southern border provinces. The study found that women who already

participate in social and political activities are more interested in joining rural development projects. Other factors affecting women's participation are their husbands, numbers of children they have, and religions. Parichat found that Muslim women tend to have less participation in rural development projects than their Buddhist counterparts.

Like other societies in Thailand, Pattani has gone through different phases of socio-economic change. In 1982, there was a master plan to create an industrial estate, which resulted in many seafood manufacturers appearing in the area. In 1991, the cabinet established a committee on a special economic zone in the southern border provinces, and in 1992 a budget of 267 million baht was allocated to build the capacity of the industrial zone. The Department of Local Administration administered two phases of development for the industrial zone. These policies generated socio-cultural changes in the south, especially with regards to the roles and duties of Muslim women.

These changes are reflected in Sawang Lertrit's 1992 research on 'Thai Muslim women and factory work in Pattani: a case study of the impact on livelihoods.' The research explained the process of adaptation of Muslim women to new lifestyles. Sawang found that the role of women in the household changes when they have to go out to work. In addition, they have to adjust the language used, and the choice of entertainment, becoming more receptive to urban culture. However, these women still uphold Islamic traditions such as Hari Raya (celebrity the end of Ramadan), the fasting period (Ramadan), wedding traditions, and funeral practices. All in all, the changing lifestyle of Muslim women who work in factories does not cause conflicts or serious effects to the communities, because it does not contradict religious norms.

Suthat Silapawisarn's 1995 thesis on 'Thai Muslim women's adoption of modern work: a case study of Thai Muslim women in factories in Pattani' compared attitudes between devout and less devout Muslims. It found that both groups worked in factories due to economic needs, and had to forego some of the duties required of them according to Islamic principles because rituals hindered their work in factories.[28]

In 1993, academics from Prince of Songkhla University collaborated with counterparts from Northern Illinois University in a research project on 'Women in rural southern Thailand: a study of roles, attitudes and ethno-religious differences.' The research compared Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists. It found out that women in the south, especially the Muslims, had low levels of education, but household incomes showed no significant difference between the two groups. Women from both groups have dominant economic roles, and are aware of their power and ability as the financial managers of the household. The study suggested that there should be a revision of the perception that women are dependent and have only a domestic role. Thai Buddhist women have more social chance to become business owners than their Muslim counterparts. This may be owing to the matrilineal culture of the Thai. Both groups of women have prominent roles in electoral politics, but lesser roles in local administration.

The last piece of work included in the survey under this theme is Dolmanaj Baka's 1999 study on the socio-economic and political roles of Muslim women in the southern border provinces. The study points out that Muslim women's social roles include being wives, daughters, and mothers, which they perform according to the Islamic principles. Muslim women in the south are able to choose their study according to their academic interests. Most of them prefer to enroll in private Islamic schools; and some of the parents encourage their daughters to pursue education at the university level. Moreover, Muslim women in the south set up various activity groups

in the villages. They all dress according to traditional Islamic principles, no matter what professions they follow. Muslim women can choose their own husbands. They also play an important economic role in supporting the family. Working outside does not contradict with Islamic principles as long as the women still perform their domestic duties. Muslim women have a role in electoral campaigns and providing financial support, indicating the increasing role of women in politics. None of these roles contradict Islamic principles.

Taken together, these studies chart the changing role of Muslim women over the twenty years since Raweewan Cha-oompreuk's 1982 work on the role of Thai Muslim women in Rusamilae village. Raweewan found that women had very few roles in the village, and could not travel outside the village without chaperons. Married women were confined to looking after the household, their husbands, and children, with some additional duty to help their husbands raise income by selling the seafood produce their husbands caught. In most cases, they sold the produce to middlemen rather than taking it to markets themselves. Women did not have any prominent roles in politics and religions.

The roles of Muslim women in the villages have changed drastically because of economic changes. More women work outside the home and become more active in politics. Muslim academics seem interested in examining whether women still adhere to Islamic traditions despite the socio-economic changes. Dolmanaj, for example, conducted two researches on this theme within the period of thirteen years.

On economy

Research in this category tends to focus on income generation, and social changes that affect livelihoods, occupations, consumption, and the economic structure of these provinces. Most works are conducted by academics at Prince of Songkhla University, including Suthiphong Prompaijit's work on 'Poverty among Thai Muslims in the rural areas of the southern border provinces' (1985), and Dolmanaj Baka's study on 'Some potential effects of the development of the economic triangle (IMT-GT) in the south: a case study of Pattani' (1998). Ar-wang Lanui's work on 'Muslim communities and economic change' (1998) found that once roads and electricity reach the villages, the mode of production changes from self-sufficiency to market-driven, with effects on the socio-cultural characteristics of the community. Villagers who still adhere to traditional ways of life in which religion plays a central role have a simple but poor life, while those who pursue economic advancement have a better standard of living but more problems in life. Wattana Sugunnasil's 2000 work on 'Consumer culture among hired laborers in Tak Bai District of Narathiwat' portrayed coastal fishing communities struggling against the expansion of commercial fishing businesses, leading to conflicts between these two groups. Peerayos Rahimullah's 2001 study of 'Development of the political economy of the five southern border provinces to serve the economic triangle of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand' pointed out that people would like to develop local investment rather than drawing in big investment from outside. Arkom Jaikaew studied 'The impact of the economic slump on the livelihoods of Thai Muslims and Thai Buddhists: a comparison between rural and urban communities in the five southern border provinces' in 2001.

All of the works on economics are research papers. Most of them are from Prince of Songkhla University, except the work of Arwang Lanui which received funding from the Office of the National Cultural Commission, and that of Wattana Sugunnasil which was supported by the Thailand Research Fund.

On history

Works on the history of the south are very rare. There was one thesis by Somchote Ongsakul in 1978 on 'Administrative reform in Pattani, 1906–1931,' and two research papers—Sunan Chaimay on 'Politics, administration, and economics of Yala during the reign of King Rama V' from Rajaphat Yala University in 1991, and Krongchai Hatta on 'Pattani: politics and trade in the past' in 2001.

The works of Somchote and Sunan are quite similar in that they study history from the point of view of Siam, and place local history in the framework of the mainstream historical perspective of the nation-state. Somchote focuses on the administrative reforms from the establishment of Monthon Pattani until its abolition in 1931, pointing out that Pattani posed three major challenges for the Thai state. First, the state was too large to govern effectively, given a lack of capable officials, and shortage of budgets. Second, there were external threats from Western powers. Third, the local governors and local people had different ethnicity, religion, language, tradition, and culture from the majority of the country, and were badly disposed towards the central government.

Sunan Chaimay studied the socio-economic and political conditions of Yala in the time of King Rama V, focusing on the period of transition before and after the administrative reform. People in Yala during that time made a living from agriculture, mining, gathering non-timber forest products, and trading with neighboring territories, especially through Tha Sap on the route between Yala to Pattani Bay. Taxation at the time included taxes on opium, tin, imports, and exports.

Krongchai Hattha studied the history of Pattani from a local perspective, using historical records of foreigners on Pattani as an important port on the Malay Peninsula. Krongchai described the rise and fall of the kingdoms of Langkasuka and Patani Darusalam. Krongchai did not study Pattani as part of the Siamese kingdom, but as a territory in its own right. His is one of very few works presenting the history from this angle. Most research on Pattani history, such as Somchote Ongsakul's work, remains within the framework of mainstream historical study with Siam at the center.

These three studies, and articles in *Rusamilae* journal, have two common characteristics worth noting. First, all of these works emphasize Pattani as the centre of the history of the southernmost provinces. By contrast, Narathiwat seems to be in oblivion, both in the national or local history, existing on the margin of Pattani's sphere of power. Second, studies on the political history of Pattani, which are not within the framework of mainstream historical studies, cannot appear as theses or research papers within the national historiography. Such works are mostly published in the form of books rather than as theses or research papers. One of the most important books in this genre is the *History of the Malay kingdom of Patani*, written by Ibrahim Syukri in Malay. The book was translated into Thai by Hasan Mudman and Mahamasaki Jaeha, as part of a project for translating and editing textbooks by the Institute for the Southeast Asian Maritime States Studies, Prince of Songkhla University. Ibrahim Syukri's book examines the history of the relationship between Pattani, Thailand, and Kelantan. The author gathered information from written records of the elders in "Patani," so the history was told from the point of view of Pattani people. Similar works can be found in the *Rusamilae* journal. Academics from Prince of Songkhla University have translated several works on the political history of Pattani's rulers and published them in this journal. One example is Wan Marohbut's Thai-language translation of *Hikayat Pattani: story of Pattani* under the title *Lao rueang mueang Pattani*, published as a series of articles in the journal from the end of 1984 to mid 1986. Another example is W. W. Skeat's article on 'Reminiscences of the

Cambridge University expedition to the northeastern Malay States, 1899–1900,' translated into Thai by Seni Mudman. The foreign observers described the Pattani Kingdom during that era, including royal rituals in which the mission had a chance to participate.

On inter-ethnic relations

There has been little research on the interrelationship among various ethnic groups in the southernmost provinces. Ten works will be reviewed in chronological order.

Chawiwan Wannaprasert, Peerayos Rahimullah, and Manop Jitphusa's work on *Customs that encourage social cohesion between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims* (1981) argued that these two religious groups tend to participate in each other's social activities, but carry out their religious ceremonies and rituals separately. Common participation in social activities is encouraged by friendship—either friendship between community leaders or between villagers—by mutual dependency, by common language, and by the fact that both groups are sharing public infrastructure and utilities. Therefore, the government should promote the revival of social ceremonies between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims.

Palit Phongphaew's 1985 thesis at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Chulalongkorn University studied social distance in the relationship between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims in Narathiwat. At the general communication level, the relationship is good; in the aspect of religious acceptance, the relationship is moderate; and the Thai Muslims are more willing to accept the Chinese than the Thai Buddhists and *vice versa*.

Kitti Rattanachaya's 1989 research focused on problems in the relationship between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims, both among civil servants and people in general, in relation to national security. He concluded that the two groups have mutual distrust and misunderstanding, resulting in political, economic, and socio-psychological problems. The government's efforts to solve the problems have been misinformed and piecemeal.

Chutinthara Wattanakul's 1994 masters thesis on 'Krue Ze Mosque: inter-ethnic relationship, myths, and rituals' examined the legend of Lim Kor Niew and the Malay Muslims' legend of the origin of Pattani as representations of the inter-ethnic relationship. Chutinthara proposed that the two legends are often cited to justify ethnic predominance. Malay Muslims emphasize their long historical roots, while the Chinese use the Lim Kor Niew legend and rituals to compete for space in the society. At the same time, the tourism industry capitalizes on the myth of Lim Kor Niew, and relates it to the curse of Krue Ze Mosque. This external influence has a tendency to introduce extra tension into the relationship between the Malay Muslims and the Chinese.

Andrew Cornish's 1997 doctoral thesis on 'Whose place is this? Malay rubber producers and Thai government officials in Yala' examined interactions between Malay rubber producers and Thai government officials at the local level, highlighting the ethnic conflicts and power plays between the two groups. The Malay Muslims produce rubber, one of the most valuable exports of Thailand, but local government officials benefit from the rubber market under the 1909 treaty which was not recognized by the ancestors of the Malay Muslims who owned the rubber. Cornish argued that government development policies in Yala are contradictory. His comparative study of two rubber-producing Muslim communities shows that one community benefited from the government's promotion of the rubber market, while

the other community did not. Both communities are concerned to protect their source of income, and both resent the government's attempts to impose control.

Kwanchart Klaharn's 1999 research studied the pattern of relationships in the multicultural society of the south, including factors which promote and obstruct social cohesion. The study also made policy recommendations to promote peaceful coexistence. People of different religions had been living together in harmony, and most problems are caused by "the misbehavior of the government officials," while Thai Buddhists feel threatened by terrorism.

Nanthiya Phimolsiripol traced the relationship between the Chinese and the Muslim communities in Pattani from 1958 to 1990 through the beliefs, legends, and rituals of the Lim Kor Niew shrine. Chinese and Malays live in relative harmony, without any serious conflicts. As a result of inter-ethnic marriage, there is a group of Chinese Muslims in Pattani who follow a Muslim way of life and have a good attitude towards the Chinese. The Thai government's promotion of the Lim Kor Niew shrine as a major tourist destination, and its registration of the Krue Ze Mosque as a historic building, created dissatisfaction amongst the Malay Muslims to the extent that they staged protests, but the incidents did not harm the relationship between the Chinese and the Muslims in the area.

Rattiya Saleh's 2001 study on *Interactions between Buddhists and Muslims in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat* portrayed a close relationship and mutual understanding between the two groups. Each accepts the difference in values and social hierarchy of the other. The belief and culture of the Muslims are major factors shaping the interactions of the villagers in the three southernmost provinces, to the extent that Buddhist traditions and ceremonies do not seem to have any significant roles in local interactions, and Muslims do not participate in them. How might this affect Buddhists' attitude to their Muslim neighbors?

Saroja Dorairajoo's 2002 doctoral thesis, '"No fish in the sea": Thai Malay tactics of negotiation in a time of scarcity' and an article entitled 'Thai-icizing the Malays: a local response to an environment crisis,' partly derived from the thesis, focused on the livelihoods of Muslims as an ethnic minority that has to adjust to the existence of the modern nation-state. Her work looks into everyday strategies and negotiations between these groups and those in positions of power. The expansion of commercial fishing has left no fish in the sea for small-scale fishermen who have to find ways to survive by using culture as a negotiating strategy. On the one hand, the Muslim fishermen face class and ethnic discrimination; on the other, the crisis prompts them to interact with Thai Buddhist NGOs to the extent that the two groups developed mutual trust and respect through their collaboration to save the fishing industry and coastal natural resources. These interactions cut across ethnic, religious, and language boundaries.

Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng's 2004 thesis looked into the interactions between Malay Muslims and Chinese in the market areas of the city of Yala, where the two groups live side by side and interact closely, resulting in the creation of ethnic consciousness. Malay Muslims and Chinese have developed processes of self-actualization and identification in order to distinguish their ethnicity against each other. In the market areas where these two groups coexist closely, they have adopted common values and mechanisms to accommodate differences and overcome tension. To promote harmony with the Chinese, the Malay Muslims now claim that they have Chinese blood.

The literature on ethnic interactions points to two dimensions: vertical relationships between the rulers and the ruled, and horizontal relationships among

people living together in each locality. The vertical relationship between Thai Buddhist government officials and Malay Muslims is portrayed as conflicting rather than harmonious. Most works on unrest in the south argue that problems are created by the government's administrative and economic policies, or by separatist movements. Only a few works point to problematic relationships between government officials and the people in the south from the past until the present.

Several works argue that horizontal relationships between Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims have always been healthy, as a result of communication, support, and mutual dependency in everyday life, as well as during special occasions such as in ceremonies and rituals. Similarly, relations between Malay Muslims and Chinese have also been harmonious because of inter-ethnic marriage, economic relations across ethnic boundaries, and friendships.

The relationship between Thai government officials and Malay Muslim people, however, is marked by tension and mutual mistrust to the extent that it is considered a cause of the unrest. Although there are some barriers and biases in the horizontal relations between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists, and between Malay Muslims and Chinese, these have never led to serious conflicts. Their interactions exhibit a process of learning to accept differences, to avoid conflicts, and to find ways of living together in harmony.

Research and national security policies

The volume of research work has fluctuated from period to period as a result of changing national security policies. This section divides up the period according to the time-span of the successive security plans for the region.

1978 to 1987

Most works that appeared in the decade 1978–87, both research papers and theses, focused on "problems" in the southern border provinces and the policies to solve them. Probably this was a consequence of massive protests by the Malay Muslims in Pattani, sparked by the killings at Kor Tor Bridge in 1975. After the protests died away in early 1976, the political tension remained and became a "problem" for study. In addition, students from the National Defence College had a long-term interest in the issues of the south, and produced research papers on the issue almost every year. These papers looked into measures to quell unrest, and to reduce conflicts and tension in the area, in line with national policy which emphasized the importance of eradicating insurgency.

In 1980, the cabinet resolved to establish two special organizations to coordinate work for solving conflict in the southernmost provinces: the Southern Border Province Administration Center (SBPAC) and the Civilian-Police-Military Task Force (CPM) 43. Subsequently in 1982 and 1984, there were studies to evaluate the performance of SBPAC.

In this decade, there were relatively few studies on economic issues. The exceptions were Pattaya Saihoo's 1978 work on 'The socio-cultural characteristics of the rubber tapping economy', Dolmanaj Baka's 'Comparative study on religious beliefs and way of life of Thai Buddhists and Muslims in the south', Suthipong Prompaijit's 1982 study on 'Poverty among Thai Muslims in the rural areas', and Raman Wongwit's 1985 survey on 'The socio-economic characteristics of the villages around Pattani Bay'. All of these were baseline studies on the socio-economic

structure of the region rather than assessments of development policy.

There was no research on the internal and external security policies in this period, but there were two works that criticized government's policies towards the south—Surin Pitsuwan and Chaiwat Satha-Anand's works on the four southern provinces and human rights problems, and Chalermkiat Thongkhunpetch's research on the opposition movement led by Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir. These works argued that ethnicity, religion, and culture are not the reasons for Muslim opposition to the Thai government, and that the assimilation policies of the Thai state had at times "intruded into the everyday practice of the Malay Muslims in the four southern provinces." [29]

1988 to 1992

A new security plan was in operation from 1988 to 1992, and works which emerged over these years and the immediate aftermath can be seen in the context of this plan.

Policy studies continued to emerge through these six years, including Piyanart Bunnag's 1988 historical survey, and Arkon Jaikaew's 1990 assessment of past policy achievements. But compared to the previous period, the number of research on government policies and political problems declined. At the same time, there was an increase in works on the needs, attitudes, and political participation of local leaders. This reflected the second national security plan, which aimed to convince Muslim leaders to join hands with government to solve problems in the south and help with social development. Research assessing the results of government projects included Manop Jitphusa's 1998 study on development projects in rural communities, the Internal Security Operation Command's 1989 work on 'New Hope' development projects, and Parichart Priyanont's 1990 study on the role of women in rural development, funded by the Department of Social Welfare.

The National Defence College continued to produce works on national security, including Seree Kleabchan's 1991 study on national security problems in the five southernmost provinces, Prakij Prajonpatjanuek's 1992 work on 'Ways to create long-lasting security and peace in the south'. Pichet Thongsrinoon's 1993 research from Chiang Mai University also analyzed problems and factors affecting national security. In the last three years of the second national security plan for the south, there were four research works on national security.

Two works in this period had no obvious bearing on security policy. These were studies of environmental conservation by schools and communities around Pattani Bay, and of local artists. Both were written by academics from Prince of Songkhla University.

In sum, in this period there were research related to national security covering socio-psychological, political, and economic issues, but none looked at international politics.

1994 to 1998

The output increased in this period, largely because NIDA provided courses in Yala, giving local government officials, staff, and businessmen a chance to pursue their studies and produce research works. NIDA aims to produce graduates who will be leaders in the society, and places emphasis on organizational management and human resource development. Most research from this university was in accordance with the third national security plan on the south which took a socio-psychological

approach to promote participation by religious institutions, local academics, and local politicians to generate development strategies on human resources, quality of life, and income-generating activities.

Several NIDA theses in this period related to the policy on socio-psychology, including studies on personnel administration in the southern border provinces (1994), the structure of public and personnel administration in the south (1994), the training of provincial policemen in the south (1995), the role of SBPAC from the point of view of the executives of local government bodies (1996), the quality of life of Thai Muslim students in private Islamic schools (1997), the quality of family life and community life of Thai Muslims in the rural areas (1998), and the participation of village committees in poverty eradication projects (1999).

Development policy in this period stressed the promotion of investment. Government drew up a master plan for the five southern border provinces, covering the period of 1999–2006, and including the tripartite economic development project involving Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand (IMT-GT). A group of academics from Prince of Songkhla University conducted a research on the potential effects of the IMT-GT, using Pattani as a case study. The IMT-GT project was halted during the 1997 economic crisis and has not been restarted.[30]

During this third national security plan, there were increasing drug problems in the south. Therefore, in the last two years of the plan, there were five researches on drug problems, including studies on young drug addicts and studies on ways to use religion in rehabilitation.

In this period, there were fewer works on "problems" in the south. However, there were still no research on relations between the Muslims in the south and those overseas, nor studies that related to the foreign aspect of the national security plan for the south.

1999 to 2003

Violence increased over 1999–2003, and the number of research works increased in parallel. The fourth national security plan focused on the multicultural character of the south.

Works in this five-year period diverged from the earlier output in two interesting ways. First, the south was no longer portrayed as a "problem" for national security, Second, there was only one research from the National Defence College—Kwanchart Klaharn's 2003 study of peaceful co-existence in the multicultural society in the south. Over the previous twenty years, most research from the National Defence College emphasized national security and homogeneity. Only this last piece of research in 2003 highlighted a multicultural society, in line with the perspective of the fourth security plan.

The largest output was again from NIDA, and reflected its institutional bias towards organizational and personnel administration, as well as on drug problems. Works from Prince of Songkhla University in this period focused increasingly on socio-economic changes. In 2001, Peerayos Rahimullah conducted research on the economic development of the five southernmost provinces for the IMT-GT project., and there were five studies on inter-ethnic relationships.

In sum, this review of literature against the timeframe of the national security plans for the south shows that some works are in line with security policy, providing baseline information or assessments of policy performance. Such works mostly came from NIDA. The direction of some works is determined, directly or indirectly, by

national security policies.

However, some other works do not appear to be associated with national security policies. These are works on socio-cultural aspects, mostly in the form of theses. This review revealed two major gaps in research coverage: the international dimension, and the effects of economic development on the local people.

Conclusion

In his review of two decades of literature on the south, Chaiwat Satha-Anand portrayed research studies as "narratives" with pre-determined plots. This review confirms that perspective, and shows that most of the plots were determined by state institutions. Many works follow the plot of the current national security policy, including research on the problems of the Malay Muslims, on the assessment and review of government policies in the region, on the assessment of related projects on education, development, and on socio-psychology. These works were produced by academics from outside the southern provinces. Research by local academics was often framed by the concerns of funding agencies, most of which were searching for policy recommendations. The plots of the studies on the south have been pre-determined by outsiders' points of view. It does not really matter whether these researches become government's policies or not. The fact that they were referred to, reproduced, and perpetuated contributed to the general perception of the south, with no sensitivity nor distinction between the points of view of outsiders and insiders. It is therefore not surprising that in this literature review, the problems in the south appear more or less the same, and that while attempts to solve the conflicts have been successful to a certain extent, violence continues.

As the "protagonists" in the stories of the south, the Malay Muslims are portrayed as "heroes" and "villains" intermittently. However, in the research papers and theses on politics and administration, the Malay Muslims are always seen as "problems" that require solutions. The terms "Malay Muslims" and "Thai Muslims" have different political connotations. Only three Thai theses use the term "Malay Muslims," while all the nine doctoral theses from overseas universities use this term. The choice of term reflects the perception of the researchers. Seeing the Muslims in the south as Malays shows awareness that Muslim communities in Thailand are diverse, and that the Muslims in the south differ from those in other parts of the country. This awareness in turn suggests greater sensitivity towards the communities under study.

Works by local researchers from the south have not tended to give emphasis to politics and administrative problems. This could be because local academics do not see the Muslims in the south as "problems," unlike the state and outsider researchers. The focus of works by local institutions has often been determined by the academic bias of the institution. For example, theses from the Social Development Department of NIDA focus on human resource development and organizational administration, while those from the Thai Studies Institute of Thaksin University prioritize local culture including beliefs, customs, rituals, and handicrafts, as well as languages.

Prince of Songkhla University is considered the leading local institution for research and the production of researchers. The university has many different faculties and departments, including Islamic theology, sociology and anthropology, education, political science, geography, public administration, and archaeology. Academics in each discipline have conducted research on various aspects of the region, not in one single direction as in the case of NIDA and Thaksin University. Srisompob Jitpiromsri

argued that the research by academics at Prince of Songkhla University has changed in accordance with research funding and shifting issues.[31] The research of these academics has reflected the social changes in the south, especially the impact of economic development on the livelihoods and culture of the local communities. Changes brought about by government policies, the spread of the capitalist economy, and globalization have prompted the Buddhists, Chinese, and especially the Muslims to adjust their ways of life to survive in changing circumstances.

There are two distinctive differences between the research done by local universities and those by institutions in Bangkok. First, the works on politics and administration conducted by researchers from outside tend to overlook the diversity within the south. The "outsiders" only see and give importance to the Malay Muslims. Very few works from outside look into other ethnic groups in the southernmost provinces, and then within a framework of comparison with the Muslims—between the Thai Buddhists and the Muslims and between the Chinese and the Muslims. Research from local institutions, by contrast, gives emphasis to the diversity of customs, cultures, and beliefs in the area.

Second, works from local institutions reflect attempts to understand the thoughts and needs of local people, even though most of the researchers use quantitative approaches, which may not effectively reflect the needs of the locals due to limitation in methodologies. Even so, the research by local academics conveys the diversity of the south better than works written by outside researchers.

Observations and recommendations

1. *Research questions* and *"problems."* Most works in the past fifteen years see the southern border provinces as "problems" or pose questions about the south and national security. Such research questions imply some biases which could lead the research to find data or information in support of the hypotheses. These works portray the south only in terms of conflict, without considering the good relationship among different groups of people in the area.

2. *Quantitative and qualitative research.* Ninety per cent of the research works reviewed here are quantitative and limited to a narrow set of questions. They tend to require simple answers—yes or no, good or bad, satisfied or not, appropriate or not. Such surveys are useful only in ascertaining the attitudes of a big group of people on a particular issue or situation at a certain time. More qualitative research is needed to elicit information that is missed by such survey methods, and to refine research questions before such surveys are launched. These are answers to the questions of the why and the how. For example, in a study on people's needs from government's development policies, the questioning needs to cover not only *what* is needed but also *why* such needs exist and *how* these needs can be met by projects or provisions which are in accordance with the diverse beliefs and cultures of the people in the south.

3. *Studies by outsiders and action research.* Although there have been more studies on the opinions and attitudes of the local people on different issues in the past ten years, the research questions are still usually framed by the perspective of outsiders. This review of literature in the past twenty-six years suggests that research on the south is not as advanced as in other regions. In the north, for example, researchers have cultivated an action approach in which communities are involved in the whole process of research, from setting the research questions, to conducting the research, making the analysis, evaluating the process, and applying the findings to develop their own communities. This action research has not been applied in the south prior to 2003. This may be because the continuing unrest has hindered community

participation in the research process.

4. *Studies on others' attitudes towards the south*. In 1984, Chaiwat Satha-Anand referred to the work of Arong Sutthasarn which points out that understanding the problems of ethnic minorities requires a realization that minorities are constructed by the majority, and that the majority is also constructed by the minority. The behavior of a minority reflects that of the majority. Thus, there is a need to study the majority as well as the minorities. Chaiwat concluded that problems associated with ethnic minorities often arise because the majority does not understand how to deal with other groups.[32] From this perspective, there should be research on the perceptions and attitudes of Thai people in general towards the south. This kind of research may help the majority to understand themselves better in relation to the people in the three southern border provinces, and could lead to solutions at the national level.

5. *Studies on culture*. Most studies on socio-cultural issues in the past have tended to look at the patterns and roles of customs and rituals, rather than studying them in terms of power relations. The approach of power relations could lead to better understanding of the dynamics within the society of the south, highlighting the negotiations of power. Moreover, unlike research from universities abroad, works on socio-cultural topics by Thai academics still lack theoretical grounding. Where there is some solid theoretical framework, it tends to be always structural-functionalist in approach. There is a need to incorporate political and social anthropological theories to substantiate the analyses, and employ a wider variety of theoretical approaches to look at the south from diverse angles.

6. *Relationship between ethnic groups, and between old and new groups of people*. There is still little research interest in inter-ethnic relationships, especially between different groups of people in the locality. Most studies focus on conflicts in the vertical relationship between the rulers and the ruled, though such works have declined over the past decade. There has been few works which assessed policies designed to solve problems arising between government officials and the people, or to examine how relationships change as a result of shifts in social status and power relations. For example, Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims may go to the same school, but when they grow up, the Buddhists become civil servants and thus change their social status. Does the change affect their horizontal relationship as friends? If so, how? There is also no research on the relationship between old settlers and new migrants, such as between Malay Muslims and Thai Muslims, between Pattani villagers and fishing entrepreneurs from central Thailand, and between different groups of migrant laborers.

7. *Studies on economic aspects*. There are still very few studies on conflicts over natural resources between the outsiders and the locals, and how such conflicts affect the socio-economic and cultural well-being of the people.

8. *Studies on the role of men*. There have been several studies on the roles of Muslim women and women of other ethnic groups in the south, but very few on the roles of men. There should be studies on the roles of men, especially in the changing Muslim world.

The upsurge in violence in the south since 2004 has prompted an upsurge in research. The volume of output, and the variety of approaches, has certainly increased. Government policy has become more dynamic in trying to respond to the situation. More agencies and institutions have become interested in the issues of the south. Further reviews of research will be needed. The most significant point is that academics and indeed Thai society as a whole should look back and question to what

extent the existing body of knowledge on the south has been practically applied to help allay the ongoing conflict in the southernmost provinces.

Endnotes

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3

The security forces and human rights violations in Thailand's insurgency-wracked south

Rungrawee Chalermsripinyorat

The raid on the Narathiwat Rachanakarin army depot on 4 January 2004 marked the resurgence of violence in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and parts of Songkhla. The violent insurgency claimed more than 2,600 lives in four years. Violence is no stranger to the southernmost provinces, where 1.3 million Muslims form a majority in the population. The region was once a prosperous Islamic kingdom prior to its annexation to Siam, Thailand's old name, as a result of the 1909 treaty between Siam and Great Britain, colonial rulers of Malaya at the time. The treaty acknowledged Siamese sovereignty over the Patani principality and established the present border demarcation between Thailand and Malaysia. Difference in ethnicity, religion, culture, and language alienates southern Muslims from the rest of the predominantly Buddhist country. The southern Muslims often complain about being treated as second-class citizens. The sense of alienation and discrimination has bred separatist movements which began soon after the annexation.

One of the key factors that sparked insurgency in the southernmost provinces is the government's abuse of power. In the past, some officials were dispatched to the south as part of punishment. Others were second-rate officials who failed to win other more competitive posts. The repeated abuse of power exacerbates existing issues resulting from the sense of religious, ethnic and cultural alienation. Silent abduction and killing of Muslim leaders from time to time has caused deep-seated hatred against government officials among the Malay Muslims.

This chapter examines how the structure, operations, and recruitment of the security forces in the deep south, along with the legal framework under which they operate, have consequences for human rights. The chapter is divided into two parts. First, I explain the structure, operations, and recruitment process of security forces working in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and some part of Songkhla. Second, I discuss human rights violations arising from the security forces' operations under the provision of the Emergency Decree.

I argue that military operations lack continuity because most soldiers work in rotation, making it difficult to develop their knowledge on human rights. Following the Narathiwat Rachanakarin depot raid, thousands of soldiers from the northeast and central region were rapidly dispatched to the south to tackle the upsurge of violence. They are rotated on a one-year basis. The government later approved the establishment of a new Fifteenth Infantry Division in Pattani which, once in place, should improve the continuity of military operations in the region.

Police officials from outside the region were also dispatched to help the regular forces throughout the southernmost region following the armory raid. The National Police Bureau later recruited some one thousand non-commissioned police officials to

work for at least five years in the south. The new recruitment has a good prospect for improving the quality of police officials because those who applied under this scheme made their own choice to work in the area, unlike in the past when many officials were sent south against their will.

Human rights violation is not only the result of bad behavior on the part of some individuals, but also stems from the overall government policy and legal framework for the security forces' operations. Under the provision of the Emergency Decree, officials are allowed to carry out certain actions which violate basic rights and spark outrage among southern Muslims. Moreover, there is some evidence that security officials or government-sponsored militias may be involved in some unlawful acts such as executing suspected Muslim insurgents.

Structure, operations, and recruitment of security forces in the south

Muslim insurgency in the country's southernmost region petered out in the early 1990s following the collapse of the Communist Party of Thailand. Although bombings and arson attacks against government installations occasionally took place, the Thai government largely deemed them to be "ordinary crimes" organized by "small-time bandits."[1] In 2002, prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra dissolved the Forty-third joint Civilian-Police-Military Command (CPM43), the central agency that handled security matters in the south, and the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC), a consultative forum between the government and local people to solve security, political, economic, and social problems. After these two key agencies were dissolved, the government handed over security matters to the police from May 2002 onwards. The police reportedly took the opportunity to crack down on insurgents by executing people suspected of being involved in the insurgency.[2] The dissolution of CPM43 and SBPAC contributed to the resurgence of Muslim insurgency in early 2004 because the lack of any consultative forum between the government and people gave the insurgents more freedom to carry out their underground movements.[3]

In the raid on Narathiwat Rachanakarin army depot in Narathiwat's Cho-airong district on 4 January 2004, four soldiers died and over four hundred weapons were stolen. The incident, which marked the resurgence of Muslim insurgency, prompted the government to react urgently by dispatching some 30,000 soldiers and police to the Muslim-dominated south. Since the SBPAC was already dissolved, on 4 March 2004 the Thaksin government established a new agency called the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command (SBPPBC) to coordinate work among the military, police, and civil servants.[4] It subsequently established a committee to oversee policies on peace building in the southern border provinces, headed by General Chitchai Wannasathit, deputy prime minister and justice minister. There were several adjustments in positions at the policy and on-the-ground levels in a bid to streamline security operation which lacked coherence and unity.

The position of the Fourth Army commander in charge of the south was changed five times between January 2004 and September 2006. General Pongsak Aekbannasingh was sacked in March 2004 and replaced by Lieutenant General Pisan Wattanawongkiri. Pisan was transferred out of the region following the death of eighty-five Muslims in the Tak Bai incident on 25 October 2004. The incident began when villagers organized a

protest in front of Tak Bai police station in Narathiwat to call for the release of six Muslim villagers who were accused of handing government-issued guns to insurgents. Security forces cracked down on protesters and shot seven Muslims dead. A further seventy-eight protesters died while they were piled on top of one another in military trucks for transfer to detention in a military camp in Pattani. After the Tak Bai incident, Lieutenant General Khwanchart Klaharn, then deputy commander of the Fourth Army region, replaced Pisarn as the commander. In October 2005, Lieutenant General Ongkorn Thongprasom, deputy commander of the Fourth Army, replaced Khwanchart. Ongkorn, who rose up from the Special Warfare Unit, was appointed at about the same time that General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, the former commander of the Special Warfare Unit, was appointed as overall army commander. In the following year, Lieutenant General Wirot Buacharun, who had spent several years of his military career working in the deep south, became a new Fourth Army commander.

Several senior military officials who were given key positions in the south were from the Special Warfare Unit. Army officials interviewed by the author said that they were given the job because military officials from the unit had been trained to fight in "unconventional" warfare. The little-known Special Warfare Unit carried out undercover missions at the time the army was fighting against communists. After the collapse of the communist movement, the Unit was in charge of the crackdown on drugs trafficking, mostly in the north. The Special Warfare Unit tends to have better experience than other regular forces in working with people in areas which have ideological conflicts.[5] Colonel Akara Thiprot, the army spokesman, admitted that "the army produces personnel to serve in conventional warfare and to defend the country. It doesn't produce personnel to fight in guerrilla warfare."[6] The fact that the Special Warfare Unit was chosen to lead the operation could be deemed a turning point, suggesting that the government had come to realize that this war could not be won by force but only by gaining the hearts and minds of the people. The violence carried out by Muslim insurgents, like that of the communists, is political in nature, despite the two movements' differing ideological underpinning and strategies. An army official said, "communists are gentlemen because they don't kill innocent people."[7] Some army officials accept that it is "the first war against terrorism" that Thailand is facing. The army believes that "the fight over information and over the hearts and minds" of local people is key to the success of this war, and hence it has to create a good perception of the government among the local and international community.[8]

Structure of military operation in the south

Military operations in the southernmost provinces fall under the Fourth Region's Forward Command, which is based in Ingkhayuth-Borihan Camp in Pattani's Nong Chik district. The structure is constantly changing. In October 2005, there were two major forces, Sri Sunthorn and Santisuk Task Force, which carried out operations in the south.

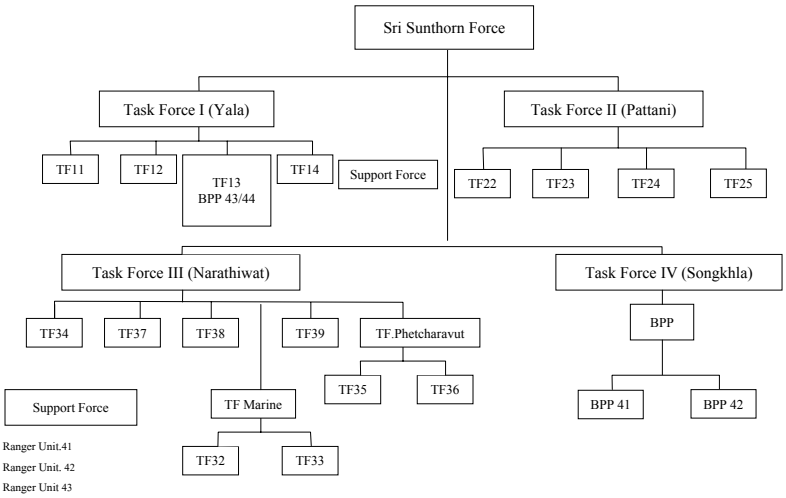

Figure 3-1 Sri Sunthorn Task Force

The Sri Sunthorn Task Force oversees the operation of some 14,000 soldiers stationed throughout the three southernmost provinces and four districts of Songkhla. The force was led by Major General Samret and tasked to patrol the area, gather intelligence, and provide security to civilians, particularly teachers and monks. The force consists of security officials from the army, navy, paramilitary rangers, and Border Patrol Police. It divides the area of responsibility into four task forces: Task Force I is in charge of Yala, Task Force II Pattani, Task Force III Narathiwat, and Task Force IV the Chana, Thepha, Na Thawi and Saba Yoi districts of Songkhla. Each task force breaks down into smaller units called by a two-digit number, for example, Task Force11 (TF11). There are a total of twenty-seven units in all four task forces. The army oversees most of the violence-plagued zone. Its manpower is largely transferred from the northeast and central region and works on a one-year rotation.[9] Five districts in Narathiwat—namely Mueang, Yi-ngo, Bacho, Si Sakhon, and Rueso—are under the navy's responsibility. Four districts in Songkhla are under Border Patrol Police unit 43. And the Yala districts of Ka Bang and Yaha are under Border Patrol Police unit 44.[10] The navy, which has some 3,000 troops in the area, has its base in Narathiwat because the province is adjacent to the sea. The Border Patrol Police, which has about 2,000 police officers in the region, has bases in Songkhla and Yala.

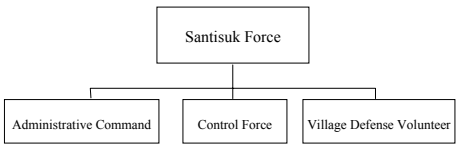

Figure 3-2 Santisuk Task Force

Santisuk Task Force, which consists of some one thousand soldiers from the Special Warfare Unit, focuses on the hearts and minds campaign.[11] Lieutenant General Malai Kiewthiang, who led the force in 2006–7, said that while the regular force is trained to "fight and kill," the Special Warfare Unit is trained to carry out psychological warfare and to work with the people. A unit of twelve soldiers is dispatched to one village to familiarize themselves with villagers, learn their thinking, and convince them to join the government sponsored village defense volunteers project. There are two major groups of village defense volunteers; *Chut raksa muban (Cho Ror Bor)* organized by the Interior Ministry and *Asasamak raksa muban (Or Ror Bor)* organized by the royal aide-de-camp under the support of Queen Sirikit. The latter is a predominantly Buddhist self-defense organization. Each 12-member unit is divided into three groups. The first is a "special force unit" which focuses on gathering intelligence and organizing villagers; the second specializes in psychological warfare; and the third is a strike force. Santisuk Task Force has no permanent force in the south, and soldiers from the unit based in the central province of Lopburi take turns to rotate to the region.

Apart from the Sri Sunthorn and Santisuk Task Forces, there is a supporting force of some 5,000 paramilitary rangers (*thahan pran*) who are permanently stationed in the area. The rangers are mainly involved in gathering information and carrying out search and arrest. Half of the rangers are newly recruited from local Buddhists and Muslims who began work in early 2007. The majority of new rangers are Buddhists, some of whom have had family members killed by suspected insurgents and harbor a sense of anger and revenge. The numbers of ranger units increased from three to seven; these are *Tho Pho* 41 to 47. Each unit is led by a career soldier as commander. The ranger force was set up in 1978 during the period when Thailand battled against the communists, particularly along the Cambodian border.[12] The military has recruited new rangers to help gather intelligence, and some of these rangers are those who have had relatives killed by suspected insurgents.[13] Rangers have a higher tendency to commit human rights violations than career soldiers because they receive much less professional training. Rangers are required to complete at least lower secondary school, and be adept at working in a jungle environment or capable of gathering intelligence.[14] The army employs new rangers because it needs personnel who are familiar with the geography and culture of local people, unlike soldiers from outside the region. General Sonthi Boonyaratglin had a policy to set up thirty additional ranger regiments, which would have roughly doubled the current complement of three thousand rangers. The project was approved after General Sonthi successfully led a coup to oust prime minister Thaksin on 19 September 2006. Problems with paramilitary rangers are covered below.

The military regularly rotates soldiers to work in the violence-plagued south because of manpower shortage. The troops receive training on Muslim culture before being dispatched to the south on a one-year basis. The continuous rotation disrupts the continuity and effectiveness of operations. Another factor which affects the effectiveness of military operations is the use of conscript soldiers for about 60 per cent of the overall force. Although this is a standard practice, it can have severe ramifications in a politically sensitive area. Conscript soldiers, who serve for two years, have a low level of maturity and may conduct themselves inappropriately. A case in point concerns conscript soldiers who were sexually involved with Muslim girls and sparked anger among their family members and neighbors.

The government approved the establishment of the Fifteenth Infantry in February 2005 because it foresaw that the conflict was likely to continue for decades. It will take three years for the Fifteenth Infantry to be fully established, when it will consist of about 13,000 soldiers. The army plans to recruit 60 per cent of each year's intake of conscript soldiers for this division among local Muslims in a bid to win loyalty from the localities. Lieutenant General Samret said, "if they are with us, their relatives will also be with us."[15] It is expected that the rotation of soldiers will be significantly reduced after the Fifteenth Infantry is completely set up. Ideally, all military officers in the region would be permanent, but in reality that is unachievable because it would require a sacrifice for all the family members to migrate there and would be costly to provide housing. Career soldiers who are recruited for the Fifteenth Infantry are required to stay for at least three years. The army is screening recruits carefully to avoid those with problematic behavior such as addiction to alcohol or heavy debts, as such recruits have a high tendency to create problems with villagers.[16]

The army has issued "ten commandments" for soldiers working on the ground as a guideline to win the hearts and minds of local people.[17]

1. Soldiers must not act as if they are the people's boss and they should treat people with politeness.
2. Soldiers should not take advantage from villagers. If they want anything, they should buy it.
3. Soldiers should not engage in premarital sex.
4. Soldiers should not drink alcohol when they are working.
5. Soldiers should not abuse their power or violate laws.
6. Soldiers should not use impolite words and look down on people.
7. Soldiers should not neglect to help people.
8. Soldiers should uphold good morality.
9. Soldiers should not do anything against people's culture, beliefs, and religion.
10. Soldiers should not discriminate against anyone on racial grounds and should respect human dignity.

It is difficult to gauge how many soldiers uphold these ten commandants. Major General Samret said that the army had taken disciplinary action against only a few soldiers since he became the Sri Sunthorn Task Force commander. Disciplinary actions range from warning through detention or deduction of salary to transfer of the person out of the region. Major General Samret said that there seem to be few opportunities for soldiers to behave inappropriately in the south. They dare not drink alcohol in the restaurants because they are afraid of bombings.[18]

Structure of police operation in the south

In interviews, lawyers, journalists and local people claim that police are more prone to human rights violation than soldiers, partly because their job has to deal directly with people. They carry out arrests, interrogations, and prosecutions. Many local Muslims have a negative perception of the police, and some believe that the police might have a

hand in abductions and murders of Muslim leaders. A high-profile case was the 1954 disappearance of Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir, a prominent cleric who led the "Patani People's Movement" to demand autonomy for the Muslim-dominated southern region. He was imprisoned for almost five years for that campaign and later mysteriously disappeared, reportedly drowned by the Thai police. The deep-seated mistrust was manifested in the "ninja bandit incident" in 2003. Villagers beat two Border Patrol Police officers to death because they believed that the police disguised themselves in order to assassinate Muslim leaders in the village. A recent case is the disappearance of a prominent Muslim lawyer Somchai Neelapaichit on 12 March 2004. Somchai was known to have defended several suspected Muslim insurgents over decades. A mid-level police officer is the only person who has been penalized for taking part in the abduction but the culprits, whom some believe are high-ranking police officers, are still at large.[19]

After the army depot raid in January 2004, the National Police Bureau established a Forward Command based in Yala. Police Major General Woraphong Siewpricha, who was the Command's deputy commander for investigation in 2006, said that it was ideology that underlines the instigation of violence and therefore the government has to change the thinking of those joining the insurgency. This will require changes in the behavior of government officials because many problems were a result of past injustice. Respect for human rights is therefore an integral part of the battle to win the hearts and minds of local Muslims.[20]

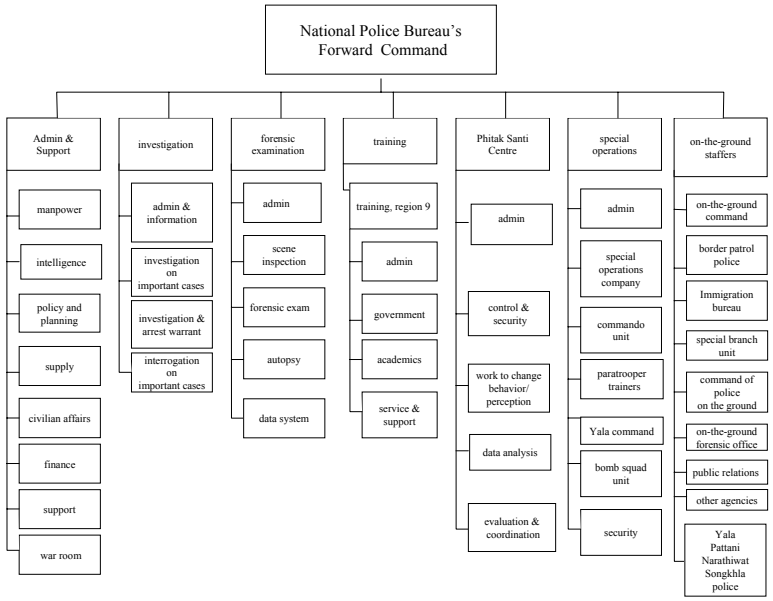

Figure 3-3 National Police Bureau's Forward Command

There are about 10,000 police officers in the violence-wracked south. About two or three hundred police are based in the Command's office in Yala's Mueang District and the

rest are stationed in police stations throughout the region. There has been shortage of manpower because the workload increased after the 4 January raid on the army depot. Besides, more police officials have been transferred out of the region than those moving in. In Yala, only 2,300 out of 3,300 posts were filled. In the 2004 fiscal year, there were 119 police officers transferred out but only nineteen moved in.[21] In Pattani, only 2,581 out of 3,023 positions were filled.[22] There was an attempt to alleviate problems of manpower shortage by bringing in 2,000 police from sixty-one provinces as a special operations unit.[23] The unit was withdrawn in December 2005 after completing a one-year rotation, and replaced by a thousand Border Patrol Police.

In an effort to reduce the shortage of manpower, the National Police Bureau also recruited 1,170 non-commissioned police officers to work in the southernmost region. The newly recruited police officers are affiliated to the Ninth Region which oversees the seven southernmost provinces, namely Songkhla, Satun, Trang, Phatthalung, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. The application was opened to all Thais and there was no special quota for local people from the southernmost provinces. The new officers received one year of training, including a course on "way of life, language, and culture of southern Muslims." However, there was no particular course on human rights. The new officials began their work in the southernmost provinces in 2007 and are required to stay in the region for at least five years before being allowed to transfer to other provinces.[24] New police recruits are normally allocated to all nine regions. However, all police officers recruited in the 2005 fiscal year were allocated to the Ninth Region because of the urgent need for manpower.[25] This recruitment process has a good prospect for improving the quality of police officers because the recruits are likely to be more prepared and willing to work in the region, unlike in the past when police were sent to the region as a punishment or because they were unable to get other posts which were more competitive. Moreover, the fact that they will stay for at least five years should mean more continuity in their work.

Shortage of manpower is not the only problem. Police on the ground are also slack, inefficient, and sometimes have little understanding of the government's overall policies on tackling the insurgency. When the author walked into the office of the police's Forward Command, there was a banner posted on a wall saying "the enemy is not that strong, but we ourselves are weak." Since late 2005, the National Police Bureau has provided anti-terrorism training to strengthen the police force in the deep south. Normally, police are not trained to fight with guerrillas in unconventional warfare but are trained to deal with ordinary criminal cases in peaceful situations.[26] Therefore, it is necessary to give them anti-terrorism training and to teach them how to win the hearts and minds of the population. Major General Woraphong said that it was important to "tune the thinking of high-ranking and low-ranking officials," because police on the ground sometimes misinterpret the policies of their supervisors.

Police are aware that misconduct and human rights abuse are key problems that cause deep-seated mistrust and hatred towards them among local Muslims. Senior police insisted that silent abductions and killings, which were done by officials in the past, have "ended." However, villagers believe otherwise. Some think that the practices have continued in a different form—disguised as ordinary daily shootings and blamed them on Muslim insurgents. Some suspect that Buddhist self-defense groups, such as the *Ruam Thai* group,[27] might turn themselves into vigilantes and take justice into their own hands by executing Muslims to retaliate against the killing of their co-religionists by suspected

Muslim insurgents. However, senior official like Major General Woraphong denied such allegations. He said "one policeman wanted to take revenge for his colleagues and asked me if I wanted him to do it. I told him that we are doing our duty. If he dies, we should accept it. It will never end, if we shoot back. Instead, we should think about what to do in order to earn love and respect (from the people)." However, Major General Woraphong accepted that some police are still responsible for misconduct such as extortion, though he had explained to his men the dangers this might cause. Villagers will not protect policemen if insurgents want to harm them. By contrast, insurgents will lose mass support if they kill officials who are loved and respected by villagers. The Bureau penalizes inefficient officials by transferring them to the Forward Command but there is no policy to move them out of the region. The Bureau also provides incentives to attract capable officials to work in the violence-plagued region by increasing per diem and promotion opportunities.[28]

In this section I have discussed the structure of operations and recruitment process of security officials and would like to draw the following conclusions. First, there is a general understanding among military and police that military solutions and heavy-handed tactics cannot end the violent insurgency. The fact that several military and police officials who had experience dealing with communists during the Cold War have been chosen to lead the security operation in the south suggests that the government realizes that this war can only be won by winning the hearts and minds of local Muslims. Human rights protection is at the heart of such an effort. This fact should discourage human rights violation on the part of the government. However, the problem lies in the translation of policy into practice. Some officials on the ground still believe that respect for human rights is an obstacle to the crackdown on insurgents.

Second, the rotation of army officials on a one-year basis has negative effects on the continuity and effectiveness of security operations. There is virtually no screening process for soldiers rotated from other regions, and there is no information about their human rights records. However, this problem should be reduced to some extent after the establishment of the Fifteenth Infantry Division is completed in 2009. On the part of the police, the recruitment of some one thousand non-commissioned officers holds a good prospect for improvement in the respect for human rights because the new officials have more willingness to work in the south than those in the past who mostly did not choose to be posted there. The five-year period of their stay should improve the continuity and quality of their work. The offer of incentives should also attract more capable security officials to work in the region.

The Emergency Decree and human rights violations

It is not only the inappropriate behavior of individuals that causes human rights abuse. The problem lies in the very structure of the state. In other words, laws and government policies provide the framework which allows officials to carry out acts that violate human rights. After the 4 January raid on the Narathiwat Rachanakarin depot, the military declared martial law in the three southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat in order to provide a legal framework for the army to carry out its duty. Under martial law, the military is allowed to conduct searches without warrants and detain suspects without charges for seven days, renewable to a maximum of fourteen days.

Because different agencies operate under different laws, officials on the ground urged the government to harmonize several laws related to government's operations in the south in order to prevent confusion. The government of Thaksin Shinawatra, therefore, promulgated an "Executive Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations" on 19 July 2005 to replace the martial law imposed in the three southernmost provinces.[29] The provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat were declared "an area of serious emergency." There were widespread criticisms after the government imposed the state of serious emergency in the south. The law was deemed to give sweeping power to the government. Officials are allowed to make arrests with court consent,[30] and detain people in a place other than prison for seven days, extendable for a maximum period of thirty days.[31] Officials can call suspected persons for questioning.[32] The government can censor news, and bar the printing or sale of media items which could cause misunderstanding or undermine national security and the public peace.[33] The decree also allows officials to tap phones and search documents "to stop serious incidents."[34] These sections directly undermine the people's rights to communicate and express their opinions as stipulated in the constitution. Besides, this law also exempts officials from any civil, criminal, and disciplinary penalties "if such act was performed in good faith, non-discriminatory, and was not unreasonable in the circumstances or did not exceed the extent of necessity."[35] This clause was included at the request of officials on the ground because they are afraid of being penalized for carrying out acts in the line of duty.[36] The concern had increased after three high-ranking military officials were transferred following the Tak Bai incident which resulted in the death of eighty-five protesters. Anand Panyarachun, chairman of the government-sponsored National Reconciliation Commission, expressed concern that the imposition of the Emergency Decree, which he called "a license to kill," would exacerbate the situation.[37]

There have been several cases of human rights violation, mostly related to arrest and detention of suspected Muslim insurgents. In order to understand these operations, I will briefly explain how the security forces classify insurgents based on their level of involvement.

Group I, suspected persons with arrest warrant, includes those for whom the authorities have solid evidence of being involved in shootings, bombings, or arson attacks. They will be dealt with by the police in accordance with the criminal law.

Group II, suspected persons without arrest warrant, includes those whom the authorities strongly suspect of being involved in shootings, bombings or arson attacks but have no solid evidence to apply for an arrest warrant. The military deals with this group using section 11(1) of the Emergency Decree. In practice, a district chief, a police officer of colonel rank, and a military officer of lieutenant-colonel rank heading a provincial task force need to agree among themselves before requesting a warrant from the court. This is designed to create a check-and-balance system to prevent officials from abusing their power and filing groundless charges. Suspects are detained and interrogated either in Ingkhayuth-Borihan military camp or the National Police Bureau's Forward Command in Yala. They may be sent for re-education under the "Peace Building School" project operated by the military.[38]

Group III, rank and file members, includes those who have secondary and non-criminal roles, such as throwing metal spikes on roads, distributing leaflets, mobilizing mass support, or finding financial support. According to section 11(2) of the Emergency

Decree, the authorities can call them in for questioning by issuing a "warrant for questioning." This requires approval by police, military and interior officials, as in the case of Group II. This group may also be sent for re-education.

Group IV, sympathizers, are those who support the insurgents but have taken no part in the movement. They may have become involved because they have been pressured by the insurgents. The authorities invite them, in some case with the consent of their parents, to attend classes in the Peace Building School.[39]

The detention guidelines of the Southern Border Provinces Peace-Building Command state that "officials must carry out searches with sensitivity and uphold the rule of law. They should try their utmost not to cause any problems for innocent people. They should be particularly sensitive to religious beliefs and local culture, and try to build unity among people of all religions." Relatives can visit suspected persons in Group II and III three days after the arrest. The visiting hours are 9.00–10.00 am. and 2.30–3.30 pm. and a maximum of 30 minutes per day. The authorities may file charges against the suspected persons if the evidence is solid, or send them for re-education for at least ten days.[40]

Security operations under this framework create problems of human rights violations which I would like to discuss as follows.

1. The arrest of suspects in Groups II and III under the provision of the Emergency Decree has been carried out on the basis of weak evidence. A case in point is the arrest of nineteen Muslim teachers of Thammawittaya Mulniti private Islamic school in Yala on 25–6 March 2006. The teachers were arrested after they traveled to Sam Island in Satun province for a seminar. They were accused of plotting to instigate violent attacks. Their lawyers submitted a petition to the provincial court calling for the teachers to be released as the accusation was groundless. After fourteen days in detention, the court ordered their release.[41] Lieutenant General Ongkorn Thongprasom, the Fourth Army commander, told reporters that

> … it was doubtful why they have to hold a meeting there since there is nobody living on that island. And Satun is a route to go to Aceh which security force and marine police have long been keeping an eye on. So, they deserve to be arrested. Besides, Thammawittaya (Mulniti) School is on the watch list of schools involved in the insurgency. The school's former headmaster was Sapae-ing Baso, and the police has set an award of 10 million Baht for any tip-off that lead to his arrest. He has an arrest warrant and is believed to have fled to Malaysia. However, there is no solid evidence and the school (teachers) insist that they held a meeting to plan their teaching. We have to let them go because we don't want to create problems.[42]

This case shows that police arrested the teachers without having any solid evidence. Although the police's action came under the provisions of the Emergency Decree, it caused outrage among southern Muslims for unfair treatment by the security forces.

The "blacklist" system can also be counterproductive. Each security unit treats its blacklist as confidential and normally will not share the list with other government agencies. Hence, there are loopholes and inaccuracies in the blacklist because of the lack of cross-checking among agencies. The blacklist then becomes a convenient tool for retaliation. Those who want to taint their enemies' reputation can simply supply misinformation that such persons have taken part in the violent insurgency. People who are arrested and released may face difficulties in living in their home village because

neighbors view them as a possible government spies. In the case of religious leaders, arrest may mean very serious embarrassment.

The tactic of pressuring suspected insurgents to surrender to the authorities can have negative consequences. Security officials threaten to issue arrest warrants for those refusing to obey invitations to meet with the authorities or be summoned for questioning. If someone persistently resists such summonses, they may be upgraded from Group IV to Group III or Group II. Such tactics force some Muslims to flee and seek refuge with their relatives in the neighboring country of Malaysia. A case in point is the 131 Muslims who fled to Malaysia in August 2005 and have not returned to their homeland (as of February 2008), citing concern for their safety. If more Muslims flee to Malaysia, it will exacerbate bilateral problems between Thailand and Malaysia.

2. The security forces conduct searches and arrests with heavy-handedness and do not abide by the law. In some instances, officials round up suspected insurgents without arrest warrants. A case in point is the arrest of Ama Sueme on 17 September 2005 while he was riding a motorcycle to pick up his wife in Pattani's Mae Lan district. The police who approached him only had a copy of his identity card.[43] Moreover, there are cases in which the security forces detain suspected insurgents longer than thirty days, the maximum period of detention without charges allowed under the Emergency Decree. A military official in Narathiwat held a suspect for more than the maximum period because he was afraid that the person would return to the area to stage violent attacks.[44]

3. Suspected persons arrested under the provision of the Emergency Decree are denied access to lawyers—a basic right of the accused. Detainees in Group II and III are not allowed to have lawyers because the authorities claim that they are not "charged suspects" . Shortly after the enactment of the Emergency Decree, the National Reconciliation Commission proposed to government that suspected persons should have access to lawyers within forty-eight hours but the proposal was dismissed. Police Major General Woraphong said that suspected persons have a tendency to confess if they don't have a lawyer. He admitted that such regulations may undermine the suspected persons' rights, but the police are certain that they "round up the right men."[45]

4. Relatives are not allowed to visit suspected persons during the detention period. Police Major General Woraphong said that detainees are generally allowed to meet visitors. However, police made some exceptions if they are concerned that relatives might try to mislead suspected persons into refusing to confess their wrongdoing. He said that if suspected persons are sons of Muslim teachers, they may not be allowed to meet visitors.[46] In some cases, the authorities fail to inform relatives where the suspected persons are held, leaving them wandering around from one police station to another to get this very basic information. Some villagers travel for several hours by public buses only to be told that the visiting time is up and they have to come back on the following day. The traveling cost is a big burden for poor villagers.

5. Police continue to use torture as a method to force suspects into confession. Shortly after the 4 January 2004 raid, police widely used this method to force detainees to confess, partly driven by the pressure from the government for an all-out manhunt.[47] A defendant in the depot raid case testified to the court that police covered his head with a plastic bag, beat him and then shorted his genitals with electrical currents.[48] Muslim lawyers interviewed by the author think that police investigation procedures are generally better than in the past. However, torture of suspects continues to occur. A recent case was

the arrest of Ashari Samaae and four other suspects on 21 July 2007. Security forces arrested five Muslim men from a hut in Yala's Krong Pinang district, claiming that they were members of the "RKK" or military unit of the insurgent movement. Ashari received a severe brain injury and later died at Yala Hospital. Colonel Shinnawat Maendej, commander of Task Force I, explained that the injury was caused by fighting when security forces attempted to arrest him. Medical doctors were unable to perform a brain operation because his identity was unknown at the time and his relatives could not be reached to give consent to the operation—a requirement for brain surgery.[49]

Moreover, the police used other psychological methods to pressure suspected persons into confession, such as turning on bright lights in interrogation rooms around-the-clock, conducting interrogation for extremely long hours, and keeping suspected persons in extremely cold conditions.[50]

6. Government agencies compete with their counterparts to get Muslims who are categorized as Group IV or sympathizers to "report" themselves to the government so as to show the agency's "achievement" in winning the hearts and minds of the Muslims. A villager Masobuelee Jehyae, 37, appealed to the interior minister, Kongsak Wantana, during a ceremony to welcome 137 sympathizers at Yala provincial hall on 10 December 2005, saying that he had been coerced to come. Masoluelee, a resident of Yala's Raman district, said that he recently received a letter inviting him to join this activity and district officials had tried to convince him to come. He said "there is a severe flooding at my house and I have to relocate 5,000 chickens in my farm from the flooded area. I didn't sleep the whole night but the district officials forced me to report myself. I have not done anything wrong. I'm very sad that my name is on the government's blacklist." Other villagers told similar stories. Ma, who goes by one name, said that the district chief of Betong asked him and other villagers to attend a meeting to explain about the Emergency Decree about two months earlier and asked him to sign his name. On 9 December, a sub-district chief showed him a letter and said that he had to report himself at the Yala provincial hall. If he attended the ceremony and the 20-day training, his name would be erased from the list. Ma said, "I was also confused why I have to come because I have not done anything wrong. My house has never been searched and I have never been interrogated. But, the deputy district chief said that I have to come and so I come."[51]

Innocent Muslims, who face similar experiences of finding their names mistakenly included in the blacklists and being forced to report themselves to the government, may feel that they are treated unfairly. It may seem to be a quick and quantifiable achievement to get as many Muslims as possible to report themselves and to show loyalty to the state, but it will be counterproductive in the government's effort to win the hearts and minds of Malay Muslims in the long run.

7. Extrajudicial killing, especially silent abduction and murder, has continued for decades in the southernmost provinces. The state is still unable to clarify several cases of disappearance. A sub-committee to coordinate efforts to trace disappeared people and heal victims of violence in the southernmost provinces calculated that at least twenty-two people had disappeared since 2002.[52] Two were taken away by people wearing official uniforms; three had their house searched prior to their disappearance; three disappeared after going to see officials; three were taken away by unidentified people; and no information was available for eleven others. A recent case was the disappearance of four young Muslims in Pattani's Mueang district on 1 November 2005. One of them had just

been acquitted of the murder of a university student at Prince of Songkhla University at Pattani.[53]

Moreover, there seem to be increasing numbers of silent killing of suspected insurgents, despite the government's denial. It is a tedious and time-consuming process to gather evidence to prove someone's guilt in the court, and some officials choose the kangaroo court instead. Information from military officials and journalists suggest that those on the blacklists have been executed in circumstances similar to daily shootings for which no culprits are found. There are suspicions that those carrying out such acts are low-ranking officials or semi-officials such as paramilitary rangers.

Paramilitary rangers have been notorious for being state-sponsored killers in the southernmost region before the 4 January raid. They are paid by the numbers of "heads" that they execute.[54] Only a handful of their immediate colleagues are informed. In some instances, the ranger unit's commander might issue an order to "get rid of" people who are believed to be insurgent leaders but for whom there is no solid evidence to prosecute. A deputy commander of a ranger unit said in interview that extrajudicial killings occurred after the raid of 4 January 2004. However, the trend seemed to decline because superior officers were not willing to take responsibility or protect their subordinates for carrying out unlawful acts.[55] However, some human rights observers think otherwise.

There are concerns that emerging armed self-defense groups sponsored by the government may turn themselves into vigilante groups and take justice into their own hands. There is a fear that communal violence might break out if the situation continues to exacerbate. Several government agencies began to arm and mobilize civilian forces, particularly among the Buddhist minority, including *Chut raksa muban (Cho Ror Bor)* under the Interior Ministry and *Asasamak raksa muban (Or Ror Bor)* under the royal aid-de-camp. There is also a predominantly Buddhist self-defense group called *Ruam Thai*, which is supported by Police Colonel Phitak Eadkiew. The military believes the *Ruam Thai* group might have been behind shootings of Muslims, although Colonel Phitak insists that he only trained Buddhists to use guns for self-defense and to be the eyes and ears of the authorities. He did not encourage them to shoot innocent Muslims.[56] A young Buddhist who joined the *Ruam Thai* group said that "police told me that if you think that any person is an insurgent, (you) just shoot him. And they will try to help me escape any penalties."[57] Colonel Phitak was accused of malfeasance and ordered to be transferred out of the region in June 2007. However, the order was abruptly halted after hundreds of Buddhists staged a protest against the transfer. He was finally transferred to an insurgency-free district in Songkhla in the 2007 annual reshuffle in November. Allegations of state-sponsored killing have been used by insurgents to wage propaganda warfare and sow seeds of hatred against the Thai government. Incidents include the killing of three Muslim teachers during an evening praying in Pattani,[58] the assassination of an *imam* in Lahan village,[59] the killing of two Muslims in Tanyonglimo village,[60] and the slaughter of nine Awaebuesa family members in Kathong village in Narathiwat.[61] It is sometimes difficult to prove whether such allegations have any grounds. However, it is vital for security forces to try their utmost to ensure that no official commits any unlawful acts in order to prevent insurgents from exploiting such mistakes in their political propaganda.

Conclusion

The interim government of Surayud Chulanont (October 2006 to January 2008) publicly stated that the authorities will strictly uphold the rule of law in dealing with Muslim insurgency, and vowed not to use heavy-handed methods to crack down on insurgents, as did the Thaksin government. Although the policy reversal won a great deal of praise, it has not been effectively translated into practice. Human rights violation has continued, including disappearance, torture, and state-sponsored silent killings. It is a positive step for the government to have set up a committee to investigate some of these cases. However, the investigation should be carried out with transparency and efficiency, and the results should be made public. This will help build confidence in government among southern Muslims in the long run.

There will be an increase in the proportion of the security forces who are permanently in place rather than subject to rotation. This is a positive development that will help increase continuity and improve efficiency in the security forces' operations, and enable officials to learn more about the culture and beliefs of local Muslims. The recruitment process for the security forces holds out good prospects for getting better-quality officials to work in the violence-plagued zones, unlike in the past when most officials did not choose to work there or were sent there as a punishment. The policy to find 60 per cent of conscripts each year among local Muslims will allow the military to be more acquainted with local people. The security forces have learned that this war cannot be won by force but by winning the hearts and minds of southern Muslims who have long felt alienated from Thai society.

The legal framework under the Emergency Decree violates the rights of the accused. The Decree allows the security forces to hold suspected persons without charge for up to thirty days during which time they are denied access to lawyer. Moreover, the government is inclined to enact more draconian laws to deal with the security threat. The Internal Security Act was passed in December 2007, a few days before the military-installed interim parliament was dissolved, despite strong public criticism. The law grants more power to the military to control security matters in the country.

The government's inability to curtail violence, the delay of judicial process, and the heightened tension between Buddhists and Muslims accumulated over the past four years has the potential to lead to all-out communal violence. Many might opt for summary processes to settle conflicts rather than awaiting court verdicts. The emergence of Buddhist vigilantes and allegations of tit-for-tat killings is a worrying trend. If the situation worsens to the point that it becomes a war of "an eye for an eye", human rights may mean nothing more than who is fastest on the trigger.

Endnotes

[1] Surachart Bumrungsuk, *Nawatthakam khwam mankhong: rabob ngan khwam mankhong mai khong thai* (Innovation in Security: New Security System in Thailand), (Bangkok: Animate Group, 2004), pp. 23–4.

[2] I have obtained such information from personal communication with several academics and Muslim politicians. General Panlop Pinmanee, former deputy commander of the Internal Security

Operations Command, said in an interview with *Matichon* daily (12 November 2006) that "the prime minister [Thaksin Shinawatra] asked Sant [Sarutanond, police chief] how many insurgents are left. Sant said that there were about fifteen to sixteen people. The prime minister gave Sant a hand signal and said that's easy. After that, Sant dispatched 'killer' police Major General Kamronwit Thupkrajang to the south and that's why problems are happening nowadays."

[3] Author's interview with Kitti Kitichokwattana, former SBPAC deputy director in charge of security affairs and former Yala governor, 4 November 2006.

[4] The interim government of prime minister Surayud Chulanont, which took office after a military coup which ousted Thaksin Shinawatra, made significant changes in the structure of government agencies handling problems in the southernmost provinces. He revived the SBPAC and CPM43, which were dissolved by Thaksin. He empowered the Internal Security Operations Command, which was a key counter-insurgency organization during the Cold War era. The ISOC oversees overall policies towards the deep south. Surayud dissolved the SBPPBC. I do not discuss the new structure because there is no clear detail at the time of writing.

[5] Interview with Colonel Chawalit Srisilphanan, deputy commander of the Sri Sunthorn Task Force, on 28 December 2005. Colonel Chawalit is also from the Special Warfare Unit.

[6] Interview with Colonel Akara Thiprot, army spokesman, 26 December 2005.

[7] Interview with Colonel Chawalit Srisilphanan, 28 December 2005.

[8] Interview with Colonel Akara Thiprot, 26 December 2005.

[9] The army does not use troops from the Third Army which is in charge of the north because it is overwhelmed with work to crack down on drug trafficking along the Thai-Myanmar border.

[10] There are three units of Border Patrol Police in charge of the south. First, BPP 43 is in charge of Songkhla, Phatthalung, Trang, and Satun and therefore is responsible for the four violence-ravaged districts in Songkhla. BPP 43 has mobilized some 1,500 police to work in the four restive districts. The second is BPP 44 unit which comprises some 800 men and is in charge of Yaha and Kabang districts. The last consisting of some 1,000 police has replaced the National Police Bureau's special operation unit which completed their one-year rotation. Interview with Police Colonel Somphong Khonkaen, TF 4 commander, 29 December 2005.

[11] Interview with Lieutenant-General Malai Kiewthiang, commander of Santisuk Task Force between October 2005 and April 2006.

[12] See http://www.geocities.com/taharnpran4/history.htm.

[13] Interview with Colonel Somchat Premchit, commander of the Forty-third Ranger Regiment, 30 December 2005.

[14] Interview with Colonel Somchat Premchit, 30 December 2005.

[15] Interview with Major General Samret Srirai, commander of the Sri Sunthorn Task Force, 20 April 2006.

[16] Interview with Major General Samret Srirai by telephone, 14 October 2006.

[17] *The Bangkok Post*'s military beat reporter Wassana Nanuam wrote in her book that it was General Surayud Chulanont who issued the ten commandments when he was supreme commander. See Wassana Nanuam, *Saen thang lek: phon aek surayud chulanont chak luk communit su pho bo tho bo* (Path of Iron: General Surayud Chulanont from the son of a communist to army commander) (Bangkok: Matichon, 2004), p. 151.

[18] Interview with Major General Samret Srirai, 20 April 2006.

[19] Somchai was taken into a car by several men, including plainclothes police, on a road in Bangkok. Nobody has seen him since. He disappeared after submitting a letter to the Interior Ministry, the National Human Rights Commission and other government agencies to call for investigations on police torture. He accused police officers of torturing five suspected Muslim insurgents alleged to have been involved in the depot raid on 4 January 2004. He wrote that police used electric shocks on

the suspects' sexual organs, covered their heads with plastic bags, and poured urine into their mouths. Five police officers were arrested in connection with Somchai's disappearance and charged with illegal detention and robbery. The Criminal Court sentenced Police Major Nguen Thongsuk to three years in prison. He was found to have forced Somchai into the car. Four others were acquitted for lacking of evidence. The Department of Special Investigations resumed the investigation but there has been no tangible progress. Thaksin Shinawatra told reporters shortly after the court ruling that there was solid evidence to believe that Somchai was dead.

[20] Interview with Police Major General Woraphong Siewpricha on 21 April 2006. He was later transferred out of the region and became the commander of the Seventh Region overseeing the upper south.

[21] Interview with Yala police commissioner Major General Paithoon Chuchaiya, 26 December 2005

[22] Interview with Pattani police commissioner Major General Kokiat Wongworachat, 28 December 2005.

[23] There is one Special Operations Unit in each province, in charge of providing help in case of emergency. There are twelve police officers in one squad and three squads in one platoon. The Unit has been trained for anti-terrorist operations.

[24] Announcement of the Ninth Region on the recruitment of non-commissioned officers in 2006.

[25] Interview with Police Colonel Noppadol Pueksomon, who was in charge of the Ninth Region's manpower management, on 14 May 2006. He later became deputy police commissioner in Narathiwat. He was transferred back to the Ninth Region's office and became deputy commissioner after he was seriously injured and lost one leg in a bombing.

[26] Interview with Police Colonel Noppadol Pueksomon, 14 May 2006.

[27] The *Ruam Thai* (Thai unity) group was set up in late 2005 by Police Colonel Phitak Eadkiew, superintendent for investigation in Yala. Phitak said that he set up the self-defense group to enable local people to assist police in maintaining security. I discuss his activities later in more details.

[28] Interview with Police Major General Woraphong Siewpricha, 21 April 2006.

[29] After the army commander, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, led a military coup to depose Thaksin Shinawatra on 19 September 2006, martial law was imposed throughout the country. Both martial law and the Emergency Decree have been used concurrently in the violence-plagued south. Although the military-installed interim government lifted martial law in most parts of the country, it remained in effect in the three southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat and five districts in Songkhla even after a civilian government was installed (as of February 2008). This article focuses on the period before martial law was imposed after the coup.

[30] Under Section 11 (1), the prime minister has the power "to issue a Notification that a competent official shall have the power of arrest and detention over persons suspected of having a role in causing the emergency situation, or being an instigator, a propagator, a supporter of such act or concealing relevant information relating to the act which caused the emergency situation, provided that this should be done to the extent that is necessary to prevent such person from committing an act or participating in the commission of any act which may cause a serious situation or to foster cooperation in the termination of the serious situation."

[31] Section 12: "In arresting and taking suspected persons into custody under section 11(1), the competent official shall apply for leave of a court of competent jurisdiction or the Criminal Court. Upon obtaining leave of the court, the competent official shall be empowered to arrest and take the suspected persons into custody for a period not exceeding seven days. The suspected persons shall be taken into custody at a designated place which is not a police station, detention centre, penal institution or prisons and shall not be treated as a convict. In case where it is necessary to continue the detention in order to remedy the emergency situation, the competent official shall apply for the leave of the court to extend such detention period by seven days at a time, provided that the total period

shall not exceed thirty days. Upon the expiration of such period, if the detention is still required, the competent official shall proceed under the Criminal Procedure Code."

[32] Under Section 11 (2), the prime minister has the power "to issue a Notification that a competent official shall have the power to summon any person to report to the competent official or to give an oral statement or submit any documents or evidence relating to the emergency situation."

[33] Under Section 9 (3), the prime minister has the power to issue regulations "to prohibit the press release, distribution or dissemination of letters, publications or any means of communication containing texts which may instigate fear amongst the people or is intended to distort information which misleads understanding of the emergency situation to the extent of affecting the security of state or public order or good moral of the people both in the area or locality where an emergency situation has been declared or the entire Kingdom."

[34] Under Section 11 (5), the prime minister has the power "to issue a Notification that a competent official shall have the power to issue an order to inspect letters, books, printed matters, telegraphic transmissions, telephone communications or any other means of communication as well as to cancel or suspend any contact or communication in order to prevent or terminate the serious incident provided that the rules prescribed in the law on special investigation are complied with mutatis mutandis."

[35] Section 17: "A competent official and a person having identical powers and duties as a competent official under this Emergency Decree shall not be subject to civil, criminal or disciplinary liabilities arising from the performance of functions for the termination or prevention of an illegal act if such act was performed in good faith, non-discriminatory, and was not unreasonable in the circumstances or exceed[ed] the extent of necessity, but [this] does not preclude the right of a victim to seek compensation from a government agency under the law on liability for wrongful act of officials."

[36] Deputy prime minister Wisanu Krua-ngam in a press conference on 19 July 2005.

[37] The National Reconciliation Commission was set up by the government of Thaksin Shinawatra to lay out long-term strategies to quell violence in the south. Anand made this remark on a televised discussion with Thaksin on how to tackle violence in the south, 28 July 2005.

[38] The Peace Building School re-educates suspects in Group II, III and IV on "how to live in a democratic society which has the king as the head of the state." The training is organized not in the three southernmost provinces but other areas, including Bangkok and Lopburi (where the Special Warfare Unit is located). Concern has been raised how much this re-education is useful for changing the minds of young militant Muslims.

[39] See 'Guidelines on how to handle target groups according to the Emergency Decree,' a document of the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command.

[40] 'Guidelines of the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command on government operations in accordance with section 11 of the Emergency Decree,' 12 August 2005.

[41] Interview with Adilan Ali Ishak of the Society of Muslim Lawyers, 21 April 2006.

[42] See 'Reflection on the Emergency Decree as seen through the arrest of 19 Thammawittaya Ustazs,' in Isara News Agency, www.tjanews.org, 19 April 2006.

[43] Information made available from Pornphen Kongkachornkiet, a staffer of Amnesty International who visited a prison in Pattani on 13 December 2005.

[44] Colonel Surasak Kanchanarat, deputy chief of the army's Civilian Affairs Department, said during a conference on the Peace Building School project, 26 April 2006.

[45] Interview with Police Major General Woraphong Siewpricha, 21 April 2006.

[46] Interview with Police Major General Woraphong Siewpricha, 21 April 2006.

[47] Interview with several lawyers defending suspects in security-related cases.

[48] Makata Harong, one of the five suspects in the depot raid case, testified to the court that police

arrested him and covered his head with a plastic bag for two days. He found himself at the Narathiwat airport when police took off the bag. The five suspects were flown to the Bangkok Remand Prison. Police brought a document for him to sign in the prison, which he did without reading. He was blindfolded, beaten, and shorted with electrical current at his genitals. Another suspect, Sukri Maming, said that four officials tried to convince him to confess that he had stolen the weapons and been involved in school arson. While he was denying the charges, they shorted his genitals with electrical current, blindfolded him, hit his head with a chair, and pouring urine into his mouth. Somchai Neelaphaichit, their lawyer, wrote an appeal to the Interior Ministry and other relevant government agencies. Somchai disappeared shortly after he submitted the petition. The Criminal Court later acquitted the five Muslim suspects.

[49] Interview with Colonel Shinnawat Maendej by telephone, 28 July 2007.

[50] Interview with Adilan Ali Ishak of the Society of Muslim Lawyers, 21 April 2006.

[51] "News which has not been announced to the press about those who have reported themselves to help build peace," Isara News Agency, www.tjanews.org, 10 December 2005.

[52] This subcommittee is under the committee to oversee policy and manage the healing of victims of violence in the southernmost provinces which was established by the prime minister's order dated 3 May 2005. The committee was headed by deputy prime minister Chaturon Chaisaeng.

[53] Document of the committee to oversee policy and manage the healing of victims of violence in the southernmost provinces, dated 11 May 2006.

[54] Interview of a paramilitary ranger who was involved in five killings and murdered fourteen suspected insurgents in the late 1990s by local journalists in November 2005, made available to the author.

[55] Interview with deputy commander of a ranger unit, who wanted his name to be withheld, 23 April 2006.

[56] Interview with Colonel Phitak Eadkiew, 21 April 2006.

[57] Interview with a *Ruam Thai* member, who wanted his name to be withheld, 29 October 2006.

[58] Three religious teachers were shot dead during evening prayers in Pattani on 20 July 2005, a day after the Emergency Decree was promulgated. One of the slain teachers was Riduan Waemanor, a graduate from Ramkhamhaeng University and a son of the headmaster of Jihad Wittaya private Islamic school. The school was closed down after it was raided by security forces and alleged to be an armed training ground for insurgents. Riduan's father fled because he was accused of being a key insurgent leader. There were suspicions that the three might have been killed by security forces because they were shot by a gun fitted with a silencer. It was unlikely that ordinary people would have such a weapon. However, there is no solid proof that the security forces did it.

[59] Satopa Usoh, an *imam* in Lahan village in Narathiwat's Su-ngai Padi, was shot dead on 29 August 2005. According to villagers' accounts, the *imam* was shot by a man in military uniform while he was walking home after the evening prayers. He told his family before he died that a soldier shot him. Villagers blocked the entrance into the village and barred officials from entering. No one outside the village saw the *imam*'s body and the authorities were unable to perform an autopsy because his body was buried within twenty-four hours according to Islamic practice. Although the military denied involvement in the shooting, villagers believed otherwise. This incident partly sparked the flight to Malaysia of 131 Muslims, some of whom told Malaysian media that they feared the security forces would threaten their lives.

[60] The shooting spree at a teashop in Tanyonglimo village in Narathiwat's Ra-ngae district on 21 September 2005 killed two and injured three Muslims. Gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire at the teashop and fled away. Shortly after, police came to investigate the incident, followed by a few plain-clothes marines. As the crowd began to gather, officials felt the danger and immediately fled. Two marines, however, were held hostage overnight and villagers believed that they were involved in the shooting. The authorities held negotiations with villagers on the following day to demand release of

the two marines. The government heeded a call to bring in Malaysian media to witness the release of the two marines. However, the marines were beaten to death under confusing circumstance shortly before the Malaysian media arrived.

[61] On 16 November 2005, Sudeng Awaebuesa and eight family members, including an eight month old baby, were shot dead in their house in the middle of the night in Narathiwat's Ra-ngae district. The military claimed that it was the work of insurgents. However, Malaysia's Berita Harian Newspaper reported, citing a resident in Katong village, that the shooting was carried out by the military. See 'Victims' relatives and Katong villagers go across the border to meet Malaysian media, telling the truth about the family's slaughter,' Isara News Agency, www.tjanews.org, 21 November 2005.

4

The internal culture of military units and its impact on the conflict resolution in Thailand's far south

Col. Pimonpan Ukoskit

The growing insurgency in the three southern provinces since the raid on the Narathiwat armory on 4 January 2004 has serious ramifications for Thailand's national security. Local residents fear for their safety while government officials and public facilities have become prime targets for militants in the separatist insurgency. The continuing violence has clearly disrupted economic activities, divided the community, and undermined the political life and security of the region. In response, the government has been trying every avenue to restore peace and stability. The government has announced major investment and development programs, one of which is a plan to turn the southern region into a center for *halal* food production. Several job creation projects have been launched to increase employment opportunities and household income. On the social front, the traditional educational system has been reorganized, and religious schools integrated into the mainstream. Politically, a number of special administrative bodies have been convened including the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command and the National Reconciliation Commission to encourage political dialogue. At the same time, the army has mobilized a large number of troops to the troubled region to enforce law and order. These measures indicate that the government has adopted a multifaceted approach to tackle the southern insurgency.

Crucially, the army has been a key agent in this effort. Troops are deployed from other localities such as from the First, Second, and Fourth Army Regions. As a result, forces from various units serve in the three southernmost provinces on a rotating basis, with each unit stationed for a year.

The operation of each military unit is directed by the central command. Yet, each unit has its own culture. This chapter investigates whether the variety of cultures of individual military units stationed in the south on a rotating basis affects the efforts to combat the insurgency. What is the military's strategy to defuse the situation in the south? What are the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of the internal cultures of various military units? How might these military cultures affect security operations in the south? How do military units with differing cultures execute their duties?

This chapter focuses on the operational staffs of army units stationed in the south during the period from October 2004 to September 2005. Two units were selected from each of the First, Second, and Fourth Regional Armies. These six units were stationed in all three provinces where most incidents took place namely Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. The units were as follows.

Two units from the First Regional Army, headquartered in Bangkok and responsible for the country's western and central provinces including the capital city:

the Eleventh Infantry Regiment, Royal Guards, which goes by the code name of Petcharavudh Task Force (CK-36), operating in Tak Bai and Su-ngai Kolok districts of Narathiwat Province;

the Second Infantry Regiment, Royal Guards, which is referred to as the 201st Infantry Battalion Special Task Force (PR-201), operating in Waeng and Sukhirin districts of Narathiwat Province.

Two units from the Second Regional Army, headquartered in Nakhon Ratchasima and responsible for the northeast:

the Thirteenth Infantry Regiment, known in the south as PRCK-132, operating in Chanae district of Narathiwat Province;

the Twenty-third Infantry Regiment, known in the south as PRCK-231, operating in Mueang and Nong Chik districts of Pattani Province.

Two units from the Fourth Regional Army, headquartered in Nakhon Si Thammarat and responsible for southern Thailand:

the Fifteenth Infantry Regiment known in the south as CK-12, operating in Bannang Sata, Raman, and Krong Pinang districts of Yala;

the Twenty-Fifth Infantry Regiment known in the south as PRCK-251 operating in Cho-airong and Su-ngai Padi districts of Narathiwat Province, and Yaring, Panare, and Mayo districts of Pattani Province.

The first section of the chapter summarizes each unit's performance, measured by the trends in the number of incidents during their term of duty. The three following sections analyze the internal culture and operating tactics of the units from the central region, northeast, and south respectively. The final section draws some conclusions and makes some recommendations.

The operational performance of military units in the far south

Over the period from October 2004 to September 2005, the trend in the number of incidents per month varied among the various units. Some units saw the number of attacks fall while other experienced a drastic increase.

For both the units from the central region, the number of incidents fell.

Table 4-1 Trend of incidents in areas of units from the central region

		Oct 04	Nov 04	Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05	Aug 05
CK-36	Tak Bai	5	4	8	4	7	11	5	2	1	2	1
				average 6.5/month					average 3.1/month			
	Su-ngai Kolok	-	1	1	4	6	1	2	1	2	4	1
				average 2.3/month					average, 2.0/month			
PR-20	Waeng			-	1	3	3	2	1	4	1	1
					average 1.75/month					average 1.75month		
	Sukhirin			-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-
					average 0.50/month					average 0.25/month		

Source: CK-36 and PR-201

In Tak Bai district, the average number of incidents was 6.5 in the first six months, and 3.1 in the following five months. During January–August 2005, seventeen incidents of shootings and seven bombings were reported.

In Su-ngai Kolok district, the average number of incidents was 2.3 in the first six months, and 2.0 in the following five months. During January–August 2005, a total of ten shootings and seven bomb attacks were reported.

In Sukhirin district, the averages were 0.50 in the first four months and 0.25 in the subsequent four. During January–August 2005, three shootings and one bomb attack took place.

In Waeng district, the average was 1.75 in both periods, but the nature of the incidents changed. In the first four months there were five shootings and three arson. In the final four months there were two shootings and two arson attacks, but also four bomb attacks.

Table 4-2 Trend of incidents in areas of units from the northeast region

		Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05	Aug 05	Sept 05
PRCK-132	Chanae	2	1	11	6	3	8	7	7	6	6
			average 4.6/month				average 6.8/month				
PRCK-231	Mueang		8					8			
			average 2.0/month					average 2.0/month			
	Nong Chik					12		44			
						av. 6.0/month		average 11.0/month			

Source: PRCK-132 and PRCK-231

The units from the northeast were unable to reduce the number of incidents in the areas under their responsibility. There were more attacks in the second half of their operations than in the first half in all areas except Mueang district where the number of incidents appeared unchanged.

In Chanae district of Narathiwat, the averages were 4.6 in the first five months and 6.8 incidents in the following five months. During the first period, there were twenty-three incidents in total—ten shootings, nine cases of arson, and four bomb attacks. In the second period the total rose to thirty-four—twenty-one shootings, one arson attempt, and twelve bomb attacks.

In Mueang district of Pattani, the average was 2.0 incidents a month in both periods. In the first period, there were seven shooting incidents with eight people dead, and one bomb attack. In the latter period, there were five shooting incidents with three dead and eight seriously wounded, plus three arson attacks.

In Nong Chik district, the number of attacks almost doubled from 6.0 to 11.0 a month. In the first two months, twelve incidents were reported including two shootings with one person killed and one seriously injured, and ten arson attacks. In the following four months, forty-four incidents were reported including eight shootings with three people killed and eight more wounded, plus thirteen arson attacks and six bombings. On top, there were seventeen minor incidents involving graffiti, burning of rubber tires and national flags, as well as scattering spikes on the road.

Table 4-3 Trend of incidents in areas of units from the south

		Oct 04	Nov 04	Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05	Aug 05	Sept 05
CK-12	Bannang Sata	3	4	13	10	10	6	6	29	3	1	4	
		average 8/month					average 4/month (excluding May)						
	Raman	5	8	12	11	9	7	14	30	9	4	5	
		average 9/month					average 8.6/month (excluding May)						
	Krong Pinang	1	1	7	2	-	-	1	6	2	1	4	
		average 2.2/month					average 1.6/month (excluding May)						
PRCK-251	Cho-airong	2	2	4	4	12	6						
		average 2.6/month			average 7.3/month								
	Su-ngai Padi	4	4	17	2	3	3						
		average 8.3/month			average 2.6/month								
	Yaring							8	8	12	8	15	8
								average 2.6/month			av. 10.6/month		
	Panarae							4	3	4	4	1	1
								average 3.6/month			average 2.0/month		
	Mayo							2	12	11	2	1	2
								average 8.3/month			average 1.6/month		

Source: CK-12 and PR-251

The CK-12 unit had been operating in the area for some time, and was generally successful in reducing the number of incidents, with the exception of May 2005. But the high figures for this month are misleading. While most of the incidents in other months involved attempts to kill or injure, those in May were more minor disturbances caused by scattering spikes on roads, burning rubber tires and national flags, spraying graffiti on public buildings, and issuing hoax bomb warnings.

The PRCK-251 unit arrived only in the latter part of the period of study. It managed to reduce incidents in two areas, but witnessed a large increase in Yaring.

Table 4-4 Incidents under PRCK-251 by type

	Su-ngai Padi	Panare	Mayo	Cho-airong	Yaring
Shootings	26	12	17	18	37
Bombings	3	-	-	5	2
Arson attacks	3	2	7	4	9
Vandalism	-	2	6	4	15
Killed	9	5	6	5	11
Injured	17	8	11	38	37

All units reported increased levels of trust and cooperation from villagers where once there was only mistrust and suspicion. At the start, local residents were afraid and suspicious of military personnel, but after the first three months, the attitudes seemed to change for the better. Some villagers had become friendly and sympathetic while others

cooperated with the authorities and gave information about goings-on in their villages. Some of the information proved to be useful in counter-insurgency operations.

The units from the central provinces appeared more successful than others in containing and reducing the number of violent incidents. Those from the southern provinces were successful in some areas but not in others. In the areas assigned to units from the northeast, violence escalated. These variations may be due to a number of factors including the nature and the severity of conflict in each local area, the duration of each unit's stay, the unit's internal culture, and its operational strengths.

Military culture and security operations

The culture of a military unit consists of core and subsidiary values. The core cultural values have been instilled and nurtured through years of formal education and professional training in cadet and officer academies. Each soldier is taught to strive for perseverance and self-discipline while embracing patriotism and showing absolute loyalty to the monarchy. Such has been the long-held tradition within the military establishment. There may be some who misbehave but they are few in number. In any social grouping, there are always good and bad people. The subsidiary values are developed through the collective experience of each unit—its missions, the environment in which it operates, and its leadership. These factors influence the soldiers' attitudes as much as the core values and culture.

Military units coming from different geographical locations and backgrounds may have different approaches toward the southern problem although they operate under the same command structure and are subject to the same policy direction. The Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command instructed all units to pursue a nonviolent approach, with political measures taking precedence over military means. The military units were told to "win over villages" and be guided by the advice of the King "to understand, to reach out (to the people), and (to step up) development."

The strategy is to win the battle at the village level. Officials were told to reestablish state power over the villages peacefully by persuading local residents to cross over to the government side. In carrying out this strategy, the rank and file on the ground must understand, reach out, and help the people develop. In the performance of their duty, they must show respect for Islam and local customs in order to gain people's trust and cooperation.

As part of this policy, the main mission has been to strengthen community relations by establishing ties with the local people. At the same time, the soldiers have to enforce security in the area and pursue those committing violent acts. Shortcomings in one area might frustrate efforts in another, especially the effort to win people's trust without which a lasting peace in the region would not be possible. As long as people in the three southern provinces continued to see members of the security forces abusing their power and mistreating local Muslims, the military would not get people to cooperate. In fact, they might become more sympathetic toward the insurgents and could be targeted as possible recruits.

The work of the military units from the central provinces

Although both units from the central region are from the same geographical

location and belong to the Royal Guard Units, their official missions and operational experiences are different. Thus, each has its own approach to the assignment in the far south.

Both units had received extensive briefings and training beforehand to ensure that they were knowledgeable about the local terrain and sensitive to the local culture and Islam. It was believed that if the troops were able to conduct themselves properly, conflicts with villagers would be minimized.

Efforts to improve community relations, especially at the beginning of the operations, were undermined by the negative attitudes of local people towards soldiers. This was particularly true right after the violent crackdown of demonstrators at Tak Bai district on 25 October 2004 when eighty-five people died. This incident fuelled the anger and mistrust of local residents toward the security forces. A soldier recalled his conversations with boys in his assigned area:

> If you ask a Buddhist boy, he will say he wants to be a policeman or a soldier. But a Muslim boy will say he wants to be a bandit. Why? It's because he wants to kill policemen and soldiers.

It was, therefore, extremely difficult for the security forces to improve the understanding and strengthen relationships with local people. Nevertheless, the military units from the central provinces were able to use the fact that they served as Royal Guards or "the king's soldiers," to explain that their mission was well-intentioned.

> When we told them we served the king, that we were members of HM's Royal Guards, it sounded as if His Majesty the King has sent us to protect them and to take care of their well-being. They understood. If the villagers understood, we'd be safe and accepted. Then we could work to extend the goodwill to other units like the rangers. They might look fierce and aggressive but we'd tell the villagers that the rangers meant no harm. I then volunteered to talk to the rangers and clear up any misunderstanding.

> I'd say I'm a soldier of Their Majesties. We were sent here to improve the standard of living. Things like this meant we came here as friends. So they relaxed and no longer feared us. Gradually, they cooperated. We'd repeat our visits after finishing our survey for the day.

Being members of the Royal Guards facilitated the soldiers' attempts to win trust, and even to act as intermediaries for other security forces, such as the rangers. At the same time, the troops had to conduct themselves well in order to ensure no disrepute was brought to their units. The military units from the central region carried out their mission in strict accordance with the ten basic rules of the army. Those violating the rules were punished. There were supplementary codes of conduct for soldiers operating in the south. They were more disciplined and closely supervised as they were bound to follow the king's advice. Each Royal Guard has to swear, "I will uphold and protect the honor of the monarch." Such honorable commitment led to exceptional conduct and enabled members of the Royal Guards to win confidence of the villagers in a short time.

In addition, the military units were involved in fund raising and distributing relief supplies to families of those killed or injured in the Tak Bai tragedy and to the general public. The CK-36 was actively engaged with religious and civic leaders, women and youth groups that were viewed as vulnerable to persuasion by the militants. Many people

were employed under emergency job creation projects to be kept under the authorities' watchful eyes, and some were hired as local informants.

In their relations with the communities, the units used a carrot-and-stick approach to convince people that cooperation with the authorities would bring concrete benefits. A solider explained how he approached religious leaders.

> Every time I go in, I focus on a substantive issue in order to improve our understanding of one another. For instance, there are eight *pondoks* in [Su-ngai] Kolok. We will provide sports equipment for any *pondok* on the condition that when I'm there they will teach me about Islam for an hour in Thai. So the religious leaders will brief us on what to do and what to avoid. When they see that we are serious, they understand, and we then approach other community leaders to deepen the understanding.

A commanding officer explained about negotiating with hired motorcycle drivers:

> I had a meeting with hired motorcycle taxi drivers along the border and asked them what they wanted or what they were short of. They told me that the motorcycle stands were so dilapidated that they could not park their vehicles. I then gave them money and ordered my unit to repair the stands. One of my subordinates took the money and bought corrugated iron sheets. These drivers joined in. They were happy to have proper shades and parking stands. Whenever they got news, they would pass it on to us.

A soldier explained about working day laborers:

> We would negotiate with them. They would said, "Captain, we are day labourers. Can you help us? We earn only 50 baht a day. If there is no job, I don't know what I'll do." So we tried to talk with them and help as much as we could. We told them that if they helped us with intelligence gathering, we would pay them back. In fact, they helped us immensely.

Humanitarian effort linked with negotiation was effective. Negotiation alone worked only when it was of mutual interest. It could backfire, however, when both sides could not agree on the terms. Humanitarian assistance was seen as a more sincere and effective approach that showed the units were paying attention to the well-being of the local people without them demanding it. For instance, one unit won trust by reacting to an appeal for help from a village hit by a severe storm.

> At one time, there was a power blackout in the whole district. It was at the height of insurgent activities, so we were on high alert at our base. While the storm was raging, a village leader called me and said, "Captain, the village was hit badly by the storm. Our homes were completely destroyed." It was close to midnight. My subordinates warned me but I thought that if we managed to render assistance here, the village would be ours. I then decided to send my staff for the relief operation. We drove to the village and were greeted by one of the leaders in Tak Bai. Villagers in their thousands were praying and their leaders took us around the village and showed us the damage. Over sixty homes were completely destroyed. The troops were dispatched to rebuild the houses. It made such a good impression on the villagers. I knew we had to weigh the risk of such a daring move, but it was a real turning point. It might have cost me my life but it could give us a rare opportunity to win hearts. I could have been shot dead by militants. But I believe we made the right decision. Our courage paid off in the end because soon after that the villagers were more

sympathetic to the soldiers. Such an understanding contributed to our effort of building a peaceful village in the future.

The operations of the military units from the central region succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the people, and inducing more positive attitudes towards soldiers. When a large number of villagers gathered for prayer, they condemned the use of violence after every bombing incident. Many of them expressed good will and showed moral support to the military personnel injured in the counter-insurgency operations.

> Every time a violent incident took place, a large number of people would congregate. In one such incident, my men were hurt in an explosion at Saeng Tham School.[1] One lost a leg and another was killed. Voluntarily, many residents came to visit and give moral support to the wounded soldier at the hospital. This showed goodwill towards the soldier.

Once the people had a positive attitude towards the soldiers, they helped gather intelligence such as alerting the authorities about the arrival of strangers in the village, informing the authorities of suspected militants who disguised themselves as traveling missionaries (*dawah*), or reporting suspected bomb attempts. Several bombs were successfully defused because of such timely warning. Information from local residents enhanced the effectiveness of military operations and enabled the soldiers to control the situation in the assigned area. Subsequently, the villagers were more confident of their safety. Initially, very few festivities were held for fear of becoming targets for militant attacks, but subsequently Buddhists held Songkran celebrations with water pouring, building sand *chedi*, and presenting robes to the monks, while Muslims organized annual sporting events, Hulu dance theatre, Mayong traditional folk dance, and Maulid-al-Nabi celebrations.

Despite their successes for the most part in changing the local people's attitudes, the military units from the central region were hampered by a lack of cooperation from other local administrative and security agencies. Prior to being deployed in the south, the PR-201 was working in the eastern region where martial law was declared. There, the unit had full authority and overall control. It could ask for cooperation from any agencies and create a unified command structure. In the south, however, the unit was unable to make similar requests for cooperation from other agencies as it did not have overall command.

> There were Volunteer Defence Corps, district heads, police, and Village Defence Volunteers in the area and I was not in a position to control these forces or tell them what to do. Their superiors were of higher rank than me or were my senior when we were at the Cadet School so they would refuse to do my bidding. They saw everything as being the responsibility of the military.

CK-36, by contrast, placed more emphasis on coordination with other local state agencies. Because it could not operate on its own, it had to work closely with other government agencies in the locality which in normal circumstances would have been in charge of public safety and well-being, such as the police, immigration police, administrative officials, and customs personnel.

> To enforce internal security, we used the military and the Border Patrol Police. In some areas, we were the core force, supplemented by police officers. But in terms of community relations, the military unit coordinated with civilian administrators. What

> we wanted to achieve was to restore state power and hand over the administration to civilians. We were there to help revive state control so that we could leave and civilian administrators would carry on the work.

CK-36 managed to secure cooperation for the most part from other government agencies. Its success could be attributed to the fact that its operations and the conduct of its officers were honorable and proper in strict accordance with the military code of conduct. Members of the unit were not drawn into any particular interest groups, nor were they engaged in activities that were deemed offensive to local sensitivities. Moreover, the unit promoted good relations with other agencies through sporting events and other social functions.

The counter-insurgency operations were targeted at militant groups and perpetrators of violent acts. They were not sweeping orders that would hurt the general public. In some cases where the public had to be affected, the approach was to be friendly to the general public. In other cases, where core militant leaders were accused but little evidence was found, the unit tried to convince them to cooperate with the authorities. But the unit was prepared to respond aggressively to insurgent attacks in order to deter future incidents. Several precautionary measures were taken such as setting up checkpoints, regular patrols, and emergency raids on suspected targets. PR-201 had experience from operating in the eastern border area. To disrupt planned attacks and prevent movement of illegal goods, the unit placed emphasis on restricting the mobility of the enemy and limiting the opportunities for the militants to launch successful operations. Ensuring the safety and security of those involved was considered a top priority. The unit set up 24-hour checkpoints and patrolled the assigned areas heavily. CK-36, meanwhile, supplemented strict military tactics with applying pressure on former militant leaders who had pledged cooperation with the authorities. They were seen as key to the political dimension of bringing about peace and transforming an armed struggle into a political dialogue.

> Our strategy was that if they fled, we did not pursue. Meanwhile, we put pressure on them by sending our doctors into the villages. We would not use violent means. These people were already feeling guilty and suspicious of authorities. So when our doctors asked their names, they became fearful and fled immediately for fear of state prosecution. We let them escape and experience hardship for a bit. In Malaysia, they would find it hard to earn a living. They would have to be in hiding because the Malaysian police would arrest them. After a while, we sent the village head or their parents to talk with them and ask them to turn themselves in. Suspected militants who had turned themselves in served as examples because they had not been prosecuted by the authorities. In fact, the military helped secure them employment and earn income. Their criminal records were also wiped clean. This was the last trigger in convincing them to return and lend the state a helping hand.

Summary of the internal culture of the military units from the central region

1. Their strength lies in being Royal Guards. They make use of this superior status when meeting with villagers to win their trust. With the status as the king's soldiers, they find it easier to explain their duty and mission. Villagers are less suspicious of them. It proves the most effective permit for gaining access to villages.

2. They are highly disciplined. Although the military in general adheres to strict rules and regulations, members of Royal Guard units are required to uphold even stricter

discipline and higher standards of honesty. They must live up to the honor and integrity of their units. The rank and file are required to follow the ten army rules to the letter. Any officer found to be in violation of these rules is severely punished. On top, there are additional codes of conduct. These units are dedicated to promoting development projects under the queen's initiative. The Royal Guards must always bear in mind the supreme importance of the king's advice which must be obeyed at all costs.

3. Soldiers from the central region especially those from Bangkok are, as a rule, better educated and more acquainted with communication technology and computer skills. The more educated troops choose to be stationed in Bangkok where they can further their studies easily, and this contributes to their effectiveness in carrying out their duties. A commanding officer explained,

> We are lucky that most of the lads here are very intelligent. Sitting here upfront are those among the top ten in their class because normally the best in each class sign up for Bangkok. They have more brain although they may not be good as those from upcountry when it comes to fighting skills and techniques. But they are intellectually-oriented, just the kind of people we need for this task as this conflict is ideological warfare.

4. The two units from the central region have skill and experience from similar operations in the eastern border area. These have proved valuable in restricting the movements of suspected militants. Their expertise in patrolling, manning of checkpoints, and rounding up suspected militants has sharply enhanced the effectiveness of counter-insurgency operations.

5. Being accustomed to working under martial law on the eastern border means that some units from the central provinces are not as effective as others in mobilizing support and cooperation from other state agencies.

The operations of the military units from the northeast

All units under the Second Regional Army in the northeast had experience fighting against the communist insurgency by using a policy of engaging with the civilian population in order to change people's attitudes toward the authorities, improve the intelligence gathering capability of military personnel, and contribute to better tactical planning of operations. A unit commander explained this nonviolent approach to bringing an end to the insurgency as follows:

> We believe that water dropping on a stone will sooner or later lead to the erosion of the stone. In other words, if we develop personal and friendly relationship with villagers, the friendship will be able to cool the fever of the conflict. When we understand each other, we can solve problems together. It doesn't mean that we have to bow to Muslims, but we must understand what may constitute the problem.
>
> What we have to defeat is the prejudice of some villagers. Our troops come from the PRCK-132 and people of old might still think—we must admit that such an impression exists—that members of the unit in the past were involved in shooting and killings some villagers. Some officers might have intimidated them or stirred up trouble here. We want to show that this is no longer the case. We are a new generation of professional soldiers.

Apart from introducing the idea of promoting civilian affairs in working with communities, the PRCK-132 also adopted the king's advice "to understand, to reach out (to the people) and (to step up) development." To reverse the negative image of soldiers and create a more positive attitude toward officials working in the conflict zones, the unit launched an initiative called "changing the camouflage into a floral pattern" which aimed at reducing the villagers' mistrust and anxiety towards soldiers. Recommended practices include friendly greetings and a smile at meetings, pleasant manners and helpful services at checkpoints such as providing free drinking water, shady areas, and toys for children.

Due to the enormous geographical and cultural differences between the northeast and the southernmost region, the military units from the northeast had to undergo a number of training courses to familiarize themselves with local customs and cultural practices of the Muslim dominated south. Besides preparation for routine operations such as setting up checkpoints and carrying out searches, they prepared plans for civilian affairs. PRCK-132 had experience in developing strong communities in the upper northeast and on peace-keeping mission in East Timor. These experiences provided invaluable insight and practical skills for the unit before they embarked on the mission in the south. The unit had started preparing its personnel since the beginning of 1994 by selecting only those qualified and experienced to be engaged in civilian affairs and community relations. Many of them had worked as trainers for the "strong community" operation at Surasakmontri Command. The deputy chairman of the Udon Thani Islamic Committee was invited to brief all personnel about the teaching of Islam and the unique way of life in the deep south. The unit had also produced Malay-language teaching materials and textbooks and distributed them to the troops. Teachers from the south were invited to teach the correct pronunciation of the far south dialect. A group of trainers was sent to spend time in villages surrounding the military camp and a few other target villages in the south to identify the weaknesses of their operations and procedures.

A seminar was held on a proposed "Happy Family" initiative to be introduced in the three southern border provinces. Several local academics were invited to give their views on the proposed plans, and changes were made accordingly. The plan was further refined after the first ten days of actual implementation in the assigned area in Chanae district of Narathiwat by holding a seminar to identify problems and obstacles. These efforts built confidence among the academics and communities. Soldiers were given additional lessons in the local Malay dialect. It was clear that the forces had undergone considerable training and preparation before being stationed in the deep South.

Community relations work of the military units from the northeast

Soldiers from the northeast had considerable experiences in working with communities and in civilian operations. Moreover, the local people were known to be friendly, generous, easy-going, and adaptable. Despite these strengths, the operations in the south proved a tough assignment given the differences in ethnicity, language, culture, religion, and terrain, and the prevalent attitudes of the local people toward men in uniform. In carrying out their duties, these units had to demonstrate a higher level of perseverance, determination, and sincerity in order to win the hearts and minds of the local people.

Initially, both the villagers and the troops were suspicious of each other because they were not acquainted. Besides, the assigned areas were highly sensitive and the

security risk was high. The villagers had extremely negative views about soldiers; they were terribly afraid and suspicious of the security forces, since the timing was right after the violent crackdowns at Krue Ze Mosque and Tak Bai. The mobilization of forces into the area further undermined people's confidence and was seen as another threat to their well-being. Moreover, the good relationship between people representing state authority and local villagers had been ignored for such a long time that the two sides were very alienated from each other. Moreover, the soldiers were nervous about a different and unfamiliar religion and culture.

> When we got there, there were no temples, only mosques. I felt a bit lonely. You looked around and there were only mosques. In a village, there might be two or three mosques so you heard the call to prayer five times a day. It sounded scary. Moreover, people dressed in a different way, making me feel as if I were in a foreign country. In such a situation, it was hard not to be afraid, not to be suspicious.

Because of the hostile attitude of the local people and the unfamiliar environment, the soldiers had to gather their courage and pool their efforts in order to be accepted by the local community. However, their first-hand experience in civilian affairs and the friendliness of the troops had positive effects on establishing a relationship between the military units and the villages. The "Hand and Smile" campaign was well received. Troops going into villages were told to greet villagers with a smile and be mindful of their manners especially when they approached village elders or community leaders. Humility, respect, and discipline were core values that the military units prioritized. Members of the units were told they had to serve the people because the people paid the soldier's salaries through taxes.

> What we ask our troops to do is to show respect to the villagers because we are paid by the taxes from our brothers and sisters. Our salaries come from the people so we have to be here to protect them, to provide security. These are the three main messages we always stressed during our meetings.

Yet some soldiers could not give up the hierarchical culture of the military and continued to act as if they were superior to the people they were supposed to serve. Many failed to strike up good relations with local communities. They were told to change their behavior and attitudes.

> Initially, I found it hard to swallow my self importance. I graduated from the prestigious military cadet institute; therefore I thought I was somebody. I had been appointed a lieutenant and wherever I went, people would greet me. I issued orders to my subordinates and everyone had to follow them unless they were senior to me. So when I was sent to work here, everything was against the grain. I had to fight my own feelings in order to *wai* villagers such as the assistant village headman. I used to think it worked this way: we invited them for talks, and if they refused to cooperate, we'd manhandle them. But it did not work like that here. A different area required a different approach. For a soldier, duty comes first. If we succeed in carrying out our duty, we feel proud. So when we realized that our tactics didn't work, we had to adjust them. We had to scale back our ego. We had to think that we were working here for them, for the people, before we could do so.

Hard work, dedication, and sincerity finally paid off. The local communities started to show acceptance and trust. Medical services were the most effective element in winning over the villagers because most villagers were poor and did not have access to

government medical services. A soldier from PRCK-132 wrote in 'My experiences'[2] as follows.

> A team of trainers who went to survey a village found a man named Dolah Masao had been bitten by a poisonous snake. His leg and foot were seriously infected; one could see the bone sticking out and the smell was so horrible that villagers did not dare to approach him. He was extremely sick; he couldn't walk and was taken care of by his children. He had been to the district hospital in Chanae but the doctor told him that he would have to amputate the leg, so he went to the central hospital in Narathiwat, and again, the doctor told him that his leg had to come off because the infection had damaged it beyond rescue. Because he was fearful of the amputation, he fled and told his wife and children that he would rather go back home to die than go through with the operation. The military trainers' team, led by a nurse sergeant, helped clean up the wound and treat him. They paid him a visit every day and tried to give him encouragement. The wound gradually healed after a month. The patient was able to walk by himself and regained his physical strength. Many villagers called the nurse sergeant a "miracle doctor" although they were Muslims. Now they all ask for Doctor Yao when they fall ill. People heed whatever Doctor Yao says. The medicine he prescribes for most people is generally a dose or two of paracetamol. Many are cured that way; so the illnesses basically have to do with the mind rather than the body.

The unit was serious in providing assistance to those who have been affected by the event at Krue Ze. The PRCK-231 expressed their sincerity and took good care of families of those who died or were injured in the incident.

> We treat them as if they are our own relatives. We address the elder ladies as grandma. We usually ask them to come and get the medicines. If they can't come by themselves, then some adults in the household or in the village will be asked to accompany them. Or we send our doctor to treat them at home. If they are seriously ill, we refer them to the hospital at Camp Ingkhayuth in Pattani. If they need an appointment, we make an appointment with the doctor at the hospital for them.

It took about three months to build trust and acceptance between the military units from the northeast and the local communities. The goodwill was expressed through a public invitation from religious leaders to the unit commanders as well as their subordinates to take part in the *Hayat* prayer for peace.[3] A soldier said that,

> We attended a *Hayat* prayer and during the ceremony, water was blessed. My colonel and I were given some of the blessed water to drink. We told the villagers that we were there to bring about development. Please consider us part of your families. They told us we were accepted as their families and they would not let anybody hurt us. They prayed for us in the mosque. After the prayer, the *imam*, the colonel, and I shared the blessed water, an act which was taken to mean that we were accepted.

The acceptance and goodwill were instrumental in preventing a situation from developing into a confrontation. A soldier was helped by a local community leader to resolve a dispute because of some misunderstanding between him and a villager.

> The captain in question went to visit and took along some fruit and money as a gift. He went with a Muslim *kamnan*. Another village head in charge of the area around Krue Ze went along too. If we had been abusing and mistreating the villagers, they would not have helped us. So the misunderstanding did not cause any trouble.… It

was March or April. We'd been there since December the year before. So this incident took place when we had been there for about three months.

The military units from the northeast also initiated other projects to improve relations such as cultural exchanges, vocational training, and other humanitarian assistance.

Cultural exchanges as a means to strengthen relations received much attention from local communities. Villagers were interested in Isan music and food. A traditional *pong-lang* band playing Isan folk music was popular with the crowd because of the upbeat tunes and funny lyrics. Although they might not understand the verses, the cheerful sound and the rhythm created a party atmosphere and people joined in. At village festivities like New Year and Children's Day, people would ask the military personnel to play Isan folk music on the stage alongside the Hulu Likae performance, typical of the southernmost region. Food was another attraction. Isan food such as sticky rice and papaya salad were popular, often taken with local *budu* sauce. Sometimes, the military units also held Buddhist festivals such as Songkran and invited Muslim village elders to join the ceremony to pay respects to older relatives. Many Muslims attended such festivals which helped bring people from the Buddhist and Muslim communities together. Despite the positive feedback from community leaders and villagers themselves, the introduction of Isan culture and tradition into the Muslim dominated region was a sensitive matter because it touched on culture, tradition, and way of life. Attempting to introduce change into such matters could easily provoke conflict among those of conservative bent.

In terms of vocational training and job creation initiatives, the PRCK-231 was unable to make any headway because the unit was transferred out of the areas before it could witness any real progress. By contrast, the PRCK-132 was more successful. It introduced the "Happy Family" project in the three southernmost provinces. The project was revised to take into account local sensitivities and promoted under the slogan "With religion as the basis, develop a good career, healthy living free of disease, and virtuous children, bringing about peace."

In implementing the "Happy Family" project, the unit encountered a number of obstacles despite having been well prepared. As outsiders, most members of the unit were unable to gain insight into the way of life of the local population. Certain elements in the project did not correspond to the local way of life and were rejected by the villagers. For instance, meetings were scheduled during the rest period after early-morning rubber tapping, resulting in people not attending, or arriving late, or not paying much attention to the training.

The way of the people posed another challenge in implementing projects in the south, as one soldier pointed out.

> If it were in Isan, a project like this would take only five days to complete. But here it took us thirty-six days. Each day after two hours or so, they would lose interest. We had to break often for prayer; and after the prayers at the mosque, we had to repeat what went on the last time before we could build on what had been discussed.

The PRCK-132 encountered several difficulties in this new area. In the northeast, the language, the way of life and the friendly attitude of the people were more conducive to their operations. Moreover, they were usually stationed in an assigned area for a long time, making it possible to establish long term relations with the communities. In the south, the situation was almost the opposite. Any military unit that attempted to promote

vocational training and development had to stay in the assigned area for some time in order to sustain any progress. Or, the vocational training and development should be viewed as a tool in forming a working relationship with the villagers or simply as a byproduct. This concept may be applicable to those units deployed for a limited period.

Women tended to be more involved and interested in taking part in the "Happy Family" project. Many groups of housewives were formed; one group sewed headscarves; another produced organic dish-washing liquid; another made fish sauce; and the last was involved in aromatherapy. Teenagers were the least cooperative. They resisted any attempts by the authorities to reach out to them. This was one of the most serious weaknesses of the project, since youth was obviously a key target group that the insurgents were trying to recruit.

The military units reportedly received little cooperation from local civilian officials because most officials were Buddhist and extremely concerned about their personal safety if they went to work in the assigned areas.

Most of the counter-insurgency operations were aimed at improving security and protecting civilians and their properties. Some operations were planned to disrupt militants' networks and prevent their planned attacks. Many tactics were deployed including regular patrols, road blockades, rounding up suspects, searches, restricting the mobility of insurgents, and pressuring suspected militants.

Permanent checkpoints, road barriers, and laying siege to suspected villages to conduct searches were some of the operations that affected civilians indiscriminately and seriously disrupted their normal lives. However, these missions were carried out with sensitivity and respect under the guidelines of the initiative called "changing the camouflage into a floral pattern." Recommended practices include friendly greetings and smiles, pleasant manners, and offering public services at checkpoints such as providing free drinking water, shady areas, and toys for children. The change in the stance of the soldiers from an aggressive approach to a softer approach won them trust and cooperation from the villagers. As a result of the PRCK-132's performance, sixty-two suspected militants turned themselves in and forty-one others fled from the villages. In general, innocent civilians were more willing to cooperate with the military despite the continuing and escalating violence.

Summary of the internal culture of the military units from the northeast

1. The approach is for politics to take priority over military operations. The northeastern military units had used this strategy in the successful operation against communist insurgency. The strong belief in the effectiveness of the concept has led the units to highlight civilian affairs in their work to regain people's trust and cooperation in the three southern border provinces. They believe this approach is more likely to yield positive results than the harsh military clampdowns of the past.

2. Initiatives used in the northeast have to be localized to suit the far south. In carrying out their work in the south, the concept of building "strong communities" is used, but with necessary localization. The military units have introduced a series of community activities such as developing the environment, vocational training, and agricultural promotion. These activities have been used as a means of gaining trust and approaching villagers who might be skeptical of the military presence in the area. However, these activities have to be promoted and implemented with sincerity and seriousness by

subsequent units to yield any long term results. The military units under study were stationed in the assigned locations for only a year and hence success depends largely on whether subsequent units will continue the work.

3. The military units are able to blend in with the local people using their cultural heritage from the northeast as a strength. They have introduced Isan traditional music like *pong-lang* bands and Isan food to the local communities. Nevertheless, the approach should be implemented with care and sensitivity because the local Muslim people observe their own religious practices strictly. Any outside elements must be introduced with respect for the local way of life. Cultural exchanges may be appropriate as long as they do not come into conflict with or question the local way of life, belief, and religious observance. Otherwise, they may cause friction with the communities.

4. The personality of the troops is an asset. The troops from the northeastern units have good manners, and are humble, friendly, and kind. Their personality coupled with their ability and experience in civilian activities gained acceptance from the local communities. The units have used their social assets in promoting community relations. Under the "Hand and Smile" campaign, troops were instructed to greet people with a smile, and to be humble and respectful towards the local people. They are also told to consider themselves the servants of the people, for their salaries are paid with the people's taxes.

5. The line of command is clear and orders by the commanding officers are well respected. It is apparent that the military units from the northeast are well disciplined. The superior officers pay close attention to their subordinates and are open to their views and suggestions. At the same time, those not following orders are punished and no disrespect towards the commanding officers is tolerated. The units have proved to be united and highly disciplined.

The operations of the military units from the southern region

After the raid on an army camp in Narathiwat on 4 January 2004, the first batch of military units sent to hunt for the perpetrators and the stolen weapons were from the south. As violence subsequently escalated in the three southernmost provinces, the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command (SBPPBC) was created on 4 October 2004 to restore peace and order using a peaceful approach. The military units operating in the three southernmost provinces thereafter came under the command of the SBPPBC. The southern units were diverted from the search for the stolen weapons to the task of using peaceful means to bring an end to the violence. The two sample units from the south took a roughly similar approach. Their familiarity with the culture, traditions, and way of the life of the people in the far south were an advantage. They were able to leverage their understanding of the local culture to win acceptance by local communities without need to focus on community development or vocational training. A unit leader said:

> Some local Muslims who are close to me said they don't necessarily want development. What they want is trust. How can the people trust the military? If the military are able to win people's trust, then we can talk development. So when my unit was sent to work there, we didn't emphasize development projects. We didn't normally do agriculture projects. Besides, we had no money for them. The local

> agricultural promotion office was better prepared and more qualified to carry out these projects, so we encouraged that office to be more active. What we as a military unit could do was to help talk to the local community. That's our strength, our job.

In their efforts to bring about understanding and win people' hearts and minds, the military units from the south encountered similar problems as other units. Most people viewed the military and government officials in a negative light. For instance there had never been a military unit stationed in Yaring district of Pattani previously. When the unit was sent there, leaders of the militant movement, who did not want a military unit stationed in the area as it would complicate their operations, stirred up dissatisfaction against the military. The soldiers became anxious about their own safety as they were unable to identify the leaders of the unrest in the localities. But they also recognized that the majority of people were not involved in the armed conflict and wished for an end of the trouble, while the militants were in a minority. The misconception that Muslims in general were disposed to violence arose because the militants concealed themselves in the towns and villages, making it difficult to distinguish the militants from ordinary people.

> I'd say that Muslims are good. The fact of the matter is that Muslims love peace. I've been working here in the three southernmost provinces and I know that Muslims do not want this to happen.… There are more good than bad people. If I have to put a figure on it, I'd say in my opinion that there may be five bandits out of a hundred people. That's why I can continue to work here unconcerned.

> There are Muslims in every southern province. And we have only heard good things about them like their delicious food, lovely *roti*, and rice dishes. We never associate them with terrorism. I have Muslim friends and we get along fine. It was only recently that there has been suspicion and skepticism.

In carrying out their duties to wipe away the negative feelings and suspicion toward the military establishment, the units needed to understand the people before they could hope to gain acceptance and trust. In the three southernmost provinces, the majority lives in poverty without adequate access to government services. Health problems are numerous and therefore free or low-cost medical services are of interest to the local communities. This is a way for the military to forge a closer relationship with the people. Besides, the military units were familiar with the way of life, culture, tradition, and Muslim teachings. Several of the soldiers had been recruited locally.

During the one year that CK-12 operated in the assigned area, the unit was able to implement several civilian activities in order to disrupt and neutralize the leadership of the insurgency and to persuade those sympathetic to the militant cause to support the government instead.

> These projects were initiated by the unit itself; we wanted to give priority to political solutions. The question we posed ourselves was straightforward. How could we reduce the number of violent incidents in the area? We had to change our tactics. For instance, if people saw soldiers carrying guns, they might then complain. So we put the priority on political solutions … and we initiated fifteen principal projects.

The fifteen projects were all designed to be in line with the culture, traditions, and way of life of the local people, as follows.

1. Home visits. These visits are part of the efforts to start a meaningful dialogue with villagers. Troops pay regular visits to households in the area.

2. Public information. Dissemination of government information is crucial in countering misinformation and rumors spread by suspected militants. In the far south, rumors tend to spread quickly and many are deceived by them.

3. Sports events. Competitive sports have been promoted among young people, both male and female, so that they spend their free time constructively and do not fall victim to the insurgents' recruitment efforts. Troops play sports with local youth. Soccer is the most popular game.

4. *Pondok* relations. As part of psychological operations, the military try to build relations with traditional religious schools or *pondoks*. Soldiers or police officers either teach in pondoks or donate teaching and sports equipment to religious schools.

> The *pondok* relations project is an attempt to go to the heart of the matter. We want to instill in young people the correct ideas about the state. It's an operation that demands a high level of social and persuasive skills as it relies principally on dialogue.

5. Villagers' forums. Such forums provide a platform for community leaders and local residents to share their views about challenges, problems, and needs over which the units may be able to help directly or induce other agencies to assist.

> Several forums have been held to gather and update information from the ground. This is an important activity that has brought the military and the people closer. These meetings are held in mosques or other religious buildings. It took time before permission to organize such forums at important religious venues was granted; we couldn't just go in and expect to get the permission. We had to be close and have long standing relations with people there.

6. Mosques or temples as military bases. This project is aimed at giving the military personnel access to the mosques and temples that play a central role in Buddhist and Muslim village life. Militants are suspected of using mosques as meeting places. It is much easier to get the abbot's permission to set up a base at a temple. Before using a mosque as a base, the unit must get a green light from the religious leaders. They have managed to convince religious leaders that they are there for a good purpose such as to develop the mosque. They usually have to spend a week in the village before they could set up a base there.

> I'd tell them that the troops would like to set up a base in the mosque and we would help develop the facility. We'd build this or that. We had to talk to the religious leaders, the community leaders, and the natural leaders in the village. Once they were informed, they were quick to spread the news to other villagers. The mosque is the center of village life; Muslims pray here five times a day. They congregate there for prayers; it's like a meeting place. So we needed to present our case. If we did that today, we might be able to move in the next day. But we had to gauge the mood right and present our case accordingly.

Soldiers who were stationed at the mosque put their lives and their safety at risk because a mosque is often not walled. Soldiers had to take a risk in order to show their sincerity.

> It's a matter of risk taking in order to reveal one's true position. "Today I'm staying with you so in a sense you are our protector. We will be safe here." Sometimes we

> have to pretend we really believe it even though we are on guard. But we want to show them, "We really trust you. You are good; you are not bandits."

7. Mobile political education units. This is a project aimed at adults and teenagers who are interested in politics. It is widely known that people in the south are more politically active and engaged than those in other regions. A by-election was called at the time in a nearby province so the military considered it appropriate to discuss politics with the local communities through the mobile political school.

> Adults here don't like small talk. They prefer to discuss politics. We have to find out what they like to talk about in a café or a teashop. Once we know for sure, we can broach the subject of politics and make suggestions such as on how to cast a vote. While I was there, many elections were held. We could advise them accordingly, for instance that they had to bring an official ID with them to the polling station and check whether their names appeared on the electoral list. We told them the correct procedure and how to exercise their voting rights.

The mobile political education project stirred up a lot of interest and a large crowd turned up at each session held at public places such as a mosque or tea shop. The project was in line with the way of life of the people in the area.

> You have to understand the traditional way of life. Things like what time do people pray. They pray five times a day and the one in the evening is about 7.30 to 8.00 pm. We take advantage of the fact that people already congregate at the mosque for prayer, so there is no need to make a special appointment or arrangement if we hold the meeting at the mosque instead of at somebody's house. It is also easier to call a meeting this way instead of asking people to come to see us when they often do not turn up. So we have to understand their way of life and adapt our strategy accordingly.

8. Making friends project. This is an attempt to establish relationships with the public by introducing members of the public to members of the armed forces who share the same birthdays and encouraging them to become friends.

9. Return kids to the family bosom. This project was adopted after finding that many young people in the area have been lured into drugs. The project is part of the military attempt to offer help to juvenile drug users and provide an opportunity for them to start a new life. It was hoped that the project would demonstrate that the military was on the same side as the people.

> We have set up road blocks and checkpoints. Sometimes we are able to capture those involved in the marijuana and methamphetamine trade. One of the people arrested was a 13 year old boy. We could have handed him to the police but because we wanted to show our goodwill we invited the village headman, local police officers, his teacher, an *uztaz*, and a community leader—all the people the boy respected—and told them the boy was arrested on a drug charge. He could have been convicted but the military staff working in the area was prepared to apply leniency. We made an exception and handed the kid back to his family. Our message was that we were here to help; we were on your side. We made it explicit that we were here to help and we wanted people to spread the word that the military had a good intention and this group of soldiers was really helpful to the young. We wanted the word of our good work to spread around here.

10. Morning meeting project. Regular meeting and chatting with villagers at tea

shops in the morning creates familiarity between the troops and the local people.

11. Five-minute teaching project. This is an important psychological operation before the start of field operations in a village. Soldiers are sent to public, private, and religious schools to work as teachers. They teach kids military drills such as standing to attention and the kids get a lot of fun out of playing soldiers. These exercises are given to school children so that they tell their parents about the enjoyment they receive from such a simple practice. It is geared toward winning recognition from the parents.

> The 5-minute teaching program allows us to come into contact with young students every morning. We want to convey a message through the kids so that when they go home they can relate what they've done at school to their parents.

12. The *Tadika* military teacher project is a project aimed at instilling the correct ideology in religious schools. Military personnel teach about religious diversity, living in peace, Thainess, the Thai nation's head of state, the duties of children, Thai language, and having a bright future. The project is well received by the students because the locally recruited soldiers are able to teach and read the Qur'an to young children.

13. Retraining people's forces. This is a project to strengthen the village defence force and the defence volunteers so that people may ensure security within their own communities.

14. Meeting relatives of the dead. As many families lost members in the Krue Ze and Tak Bai incidents. the military units have met and assisted the relatives in order to undermine the militants' efforts to recruit them.

> This came about because I was posted to an area which suffered heavy casualties as a result of the April 28 incident when a group of teenagers attacked the military and police. Many were shot dead. At least eighty-three people were killed. Then came the Tak Bai incident and 106 more were killed. Up to twenty of the victims come from this area. So I asked what we were supposed to do. The villagers were saying, "Soldiers killed their children." They were angry. What were we to do.… The local people did not have separatist ideas, but because their children were killed by state officials, the enemy had a chance to recruit them.

Home visits were conducted and assistance given in strict compliance with religious observance and the Muslim way of life. It was the fasting season.

> At the start of the fasting season, we paid a visit after sunset, bearing gifts like green beans and milled rice. At the end of the fasting period, we went back again at night bringing things like sugar and coffee to give to them. We know their way of life. During the fasting season, people feast on special food. We knew and brought them as a goodwill gesture.

15. Help the people project. This is a project to provide emergency relief including medical services to people affected by flooding, fire, or other disasters. The project also donates money to support occupational groups and mobile clinics.

The fifteen projects show that the military units placed an emphasis on psychological operations rather than development work with each project respecting the way of life, culture, and religion of people in the area. The projects were implemented with an aim to establish familiarity, confidence, and trust while creating a positive attitude toward the military and enhancing cooperation between the two sides.

Moreover, the strategy of civilian affairs required greater cooperation among

various government offices to ensure success as was the case in the past when the Forty-third Civilian-Police-Military Joint Task Force (CPM43) was still in operation.

PRCK-251 placed a high priority on joint operations with local agencies because the unit recognized that these agencies would have to work with and assist the people in the future once the unit had completed its assignment. Moreover, each agency had a budget for its work. Combining their resources and manpower would be more effective than if the military worked on its own. But in working together, respect for each other was a prerequisite.

> If we did it all alone without taking civil administrative agencies on board, the project would not have been sustainable. When the troops pull out, the local civil servants will stay on. I have been trying to convince district chiefs of the need to cooperate but it is more difficult with the older officials. Young and progressive district chiefs tend to get our point quickly and they have encouraged district agricultural officials to help. We must not be boastful or act as if soldiers are the big bosses. If we don't brag about ourselves, they don't brag about themselves either.

Nevertheless, the unit did not receive the cooperation it wanted from local agencies because most local officials were concerned about their safety.

The commanding officer of CK-12 formed a joint task force comprising police, military officers, and members of the territorial volunteer force responsible for working in targeted villages. The rationale was that joint operations would lead to a more sustainable solution because local government officials would continue to be stationed in the area long after the soldiers have been withdrawn. It was therefore important to cooperate.

The joint military civilian units were assigned to operate in so called red zones or areas of concern. But in other areas, conventional forces were deployed.

> The territorial volunteers join us in red zones only where the insurgent are active. Key militant figures are present in large number so it is necessary to penetrate their cells. The joint task force has a special feature; it combines the three forces and is used in priority areas. Other areas are patrolled by conventional forces.

Operations carried out by the tripartite forces draw not only on the strengths of the individual units, but also increase the available security personnel in the area. Civilian administrators are more familiar with the local community. They act as translators and backup. They also help in identification, intelligence gathering, and administrative affairs. The police are knowledgeable about law and act as the main law enforcement officers, and assistant administrators. The military staff, which is the largest in number, form the core of the security unit, putting pressure on suspected militants hiding in villages and forest areas around villages. They also assist civilian administrators in law and order.

> The police are the main law enforcement agency. It is appropriate to involve them. And when something goes wrong, we can say with confidence that we have thought the plan through together. It's not the military doing it alone. I had experience before of being blamed when things went wrong. It was said at the time that the soldiers did it all by themselves without consultation. We were there to help them, but we got blamed all the time.

The joint task force was able to function well without any major conflict because the commanding officer explicitly demonstrated that the military recognize the role and

the importance of local civilian officials in achieving success One of the commanding officers said:

> Forget your ego. Forget the ethos that only soldiers can do that. That's a terribly wrong idea. If the commanding officer or members of the task force do not have a good relationship with local administrators and the police or the local administrative bodies, if we are not unified or do not cooperate, I can guarantee that we'll lose. Why do I allow policemen and territorial volunteers in the task force? It is because we soldiers cannot be there all the time. We have to withdraw at some point but the police and volunteers will continue to work there. They have inside information about the villages, their residents, and the insurgent movements. They can continue our mission. If we let our ego get in the way, all of us will have to pull out and the bandits will win.

Although the military units from the southern region have experience and expertise in counter-communist insurgency operations, and are familiar with the mountainous and forested terrains, the insurgency in the three southernmost provinces is different. It is hard to mount operations against the militants because they live among the villagers. The operational tactics deployed by the units from the southern region are similar to those deployed by units from other regions; namely, they use both military methods and legal means. Checkpoints, patrols, body searches and sealing off suspected villages are some of the tactics used. However, the CK-12 unit has also adopted a five-point strategy in dealing with suspected militant in red zones:

1. Disrupt the people's support for the militant groups.
2. Seize and destroy the militants' bases or shelters.
3. Restrict the mobility of militant groups.
4. Disrupt the militants' financial and intelligence networks.
5. Maintain a strong will to defeat the militants.

CK-12 adopted the slogan "arrest the right person, search the right place, never be defeated." The unit relies on accurate information especially information gained from psychological and civilian operations in the area. The unit sets up checkpoints, increases patrols, applies pressure, seals off suspicious villages, and carries out searches to disrupt the rebels.

Operations targeted against militants in the red zone have reduced the number of violent incidents in the area, restricted the movement of the militant groups, and disrupted their supply systems. Many more people have cooperated with the authorities. In response, the insurgents intensified their efforts and mounted several attacks as witnessed in the sharp increase in the number of violent incidents in May 2005. The authorities called the revenge attacks by the insurgents "Bannang Sata disease."

Summary of the internal culture of the military units from the south

1. The military units from the south understand the way of life, culture, and traditions of the people in the three southern border provinces well.

The units' operations are geared toward improving access to the general public. They focus on operations that establish relationships and familiarity with villagers based on cultural and religious insights. They aim at creating a feeling that the soldiers belong to the people and that they are there to assist the people. The military units focus on building strong relations with the local communities because they understand the social

and cultural conditions of people in the area. Although perceived as impoverished and deprived, people in the three southernmost provinces in fact are content with their situation. They are the living testimony of the sufficiency economy and have enough to feed on. Most of their time is spent observing religious teaching. They pray five times a day. It is not convenient for the majority of the people to undertake other economic activities. Moreover, the units lack expertise in occupational training unlike those from the northeast. They may provide support for royally sponsored projects such as building infrastructure. But the units are well trained in psychological operations and disaster relief operations. Therefore, the military units from the southern provinces focused their efforts on securing better relations with local communities and responding to their needs. They have initiated a variety of projects to gain access to the local communities in accordance with the local way of life, culture, and tradition. Fifteen projects were implemented including the mobile political education school, "the mosque as the military base," the *pondok* relations project, returning kids to their parents, and the friendship project.

2. The units from the south concentrate on working with other government agencies to enhance security. Their model is the Forty-third Civilian-Police-Military Joint Task Force which had representatives of the military, police, and civilian agencies. They are able to draw on the strengths of other units such as the village defence volunteers who are recruited from the local communities, know the people, can speak the local dialect, and so help liaise with the villagers and improve communications. The police are well-informed about the law and act as the law enforcement agent while the troops provide security. The three parties work together with unity and their operations have been very effective as a result.

3. The units have had experience of working in the three southern border provinces and many of the soldiers are familiar with the local culture. Some of the forces are also recruited from the three southernmost provinces. This is a strong point for the units because local soldiers can operate with efficiency and in line with the traditional way of life and culture. The troops are also familiar with the terrain.

Conclusions and recommendations

> If you ask a Buddhist boy, he will say he wants to be a policeman or a soldier. But a Muslim boy will say he wants to be a bandit. Why? It's because he wants to kill policemen and soldiers.

This statement provides a vital clue to the continuing conflict in the three southernmost provinces. As long as the answer given by young people remains unchanged—that they want to become bandits so that they can kill policemen and soldiers—the efforts to bring an end to the insurgency will be fraught with difficulties.

Why do boys want to be bandits?

Why do boys want to shoot police and soldiers?

These questions have no easy answers. There is an underlying complexity that will take time to untangle but it is a question that urgently needs to be addressed. Guided by the king's advice "to understand, to reach out (to the people) and (to step up) development," the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command has to formulate a coherent strategy for units operating in the three southernmost provinces to implement.

The battle has to be fought at village level and the people must be won over. Those who do not sympathize with the militants have to be separated from those who do. The policy must be able to address the root causes of the conflict and avoid the use of force. It has to be "politics-led."

However, the implementation of policy may vary across units depending on their commanding officers' interpretation of the policy and the units' previous operational experiences. These variations affect the efforts to resolve the conflict. Understanding that the way of life, culture, and customs of the three southernmost provinces are different from the rest of Thailand is a prerequisite for all units working in the area. They have to make accommodation for the differences. Moreover, it is crucial for officers to be disciplined, sincere, and committed to solving problems through peaceful means. This will ensure success in the long run. Although some units have not been able to reduce the incidents of violence, every unit has been able to improve people's attitudes toward the military and convince people to cooperate more with the authorities.

Based on this study, the author would like to make recommendations about the military's approach toward resolving the insurgency in the three southern border provinces.

1. The deployment of appropriate military units in the area is crucial. Military units operating in the area must truly understand the situation and the way of life and culture of people there. Units from either the Fourth Army Region or others must be fully briefed and trained before being dispatched to the assigned areas. Importantly, all units must be fully aware that "a military operation does not constitute a war." The weapon needed in this case is "the word" rather than "the gun." This poses a real challenge for professional soldiers who may see this as a deviation from the norm. Even more important perhaps is awareness of ways in which the military's own culture, values, and norms impacts on their mission. Soldiers have to rein in their own ego and their ideas of dignity and honor. Moreover, they may have to adopt a softer approach, be polite and humble toward local villagers, and make sure this changed attitude is well understood by the local communities through outward demonstrations such as turning checkpoints into places that are friendly and attractive. All these require the troops to adjust both their personalities and their tactics.

2. In order to gain acceptance from the local communities, the operations must be sustained for a reasonable period and supported by troops on the ground in adequate number. A fixed one-year term means each unit has to start over again when it is rotated to a new assigned area, wasting valuable opportunities to make headway in bringing the conflict to an end. At the same time, it is crucial to consider the morale of the soldiers who are stationed for long stretches. Special incentives and rewards have to be considered to maintain the troops' morale.

3. Regional and local government officials including police, administrative officials, and local elected politicians such as members of the Tambon Administrative Organizations and Provincial Administrative Organizations are crucial to solving the conflict in the south both in the short and the long terms. At the "understanding" stage, the military units draw on information from various government agencies in the province to aid planning. In the next stage of reaching out, the assistance of local people such as territorial defence volunteers or district officials is valuable in communicating with local people as the volunteers and local officials usually speak the local dialect and have a

deeper knowledge of the culture. They can help establish the trust between military personnel and the villagers, enabling the soldiers to work more effectively. In the final stage when "development" is stepped up, the military units also need those with local knowledge and expertise and budgetary backup. Since government agencies have their own budgets, it is wise to involve them and let them lead in certain areas of development work where the military lacks the skills and expertise. To ensure cooperation, those involved in the operations should be invited for discussion or briefing sessions so that they can share knowledge with the troops, and get to know one another before going into the field. This will also smooth out coordination among related agencies later on.

4. Community leaders such as village heads, *kamnan*, *imams*, religious teachers, and natural leaders in the communities are key figures in the war to win over the people because their opinions are heeded by local people. Commanding officers of units must ask for a meeting with these key figures, showing respect and regard for them. Their opinions and suggestions should be listened to because they indicate what the local communities want. Moreover, the units should involve these figures and accord them a prominent role in planning and organizing community relations activities. If possible, the unit heads must try to establish close personal relations with these individuals.

5. The public can be divided into many subgroups, namely children and youth, teenagers, occupational groups, and women. The approach toward these groups should be courteous, friendly, and polite. The military units must bear in mind the norms and values of the local communities. They are a proud people who will not stand insults. Moreover, they take promises seriously so the unit heads must be mindful of their own words and avoid making promises unless they are certain that these can be kept, otherwise trust and confidence in the military will not be achieved. The military should make use of the media especially radio and TV with due respect to the way of life of the communities in question. People tend to congregate at tea shops, *pondok* schools, and mosques so these venues may be utilized as natural meeting places where useful and accurate information can be publicized. Moreover, a targeted approach should be developed to establish relations with these different groups.

5.1 Children and youth are the most accessible group and may serve as a bridge to other groups. The appropriate approach is to extend friendly greetings, to give sweets and toys, and to get them involved in games and activities so that they have a positive attitude toward the military and side with the authorities. This kind of approach has proved successful in peace-keeping missions in East Timor and Iraq where it provided a link to parents and other community leaders. If it works in the three southernmost provinces, the army may adopt it as a standard procedure in military-civil relations and peace-keeping missions.

5.2 Teenagers are the group most at risk of being recruited by the militants. In order to undermine these recruitment efforts, the authorities need to see teenagers as a priority group. Those interviewed for this paper said the most effective way to approach this group proved to be the project to assist families affected by the Tak Bai incident. Other activities that received positive response include informal talks at tea shops, special employment schemes, music and sports events, and field trips. For young offenders in drug-related offences and minor crimes, the authorities have given them opportunities to integrate back into their communities by having their sentences dropped. The military units have confirmed that these methods have proved effective in converting

sympathizers.

5.3 The three southern border provinces are richly endowed with natural resources. The long border with Malaysia means that smuggling and legal trade are both booming with many interest groups and criminal gangs operating in the area. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of people have minimum formal education and thus are unable to secure long term employment. Their job opportunities are further affected by some of the security measures in place. The combination of such factors may lead some occupational groups to sympathize with the insurgents' cause, and provide support—material, financial, and otherwise—to the insurgent movement. The authorities must co-opt these groups through "bargaining and trade-offs." Without undermining their capability to earn a living, the authorities may exchange rewards and special treatments for tip-offs and intelligence. This method has yielded satisfactory results.

5.4 Women are the most complex and interesting group. Evidence shows that they feel unhappy about the role and status of women in Muslim society. They have to accept inequality without question, especially in regards to polygamy where men are allowed to have four wives even though most of the women do not approve. They also have to be responsible for raising the family. Any development or change affecting this group must be carefully and thoroughly thought through since a relatively small change may have widespread repercussions on the society as a whole. This point deserves further scrutiny.

5.5 The insurgents themselves have been politicized over a long period to an extent that it will be difficult to change their worldview. The authorities should deploy any measures at their disposal to pressure them including face-to-face talks, surveillance, and re-education. These measures are aimed at raising awareness among members of the insurgent movements that if they do not change their behavior, legal measures may be considered to detain them to ensure the peace and order of the society. At the same time, some members could be approached to seek a peaceful solution through political dialogue. It is worth pointing out that former student leaders who joined the Communist Party of Thailand now take part in national politics.

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Endnotes

[1] The bombing in front of Saen Thamma Withaya School in Su-ngai Kolok District of Narathiwat took place on 11 August 2005 at 0805, killing one person and seriously injuring another.

[2] Trainers from PCRK-132 recounting their direct experience with the "Happy Family" project, 2004–2005.

[3] The *Hayat* prayer is an Islamic prayer and blessing ceremony whereby an *imam* will lead the *Hayat* prayer and the *Duah* chant and share the blessed water with the congregation and the soldiers as a gesture of well-wishing.

5

Reading "Bureaucrat Manuals," writing cultural space: the Thai state's cultural discourses and the Thai–Malay in-between spaces[1]

Decha Tangseefa

In this chapter I analyze documents called "Bureaucrat Manuals." They were produced by various organizations for personnel working with Muslims in Thailand's "southern border provinces." Conceptually, I weave together space, culture, and violence. I treat the "southern border provinces" as *spaces in-between:* not only spaces in between nation-states, but also political, economic, cultural and violent spaces in-between. I argue that the crises in the border provinces are constituted by *space* and *culture,* creating a dynamism that not only disrupts the Thai nation-state's sovereignty as well as its containment strategies, but also finally becomes violent. The *cultural map* and *juridical map* are not congruent. The cultural map is drawn partly by historical allegiances and partly by the realities of border trade, neither of which accepts the state boundary as a demarcation. The juridical map, on the other hand, intransigently entrenches the nation-state's sovereignty and territorial integrity through its control of space and management of peoples in a certain area. Tensions between these two maps have the potential to explode, especially when the nation-state insists on being the only legitimate political actor, and attempts to oppress, conceal, and smother other voices and memories—only to be haunted by those voices and memories that explode when the time is ripe. Within this framework of cultural politics, what discourses are produced and reproduced in "Bureaucrat Manuals"? And what is the price that the Thai state and society have to pay for maintaining the values pronounced by these discourses?

Introduction

When Chaiwat Satha-Anand asked me to conduct this research, the issue assigned was to explore and analyze manuals for Thai Buddhist bureaucrats[2] working with Malay Muslims in Thailand's "southern border provinces." These manuals are books or booklets that had been produced by government agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, or the Prime Minister's Secretariat. The main emphasis of the study is to examine how the Thai state situates its cultural relations with the Malay Muslim "minority,"[3] as manifested in the text of these "Bureaucrat Manuals" used by the Thai state as guidelines for officials to relate with Muslim communities in the southern border provinces. Has the southern borderland violence been stimulated and vitiated by the cultural relations embedded in the manuals? If yes, a conundrum arises: instead of helping to alleviate violence, these bureaucrats have become agents of cultural violence, at the state's behest, from the beginning. As a result, there is already established a continuum from cultural violence to

the production of a violent subject.

There are at least two essential problems with this line of questioning. It assumes that, first, these manuals are kept near at hand and readily available; and second and more importantly, the manuals are influential in forming the ideas, consciousness, and practices of state personnel, and hence in shaping their decisions to act. These two assumptions cast those state personnel as robots programmed to act according to the cultural relations between the Thai state and the "minority" inscribed in those texts.

In this research, I not only follow the line of questioning which the "intellectual sovereign" of this grand research project set for me, but also use this opportunity to view the violence in the southern border provinces from a perspective of borderland studies, a field that has gradually gained currency for a little over a decade. Instead of giving priority to the state and culture[4] *together* as the most important pair of "variables" in forming, retaining, and fanning the wind of violence, as assumed by Chaiwat's line of questioning, which by-the-by also locates the state as an unquestionable political actor, I propose that both the state and culture are greatly determined by geography. In other words, the physical situatedness determines the locations of both state and culture, and hence determines the cultural relations between the state and "minorities" within the state. Thus, I propose *space* as the definitive "variable" that determines relations between culture and state; and I suggest these relations form, retain, and fan violence to the point of becoming a crisis that to date defies solution.

My proposal is to change the "main variable" from *the state* to *space*, and to redraft the equation of violence in a way that enables us to come to better terms with the global dynamism that ever rapidly changes, ever violently blasts, and ever unavoidably penetrates into the multiple domains of the social fabric. I propose this equation of violence by beginning with a discussion of the relation between "Bureaucrat Manuals" and "Manual Studies." Then I "read" the location and characteristics of the studied "manuals," as well as the cultural relations between the Thai state and Malay Muslims embedded within these "manuals." Next, I discuss a nexus between the notion of "southern border provinces" and the concept of "the Others" by introducing a notion of "in-between spaces," as special zones and border zones. I end by urging readers to pay attention to the politics of *now-time.*

"Bureaucrat Manuals" and "Manual Studies"

"Manuals" in the "southern border provinces" and the daily lives of state personnel

> The idea of having manuals for non-Muslim bureaucrats working in the southern border provinces *thus should be considered as a correct policy* because at least bureaucrats who work in this area will have knowledge, understanding, and an ability to use that knowledge for practical ends. If [those bureaucrats] perform according to the intentions [of the policies], [they] will create good understanding between people and bureaucrats as well as create confidence and faith toward their work, which will [in turn] create good results both for the government's policy implementation as well as for the whole country.[5]

This idea of the Chularachamontri (the official head of the Muslim community in Thailand) in a document published in a *Manual for bureaucrats in the southern border provinces* echoes many peoples' understanding about the essentiality of "Bureaucrat

Manuals" in spaces called the "southern border provinces." These special zones require special understanding and special practices, different from those that the Thai state's personnel exercise in other parts of the country. These zones have unique cultural politics because of two important conditions that must both be present. First, in the zones, the religion of most people differs from that of the majority of people in Thailand. Second, these zones are located at the margin of the Thai state. Hence, I use four criteria to select the booklets known as "manuals" for this study. First, they must be used only in the southern border provinces. Second, although they are called "Bureaucrat Manuals," the "practices" they describe may be relevant to other personnel, such as state enterprise workers, or researchers (who may or may not be bureaucrats). Third, they are manuals designed for personnel to consult in their *daily life* practices, as this research is about the effects of these "manuals" on their readers' worldviews and everyday life—their effectiveness in "socializing" personnel to become docile bodies according to the dominant discourses pervading the society, as revealed through the organizations to which these personnel belong.[6] Finally, any document that meets these criteria, even without the word "manual" attached, qualifies for inclusion. For example, there is an annual series of *Documents for orientation of bureaucrats, local government personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces*[7] that are vital as they are materials that "open the door" of cultural politics for personnel sent to work in these special zones, knowingly or not.[8]

A question must nonetheless be raised: do these people live their daily lives, "manual" in hand?[9] If yes, do they read them? And when they go to the annual orientation, do they pay attention to the content? From an informal interview with some trainers, I was told that the content of these orientations has changed hardly at all. Moreover, by talking to some personnel (civilian, police, and military), I learnt that quite a number of them did not want to attend these orientations; and when they did attend, they mostly sat waiting for the coffee break or lunch. The package distributed at the orientation would be kept in a filing cabinet afterwards and often go missing should someone ask to look at it. In addition, when I was searching for materials at some organizations (both governmental and non-governmental), I was told that since the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) had been dissolved,[10] all the documents had been thrown away (before the SBPAC was resurrected by the Surayud government). If these materials are so weighty, before assessing the role of these "manuals" in shaping the mentality of state personnel, we should first explore "Manual Studies."

"Manual Studies" and research questions

Research on documents considered as "manuals" is quite common.[11] Such research tends to suggest that these documents have more significance in the life of society than most people would imagine. One reason is that manuals "open… a window on the underlying conflicts of their age."[12] Each manual is situated in a cultural milieu where dominant values are hegemonic, and in turn legitimize the existence of such manuals. For instance, Judy Hilkey studies 144 manuals published between 1870 and 1910 for people who wanted to be successful during the U.S.'s Gilded Age of emerging industrial capitalism.[13] Hilkey treats these manual as "part of the cultural apparatus that helped legitimize and establish the hegemony of the new industrial order."[14]

Nonetheless, although most manuals reinforce the society's dominant discourses,

every manual has to encounter counter-discourses that vie to define socio-cultural life.[15] Many scholars who study manuals state that they are interested in manuals not because those manuals "tame dissent, but how their doing so changes social life."[16] Though this issue is not directly related to this research, it helps guide this study's three questions. The first question is: what discourses of the Thai state were being reinforced during the 83-year period from 1923 to 2006 when these fourteen manuals were developed? If these discourses are a main cause of the southern crises, what is the price the Thai state and society has to pay? The third question is implied in these first two: What are the political implications of the special relations between the Thai state and Malay Muslims in these special spaces? Before answering these questions, we must first "read" these "manuals."

Locations of the text and cultural relations

Locations of the text

The fourteen "bureaucrat manuals" studied in this research in order of publication are as follows:[17]

1) Phra Rangsan Sarakit (Tiam Kanjanaprakan). 1923. *Samut khumu samrap kharatchakan krasuang mahatthai thi rap ratchakan nai monthon sung mi phonlamuang napthu satsana itsalam* (Manual for the Ministry of Interior's bureaucrats working in the territory that has believers in Islam).[18]
2) Administration Center for Southern Border Provinces (ACSBP). 1993. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan thetsaban phanakngan ratwisahakit nai changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2536* (Document for orientation: orientation project for bureaucrats, municipal personnel, state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 1993) (n.p.: ACSBP).
3) ACSBP. 1994. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan thetsaban phanakngan ratwisahakit nai changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2537* (Document for orientation: orientation project for bureaucrats, municipal personnel, state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 1994) (n.p.: ACSBP).
4) ACSBP. 1995. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet prachampi 2538: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan thetsaban lae phanakngan ratwisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai* (Document for orientation in 1995: orientation project for bureaucrats, municipal personnel, state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces) (n.p.: ACSBP).
5) ACSBP. 1998. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan thetsaban lae phanakngan ratwisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2541* (Document for orientation: orientation project for bureaucrats, municipal personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 1998) (Yala: Serm Printing).
6) ACSBP. 1999. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan suan thongthin lae phanakngan ratwisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2542* (Document for orientation: orientation project for bureaucrats, local personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 1999) (Yala: Serm Printing).

7) ACSBP. 2000. *Laksut lae ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan suan thongthin lae phanakngan ratwisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2543* (Curriculum and document for orientating bureaucrats, local personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 2000) (Yala: Serm Printing).
8) ACSBP. 2001. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan suan thongthin lae phanakngan ratwisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2544* (Document for orientating bureaucrats, local personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border province, 2001) (n.p.: Personnel Development Division, ACSBP).
9) Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC). 2002(?).[19] *Khumu kanpathibat ratchakan nai changwat chaidaen phaktai* (Manual for government operations in the southern border provinces) (Bangkok: Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior).
10) Office of the Prime Minister. 2002(?).[20] *Khumu kharatchakan nai phunthi changwat chaidaen phaktai* (Manual for bureaucrats in the southern border province area) (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister).
11) Research Coordination Unit for the Lower South. 2003(?).[21] *Kanthamngan kap chumchon mutsalim* (Working with Muslim communities) (Pattani: Research Coordination Unit for the Lower South).
12) Secretariat of the Prime Minister. 2004. *Khumu samrap kharatchakan thi pracham khetchangwat chaidaen phaktai sung mi phonlamuang napthu satsana itsalam* (Manual for bureaucrats working in the southern border provinces with people believing in Islam) (Bangkok: Prime Minister's Secretariat).
13) Ministry of Interior, Front Office, Yala. 2005. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan suan thongthin lae phanakngan ratwisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2548.* (Document for orientation: orientation project for bureaucrats, local government personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 2005) (Yala: Yala Printing).
14) Ministry of Interior, Front Office, Yala. 2006. *Ekkasan prakop kanpathomnithet: khrongkan pathomnithet kharatchakan phanakngan suan thongthin lae phanakngan ratvisahakit changwat chaidaen phaktai prachampi 2549.* (Document for orientation: orientation project for bureaucrats, local government personnel, and state enterprise personnel in the southern border provinces, 2006) (Yala: Yala Printing).[22]

The content of the fourteen manuals can be categorized into two types:[23]

a) Cultural knowledge and instructions for non-Muslim personnel on proper conduct with Muslim communities:
   - on the Qur'an;
   - Islamic cultures;
   - Muslim communities' ways of life in the southern border provinces;
   - local language;
   - 'Answers and suggestions from the Chularachamontri (Prasert Mahamad) with

practical guidelines for proper conduct regarding issues of conflict in Islam';
- principles for performing duty in the southern border province area;
- dos and don'ts for non-Muslim bureaucrats in the southern border provinces.

b) The Thai state's policies, laws, and plans:
- 'Principles of public policy and administration for Monthon[24] Pattani' (by King Rama VI);
- Principles of governance in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun;
- national security policies regarding the southern border provinces, such as the Prime Minister's Orders, "Ten Commandments," tactics for total security;
- major strategies, plans, and development projects in the southern border provinces;
- Act on the Administration of Islamic Organizations

Of all the fourteen "manuals," only the eleventh, *Working with Muslim communities* was not produced by a state security agency. Of the remaining thirteen, nine are documents for orientating new contingents sent to work in the southern border provinces. Of these thirteen, all those except the 1923 and 2004 publications have virtually the same content as the seventh. These thirteen manuals are based on two "originals": the 1923 edition and the 2000 edition. The others were reproduced with a little editing or with the incorporation of a small amount of new information.

If we believe that reproduction confirms the content's significance, then we should note that only two passages are exactly the same in the latest editions of 2004 and 2006 (numbers 12 and 14). They are: 'Understanding Muslim communities' cultural ethos,' and 'Dos and don'ts: guidelines for state personnel in the southern border provinces.'[25] Similarly, the only manual not published by a government agency (number 11, by Research Coordination Unit for the Lower South) mainly focuses on proper understanding and sensitivity toward cultural difference, and on the importance of not disparaging Muslim people or communities.[26]

The reproduction of "manuals": from "culture" to security discourse

I will "read" the two "original manuals," namely the 1923 edition (double-checked against the 2004 version which is almost the same), and the 2000 edition. The two "originals" give similar accounts of cultural relations between the Thai state, Thai Buddhist society, and the Muslim communities in the southern border area, though each employs the language of its era. Both pay attention to cultural difference and present an image of a conciliatory atmosphere between the two communities of different religions.[27] Yet, there are two issues: the question of culture, and the question of the reproduction of the content of these "manuals." Together, these two issues display how the Thai state situates its cultural relations with the southern Muslim communities. In short, the Thai state has not paid attention to the *dynamism* of cultural relations, which have immensely changed between the first publication in 1923 and the latest in 2006. Moreover, the image of conciliation portrayed in both "manuals" raises a question: How have the Muslim communities of the southern border area been positioned as a "minority" in the equation of government and administration in the name of "security"?

The previous section showed that after the reproduction of these manuals up to the 2004 and 2006 editions, what remained common to both "manuals" was only a) understanding about cultural aspects of Muslim communities, and b) guidelines for state officials in the southern border provinces. These contents can be categorized into two parts: on the ideological *foundation* of Islam, and on the cultural *ethos* of Muslim communities.[28] The first category contains some essential principles of Islam which the reader must understand, such as the meanings of "Islam" and "Allah." The second category contains applications of the first category in the daily lives of the Muslims. The implication is that the social and cultural context of the Muslim communities is important in framing the second category, and the two categories combined constitute Islamic culture in a broad sense. Yet, the way that the government agencies producing the "manuals" have compiled materials of these two categories tends to *fix* Islamic culture with no attention to the passage of time. For example, most of the fourteen "manuals" produced between 1998 and 2007 have a section called 'Answers and suggestions by the Chularachamontri (Prasert Mahamad) with practical guidelines for proper conduct regarding issues of conflict in Islam,' based on a conversation recorded in 1982. This exemplifies the representation of Muslim culture as static. Muslim ways of life are thus "frozen" like relics in museum. Over time, government agencies are *museumizing* Islamic culture.

This museumization of culture in most "manuals" becomes more complex when readers find traces of the nexus between "bureaucrat manual" and the nation-state in two dimensions: bureaucratic inefficiency and the discourse of "security." When the first "original" of 1923 was reproduced as the 2004 edition, the Prime Minister's Secretariat paid no attention to the lapse of eighty-one years between the "original" and the "reproduction." In addition, the compiler paid no attention to the difference between foundations of Islamic ideology and the cultural ethos of Muslim communities. Though announced as a "new edition", in fact the 2004 volume is virtually the same as 1923 except for "updating the language for the present time."[29] The compiler not only writes that "the content of this manual is still useable at present," but also states:

> Since this manual was published in 1923 until now (2004), it has been more than eighty years. But it seems all the advice for bureaucrats contained herein is not outdated at all. To carry out official duties in the southern border provinces today still requires sensitivity to the socio-cultural character, the understanding of which *is no different.*[30]

Even those who pay scant attention to the crisis of cultural politics in the deep south, where violence and death have become part of daily life, should be able to grasp that after these eighty years, the "socio-cultural character" *is drastically different.* In 1923, the knowledge on Islam and Muslim communities on the part of the Thai state and society was very limited—incomparable to our present understanding in the current context in which worldwide militant networks traverse state boundaries.[31] And yet the compiler of this "manual" writes:

> …hence, if we look at the problem that occurred on 4 January 2004, it may be a "signal" warning us to *finally* wake up from ignorance and lack of understanding about the socio-cultural differences existing within the Thai state.[32]

This passage assumes that the crises in the southern border provinces in the past

could not serve as "signals" at all. In the 'Principles of public policy and administration for Monthon Pattani,'[33] bestowed by King Rama VI on 6 July 1923, the monarch clearly urged his personnel sent to the deep south to heed the socio-cultural differences. "We" must have woken up a long time ago, not just after the "Gun Stealing Incident" on 4 January 2004.

The inefficiency continues. Comparing the language between the 1923 and 2004 editions reveals an instrumental utilitarianism towards Muslim communities, solely for the sake of governance and the security of the state:

> Likewise, with teachers, *toh-kru*, and *imams* in the southern border provinces. If we build good relations with knowledgeable and respected teachers and Imams, by compiling separate registers of teachers and imams, and then gradually building good relations with them, such as engaging them in conversation or organizing some special meeting *just for ceremony*, such as a meeting to enquire about some past work, whether there was anything that offended religion or government, whether there was anything that needed to be changed or pursued. If the teachers and imams cooperate, it will be very expedient for the government.[34]

The 1923 edition did not contain the problematic phrase:

> Likewise, with teachers in Monthon Pattani. If we select those that are knowledgeable and respected, compile a special district register, and then follow up by engaging them in conversation or organizing some meeting *with suitable ceremony*, such as a meeting to enquire about some past work, whether there was anything that offended religion or government, whether there were any customs that needed to be changed, or anything about taxation. If the teachers are on our side, it will be very expedient for the government.[35]

Juxtaposing the two passages shows the carelessness involved in "reproducing" the content of the "manuals." Suggesting officials should interact with *imams* "just for show" (where the earlier version implied due respect) not only encourages state personnel to have no respect for people who are revered within Muslim communities, but also demonstrates how a state agency (the Prime Minister's Secretariat, no less) forms and confirms the relations between the Thai state apparatus and a "minority." It demonstrates a lack of respect for communities with a different cultural ethos from mainstream Thai society.[36]

A question then arises: When the Thai state "takes care of" (*du lae* in Thai) the southern border provinces, is this a matter of *pokkhrong* (government), or *pok* + *khrong*, "cover over" + "take possession", extending hegemony over the bodies and lives of peoples in an area?[37] If so, another question follows: do communities in the border provinces wish to be taken as possessions without concern for their own voices? What is the price that Thai society has to pay, when the Thai state's "governing" is not a form of administration that opens opportunities for people to participate in setting the political agenda and determining their own fates? The "manuals" for the southern border attest to the efforts to understand Islam and Muslim cultures, showing that the "drafters" deem such efforts to be crucial for the effective "administration" of the three border provinces. Yet this study of the "manuals" shows that even after eighty-plus years, parts of the Thai state apparatus still have an attitude toward Muslim communities in the southern border provinces that is much more disturbing than the attitude of those drafting the "manuals" in the past. When these problematic "manuals" fall into the hands of various peoples with

varying degrees of cultural concern and sensitivity, what attitudes do they help to cultivate, what ways of speaking about Muslim communities do they encourage, and what kind of interactions with the communities do they shape? How worrying is this?

Let me sum up the argument thus far. For the Thai state, the Muslim communities in the deep south have become merely a group of people known to exist, mainly for the benefit of the Thai state, while their well-being is a by-product. These people have undergone inclusive exclusion under the governance of the Thai state.[38] The Thai state and nation classify their relations with the Muslim communities under the heading of "security." Given the meaning of "government" (*pokkhrong*) considered above, "security" here scarcely means the security of the Muslims in these border provinces.

As a discourse, "security" is a technology of power that sovereign authorities—be they nation-state, absolute monarchy, community leaders, or even family heads— deploy to govern, control, and command peoples within a certain space. The discourse of security is not equally subtle and seamless in every space. It varies from the direct exercise of violence to the tender yet profound control of education. Whatever other effects it may have, the discourse of security determines the ways of talking about other related matters, such as the importance of social order, the need to use violence at appropriate times, the definition of the "Others" who are not one of "Us" (including Muslims) as "disquieting elements" or even "separatists." Usually such statements pass without any scrutiny of the complexities they mask. Most importantly, "security" becomes something natural, an undeniable and unquestionable truth. In any family, community, or nation-state, there is no room for "insecurity." Whoever challenges "security" becomes a deviant in the family or a traitor to the community or nation-state.

As discursive practice, the "Bureaucrat Manuals" are an example of a disciplinary regime in the Foucauldian sense, with a double meaning. First, they aim to discipline the personnel that act as representatives of the state in negotiations with Muslims who are the "Others" of the Thai. Second, in these negotiations, the Thai state aims to produce Muslims as docile bodies,[39] transforming them from otherness to "sameness" as much as possible. This sameness must at the very least conform to the consciousness and practices mandated by the Thai state such as paying respect to the royal family members who visit the southern border provinces. But the fact that a "manual" containing such problems has survived for over eighty years suggests that this transformation of "Them" into "Us" (if that is the aim) is just too difficult. The problematic "manual" produced by the Prime Minister's Secretariat raises a question: Is the Thai state too crude to deal with something requiring tolerance and sensitivity like *culture*?

"Bureaucratic Manuals" are a discursive practice that weaves multiple discourses into a single cultural milieu, which in turn produces dominant values that are, by and large, unquestionable. Yet, the effectiveness of the "manuals" to subtly produce and manage the spaces of the southern border provinces is still not visible. The only thing visible at the moment is that, because these documents are "Bureaucrat Manuals," the state personnel who read them need not question whether they believe the contents or not. Their *duty* is to believe and follow. The "Bureaucrat Manuals" make those obliged to read them into agents of the state. State power is thus enforced, confirmed, and sustained because these agents are merely the mediums of the state's sovereign power.

Yet whether "Bureaucrat Manuals" are effective depends on the cultural politics and geographical environment of the southern border provinces which envelop these

"manuals." Hence it is necessary to understand the cultural politics of "otherness" and "sameness" by examining the location of "the Others" and the specialness of the southern border provinces.

"The Others" and the "southern border provinces": special spaces, border spaces, and in-between spaces

Muslims, *"jek"*[40] and "Communists": "otherness in sameness" and "the Others Within"

Reading the "Bureaucrat Manuals" made me aware of the processes of treating Muslims in the south as "Others" not as "Us." The projects to "understand" and "reach out to"[41] Muslim communities by the Thai state apparatuses, then or now, have generally been attempts to understand "the Others Within,"[42] under the logic of instrumentally utilitarian governance, amounting to an inclusive exclusion of the others, not including them as "one of us." This is different from the way the Thai state treated the "Chinese," who finally became part of the discourse of *"khon thai"* (Thai people). In that case, the difference between the Chinese and the Thai was only in the ethnic dimension. Once Thailand thrived economically and the Chinese played an instrumental part in this success, the Chinese became Thai, shared the same "imagined community," turned into "one of us," with only faint lingering traces of difference. The Chinese could enter a shared imagination because material conditions were powerful enough to overcome ethnic difference.

From this material perspective, one of the most acutely powerful examples in the history of confrontation between "the Thai" and "the Others" was the battle with the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). We must not forget that in communism, the emphasis is on material conditions determining consciousness and social change. Hence, at the end of the day, ethnic and religious differences are not definitive dimensions. This ideological condition based on material factors was more easily managed by the Thai state than the confrontation with "the Muslim Others." The Thai state engaged with the CPT under the 66/23 policy of 1980, using a political strategy to defuse differences and fight both an ideological and military war.[43] Yet, we must not forget also that thriving economic conditions from the early 1980s onwards, as well as the easing of tension between the liberal world and the communist world at the global level, undermined a communist mass-mobilization based on material conditions.

As for Muslim communities, how has the inclusive exclusion by both the Thai state and society affected the peoples and the special cultural zones in the southern border provinces? Or, is it the case that the Thai state and society consider such communities and zones as barren cultural spaces, not worthy of attention, until the violence explodes, and only then does the mind turn to seeking a solution?[44] The next section answers these questions.

"Southern border provinces": special spaces, border spaces, and in-between spaces[45]

Many books and documents produced by state security agencies, academics (both within and without the state's security fold), non-governmental organizations, private sector bodies, media, and other autonomous agencies all mention the cultural uniqueness

of peoples in the southern border provinces, and the history of the Buddhist majority's relations with the majority of peoples in the deep south whose faith is Islam.[46] Yet, this uniqueness results *not only* from ethnic and religious differences, but also from the fact that these Muslims' are situated in a *borderland.*

The report by the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), entitled *Overcoming violence through the power of reconciliation,* mentioned the "border geography" as a social-structural factor, namely that the southern border provinces are geographically adjacent to Malaysia with only the Ko-lok River (which some say "is only drainage during the wet season") as a natural state boundary. This fact, the report continues, generates two problems: pervasive dual citizenship, and migration to Malaysia. Hence, any solution to the southern problem depends on cooperation from the neighboring country, and we must not "treat Malaysia as the bad guy."[47]

Yet, the borderland-ness of the southern border provinces is much more complex than this, and inevitably those who search for solutions to problems arising in this space must confront this complexity and the anxiety it generates. Often such people have to distance themselves from the state-centric paradigm[48] in order to understand the histories of the various forces— peoples, cultures, and capitals—that existed prior to the creation of either the Thai or Malay nation-states. These forces were the result of normal contact between communities for exchange, communication, and trade. A villager along the U.S.–Mexico border once said: "We did not cross border, border crossed us."[49] Once a nation-state has established a juridical map, it usually (or always?) disregards the socio-cultural fabric, histories, and people's memories of the space that existed prior to the creation of the nation-state.[50] The border subjects, who had been there long before the nation-state, threaten both the territorial integrity as well as the narrative of nationhood of both Thailand and Malaysia—their "imagined communities,"[51] as it were.

Moreover, when a state-boundary is cut through the socio-cultural fabric of peoples, separating them into membership of different nation-states, incongruence of membership ensues. The sense of belonging of communities is divided and managed by more than one nation-state. In the case of the southern border provinces, the separation becomes more acute due to the distance between the cultural milieu and ethos of the borderland and those of the Thai nation-state. The narratives of the past and collective memories of the Muslim communities differ from (and many times are alienated from) those of "Thai nationhood." The sense of estrangement that southern Muslims have towards the Thai nation-state is hence a rule not an exception. And it is not outlandish for them to have a sense of allegiance to transnational communities rather than to the national society.[52]

Problems arise when a nation-state, not just Thailand, attempts to "manage" border communities by controlling and homogenizing them (often by violence), and the boundary of the state becomes a boundary of violence.[53] The fact that a state boundary is both a site and a claim by the dominant geopolitical discourse generates both conflict and representations of violence, determining those who do and do not belong to a state. These processes of identity formation "privilege the nation-state as the venue for political contest and change,"[54] while peoples (especially those whose cultures differ from that of the mainstream) have far less legitimacy in political action than the nation-state (and in some case, have none at all). Yet every nation-state from the past to the present encounters traces of the past that are ready to assert themselves or explode. Time and again, nation-states have hidden, forgotten, glossed over, or erased the histories and

memories of people in their territories,[55] especially along border zones where stand-offs, negotiations, and compromises are the law not the exception. Attempts to homogenize border zones, shaping them in the image of the center, have been futile, and even the use of force to this effect fails to deliver lasting results.

Borderlands thus not only symbolize nation-states' powers and their limits, but also engender conflict and accommodation. Because these spaces are filled with the cultural practice of many peoples with histories of migration and displacement, any attempt to impose "what culture signifies or what is signified by culture" becomes complicated. (The mistakes by the compilers of the manuals are a good example.) The center of the Thai state must be aware that the borderlands are zones strewn with cultural translations and negotiations.[56] As Kwame Anthony Appiah once stated, in every encounter there is not only contamination but also nourishment.[57] Every nation-state's borderland affirms this thought. In other words, this generation of Thai people is unlikely to witness the stable establishment of "Thai national identity" in the southern border provinces. The explosion of violence after the "Gun Stealing Incident" of 4 January 2004 supports this prognosis. Yet Muslim communities in this borderland cannot retain their identities amidst the fast and (at times) furious changes of the world around and far away from them, especially, in the context of a global "war against terrorism" that in many ways fuels the fires of differences in the southern border provinces.

Philosophically speaking, the discussion thus far is based on Giorgio Agamben's conception of sovereign power. Inspired by Agamben, I contend that the idea of a "Thai–Malay state boundary" is problematic. In the Agambenian topology of sovereign power, borderlands are zones of irreducible indistinction between what is outside and what is inside a sovereign jurisdiction—between violence and law, or between law and life. In these spaces, *exception* and *rule* flow through one another to the point of literal indistinction.[58] In practice, more and more "illegal" goods are smuggled, more and more "illegal" peoples traverse through many "doorways" along the border zones, and more and more weaponry, both simple and complex, is smuggled across. Consequently, it is imperative to understand *the transnational*[59] together with all the forces that rupture the territorial integrity of the nation-state. The transnational is not only state-to-state cooperation (in which nation-states are the main actors), but also movements of capital, peoples, and cultures which do not conform to nation-state rules, especially transgressions of state boundaries that are "illegal" in the state-centric discourses, such as "illegal" border trade and "illegal" migration. In other words, borderlands are spaces in-between where dimensions of culture, politics, economics, and violence are woven together in such a complex pattern that often the strands are indistinguishable. These spaces are contact zones of heterogeneity amidst the attempts at homogenization by the nation-state.[60] As for the Thai–Malay in-between spaces, since the creation of Thailand and Malaysia, the two nation-states have attempted to achieve the "amnesiac 'suspension of historical time'"[61] among peoples who have been converted into "others" (in the same way as happened in other in-between spaces), without realizing that "there is always a trace of non-presence in presence" and that the historical existence of the two nation-states has "debts to other times."[62]

Yet alongside the amnesia of the two nation-states, the histories and memories of the southern Muslim communities have been part of temporalities produced by global economic forces, part of "capital times," resulting from the "sovereignty of money"[63] and

the geography of capital.[64] Such capital times produce various dramas of various subjectivities,[65] because "money turns value into a *flow* that tends to escape the juridical frame of political territoriality,"[66] often disrupting the territorial integrity of nation-states. Furthermore, capital times disrupt the nation-state's management of ideas about the past, present, and future,[67] generating anxiety about nationhood. Driven by market mechanisms, capital times often disrupt any attempt to unify memories of the past, self-understanding in the present, and anticipation of the nation-state's future. By being part of capital times, some disquieting Muslims have been able to disrupt the Thai state's ideational management of their past, present, and future.[68] They have also competed with the Thai state's production of space, resulting in confrontations between the cultural maps of the Muslim "Others" and the juridical maps of the Thai nation-state.

As the disquieting Muslims do not share a sense of belonging with the Thai nation-state, their cultural maps have often been forced to negotiate with the Thai state's juridical map in extreme ways. Moreover, the translations of their "culture" have been more ubiquitous than the "national culture" of the Thai state. Hence, the peoples of the Muslim communities in the southern border provinces have to re-enact their cultural identities in their attempt to survive. This is part of "living on the borderlines."[69] Many Muslim communities find that their identity as a political community has to be fought for, and that their cultural identity is far more vulnerable than the Thai "national culture."

Unlike the concept of a national culture with a claim to "continuity of an authentic 'past' and a living 'present,'" the culture of marginal communities depends more on strategies for survival.[70] However, there have been times when some Muslim communities located in the Thai-Malay in-between spaces were able to grasp the past and make the present of Thailand appeared bizarre—creating the *times of the now*[71]—because history is "the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]."[72]

From time to time, marginal communities are blasted out of the homogenous continuum of Thailand's national time, creating *another time* belonging to "Others," a full-time when they can articulate their pain and their hope of exerting themselves and gaining recognition as political subjects qualified to "express themselves" in public space in the Thai–Malay in-between spaces. Yet, such full-time of self-assertion has often been seen as a time of "insurgents," "rebels," "criminals," or "terrorists."[73] Their struggles recall many past attempts to disrupt[74] the Thai state's normalization of the present state of affairs in which Muslim communities have little opportunity to make themselves heard. They evoke the pasts that undermine the normalized present, exploding Thailand's hegemonic history and temporalities. The "Gun Stealing Incident," "Krue Ze Tragedy," and "Tak Bai Killing" are just some in a lengthening list. These are attempts to make themselves visible and transfigure the field of experience of life at the margins, but with horrible cost for both many Muslim communities and the Thai state, right down to the present with no end in sight.

The three modalities underpinning both the symbolic and material conditions of daily life in the border zones are *cultural encounters, capital-electronic circuits,*[75] *and the state's territory* (and hence sovereign power). Of these, the first two are more prominent than the third. Yet the state's territory/sovereign power is firmly and at times insidiously entrenched. Capital-electronic circuits and cultural encounters can weaken the sovereign power, diminishing the authority of the nation-state in the border zones where the

borderline ought to symbolize the nation-state's power. Performing terror in the borderlands is one way for the nation-state to signify its jurisdiction. We must not forget, as William Connolly emphasizes, that to "occupy territory… is both to receive sustenance and to exercise violence." There are strains of terror embedded in the logic of territorialization.

When necessary, the sovereign power performs terror in order to maintain the territorial integrity of the nation-state. Again, the "Krue Ze Tragedy," and the "Tak Bai Killing" were stark examples. According to Connolly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* derives *territory* "from *terrere,* meaning to frighten, to terrorize, to exclude." And *territorium* is "a place from which people are warned."[76] The disquieting elements in the southern border provinces are "the Others" that must be warned to leave Thai soil.

The Thai–Malay in-between spaces are where we witness a *real* state of exception,[77] ready to erupt every now and then. They are not neutral spaces, but places where the nation-state attempts to achieve the "amnesiac suspension of historical time" of "the Others." The histories and memories of the Muslim "Others" in these spaces are forgotten; their voices are not heard; their practices of space and identity are delegitimated by the state-centric paradigm. The geographical imaginary of this paradigm ignores the contest to define the past, determine the present, and develop a foundation for the future. And how do the Thai state's practices in this regard figure in the "Bureaucrat Manuals"?

Politics of "now-time": from "Bureaucrat Manuals" to the Thai state and society

> Before we have learned to deal with things in a given position, they have already changed several times. Thus, we always perceive events too late, and politics always needs to foresee, so to speak, the present. (Anne Robert Turgot, *Oeuvres*)[78]

Since the dawn of the "new millennium" (according to the Christian calendar) the world has encountered an unceasing series of violent events. The daily lives of the world's citizens have increasingly become lives under a "state of exception." There is a long list of violent events involving *transnational subjects* traversing state boundaries. In Thailand, it started with the Ratchaburi Hospital siege along the Thai-Burmese border at the dawn of the "new millennium"—an event which shook the country to its "core," if ever there was one. By the end of the same year, a group of "illegal" laborers had escaped from a prison in a fishing-industry province, only to be executed on a "killing road" close to the Thai–Burmese state boundary. At the global level, the destruction of 9/11 was soon followed by the Bali, Cairo, and London bombings.[79] In 2004, in the Muslim-majority far south of Thailand, the atrocious killings at the Krue Ze Mosque in April were followed by the equally, if not more, atrocious Tak Bai killings in October, leading to a generally higher level of violence in the area. In 2005, the world witnessed the rage of the descendants of Africa in France. Through 2006, southern Thailand's violence continued to escalate. Among the incidents were: fifty simultaneous bombs on 15 June; 118 violent coordinated incidents in twenty-seven districts of four provinces on the night of 1 August;[80] twenty-two banks bombed in five districts on 31 August; and bombs in Hat Yai, the economic center of the lower south, on 16 September. Obviously, we must not forget the liquid bomb in London in August. There has been no convincing sign that this list will

not be lengthened.

After reading all the "Bureaucrat Manuals" in this global context of violence, I ask myself, as a student of violence, what do I make of them? For me, the "Bureaucrat Manuals" are *surveys of the cultural spaces of otherness*. They did not pay adequate attention to the *dynamism* of the cultural geography of these special zones. Various cultural markers are mentioned—such as streams of religious teachings, brooks of social fabrics of Muslims, hills of prohibitions and traditions of Muslim cultures—but without awareness that these markers have met with rapid, violent, and penetrating changes among the Thai Malay from the in-between spaces to the global level. These markers were left after each survey. Each time that another survey was conducted, another "manual" produced, there was almost nothing to confirm that the producers really went "into the field" to understand the confrontations between streams of teaching and oceans of global change; the brooks of Muslims' social fabric swept away by the Thai state's giant waves; the hills of prohibitions and traditions of Muslim cultures bombed by violence in many areas. On the contrary, later surveys just copied the results of old surveys, without being attentive to social contexts or locations or interactions between the ever-changing Muslim and Buddhist communities.[81] Consequently, to say that a dark cloud of violence has cloaked the southern border provinces since 4 January 2004 (again, the "Gun Stealing Incident") is to talk about violence only after its impact is intense and widespread. But if we had paid attention to voices from the border provinces, we would have learnt that the violence erupted a long time ago. I would like to end this article with three remarks.

1) Listening to voices of difference. As a researcher who studies atrocities committed against common people along the Thai-Burmese in-between spaces, I have become convinced that learning from other border zones and from other suppressed or oppressed peoples will enable Thai society to understand the complex reality of violence. One of the Thai society's most crucial problems (not unique to Thailand) is the inability to tolerate voices of differences, and allow those differences to play out in the theatre of politics. When I first conducted fieldwork in the Thai–Burmese border zones in 2000–1 for my doctoral dissertation, I had an opportunity to interview a leader of a group opposing the Burmese junta. I asked whether he had anything to tell Thai society. "Don't pressure us," he said.

The Dusun-nyor,[82] Krue Ze, and Ratchaburi Hospital incidents, as well as many other events occurring along the margins of Thai society, demonstrate how poor both the Thai state and society are at accepting differences that are revealed through *historical indications,* yet usually pass by without sufficient attention. In a way, this is understandable because it is the nature of the state to control and dissolve differences. But to suppress differences in the present, to suppress memories and narratives, puts the state itself in danger, as my next concluding remark explains.

2) The intertwining three geographies. After my fieldwork along the Thai–Burmese in-between spaces in 2000–1, and after developing theoretical strategies to understand the political entanglements in the forcible displacement of peoples in those zones, I was not surprised by the crisis of 9/11, or the bombings in London, Cairo, Bali, and Jordan. After the Krue Ze tragedy on 28 April 2004, I gave an interview to one of the two national

English-language newspapers, the *Bangkok Post,* saying I saw dark clouds at the horizon and they were moving towards us, because of the way the Thai state "managed" the tragedy, and because Thai society allowed its anxiety to legitimize state violence, as was the case in the Ratchaburi Hospital siege in 2000 and the execution of prisoners in Kanchanaburi at the end of the same year. After the Krue Ze tragedy, I spoke in various venues that I would not be surprised if there was a simultaneous bombing in various areas of Thailand. Peoples, cultures, and capitals traverse state boundaries beyond the capacity of the nation-state to control. Both simple and complex weaponry are part of this traffic.

3) Histories of "the Others" and attentiveness to signs of crisis. I would like to end this article with Walter Benjamin's concept that history must "blast the epoch out of the reified 'continuity of history,'"[83] that allows no space for the disruptive narratives of "the Others." Moreover, it must also "explode the homogeneity of the epoch, interspersing it with ruins—that is, with the present."[84] Such "ruins" are the traces of the existence of peoples who have been suppressed or oppressed. His conception of history opens a theoretical space for these peoples. By paying attention to their existence, we realize that "the 'state of exception' in which we live is the rule."[85] For Benjamin, the true subject of historical knowledge is "the struggling, oppressed class itself."[86] Only by paying attention of the present *before* being attentive to history can we be cognizant of the ruins. It is to pay attention to *now-time,* which is "a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past," as *now-time* "comprises that entire history of mankind in an enormous abridgment."[87] The historian's task is thus to be aware that the present state of affairs contains indications into history that may be imperceptible. Historians must be able to *read* the present, and "to ignite the explosive materials that are latent in what has been," namely suppression or oppression. In this way, to approach "'what has been' means to treat it not historiographically, as heretofore, but politically, in political categories."[88] Historians must grasp the vivid images blasting out of the daily life of "the oppressed" (not just those of the state), because these images are enactments of their present, ruptures in the normal continuity of the hegemonic narrative that has dominated society, chances to grasp the past of the oppressed and fill the present of the hegemons (the state and sovereign powers) with oddity and anxiety—just like Thai society since the day of "Gun Stealing" by "petty thieves."[89]

Endnotes

[1] I would like to pay homage to those who have died from crises in the southern border provinces since the Thai nation-state was established. This research is also written to pay respect to my teacher, Professor Sombat Chanthornwong, for his sixtieth birthday in 2005. I would like to express my gratitude to a few persons who helped make this research in the form it is now (with apologies to those I forget to mention), especially Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Chayanit Poonyarat, Janjira Sombutpoonsiri, Surat Kompot (my hard-working research assistant), Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng, Warapree Tangseefa, all the three discussants of this paper, especially, Chidchanok Rahimmulah, Niti Pawakapan, Colonel Anuchat Bunnak, Pratsanee Matman, Atchara Ditthaphong, Kamonwan Atkarunpan, Police Major Narong Ruvicha, Ayup Patan, librarians at the libraries of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and last but not least, Chris Baker for his English editing.

[2] As will be clear to readers, the 'manuals' used in this research are not only for bureaucrats, nor are they only for Buddhists, neither are they all called manuals, hence "manual" or "Bureaucrat

Manual" appears in quotation marks.

[3] I put "minority" in quotation marks to problematize the state-centric paradigm, as the concept of minority "belongs to the narrative of state forms." See Michael J. Shapiro, *For moral ambiguity: national culture and the politics of the family* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 137. As Etienne Balibar puts it: "The very existence of minorities, together with their more of less inferior status, *was a state construct,* a strict correlate of the nation-form." See Etienne Balibar, 'Ambiguous universality,' *differences: a journal of feminist cultural studies* 7, 1 (Spring 1995) p. 53. Hence, when a nation is a hegemon in a state and determines the state's narrative about the nation, the narratives of other nations or ethnicities are marginalized. This has happened to Malay Muslims' narrative(s) in the southern border provinces.

[4] See George Steinmetz, ed., *State/culture: state-formation after the cultural turn* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[5] Office of the Prime Minister. 2002(?), *Khumu kharatchakan nai phunthi changwat chaidaen phaktai* (Manual for bureaucrats in the southern border province area) (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 2002?).

[6] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977). We should, however, be prepared for the fact that many "manuals" will fail to produce docile bodies in the southern border zones for various reasons beyond the scope of this project; as Foucault states, "where there is power, there is resistant." See *The history of sexuality,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p.95.

[7] On 2 January 1965, the cabinet set up the Administrative Center for the Southern Border Provinces (ACSBP). One of its main duties was to orientate bureaucrats of all level and all departments sent to work in the southern border provinces, by organizing a 'Project for orientation of bureaucrats, local municipal personnel, and state enterprise personnel' from 1965. See number 3 in the list of manuals.

[8] This research covers "manuals" used in civilian affairs together with those used in military operation. For the former, I was informed by some security personnel that they generally used "manuals" produced by the Ministry of Interior or the Prime Minister's Secretariat. As for the latter, an army captain said he could not provide them as they were military secrets that might let "the enemy" know our military operations. Example of the latter are: 'Manual for practice of prevention and suppression of unrest: extinguishing the southern fire' and 'Manual for preparation of field operation in the three southern border provinces.' Institute of Advanced Military Study, Royal Thai Army, 2005, *Botrian lae naeothang kae panha kanko khwam maisangop nai phuenthi sam changwat chaidaen phaktai* (Lessons and guidelines for solving the unrest in the southern border province area) (Bangkok: Committee for Drafting Lessons and Guidelines for Solving the Unrest in the Southern Border Province Area, *cho*-15). The same soldier said, "You can see them, but can't take them." (Informal talk, July 2006).

[9] This question brings up the issue of size. Of all the fourteen manuals other than the 1923 edition for which no original has been found, only two are pocket-size. These are numbers 10 and 11 in the list below. The two are about the same size as *Khumue kanpathibatngan khong kharatchakan tamruat* (Manual for police operation) (Police Education Bureau, Royal Thai Police, Bangkok: Police Printing House, 2005), which is, according to an informal interview with a supervisor of a police training department, always in a policeman's pocket. Nonetheless, number 12 on the list, though a bit bigger than a typical adult Thai male's palm, is just twenty plus pages.

[10] However, the organization was re-established during the administration of prime minister Surayud Chulanont.

[11] Some interesting works on "manual studies" are: Lisa Maruca, 'Bodies of type: the work of textual production in English printers' manuals,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, 3 (2003), pp. 321–43; Martin Brückner and Kristen Poole, 'The plot thickens: surveying manuals, drama, and the materiality of narrative form in modern England,' *English Literary History* 69 (2002), pp. 617–48; Judy Hilkey,

Character is capital: success manuals and manhood in Gilded Age America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). See also Daniel H. Borus, 'Success and the single man,' *Reviews in American History* 26, 3 (1998), pp. 581–6, which reviews Hilkey's work; and Alistair Black, 'The library as clinic: a Foucauldian interpretation of British public library attitudes to social and physical disease, ca. 1850–1950.' *Libraries and Culture* 40, 3 (Summer 2005), pp. 416–34, which studies manual as a minor issue.

[12] Hilkey, *Character is capital*, p. 6, cited in Borus, 'Success,' p. 584. In Thai the word *khumue* means both *manual* and *directions* (for example, for use of an electric appliance). The second meaning is beyond the scope of this study, and also is not so interesting as there is little room for debate over how you use an electrical appliance.

[13] Mark Twain wrote in 1871: "What is the chief end of man?—to get rich. In what way?—dishonestly if we can; honestly if we must." The website of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) states that in the Gilded Age, everyone has potential to be Andrew Carnegie, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/carnegie/gildedage.html, accessed June 2006.

[14] Hilkey, *Character is capital*, p. 7, cited in Borus, 'Success,' p. 582.

[15] Deploying the language of "ideology" to talk about the confrontation between dominant and counter discourses, Borus writes "ideology naturalizes and legitimizes by recognizing, if only to efface, that which opposes it" (Borus, 'Success,' p. 584).

[16] Borus, 'Success,' p. 584.

[17] Some do not have exact publication dates, and I have estimated from the content. Because this research was designated from the beginning by Chaiwat Satha-Anand, the head of the grand project, to be documentary research, interviewing was not a *main* method of this research.

[18] Published in *"Matrakan soemsang khwam mankhong nai changwat chaidaen phaktai"* (Measures for entrenching security in southern border provinces) by Students of Psychological Practice Curriculum, Directorial Department, Batch No. 82, Group 3. Applied Psychology Institute, National Defense Studies Institute, Supreme Command Headquarter, 9 February 1998, pp. 93–109.

[19] This publication date is from the date of the 'Order of the Office of the Prime Minster (123/2002),' dated 30 April 2002, which is included in this "manual."

[20] This publication date is from the date of the 'Letter from the Office of the King's Secretariat,' dated 16 November 2003 (sent to the permanent secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister), which is included in this "manual."

[21] This publication date is estimated from the 'Meeting of village researchers in three southern border provinces,' dated 31 January to 2 February 2003, to which this "manual" is referred.

[22] In addition, I consulted three police manuals for comparison: *Khumue kanpathibatngan khong kharatchakan tamruat* (Manual for police operation) (2005, see note 9 above); Police Education Bureau, Royal Thai Police, *Khumue tamruat lem 6: muat wicha pongkan prabpram atchayakam* (Police manual vol. 6: crime prevention and suppression) (2006) (Bangkok: Police Printing House, 2006); Police Education Bureau, Royal Thai Police, *Khumue tamruat lem 7: muat wicha yutthavithi tamruat* (Police manual vol. 7: police tactics) (2006), (Bangkok: Police Printing House, 2006).

[23] This categorization is made for general understanding. Theoretically speaking, the two sets need not be sharply separated because law, policy, and the state's plans all are kinds of cultural practice; see Steinmetz, *State/culture*.

[24] A territorial division introduced in the late nineteenth century and subsequently replaced by the modern provinces.

[25] The content of numbers 10 and 14 do not differ much; some parts of both were copied from the same earlier document.

[26] Some of the studied "manuals" compile governmental policies as well as the Prime Minster's Order. Even though these documents are important (for analyzing changes of policy content, helping

to understand the Thai state's stance toward changing circumstances), they are beyond this research's scope. For further information see the chapter by Mark Tamthai and Somkiat Bunchoo in this volume.

[27] Although the 1923 "manual" (number 1 on the list) details problems regarding Islam and the Muslim community, these were corrected and edited twice: first by Professor Klomnan Baga, and second (in 2004) by an anonymous editor who followed the direction set by Klomnan. Whether or not Klomnan's view is correct is beyond my present knowledge.

[28] This categorization is influenced by the work of Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in focus* (Indianapolis, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1975); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and realities of Islam* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1988).

[29] See manual number 9 on the list.

[30] See manual number 9 on the list, emphasis added.

[31] On 5 August 2007, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, army commander in chief, stated that among the three critical inner problems at the present, namely political problem, disasters, and violence in the three southern border provinces, the last one was the hardest to solve because "leaders of the disquieting elements live outside Thailand, while the ones fighting are petty soldiers. Even though it is hard, we have to try to solve." See 'C-in-C admits southern problem hard, as leaders are outside,' Bangkobiznews online, at http://www.bangkokbiznews.com/2006/08/05/w001_126551.php?news_id=126551.

[32] See manual number 9 on the list.

[33] King Rama VI, 'Principles of public policy and administration for Monthon Pattani,' (1923) in *Khaochai khaothueng phatthana* (Understand, reach out to and develop) (Bangkok: Office of the Permanent Secretary for Interior, Ministry of Interior, 1923), pp. 25–6.

[34] See manual number 9 on the list, pp. 14–5, emphasis added.

[35] See manual number 9 on the list, p. 106.

[36] When this research was presented on 18 August 2006, one of the three discussants, Chidchanok Rahimmula, provided some information on this issue: Religious leaders in the south were upset by this very same passage. One of the leaders once said to her, "Changing commander again? That's o.k. If he wants to meet us, then we will go just for the sake of it. New one comes, but nothing is new, just a change of style. If we don't go, they will think that we are defiant. If a provincial governor invites us, we will go. Deputy prime minister invites us, we will go. But if they want us to say anything, we will just say something for the sake of it because they themselves are not sincere to us anyway. We have to learn to live."

[37] For the meaning of *pok* and *khrong,* see Royal Academy, *Dictionary: Royal Academy edition* (Bangkok: Aksorncharoenthat, 2000); Nawawan Pantumeta, *Khlang kham* (Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 2001).

[38] This notion is enlarged from Giorgio Agamben's concept of inclusive exclusion within the nexus of sovereignty and human life, in *Homo Sacer: sovereign power and bare life,* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1998). Compare my treatment of forcibly displaced peoples in the Thai-Burmese border zones, Decha Tangseefa, 'Imperceptible naked-lives and atrocities: forcibly displaced peoples and the Thai-Burmese in-between spaces,' Ph.D. diss. University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2003; Decha Tangseefa, 'Taking flight in condemned grounds: forcibly displaced Karens and the Thai-Burmese in-between spaces,' *Alternatives: global, local, political* 31, 4 (October 2006), pp. 405–30; Decha Tangseefa, '"Temporary shelter areas" and paradox of perceptibility: imperceptible naked-Karens in the Thai-Burmese border zones,' in *Borderscapes: geographies and politics at territory's edge*, ed. Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 231–62.

[39] Nonetheless, being "docile bodies" here is more subtle than the Foucauldian "docile body" (see *Discipline and punish*), in which the cultural dimension is not the main angle in his nexus of power and violence.

[40] *Jek* is a derogatory word that Thai people used to call Chinese people in Thailand.

[41] "Khaochai khaothueng phatthana" (Understand, reach out to, and develop), advice given to all the state apparatuses by King Bhumibol, which has since become a famous and much cited motto.

[42] The notion of "the Others Within" is influenced by Jacques Derrida, see *The other heading: reflections on today's Europe,* trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992) as well as his corresponding notion of "self-differentiating identity" in Derrida et al., 'The Villanova roundtable: a conversation with Jacques Derrida,' in *Deconstruction in a nutshell: a conversation with Jacques Derrida,* ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), pp. 1–28. See also a historical treatment in the development of the Thai nation-state in Thongchai Winichakul, 'The Other Within: travel and ethno-spatial differentiation of Siamese subjects 1885–1910,' in *Civility and savagery: social identity in Tai states,* ed. Andrew Turton (Richmond: RoutledgeCurzon, 2000), pp. 38–63.

[43] See Chaiwat Satha-Anand, *Khamsang 66/43?: rat panha watthanatham khong rat kap kanchatkan khwamkhatyaeng nai sattawat mai* (Order 66/43?: State, state's cultural problem, and conflict management in the new century) (Bangkok: Strategic Institute, Office of the National Security Council, 2000). Inspired by the 66/23 policy, this work proposed an "Order 66/43" to cope with conflicts in Thailand in the 2000s.

[44] Either the Thai state or disquieting elements can carry on this violence. If it is the former, this violence would be either *bio-ethnically instituted violence* or *bio-ethnically orchestrated state terror*; see Haiping Yan, 'Other transnational: an introductory essay,' *Modern Drama* 48, 2 (2005), pp. 225–48. See a treatment of state terror in Decha, 'Imperceptible naked-lives,' and Decha, 'Taking flight.'

[45] During the last decade, works on borderlands have gained more currency, see Rajaram and Grundy-Warr, *Borderscape*; Decha, '"Temporary Shelter Areas"'; Decha, 'Taking Flight'; Decha, 'Imperceptble naked-lives'; Seyla Benhabib, 'Borders, boundaries, and citizenship,' *PS* (October 2005), pp. 673–7; Alexander Horstmann, 'Incorporation and resistance: borderlands, transnational community and social change in Southeast Asia,' at http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/WPTC-02-04%20Horstmann.pdf; Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders: frontiers of identity, nation and state* (Oxford: Berg, 1999); Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 'Beyond "culture": space, identity and the politics of difference,' in *Culture power place: explorations in critical anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 33–51.

[46] Apart from the fourteen "bureaucrat manuals," see National Reconciliation Commission, *Ao chana khwam runraeng duai phalang samannachan* (Overcoming violence through the power of reconciliation*),* (Bangkok: The Secretariat of the Cabinet Printing House, 2006), pp. 28–34; Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng's chapter in this volume; Institute of Advanced Military Study, 'Manual for practice,' ch. 2; Chaiwat Satha-Anand, 'Pattani in the 1980s: academic literature as political stories,' in *The life of this world: negotiated Muslim lives in Thai society* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), pp. 29–59; Supara Janchitfah, *Violence in the mist: reporting on the presence of pain in southern Thailand* (Bangkok: Kobfai Publishing Project, 2005).

[47] National Reconciliation Commission, *Ao chana*, pp. 27–8.

[48] See an example of the Royal Thai Armed Forces' view of "border security" in Taisasang, 'Kansammana thang wichakan ro ro so tho tho bo so bo so rueang yutthasat khwammankhong chaidaen' (Seminar at the Command and General Staff College, Institute of Advanced Military Study, Royal Thai Army, on strategy for border security) W*arasan senathipat* 52, 3 (Sep–Dec, 2003), pp. 100–3. At this seminar, there were three issues that affected Thailand's border security: state-boundary conflict; drug trafficking; and illegal labor migrants.

[49] Quoted in Nevzat Soguk, 'Border's capture: insurrectional politics, border crossing humans and the new political,' in *Borderscapes*, ed. Rajaram and Grundy-Warr.

[50] See Etienne Balibar, 'The nation form: history and ideology,' trans. Chris Turner, in *Race, nation,*

class: ambiguous identities, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 86–106.

[51] Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism,* revised edition (London: Verso, 1991).

[52] For works on the issue of "sense of belonging," see Barbara Bender and Margot Winder, ed., *Contested landscapes: movement, exile and place* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); George Robertson et al., ed., *Travellers' tales: narratives of home and displacement* (London: Routledge, 1994); Marc Robinson, *Altogether elsewhere: writers on exile* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1994); Hannah Arendt, 'We refugees,' in *Altogether Elsewhere*, ed. Robinson, pp. 110–9; Edward Said, 'Reflections on exile,' in *Altogether Elsewhere,* ed. Robinson, pp. 137–49. For "map of allegiance," see Arjun Appadurai, 'Sovereignty without territory: notes for a postnational geography,' in *The geography of identity,* ed. Patricia Yaeger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 40–58; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); see also Gupta and Ferguson, 'Beyond "culture."'

Nonetheless, it should be noted that the Chularatchamontri stated in 1982, echoing the Muslim community's attempt to be a part of "Thai society," as follows: "The term 'Thai culture' should not be confined to culture known and practiced only in the society with Buddhism. It should also include culture known and practiced in Muslim society. This is because Muslims have been a part of the Thai society since the Sukhothai Kingdom until today. Neither does the term 'Thai People' according to the constitution designated by religion, language, or other cultures as well as socially different conditions. For Muslims to practice Islamic cultures, therefore, is not considered as destroying Thai culture at all. On the contrary, it even enhances Thai culture to be so unique that foreigners trust [sic]. A part of Thai culture is to accept all religious cultures, which corresponds to a provision in the constitution, giving right and freedom to faiths and practices." See number 5 on the list of manuals, p. 104.

[53] Michael J. Shapiro, *Violent cartographies: mapping cultures of war* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[54] Jennifer Hyndman, *Managing displacement: refugees and the politics of humanitarianism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 27.

[55] See Decha Tangseefa, 'Death at a margin: death of the margins?' paper presented at 'What keeps us apart, what keeps us together: international order, justice values,' second global international studies conference, at University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, 23–6 July 2008 and 'Building sustainable futures: enacting peace and development', organized by International Peace Research Association (IPRA), at University of Leuven, Belgium, 15–19 July 2008.

[56] Homi K. Bhabha, *The location of cultures* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 172, 38; compare James Clifford, *Routes: travel and translation in the late twentieth century* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[57] Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Is the "post" in "postcolonial" the "post" in "postmodern"?' in *Dangerous liaisons: gender, nation, and postcolonial perspectives,* ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 420–44.

[58] See Giorgio Agamben, 'The Messiah and the Sovereign: the problem of law in Walter Benjamin,' in *Potentialities: collected essays in philosophy,* ed. and trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 160–74; Agamben, *Homo sacer*; Decha Tangseefa, 'Imperceptible naked-lives: constructing a theoretical space to account for "non-statist" subjectivities,' in *Margins, peripheries and excluded bodies: international relations and states of exception,* ed. Shampa Biswas and Sheila Nair (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming); Decha, '"Temporary Shelter Areas"'; Decha, 'Taking Flight'; Decha , 'Imperceptible naked-lives.'

[59] Works on the transnational have pervasively gained more currency in the 2000s. See Decha Tangseefa, *Laksana khamchat* (The transnational) (Bangkok: National Research Council, forthcoming); Colin Mcfarlane, 'Transnational development networks: bringing development and postcolonial approaches into dialogue,' *The Geographical Journal* 172, 1 (March 2006), pp. 35–49;

Pinkaew Laungaramsri, 'Imagining nation: women's rights and the transnational movement of Shan women in Thailand and Burma, *Focaal, European Journal of Anthropology* 47 (2006), pp. 48–61; Clifford Bob, *The marketing of rebellion: insurgents, media, and international activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Charli R. Carpenter, '"Women, children, and other vulnerable groups": gender, strategic frames and the protection of civilians as a transnational issue,' *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (2005), pp. 295–334; Patricia Clavin, 'Defining transnationalism,' *Contemporary European History* 14, 4 (2005), pp. 421–39; Wayne A. Cornelius and Marc R Rosenblum, 'Immigration and politics,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005), pp. 99–119; Laila Farah, 'Dancing on the hyphen: performing diasporic subjectivity,' *Modern Drama*, 48, 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 316–43; Christian Joerges and Christine Godt,'Free trade: the erosion of national, and the birth of transnational governance,' *European Review* 13, Sup. 1 (2005), pp. 93–117; Lauren Langman, 'From virtual public spheres to global justice: a critical theory of internetworked social movement,' *Sociological Theory* 23, 1 (March 2005), pp 42–74; Francoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, ed., *Minor transnationalism* (Durham and London: Duke U. P., 2005); Thomas Olesen, 'Transnational publics: new spaces of social movement activism and the problem of global long-sightedness,' *Current Sociology* 53, 3 (May 2005), pp. 419–40; William I Robinson, 'Global capitalism: the new transnationalism and the folly of conventional thinking,' *Science and Society* 69, 3 (July 2005), pp. 316–28; Ronen Shamir, 'Without borders? notes on globalization as a mobility regime,' *Sociology Theory* 23, 2 (June 2005), pp. 197–217; Leslie Sklair, 'The transnational capitalist class and contemporary architecture in globalizing cities,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, 3 (September 2005), pp. 485–500; Sidney Tarrow, *The new transnational activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Ban Wang, 'Reimagining political community: diaspora, nation-state, and the struggle for recognition,' *Modern Drama* 48, 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 249–71; Yan 'Other transnational'; Thomas Faist, 'Towards a political sociology of transnationalization: the state of the art in migration research,' *Arch. Europ. Sociol.* 45, 3 (2004), pp. 331–66.

[60] Here is a Rancièrian move. In Rancière's conception of the political, the in-between spaces are spaces of a meeting among the heterogeneous amidst the confrontation between two sets of logic: "police" and "politics." The "police" logic attempts to maintain the existing power relations by determining not only the members' perceptions regarding the existing political society, but also whether or not one is a member of such society. On the contrary, the logic of "politics" is embedded in all practices that aim to disrupt the "police" logic. See Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: politics and philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 28–42; Jacques Rancière, 'Ten theses on politics,' *Theory and Events* 5, 3 (2001); Decha (everything previously cited).

[61] Michael J. Shapiro, 'Moral geographies and the ethics of post-sovereignty,' *Public Culture* 6, 3 (1994), p. 493; the phrase "suspension of historical time" is from Lauren Berlant, *The anatomy of national fantasy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 32.

[62] Shapiro, *For moral ambiguity*, p. 121. For the nexus between history and time see Giorgio Agamben, 'Time and history: critique of the instant and the continuum,' in *Infancy and history: the destruction of experience*, trans. Ritz Heron (New York: Verso, 1993), pp. 89–105; Decha, 'Death at a margin'; Decha, 'Imperceptible naked-lives.'

[63] Eric Alliez, *Capital times: tales from the conquest of time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 6.

[64] Cf. M. Coleman, 2002, 'Thinking about the World Bank's "accordion" geography of financial globalization,' *Political Geography* 21 (2002), pp. 495–524.

[65] Cf. Shapiro, *For moral ambiguity*, pp. 124–5; Yan, 'Other transnational'; Farah, 'Dancing on the hyphen'; Decha, *Laksana khamchat*.

[66] Alliez, *Capital times*.

[67] Shapiro, *For moral ambiguity*, p. 124.

[68] The National Reconciliation Commission's report states that most people's material well-being

in the southern border provinces is somewhat low (NRC, *Ao chana*, pp. 23–25). However, when considering the macro picture of "legal" border trade between 2002 and 2005 as well as comparing trade volume between Jan-Apr 2005 with that of Jan-Apr 2006, one witnesses the steady increase of the overall trade volume amidst continuous violence eruption along the Thai-Malay in-between spaces since the "Gun Stealing Incident" in January 2004 (Source: Dept. of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce http://www.dft.moc.go.th/index.asp?solution=1024, accessed July 2006).

[69] Bhabha, *Location of cultures*, p. 227.

[70] Bhabha, *Location of cultures*, p. 172.

[71] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the philosophy of history,' trans. Harry Zohn, in *Illumination,* ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), p. 263.

[72] Benjamin, 'Theses on the philosophy of history.'

[73] Diane Rubenstein, 'Did you pack your bags yourself?: governmentality after 9/11,' *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 303–31.

[74] See Chaiwat, 'Pattani in the 1980s.'

[75] The capital-electronic circuits are forms of practices of space that have capital and communication technology as the main components, no matter through mobile phone and/or computer. Such communication technology is based on unceasing technological development that renders a reversal relation between a microchip's tremendous capacity and its size (for relations between communication technology, capital and globalization, undermining nation-state's sovereign power, see Heather Horst, 'The blessings and burdens of communication: cell phones in Jamaican transnational social fields,' *Global Networks* 6, 2 (2006), pp. 143–59; Robinson, 'Global capitalism.' Because of these capital-electronic circuits, I commented (at a conference co-organized by the Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University together with Thailand's National Reconciliation Commission on 16 November 2005), a few days after the Thai government had ordered that all sim-cards used in the southern border provinces must be registered, that the order would fail to stop the disquieting elements' exploitation of these circuits.

[76] William E. Connolly, *The ethos of pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. xxii.

[77] This concept of 'real state of exception' follows Walter Benjamin who wrote: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of exception' in which we live is the rule. We must arrive at a concept of history that corresponds to this fact. Then we will have the production of a real state of exception before us as a task." Quoted in Agamben, 'The Messiah,' p. 160, n. 24. This translation belongs to Daniel Heller-Roazen. See Harry Zohn's translation in Benjamin, 'Theses.'

[78] Turgot, vol. 2 (Paris, 1844), p. 673 ('Pensées et fragments'), quoted in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin Mclaughlin (Cambridge, Ma.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 477—8 (N12a,1). Hereafter, the numbers in parentheses after page numbers are numbers of *the Theses* or entries from the *Arcades Project*.

[79] The London incident may not qualify as "transnational" if the perpetrators were British.

[80] "Kongthap phak thi 4 sarup koethet 7 changwat ruam 118 chut" (The Fourth Army region concluded: Violence erupted in four provinces altogether 118 spots), Bangkokbiznews, 2 August 2006, at http://www.bangkokbiznews.com/2006/08/02/c001_125530.php?news_id=125530.

[81] My writing of this paragraph until this line has been inspired by works such as Brückner and Poole, 'The plot thickens.'

[82] A protracted confrontation in the far south in April 1948.

[83] Benjamin, *Arcades Project,* p. 474 (N9a, 6).

[84] Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, p. 474 (N9a, 6).

[85] Benjamin, 'Theses,' p. 257 (VII).

[86] Benjamin, 'Theses,' p. 262 (XII). To be sure, following Marxism, the 'oppressed,' in Benjamin's

works, are primarily referred to as the proletariat. See also Benjamin, Arcades Project, p. 364 (J77,1); Benjamin, 'Surrealism: the last snapshot of the European intelligentsia,' trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Walter Benjamin: selected writings volume 2 1927–1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Ma: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1999), p. 217. I extend the idea of the oppressed to also include the marginal Others, who have been both other-ed and marginalized.

[87] Benjamin, 'Theses,' p. 263 (XIV), p. 265 (XVII, XVIII).

[88] Benjamin, *Arcades Project,* p. 392 (K2,3).

[89] This was the phrase uttered at the time by prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

6

"New" relations: Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces

Rattiya Saleh

Since the violence escalated in 2004, the southernmost provinces have been swamped by security personnel, and the area now resembles an armory. The hospitals teem with patients and visitors. Commercial centers, fresh markets, and weekend markets have all become unsafe. Rubber plantations are quiet or abandoned. Even though latex prices are high, there is a shortage of labor because of the risks of working in the plantations. Some stands of trees have been destroyed by unidentified persons. Some owners have sold their plantations at low prices. Many mosques are quiet because people will not enter on their own. Some *wat* (Buddhist temples) have been turned into military camps and headquarters for security officers.

The current violence between Muslims and Buddhists is bewildering. There was no prior indication of such deep hatred and religious division. The majority of people prefer a peaceful life. Yet, the violence against Buddhist Thais continues unabated.

In this chapter, I examine what impact the violence and the government's response to the violence has had on relations between Buddhists and Muslims in the three southern provinces. In 2001, I completed a project on 'Relations between religious groups in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat'[1] using four villages as a sample of the region, displaying both commonalities and differences. The main findings were as follows.

> First, for Muslims, religion provides an overarching framework for their life, including their interactions with people of the same faith as well as people of different religions.
>
> Second, harmonious relations between Muslims and Buddhists in the three southernmost provinces is based on friendships developed over time leading to mutual acceptance of their differing systems of values.
>
> Third, the customs and religious ceremonies of the Muslims provide some opportunities for interaction between Buddhists and Muslims, but those of the Buddhists do not.
>
> Fourth, interaction between Muslims and Buddhists is a constant part of life, and as the feelings and values of people differ, some conflict is inevitable, yet conflict may or may not be rooted in religion.

The 2001 research project concluded that, "religion is not always the main cause of the violence in the three southernmost provinces."

In this project, I returned to the same villages[2] I studied earlier to review changes over the period from 2001 to mid 2006. The main questions of the research were: Has this new form of violence really changed relations between Buddhists and Muslims as

commonly believed or not? In what contexts has it changed or not changed? What are the factors causing change (or no change) in the relations between Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces?

The research was based on observation and interviews. It was hampered by the violence. Some areas were unsafe. People were reluctant to be seen talking with outsiders, or reluctant to talk about the unrest directly or about such matters as the role of officials.

In this chapter, I first present a short background on the area, its peoples, religions, languages, and cultures. In the second section, I summarize some 2001 findings before proceeding to the results of the second survey.

The three southernmost provinces: land and people

The three southern provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani or Patani[3] are richly endowed with natural resources. The shape of Thailand is sometimes likened to a golden axe, with the peninsula as its handle, and this handle is traditionally described as "diamond-studded"[4] in recognition of the richness of the peninsula's resources. From earliest history, these resources have attracted the attention of seafarers, settlers, and rulers. An old Narathiwat resident said,

> Our land is rich, we have a wealth of resources in the land and sea. Everyone wants this land. So they come and fight over it, making it like the stage of a play. They fight over being the director and play out so many dramas. Everyone fights over being the star until the viewers have no time to make a living. Religious teachers have no time to teach, always being called to go join a meeting, held in hotels, not safe at all. There is only danger. Now, we don't know who we can depend on. It's our good fortune we have our king. He gives us some hope. Aside from him, we don't trust anyone because they have all come to deceive us far too many times.[5]

Peoples

The peoples of the three southernmost provinces are descendants of many different peoples who have migrated to the area from all points of the compass, attracted by its abundant resources. Evidence of coastal trading settlements and rich kingdoms stretches far back into history. There are traces of animist, Hindu, and Buddhist ritual centers. By the seventeenth century, Pattani had become a rich port and seat of a ruling dynasty of queens, as testified by several European visitors.

In the fifteenth century CE, the king of Pattani was converted to Islam by Sheikh Sa'id or Sheikh Safiyuddin.[6] The area became a well-known center of Islamic learning honored with the title "Fathoni Darussalam," meaning the land of peace and the learned.[7] Islamic thinkers and philosophers composed *Qutub* (Muslim religious treatises) both in Malay with Jawi script[8] and in Arabic script.[9] Fathoni gained a reputation throughout the Islamic world as a repository of Islamic knowledge, dubbed as *Suerambi Meukah* (the balcony of Mecca).[10]

Later Pattani's trade declined, the dynasty fell into internal dispute, and the state fell within the ambit of Kelantan. Ultimately in 1909, the area was annexed by Siam, and subsequently divided into the three provinces.

Even so, several cultural practices of Malay origin are preserved in the south. These include the practice of presenting tribute in the form of gold and silver flowers, the

royal ceremony of raising the royal cradle, the water blessing for bride and groom, and the use of old royal titles, still maintained among the descendants of former governors of Patani. While these practices are maintained, other practices have been absorbed from other cultures, contributing to the diversity of the area.

The legacy of this history is a highly diverse population in which Muslims of Malay ethnicity form a majority. According to official statistics, the three provinces in 2003 had a combined population of 1,748,681 persons, of which 79.3 per cent were Muslim and 57.1 per cent used Malay language within the household. In the local Pattani Malay dialect, the people are divided into three groups: *ogae melayu* or *nanayu* (Malay), *ogae siyae* (Siamese), and *ogae jino* (Chinese). Those classified as Thai include people of varied origins. Several Thai and Chinese have recently converted to Christianity. Besides these three main groups, there are also minorities of Javanese, Arab, Indian, Burmese, Khmer, Laotian, Bangladeshi, and Mani (a local derivation from Brahman meaning Indian).

Identity, religion, language

For all peoples in the area, their identity is a complex matter composed of several layers. First, they have an element of their identity related to religion, religious practice, and place of worship. Second they are descendants of some ethnic group which has its own distinctive cultural practices. Third, they are citizens of Thailand and governed by Thai law, while those who are Muslim also abide by the additional provisions of *shar'iah* law. Fourth, they are citizens of the world and open to some aspects of contemporary culture flooding in from the outside in accordance with their individual taste.

The majority of the Muslims in the area try very hard to live within the framework of the Islamic faith, while reconciling this with being born with Thai nationality. They are proud to be Thai, and love their country no less than the Thai or Chinese of Buddhist faith or any other people. The difference between Muslim and Buddhist lies in personal matters of belief, religious practice, and everyday behavior. Some families practice their own ethnic or cultural activities that are considered not in contradictory to Islam.

All residents of the three southernmost provinces, of every religion and ethnicity, try to learn the central Thai dialect that is the official national language. Most Thai Muslims of Malay ethnicity prefer to use the Patani Malay dialect.[11] Other Buddhist of various ethnicities use central Thai dialect and southern Thai dialect, together with their own ethnic dialects such as Chinese, Arabic, Khmer, Mani, Burmese, and Laotian. Most Buddhists of Chinese or Thai ethnicity who reside in areas with a very high proportion of Muslims in the population are fluent in the Patani Malay dialect.[12] In Si Sakhon district in Narathiwat, for instance, the Buddhist workers who collect latex or clear bushes can speak Patani Malay dialect. These Buddhists are well-taken care of by the Muslims. When they go to the rubber plantations, the two groups will make appointments to go and return together. They speak the Patani Malay dialect with each other. They say, "We are both poor people so we must help one another. Luckily we both speak Malay, so we can become friends more easily."

Thai Muslims of Malay ethnicity in the three southernmost provinces use Patani Malay dialect or standard Malay to convey their feelings, thoughts, and wisdom. They hold that the Malay language is an inextricable part of Malay ethnicity, and a tool to

preserve the Malay ethnicity from extinction. This is captured in their sayings: *Bahasa adalah jiwa bangsa, hilang bahasa hilang bangsa* (Language is the life of Malay, the loss of language is the death of Malay); and *Bahasa tidak boleh dijual beli* (Language cannot be traded). These sayings indicate that Malay language and ethnicity are one and the same. The language has existed for as long as the history of the culture of the Malay people. The Siamese also knew Malay in the past. Charnvit Kasetsiri confirms that the Ayutthaya court used Malay in communications with other states in the region, and even with the Dutch in Batavia (Jakarta).[13] It is thus puzzling that present-day Thai society is still unclear about the word "Jawi " and talks about the "Jawi language" when in fact the language is Malay, while it is the script which is Jawi .

For Muslims in the deep south who use the Patani Malay dialect as their mother tongue, the word *bah so* (language) also means ethnicity and etiquette. If someone is said not to have *bah so*, it means that person does not have language, birthplace, etiquette, or roots. Pattani has long been a center of Malay literature. This was recorded by C. O. Blagden who visited in 1906, and Stewart Wavell who made a survey in 1964.[14]

Politics

The people of the southernmost provinces are highly interested in politics at all levels. Elections are fiercely contested. Some people have grown very rich from politics, while other have fallen deeply in debt. Political allegiances and alliances cross religious lines. A young man from Si Sakhon district, Narathiwat, told me, "Sister, there are three groups of people making trouble in our area. The first are the politicians, the second are the influential people, and the third are the separatists." When asked if there was any religious factor involved, he replied "No, whether they are Buddhists or Muslims, they are one and the same. If they join together, they will not separate." I pressed him, "Then, in what group are state officials? Are they involved?" He responded at once, "Oh yes, especially them. I'm sorry, I don't mean every one of them. But if they are good people, they cannot stay here for long. Their bosses will not like them very much." I stopped my questioning but he continued, "Sister, they quarrel among themselves and put the blame on us."

On the southern side of these three provinces, the border with Malaysia stretches 647 kilometers. This border is both beneficial and problematic. Young people go to work in Malaysia. Criminals from both sides use the border forests as sanctuary. Security incidents happen constantly. In 2003, Thai soldiers captured four armed Malaysians in the forests of Yala. Later it appeared they were Malaysian soldiers who claimed to have got lost. In August 2005, 131 Narathiwat villagers fled illegally across the border into Malaysia after hearing that Stopa Yuso Imam had been gunned down.

Many violent incidents go unsolved. Government blames the people for not cooperating, but one local villager in Betong said:

> We are ready to cooperate with state officials. We want to tell the truth. We want to identify the true killers. But we hate some officials who believe influential people. The villagers themselves are also not so simple. If they don't accept a village head, sometimes they will not help catch a killer and will even side with a killer in order to discredit and embarrass the village head so he will not be re-elected.

This kind of thinking may also be why those causing the violence are able to draw more villagers to support them and are able to instigate violence in more varied ways.

Buddhist–Muslim relations before 2001

Here I present some selected statements from the research completed in 2001. These statements capture the feelings, thinking, and the mode of interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in the four sample villages before the onset of the current phase of violence.

> Muslim and Thai Buddhists here normally have no problems. Most come to assume various government offices, migrating from other places. On a personal basis, we are good to each other. We greet each other, then we buy packed food, sit, and chat. If we have some problems, it is when we are drunk. This is true for all households. When a drinking party starts up, then voices become loud, disturbing other households. If one raises a dog, it should be well-taken care of, and should not be allowed to roam around.
>
> (from Ban Bu Mae, Yi-ngo subdistrict, Narathiwat)

> When I have a party, I invite my brothers and sisters as well as friends to join. Muslims will cook their food in their quarters. The housewives of Thai Buddhists will prepare their own food. We do not use the same water. We clean our utensils separately in different corners. The Muslim people gave me the honor of calling me '*Po Teh*' (with *po* meaning father) so we are not strangers. Muslim or Thai Buddhist are all people. If they are good people, they have good things to talk about or to do. If they are bad people, nothing can be good. It's really up to the behavior of the people. We have to consider officials separately.
>
> (from Ban Bu Mae, Yi-ngo subdistrict, Narathiwat)

> When important days such as Hari Raya come… mother will give glutinous rice and fan palm (*kapho*) leaves to our Muslim relatives in order to boil the glutinous rice and we eat together merrily. We will not forget to give glutinous rice or any other sweets that we might have to our neighbors. If we are going to be noisy, we will let them know, to gain their understanding. In the fruit-bearing season, we will bring fruits to them. If someone is sick, we shall visit him or her. *However, we will do this only with close friends.* If it is a funeral, we will attempt to go. When we go, we will give them some money such as we can, but we need not dress in black.
>
> (from Palat, Khuan subdistrict, Pattani)

> We live here. Our mind focuses on making a living. *I don't really have time to see if someone is Muslim or Buddhist.* Buddhists live among Buddhists. They work in their fields. As for us, we work in our fields too.
>
> (from Ban Ramong, Yarom subdistrict, Betong district, Yala)

> I don't see any problems. Everyone who comes here wants to earn a living and to have security. Religion is a different matter. When Muslim brothers want to organize a party and invite me, then I join them. They are nice to me and consider me one of their own. So we can be friends.
>
> (from Ban Tan Mali, Aiyoeweng subdistrict, Betong district, Yala)

Every word of these good friends is meaningful as it conveys a soothing message to Thai society at large that the people in the area understand the difference in religions and know how to behave so that every party can live peacefully together in the society. Indeed, they have lived together for a long time, and have never quarreled due to

religious reasons.

This former research on relations between Buddhists and Muslims was basic research undertaken in order to understand *the meaning of events and the relations between people during the events* in the way people in the area understood them. This research is based on the concept of phenomenology which purports that there are several levels of facts, most of which are made up and real only in the thoughts of people and therefore intangible. This research therefore concentrates on real facts in the society that are reflected through symbolic actions. These actions result from and are shaped by the processes of thinking, beliefs, and values which are the practice of life of both Buddhists and Muslims, both everyday and on special occasions, both within and outside one's own village, and both on one's private land or on public land where Buddhist and Islamic people undertake their activities. The important point here is that I try to present a selective picture of relationships that have potential to promote good understanding between Buddhist and Muslims in the study area, in order to show that emphasizing values and accepting the tastes and patron-client system of people in the local area are very important factors in cultivating relations between diverse cultural groups.

This project studied four villages, each representatives of a province, as follows.

Ban Bu Mae

Ban Bu Mae is one of the seven villages of Yi-ngo subdistrict, Yi-ngo district, Narathiwat. It is a very old village whose name came from the Bu Mae or *khla* tree, according to grandma Hayi Yaena Dueramae.[15] It is the home of the last descendents of royalty from Saiburi, Yaring, Pattani, Yalo, and Rangae, who are bound together through marriage ties. This village contains a *wat*, mosque, Islamic mosque school (*tadika*), and government offices that offer services to people at the village, subdistrict, and district level. Everyone in the village can lead their life in keeping with their beliefs without fear of danger from strangers. The family of Ms Akom Phatthanakun[16] confirmed that "People in Bu Mae, both Muslim and Buddhist Thai, have always lived peacefully together without any conflict over religious matters. When Muslim people have a feast, they even invite Buddhist monks to join. They invite the monks as fellow villagers. When the Buddhist temples have fairs with shadow puppet performances, Muslim friends also join the audience." Mrs Rachanikon Phatthanakun[17] added that "At my home, we have an assistant housekeeper who is a Muslim lady. She is the wife of my student. She works well and is very honest. She is with us for six or seven years now. As I have a Muslim assistant housekeeper, I never bring pork into the house. If we want to eat pork, we eat it outside the house. We respect each other. My cushion on the sofa is a gift from my Muslim friend who brought it from Mecca. That beautiful teapot too."

In Bu Mae village, 97 per cent of the people are Muslim, but they have various opportunities to engage with Buddhist Thais, such as by being relatives, school mates, office mates, student-teacher, employer-employee, supervisor-subordinate, service provider-receiver in both the private and public sectors. There are no problems in the relations between those of different religions. If there are any, it is due to individual causes. But this has never been a problem for Uncle Phoem[18] who likes to call himself "*Po Teh.*" Uncle Phoem confirmed in the Patani Malay dialect that "*Po Teh* and Muslim people are one flesh. The past conflict occurred because certain government officials used to think that Muslim people are stupid. So they have to demonstrate clearly that they

actually know what is going on."

Ban Palat

Ban Palat is one of the five villages of Khuan subdistrict, Panare district, Pattani. The word "Palat" is a standard Malay word equivalent to the Patani Malay dialect word "Palah" which means the mangrove fan palm (*kapho*). It is a village with a Muslim majority and Buddhist minority. It is the only village of the five villages in the subdistrict in the middle of Buddhist society that has a Muslim leader. The oldest family of the Palat villagers is the Susaro family. The senior man of the family, called Jaeli, is a good friend of Mr Rung na Rangsi,[19] a Buddhist. Nowadays, the offspring of these two families still maintain good relations and serve as the power base, both old and new, in the locality. The Palat people are respectful of both administrative leaders as well as religious leaders. Some Buddhist and Muslim families are related through marriage ties, and have no problems over religion. Buddhists who were born as natives of Palat or who come to do business tend to use the Patani Malay dialect. For instance, Mother Phum[20] spoke more Patani dialect than Thai with me. This is possibly due to her desire to avoid using central Thai dialect. Mother Phum said her son's family had converted to the Islamic faith, and she had no problem with that as many of her relatives are already Muslim. One of her daughters became sick and did not recover. After changing her name to Fatima[21] and making a vow to elder Muslim relatives, she recovered.

Ban Ramong

Ban Ramong is an old village located in Yarom subdistrict, Betong district, Yala. The population is 90 per cent Muslim and 10 per cent Buddhist. It was one of the problem areas during the movement of the Malay-Chinese communists in Thailand. Most Ramong people use Patani Malay dialect and central Thai dialect in their daily life. The name of Ramong village, which means banyan tree, appeared in Perak state documents more than one hundred years ago, in relation to a violent affair in which the army commander of Perak by the name of Raja Sahid died under mysterious circumstances, triggering the outbreak of war between the people of Raman and Perak during 1852–4.[22] It is understood that this village came into existence before 1852, with the first settlers being people who escaped arrest by the Siamese authorities in the Pattani-Siamese war. This made Ramong a patron-client society based on ties of friendship and kinship.

In 2001, I made the following conclusions on this area.[23]

> Ramong village has changed making it different from yesterday in both a good and bad sense. This is not different from other villages suffering from the threat of Malay communist guerillas.… Children growing up during the period…had to suffer from lack of education.… Many fell prey to capitalists.… Many were drawn into helping illegal groups. They became drug traders or were pulled into entertainment venues of various types that made them risk their lives. It became difficult to extricate themselves in order to live a normal life.

A Yarom subdistrict chief said,

> Our society is very confused now. A good man is accused of being a bad guy. Many bad people are in the disguise of gentlemen. Muslim youth hate pork more than spirits, beer, and prostitutes. Some Buddhist Thais are afraid to be friends of

> Muslims as they do not understand us. We want everyone to work together and make a living for a better economy so that children have a better chance to study and help the country develop so we don't have to be embarrassed in front of other people. There is no quarrel because of differences in religion. I have many non-Muslim friends. But as for the issue of people not liking government officials, it is a separate matter. It must have its own reasons![24]

Ban Tan Mali

Ban Tan Mali, formerly called Ban Aiyoe Muelo, is in Aiyoeweng subdistrict, Betong district, Yala. It is a settlement of Buddhist and Muslim families from other villages in the southernmost provinces and other provinces of the south and northeast who came to make a living from forest resources. It is also a stage for political confrontation and economic rivalry between villagers led by village headman Ban Dor Lor Yama[25] and powerful groups both within and outside the system. When the issue of relations between Buddhists and Muslims was raised with him, the headman replied,

> Those without religion to guide them are dangerous. Even one who tells others that he has a religion but does not know the words 'sin' and 'merit,' then he is also dangerous. To avoid having relations with these two types of people would be the best option. Nowadays, Muslim people in the area want development and improvement in the strictness of their religious faith so that they are safe from the cultural invasion that Islam shuns. We want the new generation of youth to have better opportunities to study religion deeply instead of just worldly knowledge which may misguide them, as that is very dangerous for them and for society as a whole.

Banthoeng La-ongphan,[26] a Buddhist Thai who used to be a teacher in Tan Mali School, said, "The difference in religions is not a big matter for people whom I used to know in Tan Mali.… All Tan Mali brothers are Muslim. They all helped carry me in a hammock made of a Palikat sarong[27] from the village by foot to the main road to bring me for treatment at the hospital."[28]

Uncle Saeng, another Buddhist Thai and a 59-year old native of Buriram, said "We are not interested in the difference in religions here. We are friends, we go to parties together. If people quarrel here, it is not because of religion but personal matters and interests."

Evidence from the 2001 study showed that Buddhists and Muslims in the far south had a tendency to compromise as they were involved in common activities and in a patron-client system of support. However, neither Buddhist nor Muslim would state whether relations between official and the people were good or bad.

The anthropologist Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng made this comment on the 2001 study:

The work provides a picture of relations and good understanding between the local peoples of both religions. The key factors are accepting the differences in values and the patron-client system in the local area. The work of Rattiya emphasizes the study of Muslim faith and culture as the main factor in the relations between people in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat rural society, to the extent that Buddhist faith and practices have no important role in the relations between the peoples in the area. It seems to reflect that Muslim people cannot take part in Buddhist culture and practices. When Buddhist culture and practices do not have a major role in inter-ethnic relations, what impact does this have on Buddhists' attitude toward Muslims? [29]

> This observation shows sensitivity and concern about the state of relations between Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces in the future. When the culture and practices of Buddhists have little or no role in the relations between ethnic groups, what kind of attitude will Buddhists have towards their Muslim counterparts?

Buddhist–Muslim relations under conditions of violence

At noon one day in mid November 2003 in Panare district, Pattani, a monk highly regarded by the people advised me as follows.

> It is a fight between two elephants. It is not a question of people who have differences in religion. We have been here for a long, long time, without having any quarrels about religion. I have many Muslim friends—*imams*, teachers, district chiefs, village headmen. They were friends, and still are friends. We help oversee the welfare of the people. There are no problems because we understand each other.

On 15 October 2003, I met the family of a Pattani person who migrated from Pattani to work in the rubber plantation in Saba Yoi district, Songkhla province. One elderly person talked in a Patani Malay accent about the unrest that occurred on 28 April 2004 in the Saba Yoi area, "I felt so helpless over our destiny here.… Nowadays it is so difficult even just to be alive.… It is a kind of psychological warfare (*buepuegae samanga*)."

In this person's thinking, there was not one word that linked the religious dimension to the causes of violence in the far south. What worried him most was making an honest living even if it involved moving away; he asked only that the new place offer him a job and safety in life.

The unclear situation in the three southernmost provinces was flagged before 2001. From 1 August 1992 onwards, a total of thirty-six schools[30] were burned down. In the same year, "ninja bandit" incidents—rumors of black-clad thieves on the roam, sometimes leading to attacks on security personnel—occurred for the first time in Rueso, Si Sakhon, Ra-ngae, and Yi-ngo districts in Narathiwat province. The phenomenon then spread across all three southernmost provinces ending at Ban Boenae Goebo, Mu 5, Tanyongmat subdistrict, Narathiwat. Since 1994, violent incidents have occurred continuously, including killings to silence those who knew or happened to know about the illegal activities of certain influential people, so that these will not become known to the authorities. Innocent people have been beaten up in the course of seizing benefits from land, trading areas, drug trading, smuggling, and illegal logging in protected areas. Government officials who tried to block the illegal activities of influential people were harmed. These provinces are rich in both land-based and marine natural resources. Even seawater can be processed into salt.

The area has been restive since the "ninja bandit" incidents in 1993. But the violence increased at an alarming rate in recent years. Many incidents have hidden and complex agendas. Some incidents are designed to send a signal to Thai society that Muslims and Buddhists are in conflict because Thai Muslims with Malay ethnicity want to set up the Fathoni independent state. If Buddhists are confused into believing this, then the good relations between Buddhist and Muslim would definitely suffer. This is a very interesting scenario and is the source of the initial concept for framing this study.

Ban Bu Mae

Before the Krue Ze incident affected Ban Bu Mae, the Bu Mae people led a peaceful and comfortable life. They did not worry about any danger that might come at the hand of strangers. But after a bomb incident at the grocery store of Ms Akom and Ms Rachanikon Phatthanakun in mid August 2003, many Bu Mae people were constantly troubled by fear and uncertainty. If there were social activities, they tried to avoid holding any events at night. The people of Yi-ngo were even more scared when Mr Kei Sae Sim, aged 65 residing at No. 73, Mu 7, Yi-ngo subdistrict, Yi-ngo district, Narathiwat was attacked around the head by a teenager with a Sparta knife. This incident made many Yi-ngo people think of migrating to other areas. Even those who caused the incident might think likewise.

Wat Ratsawiryaram, which was formerly a peaceful and gentle place, has now turned into a small army barracks with a warlike air. Buddhists of Ban Bu Mae still make merit together at Wat Thungkha in a village that has more Buddhists than Muslims. Muslims can still use the services at their mosques normally. The general education schools such as Ban Yi-ngo School and Phiphat Thaksin School still serve children in Yi-ngo. These two schools are still open venues providing opportunities for Muslim and Buddhist children to interact regularly. Moreover, the people of Bu Mae are highly involved in politics and local administrative affairs. The local leaders and administration officials of this village, both Buddhist and Muslim, are eager to think and work together.

In Yi-ngo village there is a district health station that provides good services to the people. It has also taken on the burden of treating the father of a victim of the Tak Bai incident.

Ban Palat

Ban Palat is a patron-client society comprising relatives and friends. According to the health center of Ban Khuan, on 1 October 2003, Ban Palat had a total population of 1,508 persons with 35 per cent Buddhist and 65 per cent Muslim. The officials of this government unit still have to use Patani Malay when talking to Muslim people who come to use the health service. In the period of two years with constant violence, Buddhist and Muslims in Palat have suffered as in other places.

There was a fire at a grocery and a rubber sheet buying shop in a two-story, five-unit shophouse, whose owner is a Buddhist Thai of Chinese ethnicity.

A Palat family lost relatives due to gunfire and arson. It was said, “No one can solve this problem.… I will help to go pick up the pieces of wood and other materials to tidy things up… it’s such a pity. It’s really because of a misunderstanding that they became victims. It’s not a question of Muslims who are unhappy with Buddhists. It’s more likely just an accident. We have to come to terms with it.”

A policeman in Ban Palat was wounded by gunfire, but not fatally. The captain of Border Patrol Police unit 444 in Yaring subdistrict, Pattani was shot at while praying in Ban Dan Darussalam mosque, Ban Don Village, Mu 5, La-nga subdistrict.[31]

A youth used a plantation knife to slit the throat of an old Buddhist Thai man while he was tending his herd of cattle in La-nga subdistrict which is beside Ban Palat.[32] In general, the people of Palat and Khuan villages are against any form of violence.

Ban Palat has a mosque and school, but no *wat*. Thai Buddhists perform their religious rituals at Wat Khuan in another village. This *wat* has been turned into an army

camp. Some Palat Muslims send their children to the school beside Wat Khuan every school day. The school has a 50:50 ratio of Buddhists and Muslims which is an indication that both groups can still live together. The Wat Khuan school allows Buddhists and Muslims to engage with each other. Ban Palat people also meet people from other villages in a cock-fighting field every Thursday, and at the fresh market and farmer's market every Sunday and Wednesday.

Ban Ramong

According to the Yarom health station, on 17 May 2006, Ban Ramong had a total population of 989 of which 90 per cent are Muslim and 10 per cent Buddhist. It is a patron-client society comprising kin and friends. Ramong people find it closer and more convenient to travel to Malaysia rather than Yala. Ramong Muslims have opportunities to interact with Buddhists of Chinese ethnicity or Thai ancestry in and outside Ramong in their daily life and on special occasions.

Ramong people are interested in political movements and local administration. They follow various elections at the national and local levels. Two and a half years after the escalation of political violence in the southernmost provinces, no one from Ramong had been targeted directly, but some had relatives or acquaintances who had become involved. For instance, Hayi Karing Luding, the 64-year old *imam* of Ban Nangsinae Mosque in Yarom subdistrict, and Mr Asman Duding, 40 years old of the same village,[33] were arrested on suspicion of involvement in a shooting incident at a police station in Aiyoeweng subdistrict, Betong district, Yala on the night of 7 January 2004.

Ban Tan Mali

Ban Tan Mali is a settlement of Buddhist and Muslim families from the three southernmost provinces and other provinces from the south and northeast. Currently, Ban Tan Mali has a total population of 908 persons, of which 83.3 per cent are Muslim and 16.7 per cent are Buddhist. Buddhists are clustered at Yom Ban Sam Roi Rai bordering Mu 5, Ban Wang Mai, Aiyoeweng subdistrict, which is a 100 per cent Buddhist community.

Mr Dolo Yama used to be the village head. Since his death in 2003, the post has gone to his son. Tan Mali village is still quiet. Access to the village has improved with a new asphalt road, and outsiders come to buy and sell food and farm products. Ban Tan Mali School, a *tadika*, and the mosque are looked after well by the people. But Tan Mali still does not have a health station so the villagers rely on the health station at Aiyoeweng subdistrict or the Ban Krapong health station, Mae Wat subdistrict, Than To district. Tan Mali people have not been directly affected by the violence. The only incident was a drunken quarrel with Buddhists from Ban Wang Mai at the Songkran festival.

Analyzing "new" relations

This study focuses on the religious distance between Muslims and Buddhists in the in the southernmost provinces. Two factors come into play (see Figures 5-1 and 5-2). First, there are hierarchical relations between state officials (Buddhist or Muslim) and people (Buddhist or Muslim). Second, there are lateral relations between groups of peoples (Buddhist and Muslim).

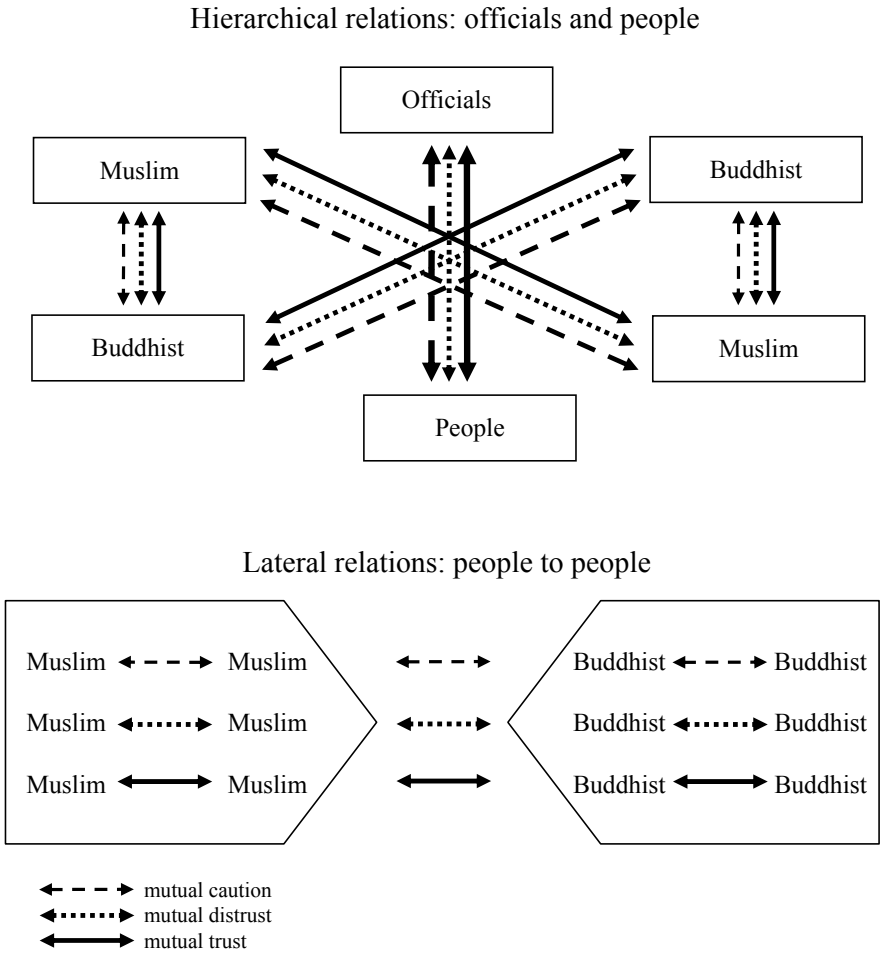

Figure 6-1 Hierarchical and lateral relations

In the context of the severe unrest, relations between state officials (civilian, soldier, police) and people have been strained on both sides. Anyone known to be a state official, whether Muslim or Buddhist, is considered to be a sympathizer and supporter of the government. All such persons are lumped together as enemies of the insurgents and are at risk of being attacked. People fearful of such attacks, despite having good feelings towards state officials, will not dare to have relationships with them as they are afraid of being accused of being a secret agent of a state agency. People in some villages feel wary if a state official visits their home as they are afraid that neighbors may suspect them of being agents of the state. If someone in the village is found to have been visited by an official or any outsider to the village, that villager will come under suspicion. Even if an official and ordinary person, of whatever religions, have no suspicions about each other and have had good relations in the past, it may not be possible to display their

relationship in public. Such relationships can continue only if they have proven to one another that they can guard their secrets well or have shared a common experience that cements mutual trust. If they are not well acquainted, they may suspect each other and not trust each other.

Nowadays, both Muslims and Buddhists try not to get close to state officials such as police, soldiers, or civilians. This gives opportunities to the insurgents to recruit support. The relations between ill-intentioned people on one side and policemen, soldiers, volunteers under the Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command, and other officials has deteriorated with consequences for religious practice. Border Patrol Police were shot and killed while praying at a mosque on a Friday, and two old men were injured. A former district officer was shot on his way home from Friday prayers. A village headman was shot at the entrance to a mosque in the evening after I-sa prayers.

Relations between Buddhists and Muslims on a people-to-people basis still rest to a large degree on old foundations of thinking and understanding. Some conflicts have arisen and sometimes become violent due to competition for illegal business opportunities or competition for political power. But in many cases, such conflicts can be settled because there are people with good religious faith, a spirit of familial relations, and the authority of belonging to traditionally powerful lineages that still work to coordinate good relations between Buddhists and Muslims, as happened in the past. People-to-people relationships between Buddhists and Muslims living in the same villages are not really problematic as they know one another well. But people have been attacked while outside their own village, or attacked at home by outsiders. Often such attacks relate to some form of self-interest. A Muslim villager in Yaha district said, "I have a problem with (name) about public property.… Those of us who do not have friends in high positions seldom get our fair share. We are taken advantage of because we have no power, no big-shot relatives. We do not feel safe."

At times of violent incidents, or rumors of such incidents, people have to be especially careful about their own safety. Even communities that are totally Muslim must be on guard. One local leader said, "Nowadays, nothing is certain. A few days ago someone brought a plastic bag filled with one liter of rice, two eggs, 20 baht, and a piece of white cloth on which was written a message in Malay language, in Jawi script, to stop trading on Friday mornings. It was hung over the door of the shop." There truly have been threats made to stop trading on Fridays. They even reach the level of death threats. The contents of the plastic bag are items that sponsors of Muslim funerals in some villages in the three southernmost provinces commonly give to those who come to the funeral service.

Several cruel incidents took place between 2001 and mid 2006, for example, the killing of three monks and novices; the killing of monks and burning of Wat Phromprasit in Panare district, Pattani; the slitting of the throats of two Laotian workers, husband and wife; the killing and burning of the homes of Thai Buddhists in Yaring district; the capture and killing of two marines in Tanyonglimo village, Tanyongmat district; the use of war weapons to destroy the house and kill an entire Muslim family of nine in Ban Kathong, Bo-ngo subdistrict; the capture and physical assault of two female teachers in Kuchingluepa village, Chaloem subdistrict, Ra-ngae, Narathiwat; the ambush and killing of government officials and innocent people, both Buddhist and Muslim, both religious leaders and lay people, regardless of sex and age; the destruction of religious places,

private property, and public offices. These were seen and heard daily. Some cases were unbelievably cruel. Those who are directly responsible for solving the unrest are at a loss and feel helpless to stop such incidents.

Meetings, mobilization of people, brainwashing in separatist ideas, sniping, secret bombing, and leaflet distribution have continued throughout. The trend is worsening. Still, the authorities believe the situation can be resolved even though it may take some time.[34]

For whatever reasons, the insurgents have made many gains. They have successfully mobilized and attracted certain groups in certain areas to join the movement and participate in violence of various forms. They have incited some Malay Muslims, both male and female, to attack officials and obstruct their activities. Today in the three southernmost provinces both Buddhists and Muslims who love peace and oppose violence are angry and frustrated. But many Muslims do not share this view and blame people in uniform for intimidating people in their homes. These people hate state officials, will not cooperate with them, and feel unhappy at seeing soldiers and policemen in their village.

Because of the frequent violence, the three southernmost provinces have been dubbed as a site of "Southern Fire" that challenges the power of the state. Several prominent military figures have tried to extinguish this fire. Both Buddhist and Muslim residents are very scared. Some families soothe themselves with sayings like, "Whatever will be, will be. We cannot rely on anybody now. It is up to the stars." Most Muslims say, "It is up to Allah's will. Most incidents are the work of a small minority. Most people don't want this. We cannot move elsewhere as there are many difficulties."

This is matter for each individual. But, it is of great concern that no solution is in sight. In October 2005, a Thai newspaper carried this report.

> General Panlop Pinmanee, deputy director of internal security, was chairman for the training program of the armed forces at Hotel Thaksin, Klang subdistrict, Mueang district, Nakhon Si Thammarat before being sent to the field in FY2006. He said, "The south is now facing guerilla warfare. It involves violence of all forms, inflicting savage injuries on government officials and people, not even sparing monks and novices. The situation is getting closer to that in Iraq…. Today the south is becoming a war zone but we cannot do anything. We need to take the initiative, by taking longer strides than they do. The masses should get involved. We need to separate the criminals from the people. In short, at present the criminals have more power than the state. To achieve harmony, the state must be strong first…. I do not want to let slip the diamond handle of the axe. As for the case of stolen fire-arms retrieved from the house of Mr Masae U-Seng, the last operation of 2006, he had tried to amass 5,000 machine guns. He was not quite ready in terms of fire-arms or manpower. Even though I am now old, I am ready to go down south. Since I used to live in Pattani for four years, I know the monks, Thai Buddhists, and Muslims."[35]

These days no one can stop anyone from making a blanket statement that all the people in the three southernmost provinces are good people or all are criminals. But if all the Muslims are really criminals or enemies of Buddhists, it would not be possible to have any *wat* or mosque still standing. It is a part of human nature to think ill of fellow human beings, to feel hatred, and to hurt others' feelings. An innocent person can be hurt as in the case of a student from Yala who boarded a minibus from Bangkok. While sitting on the bus, his mobile phone rang. It was a call from a Muslim friend. He talked in Patani Malay dialect. The bus driver asked where he came from. When he responded that he

came from Yala, the driver pulled the bus over and asked the student to get out immediately, saying, "Your people kill Thai Buddhists!" This is an example of an interaction between a Buddhist from outside the region and a Muslim man from Yala in the context of the ongoing violence.

At a provincial hospital, I was queuing up to pay for dry foodstuffs at the welfare shop. A Muslim lady placed a few items on the counter in front of the cashier and tried to ask their price in Patani Malay dialect. The cashier was a Buddhist Thai and did not understand the dialect. Instead of getting assistance from nearby people, she rapped the items on the counter and told the Muslim lady in a very rough tone, "Don't understand, don't understand. No need to buy." It is good that the customer did not understand what the cashier said, but she could still interpret the cashier's unpleasant facial expression.

At a restaurant on the Yala–Bannang Sata road, when I stood up to walk out of the restaurant, a middle-aged woman who owned the shop extended her two hands in a gesture of respect (*salam*) and said thank you. She held my hands very tightly as if to give a signal. When questioned, tears ran down her face, and she said that she now had to raise her child alone as her husband passed away on 24 February 2004, four days before the Krue Se incident. Her husband was gunned down on the balcony of a house. Asked whether she had noticed when these types of violent incidents started happening, she responded immediately "When prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra declared war on the drug dealers and influential people." Her husband was killed because he had helped in the effort to crack down on drugs in his village.

These examples are cited here to complement information in the study. I am convinced that relations between Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces and other places are entirely a matter of individuals' conduct. Thai society needs to open its mind and encourage young people to have a fair attitude, with the elder generation leading the way. The various violent incidents in the far south are not due to religious differences, and are not reflections of a Muslim hatred of Buddhists. If two cars coming from opposite directions collide on a street, and one is driven by a Muslim and the other by a Buddhist, it is an accident, and no-one should rush to conclude that there is conflict between Muslims and Buddhists.

Epilogue: crisis of faith or crisis of truth

The diamond-studded golden handle of the axe is now too hot to grasp. The general public throughout Thailand has very little information about what is going on, and as a result they are confused. People in the region have to live their lives on constant alert, uncertain of their personal safety and their possessions. Trust has been destroyed, even between people who were once close. This is the fate of Buddhist and Muslim, man and woman, young and old. Deaths occur almost daily. Those who love peace are smothered by a climate of fear.

Information is spread that events are hatched by Muslims who want to get rid of Buddhists. People who want to create division in society advocate conclusions about the causes of the unrest based on their own preconceived negative attitudes. They want to mislead others into believing that the unrest is caused by religious differences. There is a risk that the general public will be snared by this trap, leading to rifts between Muslims and Buddhists in the society as a whole.

In reality, all human beings, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim, whether from west, east, north, or south, whether black, white, tan, or yellow, have to be interdependent in this age of advanced information technology, for man cannot live alone. The foundations of a culture of interdependence must be found in friendship and good, constructive ways of dealing with one another. But most humans are susceptible to conditioning by their environment. They risk acting in ways that provoke a crisis of "faith" among friends. They may become slaves of "faith" and "truth" to such a degree that they become confused in their views. In the end, it can result in a crisis of wisdom and spirit that no one can heal.

Between 2001 and mid 2006, Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces were still able to interact to a large degree within the framework of the traditional socio-cultural structure. Many Buddhists and Muslims understand the same meanings of "faith" and "truth." If there has been change, it probably results from some groups, either Buddhist or Muslim, who were already predisposed against the other, or from people forced to act against their own beliefs because of their professional duty. In this type of s*elective interaction*, one side is not disposed to act in a good way, causing the other side to feel unhappy and distrustful. The people of two religious group can accumulate feelings of mutual suspicion that destroy former ties of friendship and trust. Nowadays both Buddhists and Muslim have to exercise great caution. They try to distance themselves from people they do not know well, and from state officials of every type, including policemen, soldiers, and civilians. But in the course of daily life in society, it is not possible to avoid all contact with these people. Moreover, there are reasons based on economics, politics, religion, education, and public health which require some dealing with state officials. As a result, part of relations between Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces is in the form of *dependent interactions* which conform to a patron-client system that places importance on relatives, friends, and intimates, and that has private benefit as its main "vehicle." This type of interaction allows the dominant party to take advantage of junior participants, and may lead to a decline of humanist values. In the elections of political leaders or religious leaders in the villages, any trick or tactic is used to garner votes with very little attention given to ethics. Examples abound in the elections of various positions such as village head, district council member, provincial council member, municipal council member, senator, member of parliament, provincial Islamic councilor, and member of the Central Islam Committee of Thailand. People are distressed to witness behavior that diverges from their own moral and ethical values.

Thai society is fortunate in that many elderly people, of the generation of great-grandparents and grandparents, who have a lot of charisma and virtue, are living in some villages. Some are descendants of old lineages, both Buddhist and Muslim, with long experience of overcoming problems and building their communities. Some fought external enemies such as the Malay Communist guerillas. Some fought to defend their homeland. Shared memories of good and bad times form a powerful communal spirit to support and protect their communities with true love and concern. This spirit is valuable social capital, more valuable than later constructions. Despite some suggestions to the contrary, this spirit still has the power to bind people together. People in the three southernmost provinces have to live with the situation facing them. They have to help and protect one another, and elude the influence of outsiders coming to interfere in the local way of life. At base, Muslims and Buddhists do not set great store by religious

difference. They do not find that religion is a major "problem" or "obstacle" to living together in society.

Some conclusions can be made about the incidence of violence. First, the incidence is a gauge of the strength of religious leadership of both the Buddhists and Muslims. Second, the religious faith of Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost provinces is still pure enough for them to understand the truth behind the violence. Third, the scale of unrest can be used to evaluate the true potential of state power in the three southernmost provinces over political and security matters. Fourth, the incidents indicate how religious difference is being exploited by certain groups of people. There are groups of people who try to use "religion" as a vehicle to gain benefits at the expense of others in complex and nefarious ways.

It is difficult to answer such questions as "Who instigated the violence?" and "Why was it instigated?" Buddhists and Muslims have to use their own good judgment. They have to filter information about each case of violence. The unrest has spread widely and increased unstoppably. Each incident is a social phenomenon that has arisen because of a failure in human relations, and because of confusion over the meanings of "faith" and "truth." People's attitudes to human society change with the times. Many now accept that politics and economics are more powerful than religion. People thus dare to adapt and use "religion" (belief) to create a "new faith" for use as a reference in maintaining a "truth" which has more falsehood than fact but which can be used to build political, economic, ideological, and individual power without any concern for righteousness. Luckily, there are still some people of the two religions in the three southernmost provinces who truly understand the meaning of the words "faith" and "truth." Hence the relations between Buddhists and Muslims have not deteriorated too far.

Recommendations

The time has come for due attention to be paid to the present and future of the three southernmost provinces, to the business of solving the violence, rehabilitating the communities, and healing the people spiritually, together with serious development in the areas of education, politics, and the economy under "religious principles" that are correct for both Buddhists and Muslims. The present population of the deep south already pay great attention to education, politics, and the economy, so the government should do its duty in providing adequate support and correct information. The government should also move swiftly to erase the negative image that the local people have of government officials. Someone summed up the situation to me as follows:

> This land [Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat] is but a public football field that is open to all football players from the local, national, and international levels and all age groups to come and compete to their heart's content. Meanwhile, people like us, both Buddhist and Muslim Thais who are less fortunate, are merely one species of "grass" that happens to have sprouted and grown in that field. I guess we just have to face the normal fate of grass on a football field that rarely receives as much care as it should. To survive, it relies merely on rainfall, except on special occasions when some groups want to use the field for a particular match. The field would then be prepared for use, such as by planting new grass seedlings to replace the parts where the grass had withered and died.

> At that point, "the grass" may receive some fertilizer and water. But this grass cannot grow tall and graceful as under natural conditions, for the grass needs to be trimmed to a certain level as grass that is too tall can prick the legs of the well-trained and carefully-selected football players who come to play, which can become a real obstacle to playing football.
>
> When the game starts, the spectators focus all attention on the players and the ball itself. Nobody pays attention to the grass being stepped on. Some patches of grass are scuffed and even uprooted. The ball is also kicked mercilessly. Everyone fights over the ball to win one or two goals that are the difference between "defeat" and "victory." Only the winners get the reward and admiration. The ball may be picked up and embraced. But the "grass" will be left neglected in the field as before. Some "grass plants" may survive. Others may die… It is only the grass on a football field."[36]

This statement makes no distinction among Thai people based on religion but tries to convey that all Thai people in the three southernmost provinces, both Buddhists and Muslims, are exploited and disadvantaged in the same way. Thus if Thai society in every region pays attention to the above message and interprets its metaphor in the same way, I am deeply convinced that the present Thai society in the three southernmost provinces, both Buddhists and Muslims, will have a better tomorrow than today. When that day comes, every diamond stud in the handle of this golden axe will have the opportunity to shine brightly and be an important force in building a stable Thai society far into the future.

Endnotes

[1] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan rawang sasanik thi prakot nai changwat pattani yala lae narathiwat* (Relations of various religious groups in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat) (Bangkok: Thailand Research Fund, 2001).

[2] These villages are: Ban Bu Mae, Tambon Yi-ngo, Amphoe Yi-ngo, Narathiwat; Ban Palat, Tambon Khuan, Amphoe Panare, Pattani; Ban Ramong, Tambon Yarom, Amphoe Betong, Yala; Ban Tan Mali, Tambon Aiyoeweng, Amphoe Betong, Yala.

[3] "Patani" is the name of the areas covering Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and the Thepha, Chana, Saba Yoi, and Na Thawi districts of Songkhla. It is a word derived from Fathoni in Arabic, which means philosopher or learned person. It is a word with a good meaning and hence many philosophers born in Patani use the word "al-Fathoni" as a suffix to their name (see Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan*, pp. 25–7).

[4] General Panlop Pinmanee in *Matichon Raiwan*, 30 October 2003, p.13.

[5] Interview with a senior citizen at a village in Bo Ngo subdistrict, Ra-ngae district, Narathiwat, March 2006, conducted in Patani Malay.

[6] Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, *Hubungan Ulama Patani dan Kedah: Kekeluargaan, Pertalian Ilmu dan Karya.* Dlm. Md.Noor Salleh dan Abdul Halim Haji Salleh (pny.), Islam di Kedah Darul Aman, 1998, p. 95. This edition of Tarikh Fathani was translated into Malay with explanations by Syeikh Faqih Ali (grandson of Sheikh Safiyuddin [1400 AD], owner of the work *Tarikh Fathani* in Arabic, which Wan Mohd. Shaghir bin Abdullah said could not be found) which Syeikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fathani copied in 1813 CE and Wan Mohd. Shaghir bin Abdullah had transcribed from Jawi into Rumi script using the modern spelling system in *Khazanah Fathaniyah*, 1 (1990), pp. 6–27. This document is important as it tells us that Kedah was the center of Langkasuka and had Fathoni as

its main port. Moreover, Wan Mohd. Shaghir bin Abdullah says Syeikh Faqih Ali bin Wan Muhammad bin Syeikh Safiyuddin is the same person as the owner of the high rank Dato' Maharajalela who fled to Bugis. See Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 'Peranan Orang-orang Patani di Dunia Perantau,' paper presented at Simposium Wilayah Perbatasan Malaysia-Thailand, organized by the History Department, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 16 May 1996, pp. 3–4.

[7] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan*, pp. 26–7.

[8] Jawi script is Arabic script adapted by Malay people to phoneticize the Malay language. Indonesians call this type of script "Melayu Script". "Jawi" (or Yawi) is a word adapted from *jaway* (*al-jaway*) in Arabic which means "tinder." It is the same as the standard Malay word *damar* or dama used in the deep south or *al-jawat* in Arabic. Thus when an Arab calls the people from the Malay islands ogae *jawi* (Jawi people), he means the islanders who possess tinder, and does not necessarily mean Yawa (Java) island or mainland Yawadwipa. In fact, the word Jawi or Jaway is often on the lips or on the pen tips of those who use one kind of Malay script adapted from Arabic, Jawi script or as Indonesian linguists call it, Arabic-Malay script; see Nabilah Lubis, *Naskah, Teks, dan Metode Penelitian Filologi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Media Alo Indonesia, 2001), p. 80. This script was widely used in Sumatra; see Slamet Muljana, *Kuntala, Sriwajaya dan Suwarnabhum*i (Jakarta: Yayasan IDAYA, 1981), pp. 58–9. In the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, Malay writers used the word Jawi for "Melayu," (Malay) giving the impression that Jawi is the same language as Malay. Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas explained that this was due to political reasons, in order to reduce tension between the Javanese and Malay people after the Malay Muslims of the Mataram Kingdom conquered Java (Majapahit), whose people observed Shaivite Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism. The people in Mataram used Malay as the official language instead of Javanese, which had flourished earlier. See Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972), p. 43. On 22 January 2005, Professor Yusny Saby from the Aceh special administrative region, Indonesia, translated Jawi (*jawi*) as "*bawah angin"* (beneath the wind), so Jawi is the language used by the people in the area beneath the wind.

[9] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan*, pp. 253–7; Ahmad Fathil Al-Fathoni, *Ulama Besar dari Fathoni*, Malayu Edition, Jawi script, (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2001).

[10] Abdul Rahman Al-Ahmadi, 'Kedatangan dan Perkembangan Islam di Kelantan dan Patani,' papers from a seminar on Islamic Civilization in the Malay World, Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 1–5 June 1980, p. 3.

[11] S. T. Alisjahbana, *Dari Perjuangan dan Pertumbuhan Bahasa Indonesia: kumpulan esei 1932–1937* (Jakarta, Dian Rakyat, 1978), p. 166.

[12] Rattiya Saleh, *Phasa malayu thin pak tai khong prathet thai* (Malayu language in southern Thailand), second printing, revised edition (Songkhla: Srinakarinwirote-Songkhla University, 1992).

[13] Charnvit Kasetsiri, 'Kan sang wiraburut (lae/rue wirasatri) khong chat' (The creation of national heroes, and/or heroines), *Silapa Watthanatham* (Art and Culture) 24, 21, 1 (1999), p. 93.

[14] Mohd. Zamberi A Malek, *Patani dalam Tamadun Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1994), p. 11; Rattiya Saleh, 'Hikayat Carang Kulina: Analisis Teks dan Kesinambungan dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Melayu Muslim Patani,' Ph.D thesis, Fakulti Sains Kemasyarakatan dan Kemanusiaan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, 2002, pp. 412–22.

[15] Mrs Yaena Khueramae, formerly a resident of Ban Kuleng, which was the old site of the town of Yi-ngo. In 2000, she was 99 years old. Currently (2006) she is still alive but her memory is failing.

[16] Mr Akom Phatthanakun and Mrs Rachanikon Patthanakun are Buddhist Thais who have retired from the civil service. They opened a grocery shop at 12/1 Ramkomut, Mu 1, Ban Bu Mae, Yi-ngo, Yi-ngo district, Narathiwat. In early 2006, the front of the shop was bombed. It was fortunate that both were not hurt, but three customers were injured.

[17] Mrs Rachanikon Phatthanakun (see previous note).

[18] Mr Phoem Manimat or *Po Teh*, a Buddhist and supporter of Wat Ratsawiriyaram (Wat Yi-ngo), is

a resident of Yi-ngo from birth and has excellent command of the Malay language. In 2000, he was 86 years old. He has since passed away due to old age.

[19] This family is related to a Buddhist Thai family that met with violence, including killing and burning of the house, at Ban Cha-o, Taliai subdistrict, Yaring district, Pattani.

[20] Mrs Phum Maansakun (maiden name Na Rangsi). In 1998, her son and his wife and two children (one girl and one boy) converted from Buddhism to Islam. In 1998, Phum was 67 years old, residing at number 4/1, Mu 1, Ban Palat, Khuan subdistrict, Panare district, Pattani. Phum''s mother was named Chan Na Rangsi. The Muslim villagers in Palat knew her by the name of Maeteh.

[21] The word "Fatima" derives from the Arabic word "Fatimah." According to Islamic history, Fatimah was a daughter of Rauzul Muhammad (May the mercy of Allah the Pure and Virtuous and peace be with you).

[22] See Tok Muda Raja Razman bin Raja Abdul Hamid and Tok Muda Haji Meor Yahya dan Husin Mahmud, *Hulu Perak dalam Sejarah* (Ipoh: Regina Press, 1963).

[23] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan*, pp. 109–10.

[24] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan*, p. 110.

[25] The village headman Dolo Yama has gone back to the mercy of Allah (the Pure and Virtuous).

[26] Interview with the principal of Ban Ramong School.

[27] The sarongs of Muslim males are checkered-patterned.

[28] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan*, pp. 117–8.

[29] See Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng, chapter 2 in this volume, p. 63.

[30] General Kitti Ratanachaya, *Dap fai tai kap rat thai* (Extinguishing the Southern Fire by the Thai state) (Bangkok: Than Press, 2003), p. 42.

[31] Additional prayer after prayers on Friday for this dead person, *Matichon Raiwan*, 7 May 2006, p. 13.

[32] It was discovered later that this was a teenage drug addict who needed money. This youth knew that the old man always carried a big sum of money as he dared not keep money at home for fear of losing it. This was the cause of this incident.

[33] *Thai Rath*, 25 January 2004, p. 15.

[34] *Matichon Raiwan*, 20 February 2005, p. 2.

[35] *Matichon Raiwan*, 30 October 2005, p. 13.

[36] Interview with a senior Muslim religious leader at a village in Pattani in April 2005, conducted in Patani Malay dialect.

7

Migration and the violence in the far south

Zakee Phithakkumpol

> Muslims in (the three provinces in) the south now live in their own home place as if they were migrants. They have no power to change anything that is happening. They do not dare facing the officials and at the same time, they dare not tell the militants to stop what they are doing.[1]

The violence that escalated in the three southernmost provinces from January 2004 onwards has been much more severe than anything in the past.[2] Earlier unrest had been largely focused against the state, its machinery and personnel. But in this new phase, the violence has engulfed ordinary people, both Buddhist and Muslim. More and more ordinary people were targeted, something unprecedented. This has created a climate of insecurity and fear. It has also depressed an already weak economy.[3]

One strategy people may use to counter the impact on their safety and their livelihood is to migrate. Ever since the violence became worse, there have been reports of migration away from the affected area. This chapter examines this phenomenon of migration.

The approach

Most earlier studies of migration were based on quantitative approaches, and much of the theoretical work underpinning these studies involved a debate over which "factors" influenced the decisions over migration. More recently, the trend has been to take a more qualitative approach, and to study the *experience* of migration and its meaning for the subjects in order to understand the behavior, beliefs, and values involved.[4] This study adopts this qualitative approach. The aim of the study is to explore what factors influenced the decision to migrate, what difficulties were encountered, and in what ways people felt the move had improved their life chances or affected their lives in other ways.

For practical reasons, I chose to limit the study to movements of people after January 2004 from the three southernmost provinces into the city of Hat Yai, the main commercial and education center of the far south sub-region. I planned to interview in-depth a small sample of migrants recruited at the destination in Hat Yai[5] using informal and loosely structured interviews coupled with personal observation. The interview covered these subjects: reasons for migration; the nature of the migration; the people who influenced the decision to migrate; the consequences of the migration; and the migrant's assessments of the gains and losses by the move.

In practice, recruitment of respondents was difficult. Because of the background of violence and trauma, many people were reluctant to be interviewed and talk of their experiences. Even when they agreed, they insisted on having others present for assurance. This made the process long and cumbersome.[6]

I recruited respondents who had originated from different parts of the three provinces, and who came from different backgrounds—student, official, trader, businessman, and daily hired employee. The fieldwork was conducted between December 2005 and May 2006. In total, I recruited and interviewed ten respondents, but for reporting I have concentrated on only seven in order to reduce duplication in the respondents' experiences.

Migrating out of the far south

Quantitative data

At the request of the National Reconciliation Commission, the Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, analyzed the statistic of migration in and out of the three southern provinces in the 30-year period of 1976–2005. Between 1976 and 1987, more people moved out of the area than into it, while over 1989 to 2003 the net movement was inward. In 2004, there was a net outward movement from all three provinces, but in 2005 the movement returned to net inward, but in small numbers. [7]

These data seem to disprove the reports of large-scale out-migration. However, this was a purely statistical study based on secondary, official information of uncertain accuracy. Moreover the study does not draw any connection between the violence and the trends in migration.

The survey

My sample included four men and three women, all but one aged 31 and over, and all with education up to high school or higher.

Table 7-1 Background of the sample of migrants

Background	N	Background	N
sex		*children*	
male	4	yes	6
female	3	no	1
age		*number of children*	
15-20	1	1-2	5
21-30		3-4	2
31-40	3	*education*	
41-50	3	primary	-
marital status		high school	2
single	1	certificate	1
married	6	B.A	4
profession		higher than B.A	-
official	2	*status in family*	
employed	2	head	5
trader	1	wife	1
business	1	child	1
student	1	*religion*	
		Buddhist	5
		Muslim	2

The sample falls into two parts. First, there were those directly affected by the violence. They had experienced violence themselves, or had members of their families

directly affected, and had suffered loss of lives or assets. Second, there were those indirectly affected, meaning they did not suffer directly from any violent incident but still felt they could not continue to live in the area.

Directly affected

Somphong,[8] was born in Su-ngai Kolok, Narathiwat and moved to Mueang[9] district. His wife was from Songkhla. They have two children, a son and a daughter. Somphong worked as an insurance salesman and then as a direct sales representative. Before the escalation of the violence, his routine started by leaving the house early in the morning to meet with his customers in the villages. After the violence flared up in 2004, his family was hit hard. His older brother was shot dead at the end of 2004, and Somphong himself narrowly escaped a bomb attack at the Angmo restaurant in Mueang district, Narathiwat, having left the restaurant only about half an hour before it exploded. Because of the violence, Somphong and his family decided to sell their house and move to Hat Yai.

Somphong's case is a clear example of the direct effect of the violence. He and his family were also affected psychologically. In the early days of their living in Hat Yai, they chose to visit only restaurants where there were no soldiers or policeman. They would not park their car near any belonging to officials for fear of attack. Somphong said, "Until now I still feel very nervous when I see cars with registration plates from the three provinces and will try to get everyone away from those cars."

The violence also affected his direct sales business. Somphong was too afraid to travel to areas he thought were not safe. He said, "When it was peaceful, I could travel to see my customers wherever they were. I could visit any village. I can't do that now. We dare not visit the villages because we just don't know who's who." Previously, safety had not been an issue.

A second reason for moving concerned his son. After the violence escalated in Narathiwat, Somphong's son felt uneasy with his Muslim friends. Somphong said, "My son didn't want to study in Narathiwat anymore. He told me he wanted to move to another place. He took the tests in several schools including Hat Yai Wittayalai." His son's success in gaining admission was another reason Somphong decided to choose Hat Yai as his destination.

Another reason for moving was the effect of the violence on members of the family. Two bombs exploded near their Narathiwat home. Somphong said, "My wife was so afraid she stayed indoor all the time and would not go out unless necessary. Sometime I had to do the shopping for her. If I could not manage it, she went herself but the trip was very brief."

Somjai,[10] from Hat Yai, studied at Palasueksa College in Yala and, after completing her degree, worked as a teacher in Yala and then Pattani for eighteen years. Somjai was married to Bunyuen from Khok Pho, Pattani. They have two sons, aged 9 and 6 years old. Her husband, who worked as a engineering supervisor for a subdistrict council (TAO) in Nong Chik, Pattani, was shot and killed in February 2004 while driving his motorcycle back home. Before the incident, Boonyuen was warned by a friend in the police that subdistrict council officials in the three provinces would be targets of the militants. Bunyuen did not pay much attention, believing he had no enemies. After his death, Somjai moved to work at Ban Khuanlanga, Khok Pho district, nearer to her home, and then on secondment at the Wat Prang Kaeo school in Khlong Hoi Khong district, Songkhla.

The family was traumatized. Somjai told me, "After my husband died I was so

stressed I threw up every night. After throwing up I could then get some sleep. It happened like that for months." Somjai's mother-in-law became very quiet and would not speak to anyone, even those in her own family. Somjai's mother came from Hat Yai to stay with them. The two sons were also affected. "My elder son said to me he didn't want to stay there anymore. He wanted to move to Hat Yai and to live with his grandmother. His brother asked about his father all the time, making me cry every time. He suffered so much. One day I had the television on with the news. There was a piece about a bomb in the south. He came to me, hugged me, shaking and crying, and told me to change the channel because he didn't want to watch it."

Rumors spread locally that teachers would be targeted, next to the soldiers and police. Somjai had to travel some distance to school every day. "When I drove to work, I had to be on guard and alert all the time and was always so worried. I kept looking at the rear and side mirrors. We also had to go out in groups."

She wanted to move away but was hampered by having to take care of her traumatized mother-in-law. She also needed some time to replace their old, wooden, and dilapidated house with something that would afford more protection. But eventually the mother-in-law decided to take control of the assets and earnings of a farm which had earlier come to Somjai's husband. At that point, Somjai decided to return to her family home in Hat Yai. She said, "Once he died, everything given to him was taken back. The earnings from the farm were gone. I was so stressed I thought there was no good reason for me to stay. I thought I'd better go back home."

Indirectly affected

Piyamon[11] was born in Mueang district, Pattani, as the youngest daughter of Apinan, a government teacher working at Prachan School, Yarang district. Piyamon studied at Decha Pattanayanukun School in Mueang district.

Although Piyamon and her family were not directly affected by the violence, the family was concerned about the quality and continuity of Piyamon's education. Piyamon said, "The school closed down so often that my family asked me if I wanted to move to study in Hat Yai. I told my father I'd do whatever he wanted me to." Her father added, "We could see that she might not get a proper education because, when the violence escalated, the school had to close down or let the students go home early. Also we were worried about her safety. We consulted my sister about moving her to school in Hat Yai." She moved to Hat Yai Wittayalai School.

Piyamon said she did not think much about the violence. Her relations with Muslim friends at school were unchanged. "It was normal. Nobody talked about the violence. My Muslim friends from Pattani even came to study with me in Hat Yai."

As a teacher, her father Apinan was also affected. When the violence flared up, he was working inside the "red zone." He applied for a transfer out of the area. "A teacher friend… told me not to leave, as I had been here for a long time and also that I would be fine. He said to me that whenever it was my turn, he would tell me to move. What he said made me lost for words and simply stunned.… Also my wife doesn't want me to move either. She wants to stay here because her parents live here and they are old. She herself was born here. We have quite a number of belongings here so we haven't moved but let our junior members leave first." The reassurance from a friend was a guarantee of safety from someone well respected in the community. But Apinan also took precautions. He varied the time of leaving home each day, and took different routes between home and work. He also suspected he would have to leave in the end. "I don't think I will be here until retirement. I have sent my children away first. The older child is studying at Walailak University and the other is now at Hat Yai. For me,

it's only a matter of time." Asked about the possibility of the conflict being solved and violence subsiding, he said, "I think it's going to be very difficult. This thing goes deep and it's now in the minds of the children. That's why I told you I won't be around until retirement."

Apinan also talked about the effect the violence had on teaching. "It takes the teachers until 8 or 9 a.m. to reach school because they have to travel in groups and wait for the soldiers to accompany them. The classes stop about 2 p.m. because the teachers don't want the soldiers to wait for too long." However, he did not feel the soldiers had to protect the school itself. "At my school there were no soldiers to protect the teachers. Having the soldiers was both good and bad. Some may think it guarantees their safety but sometime it attracts danger to the teachers and they also become targets. Look at what happened at Bra-o. A bomb was planted at the spot where soldiers meet the teachers. When it exploded, many teachers were injured. Moreover, in Yarang district, a man who is expected to be a minister of Pattani once they achieve separation said he would not guarantee the safety of anyone if soldiers are involved."

Apinan said, "There's no problem between the teachers and the community. At the village tea shop I won't talk about the violence or the situation. The villagers say they will warn me about any strangers coming into the village." Apinan also commented on the attitude of students towards the unrest. "When I asked the *prathom* 6 (elementary level) students if there was recruitment for suicide fighters would anyone want to do it, all the male students in the room put up their hands. I was stunned. I could not say anything. I asked them why they wanted to do it. They said to be God's fighters is a good thing. I think what I have taught them for eight years—two years at the kindergarten level and another six years at elementary level—did not help at all."

Somruedi[12] came from Thepha district, Songkhla. After completing high school she moved to Yala province and later married a husband from Phatthalung. They both worked in a rubber production plant, and lived in the workers' housing at the plant. Yala became their home. Somruedi has two sons.

Because of the violence, people were afraid to work in the rubber plantations. The quantity of latex received at the plant declined, with the result that Somruedi and her husband worked less and earned less. While once they had had to work overtime, the working days per month were eventually cut to fifteen.

The reduced earnings and the prospect of prolonged violence made them think of the future. Somruedi suggested to her husband that they should move to find work in Hat Yai. Her sister, who lived in Hat Yai, had urged them to move. But her husband refused. He had always worked at the rubber plant and was nervous about his chances of finding any other kind of work. He was not worried about safety as they spent their time inside the plant. He preferred to economize and get by.

Somruedi said, "Our income was reduced. I said to my husband we can't live like this but he said it would be alright, that we would stay only in the factory and if we were short of money we could always pick some vegetables and find some fish in the canal."

Their elder son studied at Kanarat School on a scholarship from Sukhothai Thammathirat University, while the younger one studied at a primary school in Mueang district, Yala. Somruedi said, "Because of the violence, the school had to close quite often. Sometimes they called and asked us to collect them before the normal closing time. We were worried my elder son might not do well in the exams,

and that could result in him losing the scholarship. The cost of his education would then fall on us." She had to take her children to their schools and collect them every day. "Everyday I was afraid something would happen to us because the route we used was quiet and deserted and it was such a long distance too. Although it hadn't happened but it could, any time."

Because of the problem concerning the education of the two children, Somruedi again tried to convince her husband to move to Hat Yai. Eventually he agreed after her brother-in-law gave him a job in his construction business.

Abdulloh[13] was born in Yala and educated there up to university level. He married a nurse from Su-ngai Kolok. They lived in Bangkok for a time but moved back to be with her parents. Working in a government hospital in Su-ngai Kolok, she earned much less than she had in a private hospital in Bangkok. She decided to move to Hat Yai.

Abdulloh said, "My wife actually wanted to move some time ago, even before the violence escalated. She once worked for a private hospital in Bangkok and was well paid so she wanted to find similar work with a private hospital in Hat Yai. The violence may have had some influence on her decision, because I was worried about her safety when traveling to work.... Sometime she had to work the late-night shift and someone had to give her a lift. I was worried for the safety both for her and those who took her there."

At first after his wife moved to Hat Yai, Abdulloh stayed in Su-ngai Kolok and ran a tour business. The border town usually relied on tourists from Malaysia. But the numbers declined once the violence started. Many hotels and tour operators had to close down. After the Krue Ze and Tak Bai incidents, the slump deepened. Abdulloh had to close down his company, move to join his wife in Hat Yai, and look for a new job. Their two daughters remained in Su-ngai Kolok with their grandparents..

Abdulloh made several trips to visit his daughters. "Each time I visited my hometown to see my daughters I felt it was not a good place to live, especially when there were car bombs. I felt very nervous. Every morning before I left home I had to check if there was any bomb underneath my car."

I asked him why he had not moved the two daughters to Hat Yai. He said, "My wife's parents are lonely. They want them to be there. Also her father is a principal at their school so the children go to school with him and I don't have to worry about their safety. Moreover, we have only an apartment in Hat Yai which is not very accommodating. So it was better to leave them there." However, the two children came to stay during school vacations.

Chae-useng[14] was born in Pattani. He worked as a controller in a construction subcontracting business, and his wife had an evening restaurant selling rice porridge near the Pattani river.

Due to the violence, the construction business in Pattani slumped dramatically. Chae-useng said, "Construction work in Pattani declined from the normal level which was not that much anyway. So the effect was heavy. I thought I would soon have to find work somewhere else. I was lucky the company got work in Hat Yai."

His wife's business was affected too. "There were fewer people once the violence started. My restaurant, next to the river, used to get a lot of customers but once the violence flared up they were all gone, especially after the Krue Ze incident. The roads were deserted. There were no people, only the police and soldiers driving by. By 8 p.m. people did not go out. It was all very quiet. Who would buy my

porridge?" But she continued selling it and sometime had to throw unsold porridge away.

They had four children studying at a school in Pattani. She had to drive them to and from school, and was constantly afraid of being present when the militants attacked a checkpoint. "One day… there was a rumor that people were being told not to go out. The roads in town were all deserted, no car, not even one. There were only soldiers and police cars. I had to go and collect my children…. I had to pass so many checkpoints where there were so many police and soldiers and I feared they would attack these people and that I would get caught in between. It was not worth it."

School closures were also a problem. She said, "The school closed quite often especially when there were rumors about bombs here and there. I wasn't that afraid. But the teachers must have been afraid about the children and so closed the school. I fully understand that. But I thought it was not good so I spoke to my husband that we should find a similar school in Hat Yai, and perhaps move there." Chae-useng added, "I was in Hat Yai then, renting a house in Khuanlang. I tried to find school nearby but couldn't. I asked my friends and heard from them that there was one in Ban Kao-mi (Khlong Hae subdistrict). I immediately called and told my wife about it. So we moved here."

Chukiat[15] was born in Yala. His father was a former police officer at Mueang district police station in Yala while his mother was from Songkhla. His family made a living selling fruits in the market in Mueang district. His parents had been living in Yala for more than forty years and they felt they had a strong bond with the place. His mother and her sister-in-law could speak Malay though Chukiat knew only a few words.

After education at the Yala Teachers' College, Chukiat worked for the Rural Development Department in Pattani. After the civil service reforms in 2002, Chukiat asked for a transfer to the Water Resources Department, and got a post in Hat Yai. He got a secondment to work in Yala so he could be with his family. Chukiat said, "The day the Krue Ze incident occurred, I was exploring the areas for water sources. I got a call from my boss who ordered me back to the office immediately."

Chukiat's job was developing small and medium sized water sources for use of communities in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Chukiat told me, "In the old days when I went into the villages there was no suspicious feeling. After the violence flared up, I had to be very careful and on the look-out all the time. If there was any motorcycle coming by, I would stop what I was doing, watch to see who it was, and wait until that person passed before I could resume my work.… When we entered villages in the red zone we had to inform the village heads so that they would get people to protect us. They know the villagers well, especially the teenagers and can identify strangers. It was helpful."

The violence changed the way he lived in Yala. He said, "I used to go about freely and went out to the teashops talking to my friends till late almost every night. Now I have to hurry home every time I go out especially after 8 p.m.. I don't go out at all unless it's absolutely necessary. Then I make it quick and try to return home as soon as I can."

Chukiat and members of his family used to go to the park in Yala for exercise almost every evening. During weekends, he and his wife and their children often went shopping in the department store there. But all these activities had to stop after the violence flared up. The grandparents repeatedly told the children not to go and play outside the house in the evenings.

The violence left the whole family feeling very fearful. Chukiat said, "My father told me that this time the incidents are very different from what happened in the past. From his longterm experience serving as a policeman, he thinks it will be hard to suppress the violence."

Chukiat decided to move to Hat Yai, partly in order to move upwards in his career, but largely because of the violence. His parents decided to go with him.

Evaluating the experience of migration

The experience of migration

In some of these cases, the migrants planned to move temporarily and later return to their place of origin,[16] while in others the intention was to make a permanent move. Chae-useng and Somjai intended to make only temporary moves.

Chae-useng's family planned a temporary move. He moved to Hat Yai first, and then his wife followed after the violence got worse. His wife also explained, "We think we will be here for a while, maybe five years or more. We will work and if we manage to make a saving then we will return to Pattani…. We can make some savings here because the economy is better than where we were. But I don't think we will be here permanently because there's no other place like home."

Somjai sent her son to Hat Yai first, and then followed him. She also planned to return to Pattani but was constantly deterred by the continuing violence. Her return trips to the three provinces reinforced this fear. She determined to return only if her mother-in-law died and she inherited the family property. Even though it would be dangerous, she felt a duty to reclaim the property for the sake of her children. She even thought of buying more farming land there. She explained that she missed her husband and their past together. She said, "I think of the trees we planted together." She added that she wanted the children to know their father's relatives, and so she had to go back.

All the other cases intended to make a permanent move.

Somphong and his family moved altogether to Hat Yai in May 2005. Somphong said, "Our move is permanent…. I don't believe the problems will be solved in the near future. The person able to solve it will have to be a well-respected national figure able to command acceptance from all sides involved." He sold his house in Narathiwat and intended to stay in Hat Yai because both the business prospects and the schooling were better.

Piyamon had moved her house registration to Hat Yai. Only her mother remained in Pattani to look after the grandparents who did not want to move. The family had no plan to return to Pattani because they could not foresee any end to the violence.

Somruedi admitted that she was more at home in Yala than in Hat Yai, but insisted her move was permanent. She said, "The violence this time is worse than any in the past. I asked my Muslim friend in the factory if it would be contained but the reply was that it wouldn't be easy."

Abdulloh and his wife aimed to move permanently. He had bought a piece of land and built a house in Hat Yai. "Hat Yai offers better business opportunities than any other province in the southern border area. I have not completely ruled out the chance of going back into the tour operating business and am now looking for a way to do it here. My wife also wants to find work here so I decided to buy the land and build the house." His children had not yet joined them. Abdulloh said, "I will have to

leave them with their grandparents for a while. The grandparents are lonely. If we take the children away with us, it would affect them a lot.... But I think we'll move them here to live together one day."

Chukiat had also built a house in Hat Yai. "After talking to my father I started the process of transferring myself back to Hat Yai, to the same post I used to work in. Once back in Hat Yai I bought the house because I decided I intend to live here now." His family will gradually follow him. Chukiat said, "I don't think I will go back and live there again. My parents will follow me in the next five to six months. They have bought a second-hand house which is under repair. Once that is finished, they will move." His wife and son remain in Yala, but he aimed to move them to Hat Yai eventually because of concern over their safety.

The effect on daily life

Somphong's family had adapted well to the new environment, "Hat Yai is a business centre for the south and it's a big town so life here is always more of a rush than what we had in Narathiwat. But after being here for a while members of the family were able to adjust to it."

Piyamon was already accustomed to Hat Yai from short sojourns during her student days. But she found it difficult living on her own and having to look after everything herself. "At first I missed home quite a lot but that was not much of a problem. The bigger problem came from the school. As I was new, other students didn't pay much attention to me and most of them were not very interested in studying so I ended up having only a few friends who are newcomers as well. We grouped together. Some of them came from Su-ngai Kolok. Now everything is fine." The teaching at Hat Yai Wittayalai School however took some getting used to. "I feel that the teachers here do it in a different ways than at Decha School. They go through everything so quickly as if the students already knew it all or the students would have extra tuition on top of what they teach anyway. The teachers at Decha School explained everything so thoroughly."

Chukiat felt his life had been greatly affected. "First, my spending has increased because I now live in two houses. Second, I have to be far from my wife and my children. My family is a big one. My house and those of my parents and other relatives are close to each other so we usually did things together. Getting together and chatting at my parents' house after dinner has now gone. I meet them only two days in a week."

Chae-useng also felt greatly affected by the move. "When I first arrived, I rented a house in Khuanlang, an area packed with Buddhists. When I learned that my family was coming to live with me I decided to find a new place among Muslims. It feels much better."

Abdulloh felt less affected. "My wife and I do not feel that we have to adjust a lot. We lived in Su-ngai Kolok, a big town itself and my wife has the experience of living in Bangkok. Living here is not so much different from those places."

Somruedi said everyone in her family had to adapt to the new life in Hat Yai, especially to the higher cost of living. Her husband felt that life in Hat Yai was chaotic. He could no longer forage for food like vegetables. Somruedi was disorientated by the scale of Hat Yai. "I can't find my way even with my motorcycle. The roads are confusing unlike those in Yala where I could drive even with my eyes closed." The children had to look after themselves more since both parents left the home early for work.

Adapting to a new environment

Chukiat found it easy to adjust to a new environment. “I don’t think I need to adapt much to Hat Yai. I actually am quite accustomed to Songkhla. My mother has quite a number of relatives living here. Also, I don’t think we need to adapt much for other things such as language because it’s the same as we use.” When asked if the neighbors knew if he had moved from the three provinces, he said, “I’m not sure but I think some of them may know. I myself am not home that much. I have to work and when at home I take a rest. On the weekends I return to Yala so I haven’t met a lot of people. But I chat with them.”

Somphong met a warm welcome in Hat Yai. “When I first moved to this area, things were just normal. They all knew we came from Narathiwat. The neighbors came and talked to us. They asked about the situation, some gave us things such as food.”

Abdulloh and his wife initially rented an apartment and had little contact with neighbors. After they built a house in a village with a rural atmosphere, they had more contact and found no difficulty over differences of language and culture. Abdulloh said, “My wife and I have no problem on this issue. I myself speak the southern dialect. That even makes things easier.”

Chae-useng and his family had more difficulty as they moved into a Muslim community that used southern dialect. His children had to adapt at school, but his wife had earlier worked in several places and found it easy to adjust.

Somjai moved back to her old home areas. As it was in a rural area, news traveled fast. Many people came to express their sympathy and enquire how she and her children were coping.

Somruedi and her husband worked all day and had little contact with neighbors. Most of their social contacts were with her sister’s family over the weekends.

The impact on career and life prospects

Chukiat felt the move might benefit his career as a civil servant. “I feel that it won’t affect my career, but might make it better for me in a way. Here I can work closely with my supervisors which might result in me getting promotion.” He also felt much safer on the job than when he had been traveling in the southernmost provinces. “Working here, I don’t feel I have to be on the watch all the time like when I was in those areas. I think it make such a lot of difference. Living there, whenever I was out to work, I prayed for safety.” The move also pleased his parents, for whom he was the only child. “My parents were very happy that I moved back to this place (Hat Yai). They said they now don’t have to worry all the time what will happen to me when I go to work.”

Somphong had also prospered. His direct-selling business did well in Hat Yai because the market was larger, and his wife had opened a beauty salon in part of their house. For his wife, moving out of the violence zone has given her a better state of mind. She also was able to charge well in the beauty salon because people in Hat Yai had higher purchasing power.

For Piyamon, moving to Hat Yai gave her a better chance in term of extra education. Besides the school, there were many places offering extra tuition for those pursuing university entrance. Piyamon availed herself of this evening tuition on a daily basis.

Abdulloh had had to abandon his tour business and get by selling food outside a local restaurant. “When I came here at first I was on my motorcycle looking for some

location for some sort of business. I found this place, I came in and had tea and asked them if anyone sold any food there in the mornings. The restaurant itself opens from evening till late into the night. They said no and so I asked if I could do it. They rented me the space to sell food in the mornings…. When I lived in Su-ngai Kolok, I made around 100,000 to 150,000 baht from each tour trip. I could make enough money for the whole year from a month's work. Many Malaysian tourists visited between December and April. But after coming here I have to sell food. I have to do everything myself and do it every day too. Of course there's no way to compare the money that I make here to the old business, and it's very tiring. But I have to hang in there, buying time, and wait for a better opportunity when I get to know more people. Then I will go back to the tour business." Abdulloh was happy to be living with his wife. He knew he might earn more in the tourism business if he settled in Phuket, but he preferred Hat Yai. "First, Hat Yai is close to our home so we can visit our children anytime we want. Second, most of my former customers were Malaysians. Phuket is a destination for westerners. I would be at a disadvantage over language."

Chae-useng still works as a construction supervisor as he did in Pattani. Apart from overseeing and supervising the construction work, he now subcontracted some works from the employer which meant that he now earned more. But his wife had been affected. "When I first arrived I went to work for my husband as a construction worker. But then I had to take the children to schools and they are quite far away so later I could not work anymore." She earned a little from subcontract work, but over all their earnings had been affected. Chae-useng had been faced with a new problem: "When my wife and I went to work, some of my colleagues who might have been jealous of me went around with the story that I was a militant and that I had had to flee to Hat Yai. He himself is a Muslim. He went around telling people I was a militant. He also told the boss. But I will bear it." Still the couple were optimistic that the move had increased their opportunities. Their children benefited from undisrupted education, and the parents looked forward to relying on them once they had grown up.

Somruedi and her husband had been nervous about moving because they had no experience at any work other than a rubber factory. Both initially found work as construction laborers, but she found it too tough and switched to a job as a cleaner in a canteen. In general, she was optimistic over the move. "I feel safer and I don't feel that tense about the situation. But I think, for me, the most important thing is my children's education. I am poor. I cannot support them in higher education on my own."

Somjai received job training from a queen's project to help victims of the violence. She had begun to get over her the shock of her husband's death, and felt optimistic about living a more normal life in Hat Yai. Her two sons enjoyed the freedom of moving around easily and playing with friends. They had brightened up considerably, but still became depressed when viewing news of the violence on television.

Opportunities lost

Moving to Hat Yai, although beneficial to the migrants in many ways, may also take away opportunities.

Somruedi felt she had lost the chance to live a simple lifestyle. Moreover, both she and her husband had to change to an unfamiliar occupation and work harder than before to earn a living.

Somphong felt he had lost the chance to be close to relatives who were still living in Narathiwat, but treated this with equanimity. "I don't think the problem is

that big because we can still call them on the telephone, and if I want to see my parents it is only a half day trip."

Chae-useng also lost the opportunity to be close to relatives living in Pattani. His wife said, "Here I have to spend more time taking care of the children myself because we have no one who we can trust to leave the children with. In Pattani, I went out to sell in the evenings, but here I cannot."

Chukiat missed his young children. "We are worried about them and the fact that they will not be able to have a proper education. They also won't be able to leave the house, especially after dark. However, here there would be no one to take care of them while I'm at work." Chukiat also faced the extra costs of running a second home, and traveling back to Yala at the weekends.

Somjai regretted the deterioration in the relationship with her mother-in-law over the family property, but was determined to maintain her claims for the sake of her children.

Abdulloh regretted losing a close relationship with his two children who were left under the care of his wife's parents. He and his wife worried about them whenever there were reports of violence in Su-ngai Kolok.

Piyamon had lost the warmth of living with her parents. Her father visited every weekend to soothe her loneliness, and she visited other relatives who lived in and around Hat Yai.

In sum, though each case is different, there were some general trends. Most of the migrants aimed to stay permanently in Hat Yai. For most, the move was not difficult because the distance and the cultural distance were not great. Generally they received a warm welcome in their new environment, though there were cases of suspicion because they came from the three provinces. Generally speaking, most migrants found better opportunities in their work, business, or education and were optimistic of their future prospects, but there was a significant minority who faced difficulty because of their lack of appropriate skills and experience. Almost all of them felt they had lost some warmth and intimacy by the rupture of family and kin ties.

Conclusion

Violence in the three provinces resulted in deep distrust between the people and the government, and between the Buddhists and the majority Muslims in the area. It undermined people's confidence in the state's ability to protect their lives and property. The Thaksin Shinawatra government tried to suppress the violence using primarily military rather than political measures, and the militants were able to exploit the opportunities thus created. Officials' abuse of human rights such as kidnapping, murder, and intimidation helped the militants to rally people to support their cause and to resist the state in any form possible.

In this situation, a number of people came to believe that violence is the best weapon to counter the state. Meanwhile, the government is trapped into a situation where violence breeds violence. The more force the state employs, the more violence it provokes in response. It is not surprising, therefore, that violence is now spreading out of control in the three provinces. Ultimately, this violence has driven some people out of the area. Hat Yai has become a destination for several victims of the violence.

Hat Yai is a center of business, tourism, and education for the lower south region. Once the violence began in the three provinces, Hat Yai was a natural

destination for migrants. Hat Yai also is a multicultural society where people of different races, languages, and beliefs co-exist, while retaining their own identity. Good relations have been maintained between different groups of people.

According to this study, migrants choose Hat Yai as their destination for several reasons. First, it is close by, and the cost of travel is low. Second, it is an expanding commercial center and thus offers good opportunities for making a living. Third, it has good educational institutions where children can study without fear of danger. Fourth, several of the subjects of this study had some personal connections in Hat Yai—either through relatives or having spent sometime there as a student. Others could get to know the place from friends or relatives who had experience of living there.

The violence since early 2004 has a different pattern from the past. Chaiwat Satha-Anand believes there are efforts to expand a conflict between state and people to a conflict among the people themselves.[17] Examples of such efforts are attacks on monks in Yala and Pattani, attempted arson of a *wat* in Pattani, and the arson of a Buddhist settlement in Pattani.

The targeting of attacks has changed. Previously, the targets were mainly government officials such as soldiers, police, and teachers. This has expanded to include other government employees, and also others who "assist the state." Only the public healthcare workers such as doctors and nurses are excluded. Besides, the attacks have become less discriminating, more random. Even infants may fall victim. Tactics such as hiding bombs in public places have been borrowed from international terrorism in order to shake people's confidence in their security on a daily basis. Ordinary people have fallen victim to the violence.

Many Buddhist residents of the area feel terrorized. As they no longer feel secure about life and property, some have resolved to move away.

In the past, relations between Buddhists and Muslims were generally cordial. Though sometimes relations might become more strained, the strain was never too severe. As Rattiya Saleh argued, the two groups used to perceive themselves as products of the same society and the same Malay ethnicity, with religion as the only difference between them, and hence the conflict was not too difficult to deal with through negotiation and compromise. Both sides understood and respected the other's customs, culture, and religious belief. [18]

Has the eruption of violence since early 2004 disrupted this close relationship, destroyed the sense of commonality, and made the Buddhists into "others" in the eyes of the Muslims, and vice versa? The attempts to incite religious conflict between the communities are unprecedented. Migration is one response to the rupture of the relationship. The community is no longer able to take care of all its members as it once did.

Endnotes

[1] Abdulrauman Abdulsamad, the former president of the Narathiwat Islamic Committee, quoted in, Sisomphop Jitpiromsri, 'Nueng pi nueng sattawat khwam runraeng chai daen pak tai: pritsana khong phanha lae tang ok' (One year one decade of violence in the three southern provinces: the riddle of the problem and the solution), *Journal of Political Science* 26, 1 (2005), p 89. (in Thai)

[2] Sisomphop estimated there was an average of 65.6 incidents a year over 1997–2004, but this multiplied 19 times to 1,843 in 2004. And in 2004–5, according to the National Reconciliation

Commission, there were 3,546 incidents, resulting in 1,175 deaths and 1,765 injuries. See Sisomphop, 'Nueng pi nueng sattawat,' p. 83; National Reconciliation Commission, *Ao chana khwam runraeng duai khwam samannachan* (Overcoming violence with reconciliation) (Bangkok: National Reconciliation Commission, 2006).

[3] According to Prapan Musikapan, GDP growth in the three provinces that had averaged around 5.8 to 5.9 per cent fell to 1.4 per cent in 2004. According to Rauseeda Raden-ahmad, the primary sector of agriculture and fisheries was worst hit, followed by hotels (i.e., tourism), property and construction, and services. See Midnight University 'Sethasat kan mueang kap sam changwat chaidaen pak tai' (Political economy and the three southern provinces), at http://midnightuniv.org/midnight2545/document95072.html.

[4] A. V. Lawson, 'Arguments within geographies of movement: the theoretical potential of migrants' stories,' *Progress in Human Geography* 24, 2 (2000); Helen J. Streubert and Dona R. Carpenter, *Qualitative research in nursing: advancing the humanistic imperative* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 1995), pp. 88–124; Phonsak Pongpaeo, *Kan wichai choeng khunaphap, naeo tritsadi lae kunnalaksana* (Qualitative research, theories and characteritics), (Bangkok: Piyasan Printing, 1987), p. 15.

[5] I contacted Hat Yai Wittayalai School, Hat Yai Somboon Kulkallya School, the Hat Yai Land Registration Office, and local community leaders in order to locate respondents.

[6] I started by introducing myself to the migrants, telling them the purpose of the research and asked for cooperation for information. I informed them about the length of the interview and asked their permission to use a tape recorder and to take notes. Once the migrants agreed to give the information, I then told them that during the interview, they could tell me if they felt they were not ready to give information and then cancel the interview. I also told them that the information given would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. If I needed to refer to the migrants, I would use false names.

[7] See Suwani Surasi-engsang, et al, *'"Phaenti" phaenti kon koet dai yai thin lae chep buai nai sam changwat chaidaen pak tai* (Mapping of birth, death, migration, and sickness in the three southern border provinces) (Bangkok: Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University for the National Reconciliation Commission, 2006).

[8] Interviewed 12 January 2006.

[9] In every province, the district containing the provincial capital is called the Mueang district.

[10] Interviewed 25 March 2006.

[11] Interviewed 22 February 2006.

[12] Interviewed 2 April 2006.

[13] Interviewed 7 March 2006.

[14] Interviewed 10 March 2006.

[15] Interviewed 5 May 2006.

[16] J. Bale, and D. Smith, *Population movement and the Third World,* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 89.

[17] See Chaiwat Satha-Anand, 'Prachathiphathai amnatniyom phon kan chai khwam runraeng nai sam changwat chaidaen pak tai,' (Fostering violence in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand Authoritarian Democracy) in Uthai Dulyakasem et al., *Khwam ru kap kan kaekhai khwam khatyaeng korani wikrit kan chaidaen tai* (Knowledge and the solution to the crisis on the southern border) (Bangkok: Edison Press Products, 2005).

[18] Rattiya Saleh, *Kan pathisamphan rawang sasanik thi prakot nai changwat pattani yala lae narathiwat* (Relations between religious groups in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat) (Bangkok, Thailand Research Fund, 1997), pp. 123–84 .

8

The USA, the war on terror, and the violence in southernmost Thailand

Matthew Wheeler

In November, 2005, a young American journalist in Pattani interviewed the Chairman of the National Reconciliation Commission, former prime minister Anand Panyarachun. When the journalist asked what role the U.S. might play in bringing about a solution to the unrest in the southernmost provinces, the statesman said, "Tell them to stay the hell out of here."[1] Anand's emphatic command encapsulates a particular but not uncommon perception within Thailand that the U.S. is unable to play a constructive role in attenuating the violence in the Malay Muslim-majority provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. There are a variety of reasons for holding such a view, from suspicion of U.S. intentions to a recognition that more harm than good would likely result from a direct U.S. role. Indeed, suspicion of U.S. policies and intentions with respect to the conflict in southern Thailand are prevalent among some Thais, including elites and Malay Muslims. An extreme view is that the U.S., and specifically the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), is fomenting the violence in order to advance U.S. interests by expanding a market for arms sales or as a pretext for military intervention.[2] A related, and probably more common, view is that the U.S. has encouraged or directed the Thai government's hard-line approach to security in the south as a complement to its own "Global War on Terror," or "GWOT" as it was known in Washington, D.C.[3]

In the case of the southern Thailand conflict, however, the Americans do not need to be told to stay out. The U.S. position[4] on the conflict has been characterized above all by caution and circumspection. Although the U.S. is concerned about the conflict, there is neither rationale nor appetite among U.S. policymakers for direct intervention in southernmost Thailand. U.S. officials maintain that the problem is domestic and they refuse to conflate violence by Muslim separatists with the global "jihadist" insurgency championed by al-Qaeda and like-minded terrorist groups against which the U.S. claims to be waging a global war. However, the U.S. is concerned that the conflict in southernmost Thailand may present an opportunity for the spread of extremist ideology and active intervention by international terrorist groups. Moreover, U.S. officials are cognizant that in the highly charged environment of a "Global War on Terror" U.S. statements and actions may be misconstrued in ways that harm U.S. and allied interests. Indeed, this concern about misperception appears to be a key reason that the U.S. has adopted a cautious, even fastidious, approach to the issue of violence in southernmost Thailand.

This paper examines the U.S. position on the conflict in southernmost Thailand in the context of the War on Terror, beginning with a consideration of perceptions of the U.S. in Thailand. The paper then briefly reviews Thailand's role in the U.S.-led War on Terror, which appears to be the major factor influencing perceptions of the U.S. in the southernmost provinces. I describe the U.S. position with respect to the conflict by examining statements of U.S. officials, analysts, and observers and U.S.

programs that have a bearing on the South. Finally, I examine how the U.S. approach to southernmost Thailand comports with prevailing analyses of the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia that advance a discourse of "radicalization." I maintain that the U.S. approach to the conflict is consistent with the logic of these analyses, even as the Global War on Terror produces conditions in which radicalization may take place.

The problem of perceptions

How prevalent are negative perceptions of the U.S. position on the south? This researcher is not aware of any survey research of Thai Muslim attitudes toward the U.S., but anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that suspicion is widespread, particularly in the southernmost provinces. Certainly, large numbers of Muslims have protested against U.S. policies, particularly the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.[5] As the U.S. prepared to invade Iraq in the spring of 2003, the Islamic Committees of the five southernmost provinces urged that parliament append the words "terrorist state" to all references to the U.S.[6] In 2004, as the violence in southernmost Thailand reached unprecedented levels, Narathiwat senator Fadruddin Boto explained that, "Local people believe the CIA has played a role in what's happening here."[7] In an article about some of the Muslim attackers killed on 28 April 2004, Alan Sipress wrote that, "militancy has been shaped and sharpened by what [local people] call oppressive U.S. policies in Iraq and elsewhere."[8] A villager interviewed by Sipress observed, "Some people in the village say the way the Thai government treats Muslims is the same way Americans treat Muslims." According to Ahmad Somboon Bualang, a retired lecturer at Prince of Songkhla University in Pattani (PSU-Pattani), "Whatever way people in Afghanistan or Iraq or Palestine have been treated, it is the same way people here have been treated.… The extent may be different, but it has become symbolic of the same kind of treatment. The point is injustice."[9] My own experience in speaking to people in Pattani province indicates that some perceive covert U.S. involvement in the south as fact.[10]

Survey research by the U.S. government indicates that comfortable majorities of urban Thais have a generally favorable view of the U.S., which they see as a valuable partner in maintaining Thailand's security.[11] However, as Anand's comment to the American journalist indicates, suspicion of the U.S. does circulate among the educated, governing elite in Bangkok. In April 2005, following three bombings in Songkhla province, including a fatal attack at Hat Yai airport, *Matichon* newspaper cited Bangkok senator Sophon Supapong to the effect that the U.S. may have been behind the attacks. The article also quotes Democrat party-list MP and former PSU-Pattani academic Perayot Rahimulla suggesting that the interest evinced by U.S. graduate students and diplomats in the southern conflict lends credence to Sophon's hypothesis. According to Perayot, the steady stream of U.S. Ph.D. students to Pattani and the presence of U.S. diplomats at a joint session of Parliament to discuss the conflict—when no other foreign diplomats showed up—are "reason enough to suspect that the CIA may be involved in the turmoil in the south."[12]

Why would efforts by American scholars and diplomats to understand the southern conflict excite the suspicion of Thai academics and politicians? It is tempting to dismiss suspicion of covert U.S. involvement in the south as a conspiracy theory. One might add, moreover, that by projecting responsibility for the violence onto a powerful foreign entity, one runs the risk of encouraging complacency by obviating the need to come to grips with the conflict's complex domestic causes.

On the other hand, such perceptions do not emerge from the ether. In order to

understand the context in which the U.S. approaches the conflict in southernmost Thailand, it is useful to acknowledge some factors that may contribute to negative Thai perceptions of U.S. actions and intentions. The reasons are manifold and complicated, but three factors are key: anti-Americanism, the history of US intervention in the region, and the unprecedented circumstances of the Global War on Terror.

First, and most broadly, perceptions that the U.S. is meddling in the south likely constitute a subset of views of the U.S.—not confined to Thailand or Southeast Asia—as an arrogant superpower, able and determined to control events in all corners of the globe. Resentment of the world's sole superpower spurs opposition not only to specific policies but to U.S. culture and values, which, by virtue of the preponderance of U.S. economic power, are extensively reproduced and propagated in the process of globalization.[13] A study of U.S. public diplomacy after September 11 found that, "stereotypes of Americans as arrogant, self-indulgent, hypocritical, inattentive and unwilling or unable to engage in cross-cultural dialogue are pervasive and deeply rooted."[14]

Second, the history of U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia, particularly during the Second Indochina War, and the extensive U.S. military presence in Thailand during the 1960s and 1970s have also conditioned Thai perceptions of U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. role in Thailand. It is worth remembering that revelations of CIA meddling in Thailand's domestic affairs sparked the first major protest against the U.S., on 4 July 1974.[15] More recently, perceptions that the U.S. was responsible for the harsh conditions of the International Monetary Fund bailout following the 1997 financial crisis stoked anti-American feeling. This resentment against the U.S. served as a "subliminal source" of opposition to Thai participation in the war on terror.[16]

Above all, however, it is the war on terror that now shapes how the U.S. is perceived abroad. More specifically, the implementation of the Bush Doctrine, which maintains that the U.S. has the means and duty to "spread freedom" by maintaining "strength beyond challenge," acting alone and using force in preventive wars if necessary, has caused apprehension even among U.S. allies. The rhetoric of "a conflict between good and evil" waged with the goal of "ending tyranny in our world" indicates an unsettlingly open-ended war.[17] However, failure to bring security to Iraq and revelations of detainee abuse, torture, secret prisons, and atrocities committed by U.S. troops have undermined the credibility of U.S. claims that it acts in the name of peace, freedom, and human dignity. Unsurprisingly, U.S. policies in the Middle East have led to an increase in anti-American sentiment. Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center noted that after the invasion of Iraq, "the opinion many Muslims have of the United States has gone beyond mere loathing."[18] The most recent Pew survey shows, "the Iraq war continues to exact a toll on America's overall image and on support for the struggle against terrorism. Majorities in 10 of 14 foreign countries surveyed say that the war in Iraq has made the world a more dangerous place."[19] Meanwhile, as the Bush Doctrine has faltered in the face of "an international environment… unresponsive to the instruments of national power,"[20] Washington's purported values and ideology are "being dragged under international scrutiny, to its detriment."[21]

This broader context is important in understanding why the U.S. approach to conflict in southern Thailand is cautious and circumspect. I wish to emphasize the relationship between the U.S. position vis-à-vis southern Thailand and Thai perceptions of U.S. policy more generally. Although the U.S., particularly under the Bush administration, has acquired a reputation for acting unilaterally, U.S. policies in

Southeast Asia are shaped in part by concern for how they will be perceived by particular audiences. This is not to say that Thai perceptions of the U.S. somehow determine the U.S. position. It must be said plainly that the U.S. position on southern Thailand is determined by policymakers based on analysis of U.S. interests. In this case, the U.S. recognizes that its interests would not be served by a direct role in southernmost Thailand. The well-founded concern that U.S. statements or actions will be misperceived is an important factor shaping the U.S. position vis-à-vis the conflict in southernmost Thailand.

Prologue to insurgency: Thailand, the war on terror, and the far south

June 2003 represented a turning point for Thailand with respect to the U.S.-led Global War on Terror. After almost two years of balancing quiet cooperation with Washington and strident denials that Thailand faced a terrorism problem, prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra shed his ambiguous stance. This shift was symbolized by the arrest in Narathiwat province of three alleged members of the Indonesian-based terrorist organization, *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), just hours before Thaksin met with President George Bush in the White House. Police accused the suspects—Maisuri Haji Abdulloh, the owner of an Islamic school; his son Muyahi; and Dr. Waemahadi Wae-dao, a physician, philanthropist and community leader—of plotting to bomb Western embassies in Bangkok, as well as the tourist destinations of Pattaya and Phuket.[22]

The suspects were Malay Muslims, all respected members of their community. Local people met the arrests with skepticism and anger. To many observers, the timing suggested that the arrests were orchestrated to please Washington. In spite of initial reports that the suspects had confessed to the bomb plots, their lawyer, Somchai Neelapaichit, declared that his clients had not confessed and were innocent.[23] Suspicion about the alleged "JI" arrests intensified with Somchai's abduction and presumed murder in March 2004,[24] and was vindicated on 1 June 2005, when the suspects were acquitted of all charges.[25] In June 2003, however, the revelation that Thai "JI members" in southern Thailand were actively plotting attacks against Western targets signified a striking turnaround in Thaksin's approach to the war on terror. The "JI" arrests represent an intersection of Thai–U.S. bilateral relations, the war on terror, and the Muslim south.

Days after the September 11 attacks, President Bush challenged the world to choose between the U.S. and its enemies, declaring that "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."[26] This was a choice that Thaksin preferred not to make in a public fashion. Vocal support for the world's lone superpower was problematic for Thaksin, who had come to office on a wave of nationalist sentiment in the wake of the economic crisis. Thaksin was also constrained by concern about the sentiment of Thai Muslims, who overwhelmingly opposed the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Moreover, Thaksin may have been concerned that overt support for the U.S. might mark Thailand as a target for al-Qaeda or other anti-U.S. terrorist organizations. Indeed, Thaksin's initial reaction to the looming U.S. invasion of Afghanistan was to proclaim that Thailand would be "strictly neutral" in any conflict.[27] However, given the long-standing security relationship and formal alliance between Thailand and the U.S., Thaksin did cooperate with the U.S., granting over-flight rights and access to U-Tapao airbase and deploying a contingent of army engineers to Afghanistan. Indeed, U.S. officials praised Thailand's cooperation. Thaksin nonetheless preferred low-key collaboration.

In addition to this overt but quiet support to the U.S., *The New York Times* reported in March 2003 that Thailand had agreed to allow the U.S. to hold al-Qaeda suspects at an airbase in Thailand. According to the initial report, which cited anonymous American officials, the installation was run by the CIA.[28] Subsequent reports, based on information from "retired American intelligence officials," indicated that the al-Qaeda prisoners may have been held at U-Tapao airbase.[29] A later article indicated that Thailand had been one of eight countries in which the CIA operated secret prisons, or so-called "black sites," where al-Qaeda suspects have been detained. According to the *Washington Post*, an agreement for such a facility had been worked out between the U.S. and Thailand in mid 2002. Following the initial *New York Times* article, Thai authorities reportedly insisted that the site be shut down and its two inmates were transferred out of Thailand.[30] Thai and U.S. officials denied the existence of any CIA detention facility in Thailand.[31]

Thaksin's ambivalence in supporting the GWOT persisted through the run up to the invasion of Iraq. Following the first Bali bombings in October 2002, Thaksin strongly criticized the media for reporting on the alleged presence of international terrorists in Thailand, and railed against Western governments for issuing travel warnings based on the threat of terrorism. While Washington led the War on Terror, Thaksin began 2003 by declaring a War on Drugs.[32] As the U.S. prepared to invade Iraq in early 2003, the Thai government reportedly insisted that Thailand be left off a list of countries supporting the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.[33]

This ambivalence would not have satisfied Washington; as one U.S. official in Southeast Asia explained, "It is not enough to be with us in the war on terrorism, but you have to trumpet it."[34] Indeed, as Thaksin prepared for a visit to Washington in June 2003, the bilateral relationship appeared strained. Thaksin's string of nationalistic outbursts, including the assertion that Thailand is not a U.S. "lackey," did nothing to foster prospects for a productive visit.[35] News reports suggested that Thailand was among those countries slated for "punishment" by Washington for failing to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March.[36] Under these circumstances, it was reported that Washington might not consent to a meeting between Bush and Thaksin.

In the event, however, Thaksin met with President Bush at the White House on 10 June 2003. Whether by design or by coincidence, the supposed "JI" arrests preceded Thaksin's arrival at the White House by a matter of hours.[37] The arrests were an unambiguous signal that Thaksin was at last prepared to be seen to embrace the rationale of the U.S.-led "Global War on Terror."

The arrest of the alleged "JI suspects" was only the most striking and symbolic of several measures that served to align Thailand more publicly with the U.S. and to rehabilitate Thaksin in the eyes of a U.S. administration narrowly focused on fighting a war on terror. During his 2003 visit to Washington, Thaksin reportedly signed a Bilateral Immunity Agreement, also known as an Article 98 agreement, consenting not to extradite U.S. citizens accused of war crimes to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.[38] In early August 2003, Thaksin committed Thailand to send soldiers to participate in reconstruction efforts in Iraq.[39] As Michael Connors notes, the decision to send troops to Iraq was a reversal of Thailand's previous position, and "must be interpreted as a consequence of increased U.S. pressure."[40]

On 14 August 2003, Thaksin issued two executive anti-terrorism decrees giving security officials expanded authority to conduct wire-taps and detain terrorist suspects, alarming Muslims in the south who feared that the new power would be used against them.[41] "Muslim religious teachers warned that the laws would have an adverse effect

on their confidence and trust in the government because they granted the authorities wide-ranging powers to issue arrest warrants and question suspected terrorists."[42] On 11 August 2003, Thai security forces, acting on U.S. intelligence, captured Indonesian JI leader Riduan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, in Ayutthaya; these decrees "served as the legal basis for placing Hambali in U.S. custody."[43] While Hambali's capture marks the apex of Thai-U.S. counter-terrorism cooperation to date, Thailand's decision to hand him to the U.S. was controversial. Hambali was allegedly planning attacks in Thailand, so presumably should have been charged and tried in Thailand. The U.S. claim on Hambali was "seen as an example of bullying and support of arbitrary and extra-legal means."[44]

Thaksin's public support for the war on terror appeared to pay a number of dividends. Most immediately, Thaksin avoided immediate public reproach for the campaign of extra-judicial killings.[45] In the joint statement issued after the meeting, President Bush indicated that the U.S. would consider granting Thailand status as a Major Non-Nato Ally (MNNA).[46] Although MNNA status had little practical import given that Thailand has been a treaty ally and close security partner for more than fifty years, it served as an affirmation of the improved relations between the two countries and certified that Thaksin was "with us" in the GWOT.[47] The Bush administration also agreed to seek a free trade agreement with Thailand.

It is worth remembering that the arrest of the three alleged JI suspects came one month after Bush, in a dramatic and elaborate photo opportunity aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*, proclaimed "mission accomplished" in Iraq. The insurgency that would characterize the "post-combat" Iraq had not yet started in earnest. For this brief period, it appeared that the Bush Doctrine, based on a belief in the universality of American values and the efficacy of military force, might be validated. Although Thaksin avowed that Thailand would remain neutral and not take part in the war well into March 2003, the apparent U.S. victory demanded a change in tone. According to Thammasat University professor Prapat Thepchatree, "Iraq showed [Thaksin] that the U.S. carried a big stick and anyone not falling into line would be punished.… He had to do something to mend ties with the U.S."[48] Thaksin later admitted, "You will get no cooperation, assistance or dialogue with the US if you refuse to talk of cooperation to suppress terrorism."[49]

However, Thaksin's embrace of the GWOT, and especially the "JI" arrests, caused disquiet among Muslims in the south. The timing smacked of a ploy by Thaksin to prove his fidelity to the U.S. anti-terrorism agenda, and the U.S. shared in the blame. According to Fudruddin Boto, then a senator from Narathiwat, "They were social activists, not terrorists.… This is the government's way of trying to please the United States at the expense of our peoples' rights."[50] Reacting to the arrests, Abdullah Hapbru, a lecturer in Islamic studies at PSU-Pattani, said, "They (the Americans) once told us how ugly and loathsome communists were and taught us to hate China and Russia when the communists were its main opponent. We no longer have a threat from communists but the U.S. makes a new monster to serve its interest."[51] According to Shawn Crispin, it was following the arrest of the alleged JI suspects that suspicions of CIA involvement in the southern violence "took root."[52]

It is worth noting that Thaksin's turnabout on the war on terror followed his war on drugs, which, in spite of rampant human rights abuses and disrespect for the rule of law, was overwhelmingly popular with Thai people.[53] The drug war took a heavy tool in the southern border area, a haven for smuggling and other criminal enterprises. According to Duncan McCargo, "the war on drugs that Thaksin declared in February 2003 gave the police carte blanche to target selected locals for extra-judicial

execution."[54] McCargo writes that there were at least twenty disappearances in 2002–3, and as many as fifty by March 2005.[55] Other reports suggest as many as a hundred Muslims disappeared in the first four months of 2004 alone, abducted by masked gunmen.[56] The disappearance of Somchai Neelapaichit contributed to a sense of injustice and fear among Malay Muslims, epitomizing the rise "of a more authoritarian tendency in Thai society, accepting violence as a dominant strategy in solving conflicts."[57]

Meanwhile, the heightened level of militant violence, described by Thaksin and members of his cabinet as common criminality, slowly escalated during 2002 and 2003.[58] The raid on an army base in Cho-airong district, Narathiwat province, on 4 January 2004, marked the beginning of a heightened level of violence. According to Dr. Srisompob Jitpiromsri of PSU-Pattani, from the beginning of 2004 to mid 2005, the frequency of violent incidents in the region increased to twenty-seven times the average rate of the preceding decade.[59]

Although we cannot be certain of a correlation between the Thai government's belated support for the war on terror and the surge in violence in Thailand's southernmost provinces, the coincidence of the two phenomena has not gone unnoticed. Chulalongkorn University's Surat Horachaikul noted that the "special tie" between the U.S. and Thailand in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, "help[s] explain why the Thai Muslim community feels more isolated from the center."[60] Kavi Chongkittavorn wrote in 2004 that, "[Thaksin's] pro-U.S. policy on terrorism deepened suspicion among young Thai Muslims."[61] According to Wattana Sugunnasil, "The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the continuing presence of foreign troops in many Muslim societies have further radicalized many Muslims in Thailand and increased their awareness of global Muslim grievances."[62]

Although U.S. policies may have contributed to perceptions that the Muslim community is threatened by the West and the U.S. there is no evidence that opposition to the U.S. is motivating the insurgency in southernmost Thailand. Certainly, it would be a mistake to equate opposition to U.S. policies with support for separatism or extremist violence. However, the possibility that the dichotomous world view fostered by the war on terror has served to alienate Malay Muslims from Bangkok cannot be discounted. As we will see, the U.S. is worried about the prospect that foreign terrorist organizations such as JI or al-Qaeda will exploit this alienation.

U.S. perceptions of the violence in southernmost Thailand

It is often difficult to speak in general terms about "U.S. perceptions" or "U.S. views" of any given issue due to the variety of agencies, organizations, and individuals that may be construed as representing the United States of America. Moreover, the conflict in southern Thailand does not rank high on the security and foreign policy agenda in Washington, so the pool of available information is small. It is also the case that the judgments of some analysts have changed over time, which adds to the complexity of depicting the U.S. point of view. However, to the extent that U.S. officials speak about and report on the situation in southernmost Thailand, the pronouncements are remarkably uniform. This uniformity allows a reasonably accurate assessment of how the conflict in southern Thailand is perceived by U.S. officials, policymakers, and analysts. Given the largely homogeneous perception of the causes and nature of the conflict, prescriptions about what the U.S. should and should not do are also broadly similar.

The basic elements of official U.S. understanding of the conflict are:

- the violence is domestic in its causes and form;
- the causes are historical, and relate to poor governance;
- there is no significant, direct foreign involvement in the conflict;
- the heavy-handed response of the Thai government and human-rights abuses risk expanding, prolonging, and intensifying the violence;
- an expanded, prolonged, or intensified conflict increases the risk that foreign terrorists organizations may become directly involved.

It is also possible to ascribe to the U.S. the view that a small minority of extremists are to blame for most of the violence.

The U.S. approach to the conflict is guided by these perceptions. The U.S. shares with the Thai government an appreciation of the fact that a direct U.S. role in the southernmost provinces would be counterproductive on several levels. First, the Thai government envisions no role for the U.S. or other foreign countries and thus has not invited the U.S. to become involved.[63] Second, internationalizing the conflict risks further alienating Malay Muslims from the Thai government and encouraging support for (or acquiescence to) the insurgents. Third, U.S. involvement would serve to confirm popular perceptions of a conspiracy by the U.S. to foment unrest in southernmost Thailand to serve its interests. Finally, a direct U.S. role could encourage the active intervention of international jihadist organizations, whose role in southern Thailand has thus far been immaterial to the course of the insurgency.[64] According to Fourth Army commander Lieutenant General Ongkorn Thongprasong, "This is an internal matter with its roots in local history," and the involvement of Western countries would serve to exacerbate the conflict.[65]

Given the domestic nature of the conflict, the U.S. sees the problem as one that must be solved by the Thai government and Thai people. However, the U.S. is deeply concerned that the violence may lead to sectarian divisions and the erosion of state authority, which could in turn be exploited by international terrorist groups with an explicitly anti-Western or anti-U.S. agenda, such as JI or al-Qaeda. Therefore, the U.S. desires an end to the violence and a swift, peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In order to substantiate this characterization of the U.S. position on the south, a representative sample of statements on the conflict by U.S. officials and agencies follows. The views of non-government experts and analysts are also consulted to offer a more complete picture of prevailing U.S. perceptions.[66]

Domestic nature of the conflict

During a brief visit to Phuket in July 2005, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice told reporters that the southern violence "is a domestic issue for Thailand from our point of view." She also indicated U.S support for the National Reconciliation Commission, which she described as "a positive step" in dealing with the problem.[67] U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Ralph Boyce, stated on many occasions that the conflict in the far south is a domestic issue. Speaking to reporters after a meeting with deputy prime minister Chidchai Wannasathit in October 2005, Boyce affirmed that the security situation in the south is a domestic affair.[68] In a televised interview conducted in Thai with Suthichai Yoon on *Jeepajornlok* in February 2006, Boyce said, "As far as we know, the southern situation is a domestic issue. It is an issue that concerns Thai history and the culture of the area. It is a problem that Thais must solve, not other countries. We don't see any influence from foreign terrorists."[69]

The State Department's *Country reports on terrorism 2005* states, "There are no indications that transnational terrorist groups are directly involved in the violence, and

there is no current evidence of direct operational links between southern Thai separatist groups and regional terror networks." The report acknowledges that although the Malay Muslim militants may share, "the basic ideology and general rejection of Western influence held by international Islamic terrorists," their agenda appears to be domestic, focusing on autonomy or independence for the southern border provinces.[70]

The U.S. intelligence community appears to share this view. In a 2003 briefing to the Senate, the CIA stated, "We are uncertain whether Muslim separatist groups—possibly with ties to international terrorists—or local criminal networks have been responsible for the violence."[71] Director of central intelligence Porter Goss noted in 2005 that, "Thailand is plagued with an increasingly volatile Muslim separatist threat in its southeastern [sic] provinces, and the risk of escalation remains high."[72] In 2006 testimony before the Senate, director of national intelligence John Negroponte reported that, "Thailand is searching for a formula to contain violence instigated by ethnic-Malay Muslim separatist groups in the far southern provinces."[73]

Early in 2005, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs Marie Huhtala explained during a seminar at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C., that the U.S. did not see any evidence of outside involvement in the southern Thailand conflict. In describing the causes of the violence, Huhtala cited a combination of factors:

> You have a separatist movement that has never really gone away in the hundred years that those provinces have been annexed by Thailand. You have extraordinarily poor governance on the part of some of the local officials here in southern Thailand, who are almost exclusively Buddhist and from other regions of Thailand. And you had an incident on January 4th of last year…. And the reaction of the Bangkok government to that was quite a process. And so, unfortunately, the events snowballed during the year.[74]

Dr. Anthony L. Smith, a senior research fellow at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, a U.S. Department of Defense educational institute, wrote in late 2004 that the violence grows out of discontent arising from the belief that Malay Muslim identity is under threat. Dr. Smith is a New Zealander and although his report reflects his personal views, his argument is consonant with the statements of US officials cited above. Smith writes:

> Although there is a real danger that international terrorist groups will exploit the situation in southern Thailand, separatism in the southern provinces rests on different goals. For Malay speaking peoples in southern Thailand, there is a strong perception that their ethno-religious identity is under siege. Poor administration and a host of social problems have exacerbated discontent. … These background factors suggest that the key to stability in Thailand's southern provinces lies in addressing factors that contribute to social tension.[75]

Concern about human rights abuses

Concern about human rights is a common element of U.S. pronouncements on the southern Thailand situation. This concern, reflected in official U.S. statements critical of Thailand's human rights record, is linked with the unease about the Thai government approach to the violence. The heavy-handedness of the Thai security response, especially in 2004, and the disappearance of Somchai Neelapaichit has caused dismay among U.S. officials and observers who worry that human rights abuses serve to exacerbate the conflict and invite the attention of foreign terrorists.

In 2005 and 2006, the State Department's annual reports on human rights

detailed abuses by security forces in southernmost Thailand, noting in particular the attack on Krue Ze Mosque in April 2004 and the deaths of seventy-eight men in army custody following the Tak Bai protest in October 2004. In addition to official expressions of concern by Marie T. Huhtala to Thailand's ambassador to the United States and by Ambassador Boyce to other senior Thai officials,[76] the U.S. continues to call for appropriate legal action to punish officials responsible for those incidents.[77] According to the two recent State Department human rights reports, "security forces continued to use excessive, lethal force against criminal suspects and committed or were connected to numerous extra-judicial, arbitrary, and unlawful killings."[78] The report released in March 2006 observes that, "there were instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority." The list of human rights violations includes unlawful killings by security force personnel and insurgents as well as deaths in police custody; torture and excessive use of force by police; arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention without charge; and impunity for human rights abusers.[79] The latest report also notes the death of Satopa Yushoh, an *imam* in Narathiwat province who was killed by unknown gunmen, and who claimed before he died that he had been shot by soldiers.

Some expressions of concern about human rights are general, whereas others assign responsibility to prime minister Thaksin. As deputy assistant secretary of state Huhtala stated in February 2005, "[Thaksin] clearly doesn't understand what he's up against. I think that's the real problem." Huhtala described Thaksin's administrative changes, such as dismantling the Southern Border Provinces Adminsitrative Center in 2002 and the decision to place the police, rather than the army, in charge of security, as factors that may have triggered the renewed violence. Huhtala concluded by saying, "[Thaksin is] a smart man. I think he will find his way to the answer down there. But it is very distressing for all of us who consider ourselves friends of Thailand to see this playing out so painfully."[80] At the same seminar, Dr. Zachary Abuza, a prominent U.S. expert on terrorism in Southeast Asia, said, "In Thailand, you could make the case that you do have a democracy there, but heavy-handed government response is the reason for the unrest."[81]

In November 2005, Thomas Sanderson, deputy director of the Transnational Threats Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., and a consultant to the U.S. government, spoke about transnational crime and terrorism at Chulalongkorn University; the U.S. Embassy sponsored his visit. In elaborating measures to curb support for violent extremism in the southernmost provinces, Sanderson urged the Thai government to respect basic human rights and to accord the Muslim community greater respect and freedom of expression. The aim, he said, should be to integrate Malay Muslims into the economic and social processes of the country. According to Sanderson, those who are unable to choose their own leaders or to speak freely are more receptive to extremist ideology.[82]

Human rights have been a particular concern in the U.S. Congress. Some legislators have voiced alarm about the deteriorating human rights situation in Thailand. Senator Russ Feingold, Democrat from Wisconsin, visited Thailand in February 2006 and in his meetings with Thaksin and other officials, "stressed the need for the Thai government to respect human rights and the rule of law as it addresses unrest in the country's southern provinces." [83] Congressman Dennis Kucinich, Democrat from Ohio, wrote in a 2004 letter to fellow legislators urging opposition to free trade negotiations, that "Thailand is no longer the most democratic, open and free partner of the United States in Southeast Asia that it once was."[84] Congress passed authorization of free trade negotiations with Thailand by a single vote, partly as a

consequence of concern about Thailand's human rights record.[85]

Dana Dillon, senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank in Washington, D.C., has also voiced concern about the negative consequences of human rights abuses. Dillon said, "It appears that the brutal treatment of the Thai Muslims by the security forces, either through negligence or lack of training or some other reasons, seems to contribute to the insurgency."[86] In a brief memo on the subject of the insurgency in Thailand, Dillon argues that if the U.S. wants to prevent southern Thailand from becoming an international conflict, it must confront the Thai government about abuses by its security forces:

> The United States cannot stand by while heavy-handed Thai security forces create an international terrorist problem where there was not one before. The United States has a deep and sophisticated military-to-military relationship with Thailand's security forces, and it is time to use that leverage to bring more discipline to the Thai military. Pentagon officials must closely review this relationship and convince Thailand to emphasize human rights and the rule of law. Furthermore, when Pentagon officials meet with their Thai counterparts, the excessive force issue must not be ignored or glossed over but underscored as a serious national security problem for both countries. Members of Congress should emphasize the issue with their counterparts in Parliament, and the Bush Administration should stress human rights to Prime Minister Thaksin.[87]

Concern about foreign involvement and "jihadist" extremism

Although there is no evidence to suggest foreign involvement in the conflict, the prospect of involvement by outside Islamist extremists such as JI or al-Qaeda is the greatest concern for the U.S. This concern is closely related to U.S. concern about human rights issues, as further abuses are perceived as a catalyst for violent extremism. A report by the Congressional Research Service, the public policy research arm of the U.S. Congress, explains the consensus view:

> Most analysts stress that there is no convincing evidence to date of serious JI involvement in the attacks in the southern provinces. Many experts concur, however, that sectarian violence involving local Muslim grievances provides a ripe environment for JI to become more engaged in the struggle. Such experts have warned that outside groups, including JI and other militant Indonesia-based groups, may attempt to exploit public outrage with events like the [Tak Bai] deaths to forge alliances between local separatists and regional Islamic militants.[88]

As the respected terrorism analyst Sydney Jones observed in late 2004, another incident like that at Tak Bai would likely attract the involvement of Indonesian militants.[89]

In October 2005, Ambassador Boyce remarked that, "Both Thailand and the US have concerns that the situation will develop in such a way [i.e., influenced by foreign terrorist organizations], but today we still see the situation as an internal problem."[90] At the Council on Foreign Relations seminar, Huhtala said that the U.S. is "watching [southern Thailand] closely, because when you have a long-simmering, violent problem like that in a primarily Muslim area, it's like an engraved invitation for the bad guys to come in. And we do worry about that."[91] According to Abuza, there is no evidence yet of significant involvement by JI. However, the situation is "tailor-made" for JI, which in the past has sought out sectarian conflicts, such as those in Poso and the Moloccas, in order to deepen the "Manichean worldview" and garner new recruits. For Abuza, if the conflict is not resolved and the violence brought under control, JI's

involvement is "a matter of time."[92]

More recently, however, Abuza has argued that alien forms of Islamic extremism are propelling the violence. At a seminar at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand early in 2006, Abuza declared, "Very simply the militants are ideologically and religiously motivated; they are trying to impose a very austere and intolerant form of Islam on their society and they countenance no opposition to this."[93] As evidence for the proposition, Abuza noted militant demands that Muslims refrain from working on Fridays and avoid state-run schools, and that *imams* refuse to conduct funeral rites for civil servants. He also cited the increasing proportion of Muslim victims of the violence.

A few other non-government observers offer similarly alarming assessments of the extent of "jihadi" influence in southernmost Thailand. Stephen Ulph, editor of the Jamestown Foundation's *Terrorism Focus*, sees in southernmost Thailand "an Islamist insurgency that is about to overflow." He cites an Associated Press interview with Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) spokesman Lukman Lima, who boasted of financial support for Thai militants from "Islamic sympathizers in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia." For Ulph, this raises the specter of "foreign mujahid intervention" and "extreme Islamist influence." Ulph sees the increasing numbers of Muslim victims of violence as evidence that Muslim "extremists" are retaliating against Muslim "moderates." Under such circumstances, there is a danger of the insurgency, "succumbing to austere 'Wahabi' influences, useful in providing a groundwork for exporting jihadi culture."[94]

Writing in the conservative journal *The National Interest*, Australian journalist Greg Sheridan also detected the influence of international "jihadist" ideology at work.

> It is the timing of the upsurge in violence in southern Thailand that is most suggestive of JI and Al-Qaeda influence. It coincides with an increase in Islamist terrorist violence in other parts of Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the Muslim world. This indicates that Al-Qaeda is now as important as an ideology as it is as an organization. As an ideology it offers disgruntled Muslim populations a prism through which to interpret their grievances and a way to respond to them. The interpretive prism centers on Western and infidel imperialism and the operational response is terrorism.[95]

Sheridan is more willing than most U.S. observers to ascribe the violence to the al-Qaeda ideology, but he notes, "No one thinks that the Thai terrorist and criminal groups in the south are being directed by Al-Qaeda, or even JI." However, concern about such a development is universal among U.S. observers.

Concerning solutions and the appropriate U.S. role

Besides the uniformity in U.S. perceptions about the nature of the violence, there is also general agreement about how best to deal with the conflict and the appropriate role for the U.S. Consonant with the view that human rights abuses exacerbate the conflict and that prolonged conflict increases the odds of foreign terrorist involvement, the U.S. supports efforts to resolve the conflict, prevent human rights abuses, and address the grievances fueling opposition to the Thai government. To that end, the U.S. seeks to improve Thai military and law-enforcement capabilities and improve the quality of the judicial system through training, exchanges, and other forms of cooperation.

The U.S. has repeatedly emphasized its support for a peaceful approach to resolving the conflict in the south, such as that embodied by the National Reconciliation Commission. In testimony before Congress in September 2005, deputy

assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs Eric John stated that, "With respect to the situation in Southern Thailand, we continue to closely follow the violence and other developments in that region. We are encouraged by the work of the National Reconciliation Commission and their efforts to protect human rights."[96] The typically anodyne joint statement issued following prime minister Thaksin's meeting with President Bush on 19 September 2005 notes that Thaksin briefed Bush on, "efforts to deal with the violence in southern Thailand while preserving the democratic freedom that has made Thailand a leader in Southeast Asia." Bush, meanwhile, commended the creation of the National Reconciliation Commission, "aimed at developing a broad-based approach to the South that combines security, equitable development, and protection for basic rights."[97] As noted above, Secretary of State Rice also described the National Reconciliation Commission as the best way forward. To the extent that U.S. law-makers are aware of the problem, the NRC also has support among legislators.[98]

U.S.-based analysts have emphasized that any lasting solution must address the "root causes" or grievances within the Malay Muslim community. Anthony Smith writes that, "The key to settlement of Thailand's upheavals in the south relies on social, economic, and political initiatives that tackle the immediate concerns of the Muslim population.… Fixing the problem of southern Thailand rests in Bangkok's hands, and Washington should be cautious about being dragged into this conflict."[99] Aurel Croissant, assistant professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, likewise insists that a solution to the conflict must begin with "a broad recognition in government of the need to address Muslim disaffection from which both radical Islam tendencies and separatism have been drawing strength."[100]

Jonathan Ross-Harrington, a private-sector anti-terrorism consultant to the U.S. government, offered this assessment of the southern Thailand conflict:

> The current situation in Thailand underscores the importance of finding… solutions to these autonomy/identity/economic grievances.… If Thailand is serious about being a partner in the "war on terror" its first actions should not be the repression of Malay-Muslims in the hopes of locating isolated (yet dangerous) Salafist militants that may or may not be operating in Pattani, it should be the initiation of a peace process with those willing to seek political solutions. [101]

One may quibble with the notion of negotiating with an insurgent movement that has yet to establish an overt presence, but it is worth noting that Ross-Harrington advocates addressing the range of grievances fueling Malay Muslim alienation from the Thai state.

An exception to the consensus on what the U.S. should do with respect to southern Thailand is an article written by J. C. Lumbaca, a U.S. Army captain, published in the newsletter of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Pacific Forum. Writing in his capacity as a private citizen, Lumbaca, a Special Forces officer, argued that small numbers of U.S. Special Forces should be deployed to southernmost Thailand in an advisory capacity to help Thai security forces better control the insurgency. However, even as Lumbaca advocates a direct role for U.S. Special Forces, he insists that military force alone will not quell the violence. Lumbaca writes, "The key to counterinsurgency is understanding the population and its motivations to either support or reject violence." Lumbaca concludes, "In an environment that involves an active insurgency, military initiatives are one small part in a complex interrelationship of social, political, military, and economic concerns that must be addressed."[102]

Significantly, Lumbaca's view on the utility of a direct role for U.S. Special Forces has evolved. In his master's thesis for the Naval Postgraduate School, completed subsequent to his CSIS article, Lumbaca gives greater weight to the possibility that the introduction of U.S. forces would be counter to U.S. interests. Lumbaca believes strongly in the ability of U.S. Special Forces to contribute to Thailand's security by developing the capabilities and professionalism of the Thai military. However, Lumbaca notes the prevalence of conspiracy theories suggesting that "US agencies—the CIA and Special Forces, among others—are somehow inciting the violence in order to justify bringing the War on Terror to southern Thailand." Recognizing that such a theory is "quite effective" for the insurgents, Lumabaca concedes that, "If US agencies are overtly introduced to the south, such action reinforces the conspiracy theory."[103]

Lumbaca goes on to cite personal correspondence from another Special Forces officer, Colonel Barry Shapiro, who explains that the introduction of U.S. soldiers into the conflict would be counter-productive given the particularity of the southern Thai situation:

> [A]n effort [such as introduction of US Army Special Forces] in the Southern three provinces is more likely to achieve the opposite effect of what [the US] hope[s] for. The complex problems that combine to create the conditions in Southern Thailand have been around a long time. What is new is the dimension of globalization: the connections between a militant Muslim extremist in Pattani and Riyadh may be debatable, but that their actions and concerns are seen and felt by Muslims across the world in real-time is undeniable. Direct involvement of U.S. forces would only enhance the dangerously popular perception of a U.S.-led war on Islam, a perception we urgently need to turn around. … I spent a year in Afghanistan where the direct approach was and remains necessary, but the situation in Southern Thailand is far removed from that set of circumstances.[104]

Lumbaca concludes that a direct role for US troops in southern Thailand is not appropriate at this time. Lumbaca suggests programs to improve: the police force and judicial system; intelligence; immigration and anti-money laundering laws; transparency; human rights; regional (ASEAN) cooperation; information operations; and maritime security. This list of recommendations tracks closely with the aims of existing U.S. assistance to Thailand.

U.S. programs relevant to the South

The perceptions of the violence in southern Thailand outlined above guide the U.S. approach to the conflict. It would be an exaggeration to describe U.S. programs that bear on the south as constituting a discrete policy. Rather, the U.S. has tailored some elements of existing security assistance in an effort to advance U.S. goals. The immediate U.S. aim is to prevent the conflict from worsening. The optimum outcome for the U.S. is a peaceful resolution to the conflict, which requires respect for human rights, effective security forces, and a transparent judicial system. On a completely separate track from security assistance is the U.S. public diplomacy effort. These information programs are not specifically related to the southern conflict, but rather aim to increase understanding among Thais of U.S. policies and culture.

The U.S. has traditionally been Thailand's foremost security partner, with security cooperation going back to 1950. The U.S. provides assistance through a variety of programs administered by the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice. In general terms, U.S. assistance seeks to enhance interoperability between Thai and US forces, develop Thai capabilities, and enhance U.S. access and influence in

Thailand. The level of U.S. funding to Thailand has remained largely steady since 2001, with declines in funding for some programs and increases for others.[105]

Since the escalation of the violence in the southernmost provinces in 2004, the U.S. has been concerned that its security assistance to Thailand should not be directly associated with the conflict. The U.S. is keen to avoid the appearance of intervening or otherwise impinging on Thai sovereignty. Therefore, according to U.S. officials, all security-assistance programs must meet the "label and location" test. That is, the programs must not be labeled in a way that indicates a direct counter-terrorism role in the southern conflict. Second, all training involving U.S. soldiers or law-enforcement officers must take place outside of the southernmost provinces. U.S. security assistance programs, such as peacekeeping, drug interdiction, crowd control, and humanitarian assistance, emphasize capabilities that may be employed by Thai security forces in the southernmost provinces

The conflict in the south has also influenced the content of some U.S. security assistance by highlighting weaknesses or problems that the U.S. believes it can help to address. Most prominently, following the incidents at Krue Ze mosque in April 2004 and Tak Bai in October 2004, the U.S. identified human rights training as a top priority. The U.S. has renewed emphasis on human rights training, which is a component of all combined training that the U.S. military conducts with Thai security forces. In March 2006, a team from the U.S. Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS), in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, arrived in Bangkok to conduct a week-long seminar for fifty-two civilian and military officials on "Legal aspects combating terrorism." The instructors immediately recognized that the Thai participants lacked an understanding of the concept of "Rules of Engagement," which govern when and how soldiers or police may use force. According to an account in the DIILS journal, the instructors adjusted the seminar program to address Rules of Engagement before proceeding to the planned agenda.[106] After the Tak Bai incident, the U.S. established a course on crowd control operations, with separate components for enlisted men, mid level officers, and senior officers. With senior officers, the U.S. officials emphasize the potential costs associated with large-scale human rights abuses and point to the suspension of U.S. military assistance to Indonesia as an example of what can happen when foreign security forces run afoul of the U.S. Congress.[107] According to one U.S. official, "We try to emphasize that extra-judicial killings have the potential to jeopardize the whole [security] relationship, to everyone's detriment."[108]

Another area that the U.S. has targeted for assistance is forensic investigation capabilities and judicial transparency. As a State Department counter-terrorism report notes, "Police forensics and ballistics work often failed to produce evidence that led to arrests following insurgent attacks, and government prosecutors struggled to develop cases that could stand up in court."[109] The International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok aims to develop skills relevant to these needs. Established in 1998, ILEA is a U.S.-funded regional training center for police, immigration, customs, and other law enforcement officials that aims to build regional capacity to deal with transnational criminal threats. All ILEA courses "address support for democratic institutions, the importance of impartiality and integrity in criminal law enforcement, and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms." [110] Funds from the State Department's Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism and Related Programs, "will be used to familiarize senior police officials with modern investigative and interdiction methodologies aimed at terrorist organizational structures, as well as the flow of terrorist financing and information transfer," and to establish a "modest program to

fight corruption in the criminal justice system in order to enhance judicial ethics."[111] The State Department is also emphasizing "basic law enforcement training" in several of its counter-narcotics training events in Thailand, while "additional crime-fighting skills and forensic training programs will be developed for Thai participants in recognition of the new law enforcement challenges faced by Thailand."[112]

Intelligence cooperation is another element of the Thai-U.S. security relationship, though little credible or authoritative information is available. Media attention has focused on the Counter Terrorism Intelligence Center, or CTIC, a U.S.-funded joint operations center established in early 2001.[113] The Thailand CTIC is one of about two dozen such centers around the world and brings together U.S. intelligence officers with Thai police, military, and National Intelligence Agency officials. The U.S. rationale for CTIC is to encourage cooperation and information sharing among Thailand's rivalry-prone intelligence agencies while providing a platform to gather intelligence about international terrorist activities in the region. According to the *Washington Post* reporter Dana Priest, CTICs are unrelated to the alleged CIA network of secret prisons: "The CTICs, by contrast, are an expansion of the hidden intelligence cooperation that has been a staple of foreign policy for decades."[114] CTIC was instrumental in the capture of Hambali in 2003. Journalist Shawn Crispin maintains that the CTIC shifted its attention to southernmost Thailand following the 4 January 2004 raid; citing an anonymous Thai intelligence official, he writes, "'The U.S. is monitoring Thai Muslims and helping us X-ray who is who,' that is, sorting common criminals from 'ideologically driven terrorists.'"[115]

U.S. public diplomacy efforts also bear on southernmost Thailand. Public diplomacy refers to programs that aim to, "understand, inform, engage, and influence the attitudes and behavior of global audiences in ways that support the United States' strategic interests."[116] After the September 11 attacks, the U.S. recognized the need to improve its public diplomacy in the Muslim world and stepped up its efforts to communicate with Muslim audiences, including those in Thailand. Particularly after the U.S. Consulate in Songkhla was closed in 1993 and the U.S. Information Agency dissolved in 1999, U.S. channels of communication with southern Thai Muslims had been allowed to wither. U.S. efforts to boost information programs in southern Thailand are part of its broader policy.

U.S. officials emphasize that information and cultural programs implemented in southernmost Thailand are not specifically related to the conflict. Nonetheless, they concede that the violence has impinged on U.S. public diplomacy efforts, especially in imposing restrictions on travel in the southernmost provinces. For example, in January 2004, renewed violence forced the cancellation of a planned visit by the ambassador to Pattani to preside over the opening of a new "American Corner" at Prince of Songkhla University.

In recent years the U.S. has configured a number of information and cultural programs to reach Thai Muslims, particularly those in southernmost Thailand. Chief among them are the International Visitors Program, which sends prospective Thai leaders to the U.S. for two or three weeks on thematic study trips. The U.S. is particularly interested in selecting Muslims from southern Thailand for the program; in 2004, eight of eleven participants were Muslim while in 2005, nine of twenty-five were from southern Thailand. The U.S. also seeks to encourage Thai Muslims to study in the U.S., and offers funding specifically for Muslim students. Funding for after-school English-language instruction helps prepare students for exchange opportunities. Two of the five "American Corners" in Thailand are in the south, one at PSU-Pattani and one at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University. These centers offer

information about the U.S., cultural and speaking programs, digital-video conferencing, and Internet access.

Embassy-sponsored speaker programs have also reflected U.S. efforts to reach Thai Muslims.[117] In 2004, Imam Rahmat Phyome Phyakul, a Thai-American Muslim cleric, spoke at an embassy-sponsored conference on "Civil liberties, rights and responsibilities" at PSU–Pattani, as well as at Yala Rajabhat University, Saiburi School in Narathiwat, and PSU–Hat Yai. Elmer Ransom, a veteran of the U.S. civil rights movement, spoke to Thai audiences about change by peaceful means.

The embassy has also produced several publications in Thai, English, and Jawi, including a magazine titled *Muslim life in America and rights of the people: individual freedom and the Bill of Rights*. In 2004, the Embassy funded a Patani-Malay-speaking journalist, producer, and cameraman to film a 12-part series about the role of U.S. Muslims in the U.S. general election; the ten-minute segments aired on Channel 11's Malay-language program. In November 2005, the U.S. donated 1,200 sewing machines to Muslim women in six southern provinces. In collaboration with a local non-government organization, the sewing machines were distributed along with training designed to provide resources for establishing micro-enterprises.

Of moderates, radicals, and the war on terror

The U.S. approach to the conflict in southernmost Thailand, rooted in concern that prolonged violence may serve to radicalize Malay Muslims and attract foreign terrorists, is consonant with prevailing conceptions of the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia found in much of the post-September 11 academic literature. The need to appreciate the variety of social and political views, attitudes, and activities encompassed by Islam is a recurring theme. In fighting terrorism, we are told, it is imperative to distinguish between "moderate" and "radical" or "extremist" tendencies in "political Islam."[118] Although a variety of labels are employed to identify these tendencies, the imperative is to distinguish between legitimate political activity and violent extremism.[119] The price of failing to make such distinctions is to risk radicalizing moderate Muslims, thus fueling the terrorist threat.

The essence of this argument is that Southeast Asia's Muslims are at risk of a process of radicalization, whereby extremists capitalize on social problems and legitimate grievances to proselytize for the "jihadist" worldview. Rohan Gunarantna writes, "Although al-Qaeda does not enjoy widespread support among the Muslim masses worldwide, it seeks to exploit the anger, suffering and the resentment of Muslims against the United States."[120] RAND Corporation analyst Angel Rabasa, who classifies Islamic "tendencies or orientations" by categories such as "radical fundamentalist" and "liberal secularists,"[121] notes that, "Extremist movements can evolve into moderate ones and moderate movements can become radicalized."[122] With respect to Southeast Asia, Rabasa notes the "different agendas and strategies" between international terrorists and domestic extremists: "The international terrorist networks focus on US and international targets, while domestic extremists are driven largely by internal factors and pursue domestic goals."[123]

David Wright-Neville offers a typology of Islamist political groups—classified as "activist," "militant," and "terrorist"—reflecting degrees of social and political alienation. Citing the Israeli terrorism scholar Ehud Sprinzak, he writes, "terrorists are almost always the product of a complex process of social and political embitterment that transforms a handful of political activists into terrorists or, in Sprinzak's words, 'sane human beings into brutal and indiscriminate killers.'"[124] Wright-Neville's typology describes a "transformative process" whereby "accumulated frustration with

the political and social status quo has led some activists to become militants and militants to become terrorists."[125] The lesson is that efforts must be made to check this transformative process by addressing grievances so that activists do not become further alienated and embittered and thus susceptible to violent extremism.

For Wright-Neville, the U.S. War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia fails to adequately appreciate the distinctions between "moderate" and "extremists." He warned in 2004:

> … unless the US begins to calibrate its counter-terrorist initiatives in Southeast Asia to take account of the important differences that divide Islamist groups, then it risks generating unintended consequences that will see more activists to [sic] become militants, and more militants become terrorists. There is a particular need to resist the temptation to pigeonhole all Islamist groups in Southeast Asia as vehemently anti-US and as anti-democratic. [126]

Others have criticized the U.S. for entertaining a "rather undifferentiated view of the supposed threat posed by Islamist groups across the region," and therefore failing to make important distinctions between moderates with local agendas and violent extremists with transnational goals.[127]

However, in the case of southernmost Thailand, it appears that such criticism is misplaced. U.S. officials have refused to generalize about those responsible for the violence in the South and have been careful to distinguish between militancy there and the global "jihadist" phenomenon. U.S. officials have also noted that Malay Muslims' grievances are driving the conflict in the far south. Indeed, the U.S. approach to the conflict in southernmost Thailand is motivated by a desire to curb any radicalizing process and to avert hostility being directed at the U.S. Although U.S. circumspection may partly be a function of Washington's preoccupation with the Middle East, U.S. officials recognize that even the impression of U.S. involvement in the conflict carries a risk of "blowback," or unintended and negative consequences.[128]

There are legitimate criticisms to be made about understanding terrorism as the result of a transformative, radicalizing process. The theory that Muslims are at heightened risk of being radicalized is based on what Rizal Sukma calls a "geographic and religious profiling factor," by which the concentration of Muslims in Southeast Asia, combined with "economic deprivation, social ills, and bad governance" allegedly results in a population prone to support or engage in terrorism. [129] As Sukma observes:

> The hidden… assumption behind this line of analysis is that Muslims, especially when they are poor, are potential terrorists. Within such a context… it is not difficult to see why the American-led war on terror is generally perceived by the public as another pretext of the West in their attempt to discredit and subjugate the Muslim world, including Muslims in Southeast Asia.[130]

The prevalence of this kind of "profiling" contributes to the perception that the U.S. sees all conflicts involving Muslims through the lens of "terrorism." Natasha Hamilton-Hart likewise argues against the causal association between Islam and terrorism evident in many studies of terrorism in Southeast Asia. She cites two main problems: the way Islam "is used as a framing device to create an implicit, non-specific association between Islam and violence; and the way almost all studies dichotomize 'moderate' and 'radical' versions of Islam."[131] Hamilton-Hart writes that although most studies acknowledge the peaceful and moderate nature of Southeast Asian Islam, structuring analysis around the terms "moderate" and "radical" serves to "obscure political grievances." [132] The result is that legitimate activities such as

opposing U.S. policies or espousing Islamic law become expressions of "radicalism" that signal "imminent transgression into the fundamentalist/terrorist category."[133]

However, a more generous interpretation of the "radicalization" theory may be tenable. Rather than obscuring political grievances, the emphasis on social and political causes of alienation should encourage greater sensitivity to discourses of grievance and "root causes." In order to prevent the transformation of moderates into radicals or reformers into revolutionaries, it is necessary to broaden political participation and provide opportunities for economic and social development. Addressing socio-political problems is a means to prevent the evolution of moderates into extremists. According to Rabasa, in Thailand as in the Philippines, national reconciliation is the key to resolving the problem of separatist violence: "The success of such efforts is likely to hinge on the ability of central governments to address discontent by opening up political, social and economic opportunities for minority populations.… [I]mproving the political opportunities and socio-economic conditions in potentially disaffected regions reduces potential popular support for extremist movements."[134]

Another corollary of the "radicalization" theory is the recognition that the "war on terror" is essentially an ideological struggle that must be conducted at the level of "hearts and minds." In theory, the Bush administration appreciates this fact. In 2004, national security advisor Condoleeza Rice said, "We are engaged primarily in a war of ideas, not of armies. It will be won by visionaries who can look past the moment."[135] The recent Department of Defense *Quadrennial Defense Review* asserts, "Victory will come when the enemy's extremist ideologies are discredited in the eyes of their host populations and tacit supporters, becoming unfashionable, and following other discredited creeds, such as Communism and Nazism, into oblivion."[136] Given that control of the relevant hearts and minds is beyond U.S. capabilities, it has been argued that, "The challenge for the United States is to merely hold its ground in the eyes of the moderate Muslim World and avoid any disastrous public relation nightmares."[137]

In practice, however, U.S efforts to fight a war of ideas have been poorly gauged and implemented and have all too often given rise to nightmares. These efforts have generally been either "too little, too late," such as undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs Karen Hughes' "disastrous 'listening tour'" of Muslim nations, [138] or far too grandiose, such as the effort to recast the politics of the Middle East by force. Washington is aware of the problem. A 2004 study by the Defense Science Board, which advises the Department of Defense, described this "larger strategic context" as "acutely uncomfortable" for the U.S.:

> U.S. policies and actions are increasingly seen by the overwhelming majority of Muslims as a threat to the survival of Islam itself. Three recent polls of Muslims show an overwhelming conviction that the U.S. seeks to "dominate" and "weaken" the Muslim World. Not only is every American initiative and commitment in the Muslim World enmeshed in the larger dynamic of intra-Islamic hostilities—[sic] but Americans have inserted themselves into this intra-Islamic struggle in ways that have made us an enemy to most Muslims.[139]

One consequence of these perceptions is that U.S. efforts to wage a "war of ideas" are not merely failing, but "may also have achieved the opposite of what they intended." The report finds that U.S. public diplomacy directed toward the Muslim world faces a "fundamental problem of credibility. Simply, there is none—the U.S. is without a working channel of communication to the world of Muslims and Islam."[140]

This lack of credibility afflicts U.S. policy in Southeast Asia as it does elsewhere. Indeed, the problem is exacerbated by an understandable tendency to

conflate U.S. policies in the Middle East with those pursued within the region. Incongruity between the measured response to terrorism implemented in Southeast Asia and the ambitious, sweeping rhetoric of the Bush Doctrine results in a kind of cognitive dissonance. As Renato Cruz De Castro observed in 2003:

> US counter-terrorism efforts in Southeast Asia appear bereft of actual and unilateral American military involvement and crusading rhetoric as Washington has taken into account the complexity of neutralizing Islamic militants in a region with a significant Muslim population. The US campaign against international terrorism in Southeast Asia has been conducted in a very pragmatic manner.[141]

However, De Castro sees in the 2002 *National Security Strategy*, "the Bush administration's intention to wage a total and disproportionate war against asymmetrical opponents."[142] De Castro continues:

> The prerogative implies a sort of American anti-terrorism ultimatum, which is high-handed, permits arbitrary application of American power in Southeast Asia, and amounts to an unprecedented assertion of US freedom of action and a definitive statement of new American unilateralism in the region.[143]

A report by the U.S. Congressional Research Service maintains that, "While these perceptions of an overly militaristic U.S. response in Southeast Asia may be overblown—particularly by being colored by U.S. politics in the Middle East—they may indicate a disconnect between the United States approach to the war on terror and its regional friends and allies."[144] Although this "disconnect" between the U.S. and its friends and allies is important, it is secondary; it grows out of the more basic and damaging discontinuity between ends and means in the U.S. strategy to counter the threat of extremist violence.

U.S. policy in Southeast Asia is not marked by the extreme hubris that has characterized the Bush Doctrine in the Middle East. For some, however, perhaps particularly Muslims who strongly identify with a transnational community of faith, this may be a distinction too fine to be meaningful. As Wright-Neville observes:

> The festering of Muslim anger builds on a widely held image of the United States as the main prop to an international system that denies Muslims their cultural, economic and political rights. At a practical level it is irrelevant that this view might be naïvely simplistic or that its prevalence often results from deliberate disinformation spread by the political elites in these countries as a way of deflecting critical attention from their own administrative malfeasance. What matters is that *the myth is believed* and that in so being it is for many a reality.[145]

The notion that beliefs may constitute one level of reality is helpful in understanding the U.S. approach to the conflict in southernmost Thailand as well as the way it is perceived by some within Thailand. The incongruity between Washington's moderate approach to the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia and its radical policies in the Middle East may help to explain why even a patently reasonable U.S. position arouses suspicion. Meanwhile, the rationale for a cautious position vis-à-vis southernmost Thailand is reinforced by concern that misperceptions of the U.S. role will result in outcomes that the U.S. seeks to avoid.

Endnotes

[1] Benjamin Pauker, 'A fire this time,' *World Policy Journal* , Winter 2005/6, p. 85.

[2] Michael Connors, 'The war on error and the southern fire: how terrorism analysts get it wrong: review essay,' *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 1 (2006), p. 160; 'CIA-backed unit "may be involved in violence",' *The Nation*, 19 April 2004.

[3] The term "Global War on Terror" fell out of favor in 2005. After a brief flirtation with the "Global Struggle Against Violent Extremism" (GSAVE), the Department of Defense has settled on "the Long War," which is used throughout the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*. "GWOT" may no longer be preferred, but after almost five years in circulation, the term is still commonly used.

[4] I use "position" rather than "policy" in order to convey a concept broader than formal plans for a course of action. "Position" is meant to include "attitude" or "point of view."

[5] 'Thai Muslims react: boycott of goods from West, Israel,' *The Nation*, 14 October 2001; Kittipong Soonprasert, 'Thai Muslims protest at US war,' BBC News, 21 March 2003.

[6] Don Pathan, 'Thaksin sails uncharted foreign-policy waters,' *The Nation*, 19 April 2003.

[7] Shawn Crispin, 'Thailand's war zone,' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 March 2004, p. 12.

[8] Alan Sipress, 'Inspired by anger a world away,' *Washington Post*, 15 May 2004.

[9] Sipress, 'Inspired.'

[10] Author interviews, Pattani, September 2004, November 2005, and May 2006.

[11] Personal communication, US official, May, 2006; survey report viewed by author.

[12] 'So so po cho po cheua "tang chat" mi suan saek saeng' (Democrat MP believes 'foreigners' have a hand), *Matichon*, 7 April 2005 at http://www.rakbankerd.com/hotnews.html?nid=1751, posted and translated by Tom Vamvanij, 'Bomb mastermind,' *Sara sonthe*, 7 April 2005, at http://sanpaworn.vissaventure.com/?id=104.

[13] See discussion of anti-Americanism in Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft power: the means to success in world politics* (New York: Public Affairs 2004), pp. 35–44.

[14] Peter G. Peterson, 'Public diplomacy and the war on terrorism,' *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2002, at http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20020901faessay9734/peter-g-peterson/public-diplomacy-and-the-war-on-terrorism.html.

[15] A CIA officer in Nakhon Phanom sent a fake letter to the Thai government purporting to be from a member of the Communist Party of Thailand. The letter was quickly traced to its source and its author revealed. U.S. ambassador William Kintner was obliged to pledge to prime minster Sanya Dhammasakdi that the U.S. would not interfere in Thai domestic politics. Surachart Bamrungsuk, *United States foreign policy and Thai military rule, 1947–1977* (Bangkok: Duangkamol, 1988), p. 174.

[16] Thitinan Pongsudhirak, 'Thailand cannot afford not to join coalition,' *Bangkok Post*, 26 September 2001.

[17] The White House, 'Bush delivers graduation speech at West Point,' 1 June 2002, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html; White House, 'President sworn in to second term,' 20 January 2005, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html.

[18] Andrew Kohut, 'Anti-Americanism: causes and characteristics,' Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 10 December 2003, p. 1, at http://people-press.org/commentary/display.php3?AnalysisID=77.

[19] Pew Research Center, 'No global warming alarm in U.S., China,' 13 June 2006, p. 3, at http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/252.pdf.

[20] Thomas H. Johnson and James A. Russell, 'A hard day's night? The United States and the global war on terrorism,' *Comparative Strategy* 24 (2005), p. 128.

[21] Evelyn Goh, 'Hegemonic constraints: the implications of 11 September for American power,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 57, 1 (2003), p. 81.

[22] A fourth suspect, alleged bomb-maker Samarn Waekaji, turned himself in to police on 8 July 2003.

[23] Agence France-Presse, 'JI arrests "may cause unrest",' *The Star* (Malaysia), 18 June 2003.

[24] It appears that Somchai's abduction was prompted by his allegation that police had tortured suspects in the 4 January 2004 arms raid, rather than his defense of the "JI" suspects. Five policemen were tried for the crime of coercion; murder charges were not brought because Somchai's body has not been recovered. On 12 January 2006, four of the policemen were acquitted due to lack of evidence and one, Police Major Ngern Thongsuk, was found guilty of coercion. He was sentenced to three years and released on Baht 1.5 million bail. The day following the end of the policemen's trial, Thaksin announced, "I know that Somchai is dead and more than four government officials were involved, but witnesses and evidence are still being collected." Thomas Fuller, 'Thaksin sees possible role of officials in lawyer's death,' *International Herald Tribune*, 13 January 2006.

[25] The arrests came as a result of information supplied by Singaporean Arifin bin Ali, an ethnic-Chinese convert to Islam who was arrested in May 2003 in Bangkok and handed over to Singapore. Thai authorities had no evidence against the suspects aside from Arifin's testimony. The judge explained that the prosecution failed to produce evidence to support the claims that the men were members of JI or had planned bombing attacks. Moreover, the Department of Special Investigations was found to have fabricated documents as evidence. Don Pathan, 'Muslims acquitted of JI bomb plot charges,' *The Nation*, 2 June 2005. Dr. Wae is currently a senator, having won the election in Narathiwat in April 2006.

[26] George W. Bush, 'Address to a joint session of Congress and the American people,' 20 September 2001, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html.

[27] 'Thailand will be strictly neutral,' *The Nation*, 17 September 2001. On the following day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that Thailand was willing to, "render all possible assistance to the United States as Thailand has done consistently in the past." Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Government, 'Thai Position,' 17 September 2001, at http://www.thaiembdc.org/pressctr/pr/thaiposition0911.html.

[28] Don Van Natta, Jr., 'Questioning terror suspects in a dark and surreal world,' *The New York Times*, 9 March 2003.

[29] Raymond Bonner, 'Thailand tiptoes in step with the American anti-terror effort,' *The New York Times*, 8 June 2003. At least two al-Qaeda suspects were reported to have been held in Thailand: Abu Zubaydah, an alleged operations chief, and Ramzi bin al-Shiba, an alleged 9/11-attack planner. Both were captured in Pakistan. The US refuses to discuss the issue. Thailand denied it, and the story died out until further revelations of a "hidden global internment network" was reported in the *Washington Post* by Dana Priest in November 2005. According to the account in *The One Percent Doctrine* by Ron Suskind, American interrogators discovered that Zubaydah was mentally ill and had limited knowledge of al-Qaeda operations. Having been described by President Bush as a key al-Qaeda figure, however, interrogators were obliged to extract "intelligence" from Zubaydah. Under torture, Zubaydah revealed a number of spurious plots, sending thousands of U.S. agents on pointless missions. Thus, writes Suskind, "the United States would torture a mentally disturbed man and then leap, screaming, at every word he uttered." Cited in Barton Gellman, 'The shadow war, in a surprising new light,' *Washington Post*, 20 June 2006.

[30] Dana Priest, 'CIA holds terror suspects in secret prisons,' *Washington Post*, 2 November 2005.

[31] 'PM denies Thai knowledge of, connection with reported CIA secret prison,' TNA, 3 November 2005, at http://etna.mcot.net/query.php?nid=17280, 'US gov't: no hidden jail in Thailand for al-Qaeda suspects,' TNA, 4 November 2005, at http://etna.mcot.net/query.php?nid=17306.

[32] Kavi Chongkittavorn, 'Evaluating western media perceptions of Thailand after the Bali bombing,' in Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan, eds., *After Bali: the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific and the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2003), p. 193.

[33] Bonner, 'Thailand tiptoes.'

[34] Bonner, 'Thailand tiptoes.'

[35] Yuwadee Tunyasiri, 'We are no lackey of US, says PM,' *Bangkok Post*, 3 April 2003.

[36] Barry Wain, 'Washington begins to reward Asian backers of Iraq invasion,' *Wall Street Journal*, 28 April 2003.

[37] John Funston, 'Terrorism in Thailand: how serious is it?' in *Thailand's economic recovery*, ed. Cavan Hogue (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), p. 96.

[38] The American Service member's Protection Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 2002, prohibits provision of U.S. military aid to countries that have ratified the Rome Statute that established the ICC. The U.S. has cut security and development assistance to at least eighteen countries that have not signed Article 98 agreements, including Brazil and South Africa. As of May 2006, 100 countries had signed Bilateral Immunity Agreements with the U.S., including Cambodia, East Timor, Laos, the Philippines, Singapore and (possibly) Brunei.

[39] When Parliament declined to fully fund the deployment, the U.S. agreed to cover remaining costs. Following the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad in August, 2003, the initial contingent of 900 troops was halved. Thailand sent 447 troops, mostly engineers, to serve at Camp Lima, near the city of Karbala. Two Thai soldiers were killed in a truck bomb attack at Camp Lima in December 2003. Sheldon Simon, 'U.S.-Southeast Asia relations: terrorism perpetrated and terrorists apprehended,' *Comparative Connections*, Pacific Forum CSIS 3rd quarter, 2003, p. 69, at http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/0303q.pdf

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[42] Kavi Chongkittavorn, 'Thailand: international terrorism and the Muslim south,' in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004* ed. Daljit Singh and Chin Kin Wah (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), p. 270.

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[45] After the June 10 White House meeting Thaksin's spokesman Sita Divari told a Thai reporter, "Please note that the president did not voice concern or complain about extra-judicial killings and 'silencings' during the three-month campaign." Supalak Ganjanakhundee, 'Thailand "to become a Major Non-NATO Ally",' *The Nation*, 12 June 2003.

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[47] Among other things, MNNA status confers eligibility to bid on certain US government contracts; participate in certain research and development projects; host a War Reserve Stockpile (the U.S. closed such a stockpile in 2002); and to receive priority for U.S. Excess Defense Articles. 'Fact sheet: Major Non-Nato status for Thailand,' http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/apec2003/factsheetmnna.htm. Bush publicly announced his intention to make Thailand a Major Non-NATO Ally on 19 October 2003, during his visit to Thailand for the APEC summit. Bush issued the order granting MNNA status to Thailand on 30 December 2003.

[48] Andrew Perrin, 'The hard cell?' *Time Asia*, 16 June 2003.

[49] Surath Jinakul, 'No end in sight,' *Bangkok Post*, 4 April 2004.

[50] Shawn Crispin, 'Targets of a new anti-terror war,' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 July 2003, p. 14.

[51] Sermsuk Kasitipradit, 'US accused of setting up arrests of trio,' *Bangkok Post*, 22 June 2003.

[52] Crispin, 'Thailand's war zone.'

[53] Chaiwat Satha-Anand, 'Fostering "authoritarian democracy" with violence: the effect of violent solutions to southern violence in Thailand,' paper prepared for the Empire Conference, National University of Singapore, 23–24 September 2004, p. 8.

[54] Duncan McCargo, 'Thaksin and the resurgence of violence in the Thai South: network monarchy strikes back?' *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 1 (2006), p. 53.

[55] McCargo, 'Thaksin,' p. 56.

[56] Shawn W. Crispin, 'U.S. ally may have crossed line in terror fight,' *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 21 April 2004.

[57] Chaiwat, 'Fostering,' p. 7.

[58] The current phase of violence in the southernmost provinces may be traced to 24 December 2001, when militants staged near-simultaneous attacks on five police checkpoints across Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala provinces, killing five policemen and a defence volunteer.

[59] Srisompob Jitpiromsri, with Panyasak Sobhonvasu, 'Unpacking Thailand's southern conflict: the poverty of structural explanations,' *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 1 (2006), p. 99.

[60] Surat Horachaikul, 'The far south of Thailand in the era of the American empire, 9/11 version, and Thaksin's 'cash and gung-ho' premiership,' *Asian Review* 16 (2003), p. 141.

[61] Kavi, 'International Terrorism and the Muslim South,' p. 270.

[62] Wattana Sugunnasil, 'Islam, radicalism and violence in southern Thailand,' *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 1 (2006), pp. 132–3; see also Srisompob, 'Unpacking,' p. 97, and International Crisis Group, *Thailand's Emergency Decree: No Solution*, Asia Report No. 105, November 2005, p. 32.

[63] Agence France-Presse, 'US warns Thailand insurgency may become regional,' 14 October 2005.

[64] There are persistent but uncorroborated reports that Indonesian militants are involved in the insurgency, primarily as trainers. It is likely that some Thai militants received training in Indonesia, probably while studying. 'Premier fingers Indonesians,' *The Nation*, 19 December 2004; 'Thai separatists stockpiled thousands of weapons,' Associated Press, 4 July 2005; Wassana Nanuam, 'RKK insurgents admit they trained in Indonesia, says army,' *Bangkok Post*, 28 November 2005; Maximilian Wechsler, 'Closing the net on terror,' *Bangkok Post*, 28 May 2006. Following the 15 June 2006 bombings across the southernmost provinces, police in Narathiwat arrested an Indonesian man who had been living in Thailand with his Thai wife for the past two years. A month after the arrest, his connection to the bombings, if any, has not been made public. 'Narathiwat police nab Indonesian bomb suspect,' *The Nation*, 16 June 2006.

[65] Tony Davis, 'Interview, Lt Gen Ongkorn Thongprasong,' *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 31 May 2006, p. 34.

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[67] U.S. State Department, 'Joint press availability with Thailand foreign minister Khantathi Suphamongkhon,' press release, 11 July 2005, at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/49292.htm.

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[69] Ambassador Ralph Boyce, interview with Sutichai Yoon, *Jeepajornlok*, Channel 9, (in Thai) broadcast 13 February 2006, at http://hiptv.mcot.net/hipPlay.php?id=4785.

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[71] Central Intelligence Agency, 'SSCI (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence) questions for the record regarding 11 February 2003 DCI worldwide threat briefing,' p. 159, at http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2003_hr/021103qfr-cia.pdf.

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[75] Anthony L. Smith, 'Trouble in Thailand's Muslim south: separatism not global jihad,' *Asia Pacific Security Studies* 3, 10 (December 2004), p. 2.

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[78] U.S. Department of State, *Country reports on human rights practices 2004*, 28 February 2005, at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41661.htm, and U.S. Department of State, *Country reports on human rights practices 2005*, 8 March 2006, at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61628.htm.

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[81] Transcript of seminar, 'Islam around the world.'

[82] 'US expert: do more before it gets worse,' *Bangkok Post*, 15 November 2005.

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9

The southern Thailand conflict and the Muslim *ummah*

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The Muslim world of around 1.3 billion people is spread over Asia, Africa, Europe, and North American. Muslims live in various countries both as majority and minority populations. The Muslim world sees itself as an *ummah*, a worldwide community bound by the fraternal spirit of *ikhwah*, brotherhood related by faith and practice of Islam as religion.

The Muslim world is made up of various ethnic groups, including minorities, speaking various languages. The Muslim world can be divided into the following linguistic-cultural zones: Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Central Asian, Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Bengali, Malay, Javanese, Maghribi, West African, and Swahili. In spite of this, the adherents of Islam see themselves as a brotherhood with strong emotional attachment, a composite entity united by faith.

Muslim related international conflicts such as those in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, and southern Thailand have drawn the attention of the worldwide Muslim community. These are generally interpreted by the worldwide Muslim community as instances of victimization on account of religion, or subjugation as a minority in a non-Muslim state. The Muslim world views these conflicts through the lens of pan-Islamism, an ideology of worldwide Muslim unity proposed by Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838–97) during the colonial era of Muslim history.[2] The southern Thai conflict is also viewed from the perspective of pan-Malayness referring to the regional ethnic fraternity of the Malay race. Hence, Muslim conflicts are viewed from the perspectives of religion as well as ethnic identity.

The conflict in southern Thailand has been viewed from different angles by various analysts. A majority of the foreign security analysts have tried to discern a connection between the conflict and international jihadist movements such as *al-Qaeda* and *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI).[3] Within the Muslim world, most analyses view the conflict as religious—between an oppressive Thai Buddhist state and its repressed Muslim minority. This chapter contends that the conflict in southern Thailand is largely a local conflict rooted in a clash between the two ethno-religiosities of Thai Buddhism and Malay Islam with the latter taking a Malay Muslim nationalist and separatist stance. The southern Thai episode demonstrates that ethno-religious identity is a large factor in shaping the conflict. Yet the Muslim world views the on-going conflict as being purely religious.

The approach of this chapter is rooted in the field of religious studies with a focus on intra-religious relations within the Islamic world. It looks at how the conflict in southern Thailand affects Thailand's relations with the Muslim world—from the angles of both the history of relations between Islam and Buddhism as religions, and Thailand's relations with the larger Muslim world and Muslim countries in the neighborhood.

The first paper of the chapter discusses the Muslim view of religious brotherhood from the perspective of Islamic sources of the Qur'an and *hadith* or the

traditions of Muhammad. The second, third, and fourth parts of this paper discuss the history of relations between Thailand and the Muslim world including the historical religious interaction between Islam and Buddhism. The fifth part of the paper analyzes the unique ethno-religious dimension of Islam as practiced in southern Thailand. The sixth part of the paper traces the educational links between Thai Muslims and the wider Muslim world, especially Iran and Pakistan, two states founded on Islamic politico-religious ideology.[4] The seventh part of the paper analyzes reportage about the southern Thai conflict in Muslim media. And the eighth part of the paper looks at the roles played in the conflict by international Muslim organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Thailand's ASEAN Muslim neighbors of Indonesia, and especially Malaysia due to the ethnic and religious commonality with the southern Thai population. These various perspectives and approaches show that the conflict has drawn a concerned interest from the Muslim world at large.

A point before we proceed further. The nature of conflict in southern Thailand is evolving under the influence of local politics within Thailand which are now entering a post-Thaksin era. The Thai state's approach to the resolution of the conflict is changing. The military authorities are more open to dialogue with the insurgents than the Thaksin government which was intent on the use of force. This in turn has magnified the expected role of Malaysia in the negotiation process. Some aspects of this are discussed below.

The concept of *ikhwah*, brotherhood in the Qur'an and *hadith*

The Qur'an states that Muslims are a brotherhood (*ikhwah*) united like a human body. When there is a single pain, the whole body suffers. Similarly, if a single Muslim is oppressed, the whole body of Muslims suffers. Hence, international conflicts concerning Muslim communities such as those in Palestine, Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and now southern Thailand have become the concern of the *ummah*.

The Qur'an describes the Muslim fraternity as follows:

> The believers are but a single brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy. (Qur'an 49:10)
>
> And (moreover) He hath put affection between their hearts: not if thou had spent all that is in the earth, could thou have produced that affection, but Allah hath done it: for He is Exalted in might, Wise. (Qur'an 8:63)
>
> And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.
>
> Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity. (Qur'an 3:103–104)

The *hadith* literature, which consists of sayings of the prophet Muhammad, also discusses the nature and character of the Muslim community. The following *hadiths* are taken from the collections of *Sahih Muslim* and *Sahih Bukhari*, the two

authenticated sources of *hadith*.

Abu Musa reported Allah's Messenger as saying,

> "A believer is like a brick for another believer, the one supporting the other." (*Sahih Muslim*)

Nu'man b. Bashir reported Allah's Messenger as saying,

> "The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever." (*Sahih Muslim*)

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying,

> "Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He would say: O my Lord; how could I visit Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked food from you but you did not feed Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I feed Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He said: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? (The Lord would again say:) O son of Adam, I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I provide Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Such and such of servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me." (*Sahih Muslim*)

A *hadith* in *Sahih al-Bukhari* collection states that: "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim." Other *hadiths* in the same collection report that, a Muslim should not oppress another Muslim and screen him from other oppressors.

Abdullah bin Umar reported Allah's Apostle saying,

> "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Furthermore, a Muslim's faith is dependent upon his attitude towards other Muslims. A Muslim should always wish good for his fellow Muslim. It is an evil deed for one Muslim to abuse his brother in the faith. And it is unbelief for one Muslim to murder a fellow Muslim.

Anas narrated, "The Prophet said, 'None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.'" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Thailand's relations with the Muslim world

Thailand has been successful in building dynamic and cooperative relations with several Muslim countries in the region and beyond. Presently, seventeen Muslim countries have established diplomatic relations with Thailand.[5] Meanwhile, Thailand has an observer status at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Thailand also has extensive trade and commercial relations

with several Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian Muslim countries.

The ongoing conflict in southern Thailand, now around a century old, has attracted the attention of the Muslim world in different ways depending upon various factors such as ethno-religious similarity with neighbors such as Malaysia and Indonesia and religious similarity with the Muslim world in general. Thus the Muslim world's attention toward the unrest in the south is influenced by the sentiments of pan-Malayness and pan-Islamism. A glance at the media reports on the events in the south reflects these two types of interests in the Muslim world.

At the religious and communal levels, Thai Muslims have established extensive relations with Muslim countries in the areas of educational and socio-religious relations, both public and private. Thousands of Thai Muslims have obtained their religious and general education at institutions in the Muslim world in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Hence, there is a two-tired relationship between Thailand and the Muslim world. The first tier is conducted at the official level and the second at the level of inter-Muslim community relations.

Religious relations between Islam and Buddhism[6]

Religious encounters between Islam and Buddhism are as old as Islam.[7] The first encounter between Islam and *ashab al-Bidada* or the Buddhist community took place in the middle of the seventh century CE in the regions of East Persia, Transoxiana, Afghanistan, and Sindh.[8] Historical evidence suggests that some early Muslims extended the Qur'anic category of *ahl al-Kitab*, people of the book or revealed religion, to include Hindus and Buddhists.[9] The second encounter took place in Southeast Asia beginning around the twelfth or thirteenth century CE.

During the second century of Islam or the eighth century CE, Central Asian Muslims translated many Buddhist works into Arabic. We come across Arabic titles such as *Bilawar wa Budhasaf* and *Kitab al-Budd*, as evidence of Muslim learning about Buddhism.[10]

In spite of being aware of the idol-worship of the Buddha, Ibn al-Nadim (d. 995 CE), the author of *al-Firhist*, commented:

> These people (Buddhists of Khurasan) are the most generous of all the inhabitants of the earth and of all the religionists. This is because their prophet *Budhasaf* (Bodhisattva) has taught them that the greatest sin, which should never be thought of or committed is the utterance of 'No.' Hence they act upon this advice; they regard the uttering of 'No' as an act of Satan. And it is their very religion to banish Satan.[11]

There is evidence of Buddhist survivals in the succeeding Muslim era of this region, for example, the Barmak family of Buddhist monks who played a powerful administrative role in the early Abbasid dynasty. The Abbasids ruled from Baghdad during 750–1258 CE, governing most of the Islamic world. The Barmakids controlled the Buddhist monastery of *Naw Bahar* near Balkh and other Iranian monasteries.[12]

Several Buddhist beliefs and practices survived among the Muslims of Central Asia. For example, the Samanid dynasty which ruled Persia during the ninth and tenth centuries CE modelled the *madrasah* or Muslim religious schools, devoted to advanced studies in the Islamic religious sciences, after Buddhist schools in eastern Iran.[13] Similar may have been the case with *pondoks* or *pesanterens*, Muslim religious schools of Southeast Asia.

Muslim religious scholar and historian, Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Jarir

al-Tabari (839–923 CE), who was born at Amul in Tabaristan, northern Persia, mentions that Buddhist idols were brought from Kabul, Afghanistan to Baghdad in the ninth century. It is also reported that Buddhist idols were sold in a Buddhist temple next to the Makh mosque in the market of the city of Bukhara in present Uzbekistan.[14]

A classical Muslim scholar of comparative religion, al-Shahrastani (1086–1153 CE), in the passage on *'Ara' al-hind'* (The Views of the Indians) in his *magnum opus*, *Kitab al-Milal wan-Nihal* (Book of religious and philosophical sects), pays high spiritual respect to Buddhism by identifying the Buddha with the Qur'anic figure of al-Khidr, as a seeker of enlightenment.[15]

More recently, the late Professor Muhammad Hamidullah observed that in line with the Qur'anic view of prophethood, the Buddha can be regarded as one among the previous prophets. According to Hamidullah, the symbolic mention of the fig tree in chapter 95, verse 1 of the Qur'an alludes to the prophethood of the Buddha. He concludes that since Buddha is said to have received *nirvana*, enlightenment, under a wild fig tree and that a fig tree does not figure prominently in the life of any of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, hence the Qur'anic verse refers to Gautama Buddha.[16]

> By the fig and the olive,
> By Mount Sinai,
> And by this land made safe;
> Surely We created man of the best stature
> Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low,
> Save those who believe and do good works, and theirs is a reward unfailing.
> So who henceforth will give the lie to thee about the judgment?
> Is not Allah the most conclusive of all judges? (Qur'an 95:1–8)

> And indeed, [O Muhammad], We have sent forth apostles before your time; some of them We have mentioned to thee, and some of them We have not mentioned to thee. (Qur'an 40:78. See also Qur'an 4:164)

> And never have We sent forth any apostle otherwise than [with a message] in own people's tongue... (Qur'an 14:4)

Hence, Islam's position toward other religions is that of religious pluralism recognizing the existence of different religions including Buddhism. The Qur'an states that:

> To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed He would have made you a single people but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to God; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute. (Qur'an 5:48)

Islam in Thailand

Islam, like all world religions, operates at global and local levels. The global identity of Islam is constructed in pan-Islamist terms as the *ummah* or worldwide Muslim community, while most local Muslim identities are construed in tribal or ethnic terms as seen in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

Islam spread to Thailand from various directions—the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, Yemen (Hadhramawt), Persia, India, Burma, China, and Cambodia. Just as with other Muslim communities of Southeast Asia, the Thai Muslim community is made up of two groups: the "native/local Muslims" and the "immigrant settler

Muslims." Hence, there is ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and political variety within the Thai Muslim community.

The "immigrant Muslims" of Thailand belong to different sectarian and ethnic backgrounds. For example, Persian Muslims belonging to the Shia sect served at the court of the Ayudhaya Kingdom in different official capacities.[17] The majority of Thai Muslims belong to the Sunni sect. There is also a small Shia community belonging to the Imami and Bohras/Mustali Ismailis sub-groups within the Shia sect.[18]

Overall, the Thai Muslims make up the largest minority religious group in the country constituting "a national minority rather than a border minority."[19]

Muslims in Thailand may be divided into three groups defined by history and location. First, there are Muslims of Malay ethnicity and language in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat of the deep south. These southern Muslims make up about 80 per cent of the total Thai Muslim population of about 5 to 7 million. Second, there are Thai-speaking ethnic Malays in the province of Satun and parts of the upper south such as Songkhla, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phuket, Krabi, and Phangnga. Third, there are Thai-speaking Muslims of myriad ethnic origins in the central provinces of Bangkok and Ayutthaya and also in north and northeast Thailand. This third group includes Muslims of Persian, Malay, Cham, Indonesian, Indian, Bengali, Pathan, and Chinese ethnic backgrounds.[20] These migrant Muslims from neighboring and distant countries came to settle in Thailand for economic and political reasons. Some fled religious persecution at the hands of the communists in China and the nationalists in Burma. There are also Thai converts to Islam either through marriage or religious conversions.

The first group has largely resisted integration into the Thai polity while the second and third groups have accepted integration.

The history of Islam in Thailand has two key dates. First, non-Malay Muslims such as the Persians, Chams, Indians, and others began to arrive at the courts and cities of the Ayutthaya kingdom from the fourteenth century CE onwards. Second, the Islamization of Patani began around the 1520s. Both these groups were merged within the single nation-state in 1939, when Siam became Thailand.

The general Thai Muslim attitude towards Buddhism is that of "live and let live," drawing on the Qur'anic verse, "Unto you, your religion (moral law), and unto me mine." (Qur'an 109: 6)

Educated Thai Muslims view the Buddhist concept of *dukkha*, suffering, and the quest for *nirvana*, enlightenment as a philosophy and way of life. At the same time, they view the widespread Thai beliefs in spirits as strange, irrational, and unwise. In turn, educated Buddhists view their own religion as philosophically and scientifically superior to Islam, and see Islam's belief in monotheism as philosophically and scientifically inferior.

At the popular level, Thai Muslims see Buddhism as *kufr*, disbelief in God, and *shirk*, polytheism. They view Thai Buddhists as *kafirs*, unbelievers and infidels, and *mushrik*, polytheists.[21] These two ways of thinking are scorned by the Qur'an and opposed vehemently by the prophet Muhammad. Thai Muslims adopt and apply a literal understanding of Qur'anic passages which talk of the conflict between *tauhid*, monotheism, and *kufr* and *shirk* in the Thai context, without analyzing the historical background. Hence, in situations of political conflict, Thai Muslims view the Thai Buddhists as *najis* (unclean, immoral, and faithless) engaged in *kufr* and *shirk* and hence to be opposed by engaging in *jihad*. This view arises because of a lack of understanding of the true position of Islam towards Buddhism, and gives rise to greater conflict and religious division.

Ethnicity and Islam in southern Thailand

The ongoing violence in southern Thailand is a result of ethnicity and religion. Hence it is first necessary to understand how the Malay Muslims in the area view ethnicity and religion.

In truth, the Malay Muslims place strong emphasis on their ethnicity which is tied to their religion. For them, their ethnicity is of prime importance, at the same time as they conduct a way of life in keeping with Islam as practiced in the locality. Thus the mythic/narrative, experiential/emotional, ritual, ethical, social, legal, material, and political aspects of life are all interpreted and perceived through the lens of ethnic identity. Here ethnicity and religion are intermixed resulting in the formation of an ethnicized view of Islam.

In such a perspective, ethnicity is the defining characteristic of a group's identity which sets it apart from others in its own and others' eyes. It serves also as the foundation for the community's interpretation of nationalism and religion. Religion becomes a tool for displaying ethnic identity. For this reason, the conflict on the southern border has an ethnic dimension which is inseparable from religion. This is similar to the conflicts in the Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Kashmir, Rwanda, Nigeria, Lebanon, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland.

The combination of ethnicity and religion often results in explosive conflicts in the political arena to which solutions are not easy to be found.

> Religion and ethnicity, as social and political concepts, have many similarities. While ethnicity is not always congruent with a framework of belief, it is often associated with nationalism, which does provide such a framework. This framework can include rules and standards of behavior such as the requirement or at least the desirability of forming or maintaining a state for one's ethnic group. Even for ethnic groups which do not express such national sentiments, ethnicity is a basis for identity that can influence beliefs and behavior. Ethnicity, both in its nationalist and other manifestation, can provide legitimacy for a wide variety of activities and policies and ethnic symbols can be as potent a political and social mobilizing force as religious symbols.[22]

Such ethno-religiosity which gives primacy to ethnicity in religion is not exclusive to the Malays. A similar tendency is also found in other ethnic groups of Southeast Asia such as the Thai, Filipino, and Chinese.

The Malay Muslims of southern Thailand view national integration as destructive of their own culture because Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims have different cosmologies.[23] "They do not want to be integrated into the Thai state. They do not want to lose their religious and cultural autonomy. If the Thai state is the manifestation of the Buddhist cosmology, the Malay-Muslim do not want to be a part of it."[24] The two large groups of Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims have been described as "closed systems."[25]

The Malay Muslims recoil from outsiders (even other Muslims) unless they are members of the same ethnic group or speak the Melayu language. Simlarly, mere religious conversion to Islam is not enough. Rather one has to *masuk Melayu*, become a Malay, to be accepted as a Muslim. This process is reinforced through loyalty to the historical memory and the role played by the *'ulama* or *toh-kru* in asserting and maintaining the ethno-religious identity of the Malay Muslim community.

The network of the *'ulama* and their role as custodians of religion and ethnicity makes them important players in the conflict as custodians of the Malay culture and local Islam. An example is Haji Sulong who in 1947 made seven demands to the

central government on the issues of political freedom for the Malays, preservation of Malay-ness in terms of both language and religion, and use of Islamic law in the locality.[26]

Since 1980, the Thai government has made several efforts to accommodate the Muslim population into the mainstream with some success, as shown by the number of people who identify themselves as "Thai Muslims." But there are still sections who sees themselves as different from the majority of society for ethno-religious reasons.

Those who resist assimilation have been influenced by the contemporary politicization of religion which is associated with the "politicization of ethnicity" and "ethno-religious nationalism." They engage in what has been called "regional or subnational reactions and resistances to what is seen as an over centralized and hegemonic state... to achieve their own regional and local sociopolitical formations."[27] In this particular case, "Religion is not purely a matter of belief and worship; it also has social and political resonances and communitarian associations. Likewise, language is not merely a communicative device but has implications for cultural identity and literary creation, educational advantage, occupation, and historical legitimation of social precedence. Similarly, territory has multiple implications, which go beyond spatial location to include charged claims about "homelands' and "sons [and daughters] of the soil."[28]

Dr. Ismae Alee, director of the College of Islamic Studies at Prince of Songkhla University, an expert on Islam in the southern border provinces, suggested that ignorance about the Malay way of life and the role of religion is a cause of conflict. The beliefs and way of life of Muslims in the southern border provinces differ from those of other Muslims in Thailand because their identity, ethnicity, and history are deeply rooted deeply in their psyche.[29]

The recent events in southern Thailand show that the intertwining of religion and ethnicity has destroying social relations between the Thai Buddhists and Muslims who have been living as neighbors for centuries. At present, both Muslims and Buddhists are being killed, not sparing even monks.[30] Muslim-Buddhist relations have reached a low point, with distrust and alienation on both sides.

Educational links between Thailand and the Muslim world

As a religious minority, Thai Muslims have always been concerned about maintaining their religious identity within a largely Buddhist nation. The need to maintain and reinforce both ethnic and religious identity has been an important factor in determining their educational paths.

Southern Thai Muslims who are ethnically Malay have cross-border ethnic and religious relations with the Muslims of Kelantan in Malaysia and also Indonesia. In fact, Islam in southern Thailand shares strong intellectual and cultural roots and relations with Islam in Kelantan from the past until today.[31]

Many young Thai Muslims travel to neighboring Muslim countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei or to India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, and Egypt for seeking education that will reinforce their religious and ethnic identities. Presently, there are about two hundred Thai Muslim students studying in Saudi Arabia, about two thousand in Egypt, and one hundred in Iran. Such educational sojourns contribute toward the production of trans-border and transnational versions of Islam with "cross-cutting interpretations which produce and reproduce various understandings of this religion across an equally diverse range of sociocultural contexts."[32]

Educational sojourns by Thai Muslims in countries mentioned above have resulted in the production of a variety of interpretations of Islam in Thailand. Some emphasize the ethno-religious dimension of being Malay, with or without stress on Islamic religious purity. Others combine ethnic identity and religious purity. The term "purity" here refers to the practice of Islam in countries where Muslims are in a majority. For example, Thais educated in Egypt may stress their ethnic Malay identity in nationalist terms without stressing the puritanical practice of Islam. Those educated in the Wahhabi theological seminaries and universities in Pakistan and the Middle East may stress the pure practice of Islam, either combined or not combined with stress on Malay ethnicity. Those educated in Iran may stress the political theology associated with the Shiite interpretation of Islamic history. Hence, educational links between Thai Muslims and the Muslim world have important ramifications for the internal discourse on practice within Thai Islam.

Travel to Muslim countries for education may induce some Thai Muslims to emphasize certain elements of their ethno-religious identity which are salient in their local context. However, it would be wrong to assume that acquiring education in Muslim countries naturally leads to sympathies for the cause of insurgency. Many returnee Thai students have engaged in promoting Islamic reform within the Thai Muslim community along purist and also sectarian lines. Yet, not all such reformists are insurgents.

The overseas-educated Muslims have also played a significant role in weaning local Muslims, whose religious practice is inflected by local ethnicity and culture, to practice a purer form of Islam. This can be seen from the success of Salafi-Wahhabi Islamic reformers in turning Thai Muslims to adopt stricter practice, resulting in marginalization of the traditional strain in contemporary Thailand.

Yet, Islam-related global events such as the wars in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq do arouse pan-Islamist sympathies among local Thai Muslims.[33]

Overseas Muslim foundations also contribute to the building of mosques, *pondok*, and *madrasas* (religious schools) in Thailand. For example, Yala Islamic College received support from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait. The Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organisation has been the biggest donor to Islamic social projects in southern Thailand. Such support, along with import of education from the Muslim world, has provoked suspicion against Thai Muslims, especially against *imam* and *pondok* teachers who were educated in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan, Sudan, Indonesia, and Pakistan. They are suspected of supporting separatism even though there is no adequate proof to connect these people with separatism or anti-state activities in the southern border provinces over a long history, even though such suspicion cannot be totally discounted.[34] At the same time, one cannot measure the level of sympathy among local Muslims for those causing the unrest.

In political terms, the Salafi-Wahhabi religious trend within Thai Islam favors an integrationist approach towards the Thai polity in the spirit of "live and let live," while some inspired by Salafi-Jihadist radicalism opt for a confrontational stance.

Pakistan

Diplomatic relations between Thailand and Pakistan were established on 1 October 1951 as a result of both countries' membership in the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). Initially, the relations were based on defense cooperation. Later, political relations started to develop. A landmark of this relationship was a 12-day visit by the Thai king and queen to Pakistan in 1962. General Prem Tinsulanonda visited Pakistan in 1983, General Zia-ul-Haq visited Thailand in 1985, and the Thai

crown prince visited Pakistan in 1991 and 1998.[35]

Until recently, the relationship was not much developed, but has expanded substantially over the past four years with not only growing political but also economic and social relations.

In the wake of 9/11, Pakistan sent a representative to the Thai parliament in October 2001 to strengthen relations. Subsequently, a Thai parliamentary delegation visited Pakistan for the first time in January–February 2002. This was followed by exchange visits by foreign ministers, by prime minister Thaksin's visit to Pakistan in July 2002, and by the Pakistan prime minister's visits to Thailand in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Thailand invited Pakistan to be a founding member of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue at ministerial level. This was in keeping with Pakistan's initiation of an "East Asian Vision Policy" which lays stress on building economic relations with ASEAN. The trade volume between Thailand and Pakistan now exceeds US$ 500 million a year, and there are major Thai investments in infrastructure development in Pakistan.

Islam occupies an important place in Pakistan's foreign policy with stress on bettering relations with the Muslim world but without discrimination toward non-Muslim countries. Pakistan was created as a country on the basis of Islamic ideology and its constitution is founded on Islamic principles, though the government does not hold to a radical line in any way.

Pakistan is well known for Islamic education, hence many Thai Muslim students go to Pakistan to acquire Islamic education. Islamic education is offered at *madrasas* (religious seminaries) and also at university level through the International Islamic University at Islamabad. The *madrasas* follow regulations set by the Ministry of Education.

In the past three years, entry into these institutions has become more regulated. When a Thai student applies for a student visa, the case is sent to Pakistan for approval. Once the visa is granted, the Thai government is informed that the Thai student has been accepted by Pakistan. Upon arrival in Pakistan, the student must register with the Thai embassy. Although some suspect these educational institutions of nurturing terrorists, there is no evidence of any Thai Muslim student who studied in Pakistan having taken part in any violent activity.

Pakistan views the conflict in the south as an internal Thai problem and is satisfied with the measures taken by the Thai government. Pakistan appreciates that Thailand welcomed a fact-finding mission from the Organization of Islamic Conference, and that Thailand established the National Reconciliation Commission as a mechanism to help resolve the conflict. However, Pakistan believes that two factors prolonging the conflict area a lack of well planned strategy and rapid changes in implementation. In addition, some groups attempt to exploit youth who feel excluded and deprived to undertake subversive activities. There is a need for the Thai government to adopt a well planned strategy to address a deep rooted problem and this will need time.

In addition, Pakistan believes that the international community should trust the Thai government to manage the problem, and should help the government to bridge the gap between Muslims in the central region and those in the south. One contribution made by Pakistan was to offer fifty scholarships for Thai Muslim students from the south to acquire higher education in non-religious subjects such as science, social science, and professional subjects. Pakistan also offers twenty-five scholarships for Thai Muslim teachers from the south to study in Pakistan at postgraduate level in the fields of education, languages, and business administration.

Hence, Pakistan is helping in various ways to alleviate the problems in southern Thailand.

Iran

Diplomatic relations between Iran and Thailand were established on 25 November 1955. Though there had been an Iranian community in Siam since the Ayutthaya period that made important contributions to the development of Thai culture, prior to the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, relations were mostly restricted to the usual matters of trade and commerce, and a strong relationship between the royal families of the two countries.[36]

After 1979, Thailand was among the first countries to recognize the Islamic revolution of Iran, and relations restarted with an exchange of ambassadors in 1983. The main aspect of the relationship revolves around energy as Thailand needs to import oil and gas. The Thai petroleum company PTT has invested in petrochemical projects in Iran and also opened a office in Tehran. Hence, Iran–Thai relations are on a good footing.

Iran recognizes that Thailand welcomed the OIC fact finding mission. Iran and Thailand place importance on human rights and non-violence. Iran supports peaceful negotiations concerning southern Thailand and does not endorse separatism. Iran believes that southerners should negotiate with the government and not resort to violent means, while the Thai government should respect Muslim religion and culture.

There are currently about a hundred Thai students studying in Iranian educational institutions both in religious and general educational faculties. They come from different parts of Thailand. Those in religious institutions study religious subjects such as Quranic studies, Hadith studies, Islamic philosophy, and mysticism. They have full freedom to increase their knowledge without any bias. Thus the overall state of relations between Iran and Thailand, both in the areas of international and bilateral relations, are in an excellent state.

Reportage on southern Thailand in Muslim media

Today news travels in a flash, and news about events in southern Thailand has been reported in nearly all Muslim media. The presentation of news by each organization has its own character depending on the medium and the audience.

The Thai press reports events in southern Thailand as an internal matter. But since the conflict takes place in the area of greatest Muslim concentration in Thailand, many international Muslim media present the same news as a religious conflict between **a** Buddhist state and local Muslims. A general survey of the print, radio, television, and online media reports in the Muslim world about events in the southern Thailand displays this trend.

The conflict in southern Thailand is largely viewed in the Muslim media in pan-Islamist terms. The worldwide Muslim community views the conflict as persecution of Muslims in a Buddhist majority country.

The Malay press tends to view the conflict in terms of pan-Malayness. After the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents, there were demonstrations in front of the Thai embassy and a raging debate in parliament. A Malaysian commentator, Farish Noor, wrote articles with a pan-Malay sentiment entitled, ‘Southern Thailand: a bloody mess about to get bloodier,’ and ‘The killings in southern Thailand: a long history of persecution unrecorded.’[37] Such sentiment pervades the Malay press reporting on the

southern Thai unrest.

Similar pan-Malay and pan-Islamic sentiments were expressed by the Malaysian foreign minister Hamid Albar who was reported in the Pakistani daily *Dawn* remarking,

> Malaysia is the chairman of the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Countries) and one of the roles of the OIC is to ensure the safety of Muslim minorities living in non-Muslims countries are guaranteed and their security not threatened. Thailand is not very far from Malaysia and what happens in south Thailand has direct impact upon us, so we just cannot keep quiet.

The same news report carried comments by Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the Kelantan chief minister and leader of PAS (Parti Islam Malaysia), that the Bangkok government was insensitive and dictatorial in its policy towards the south. Other PAS leaders stated that the southern Thai provinces belong to Muslim Malaysia and not Buddhist Thailand.[38]

The *Jakarta Post* of Indonesia urged prime minister Thaksin to learn from Indonesia's experience in dealing with the Free Aceh Movement, and called for talks to be held with separatists in the south to forge a peace agreement. The report informed its readers, "The fact is that the discontent among Muslim Thais in the south has been fed by the poor economic opportunities in the region; their distinct culture, history, language and religion from the Buddhist Thai majority; and the human rights violations they have been subject to by Thai troops and police." [39]

Beyond the region, trends in the Muslim media are similar. The Canadian based Muslimedia International, an online edition of the pro-Iranian print magazine *Crescent International* which calls itself the news magazine of the Islamic movement, reported about the southern Thai conflict in pan-Islamist terms. It talked of cultural imperialism being imposed on the southern Muslim by the regime in Bangkok through suppression of the local Malay identity and language. It also mentioned that the Muslims of southern Thailand, like those in Mindanao, have sought moral and material support from Arab governments but to no avail. It also hoped that the Thai government would not end up like those of Indonesia and the Philippines which became entangled in protracted wars which they could neither afford nor win.[40]

A report in the same magazine after the Tak Bai incident referred to Thaksin as the "Butcher of Bangkok" who avoided use of democratic means to resolve the conflict. It remarked that the Thaksin government was more interested in showing the Bush administration that it was an ally in the latter's global "War against Terror."[41] The reportage in the *Crescent* views the southern conflict as a high-handed war against defenseless Muslims by the Thaksin government which refuses to employ democratic means.

A popular Muslim website, islamonline.net, has also reported on the southern conflict regularly with such headlines as 'Thailand buys US arms for war in Muslim south' [42] and 'Thai Muslim massacred… What lies beneath.' The site has also discussed the historical past of the Patani sultanate and the movement for separatism sparked by discrimination in jobs, education, and economic neglect.[43]

A report titled, 'Thailand perpetuating the taming of Islam in Patani' talked about the long war perpetuated by Siam against Islam and Muslims in Patani, where the freedom fighters are fighting for the birthrights of Muslim in their own motherland.[44]

Commenting on the Krue Se incident, a report on the same website called upon Muslims to familiarize themselves "with the struggle of our brothers in Pattani" which is currently occupied by outsiders.[45] It also called upon worldwide Muslims to

familiarize themselves with the case of Pattani for this case is similar to those in Chechnya, Kashmir, Aceh, and Uzbekistan.

Another article talked of the history of Siamese rule over the Muslim south and its insensitivity to local culture and religion combined with economic neglect and imposition of Thai language and Buddhist culture. It remarked that the repression of the "Pattanese" people "is part and parcel of a global campaign aimed at suppressing Muslims worldwide."[46] It also remarked that the "crackdown on Pattanese Muslims may also have an impact throughout Southeast Asia due to multiple ideological and logistical linkages between Muslims separatists operating in the region."[47]

On 1 July 2004, islamonline.net conducted a live dialogue about the "Struggle in Pattani." The transcript of the dialogue illustrates how the conflict is understood by Muslims internationally. An anonymous respondent to various questions from around the world called for a united Muslim stand against attempts by the Thai state to eradicate "Muslims' cultural identity."

The same respondent welcomed the change in the stance of the Malaysian government since Abdullah Badawi came to power and took a "pro-Muslim approach," marking a difference from that of former prime minister Mahathir.

The respondent also talked of the close history between Malaysia and Pattani and the close ethnic relations between the people in the two locations, and suggested that the problem is now moving towards a state of conflict between Thailand and Malaysia. The respondent also noted the strong support for Pattani Muslims in Indonesia. Calling the unrest a Muslim–Buddhist conflict, the respondent also said that the conflict in Pattani is in line with Muslim conflicts in Palestine, Chechnya, Aceh, and Mindanao, and could be interpreted as a *jihad* as indicated in the text of *Berjihad di Patani*, which some Thai Muslim scholars and the Chularachamontri claim is not an Islamic text. The respondent said that the current strategy adopted in the struggle of Pattani was that of "tactical retreat," similar to that practiced by the prophet Muhammad in the famous treaty of Hudaybbiyah when the prophet agreed to humiliating terms of being denied entry to Mecca for ten years but subsequently gained entry only a few years later because the opponents failed to observe the terms of the treaty.

Muslim international organization, Muslim neighbors, and the conflict

The ethno-religious dimension of the conflict in southern Thailand has also become a matter of foreign policy affecting relations between the Muslim world and Thailand. Though the foreign policies of most Muslim countries are based on their national interest, all of them also refer to Islam due to the convergence of international and domestic Muslim concerns.

The OIC, the neighboring Muslim countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, and the Muslim world in general have expressed concern at the plight of southern Thai Muslims. For the most part, Muslim countries and the OIC view the conflict as a domestic political issue unrelated to religion, and they expect that Thailand will be able to restore peace in the south with respect for the ethnic and cultural identity of the Thai Muslim minority. However, there is also a view in the Muslim world that the conflict has a religious dimension. Hence, there are two readings of the conflict in Muslim opinion.

Organization of Islamic Conference

The OIC is an inter-governmental organization grouping fifty-seven Muslim countries. It was established in 1969 through the efforts of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. The goals of the OIC are to work for solidarity and build cooperation among its Muslim member states. It is also committed to stand up for the national rights, dignity, and independence of all Muslim peoples in different countries of the world including those in non-Muslim states. Thailand joined the OIC in 1998 in the capacity of an observer.

Since the aggravation of the conflict in 2004 following the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents, the OIC has issued several press releases in regard to southern Thailand. These press releases condemned the continuation of violence resulting in loss of life, and called for negotiations and peaceful dialogue to resolve all problems faced by Muslims in Thailand. They also called for the Thai government to safeguard the rights of Thai Muslims and build confidence that Muslims in Thailand would be treated on equal footing with other citizens, and assisted to achieve a good standard of economic and social life. [48]

The OIC stressed that it is not enough to deal with the problems in the south from an exclusively security perspective for such an approach will lead to continued violence and deterioration of the situation.

The secretary general of the OIC, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, sent a high-level delegation to Thailand, led by ambassador Syed Qasim al-Masri, formerly assistant secretary general and international human rights expert of the OIC. The delegation received an official invitation from the Thai government. The objective of the delegation was to observe and evaluate the conditions of Muslims in southern Thailand and report its finding to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in San'aa, Yemen at the end of June 2005.

At the start of the visit, ambassador al-Masri remarked that his delegation would use "the good offices with the Thai government to ease the obstacles facing negotiations on allowing Thai Muslims to enjoy their acquired rights as citizens. It would also aim at halting security authorities' acts of violence and oppression against them, so as to support the efforts to enthrone peace and stability in Thailand, within the framework of respect for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Ambassador al-Masri also announced, "that the delegation would stress the need to take the necessary measures to punish those involved in the tragic events which took place recently in southern Thailand, to compensate the victims, and to prevent the recurrence of such violations and disproportionate use of power." [49]

During his visit ambassador al-Masri remarked that mere transfer of military personnel to inactive posts following the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents was not enough, and called for the payment of adequate compensation to the victims and their families.[50] However, the delegation concluded that the unrest in the south was not the result of religious discrimination against the Muslims nor was it rooted in religion, but in culture and in the past neglect of the area.[51] Thailand was successful in creating confidence in the Muslim world over the southern issue, and repeated this stance at the OIC ministers meeting in San'aa, Yemen on 30 June 2005.[52] Yet, in his report to the San'aa meeting ambassador al-Masri of the OIC remarked that, though religion was not a factor in the conflict, that did not mean there was no problem in the south. He remarked that Thailand should allow the southern Muslims to have more say in managing their affairs and the ability to practice their culture and language.[53]

Meanwhile the secretary general of the OIC, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, continued to watch the southern situation. In October 2005, he issued another press

release calling for attention to the roots of the problem "to settle it through dialogue and positive handling of the legitimate aspirations of the population of the South so that they may maintain and express their cultural identity, and manage their local affairs through participation guaranteed by the Thai constitution, within the framework of respect for the territorial integrity of Thailand." The release also stated that, "The Secretary General expresses regret over the causalities among innocent civilians. He reiterates his strong condemnation of the operations aimed at civilians whatever their motive may be. He also underlines the importance of respecting human rights in all circumstances and the adoption of legal measures against all those proved to be involved in such acts." [54] This statement irked prime minister Thaksin, who remarked that Islam requires all Muslims to respect the law of the countries in which they reside and live peacefully with others, and that the OIC should express regret for the killings of both Buddhist monks as well as Muslims. Some believe that the OIC is listening to both the Thai government and separatist groups outside Thailand, and wants to see more being done to resolve the conflict.[55]

A subsequent OIC reference to the southern Thai conflict was made by Professor Ihsanoglu in his report at the opening of the 33rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Baku, Azerbaijan on 19–22 June 2006. He again urged Thailand to respect cultural differences in order to resolve the conflict by remarking that, "The situation remains a matter of serious concern, and in solving the problem [the Thai government] should take into account the cultural characteristics of the region."[56] On this occasion the OIC also released a five page report on the Thai situation.

Malaysia

The concept of *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community, is significant in shaping the direction of Malaysian foreign policy in relation to both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries. Additionally, the pan-Malay concept also plays an important sentimental role in shaping Malaysian public opinion about the southern Thai conflict and the involvement of their country in resolving the matter.

At the same time, Thailand is always suspicious about Malaysian aid and support for the southern Thai separatists. Thailand suspects that many rebels take refuge in Malaysia in order to convert an internal issue into an international cause. Thus while regional cooperation in the spirit of ASEAN draws the two countries to a common platform, the separatist issue makes both countries careful in talking about national security and ethno-religious matters. For these reasons, the Mahathir administration was "reluctant to allow any international Islamic recognition of the matter as a just cause, due to sensitivity towards the principle of territorial integrity."[57]

Malaysia has shown concern for Muslim minorities in various places and given assistance, for example in Bosnia, Palestine, and southern Thailand, citing humanitarian considerations. The tendency of Thai Muslims to flee across the border into Malaysia has regularly strained relations between the two countries. In both 1981 and 2005, Malaysia refused to repatriate refugees. Malay lobbies in Malaysia have pressured their government to take a pro-Malay and pro-Muslim stand toward the issue of refugees, as earlier in the case of 100,000 Kampuchean Muslim refugees in 1978 and those from southern Thailand.[58]

Malaysian politicians and political parties were critical of Thailand's handling of the Tak Bai incident, calling it a massacre of Muslims, and blaming prime minister Thaksin for the poor handling of the incident.[59] Comparing the southern Thai conflict with the Israel–Palestine conflict, the former prime minister Mahathir Mohammad

called upon the Thai government to give autonomy to the south as a way of resolving the conflict. He also remarked that independence was not possible.[60] This attitude irked the Thai government.

The issue of how to treat those fleeing across the Thai-Malay border into Malaysia surfaced once again following the Tanyonglimo incident, when 131 Thai Muslims fled to the neighboring Malaysian state of Kelantan in October 2005.

Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the chief minister of Kelantan of the PAS party, stated that people on both sides of the border have family ties as well as ethnic, linguistic, and religious links.[61] He urged the Thai government to negotiate with the local Muslim population instead of resorting to military force.[62]

The Malaysian government decided to return the 131 people. Malaysian deputy prime minister Najib Razak said that, "We will not release them to Thailand except if we have assurance that their human rights are not being infringed upon by the Thai government."[63] The Malaysian government also allowed the UN high commissioner for refugees to interview the group. The stalemate over this matter led to a row between Malaysia and Thailand and the matter remains unresolved.

Meanwhile, the former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir visited Bangkok on 22–23 November to hold private talks with prime minister Thaksin, ending the megaphone shouting match between the two countries. Malaysia agreed to refrain from the using the word "autonomy" in reference to the south.[64]

The overthrow of the Thaksin government by the military under General Sonthi Boonyaratglin's leadership may be a positive factor in the resolution of the conflict. Sonthi was the first to propose talking with the insurgents, even during the period of the Thaksin regime, but he was ignored. On coming to power, Sonthi and the interim prime minister Surayud Chulanont recognized the role of the former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir in contacting the separatist leaders for peace talks with the Thai officials.[65]

As an ASEAN member and a Muslim neighbor sharing ethnic relations with the Malay Muslims of the south, Malaysia has a role that is crucial and complex and vital in negotiation for peace. Malaysia does not want to get involved uninvited.[66] The Malaysian government gives encouragement for peace talks between the Thai officials and the separatists, and insists that it will not interfere in the process.[67] This may be due to the political tension between the Malaysian government of Ahmed Badawi and former prime minister Mahathir, both of whom want a clear role in the process.

Indonesia

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world. Its foreign policy is based on the spirit of Indonesian nationalism, with Islam as a secondary factor. Yet, in light of various international events related to Islam, domestic Muslim groups and political parties have put pressure for foreign policy to pay heed to worldwide Islamic considerations.

The governments of presidents Suharto, Habibie, Wahid, Megawati, and Yudhoyono have often had to accommodate Islamic concerns in dealing with the country's foreign affairs.[68] Various Indonesian groups protested over the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents, sometimes referring to them as massacres of Muslims.

Diplomatic relations between Thailand and Indonesia were first established in 1950. As close neighbors, relations span a full range of politics, security, social matters, culture, and economy, and are constantly expanding. These relations also focus on regional security under ASEAN. Indonesian foreign policy is shaped by

nationalism and anti-colonialism, not religious factors. The Indonesian ambassador to Thailand, Ibrahim Yusuk, stated that Indonesia is a member of the OIC and has good relations with the Muslim world, but pays more attention to ASEAN regional interests rather than matters of religion or ethnicity. At the same time, within Indonesia the government wants to empower Muslim moderates to fight against terrorism, by such measures as providing support for inter-religious dialogue.[69]

The ambassador also remarked that Indonesia does not have special relations with the Muslims of southern Thailand, and officially Indonesia considers the southern area as an integral part of Thailand. Presently, there are about 120 Thai students studying in Indonesian religious institutions such as the Islamic *madrasah* and also secular universities. They are both Buddhists and Muslims, some of whom have been awarded government scholarships. The Thai Muslim students at *madrasah* are self-financed. Some of them attend religious schools managed by the largest Indonesian Muslim religious organization known as *Nahdatul Ulama* or NU while some attend educational institutions managed by religious organizations such as the Muhammadiyah. There are also Thai Muslim students studying at universities of religious study such as Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidyatullah in Jakarta or various state Institutes of Islamic Studies, known as IAIN, in different parts of the country. There is little chance of these students coming under the influence of radical Islamist organizations such as *Front Pembela Islam* (Defenders of Islam Front), *Ikhwan al-Muslmin Indonesia***,** *Hizb ul-Tahrir Indonesia*, or militia groups such as *Laskar Mujahidin* (paramilitary wing of *Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia*), *Laskar Jundullah* (paramilitary wing of *Komite Persiapan Pemberlakuan Syariat Islam*), and *Laskar Pembela Islam* (paramilitary wing of *Front Pembela Islam*).

Concerning southern Thailand, the ambassador said that Indonesia adheres to the ASEAN principle of non-interference in Thailand's domestic affairs unless invited by Thai authorities. The Thai government invited an Indonesian Muslim delegation led by Hasyim Muzadi, leader of the *Nahdatul Ulama* and comprising members from the Muhammadiyah, to visit the south, to mediate between the government and the insurgents, and to remove misperceptions about Thailand's treatment of its Muslim religious minority.[70] After the visit, the Indonesian delegation advised the Thai government to deal with the conflict in a civilian way using legal means, similar to the way Indonesia dealt with its Bali bombers, as the resort to military means and use of excessive force will further escalate the situation and draw condemnation from the Muslim world and international human rights groups. The Indonesian delegation also offered exchange of *ulama* or Muslim religious scholars between the two countries and opportunities for Thai Muslim scholars to study in Indonesia.

Overall the Indonesian Muslim public has expressed concern about the southern Thai conflict within the spirit of Islamic religious fraternity, while the Indonesian government has offered to help Thailand in dealing with the restive south in the spirit of neighborly relations.

Conclusion

The Islamic concepts of *ikhwah*, Muslim religious fraternity, and *ummah*, a Muslim world community, have played an important role in drawing the Muslim world's attention to the southern Thai conflict at various levels in spite of the fact that it is largely a local domestic conflict

The problems in southern Thailand are the results of decades of economic neglect, lack of employment opportunities for the local Muslims in both public and

private sectors, cultural insensitivity of the bureaucracy, and failure to recognize religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity within the Thai polity. Any solution requires greater efforts by the Thai government to respond to the demands of the local Muslim population in order to build peace and stability within Thailand. Otherwise, the Muslim world both in the neighborhood and farther afield will be misinformed about the problems in the south and perceive them as being directed against a part of the Muslim *ummah* residing in Thailand, similar to the events taking place in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and so on.

The southern Thai conflict has drawn the attention of Muslims worldwide, including the international and regional jihadists, ideological militant Islamic groups engaged in armed struggle against Muslim and non-Muslim nation states. Lacking proper information, they view the southern Thai conflict as a religious affair in which their brothers are being oppressed. However, as the International Crisis Group reported on southern Thailand, the conflict remains local and has not involved the global or regional jihadists.[71]

The southern conflict has to be understood in its cosmological and ethno-cultural context as an ethno-religious conflict between two exclusive ethno-religious worldviews of Thai *sasana* and Malay *agama*, which needs more than political and security measures as the solution. Malay identity has to be accorded status equal to that of Thai identity in Thai society. Solutions to the southern problem will require a new social formation, by reviving efficient administration. Since the fall of Thaksin, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) has been reinstated. This joint civilian-military-police task force played a crucial role as a forum for dialogue between local people and the authorities until it was dissolved by Thaksin.[72] The revived SBPAC under its new name of Southern Border Provinces Development Center (SBPDC) will play a crucial and a newly designed role towards resolving the southern conflict. It should work toward changing the prevalent hostile attitudes between Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims to one of mutual acceptance and trust by building cooperation in managing their political and social affairs together.

From the perspective of the Muslim world observing the southern Thai conflict, any resolution requires not only efforts at reconciliation but also proper delivery of justice in various ways, both symbolic and real. Confession, atonement, and forgiveness will help to nurture reconciliation both psychologically and politically.

Though Thailand prefers to handle the conflict on its own without outside assistance, reality shows this is not possible. Neighboring Muslim countries and international Muslim organization such as the OIC cannot be excluded from the solution. Thus, Thailand should concentrate on shaping a solution, and give importance to the stance of the OIC as it will have a part in developing relations between Thailand and the Muslim world. The Thai government understands that it cannot neglect the diplomatic aspect, and hence invited the OIC, Indonesia, and former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir to participate in the search for solutions. This role became clearer when General Sonthi visited Middle Eastern countries and perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage in December 2006 with the intention of explaining the Thai government's efforts in resolving the southern conflict in a peaceful manner.[73]

Finally on the internal front, the resolution of the conflict requires the Malay Muslims of Thailand to distinguish between Islam which arises from ethnicity and tends to separate them from others, and international Islam which supports and nurtures coexistence, dialogue, and cooperation with those of other religions, cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities, as is written in the following verse of the Qur'an.

> O mankind! We created you out of a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware. (Qur'an 49:13)

Geography and history have yoked the destinies of Thai Muslims and Thai Buddhists to live together, thus it bears on both of them to live in a spirit of cooperation. It is time that both these communities became pluralist about religion.

Endnotes

[1] An earlier version of this article appeared as 'The southern Thailand conflict and the Muslim world,' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 27, 2 (August 2007), pp. 319–39.

[2] Jacob L. Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 13–21.

[3] Joseph Chinyong Liow, 'The security situation in southern Thailand: toward an understanding of domestic and international dimensions,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27 (2004), pp. 531–48; Peter Chalk, 'Separatism and Southeast Asia; the Islamic factor in southern Thailand, Mindanao, and Aceh,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (2001), pp. 241–69; Rohan Gunartana, Arabinda Acharya, and Sabrina Chua, *Conflict and terrorism in southern Thailand* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2005).

[4] I requested interviews with various Muslim embassies in Thailand concerning the topic of this paper. Only the embassies of Pakistan, Iran, and Indonesia responded. The embassy of Saudi Arabia declined the request while that of Egypt did not respond at all.

[5] These are: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalaam, Egypt, Qatar, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UAE, and Uzbekistan.

[6] This discussion expands upon Imtiyaz Yusuf, 'Religious diversity in a Buddhist majority country: the case of Islam in Thailand,' *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 3 (September 2003), pp. 131–43.

[7] Islam was founded in 611 CE when the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'an in Mecca.

[8] *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. 'Balkh.' *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. 'Buddhism.'

[9] The term "*Ahl al-Kitab*" or "the People of Book" is a Qur'anic and Muhammad's reference to the followers of Christianity and Judaism as religions that possess divine books of revelation (Torah, Psalter, Gospel) which gives them a privileged position above followers of other religions. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. 'Ahl al-Kitab.'

[10] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic theology and law*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) p. 141.

[11] Quoted in S. M. Yusuf, 'The early contacts between Islam and Buddhism,' in *University of Ceylon Review* 13 (1955), p. 28.

[12] Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1999), p. 100. Also Richard Bulliet, '*Naw Bahar* and the survival of Iranian Buddhism,' *Iran* 14 (1976), pp. 140–145.

[13] Foltz, *Religions*, pp. 100–1. See also *Encyclopedia of religion* (Mircea Eliade, General Editor), s.v. 'Madrasah.'

[14] Foltz, *Religions*, p. 100.

[15] Qur'an 18:64. See also Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shahrastani on the Indian Religions* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), pp. 113–4.

[16] Muhammad Hamidullah, *Muhammad Rasullah*, (Hyderabad: Habib, 1974), pp. 27, 107. See also David Scott, 'Buddhism and Islam: past to present encounters and interfaith lessons,' *Numen* 42 (1995), pp. 141–155.

[17] Raymond Scupin, 'Islam in Thailand before the Bangkok period,' *Journal of the Siam Society* 68 (1980), pp. 55–71.

[18] See *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam,* s.v. 'Ismailiya' and 'Shi'a.' And Moojan Momen, *An introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1987).

[19] Omar Farouk 'The Muslims of Thailand' in Lutfi Ibrahim, ed. *Islamika* (Kuala Lampur: Sarjana Enterprise, 1981), pp. 97–121.

[20] Raymond Scupin, 'Cham Muslims of Thailand: a haven of security in Southeast Asian,' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 10 (1989), pp. 486–91. Also Seddik Taouti, 'The forgotten Muslims of Kampuchea and Vietnam,' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 4 (1982), pp. 3–13. See also Suthep Soonthornpasuch, 'Islamic identity in Chiengmai city: a historical and structural comparison of two communities,' Ph.D dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1977. Also David Wilson and David Henley, 'Northern comfort: the contented Muslims of Chiang Mai,' *Bangkok Post Outlook Section*, 4 January 1995, pp. 33, 40.

[21] This is different from a learned Muslim view about *kufr* and *mushrik*. Muhammad Asad, a translator and an exegete of the Qur'an, comments that the meaning of the terms *kufr* and *kafir* in the Qur'an are determined by the meanings these terms had in Arabic language during pre-Islamic times and their meanings cannot be equated to "unbeliever" or "infidel" in the restricted sense as referring to one who rejects the doctrine of the Qur'an and teaching of Muhammad as is being done by Muslim theologians of the post-classical times and also Western translators of the Qur'an. Rather, "a *kafir* is 'one who denies [or "refuses to acknowledge"] the truth' in the widest, spiritual sense … irrespective of whether it relates to a cognition of the supreme truth—namely, the existence of God—or to a doctrine or ordinance enunciated in the divine writ, or to a self-evident moral proposition, or to an acknowledgement of, and therefore gratitude for, favours received." Muhammad Asad, *The message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), p. 907.

The term *shirk* means the ascribing of divinity to anything besides God and "is not confined to a worship of other 'deities', but implies also the attribution of divine or quasi-divine powers to persons or objects not regarded as deities: in other words, it embraces also saint-worship, etc." Or, through "overstepping the bounds of truth." Muhammad Asad, *The message*, pp. 110, 160. In the case of Buddhism it would imply overstepping the *Dhamma*.

[22] Jonathan Fox, *Ethnoreligious conflict in the late twentieth century: a general theory* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 26.

[23] Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay nationalism: a case study of Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand* (Bangkok : Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, 1985), p. 8, 12.

[24] Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay nationalism*, p. 13.

[25] Donald Tugby and Elise Tugby, 'Malay-Muslim and Thai-Buddhist relations in the Pattani region: an interpretation,' in Forbes, ed., *The Muslims of Thailand*, Vol. 2 (Gaya, India: Center For South East Asian Studies, 1989), p. 73.

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[27] Stanley J. Tambiah, *Levelling crowds: ethnonationalist conflicts and collective violence in South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 16.

[28] Tambiah, *Levelling crowd*, p. 22.

[29] 'Ignorance "cause of unrest",' *Bangkok Post,* 12 May 2006, p. 2.

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[31] William Roff, *Kelantan* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974); Mohd. Taib Osman, *Islamic civilization in the Malay* world (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1997); Hasan Madmarn, Azyumardi Azra, *The origins of Islamic reformism in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004);

Shamsul A. B. 'Islam embedded: religion and plurality in Southeast Asia as a mirror for Europe,' in *Asia Europe Journal* 3 (2005), pp. 159–78.

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[35] Interview with Mr Mohammed Nafis Zakariyya, deputy head of mission, Embassy of Pakistan, Bangkok, 25 October 2005.

[36] Interview with Mr Mohsen Pakain, Iranian ambassador to Thailand, 15 September 2005.

[37] Farish Noor, 'Southern Thailand: A bloody mess about to get bloodier,' and 'The killings in southern Thailand: a long history of persecution unrecorded,' at: www.muslimwakeup.com.

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[47] Kamel, 'Shock and awe.'

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[72] 'SBPAC successor name agreed,' *Bangkok Post*, 17 October 2006, p. 3.

[73] 'Sonthi plans to visit Muslim countries,' *Bangkok Post*, 18 October 2006, p. 2.

Glossary

agama	religion (a Malay word)
bilan	a person whose duty is to call the faithful to the mosque for prayers five times a day, from the Arabic word, "bilal"
budu	a type of fish sauce from Malaysia and southern Thailand
chedi	stupa, a Buddhist building to enshrine a relic
Chularachamontri	royally appointed state counselor for Islamic affairs, officially recognized as the spiritual leader of Muslims in Thailand
hadith	records of sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad
hajj	pilgrimage (to Mecca)
halal	"permissible"; for example, food prepared according to Islamic law is called "halal food"
ikhwah	brotherhood
imam	Islamic leader of a mosque whose primary duty is to lead the community at prayers and who thus is generally regarded as a Muslim community leader
Isan	the northeast region of Thailand
Jawi	(or Yawi) a Malay word for the Arabic script used for writing Malay, often incorrectly used in Thailand as a synonym for the Malay language
jihad	"struggle for the cause of Islam," often used especially for struggle against its perceived enemies
kafir	non-believer
kamnan	the head of a subdistrict
koteb	(*khateb*) a person whose duty is to give sermons on Fridays during the weekly Islamic congregation at the mosque
kris	a dagger with a distinctive curved blade, typical of the Malay world
Krue Ze	(Krue-se) historic unfinished mosque in Pattani, site of an incident on 28 April 2004 when, after a coordinated series of attacks on government targets, thirty-two militants took refuge in the mosque and were all subsequently killed by security forces
kufr	disbelief in God
Lim Kor Niew	(Lim Kun Yew) a Chinese shrine in Pattani, believed to be mythologically connected to Krue Se mosque
madrasah	Muslim religious seminary
pondok	(or *ponoh*), boarding school teaching Islamic subjects
pong-lang	a wooden xylophone played by two players
roti	a wheatflour pancake, originally from South Asia
Rumi	Malay language written in the Latin alphabet

sasana	religion, often meaning Buddhism
shari'ah	the body of revealed laws found both in the *Qur'an* and the Prophetic Traditions (Sunnah)
shirk	polytheism
Songkran	Thai new year (mid April)
tadika	religious school for small Muslim children (abbreviation of Taman Didikan Kanak-kanak)
Tak Bai	subdistrict town in Narathiwat, site of an incident on 25 October 2004 when security forces attacked a demonstration, resulting in seven deaths by gunshot, and a further seventy-eight died from suffocation during transportation to a detention center
tambon	a subdistrict
thesaphiban	"rule over territory," an administrative system introduced in the late nineteenth century
toh-kru	religious teacher, religious leader of a *pondok*
toh-kali	judge in an Islamic court, from the Arabic word *qa-di*
ulama	Muslim religious scholars
ummah	the worldwide Muslim community
uztaz	an Arabic term for a male teacher
wai	a gesture of greeting or respect, with hands placed palms together in front of the chest or face
wat	a Buddhist temple

Abbreviations

ACSBP	Administration Center for Southern Border Provinces
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPP	Border Patrol Police
CE	common era (= AD)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPM	Civilian-Police-Military Task Force
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CTIC	Counter Terrorism Intelligence Center
DIILS	Defense Institute of International Legal Studies
GWOT	Global War on Terror
ICC	International Criminal Court
ILEA	International Law Enforcement Academy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMT-GT	Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand Growth Triangle
ISOC	Internal Security Operation Command
JI	*Jemaah Islamiyah*
MNNA	Major Non-NATO Ally
MP	member of parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIDA	National Institute of Development Administration
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
NSC	National Security Council
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
PAS	Parti Islam Malaysia
PSU	Prince of Songkhla University
PULO	Patani United Liberation Organization
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administration Center
SBPPBC	Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
TNA	Thai News Agency

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